

Mrs. Oswald's Ex-Attorney Threatens Contract Suit

By JACK LANGGUTH
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DALLAS, Feb. 24—Mrs. Lee H. Oswald's former attorney warned today that he would go to court to retain a contract that guaranteed him 10 per cent of her income

"I understand that Robert Oswald advised her to change attorneys," John Thorne, her former attorney, said. "He may have advised her into the courthouse."

Mr. Thorne, who practices in suburban Grand Prairie, said he had been unable to reach Marina Oswald, the widow of the accused assassin of President Kennedy, since learning that she had hired another lawyer.

"I don't know where she is,"

he said. "She has not been available to me."

James H. Martin, Mrs. Oswald's former business adviser, is out of town and unavailable for comment, his wife said.

Mr. Thorne said that Mr. Martin had "full and complete power of attorney" for Mrs. Oswald and that he had signed contracts in her name.

William A. McKenzie, the Dallas lawyer Mrs. Oswald chose to replace Mr. Thorne, said he hoped to untangle her legal affairs soon. Mr. McKenzie represented Robert Oswald, Lee H. Oswald's older brother, last week before the Presidential commission investigating the assassination.

Mr. Thorne described the 10 per cent fee for his services as "modest." Many attorneys

charge from 25 to 30 per cent or more, he added.

An Italian film company has paid a \$75,000 advance for the motion picture and television rights to her story, plus a guaranteed sum for personal appearances, Mr. Thorne said.

He said that the Meredith Press in Des Moines, Iowa, had also promised her "quite a substantial sum" for her autobiography.

In Des Moines, a spokesman for the company said that no contracts had been signed.

"We have an agreement ready for her signature," Jack Barlass, the general manager for Meredith Press, said. "But we have to wait until the confusion clears away."

He said Isaac Don Levine,

who has written books on the Soviet Union, had approached him about helping Mrs. Oswald to write her story.

"There was to be a three-way contract, with part of the money going to Marina, part to Levine and part to her agent—anyone she designated," he said.

One informed source said that a key question in any legal dispute between Mrs. Oswald and her former agent and attorney would be whether the agreements she signed were valid if they had not been read to her in Russian.

Mr. Thorne said that he had not provided Russian translations of the contracts for Mrs. Oswald, a 22-year-old native of the Soviet Union with a limited knowledge of English.