

INVESTIGATIONS

Between Two Fires

TIME 2/14

(See Cover)

Marina Oswald, 22, sat at a table in Parchey's Restaurant in Washington. Ten feet away were two vigilant Secret Service agents. Slight and slim at about 5 ft. 2 in. and 98 lbs., she had had her hair set in a beauty parlor—something her late husband would not have allowed. She wore touches of makeup—something her husband had frowned upon. She lit a cigarette and smoked it—something he had disapproved of.

Lee Harvey Oswald had disapproved of drinking too. Now she asked for a

tried to explain. "It is very difficult question," she said. "He was not too much. Sometimes he was a little bit sick. He was a normal man, but sometimes people don't understand him. And sometimes I didn't know . . . He want to be popular, so everyone know who is Lee Harvey Oswald.

"I am sleepy, I am tired. I want to go to bed. I am going to sleep all day Saturday."

The Witness. There was good cause for her weariness. For the past four days, Marina had testified before the special commission, headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren, that is conducting a long, painstaking investigation into

staged with the connivance of the Dallas police.

The Commission. So wild had the speculation about Kennedy's assassination become that a Black Muslim newspaper even reported that the President, dying of cancer and desiring martyrdom, had ordered his own slaying. And it was to set such nonsense to rest that President Johnson, on Nov. 29, established the Warren Commission.

Earl Warren, 72, undertook the assignment with great reluctance. In the past, Supreme Court Justices occasionally have accepted extrajudicial chores: Justice Robert Jackson was chief U.S. prosecutor at the Nürnberg trials; Owen Roberts was head of the Pearl Harbor investigating commission. But Warren held the traditional view that the federal judiciary—especially the Supreme Court—ought not to move out of its well-defined limits. In 1958 Warren had turned down a suggestion that he, or any member of the Court, join a committee to study the question of presidential disability. Moreover, he knew that litigation arising from the November events in Dallas—the Jack Ruby case, for one—might some day come before the Supreme Court. If that happened, he would almost certainly have to disqualify himself.

Nevertheless, in a White House meeting, President Johnson insisted that the national interest required a man in Warren's position and with his reputation to head the investigation. Warren finally agreed, but when he left Johnson's office there were tears in his eyes.

Other members of the commission are Georgia's Democratic Senator Richard B. Russell, 66, who chaired the 1951 congressional investigation into President Truman's dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur; Kentucky's Republican Senator John Sherman Cooper, 62, a former state judge and Ambassador to India; Louisiana's Democratic Congressman Hale Boggs, 50, a lawyer and the House Democratic whip; Michigan's Republican Congressman Gerald Ford, 50, Yale Law School graduate and one of the G.O.P.'s most respected House members; Allen W. Dulles, 70, former head of the Central Intelligence Agency; and John J. McCloy, 68, retired chairman of the Chase Manhattan Bank, onetime U.S. High Commissioner in West Germany and John Kennedy's disarmament adviser.

Named chief counsel to the commission was James Lee Rankin, 56, a Manhattan attorney who was Eisenhower's Solicitor General. Rankin ranks high in Supreme Court circles, argued for the Government in the 1953 school desegregation cases, in the Little Rock high school litigation, defended Ike's right to invoke the Taft-Hartley law in the 1959 steel strike.

Month's Rent. Using a rented suite of offices in Washington's Veterans of Foreign Wars Building, the commission last week led Marina Oswald through the story of her life—and her days with



LEE & MARINA'S WEDDING DAY IN MINSK (1961)
Even then, something mysterious and unstable.

vodka gimlet but did not like it. She took a sip from the old-fashioned of a newsmen at the table with her, made a face and handed it back, finally settling for a cherry cordial. She was not very hungry, and ate little of her filet mignon with mushroom sauce.

At her side in a high chair was the older of her two daughters, June Lee, called Junie and three years old this week. The child chattered in Russian, banged the silverware on the table, sampled the vodka, played with the butter. The restaurant was out of spaghetti and meatballs, Junie's favorite dish, so she was served hamburger, which she crumbled and carefully dropped on the floor, piece by piece. Junie looks like her father.

Marina Oswald calmed the child, returned to the conversation. She was convinced that her husband had killed President John Kennedy. But why?

In her halting English, she painfully

the Kennedy assassination. For the most part, she merely substantiated the mass of evidence already compiled by the FBI (in five volumes of reports), the Secret Service, and a dozen investigative lawyers hired by the commission itself. That evidence—ranging from fingerprints to ballistics tests—is as conclusive as any confession, and there is no lingering doubt about what the commission's main findings will be:

► Lee Harvey Oswald killed Kennedy and wounded Texas' Governor John Connally, and he carried out the assassination without an accomplice.

► There was no dark conspiracy. Oswald was neither a Soviet nor a Cuban agent. There was no plot instigated by right-wingers (as the radical left has claimed) or by left-wingers (as the radical right insists). Similarly, Oswald's own assassination was the work of just one man—Jack Ruby—and it was not (as Moscow intimated at the time)

Lee Oswald. During her appearances, Marina became especially fond of gracious Earl Warren and pipe-puffing Alben Dulles. Warren, she later confided, reminded her of her grandfather; Dulles was "sympathique."

Yet for all the commission's kindness towards Marina, her testimony, totaling 20 nerve-rasping hours, was an ordeal, made more grueling by the necessity to translate questions into Russian and replies into English. She refused to speculate on Lee Oswald's motives, gave only those answers of which she was certain. Counsel Rankin was interested in a rumor that Oswald had returned from a quick trip to Mexico City with \$5,000. Was that so?

A. No.

Q. How much did he have when he returned?

A. \$50 or \$70.

Q. That's all? Only \$50 or \$70?

A. That may not seem much to you, but to us that was a month's rent.

During one exchange, Rankin asked Marina if she had known at one time that Lee had "gone to live" with a certain woman. Marina frowned. "How do you mean, live with this woman?" she asked coldly. Rankin put in quickly: "As a tenant." That was different. "No," said Marina.

The last day was the most difficult. The commission asked Marina to identify some 145 exhibits, most of them Oswald's personal possessions. There were his letters and notebooks, the mail-order rifle he had bought. She identified them all, including the bloodstained clothes he was wearing when he was shot. From time to time Marina wept, but she quickly regained her composure. And at last it was over.

The Mother. Marina Oswald was the first witness to appear before the Warren Commission. But as the commission continues to delve deeply into the secret life of Lee Harvey Oswald, she may not necessarily be the most important. For

JOE SCOTT, KELD—BLACK STAR



MARINA & HER CHILDREN

"This is too much bad for me."

there is evidence that the dominating figure in that life was his mother. This week, at her own request, Marguerite Claverie Pic Oswald Ekdahl, 56, a practical nurse, is scheduled to appear before the commission along with her lawyer, Mark Lane, a New Yorker with an unquenchable passion for the defense of underdogs and liberal causes.

There is not much doubt about the mother's purpose: to defend her son's name. She has been doing that ever since the assassination.

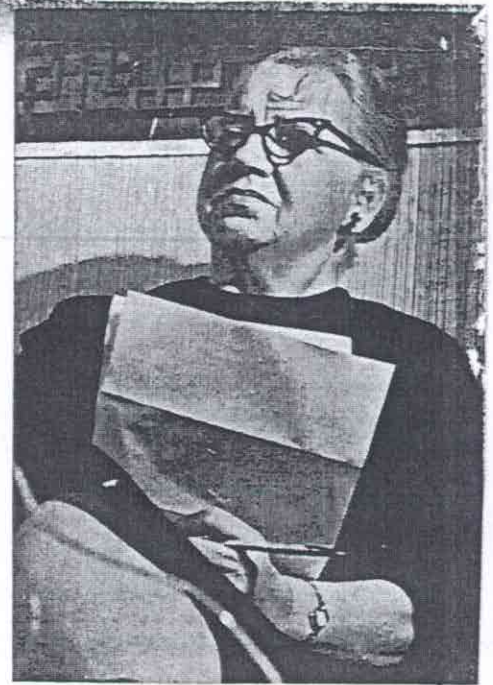
A short, stout woman with grey hair drawn back in a bun, Marguerite has hardly been hostile to the publicity that has come her way since Nov. 22. "I am an important person," she says with obvious relish. "I understand that I will go down in history too." She rents one side of a small duplex house in Fort Worth. It is a clean place, with blistering wallpaper, an ancient TV set, a picture of the Christ Child that stands in one of the bookshelves, a hissing gas heater in one corner. She was at home last week when a reporter went by. "Here," said Mrs. Oswald genially, "have a press release."

The handout related how Mrs. Oswald had sent a wire to President Johnson asking for legal representation for her son at the investigation proceedings. "You know what I got back?" she asked the reporter. "You know? I got back a note from the White House saying that in the future I ought to direct such messages to the Warren Commission and not the White House at all. Can you imagine? Why, I've got as much right as any citizen to write the President of the United States, to petition him, and let me tell you this, Mr. Johnson should also remember that I am not just anyone, and that he is only President of the United States by the grace of my son's action."

Whisked Away. "My son was a human being," she continued, "and like any human being, he could shoot somebody. Maybe he was involved. Maybe there were others involved too. But I heard my son say on television that he did not do it, and I want to see the evidence first before I will accept the final fact that he shot the President. My heart goes out to Marina. She is a nice girl, but they are keeping her from me. They whisked her away the other day at the cemetery. They saw me, and they just shoved her in that car and took her away. I was so humiliated. There were a lot of people standing there, and I cried, and got in my car and cried all the way home."

Looking back, Marguerite Oswald says, "Everybody has sympathy for Mrs. Kennedy. Doesn't anybody feel sorry for me? I've had enough misery. I've been married three times and altogether had husbands for a total of eight years. I did my best for my boys."

The Boy. Marguerite Claverie was born in New Orleans in 1907. Her miseries began in 1931, about two years after she married New Orleans Steve



OSWALD'S MOTHER

"I will go down in history too."

dore Edward John Pic. She became pregnant, she says, and Pic left her because he did not want any children. She and Pic were divorced, but Pic sent support money for their son John Edward, now an Air Force staff sergeant, for some years after that. In 1933 Marguerite married Robert Edward Lee Oswald, an insurance agent. Their first child, Robert, born in 1934, works for a brick company in Denton, Texas. In August 1939, Mrs. Oswald's husband died of a coronary thrombosis; two months later, on Oct. 18, she gave birth to her third child, Lee Harvey Oswald. Mrs. Oswald recalls that "other kids teased Lee because he was so bright. He learned to read by himself before he went to school. He was always wanting to know about important things."

In 1945 she married an industrial engineer from Boston, Edwin A. Ekdahl, and moved to Fort Worth. They kept Lee with them, sent the two older boys to a Mississippi military academy. That marriage also was brief. In 1948 Ekdahl filed for divorce, charged that his wife nagged him constantly about money, hit and scratched him, threw a bottle and a cookie jar at him, once nearly crowned him with a vase.

The Truant. Marguerite and Lee moved in 1952 to New York City, where they took an apartment in The Bronx. At 13, Lee Oswald was a chronic truant, and The Bronx children's court referred him for psychiatric examination to the Youth House for Boys. Psychiatrist Renatus Hartogs concluded that Lee had a schizoid personality and was potentially a "dangerous person who needed treatment." Says Probation Officer John Carro: "His environment was poor because his mother was in need of help herself." At one point during an examination, young Lee was

ing." But all efforts to get treatment for Lee failed—because Marguerite Oswald was convinced that there was nothing wrong with her son.

She told Carro: "Please keep out of family affairs."

Marguerite took Lee out of New York, moved to New Orleans. Not long after that, he began bringing home library copies of *Das Kapital* and other



7:10 a.m. Oswald carrying long package leaves Paine house, rides to work with neighbor.



books dealing with Communism and socialism. "I didn't worry," says his mother. "You can't protect children from everything—just try to help them see things in the right way. Besides, if those books are so bad, why are they where any child can get hold of them?"

In the fall of 1956 the Oswalds returned to Texas, and Lee, just 17, quit school to join the Marines. All told, he spent about three years in the service, was trained in aviation electronics. His mother still insists that his service record was exemplary; in fact, Oswald was twice court-martialed, once for unlawful possession of a pistol, once for swearing at a noncommissioned officer. He is remembered mostly as a rather dislikable loner who spent his off-duty hours studying the Russian language.

Renunciation. In September 1959, Oswald received a hardship discharge from the Marines; his mother had been hurt when a box of glass jars fell on her in a Fort Worth department store, and she needed him at home. But Oswald stayed with Marguerite only three days. Instead of helping her, he shipped out on a freighter to the Soviet Union. In Moscow he appeared at the U.S. embassy and announced: "I'm through. Capitalism has passed its peak. I've seen poor niggers, and that was a lesson. People hate because they've been told to hate. It's the fashion to hate people in the United States." He then signed an affidavit: "I affirm that my allegiance is to the Soviet Socialist Republics."

Renouncing his American citizenship was one thing, but gaining Soviet citizenship was another. Russian officials did not view Oswald as America's greatest gift to Communism. They let him stay as an alien resident, got him a fac-

tory job for 80 rubles (\$88.00) a month—but no citizenship.

Boy Meets Girl. Oswald was working in a Minsk factory in the spring of 1961 when he met pretty Marina Nikolaevna Pruskova at a dance. Marina was born in Archangel, raised in Leningrad. Her father died when she was two, her mother when she was 15. Marina studied Latin and French, had gone on to become a pharmacist. She sensed that there was something mysterious and unstable about Lee—but she was convinced that he loved her, and they were married six weeks after they met, in a double-ring civil ceremony.

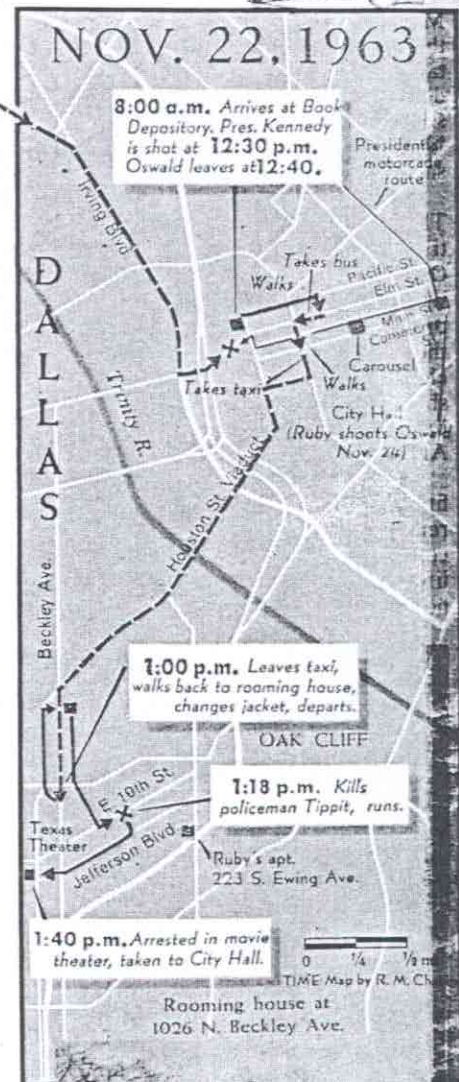
Soviet life was totally frustrating for Oswald: the living accommodations were inadequate, the job paid poorly. Moreover, he was enraged to learn that the Marine Corps had changed his discharge to "undesirable." In January 1962 he wrote an angry letter to John Connally, who had just resigned as Secretary of the Navy to run for Governor of Texas, demanding that Connally "take the necessary steps to repair the harm done to me and my family." Six months later, thanks to a loan of \$435.71 from the U.S. embassy in Moscow, Lee, Marina, and Junie, then four months old, arrived in Fort Worth, where they lived for several weeks with Oswald's mother. Says Marguerite: "Every day, of course, Lee would go out and look for work. They were very nice at the employment commission office, but he couldn't get a job. You see, he had no background, no experience or training. And I think people remembered his defection, because it was all blown up out of proportion in Fort Worth when it happened. Then Lee got a job with a welding company. Marina was so happy. She said to me, 'Thank your God. Lee work.'"

A Friend in Need. Oswald took his wife and his baby to a \$59-a-month apartment ten blocks away. Later on, he moved his family to Dallas, where he got another job, this time in a photo-engraving plant. Last February he and Marina met Ruth Paine, 31, mother of two children and an energetic Quaker with a deep interest in furthering U.S.-Soviet relations. Ruth wanted to learn Russian, and Marina helped her. The two women became close friends.

Ruth and her husband, Michael, 35, were separated, though Michael visited the house frequently. A research engineer with the Bell Helicopter Co., Michael was active in liberal causes, recalls that he and Lee Oswald disagreed on a variety of subjects. Says Paine: "His view of the world seemed to be that the world should fit his view rather than the other way around. He had a certain picture of the world, which he insisted on defending irrespective of evidence. He had little tolerance. He had no respect for religion or the values taught by religion. He wouldn't let his wife talk about actual life in Russia. He was nice to Marina so long as she didn't think counter to him. One time I took

him to a meeting of the American Civil Liberties Union. It took him by surprise that people could be concerned about the concepts of freedom of speech. He said, 'I couldn't join such an organization. It isn't political.' It struck me that he hadn't really met people who stuck by the values stated in the Bill of Rights. He didn't treasure values and concepts except as they were convenient to him."

During this period, Marina recalls Oswald's personality changed for the worse. He beat Marina at least once, criticized her, ordered her about, even demanded that she run his bath. She told Ruth, after one quarrel: "I often feel as if I am caught between two fires—*mezhdvukh ognem*. This is not the first time." Says Ruth: "She meant these fires to be her sense of loyalty and her sense of what was right to do." Oswald also became increasingly secretive. He rented a post office box under the name of "A. Hidell," wrote to U.S. Communist headquarters in New York to request information, subscribed to the



Daily Worker and the Militant, a Trotskyite paper. In March, "A. Hidell" bought a 6.5-mm. Mannlicher-Carcano rifle and telescopic sight from a Chicago mail-order house for \$19.95.

Dogged Loyalty. On the night of April 10, Lee Oswald rushed home, exultantly told Marina that he had just killed ex-Army Major General Edwin Walker, the right-wing extremist who lives in Dallas. Sure enough, Walker was shot at that night. He had been working on his income tax return. Just as the shot was fired, Walker bent over and the bullet narrowly missed killing him. Marina now knew that her husband was terribly sick. But she never told, until much later, that Oswald had fired the shot. Hers was a dogged loyalty. "I am wife," she said simply.

At Marina's suggestion, Oswald took a bus for New Orleans that month to look for a job. Marina and her baby went to live with Ruth Paine. Marina was two months pregnant. "She stayed then about two weeks," says Ruth. "During the day, we would do the normal things, washing diapers, folding clothes, talking. She was interested in how Americans cook. She was particularly interested in all the spices and condiments. I taught her how to use seasoning, salt and soy sauce and so forth. She taught me to use dill weed in making a good creamed chicken dish." On Thursday, May 9, Oswald called from New Orleans and said he had found a job. Mrs. Paine piled Marina and Junie and her own two children into her Chevrolet station wagon and drove to New Orleans. In September, Ruth drove again to New Orleans, took Marina and Junie home with her.

It was just as well, for Oswald was in more trouble. He had lost his job, had tried unsuccessfully to infiltrate a Cuban anti-Castro group, then started handing out pro-Castro propaganda, and was arrested for disturbing the peace. He had also decided to go to Cuba, and then perhaps again to Russia.

Last Job. With Marina on her way to Dallas, Oswald left New Orleans without paying his apartment rent. A few days later he turned up at the Cuban consulate in Mexico City. He demanded a visa, was told that it would take time, stormed out in anger. Next he went to the Soviet consulate and asked for a Russian visa. Again he was told that there would be a delay, and again he stomped out. On Oct. 4 he called Marina at the Paine house. He was in Dallas and hoped to find a job, and he asked if he could visit the Paine suburban home on weekends.

"Usually," recalls Ruth Paine, "he would hitchhike out. He would watch television. He liked the World War II movies, and he simply loved football. He'd watch the college football games on Saturday and the pro games on Sunday, lying there on the floor, usually dressed in a white T shirt and slacks. He went looking for a job, and I gave him a city map of the Dallas-Fort Worth area



OSWALD BEING ARRESTED
A bystander saw the rifle poke out.

—that infamous map—so he could find the places." After Kennedy's death that map was found in Oswald's room.

Ruth Paine landed Oswald his last job. From a neighbor she heard of an opening at the Texas Book Depository on Elm Street in Dallas. She called the warehouse and recommended Lee. That day, Oct. 14, Lee took an \$8-a-week room in a boardinghouse on North Beckley Avenue. He gave his name as O. H. Lee. Next day he was hired at the warehouse. On Oct. 20 his second daughter, Rachel, was born.

Curtain Rods. Lee continued to visit Marina only on weekends, but mostly to sleep and to watch television; she once confided to a friend that he had intercourse with her only about once every two months. Also during this time he hid his rifle, wrapped in a blanket, in the Paine garage. Marina knew it was there. But realizing that Ruth, a strong pacifist, would object, she said nothing about it.

On Thursday, Nov. 21, Oswald turned up at the house unexpectedly. He went to bed at 9 p.m., while Ruth and Marina stayed up and talked. Next morning Lee was up and gone before anyone else in the household was awake. He caught a ride to Dallas with a co-worker, Wesley Frazier. He carried a long object wrapped in brown paper. "Curtain rods," he explained.

But the rifle was gone from the Paine garage.

All Over. At 12:30 that afternoon, just as President Kennedy's car passed by the Texas Book Depository, that same rifle was poked out of a sixth-floor window. A bystander spotted it. "Boy," he said, "you sure can't say the Secret Service isn't on the ball. Look at that guy up there in the window with a rifle."

Seconds later, three shots were fired—and President Kennedy was dead or dying. Lee Oswald slipped out a rear

entrance of the building, walked six blocks, returned to Elm and boarded a bus. The bus bogged down in traffic. Oswald got off, walked a few blocks, got into a cab, ordered the driver to drop him on the 500 block of North Beckley—five blocks beyond his room. He paid the 95¢ fare, gave the driver a nickel tip, hurried to his room, ran out again with a windbreaker.

"Those Poor Kids." By this time, the warehouse employees had been assembled and Oswald's absence noted. A police call was already on the air. As Oswald walked along East Tenth, Patrolman J. D. Tippit pulled up, got out of his car and started toward him. Oswald whipped out a .38-cal. revolver, pumped three bullets into Tippit and killed him. Minutes later, he was cornered in a movie house.

At the Paine home, even before she knew that her husband was implicated, Marina Oswald watched the TV newscasts in horror. "What a terrible thing this is to Mrs. Kennedy," she said. "Now the children will have to grow up without a father!" That, of course, was the reaction of millions of people—notably including a balding saloonkeeper, Jack Ruby. "Those poor kids," he moaned when he heard the news.

The Busybody. Ruby was another unlovable character. He had knocked around with some tough boys in his home town, Chicago, now prided himself on running one of the most popular striptease joints in Dallas. He carried a gun, was a cop buff, and loved to visit police headquarters. Medical reports later noted that Bachelor Ruby contracted gonorrhea no fewer than four times; he checked negative for syphilis. "He denies homosexuality, but is extremely sensitive should anybody accuse him of that and is very defensive," said a psychiatrist at Ruby's bond



JACK RUBY
"I am above everybody."

earing. "He admits that he must adopt at times the feminine position during intercourse. His handling of sexuality is flippant, more the nature of a bragging youth." The psychiatrist described Ruby, 52, as a "hyperactive busy-body," sexually and socially.

Whether or not Ruby, as his lawyer claims, went temporarily insane at news of Kennedy's assassination, there seems little doubt that he suffered a severe emotional trauma. On Sunday morning, as police prepared to transfer Lee Oswald from headquarters to the county jail, Ruby eased himself into a crowd of newsmen, waited till Oswald was brought down from his fourth-floor cell. Then he stepped up, stuck out his revolver and, as millions of viewers watched, killed Oswald with one shot. That act, he said later, made him think he was "looking on history." He told his examiners that he thought: "I am above everybody. They cannot move me." He had, for the first time in his long and scruffy life, become "a big guy."

Next morning at Fort Worth's Rose Hill Cemetery, Marina and her two babies, her mother-in-law and her brother-in-law Robert buried Lee Oswald in a plain pine box. Save for a group of newsmen, Secret Service agents and police officers, the rite was unattended.

The burial symbolically sealed off for all time the best witness in the extraordinary case. The President has instructed the Warren Commission to satisfy itself that the truth is known as far as it can be discovered, and to report its findings and conclusions to him, to the American people and to the world." The commission has managed to avoid the natural impulse to weave a webwork of sinister motivations and complex conspiracies to satisfy a puzzled nation. Instead, it has found so far that the act was committed by a rootless, aimless, driven young man. It was a bizarre coming together of circumstances that gave Lee Oswald the time, the place and the opportunity to play the demons that consumed him.

was a phenomenon of his time. The Gifts. There was, as well, a happier phenomenon. From all parts of the U.S., money and bundles of clothing began pouring in for Marina. Virtually penniless all her life, she has received about \$36,000 in gifts from sympathetic Americans. At the advice of James Martin, who quit his job as a Dallas motel manager to become her business agent, Marina has set up a \$25,000 trust fund for the children. It took some doing. Dallas' big First National Bank ("Give Us the Opportunity to Say Yes") said no. The fund was finally lodged with a small bank in nearby Grand Prairie.

For the time being, Marina and her children are living with Business Agent Martin's family. Outside is a parked car with two Secret Servicemen, who, with two other pairs, stand guard 24 hours a day. But the worst seems to be over. "I think," Marina says, "I am more happy now." She helps with the cooking and cleaning, plays with her children, takes long evening walks. She likes Dallas, wants to stay on there, become an American citizen and resume her work in pharmacy. Remarriage? "No! Please!" she cries. "I have crazy letters from men who want to marry. I think these silly men." She does not hide the fact that she dislikes her mother-in-law. "I don't want to talk with her. This is too much bad for me."

Marina and Marguerite Oswald are likely to meet hereafter only by chance along the black-topped road that winds far to the back of Rose Hill Cemetery. Both women visit Lee Oswald's grave once or twice a week. It is marked with a small cross cut into a simple granite plaque, which carries the man's name and the dates of his first and last days on earth. The bare cedars quake on wintry, windy Texas days, and the grass is brown and forlorn. Here and there a leaf flutters and a sudden swarm of starlings lights in a tree for a moment, only to take off like a cloud in the bleak sky. And on the grave are a pot of withered chrysanthemums, some carnations and nine sprays of pretty pink roses. The roses are plastic.

TRIALS

Hung Jury

For the eleven days of his trial, Byron De La Beckwith, 43, accused killer of Mississippi N.A.A.C.P. Leader Medgar Evers, performed more like a circus clown than a defendant in a first-degree murder case. Constantly shooting his French cuffs, he propped his feet up on a nearby chair, swigged soda pop, glowered at Negro newsmen, hallooed to white spectators, was once restrained by a bailiff from sauntering over to the jury box to chat with his peers, and with the exaggerated Southern courtliness upon which he so much prides himself, even offered cigars to Prosecutor William L. Waller.

around, sat in tense silence until 22 hours after they had been handed the case for a verdict—the jurors returned to say that they could not agree. Circuit Judge Leon Hendrick declared a mistrial, and Beckwith, with nary a smirk nor a smile, got up and went back to his cell.

No sooner had this celebrated civil rights murder trial ended in a hung jury, split seven to five for acquittal, than there were murmurs of surprise. Many had expected "Mississippi justice." But that was not the case. Judge Hendrick had presided wisely and fairly. Prosecutor Waller, 37, had won the admiration of Northern newsmen for his aggressive presentation. And Defendant Beckwith had been tried before a jury of his peers—even if it was all male, all white, and all Mississippian.

"To No One Else." The case against Beckwith, a Greenwood fertilizer salesman, hinged on a .30/06 Enfield rifle found near a clump of sweet-gum trees across the street from Evers' home in Jackson on the morning after the murder. A fingerprint of Beckwith's was found on the weapon's telescopic sight.

Prosecution witnesses identified the rifle as Beckwith's. One told of trading Beckwith a Japanese-made sight—identical to the one on the Enfield—in return for a revolver. An FBI expert swore the fingerprint belonged to Beckwith and to "no one else in the world."

Two Jackson cab drivers told how four days before Evers was ambushed on June 12, Beckwith had asked directions to Evers' home, saying, "I've got to find where he lives in a couple of days." A young woman said that she had seen a car similar to Beckwith's parked near Evers' house 50 minutes before the shooting. But because the bullet that killed Medgar Evers was too badly shattered to produce positive results in ballistics tests, the state never did prove that it had been fired by the rifle in the sweet-gum grove.



BYRON DE LA BECKWITH

But after the jury had been out for