









# OSWALD CALLED IT MY 'HISTORIC

Here, published in full for the first time as he wrote and spelled it, is the assassin's diary inside Russia

*On these and the following pages LIFE presents a fascinating and historic document, the personal diary kept by Lee Harvey Oswald during his months in Russia. It is one of the most important pieces of evidence studied by the Warren Commission in its effort to unravel the character and motives of President Kennedy's assassin. Though Oswald's widow did not provide LIFE with the diary, it is*

*printed here in full with her permission. At Marina Oswald's request, many Russian names in the diary have been changed to prevent reprisals against Oswald's acquaintances. In a few instances—which are indicated in the text—Oswald's writing is so undecipherable that the editors had to make an educated guess. Other than that the diary is printed exactly as Oswald wrote it, misspellings and all.*

## HISTORIC DIARY

1959

FROM OCT. 16, 1959

### ARRIVAL—LEAVING

**OCT. 16.** Arrive from Helsinki by train; am met by Intourist representative in car to Hotel "Berlin." Reges, as "student" 5 day lux. tourist ticket.) Meet my Intourist guide Olga I explain to her I wish to appll. for Rus. citizenship, she is flabbergassed, but agrees to help. She checks with her boss, main office intour; than helps me add. a letter to sup. Sovit. asking for citizenship, mean while boss telephons passport \* visa office and notifies them about me.

**OCT. 17**—Olga meets me for Intourist sighseeing says we must contin. with this although I am

too nervous she is "sure" I'll have an answer, soon. Asks me about this I explaine I am a communist. ect. She is politely sym. but uneasy now. She tries to be a friend to me. She feels sorry for me I am someth. new.

**SUN. OCT. 18.** My 20th birthday, we vist exhib. in morning and in the after noon the Lenin-Stalin tomb. She gives me a present book "IDEOT" by Dostoewski.

**OCT. 19.** Tourism. Am anxious since my visa is good for five days only and still no word from auth. about my request.

**OCT. 20.** Olga in the afternoon says Intourist was notified by the pass. \* visa depl. that they want to see me I am excited greatly by

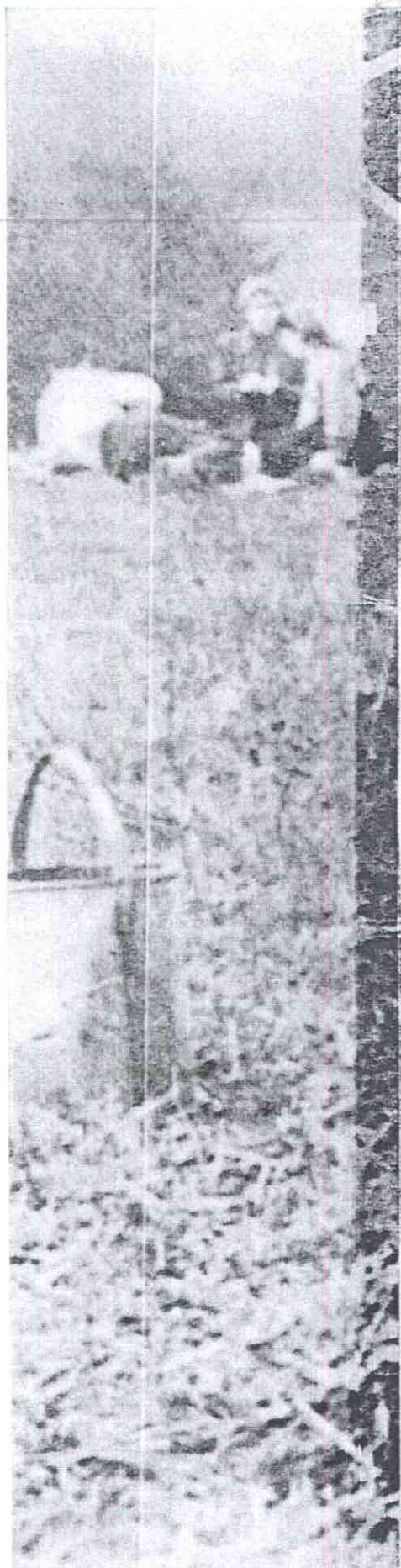
this news.

**OCT. 21.** (mor) Meeting with single offal. Balding stout, black suit fairly. good English, asks what do I want?; I say Sovite citizenship, he ask why I give vaunge answers about "great Soviet union" He tells me "USSR only great in literature wants me to go back home" I am studded I reiterate, he says he shall check and let me know weather my visa will be (extended it expiers today) Eve. 6.00 Recive word from police official. I must leave country tonight at 8.00 p.m. as visa expires I am shocked!! My dreams! I retire to my room. I have \$100. left. I have waited for 2 year to be accepted. My fondis dreams are shattered because of a petty offal; because of bad plan-

CONTINUED







**FAMILY OUTING.** On a warm day in Minsk in 1962, Lee Oswald and his wife Marina (*right*) pose in country

# DIARY'—AND IT IS

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with her Uncle Vasilii Khritinin and Aunt Labov Axelrova. It was early spring and Marina remembers that

the countryside seemed more drab than usual on this occasion. She also feels that she did not look her best.

**PICNIC CHEF.** While friends of Oswald (*left, background*) relaxed on the grass outside Minsk, he started a

fire to begin a cookout, Russian-style. This picture was taken several weeks before Oswald met Marina.







ning, I planned so much! 7.00 p.m. I decide to end it. Soak rist in cold water to numb the pain. Than slash my left wrist. Than plaug wrist into bathtum of hot water. I think "when Olga comes at 8. to find me dead it wil be a great shock. Some where, a violin plays, as I wacth my life whirl away. I think to myself. How easy to die" and "a sweet death, (to violins) about 8.00 Olga finds me unconcious (bathtub water a rich red color) she screams (I remember that) and runs for help. Amulance comes, am taken to hospital where five stiches [writing unclear, probably "are put"] in my wrist. Poor Olga stays by my side as interrptor my Russian is still very bad) far into the night, I tell her go home" (my mood is bad) but she stays, she is "my friend" she has a strong will only at this moment I notice she is preety.

**OCT. 22.** Hospital I am in a small room with about 12 others sick persons.) 2 ordalies and a nurse the room is very drab as well as the breakfast. Only after prolonged (2 hours) observation of the other pat. do I realize I am in the insanity ward. This relization disquits me. Later in afternoon I am visited by Olga, she comes in with two doctors. As intern she must ask me medical question; did you know what you were doing? Ans. Yes Did you black out? No. ect. I than comp. about poor food the doctors laugh app. this is a good sign later they leave, I am alone with Olga (amongst the mentaly ill) She encourgest me and scolls me. She says she will help me me get transfered to another section of hos. (not for insane) where food is good.

**OCT. 23.** Transfered to ordinary ward, (airy, good food,) but nurses suspious of me. (They know). Afternoon I am visited by Katerina of the hotel tourist office, who asks about my health, very beautiful, excelant Eng., very merry

and kind, she makes me very glad to be alive. Later Olga vists

**OCT. 24.** Hospital routine, Olga vists me in afternoon

**OCT. 25.** Hospital routine, Olga vists me in afternoon

**OCT. 26** An elderly American at the hospital grow suspious about me for some reason. [Word unclear, probably "perhaps"] because at embassy I told him I had not registered as most tourist and I am in general evasive about my presence in Moscow and at hospital. Afternoon Olga vists.

**OCT. 27.** Stiches are taken out by doctor with "dull" scisor

**OCT. 28** (mor) Leave hospital in Intorist car. with Olga for Hotel "Berlin", later I change hotels to "Metropole", all cloths packed, and money from my room (to the last kopeek) returned as well as watch, ring. Vera (Intorist office head) and Katerina invite me to come and sit and take with them any time. I get lonesome at new hotel. They feel sorry for me. Olga notifies me that. pass\* registration office wishes to see me about my future. Later Olga and car pick me up and we enter the officies to find four offials waiting for me (all unknown to me) they ask how my arm is, I say O.K. They ask "Do you want to go to your homeland. I say no I want Sovite citizen I say I want to reside in the Soviet Union. They say they will see about that. Than they ask me about the lone offial with whom I spoke in the first place (Aprar. he did not pass along my request at all but thought to simply get rid of me by not extending my Soviet visa at the time I requested it) I desqribe him (they make notes) (what papers do you have to show who and what you are? I give them my dischare papers from the Ma-

rine Corps. They say wait for our ans. I ask how long? Not soon. Later Olga comes to check on me. I feel insulted and insult her. **OCT. 29.** Hotel room 214 Metropole Hotel. I wait. I worry I eat once, stay next to phone worry I keep fully dressed

**OCT. 30.** Hotel room I have been in hotel three days, if seems like three years I must have some sort of a showdown!

**OCT. 31.** I make my dision. Getting passport a 12:00 I meet and talk with Olga for a few minutes she says; stay in your room and eat well, I don't tell her about what I intend to do since I know she would not approve. After she leaves I wait a few minutes and than I catch a taxi. "American Embassy" I say. 12:30, I arrive American Embassy, I walk in and say to the receptionist "I would like to see the consular" She points at a large lager and says "If you are a tourist please register". I take out my American passport and lay it on the desk, I have come to dissolve my American citizenship. I say matter-of-factly she rises and enters the office of Richard Snyder American head consular in Moscow at that time. He invites me to sit down. He finishes a letter he is typing and than ask what he can do for me. I tell him I have decided to take Soviet citizenship and would like to leagly dissolve my U.S. citizenship. His assitant (now head consular) McVickers looks up from his work. Snyder takes down personall Information, ask questions, warnes me not to take any steps before the soviets except me, says I am a "fool," and says the dissolution papers are



along time in preparing (In other words refuses to allow me at that time to dissolve U.S. citiz. I state "my mind is make up" from this day forward I consider myself no citizen of the U.S.A. I spend 40 minutes at the Embassy before Snyder says "now unless you wish to expound on your Maxist belifes you can go." I wish to dissolve U.S. citiz., not today he says in effect. I leave Embassy, elated at this showdown, returning to my hotel I feel now my enorgies are not spent in vain. I'm sure Russians will except me after this sign of my faith in them. 2:00 A knock. A reporter by the name of Goldstone wants an interview I'm flabergassed "How did you find out? The Embassy called us." he said. I send him away I sit and relize this is one way to bring pressure on me. By notifying my relations in U.S. through the newspapers. Although they would say "ifs for the public record." A half hour later another reporter Miss Mosby comes. I ansewer a few quick questions after refusing an interview. I am surprised at the interest. I get phone calls from "Time" at night a phone call from the States I refuse all calls without finding out who's it from. I feel non-deplused because of the attention 10:00 retire.

**NOV. 1**—More reporters, 3 phone calls from brother \* mother. Now I feel slightly axzillated, not so lonely.

**NOV. 2-15** Days of utter loneliness I refuse all reports phone calls I remaine in my room, I am racked with dysentary.

**NOV 15**—I decide to give an interview, I have Miss Mosbys card

so I call her. She drives right over-I give my story, allow pictures, later story is distorted, sent without my permission, that is: before I ever saw and O.K.'ed her story. Again I feel slightly better because of the attention

**NOV. 16.** A Russian official comes to my room askes how I am. Notifies me I can remain in USSR till some solution in found with what to do with me, it is comforting news. For me.

**NOV 17-DEC. 30** I have bought myself two self-teaching Russian an. books I force myself to study 8 hours a day I sit in my room and read and memorize words. All meals I take in my room. Olga arranged that. It is very cold on the streets so I rarley go outside at all for this month and a-half I see no-one speak to no-one accept everynow-and-then Olga, who calls the ministry about me. Have they forgotten? During Decemember I paid no money to the hotel, but Olga told hotel I was expecting a lot of money from U.S.A. I have 28. left. This month I was called to the passport office and met 3 new officials who asked me the same questions I ans. a month before. They appear not to know me at all.

**DEC 31.** New Years Eve, I spend in the company of Katerina at the Hotel Berlin, she has the duty. I sit with her untill past mignight, She gives me a small "Boratin," clown, for a New Years present she is very nice I fonud out only recently she is married, has small son who was born crippled; that is why she is so strangly tender

and compeling.

**JAN 1 - 4** No change in routine

**JAN 4.** I am called to passport office and finilly given a Soviet document not the Soviet citizenship as I so wanted, only a Residence document, not even for foringners, but a paper called "for those without citizenship". Still I am happy. The offial says they are sending me to the city of "Minsk" I ask "is that in Siberia? He only laughs; he also tells me that they have arranged for me to recive some money though the Red cross to pay my hotel bills and expensis. I thank the gentelmen and leave later in the afternoon I see Olga "she asks are you happy" "yes"

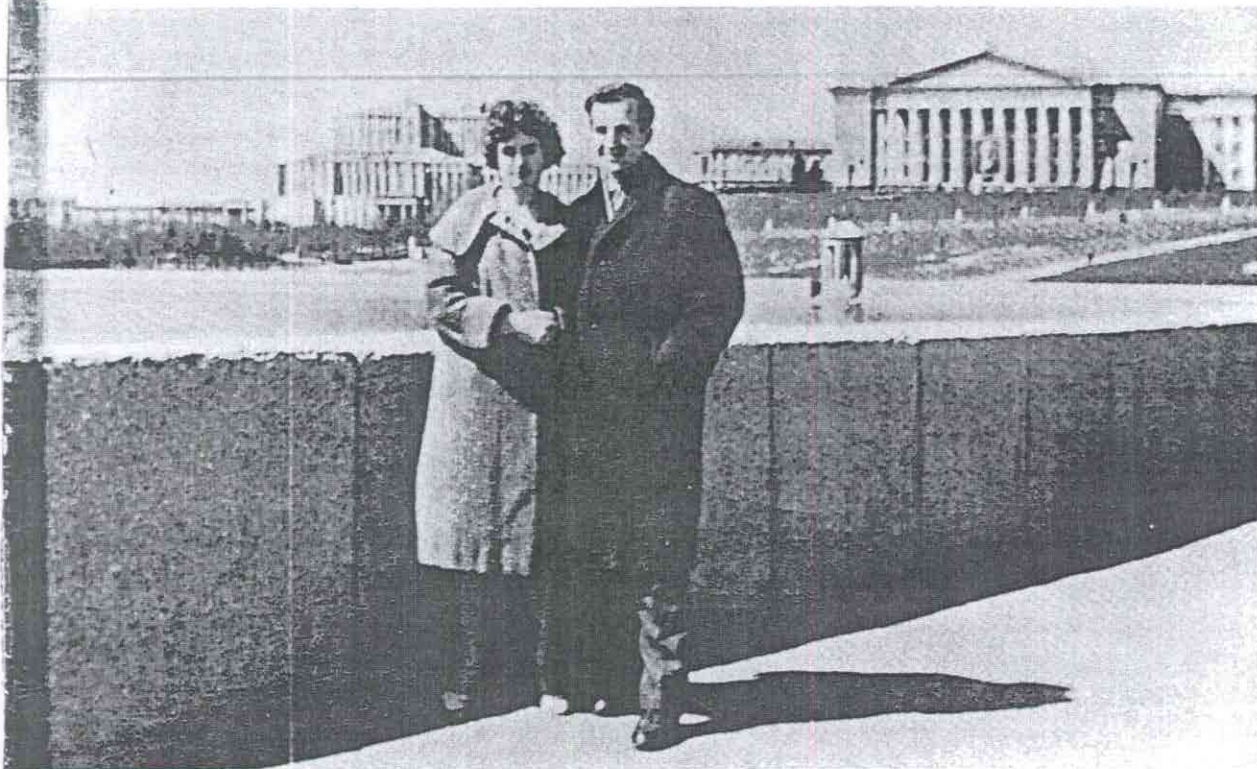
**JAN. 5.** I go to Red Cross in Moscow for money with interrupter (a new one) I-recive 5000. rubles a huge sum!! Later in Minsk I am to earn 70 rubles a month at the factory.

**JAN. 7.** I leave Moscow by train for Minsk, Belorussia. My hotel bill was 2200. rubles and the train ticket to Minsk 150. rubles so I have a lot of money \* hope. I wrote my brother \* mother letters in which I said "I do not wish to every contact you again." I am begining a new life and I don't want *any part* of the old."

**JAN. 7.** Arrive in Minsk, met by 2 women Red Cross workers we go to Hotel "Minsk." I take room, and meet Tamara and Valentina two persons from intourist in hotel who speak English Valentina is in 40's nice married young child, Tamara about 23 blond attractive unmarried excellant English, we attract each other at once.



# AS I WATCH MY LIFE WHIRL AWAY



(LOWT)

**JAN 8.** I meet the city mayor, comrade Shrapof, who welcomes me to Minsk promis a rent-free apartment "soon" and warns me about "uncultured persons" who somethimes insult foriengress. My interputer: Aleksei. Head For. Tech Instit. next door.

**JAN. 10.** The day to myself I walk through city, very nice.

**JAN. 12** I vist Minsk Radio factory where I shall work. There I meet Andrei B., late 40's mild mannered likable he seems to want to tell me somet. I show hin my tempor. docu. and say soon I shall have Russ. Citiz.

**JAN. 13-16** I work as a "checker" metal worker, pay: 700 rubles a month. Work very easy. I am learning Russian quickly. Now everyone is very freindly and kind. I meet many young Russian workers my own age they have varied perso-

natities all wish to know about me even offer to hold a mass meeting so I can say. I refuse polity. At night I take Tamara to the theater, movie or operor almost every day I'm living big and am very satisfied. I receive a check from the Red Cross every 5th of the month "to help." The check is 700 rubles. Therefore every month I make 1400. R. about the same as the director of the factory! Andrei observes me during this time I don't like: picture of Lenin which watches from its place of honour and phy. traning at 11.-11.10 each morning (complusery). For all. (Shades of H.G. Wells!!)

**MARCH 16.** I recive a small flat one-room kieten-bath near the factory (8 min. walk) with splendid

were home.

view from 2 balconies of the river. Almost rent free (60. rub a mon.) It is a Russians dream.

**MARCH 17 - APRIL 31.** - Work. I have lost contact with Tamara after my house moving. I meet Vladimir G. A yonuge man my age friendly very intelligent a exalant radio tehnicion his father is Gen. G. twice hero of USSR in W.W.2.

**MAY 1**—May Day came as my first holiday all factories ect. closed after sptacular military parade all workers parad past reviewing stand waving flags and pictures of Mr. K. ect. I follow the Amer. custom of marking a holiday by sleeping in in the morning. At night I vist with Andrei's daughters at an party thron by them about 40 people come many of Argentine origen we dance and play around and drink until 2 AM. when party breaks up. Natasha oldest dau. 26 formally married, now divorced, a talanted singer. Galina 20 very gay, not so attractive but we hit it off.







my being an american in order to get the envy of the other girls who consider me different from the Russian Boys. I AM MISARABLE!  
**JAN 3.** I am misarable about Anna. I love her but what can I do? It is the state of fear which was always in the Soviet Union.

**JAN. 4.** One year after I received the residence document I am called in to the passport office and asked if I want citizenship (Russian) I say no simply extend my residential passport to agree and my document is extended until Jan 4. 1962.

**JAN-4-31** I am stating to reconsider my disire about staying The work is drab the money I get has nowhere to be spent. No night-clubs or bowling allys no places of recreation except the trade union dances I have have had enough.

**FEB. 1.** I mail my first request to American Embassy, Moscow for reconsidering my position, I stated "I would like to go back to U.S!"

**FEB. 28** - I recive letter from Embassy. Richard E. Snyder stated "I could come in for an interview any time I wanted."

**MARCH 1-16** I now live in a state of expectation about going back to the U.S. I confided with Andrei he supports my judgement but warnes me not to tell any Russians about my desire to reture. I understand now why.

**MARCH 17** - I and Ivan went to trade union dance. Boring but at the last hour I am introduced to a girl with a French hair-do and red-dress with white slippers I dance with her. Than ask to show her home I do, along with 5 other admirares Her name is Marina. We like each other right away she gives me her phone number and departs home with an not-so-new freiend in a taxi, I walk home.

**MARCH-18-31**- We walk I talk a little about myself she talks alot about herself. Her name is Marina N. Pruskova.

**APRIL-1-30** We are going steady and I decide I must have her, she puts me off so on April 15 I propose, she accepts.

**APRIL 31,** After a 7 day delay at the marrriage beaure because of my unusual passport they allow us to registra as man \* wife two of Marinas girl friends act as brides-

maids. We are married. At her aunts home we have a dinner reception for about 20 friends and neighbors who wish us happiness (in spite of my origin and accept) which was in general rather disquiting to any Russian since for. are very rare in the soviet union even torrist. After a evening of eating and drinking in which uncle Mooser started a fight and the fuse blow on an overloaded circite we take our leave and walk the 15 minutes to our home. We lived near each other. At midnight we were home.

**1ST-MAY DAY 1961.** Found us thinking about our future. In spite of fact I married Marina to hurt Anna I found myself in love with Marina.

**MAY.** - The trasistion of changing full love from Anna to Marina was very painfull esp. as I saw Anna almost every day at the factory but as the days \* weeks went by I adjusted more and more my wife mentaly. I still hade'nt told my wife of my desire to return to U.S. She is maddly in love with me from the very start. Boat rides on Lake Minsk walks through the parks evening at home or at aunt Valia's place, mark May

**JUNE** - A continuenec of May, except that; we draw closer and closer, and I think very little now of Anna. In the last days of this month I revele my longing to return to America. My wife is slightly startled. But than encourages me to do what I wish to do.

**JULY** - I decided to take my two week vactition and travel to Moscow (without police permission) to the American Embassy to see about geting my U.S. passport back and make arrangements for my wife to enter the U.S. with me.

**JULY 8** - I fly by plane to [he means "from"] Minsk on a IL-20, 2 hrs. 20 m. Later after taking a tearful and anxiou parting from my wife I arrive in Moscow departing by bus from the airfield I arrive in the center of the city. Making my way through heavy traffic I don't come in sight of the Embassy until 2:00 in the afternoon. Its Saturday what if they are closed? Entering I find the offices

empty but mange to contact Snyder on the phone (since all Embassy personal live in the same buiding) he comes down to greet me shake my hand after interview, he advises me to come in first thing Mon.

(see - July 8-13.)

**JULY 8.** Interview July-9 recive passport, call Maria to Moscow also.

**JULY 14.** I and Marina returen to Minsk.

**JULY 15.** Marina at work, is shocked to find out they everyone knows she entered the U.S. embassy. They were called at her place of work from some official in Moscow! The bosses hold a meeting and give her a strong browbeating. The first of many indocrinations.

**JULY 15 - AUG 20.** We have found out which blanks and certifikats are nessceary to apply for a exit visa they number about 20 papers; birth

## 'I REVELE

certificates affdavite photos ect. on Aug 20th we give the papers out they say it will be 3½ months before we know wheather theyll let us go or not. In the meantime Marina has had to stade 4 differant meeting at the place of work held by her boss's at the direction of "someone" by phone. The young comm. leauge headquarters also called about her and she had to go see them for 1½ hrs. The purpose (expressed) is to disauade her from going to the U.S.A., net effect: make her more stubborn about wanting to go. Maria is pregnet. We only hope that the visas come through soon.

**AUG 21 - SEPT 1** - I make repeated trips to the passport \* visa office also to ministry of for. affairs in Minsk, also min. of Interl Affairs, all of which have a say in the granting of a visa. I extrakted promises of quick attention to U.S.



**WIFE AND CHILD.** En route to the U.S. 18 months before her husband assassinated President Kennedy, Marina Oswald paused in Poland to quiet their daughter, June, with a pacifier





# MY LONGING TO RETURN TO AMERICA

(LOW T)

LIFE - 7/10

**SEPT-OCT** [seems to be "28"]. No word from min. ("they'll call us.") Marina leaves Minsk by train on vacation to the city of Khrkov in the Urals to visit an aunt for [seems to be "7"] weeks. During this time I am lonely but I and Ivan go to the dances and public places for entertainment. I haven't done this in quite a few months now. I spend my birthday alone at the opera watching my favorite "Queen of Spades." I am 22 years old.

**NOV. 12** Marina arrives back, radiant, with several jars of preserves for me from her aunt in Khrkov.

**NOV-DEC.** Now we are becoming anxious about the delay Marina is beginning to waiver about going to the U.S. Probably from the strain and her being pregnant, still we quarrel and so things are not to bright esp. with the approach of the hard Russian winter.

**DEC 25th XMAS DAY Tues.** Marina is called to the passport \* visa office. She is told we have been granted Soviet exit visa's. She fills out the completing blank and than comes home with the news. Its great (I think?) New Years, we spend at the B's at a dinner party at midnight. Attended by 6 other persons.

**JAN. 4.** I am called to the passport office since my residence passport expires today. Since I now have a U.S. passport in my possition I am given a totly new resid. pass. called "Pass. For Forin." And since they have given us permission to leave, and know we shall, [word unclear, probably "good"] to July 5, 1962.

**JAN 15-FEB. 15.** Days of cold Russian winter. But we feel fine. Marina is supposed to have baby on March 1st.

**FEB. 15-** Dawn, Marina wakes me. It's her time. At 9:00 we arrive at the hospital I leave her in care of nurses and leave to go to work. 10:00 Marina has a baby girl. When I visit the hospital at 500 after work, I am given news. We both wanted a boy. Marina feels well, baby girl, O.K.

**FEB. 23** Maria leaves hospital I see June for first time.

**FEB. 28** I go to registra (as prescribed by law) the baby. I want her name to be June Marina Oswald. But those beaurocrats say her middle name must be the same as my first. A Russian custom support by a law. I refuse to have her name written as "June Lee." They promise to call the city ministry (city hall) and find out in this case since I do have an U.S. passport.

**FEB. 29.** I am told that nobody knows what to do exactly. But everyone agrees "go ahead and do it, "po-russki". Name: June Lee.

**MARCH.** The last commuques are exchanged between myself and Em-bassy. letters are always arriving from my mother and brother in the U.S. I have still not told Ivan who is my oldest existing aquatiance, that we are going to the state, he's O.K. But I'm afraid he is too good a young Communist League member so "I'll wait till last min."

**MARCH** [seems to be "24"] - Marina quits her job in the formal fashion.

**MARCH** [seems to be "26"] - I receive a letter from Immigration Natur. Service at San Antonio, Texas, that Marina has had her visa petition to the U.S. (approved!!) the last document. Now we only have to wait for the U.S. Embassey to receive their copy of the approval so they can officially give the go ahead.

**MARCH** [seems to be "27"] I receive a letter from a Mr. Phillips (a employ. of my mother, pledging to support my wife in case of need).

END