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Lee Harvey Oswald Certainly Was Far From a Crackpot!

BY HENRY V. FELLOW

NEW ORLEANS — William Manchester's book, "The Death of a President," like most of the coverage of the Dallas horror, deals with the martyrdom. But what about the man? Our public's picture of the man remains so utterly confused that millions even think of Lee Harvey Oswald as a crackpot.

Moreover, New Orleans—not Dallas—is the place to find the truth. Oswald was born here and grew up here and this was the scene of his life. Dallas was only his denouement.

New Orleans Chief of Police Joseph I. Giarrusso, who reopened for me Oswald's arrest file here, stated: "Anybody who calls Lee Oswald a crackpot simply does not know the truth. Sometimes I think the public has been brainwashed about him."



Born of a New Orleans mother and father, Oswald used an alias here. It was "David Hidell." He said he chose it to rhyme with Fidel," Thomas A. Drake, director of the Police Intelligence Division, told me. This was the same alias Oswald ultimately used to purchase the assassination weapon. He sailed from New Orleans for Russia on Sept. 20, 1959, aboard the SS Marine Doria. Oswald, five feet

...eyed, brown-haired, ruddy and slender (the official New Orleans Police Department description under the Bureau of Identification docket No. 112-723) took off for the U.S.S.R. only 11 days after being released from active duty in his Marine Corps control squadron.

He was soon to write his brother Robert, from Moscow: "In the event of war I would kill any American who put a uniform on in defense of the American government — any American."

Oswald stated to Travel Consultants, Inc., a travel bureau, that he was leaving the country on a two-months pleasure trip. He presented U.S. passport No. 1733242, dated Sept. 10, a forged smallpox vaccination certificate signed by Dr. A. J. Hidell, P.O. Box 30061, New Orleans, La., and paid the firm \$220.75 for a ticket. It read to Le Havre, France, and New Orleans immigration officers counted only four passengers aboard the ship.

Oswald disembarked at Le Havre Oct. 8, left for England that same day and reached London Oct. 9. He claimed to Southampton customs officials that he was en route to the Albert Schweitzer College of Chuswalden, Switzerland, and carried a valid registration receipt from the college for \$25. But, within hours, Oswald flew to Helsinki, Finland.

The Russian consulate there gave him a visa (No. 40339) and he crossed the frontier at Vainikkala. Oswald arrived in Moscow October 16, and immediately declared his defection to the U.S.S.R. He attempted to renounce his U.S. citizenship to American Embassy Second Secretary Richard E. Snyder on Oct. 21. When Oswald returned to New Orleans with his Russian wife (April 24, 1963, seven months before the Dallas assassination), Police Chief Giarrusso credits New Orleans surgeon Alton Ochsner with being the first man to uncover Oswald's past Communist activities. Dr. Ochsner, surgeon and head of the Ochsner

Medical Clinic, where I went to see him, is a world-traveler constantly to the Surgeon General of the U.S. Air Force on the medical side of subversive matters.

An important and widely ignored point about "crackpot" Oswald is that nothing in his Marine medical record, after his childhood, finds him mentally unstable or otherwise psychologically unfit. But Dr. Ochsner's firsthand impressions of Oswald's ideological pitch proved completely valid and led to a statement by Oswald to Police Lt. Francis L. Martello that "I refuse to speak English in my family because I do not want them to become Americanized."

This slip put Cuban exile expert Carlos Bringuier and Edward S. Butler, executive vice-president of New Orleans' Information Council of the Americas, on Oswald's trail even before Oswald picketed the USS Wasp (June 16) at the Dumaine Street wharf.

These are the two men who confronted Oswald in his Aug. 21 radio debate over Station WDSU, less than 100 days before the assassination. I found them utterly mystified and deeply concerned over the widespread whitewash of Oswald as a "crackpot."

It makes you wonder whether the whole country hasn't gone crazy," said Director Drake, "when you see that kind of thing in print."

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