

Chapter Six

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Marina---The Commission's Star Witness

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"If, as I hope, [the Sultan] grants me my wish, be sure that you wake me before the dawn, and speak to me these words: 'My sister, if you are not asleep, I beg you, before the sun rises, to tell me one of your charming stories.' Then I shall begin, and I hope by this means to deliver the people from the terror that reigns over them."

Scheherazada to Dinarzade, *The Arabian Nights*

Tasking themselves with proving that Oswald was the lone assassin when not a single believable witness saw him in the "sniper's nest" at the time of the shooting or in the TSBDB with a smoking rifle confronted the Commission with no small problem. It had to construct a convincing case to bridge the gap from allegation to verification. Or, as Rankin summarized the Commission's task, "to tell the story and to show why it is reasonable to assume that he did what the Commission concludes that he did do." ¹

To avoid suspicions that it was building conjectural castles in the air the Commission turned to Marina N. Oswald, the alleged assassin's widow. She was the Commission's first witness. As for the Dealey Plaza shooting Marina was a witness to nothing. She was at home in Irving, a suburb of Dallas, some 15 miles away when the presidential motorcade was fired upon. Nevertheless, a cooperative Marina was indispensable to the Commission building a "reasonable" case against her husband. It was Marina and not the physical evidence that tied her dead husband to the attempt on General Walker's life. She was the only person who

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military rifle. The authorities counted on Oswald's Russian wife to throw light on her husband's mysterious Mexico trip. About one out of every ten hours the Commission spent with live witnesses was devoted to Marina Oswald. For ten months the Secret Service and then increasingly the FBI spent hundreds of hours interrogating this Russian expatriate who spoke little or no English. For a time the FBI placed her under physical and electronic surveillance.²

On 22 November 1963 Marina Nikilaevna's world was turned upside down. Life with her self-absorbed husband who moved in and out of his own fantasy world was never smooth and predictable. When it was reported that Lee was charged with assassinating President Kennedy she was suddenly a woman without a country. Suddenly her husband was America's Number One villain who had killed the president and shot to death a Dallas policeman. Marina had no reason to believe she would be welcome in her own country. The truth was she did not want to return to the Soviet Union. Yet, she had lied to the U.S. government to gain access to this country and these untruths made her eligible for automatic expulsion if the authorities decided to send her packing. Marina was twenty-two-years old in November 1963 with two children under two years of age and her life was suddenly adrift, she had no control over her fate and that of her infant daughters.³

For the next three months her life oscillated wildly between two extremes: American Nightmare and American Dream. For almost 90 days she was under a regime of protective custody and subjected to intensive grilling by the Secret Service and the FBI. Her interrogators made it clear that if she wished to stay in America she would have to cooperate. Government officials were not very subtle about this proffered quid pro

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quo: Marina would tell them what they wanted to hear or she and her family would be deported to the Soviet Union.

While officialdom menaced Oswald's widow, the American people showered her with sympathy and financial support. For example, letters poured into the Dallas FBI field office with checks made out to Marina, mostly in modest denominations, with words of support and assurances that no one held her responsible for her husband's heinous crimes. The Presbyterian Church of Chicago urged that all churches take up a collection for the distraught widow. By 6 December 1963 there was an "Oswald Trust Fund" opened in Dallas to hold the flood of voluntary donations. Over the next months the \$25,000 in the trust fund grew to almost \$75,000 some of this increase came from *Life* magazine for the right to publish excerpts from Lee's diary and a picture of the ex-Marine holding the "assassination rifle." This outpouring of emotion and largesse not only made Marina a wealthy woman and, in time, tempered the government's treatment of this attractive young widow thrust into the public spotlight.⁴

For the first three months after the assassination Marina and her children were held in protective custody by the Secret Service in Arlington, Texas, at the Inn of the Six Flags Motel. They were transported there the day Lee died from a gunshot wound inflicted by Jack Ruby. The Secret Service knew that her husband had been shot but tried to keep this information from her. Secret Service Inspector Thomas J. Kelley gave a totally misleading account of the move to Arlington and Marina Oswald's first experience with government officials to the Warren Commission. In contrast to Kelley's benign account, immediately after the family was settled, Secret Service Agents Charles E. Kunkel and James F. ("Mike") Howard began grilling Marina who had just left the

hospital where she had to identify the body of her dead husband. The transcript of the interrogation is 45-pages long. The fact that the questions and answers had to be filtered through a translator, meant that the length of the transcript was not a true indicator of the time Marina had to put her grieving on hold while she confronted her interrogators. This uncalled for and unconscionable treatment could only have terrorized this Russian expatriate who harbored a deep dread of all police and government agents, was cut off from her few friends, and was denied counsel. Marina was abused by government agents on the day her husband was murdered; shot to death while he was under the control of the authorities. Marina had to wonder if she would ever wake from this nightmare.⁵

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James P. Hosty*

On the day of the assassination the FBI tried to get Marina to identify the alleged murder weapon as the rifle owned by her husband. She was no help. Totally bewildered and distrustful of the FBI, she was probably not being deceptive when she could not make a positive identification, telling the agents that all guns looked alike to her. The following day she refused to be interviewed. The next day, November 26, FBI agents Charles T. Brown and James P. Hosty, Jr., showed up at Marina's cottage at Six Flags Motel to interview her. She refused to answer any of their questions, explaining that she had told the Secret Service everything she knew. She made it clear she was hostile because she felt the FBI had Lee fired from every job he ever had. Hosty and Brown returned the next day and Marina proved no more cooperative. The agents stressed that remaining in the country and finding employment was conditioned upon her cooperating with the government. While Marina did not back down she did give way to her emotions with an outburst, "I swear before God Lee did not intend to kill the President." She then asked the agents to leave.⁶



At this point Assistant Director William C. Sullivan, the head of the FBI's Domestic Intelligence Division, took control over Marina's interrogation. Sullivan arranged through the cooperation of James Rowley, the head of the Secret Service, to allow the FBI to go one-on-one with Marina without the Secret Service in the background. Inspector Kelley even promised to "kick the mother [Marguerite] loose" to assure that Marina would be totally isolated.⁷ On November 28 FBIHQ arranged for a U.S. Air Force plane to fly Fred Harvey of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) from the Washington office and FBI Russian language specialist Anatole A. Boguslav to Dallas. They were to team up with Dallas agent Wallace R. Heitman, the Dallas field office's top "Red" expert, who would do the questioning. This entire operation was ultra-hush-hush, "the Dallas agents" involved were "to be cautioned to keep their mouths shut"⁸

Sullivan furnished Heitman with three pages of questions for Marina and some advice on how to handle the subject. Leaving nothing to chance, the assistant director telephoned Heitman to make sure he fully understood the gravity of the assignment. Aware that Marina feared and distrusted the FBI, Sullivan advised Heitman to take the " 'con man' approach---to win her over. Do not start out cold interrogating her." He suggested Heitman begin by showing some compassion about her plight and ask about the children and how they were bearing up. In time, over the hundreds of hours the FBI spent questioning Marina, Heitman doing most of the interviewing, while she was never totally at ease, Marina developed a liking for the agent. Heitman, out of calculation, or genuine feelings of sympathy that grew out of the many contact hours spent with Marina, began treating her like his own daughter.⁹

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Of the list of questions Sullivan prepared for Heitman the area that loomed most important was Oswald's eight-day trip to Mexico. The Mexico business was the chief reason why FBIHQ ordered the initial interviews be handled with extreme discretion and tightly contained among the FBI team sent to Dallas to "bear down" on her. Sullivan was tasked with the heavy responsibility of finding out what Marina knew of Oswald's meeting with Soviet Embassy official Valery V. Kostikov and whether her husband was in Mexico City on September 18, 1963, where a Nicaraguan intelligence agent claimed he saw him being paid to assassinate President Kennedy. At the time Sullivan was setting up the initial Arlington, Texas, interviews with Marina the FBI was still running out all its lines of inquiry into these Mexico City allegations. FBIHQ wanted to squeeze Marina for anything she knew about the reported September 18 "payoff" and whether her husband had any dealings with Soviet intelligence while he was in Mexico. It was during her November twenty-eighth interrogation that Marina disclosed that Lee was with her in New Orleans from May until September 24 when Ruth Paine helped her move to Dallas.

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This information confirmed Hoover's original suspicions that the Alvarado story was a hoax.¹⁰

Here I am writing "Breach" pages for all the true Alvarado affair

The combination of Marina's strong survival instincts, her desperation, and Sullivan's assembled special team began to make some inroads into the stalemated situation. The FBI report on the November 28 interview noted that INS agent Harvey made a favorable impression on the wary and reluctant Marina. He guaranteed her residence in the United States and eventual citizenship if she cooperated fully with the government authorities.¹¹

Do I need to elaborate on Harvey's confrontation of Marina

Marina presented a more nuanced version of her exchange with Harvey when she made her first appearance with a translator before the Warren Commission:

Rankin. What did he say to you?

Mrs. Oswald. That if I was not guilty of anything, if I had not committed any crime against this Government, then I had every right to live in this country. This was the type of introduction before the questioning by the FBI. He said that it would be better for me if I would help them.

Rankin. Did you understand that you were being threatened with deportation if you didn't answer these questions?

Mrs. Oswald. No, I did not understand it that way. You see, it was presented in such a delicate form, but there was a clear implication that it would be better if I helped.

Rankin. Did anyone indicate that it would affect your ability to work in this country if you cooperated?

Mrs. Oswald. Excuse me. No.

Rankin. Is there anything else about your treatment by law enforcement officials during this period that you would like to tell the Commission about?

Mrs. Oswald. I think the FBI agents knew that I was afraid that after everything that had happened I could not remain to live in this country, and they somewhat exploited that for their own purposes, in a very polite form, so that you could not say anything after that. They cannot be accused of anything. They approached it in a very clever, contrived way.

There is no way of knowing from either the FBI report or Marina's Commission testimony whether Harvey raised the issue of her lying to get into the country. At the age of eighteen she was employed at the Clinical Hospital in Minsk. In order to hold down the job it was necessary that she become a Komsomol member, that is, a member of the Communist Youth League. Marina had no interest in politics and never bothered to pick up her membership card. But when she filed her papers for entry into the United States she failed to report her Komsomol membership. As mentioned ^{above} before, these were grounds for automatic expulsion had the government chose to exercise this option. There

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is nothing in any released documents to indicate whether Harvey or the FBI brought this up at the November 28 interview. Harvey was never deposed, asked for a statement, or called as a Commission witness. But Harvey's presence at the November 28 interview, and the fact that the FBI made it clear to Marina that he was especially brought in from Washington, had to weigh heavy on her mind.¹²

Marina lying

Once Marina realized she had to submit to FBI questioning she began spinning her interrogators. Like a modern-day Scheherazade, she related story after story as though her very life was at stake. In her first interview with Heitman, Marina told him that Lee had never been to Mexico. Later, confronted with her lie, she blushed, admitted the falsehood, explaining she despised the FBI and wanted to save something to tell the Commission. When she first appeared before the Commission Marina told Rankin she would conceal nothing now that she was under oath. "I will not," she assured the chief counsel, "be charged with anything." The interpreter clarified: "... as she is sworn in, she is going to tell the truth."¹³ Tripped up on her lie about Lee and Mexico, Marina salvaged some credibility when she told the FBI that on September 18 her husband was with the family in New Orleans and could not have been in Mexico City. The FBI followed up her story and found it faithful to the facts. With meticulous investigative work the FBI discovered that Oswald cashed an unemployment check in New Orleans on September 26, the day he left for Mexico City. That satisfied FBIHQ that the allegation Oswald received several thousands of dollars from a Cuban national outside the Cuban Consulate on September 18 was totally bogus. The FBI never found reason to question Marina's claim that Lee took about \$170.00 with him to Mexico and had \$70 when he

Washed this the truth

Alvarado story a lie

Mexico City story was never in Mexico

returned. The day Marina was widowed her worldly estate was under \$200; three days later she was without any funds.¹⁴

The Commission needed Marina to help it make a case that Lee Oswald was proficient with a rifle; that the alleged assassination weapon belonged to her husband; and provide convincing testimony that he was the assailant who took a shot at General Walker.

On the day of the assassination she told the FBI she knew Lee had a rifle and that it was kept in the garage at Ruth Paine's home in Irving where she and the children were staying. Five days later she told her Secret Service and FBI interrogators that she never saw Lee with a rifle. Less than a week later Marina admitted to Heitman that she took the photograph of Lee packing a revolver and holding a rifle in one hand and a copy of *The Militant*, the organ of the American Socialist Workers' party, in the other.¹⁵

According to the Commission's records Marina went through 46 FBI interviews. When the questioning turned to her husband's rifle she was always indefinite, never able to positively identify the Mannlicher-Carcano as the weapon Lee had in their home in New Orleans, Dallas, or in the Paine's garage in Irving. She could not explain to her FBI interrogators how the rifle was returned from New Orleans to Dallas. Lee did not accompany Marina and Ruth Paine after they loaded up Mrs. Paine's 1955 Chevy station wagon and moved the Oswald household from New Orleans back to Dallas. Lee left New Orleans three days after the ^{alleged} move to go to Mexico. Lee and Ruth Paine did all the packing and loading of the car; Marina was pregnant and near her time. In her Commission testimony Mrs. Paine was certain she never saw any package that could have been holding a rifle. Since Lee traveled to Mexico City by bus there was no

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likelihood he somehow carried a rifle across the border and back again on public transport.

Moreover, the Commission had “fairly solid” testimony that the only luggage Oswald carried with him on his Mexico trip was a “small zipper bag,” one too small to carry a rifle, even if it was broken down. All Marina could tell Heitman was that the rifle somehow showed up wrapped in a blanket lying flat on the floor in the Paine’s garage. Ruth Paine was certain when she and her husband, Michael, unloaded the station wagon when they reached Irving none of the packages or bundles held a rifle. She told the Commission the first time she saw the blanket in her garage was in late October. The FBI was never able to solve the mystery of the transported rifle; and the Commission ignored it entirely. This was not an irrelevant or easily disposable complication because it raised the question of ownership and chain of possession of the alleged murder weapon. Mrs. Paine was definite in one respect: She never saw Lee Harvey Oswald handling a rifle during the three days in September when she was in New Orleans with the family or after they all resettled back in Dallas.¹⁶

During the Commission’s 30 April 1964 executive session the Commissioners spent a few minutes on the General Walker shooting. Rankin did a quick overview of what the Report would use to tie Oswald to the failed attempt on the general’s life. He mentioned the Dallas police report on the attack, neglecting to note that Oswald was never a suspect. The FBI, on the other hand, Rankin reminded his colleagues, conducted a more complete investigation, but they “never had anything they could work with from a ballistics standpoint.” McCloy was quick to come up with the saving stopgap: “We have

Walker shooting

had Marina's testimony." Marina was their star witness, their rod and their staff, and she did comfort them on the Walker shooting.¹⁷

Marina told the FBI and then gave the Commission chapter and verse about Lee's abortive attempt on the right-wing general. Prior to her interrogation by Heitman she said she never spoke of this to any one, including Ruth Paine. She related an elaborate story involving Lee's stalking the general, surreptitiously taking photographs of his quarry's home, burying his rifle in a field near Walker's residence, and secret rifle practice in the dead of night at Dallas's Love Field to hone his marksmanship skills for the task ahead.¹⁸ Marina's account perfectly complimented the Commission's profile of the man who single-handily planned and carried out the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.¹⁹

Nixon story

To the Walker shooting story, Marina added an elaborate and bizarre footnote, of sorts, about her husband's threat to shoot former Vice-President Richard M. Nixon. This story reached the FBI indirectly through Robert Oswald, Lee's brother, who learned about this incident from Marina and her business manager, James H. Martin, in early 1964. According to Marina, two weeks after the 10 April 1963 attempt on General Walker's life, Lee put on his good suit to hide the revolver he was carrying and told his wife that Nixon was coming to town and he was going to "have a look." Fearing the worse, Marina, who was pregnant at the time, coaxed him into the bathroom, whereupon she slipped out and held the door trapping her husband. Since the bathroom door locked from the inside, Marina, who weighed less than 100 pounds, braced her feet against the door and held it shut against her husband's threats and protestations. The struggle went on for about three minutes while Marina verbally whip lashed Lee, telling him that if she lost the baby it would be on his head. This brought him up short, according to Marina,

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and defused his rage. She then ordered him to hand over his gun, strip to his underwear, and stay in the bathroom until he regained his senses. Properly chastised and contrite, Lee asked for something to read and he remained closeted in the bathroom for the next two or three hours.²⁰

As the Commission's star witness, Marina Oswald's testimony was the most damaging in placing her dead husband in the frame for the murder of President Kennedy. It was Marina more than any other witness who provided the veneer of "reasonableness" (Rankin's desideratum) to the Commission's assumptions that her husband was the lone assailant in the Kennedy assassination. The towering irony here is that had Lee Harvey Oswald lived to go to trial the government would never have placed Marina on the witness stand because of the constitutional protection preventing one spouse from testifying against the other. And, I think it can safely be added, because it would have anticipated that defense attorneys would have had a field day demolishing her testimony.

It is also true that the Mrs. Lee Harvey Oswald of the Warren Commission Report was a sanitized version of the Marina whose false and ambiguous statements gave the Commission, its staff, and the FBI multiple migraines. Commission staffer Richard M. Mosk, tasked to help prepare the section of the report of Oswald's rifle skills, submitted an 18-page memo pointing out numerous false statements she made to the Commission and her FBI interviewers. The gravamen of the Mosk memo was there was virtually nothing that Marina reported about Lee and the rifle that could be taken at face value. Overall, Mosk could find no convincing evidence that Lee Oswald ever had a rifle in his hands after he left the Marines and returned from the Soviet Union. Mosk's memo galvanized Rankin to press the FBI for its report on the Walker shooting because

Marina's statements "just don't jibe" and her next appearance before the Commission was imminent.²¹

For Gerald R. Ford, Marina was the "most difficult" of the Commission's 552 witness. "A baffling personality," was Senator Russell's take on Marina; his reaction to her irritating habit of changing her testimony over the course of the Commission's three sessions with Oswald's widow. Assistant counsel Norman Redlich was at wits end with Marina after reviewing her Commission testimony. He sent off a heated memo to Rankin charging that she "lied to the Secret Service, FBI, and this commission repeatedly on matters which are of vital concern to the people of this country and the world."²²

In some cases where her accounts did "not jibe" the Commission engaged in its own dissembling and suppressed her contradictory stories from the official Commission Report that was released to the public. For example, Marina told the FBI and the Commission that after Lee's abortive attempt on General Walker's life he buried his rifle in a field far from Walker's home near some railroad tracks. She then recalled that Lee brought the rifle home on Sunday (4/14/'63) three days after he allegedly made his attempt on Walker. There was just one small problem with this story. Saturday (4/13) Mr. and Mrs. George DeMohrenschildt, close acquaintances from the Dallas White Russian community, visited the Oswalds. Jeanne DeMohrenschildt testified before the Commission that she spotted the rifle in the closet and this generated all sorts of awkward conversation about Lee's "practice" with the rifle, including his shooting at leaves in the park while walking the baby. Whether Marina had her dates confused or tripped herself up in her elaborate invention of the Walker shooting the Commission never bothered to unravel. In all the many hours the Commission had Marina under oath it never asked her

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"Here Hoffman's work cite it" with an arrow pointing to the sentence: "Jeanne DeMohrenschildt testified before the Commission that she spotted the rifle in the closet..."
"But when she is in a more accusatory way" with an arrow pointing to the sentence: "Whether Marina had her dates confused or tripped herself up in her elaborate invention of the Walker shooting the Commission never bothered to unravel..."

when Lee recovered his rifle after the alleged 10 April 1963 assassination attempt on the general.²³

As mentioned earlier, the FBI could not determine whether the slug taken from General Walker's home could have been fired from the alleged assassination rifle because of the mutilation of the bullet. In March FBI lab agents muddied the evidentiary waters even more around the Walker shooting with a report that spectrographic comparison between the lead alloy in the Walker slug and the lead alloy from a large fragment from the presidential limousine "did not compare". There was little comfort the FBI could take from this report unless it could prove that Oswald owned a second rifle or was using different ammunition in his presumed attempts on JFK and Walker. Otherwise, the spectrographic tests were exculpatory, the alleged presidential assassin was not the Walker sniper. Ivan W. Conrad, the assistant director of the FBI Crime Laboratory (BuLab) thought they might still tie Oswald to the Walker attempt if they could find bullets at any of the target ranges in and around the Dallas-Irving area where he practiced. Since Marina fed her FBI interrogators stories of Lee slipping off at night with the rifle to sharpen his skills, he thought Marina might provide some useful leads.²⁴

With the help of the Dallas-Irving police, the FBI checked on the gun clubs and questioned the owners and some patrons to see if they could identify Oswald with a rifle and scope that looked like C2766, the evidence tag number the Commission assigned to the Mannlicher-Carcano found on the sixth floor of the TSBD. The FBI search came up empty. It was reported to Rankin "every allegation made concerning Oswald's target practice was fully run out but in each instance the allegation proved to be unfounded." Mosk noted in his 18-page memo that the FBI failed to find anyone "who could identify

Oswald as having fired in the Love Field area or at a gun club in the area.” Additionally, according to Mosk, the owner of the one gun shop in the Dallas-Irving area that handled 6.5 mm Mannlicher-Carcano, Western Cartridge Company ammunition, identical to the round left in the chamber of C2766 found secreted away on the sixth floor of the TSBDB, swore that Oswald never patronized his business.²⁵

Ultimately, the Commission was forced to go to tendentious lengths to tie Oswald with the Walker affair. The Commission used FBI ballistics expert, Robert A. Frazier, to fix the problem. Frazier testified that while it was impossible to conclude that the Walker slug came from the Oswald rifle, there was no compelling physical evidence to persuade that it did not. It was a demonstration of low-grade police work masked by dazzling high-wire semantics to ease the Commission over the divide from questionable allegation to the thumping conclusion that “Oswald attempted to kill General Walker.” Not a single member of the Commission asked Frazier how he squared his testimony with BuLab’s report that spectrographic analysis could not match the Walker slug with the missile fragments recovered from the presidential limousine, or Kennedy’s brain, or from the gravely wounded Governor John Connally.²⁶

Despite all the contrived appearances that Marina’s testimony was of probative value, the Commission was always leery about its star witness. Both the Commission and the FBI never stopped fretting that the part of their case built around Marina’s testimony was made out of bricks without straw and could come tumbling down about their ears. The hand wringing began in earnest in late February after Marina’s first appearance as a Commission witness.

*Marina
Martin affair*

The first danger signal was tripped by events taking place in Marina's private life.

The FBI learned that when Marina first came to Washington to testify she had an affair with her then business manager, James H. Martin, who accompanied her on the trip. Marina first met Martin in his capacity as assistant manager of the Six Flags Motel. Shortly after the Thanksgiving holidays he invited Marina and her daughters to move into his home and become part of the Martin household. Married and with a family of his own, Martin, keenly aware of Marina's sudden celebrity status and the object of an outpouring of financial assistance, wanted in on the action.

He did not wait long to launch his campaign of seduction to win her trust and sexual favors. He brazenly carried the torch for Marina even under the nose of Mrs. Martin, who might have been a witting accomplice in her husband's cheap confidence game, and the Secret Service agents tasked with Marina's security. Lonely, vulnerable, and increasingly susceptible to his attentions and professions of love, Marina agreed to be his mistress when she had a home of her own. In the meantime, Marina agreed that Martin take over her business affairs and retain a lawyer to handle her legal matters. He opened a bank account in the name of "Marina Martin" at a Dallas bank and handled all the donation checks endorsing them in his name and promising to deposit them in Marina's account. Marina was not a silly-heart; but she was in need of affection and hungry for tender caring and Martin gave her every assurance that he was sincere. With the advice and help from her brother-in-law, Robert Oswald, Marina ultimately disentangled herself from Martin's clutches but not first without some messy legal wrangling and bitter recriminations.²⁷

Given Marina's importance to the investigation "The Affair" could not remain a private matter. On 24 February 1964 Hoover had a long conversation with Rankin about Marina, her relations with Martin, and her credibility in general. The director worried that if Marina's affair with a married man became public her credibility as a Commission witness could suffer. Hoover was having his own doubts, telling Rankin he thought she was a "pretty questionable character." Then they started to chew around the edges of Marina's story about Lee's threat against Nixon. Hoover thought the whole story was "fishy" and not worth serious consideration. He could not bring himself to believe that a deranged and cold-blooded assassin would meekly submit to banishment to his own bathroom. The director even went so far as to infer that Marina and Martin might have concocted the "Nixon Story" to sell to a credulous media hungry for insights into Lee Harvey Oswald coming from the alleged assassin's widow. Hoover was wary of what he called the "bleeding hearts" and "sob sisters" journalists who were scouring Dallas for stories related to the assassination.²⁸

Moreover, Nixon was not in Dallas in April. He had an April date to receive an award from the Dallas Chamber of Commerce but cancelled his appearance because of other pressing business. Vice-President Johnson was in Dallas on April 23, but Marina insisted upon Nixon. She told Heitman she did not know Johnson, but remembered Nixon from his "kitchen debate" with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev. To the Martin affair and the bogus Nixon story, Hoover could have added more to the debit side of Marina's credibility account. There was her lying about Lee's Mexico trip, withholding information on the Walker incident, and her ambiguous statements and inventions about her husband's rifle and his after-dark rifle practice at Love Field. But Hoover held the

Hoover's desperation

line on the Walker incident, telling Rankin that while “you can’t say you are 100 % sure” the ballistic evidence, he assured the chief counsel, still pointed convincingly to Oswald.²⁹

When do I destroy this

Both Hoover and Rankin feared that Marina was a loose cannon. She could be quoted from any official source on almost any side of any question, giving contradictory meaning and interpretations on almost every topic raised by her interrogators. The Commission was aware that the national press was frantic to gain access to Marina and her story. Her business manager, James Martin, was busy lining up article and book deals and there was even some talk about a movie.

The Commission and Hoover wanted to be absolutely certain that Marina testified under oath before the Marina-Martin versions of this national tragedy found their way into the public domain. McCloy alarmed his fellow Commissioners when he dropped the bomblet he had picked up from a *Life* magazine source that Marina was collaborating with professional anti-Communist writer Isaac Don Levine to publish her story in that publication. McCloy’s concern was that Levine “is trying to pep it up” with “evidence that [Oswald] was a Soviet agent.” Russell spoke for the rest of the members when he retorted: “That will blow the lid if she testifies to that.” Dulles volunteered that he knew Levine and would “get him in” and have a “friendly talk.” Dulles never did reveal what there was to talk about. But the former CIA head, as it will be discussed later, was anxious that there be no talk of Oswald as any kind of agent. On 28 May 1964 Levine had a conference with Commission assistant counsel W. David Slawson. He handed over to Slawson a list of 33 “Fresh Clues” to the assassination. Included among Levine’s “insights” were notes on the much worked-over alleged assassination attempt on Richard

M. Nixon and a bizarre account of a “deal” between JFK and Khrushchev to sell “true communism down the river.” Marina had several meetings with Levine before she brushed him off. The FBI learned about this through a phone intercept between Marina and George Bouhe, an adviser and a member of the Dallas White Russian community. Marina told Bouhe not to give Levine her telephone number or her new Richardson, Texas, address since she did not want him to come to her home and “bother her ears.”³⁰

Hoover wanted to place her under surveillance so there would be no more potentially damaging surprises. At the end of her first session with the Commission she requested an end to protective custody. Warren consented to her petition and declared her a free agent, relieving her from her round-the-clock Secret Service protection. Now that Marina was out from under protective custody, Rankin worried that she might slip across the border into Mexico. With her “Oswald Trust Fund” and article and book deals alone, Rankin had to believe that the threat of a fleeing Marina was as improbable as a cow doing mathematics. He invented this concern as preface to his suggestion to Hoover that the FBI put her under 24-hour physical surveillance.

Hoover grabbed at the bait and ran with it. He reportedly told Rankin that a telephone tap would increase their surveillance capabilities and make for a more comprehensive intelligence profile on anyone Marina was seeing and what they talked about. Rankin wavered somewhat about a phone tap, and while he apparently never vetoed the idea, good bureaucrat that he was, he cautioned Hoover to keep expenses down. Hoover being Hoover, that same day the director ordered a tap on the phone of the Declan P. Fords, prominent members of the White Russian community in Dallas, in whose home where Marina and the children were staying after she broke with James

Martin. While the request was bucked up to Justice for the attorney general's approval, Belmont recommended that Rankin and the Commissioners not be told about phone tap until it was in place; Hoover concurred. It was later decided to hold off all technical surveillance until Marina moved into her own home in the Dallas suburb of Richardson.³¹

Because of the construction of Marina's Richardson address and the fact that the phone company would not install her phone until she moved in, the FBI had to resort to illegal trespass in order to install both the phone tap and the "misurs" or microphones. The Dallas office reported that the phone tap was in place on February 29 and two days later the microphones or "bugs" were operational. Rankin and the Commission apparently were never informed about the illegal installation of the microphones. FBIHQ sent eight agents to the Dallas office to help man the surveillance equipment around the clock. Most of the coverage on the phone tap and the "bugs" was in Russian necessitating the addition of a Russian language translator. On March 9, FBIHQ decided on its own to discontinue all surveillance on Marina.³²

The electronic "take" from the operation, 22 reels of tape, revealed nothing of Oswald's motives or any hint of conspiracy. The official FBI position, of course, from day one was that Oswald acted alone in the killing of President Kennedy. However, every FBI "June Mail" memo carried the slug line "Lee Harvey Oswald, Internal Security---Russia---Cuba." This was probably to cover the FBI's illegal wiretapping and bugging. By concocting a "national security" cover the bureau did not require a judge's permission for the electronic surveillance. The FBI admitted that this around-the-clock snooping into Marina's private life captured on the 22 reels of tape was of no evidentiary value.³³ This certainly came as no surprise to the FBI since it must have tumbled to the fact by this

time that Marina knew nothing about the Kennedy assassination. Like Scheherazade in the ancient Persian chronicles, Marina spun out her stories to keep from being swallowed up by an act of incomprehensible and all-consuming horror and to escape being deported to her country of birth whose interest in her fate could best be summed up--“return not desired.”

What the tapes did record were Marina’s most intimate feelings, her dream life, and sexual fantasies that she confided to Katya Ford, her Russian-speaking friend and confidant, former host, and wife of her new business manager. They also recorded intercepts of Marina’s conversations with her lawyer, William A. McKenzie, a Dallas attorney recommended by Declan Ford to handle her legal battles with James Martin following the rupture in their personal and business relationship. FBIHQ developed a sudden case of cold feet on the Marina surveillance fearing it would kick back if it was leaked to the public.³⁴ Details of Marina’s negotiations with her lawyer and her erotic fantasy life were not, most Americans would have agreed, legitimate interests of the government even under the most generous interpretation of the overworked Cold War shibboleth of “national security.” Had this lawless abuse of Marina Oswald’s right to privacy reached the media it would have created a public relations debacle for the Hoover Bureau.³⁵

It was absolutely essential that the technical surveillance equipment be removed from Marina’s new residence at 629 Belt Line Road home without detection. The problem the FBI faced was that the timing could not have been worse. Dallas was inundated with a large contingent of the world press who were in the city covering the trial of Jack Ruby. In addition to covering the trial reporters were scrambling about trying

to locate Oswald's widow for interviews. It took the FBI the better part of a week to concoct some ruse to get Marina out of the house allowing a team of wiremen to slip into the house and remove the phone tap and the microphones. One pretext was to invite her to Agent Wallace R. Heitman's for dinner since Heitman had established a protective and quasi-paternal relationship with Marina. When the operation came off without a hitch, Gordon J. Shanklin, the supervising agent in charge of the Dallas office, recommended that six of his agents receive a substantial incentive award. Shanklin stressed the high sensitivity and the long hours that went into the planning of the operation. He believed that recognition was warranted given that the target enjoyed "world-wide prominence" that would have had a "detrimental" impact on the FBI's "national reputation" if the operation had been detected. FBI Washington notified Shanklin that his recommendations were taken under advisement and any decisions were deferred until after the Commission released its report. After the Warren Report came out in September with its criticisms of the FBI (specifically personnel in the Dallas office), the Dallas office was instantly anathema to Director Hoover. Shanklin received a Personal Attention memo from the director icily stating: "Bureau does not feel that incentive awards are merited in this particular facet of this investigation."³⁶

When FBIHQ suddenly terminated the surveillance, Assistant Director William C. Sullivan recommended that the Commission not receive the FBI report generated from the Marina tapes since "it does not appear the Commission specifically asked for a technical surveillance." W. A. Branigan, FBIHQ's man who headed up the Marina case, strongly supported ending the surveillance. Branigan worried that since the wiretap had picked up detailed conversation between Marina and her lawyer he argued--putting a nice

point on it--that this was “undesirable” from a “legal standpoint” if it became public. Belmont, who was formally responsible for the entire investigation, “loathed to have this type of material on record” less the Commission have access and leak to the press. FBIHQ leakers had suddenly become champions of preventive maintenance plumbing. Hoover naturally agreed to the suppression “because the Commission seems intensely alert to embarrass the FBI. . . .” Tolson, DeLoach, and Mohr, the rest of Hoover’s “General Staff”, all favored burying the report certain that someone on the Commission would leak it to the press. But when the Dallas field office asked if it should destroy the Marina tapes, Hoover ordered that Dallas permanently retain them.³⁷

Given that the FBI discounted the tapes as having “no evidentiary value,” what possible use could the agency have for them? A September 1964 Branigan to Sullivan memo written after the Warren Commission Report was released gave an indication of FBIHQ’s intentions. Branigan’s memo reported in detail Marina’s criticism of the FBI during her first Commission session as a witness. Hoover and his bureau chiefs could be unforgiving and vindictive when it came to those with the temerity to criticize the agency. In her February 1964 testimony before the Commission Marina was outspoken in her criticism of the FBI. She unfavorably contrasted the agency with the high opinion she had of the Secret Service and the Dallas Police Department. It would hardly be breaking news where the Hoover FBI was concerned, if the director and his agency chiefs kept the tapes to threaten or publicly embarrass Marina when and if the opportunity arose. Blackmail and character assassination were part of the Hoover FBI arsenal of dirty tricks used without compunction against its critics and perceived enemies.³⁸

In September 1964 the Warren Commission submitted its findings to President Johnson and the American people. Officially, the nightmare of Dallas was over and the nation was quickly swept up in LBJ's Great Society programs, a burgeoning civil rights revolution, and the distant rumblings of a war in Southeast Asia.

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For Marina the nightmare never really ended but she moved ahead making a life for herself and her children. At the beginning of 1965 she enrolled in an intensive eight-week English language course at the University of Michigan under the sponsorship of an area church group. Her presence on the Ann Arbor campus generated immediate but short-lived interest and excitement. The Ann Arbor police department, campus security, and the university administration closely monitored her mail and her comings and goings. Ann Arbor Police Chief Rolland Gainsley, at the request of the FBI, discreetly covered her few press conferences. Gainsley reported her comments to the FBI and agent Wallace Heitman sent his Marina reports forward to FBIHQ. After the initial flash of publicity Marina became just another student on the large Michigan University campus. She finished her course without any further fanfare, returned to Dallas, remarried, and had another child.³⁹

Ostensibly, Marina appeared on the path to a normal life. She surrounded herself with all the trappings of the contemporary American middle-class model of the good life: a caring and hard working husband, the sweet satisfaction of financial security, the joy of a new baby, and a comfortable home in the Dallas suburbs. But Marina was haunted by memories and flashbacks of the nightmare of the assassination and the subsequent nine months when she was the object of intense government scrutiny. Marina Oswald Porter's burden was, if nothing else, *sui generis*: her first husband was "convicted" by a blue-

ribbon presidential commission of committing the “Crime of the Century.” This was a bleak legacy that could be a crushing weight for the Oswald children and their children’s children to carry through life. Marina once described this legacy as a “heavy object, a hammer in my mind.” Given time to reflect, it was natural that Marina wanted the reality to be otherwise. There were understandable psychological reasons why she felt compelled to rearrange the truth---that is, the “official truth” of Dallas---to wash away what threatened to be an indelible and crippling family stigma.⁴⁰

*Russell
Cooper
Boggs
Rankin*

Marina’s attempts to revise the “official truth” of Dallas started incrementally in 1964 and continued, despite great interludes of silence, for the next thirty years. Hers was not always a very popular course with the Oswald children. On Sunday, 6 September 1964 at the U.S. Naval Air Station in Dallas, Marina confronted Commission members for her third and last time. The Commission’s final report was already in final draft and ready for the printers, but Russell, Cooper, Boggs, and Rankin wanted one more go-around with their star witness.

During the course of the three-hour session Marina flabbergasted her questioners when she opined that Lee was shooting not at JFK but Governor John Connally. She could only speculate about Connally, explaining that he was Secretary of the Navy when her husband unsuccessfully petitioned to have his dishonorable discharge from the Marine Corps Reserves reversed. Marina inferred that her impulsive and hot-tempered husband harbored a festering grudge against Connally, a noted public figure and a “stupid bureaucrat” (Lee’s characterization) and made an attempt on his life to settle a score. This was a dramatic rearrangement of her February 1964 Commission testimony when Commissioner Boggs asked her if she believed Lee shot President Kennedy and Marina

unhesitatingly replied: “Regretfully, yes.” Three years later she was subpoenaed to appear before the grand jury in the Jim Garrison case against Clay Shaw. Marina testified that she believed Lee killed the president but rejected the notion that he was involved in any conspiracy.⁴¹

By the late 1980s Marina began to speak with cold conviction that Lee was a “government agent” and was set up to take the fall for the assassination. Needing to speak out she found a new voice. Marina was now certain her first husband did not shoot anybody. In a rare public appearance at a 1993 Harvard University conference on the assassination, Marina claimed that Lee “loved JFK and what he stood for.” She went on to assert to the largely sympathetic audience that Lee was a “patsy in a conspiracy to kill the president.” She rejected the government’s investigation and the Warren Report as a “historic miscarriage of justice.”⁴²

In Marina’s own mind Lee was a victim just as she, too, felt victimized. It was as though Dallas had erased or blurred the boundary between his history and her own. She told one interviewer “Lee was buried, but I was buried even deeper by the weight of my humiliation.” As the Commission’s most damaging witness against her husband, she had come to see herself as “his executioner.” She blamed the Commission for leading her as a witness, maneuvering her with their questions so she became a spokesman to advance their predetermined conclusions that Oswald was the lone gunman.⁴³

Given the threats and other circumstances at the time that prompted Marina to help the Commission build its “reasonable” case against Lee her latter efforts to clear his name could be easily dismissed as self-directed therapy. The only way she had to alleviate her guilt for being an accessory to the Commission’s findings that Oswald

committed the most subversive crime in our form of government was by publicly championing his innocence and, by extension, her own. However, to dismiss Marina away too quickly would overlook the Commission's ex parte and systematic efforts to prejudice the case against Oswald by what it chose to emphasize and what it intentionally ignored or suppressed. A review of some of the Commission's evaluation of Oswald makes the case that Marina's contention that her husband was a "government agent" not categorically unwarranted.

Motive In its more than 900-page Report, much of it devoted largely or exclusively to Oswald, the Commission had to grapple with the troublesome question of motive. In *Motive* Chapter Seven the Report turns its hand at trying to answer why Oswald did what the Commission concluded he did do. From the outset of the chapter the Report settles upon his "Commitment to Marxism or Communism" as the controlling explanation for Oswald's actions. The Report makes no effort to define or explain what it means by these terms nor does it produce any evidence of his alleged "commitment to Marxism or communism." The Report asserts that Oswald "resented the capitalist system", but that same paragraph includes the incongruous observation that when he was in the Soviet Union Oswald "spoke highly of the United States" and condemned the communists and the Soviet Union. The Marine officer in charge of the radar crew on which Oswald served testified that he never heard him say he was a communist or "thought of being a communist." Oswald's closest buddy in the Marines, Nelson Delgado, observed that Oswald was favorably excited about the Castro revolution but was not in favor "of the Communist way of life."⁴⁴ Moreover, some of Oswald's favorite books were George

Orwell's anti-authoritarian and anti-Communist classics *Animal Farm* and *1984*. His favorite piece of classical music was Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades*.⁴⁵

The 50-page chapter, under the misstated section "Return to the United States," quotes excerpts from an Oswald essay entitled "The Collective." According to the Commission, this was Oswald's "longest and clearest" piece of writing, basically detailing his work experience in the Minsk radio and television factory where he worked when residing in the Soviet Union. (It provided the kind of detail that would attract the attention of the intelligence community.) In his piece "The Collective," Oswald spares neither the American Communist Party nor the Soviet system. He accuses the Soviets of "crimes unsurpassed even by their early capitalist counterparts" and blasts the Kremlin heirs of Stalinist mass exterminations, individual suppression and regimentation for "the murder of history and the prostitution of art and culture." This was the kind of language that would have been warmly endorsed by the ultra right groups in Dallas. Having laid all this out, and more, in Chapter Seven the Commission still comes to the thudding conclusion that Oswald's "commitment to Marxism and communism" was an "important factor" in his attempts to kill General Walker and President Kennedy. This motif--- commitment to Marxism and communism---was in the Commission's eyes enough of an explanation for the ordinary understanding of the American people as to the "Why" of Dallas.⁴⁶

When the Report deals with Oswald's record in the Marine Corps it suppresses facts and ignores circumstances that are inconvenient to the Commission's prosecutorial case against the dead man charged with JFK's murder. Oswald was not a model leatherneck. He was moody, disrespectful and occasionally insubordinate to those

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superiors who he regarded as his intellectual inferiors. The Report covers these incidents and his two court-martials in sufficient detail. At the same time the Corps was uncharacteristically tolerant of Oswald's consuming and well-known interest in Marxism and the Soviet Union. While he was in the Corps Oswald studied the Russian language, played Russian songs, subscribed to Russian language newspapers, and brushed up on his *Das Kapital* when free time permitted. These were not the kind of pursuits the Corps expected of its "gyrenes", especially those with security clearances, when they were off duty. This open, in-your-face display of Russophilia predictably drew attention from his fellow Marines. Some of them took to calling him "Oswaldskovich" or addressed him as "Comrade," usually to his genuine delight.⁴⁷

Oswald's self-professed Marxism and avid interest in things Russian never interfered with his Marine Corps security clearances. The Report hinted around that Oswald had a clearance "above the 'confidential' level" with access to certain kinds of classified material. Actually, when he served overseas, in the Philippines for instance, Oswald had "Crypto" clearance, which required "Top Secret" as a prerequisite. His Marine Corps MOS (Military Occupation Specialty) was Electronics Operator Airborne, which meant he worked with rather sophisticated radar equipment and systems. In May 1958 his radar crew played some role in the CIA's covert "Operation Strongback", an abortive attempt to topple the leftward-leaning government of Indonesia's President Achmed Sukarno.⁴⁸

The Warren Commission knew about Oswald's Crypto clearance but suppressed it from the official record. It was never even discussed in any of the on-the-record executive sessions. The Commission became intensely interested in Oswald's tour of

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duty in the Philippines when it learned that an 18-year-old Marine in Oswald's outfit died of a gunshot wound while guarding the crypto van at Cubi Point, in the Philippines. The dead Marine was Pvt. Martin D. Schrand. Schrand and Oswald had gone to the same advanced radar school in Biloxi, Mississippi, before being posted overseas in the same radar crew assigned to the ultra-secret crypto van. All six Marines attached to the crypto van had to have Crypto clearance, and that included Lee Harvey Oswald.⁴⁹

Soon after the assassination the FBI went over Oswald's Marine Corps records and came across Schrand's death while on sentry duty on 5 January 1958. The FBI's interest was peaked by the fact that Oswald served with the unfortunate Schrand and by the rumors circulated by several Marines in Oswald's outfit that he may have been responsible for Schrand's death. After two criminal investigations into the case the Navy's official 1958 verdict was accidental death with "no other person or persons involved in the incident." After the FBI ran out its investigation into the rumors to no avail, Rankin requested that the Judge Advocate General's (JAG) office review the record on the off chance that the facts of the case just might, upon reexamination, point to foul play. What better collateral evidence of Oswald's criminally violent nature to bolster the Commission's "reasonable" case than tying him to the "murder" of Pvt. Schrand. JAG did forward to Rankin two copies of the Schrand investigation establishing beyond any doubt that the Commission was aware of the status of Oswald's security clearance. After a review of the facts and interviews with the Marines identified with the rumors of Oswald's involvement, JAG was satisfied with the correctness of the original verdict. The Commission and the FBI, faced with disappointment in the Schrand matter, had to bear

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down on Marina to salvage a scintilla of probative value in her testimony on the Walker shooting.⁵⁰

That the Commission studiously failed to make mention of Oswald's Crypto clearance cannot be attributed, at least in any conventional understanding, to national security reasons. The U.S. Navy never classified the Schrand case. This suppression conforms with the extraordinary circumstances surrounding his discharge from the Marines and subsequent defection to the Soviet Union. With less than two months of his enlistment remaining, Oswald asked for a "hardship discharge" to take care of his ailing mother. This was a spurious request and the Marine Corps had to know it was a flat-out lie. His discharge was scheduled for 11 September 1959. A week earlier Oswald applied for a passport from his stateside posting at Santa Ana, California.⁵¹

With the full knowledge and support from the Marine Corps his passport was issued on 10 September 1959, just six days later. Along with his passport application there were standard Marine Corps forms he had to fill out. Oswald matter-of-factly noted on these forms that he intended to visit, among other countries, the Soviet Union and Cuba before enrolling as a student at Albert Schweitzer College in Switzerland and the University of Turku in Finland.⁵² How did the Corps think Oswald was going to support his mother traipsing around communist countries and attending European institutions of higher learning? Why did alarm bells fail to go off when Marine PFC Oswald, with his unrevoked ultra-secret security clearance, flatly reported that he was going to spend some time in Russia and Castro's Cuba---at the height of the Cold War---before pursuing a university degree, and that with its knowledge that Oswald was a high school dropout?

While the Commission included all of this in its 26 volumes of hearings and exhibits, it made no attempt to explain away these glaring suspicious circumstances overrunning Oswald's Marine Corps service records. It was all passed over and ignored as though it was as unremarkable as water running down hill. The Warren Report fails to expend a word on his fraudulent discharge and treated the issuance of his passport as administratively routine.⁵³ The Commission could have gone a long way to alleviate suspicions if it could have sighted just one other service record from any branch of the military as unconventional as Oswald's before he found his way to Russia and announced his intentions to U.S. Embassy officials in Moscow that he was going to seek Soviet citizenship.

When the Commission turned to speculating on Oswald's motives for assassinating the president it mentioned, in addition to his "commitment to Marxism or communism," a desire to "go down in history as a well-publicized assassin."⁵⁴ Before Marina began testifying before the Warren Commission she wrote a rather lengthy handwritten document in Russian. The piece was translated and appears as Commission Exhibit 994 and identified only in the table of contents as "Narrative prepared by Marina Oswald." When Marina gave her accounts of the Walker shooting, as mentioned above, they included elaborate details of Lee's preparation and his agitated state before the alleged attempt on the right-wing general.⁵⁵

In her narrative Marina recounts Lee's behavior when he visited her and the children at Ruth Paine's house on Thursday, 21 November 1963, the night before his rendezvous with history. She writes that Lee "was not particularly agitated." In fact, he played with June, his oldest toddler, "for a long time." Over dinner he told Marina he was

tired of living alone and wanted to find an apartment large enough so he could be with her and the children. Marina demurred, she wanted to stay with Ruth Paine until after Christmas so they “could celebrate the holidays with friends.” She mentioned President Kennedy’s visit to Dallas and whether she could view it on the television. Lee seemed disinterested and was of no help. While she busied herself about the house after dinner Lee retired early. When she came to bed shortly after midnight Lee was fast asleep. The next morning Lee slept through the alarm clock. When Marina woke him he was running so late that he did not have time to make his own breakfast, which was his usual practice. Before he left for work, Marina would later recall at her 6 September 1964 session with the Commission, Lee asked if she had bought shoes for June. This was the last normal husband-wife exchange of words that passed between Marina and Lee.⁵⁶

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Chapter 6

Endnotes

1. Warren Commission, 30 April 1964, executive session transcript, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland (hereafter cited as NARA], 42
2. Warren Commission, 30 April, 1964, executive session transcript, NARA, 10; Harold Weisberg, Whitewash II: FBI-Secret Service Coverup (Hyattstown, Maryland: Harold Weisberg, 1966), 10. The number of transcript pages of Marina's six appearances before the Commission (February, June, and September] total an impressive and unequaled 599 pages. See Marina Oswald to Ward & Paul, 10/7/1964 of 917 G. Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. Ward & Paul was the firm that provided the stenographic work for the Warren Commission executive sessions. Priscilla Johnson McMillan, Marina and Lee (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 563. For the FBI's "June Mail" file on Marina ("June Mail" was the FBI's designation for electronic surveillance), see the five sections under the FBI's "June Mail" Marina Oswald File, 105-126082.
3. McMillan, Marina and Lee, 559-581.
4. For a hundred or more of these letters to Marina care of the Dallas FBI see Main Dallas Marina Oswald File, 105-1435A, serials 1-192. DeLoach to Mohr, 3/3/1964, FBI HQ Marina Oswald File, 105-126032-Not Recorded (hereafter cited as NR]; Hoover to Rankin, 4/30/1963, Warren Commission Document 880, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Wallace R. Heitman Report, 1/5/1965, FBI HQ Marina Oswald File, 105-126032-NR. The outpouring of support for Marina was nothing compared to the flood of donations murdered Dallas police officer J.D. Tippit's widow received. Mrs. Tippit suddenly found herself a wealthy woman. The widow and her three children were the beneficiaries of about \$650,000. Abraham Zapruder turned over his first-payment check of \$25,000 from *Time-Life* for the purchase of his film on the assassination to the Tippit family. Walter H. Annenberg, wealthy publisher of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* paid off the balance (\$12, 217.00) of the Tippit mortgage. See the *Washington Star*, 11/21/1965.
5. For Kelley's account see Warren Commission Report: Report of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964], 629-632 (hereafter cited as WCR]; Weisberg, Whitewash II, 13-15; a synopsis of the Kunkel-Howard interrogation can be found in the Rankin Papers, box 10, folder 164, NARA.
6. James W. Bookout to Shanklin, 11/22/1963, Main Dallas JFK Assassination File, 89-43-44; FBI summaries of interviews with Marina Oswald, 11/23/1963, Warren Commission Document 83, National Archives, Washington D.C. (hereafter cited as

Warren Commission Document 83]; for a summary of FBI efforts to interview Marina on 11/26 and 11/27/1963 see Rankin Papers, box 10, folder 164, NARA.

7. Shanklin to File, 11/28/1963, Main Dallas JFK Assassination File, 89-43-1294.

8. James R. Malley to SAC (Special-Agent-in-Charge] Dallas, 11/28/1963, Main Dallas JFK Assassination File, 89-43-1299; Malley to SAC, Dallas, 11/28/1963, Main Dallas JFK Assassination File, 89-43-1299.

9. Malley to SAC, Dallas, 11/28/1963, Main Dallas JFK Assassination File, 89-43-12(or3)95; Shanklin to File, 11/28/1963, Main Dallas JFK Assassination File, 1294; Shanklin to File, 11/28/1963, Main Dallas JFK Assassination File, 89-43-1296; McMillan, Marina and Lee, 563.

10. For Sullivan's three-pages of questions see Shanklin to File, 11/28/1963, Main Dallas JFK Assassination File, 89-43-1296; Shanklin to File, 11/29/1963, Main Dallas JFK Assassination File, 89-43-1297. For a detailed treatment of Oswald in Mexico see Chapter 3.

11. Heitman to File, 11/30/1963, Main Dallas JFK Assassination File, 89-43-1421.

12. *Investigation of the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy*, Hearings Before the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964) Warren, Volume I, 80 (hereafter cited as 1H 80); Heitman draft of report entitled "Biographic Information on Mrs. Oswald and Her Relatives," 6-7, Warren Commission Document 361; 5H 609; Weisberg, Whitewash II, 9-23.

13. Shanklin to File, 11/29/1963, Main Dallas JFK Assassination File, 89-43-1297; Hoover to Rankin, 2/19/1964, FBI HQ Liaison with Commission File, 62-109090-NR; 1H 14.

14. Shanklin to File, 11/29/1963, Main Dallas JFK Assassination File, 89-43-1297; Hoover to Rankin, 2/19/1964, FBI HQ Liaison with Commission File, 62-109090-NR; FBI interview with Marina Oswald, 1/29/1964, Warren Commission Document 83; 5H 613.

15. Bookout to Shanklin, 11/22/1963, Main Dallas JFK Assassination File, 89-43-44; FBI interviews with Marina Oswald for 11/27 and 12/3/1963, Warren Commission Document 83.

16. 1H 3; FBI interview with Marina Oswald, 12/17/1963 by Heitman can be found in Rankin Papers, "Investigation & Evidence" File 12, box 4, folder 2 (Marina Oswald), NARA; 1H67 and 5H593. On the travel bags Oswald took on his Mexico trip see Coleman-Slawson to Jenner-Liebeler, 12 March 1965, Rankin Papers, "Investigation &

Evidence” File, box 4, folder 2, (Marina Oswald), *ibid.* and Director, FBI, to SAC, Dallas, 4/28/1964, FBI Mexico City File, 105-3702-816 and 856. For Ruth H. Paine’s Commission testimony see 2H 495 and 3H 20-25.

17. Warren Commission, 30 April 1964, executive session transcript, NARA, 10-11.

18. Heitman interview with Marina Oswald, 12/13/1963, Rankin Papers, “Investigation Evidence” File 12, box 4, folder 2, NARA; FBI interviews with Marina Oswald for 12/3, 12/11, and 12/11/1963, Warren Commission Document 83; 1H 14-18, 38-40; 1H 93.

19. WCR, 404-406.

20. For the “Nixon incident” see 1H333-342 for Robert Oswald’s Warren Commission testimony; FBI interviews with Marina Oswald 2/24, 2/27, 6/5, and 6/8/1964 see Warren Commission Document 83; McMillan, Marina and Lee, 368-370; Branigan to Sullivan, 2/19/1964, FBI HQ Liaison with Commission File, 62-109090-NR.

21. Mosk to Redlich, 6/7/1964, Rankin Papers, “Investigation & Evidence,” File 12, box 35, folder 459, NARA; Shanklin to File, 6/10/1964, Main Dallas Oswald File, 100-10461-6620.

22. For Ford, Russell, and Redlich quotes see *San Francisco Examiner*, 1/4/1979 or see a reproduction of Redlich’s memo to Rankin in *Investigation of the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy, Appendix to Hearings before the Select Committee on Assassinations of the U.S. House of Representatives, 95th Congress, 2nd session* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), 126-127. For Russell’s exchange with Marina that gave vent to his irritation see Marina’s 6 September 1964 Commission testimony 5H607-610.

23. Heitman report, 12/13/1963, Rankin Papers, “Investigation & Evidence,” (Marina File), box 4, folder 2, NARA and FBI report, Commission Exhibit 1403, 733-744, found in 22H777. Heitman report, *ibid.* and WCR, 282 for the DeMohrenschildt’s Saturday visit to the Oswalds. For Mrs. DeMohrenschildt’s spotting of the rifle in the closet see 9H314, and Heitman report, *ibid.* 2-3

24. Conrad to Belmont, 12/4/1963, FBI HQ JFK Assassination File, 62-109060-7132; Jevons to Conrad, 3/27/1964, FBI HQ JFK Assassination File, 62-109060-2845; Conrad to Belmont, 12/4/1963, FBI HQ JFK Assassination File, 62-109060-7132. For Marina’s contradictory statements about Lee’s slipping off at night to “Love Field” to practice with his rifle see Dallas Report, 2/18/1964, FBI HQ Oswald File, 105-82555-2579, Section 103, 42-47.

25. For FBI reports on the search see FBI HQ JFK Assassination File, 62-10960-serials 1960, 1890, and 1958; Rosen to Belmont, 2/12/1964, HQ FBI Liaison with Commission File, 62-109090-NR; Mosk memo to Redlich, 6/7/1964, Rankin Papers, box 35, folder

459, NARA, 9-10. Mosk's frustrated efforts to come up with any credible evidence that Oswald had practiced with the Mannlicher-Carcano before his alleged attempt on General Walker and prior to the assassination of JFK was not because the FBI failed to undertake a "turn-over-every-stone" investigation into this area of the case. The one gun shop in the Dallas area that sold 6.5 mm manufactured by Western Cartridge Company was owned by John H. Brinegar. When the FBI tracked him down and showed him a photo of Oswald, Brinegar was unable to identify "this individual as being a person to whom he had previously sold 6.5 ammunition." See Gemberling Report, 4/15/1964, FBI HQ Oswald File, 105-82555-3464, Section 141, 114. The FBI contacted 164 other gun shops in the Dallas area that handled rifle ammunition but none of these stocked 6.5 Mannlicher-Carcano Western Cartridge Company ammunition. See Gemberling Report, ibid., 91-106. For the FBI's investigation of the shooting ranges in the Dallas area see Gemberling Report, section E. Alleged Target Practice by Lee Harvey Oswald, FBI HQ Oswald File, 105-82555-1212, Section 55, 89-138. The Dallas office also conducted an intensive investigation of the levee on both sides of the Trinity River that runs through Dallas. This so-called "Trinity river bottom" in the vicinity of Love Field was a favorite spot for people to test fire rifles. The FBI interviewed more than 50 people who lived near the west and east side of the Trinity River and asked if they ever saw Oswald practicing with a rifle. All of them were shown a photo of Oswald and none reported ever seeing him in this vicinity at any time. See Gemberling Report, 4/15/1964, FBI HQ Oswald File, 105-82555-3404, Section 141, 111-123.

26. WCR, 186-187. Frazier was one of the select FBI agent specialists especially trained by the FBI to testify in court cases on ballistic matters. See Sanford J. Unger, FBI: An Uncensored Look Behind the Walls (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1975), 153-154. For Frazier's Commission testimony on 31 March 1964 see 3H 391-441.

27. Branigan to Sullivan, 2/20/1964, FBI HQ Liaison with Commission File, 62-109090-NR; James J. Rowley to Rankin, 2/26/1964, Rankin Papers, "Investigation & Evidence" File 12, box 4, folder 2, NARA; Hoover memo, 2/18/1964, FBI HQ FBI Liaison with Commission File, 62-109090-NR, see three-page report attached; Hoover to Rankin, 2/20/1964, FBI HQ Liaison with Commission File, 62-109090-NR.

28. Hoover memo, 2/24/1964, FBI HQ Liaison with Commission File, 62-109090-NR; Kyle G. Clark to SAC, Dallas, 2/24/1964, Main Dallas Oswald File, 100-10461-376(obliterated).

29. That is was Senator Barry Goldwater who was the likely recipient of the reward from the Dallas Chamber of Commerce see Shanklin to File, 2/26/1964, Dallas Main Oswald File, 100-10461-3698. Hoover to Rankin, 6/4/1964, FBI HQ Liaison with Commission, 62-109090-NR; FBI interviews with Marina Oswald, Warren Commission Document 83; Branigan to Sullivan, 11/25/1964, FBI HQ Liaison with Commission, 62-109090-(obliterated)398; Hoover memo, 2/24/1964, FBI HQ Liaison with Commission File, 62-1-9090-NR, 5-6.

30. Warren Commission, 21 January 1964, executive session transcript, NARA. The Commission spent most of this session on working out a modus vivendi with the lawyer handpicked by Martin to handle Marina's affairs to assure that she would appear as a witness before the Commission before the publication of any articles or book. The Commission gave more attention to this matter than it did, for example, to an examination of the evidence in the Walker shooting. For McCloy and Dulles on Levine see pages 110-111 of the 21 January 1964 transcript. Slawson to Rankin, et. al., Rankin Papers, box 18, folder 290, NARA; Anatole A. Boguslav to Shanklin, 3/3/1964, FBI Marina Oswald Transcripts, FBI HQ Marina Oswald File, ("June Mail"), 105-126032, 6-7.
31. Hoover memo, 2/24/1964, FBI HQ Liaison with Commission File, 62-109090-NR; J.A. Sizoo to W.C. Sullivan, 2/24/1964, FBI HQ Oswald File, 105-82555-2260.
32. Hoover memo to Attorney General (Katzenbach, Acting AG), 2/24/1964, FBI HQ Oswald File, ("June Mail"), 105-82555-2402. Years later when reporter John M. Crewdson broke the story of FBI eavesdropping on Oswald's widow in the *New York Times*, the former acting attorney general Nicholas B. Katzenbach contended that it was Chief Justice Earl Warren who requested a phone tap on Marina but never authorized the bugging of her home. For Crewdson's piece see *New York Times*, 10/30/1975, 34. For Katzenbach's comments see Harold R. Tyler, Jr., Deputy Attorney General to Director, FBI, 10/31/1975, FBI HQ JFK Assassination File, 62-109060-7426 and Clarence Kelley to Katzenbach, 11/21/1975, FBI HQ JFK Assassination File, 62-10906-7425
33. Clark to SAC, Dallas, 2/24/1964, Main Dallas Oswald File, 100-10461-376(obliterated), Robert M. Barrett to SAC, Dallas, 2/29/1964, Dallas Main Oswald File, 100-10461-3842; Shanklin to File, 2/28/1964, June, Lee Harvey Oswald (June Mail), 66-1313A-7.
34. Kyle G. Clark to SAC, Dallas, 2/27/1964, Lee Harvey Oswald File, 66-1313A-5, ("June Mail"); Shanklin to File, 3/2/1964, Lee Harvey Oswald File, ("June Mail") 66-1313A-19; Shanklin to File, 3/5/1964, Lee Harvey Oswald File, ("June Mail"), 66-1313A-14. The FBI technician who installed the "misurs" in Marina's new residence was Nat Pinkston. He entered her residence through a crawl space under the house when Marina was not at home. See James P. Hosty, Jr. with Thomas Hosty, Assignment: Oswald (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1996), 110.
35. SA Newsom to SAC, Dallas, 3/2/1964, (serial masked); SAC, Dallas, to Director, 3/2/1964, FBI HQ Oswald File, ["June Mail]," 105-82555-2363; Branigan to Sullivan, 3/16/1964, FBI HQ Oswald File, ["June Mail]," 105-82555-2642; SAC, Dallas, to Director, 7/3/1967, FBI HQ Oswald File, ["June Mail]," 105-82555-5585; Branigan to Sullivan, 7/14/1967, FBI HQ Oswald File, ["June Mail]," 105-82555-5887.
36. Branigan to Sullivan, 3/5/1964, FBI HQ Oswald File, ["June Mail]," 105-82555-2588.

37. In 1975 a former unnamed FBI official disclosed publicly the wire tapping of Marina Oswald. The story in the papers quoted two of the former Commission lawyers, David W. Belin and Albert E. Jenner, and their strong reactions to this revelation, charging that the Commission assistant counsels were kept in the dark about this electronic surveillance. Belin was quoted as saying "it strikes me as horrible" if true. See the *New York Times* 10/30/1975 and *The Dallas Morning News*, 11/1/1975.

38. Shanklin to File, 3/9/1964, Lee Harvey Oswald File, 66-1313A-21; Shanklin to File, 3/8/1964, Lee Harvey Oswald File, 66-1313-20; SAC, Dallas to File, 3/12/1964, Lee Harvey Oswald File, 66-1313A-22; SAC, Dallas to Director, FBI, 4/17/1964, FBI Personnel Matters File, 67-425-1633; Director, FBI to SAC, Dallas, 4/27/1964 ("June Mail"), FBI Personnel Matters File, 67-425-1633a; Director, FBI to SAC, Dallas, 10/14/1964, FBI Personnel Matters File, 67-425-1633e. The reasons for Hoover's displeasure with FBI Dallas is covered in chapters 11 and 12.

39. Branigan to Sullivan, 4/7/1964, FBI HQ Oswald File, ["June Mail]," 105-82555-3144; Branigan to Sullivan, 3/5/1964, FBI HQ Oswald File, ["June Mail]," 105-82555-2588; Rosen to Belmont, 3/6/1964, FBI HQ Oswald File, ["June Mail]," 105-82555-2587, see Belmont's 3/12/1964 attached memo. Dallas, to Director, 7/3/1967, FBI HQ Oswald File, ["June Mail]," 105-82555-5585; Director to SAC, Dallas, 7/17/1967, FBI HQ Oswald File, ["June Mail]," 105-82555-5585; Branigan to Sullivan, 7/14/1967, FBI HQ Oswald File, ["June Mail]," 105-82555-5587.

40. Branigan to Sullivan, 11/25/1964, FBI HQ Liaison with Commission File, 62-109090-(obliterated)398; 1H79-80 for Marina's criticism of the FBI at her first appearance before the Warren Commission.

41. See Heitman reports to Director, FBI, FBI HQ Marina Oswald File, 105-126032, serials 104-108.

42. "Marina's Story," Ladies' Home Journal (May 1993), 158.

43. 5H608-610; for her "Regretfully, yes" see 1H122.

44. Myrna Blyth and Jane Farrell, "Marina Oswald: Twenty-Five Years Later," Ladies' Home Journal, (November 1993), 188; *The Boston Globe*, 11/14/1993; "Marina's Story," Ladies' Home Journal (May 1988), 158.

45. "Marina's Story," Ladies' Home Journal (May 1993), 158.

46. WCR, 375-376, 389,

47. ibid., 388, 687.

48. ibid., 395, 398, 428-429.

46. ~~WCR, 375-376, 389,~~

47. ~~ibid., 388, 687.~~

48. ~~ibid., 395, 398, 428-429.~~

49. ibid., Chapter 7 and 683-686.

50. ibid., 684-685; Stephen E. Ambrose, Ike's Spies: Eisenhower and the Espionage Establishment (New York: Doubleday, 1981), 249-251.

51. See the U.S. Navy's inquest of Martin D. Schrand (serial number 1639694). The author wishes to thank Harold Weisberg for allowing him to copy his file on Schrand.

52. Director to St. Louis, 11/29/1963, FBI HQ JFK Assassination File, 62-109060-394; Security Officer to Commanding Officer, MACS-1, 9 January 1958, U.S. Naval Air Station, Cubi Point, Philippines, Schrand Investigation; Judge Advocate General to Commandant of the Marine Corps, 30 April 1964, signed by Wilfred Hearn, Schrand investigation. Suspecting that the make of the weapon issued to Pvt. Schrand was unstable if used improperly the Navy did some tests on the type of riot gun issued for guard duty at the Cubi Point installation. The tests disclosed that if the weapon was dropped vertically on the butt end on the ground, which was one of the drill steps in the Manual of Arms, it might discharge. Since Schrand had a reputation for being a "bug" for drill, it was concluded that the weapon accidentally went off and killed him. See the report filed by Special Agent W.C. Kuehl, 5/26/1964, Office of Naval Intelligence File, ONI-2852-7(b), Harold Weisberg Archive, ONI File, Hood College, Frederick, Maryland.

53. 19H676, 680.

54. 22H77-79.

55. WCR, 746. See the 112 pages of photocopies of Oswald's Marine Corps records reproduced in 19H656-768. The most insightful analysis of Oswald's Marine Corps records is still Weisberg, Whitewash I, 123-124.

56. WCR, 375.

57. For a useful Commission summary of the Walker shooting see ibid., 183-186.

58. 18H638-639; 5H612. Rankin's opinion of Marina's "narrative" was that it was a "pretty good story for a magazine. It doesn't add anything," he told the Commission, "to what we know already." See Warren Commission, 21 January 1964, executive transcript, NARA, 100. But what the Commission chose to use and what to exclude from Marina's account illustrates how it went about building its "reasonable" case against Oswald. See WCR, 420-421. Lee Oswald slept through the alarm set for 6:40 a.m. and remained

asleep until Marina woke him at about 7:00 o'clock. See Gemberling Report, 12/2/1963, FBI HQ Oswald File, 105-82555-454, Section 12.

Material used for
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