

30 March 1978

Dear Harold,

Thank you for your latest letter and for returning the pages from Oltman's book together with a set of copies, which I have sent on to Paul Hoch. I was most interested in your comments on the inscribed photo which turned up so mysteriously and so conveniently for purveyors of the lone-assassin myth.

I had not planned to subject myself to the ordeal of reading "Marina and Lee" by Priscilla Johnson McMillan. However, I was so hung up on that inscribed photograph that I ran out this morning and bought a copy of the book to see what, if anything, Marina/Priscilla had to say about it.

Well, they did indeed have something to say, and what they said was so interesting that I copied it out of the book and am enclosing the excerpt with this letter (with copy to Paul). Now we know why no one testified about this inscribed photo to the Warren Commission—it was not "discovered" until "early 1967" and what is more, Marina "today...has no recollection of having written" the inscription! Moreover, according to Priscilla, Marina not only wrote the inscription but under it she made a small sketch of a terrier. But in the copy of the back of the photo which comes from Oltman's book, there is only the inscription, but no sketch of the terrier.

According to Epsteinker, Marina's handwriting on the back of the photo was authenticated by a handwriting expert; but no one seems to have analyzed the alleged Oswald inscription for handwriting authenticity. Indeed, that inscription includes a curious feature--the manner in which the date was written. Oswald supposedly dated it "5/IV/63" (which I read as 5 April 1963 and not May 4, 1963) but to the best of my recollection, Oswald never wrote dates in that combination of Arabic and Roman numerals. I have not taken the time to search all of his known writings as they appear in the Hearings and Exhibits but a cursory review of his letters to Marguerite and to Robert show that he invariably inscribed the date by writing out the month, followed by Arabic number, followed by the year (e.g., January 14, 1963; May 7, 1962; etc.).

Another curious element: When DeM found the inscribed photo, he took it not to the FBI, not to the Dallas Police, not to any authority or agency, but to George (and Priscilla) McMillan, the well-known professional purveyors of the lone-assassin theory in both the JFK and the MLK cases!

Perhaps it is paranoic, but I do think one has to look very hard at the inscriptions to determine whether or not they are authentic (and what happened to the sketch of the terrier???) and one has to look equally hard at the strange and fortuitous discovery of the inscribed photo by DeM among his possessions. Is it beyond all possibility that the package and the inscribed photo were planted? Could Marina have written that inscription and then lost all recollection of it?

I will close with excerpts from some rough notes of an interview of Epsteinker which I have just received from David Williams of AIB: "I asked him about the photo, allegedly signed by Marina and Oswald that had been given to DeM. He said the handwriting analysis had been performed ('in Nov. or Dec.') by Jay McManus, ex-FBI analyst. Confirmed it was Marina's handwriting. What about Oswald? He mumbled 'yes', but I question whether this was actually confirmed because later in the discussion he said, 'Maybe people doubt it was LHO's writing on the photo.' Certainly not the words of someone confident that it was LHO."

All the best,