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MEMO: LHO WALLET--Chain of Possession and Contents

By: Howard Roffman

My interest sparked by other matters, I decided to try to trace the chain of possession of the wallet Oswald supposedly carried when arrested 11/22, and its contents. Sylvia has an excellent discussion (AAF 185-9) which examines in detail the gross contradictions between the stories of those who told of finding the wallet and of what was done with it subsequently.

For the first couple of hours LHO was in police hands, his wallet and its contents, by the various accounts, were nothing short of ubiquitous. Bentley supposedly recovered it in the car on the way to the police station. He says he turned ~~it over~~ over Oswald's "identification" to Det. T.L. Baker (24H234). Bentley was later shown photos of 5 of the items supposedly in the wallet. According to the FBI he verified that these were photos of items he found in LHO's wallet while in the car (24H421-2). It is interesting to note that when Rankin asked the FBI to make this check, he specified that the originals were to be shown. (Letter not printed.)

Once LHO is at the police station (arrived homicide office circa 2:15) it is impossible to trace what happened to the wallet. Rose and Stovall first said they "obtained" his ID (24H292). In testimony, Stoval said Oswald had his billfold at the 1st interrogation (7H187-88) while Rose said LHO had the contents of the billfold but not the billfold itself (7H228). When FBI agent Clements saw LHO in the interrogation room by himself at 10 that night, the wallet was on a desk in the room (7H320). While LHO was out of the room, Clements went through the wallet and listed its contents (R 615-17). The next mention of the wallet that I can find is interesting. On 11/24/63, Fritz furnished the FBI with photos "of all the articles contained in the wallet of" LHO at time of arrest. These were apparently given to Bookhout, whose report lists 17 items (24H17). It is quite interesting to compare this with Clements' listing, as I shall do in a minute.

Even more interesting is a receipt executed by none other than Hosty, which reads (24H347):

"Received from Capt. Will Fritz at approximately 1:00 a.m. on 11/27/63:

Billfold and 16 cards and pictures taken from Lee Harvey Oswald on 11/22/63.

One notebook recovered from room of Lee Harvey Oswald at 1026 No. Beckley on 11/22/63. with names and addresses.

One 6.5 mm rifle hull....."

A most curious go-between for such items, especially the notebook with its subsequent history!

As far as I can tell, many (most) of the items in the wallet were never reproduced by the WC, if they had them at all (which I'm trying to find out from Archives). But there is a real question as to just what the contents were. The maximum number of items I have found (excluding the cash) is 17 (24H17). Hosty's receipt lists

only 16 items. Clements listed 13 plus the cash, plus LHO's Social Sec. card which LHO "had...in possession."

Comparing the Clements list with the Bookhout list of the photos Fritz supplied, I find the following items absent from Clements:

1. Photo of LHO in marine uniform
2. A.J. Hidell Certificate of Service
3. slip of paper with 2 addresses for The Worker

Also, both list a card from the Ga-Jo Enkanko Hotel, but Clements omits one thing about the card. Clements described "Card, 'Compliments GA-JO Enkanko Hotel, telephone number ED 5-0755 of (sic--should be on) reverse side." Bookhout describes the item like this: "...street map, compliments of Ga-Jo-Enkanko Hotel, bearing telephone number ED 50755, and figure or telephone number 92463."

I can't find any other reference to this hotel, but it does intrigue me for many reasons. I hope I can get a copy of the card from the Archives, for perhaps that would reveal its location. It is surely not a Russian Hotel, but I can't be sure which US city it is from. I checked current Fort Worth and New Orleans directories and it is not listed. The phone number, an ED exchange suggests that it is (or was) in Fort Worth. LHO listed Pauline Bate's number in Fort Worth as an ED exchange (16H41) and I have found numerous other ED numbers in LHO's address book and another small notebook of his (16H41, 42, 50, 69, 448, 449)--at least ~~two~~¹⁰ different numbers, none of which matches or is close to that of the Ga-Jo. Assuming the Ga-Jo is in Ft. Worth, Oswald probably went there or obtained the card while he was in Fort Worth in 1962 after returning from Russia. If this is so, the other number on the card, 92463, which was not mentioned by Clements, is quite interesting. (Note: I am assuming that 92463 is written on the card, not printed.)

92463 is the phone number of Rosa Kuznetsova in Minsk. When LHO arrived in Minsk on 1/7/60, he was met by two "Red Cross" workers who took him to the Hotel Minsk, where 2 Intourist employees who spoke excellent English were waiting for him. One was Roza, who became his "close friend" and attended his 21st birthday party in 10/60. (R697; 16H99-100--Historic Diary). Rosa's name appears twice in Oswald's address book, first at p. 45 (16H53):

Kuznetsova, Rosa
Intor. Hotel "Minsk"
92-463
House 130, Apt. 8

and then on the rear flyleaf (16H68):

Rosa House 130
Apt. 8
92463

Rosa also appears on the mysterious piece of paper that was found in Oswald's wallet by Lt. Martello when he was arrested in New Orleans (CE 1438). There she is listed at the top of a list on one side of the paper as "Hotel Minsk Rose 92 463." I have compared all the other entries of this slip of paper and have found all in one form or another in the address book, except for the number 22182, which is "Marina at work" and appears twice on

*ms - the number appears
on back page at 16H69*

the slip of paper. This may not mean anything, but it is interesting that the second Rosa entry in the address book is on a page which appears to have been written in both pencil and pen and on which that curious listing of items and numbers appears, later copied onto the slip of paper. In the address book, Rosa's name and address are in pencil, but her number is in pen and appears directly at the top of the list, followed by "APAWS (Drawers?)--46." (16H68)

Because there might be a relationship between Rosa (or her number) and the list, I tried to find out more about the list. There is, of course, virtually nothing to be found. A little notebook of Oswald's contains a list of a somewhat comparable nature (16H448). ^{CE 105} This list has four columns, three labeled "SOLD," "PRICE" AND "REC." respectively. The only item under "SOLD" which appears on the other list is "overcoat" which appears twice on CE 105. Perhaps there is a correlation. The second time it appears, the "price" is listed as 70, with 32 "REC." (received?) The difference is 38. The first time it appears, the difference between the two columns is 10. Total difference, 48. On the slip of paper and in the address book, we find the listing "Overcoat--48." On another page there is a list headed "Take" followed by items such as radio, phonograph, records, blanket, etc. (16H447) When Marina was shown CE 105 by Rankin, she said "This is when Lee was getting ready to go to Russia, and he made a list of the things that he wanted to buy and take with him." (1H110) She specified she meant when he wanted to return to Russia, which was allegedly in the summer of 1963, after they moved to New Orleans. Marina's explanation does not seem credible, and I am more inclined to believe that both the lists in CE 105 ~~xx~~ were made while Oswald was preparing to leave Russia and return to the U.S. Assuming the list of "SOLD" items represents a listing of things which LHO sold, I can't imagine when he could have done so except when he ~~xxxx~~ moved back to the states. Also, the numbers listed would seem more likely to represent rubles than dollars. Note also on the "SOLD" list is "gun & case." This could mean the shotgun Oswald owned in Russia. If this is a list of items sold by LHO in America, the implications of this entry could be great. The notebook itself is Russian.

If the list in CE 105 is related to the list in the address book and on the slip of paper, and represents an itemization of what Oswald sold before leaving RUSSIA, then perhaps the address book ~~xxx~~ list represents some items Oswald needed to buy or had bought before leaving, plus their price in rubles (I write this not knowing the exchange rate). Note that on the back of that page in the address book, Oswald apparently did some figuring of expenses for various means of getting back to the U.S. (16H69) So, perhaps the list was a part of Oswald's efforts to figure out his finances at the time he left Russia. This still would not really explain why the list was copied onto the slip of paper.

The ~~xxx~~ address book itself is confusing enough, but there are some interesting correlations between it and the slip of paper, with unmistakable implications of KGB connections.

Let's take the list that begins with Rosa and 92463. The next two entries on the list evidently come from page 59 of the address book (AB for short) (16H59) The next entry, concerning the Radio Factory

Experimental Shop where Oswald worked in Minsk, comes from p. 61 of the AB (16H60) The AP and UPI listing on the slip of paper also come from page 61 of the AB. There is also another listing on 61 which is crossed out: "Comrade Roman works at Karl Marx Technical Library." Comrade Roman is Roman Detkov, who appears on the list and whose business phone is listed at page 35 of the AB (16H50) The only other reference to Detkov that I can find is in the historic diary. Apparently when Oswald arrived ~~in~~ in Minsk and met the city mayor, with whom he conferred, Detkov was his interpreter (16H99--1/8/60 entry). (Interesting but probably not significant, is that Detkov's phone number is listed on the same page in AB as Mrs. Hal Davidson, mother of U.S. Embassy Doctor, Alexis, who apparently has U.S. intelligence connections) The next listing is Hotel Savoy Moscow, with number K42980. On page 33 of the AB this hotel is listed with the number K 41980 (16H33 48). There are 4 hotel listings in the AB that I have found, one of which was that just described on page 33. There are two other hotel "Savoy" listings, both for Hotel "Berlin", on pages 27 and 35. I'll return to that later. The listings following Detkov are in the AB but I cannot identify them. They are for Byadev, Kon. Narokhsov, and Sharapev. Sharapev's number on the list is 20525, but it is listed twice in the AB as 20575, on pages 45 and 81 (16H53, 65). (There is another time on the list that a "2" is mixed up with a "7". The Ass. Press number in the AB is 726430, page 61, 16H60, but on the list it is 776430.) The next list entry is that of Lev (misspelled Leo) Setyaev, Radio Moscow, with number V (B) 3 6588. This name appears in the AB at page 63 (16H61), and in fact is listed three times in a row. The first could be LHO's writing, but the next two definitely are not. This is interesting because the Report very matter-of-factly states that Lev "was probably working for the KGB," (R691) but never mentions the fact that his name appears in the AB in writing other than LHO's and on a list of names carried by Oswald in the U.S.

Keeping all this in mind, before I procede, note a memo dated 9/10/64 from CIA Dep. Dir. for Plans, Thomas Karamessines, to Rankin. (CE 2760, 26H145) The memo concerns "KGB Handling of Foreigners in the USSR." It notes that to fill its intelligence duties re foreigners, the KGB "makes extensive use of agents and informers drawn from among Soviet citizens with whom foreigners come in contact. For example, many if not all of the guides provided foreigners by Inturist...are KGB agents or informants. Hotel and restaurant personnel are also often used in this capacity by the KGB. Only certain restaurants and hotels in the major cities of the USSR are normally open to foreign visitors. A high percentage of the employees in these selected hotels and restaurants are KGB agents or informants."

With this in mind, the Intourist and hotel connections of the people with whom LHO was close in Russia may be quite significant. When LHO arrived in Russia he was met by Intourist and taken to the Hotel "Berlin." His Intourist guide was Rimma Sherikova. (16H94) "Rimma" is written at the bottom of page 63 of the AB (16H61). Her full name appears at page 81, where it is repeated several times (16H65). Also, at this point, the name "Sherakov" appears with phone number (I described it above because it is also on the slip of paper). I think it likely that Sherakov, listed by the translator

as a man, is really Rimma in a somewhat misspelled manner. Oswald apparently misspelled her last name in other ways as well. Rimma is supposedly the one who found him after his suicide attempt and brought him to the hospital. There he was visited by another Rosa, this one Rosa Agafonova from the tourist office. He apparently developed some sort of friendship with Rosa and Ludmilla Dimitrova, whom he described as "Intorist office head," and he spent new years 1959-60 with this Rosa (see 16H94-96). Both names appear in his AB. Rosa Agadonova, Hotel Berlin (Savoy) is on page 27 (16H46). On page 35 there appears this, apparently written by LHO: "Lyudmir Dmitrievna, Hotel "Berlin" (Savoy)." Under this is the entry for Roman Detkov (misspelled). Then, in someone else's handwriting, there appears "Dmitrieov Ludmila" and something else I can't decipher. (16H50). This is also the page on which Mrs. Davidson appears. I assume the three names are entered here because it is the page for the Russian letter corresponding to "D." When Oswald moved to Minsk, he became close with Rosa Kuznetsova, of Intourist and working at the Hotel Minsk. After LHO moved from ~~his~~ his first apt. in Minsk, he lost touch with Rosa, but became good friends with Pavel Golovacha. According to the Report, Oswald liked Pavel, who was a radio technician, helped Pavel learn English, and the two corresponded until Sept. 1963 (R698). The Report does not mention that Pavel's father "is Gen. Golovacha, Commander of Northwester Siberia. Twice hero of USSR in WW.2." (16H99) Pavel's listing in the AB is in Pavel's own handwriting (compare page 33 of AB, 16H49, with CE 42 and 79, letters to LHO from Pavel). Curiously, the listing above Pavel's is for "Hotel Savoy K 41980", which appears in a somewhat different form on the slip of paper list. Whether there is any relation between this and Pavel I can't tell. I can't imagine why the hotel would be listed on this page of the AB. Also curious is the name of a town or street "Zhdanova" which appears at the top of the page with an asterisk. A similar notation appears at the top of page 45 (16H53), which is an interesting page in itself. Most of the entries on it appear on the slip of paper list, including Rosa K. and "Sharapov" (another corruption of Rimma's last name?). It is interesting to note that Pavel's name comes up in one of the documents recently released by CIA, according to the Village Voice article. This was a 3/2/65 memo from CIA to Hoover, pointing out similarities in the backgrounds of (DELETED) and LHO. One of the similarities was that while ~~in~~ in Minsk, (DELETED) became acquainted with the son of a Soviet army general. The memo states: "It should be noted that Oswald listed among his close friends in Minsk a young Soviet named Pavel Golovachev, whose father ostensibly was a Soviet army general." Pavel and Rosa K attended a party for LHO's 21st birthday, and the three of them (with another woman) ~~was~~ were photographed together (CE 2609). Later Pavel sent Oswald a photo of him (Pavel) repairing a TV set (CE 3, "P5").

I'm not claiming to make any particular sense out of the contents of the list on the slip of paper. My attention focused on it primarily because Rosa K's phone number, ~~92436~~ 92463, appeared on the Ga-Jo hotel card supposedly found in Oswald's wallet. Without knowing more about how Oswald got that card, I can't imagine why Rosa's number would be written on it. What use would he have for it in the U.S.?

I welcome ideas and other information not reflected in this admittedly rambling memo.