

Reveries L.O. Fife

about saying the Rosenbergs, I still remember that."

He told reporters he then went on to read Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*. "It was," he said, "what I'd been looking for. It was like a very religious man opening the Bible for the first time."

After his interview with the press in Moscow, Oswald seemed to fade from public view. The American embassy in Moscow delayed formal acceptance of his renunciation of U.S. citizenship to give him time to think it over. Then, for some reason, Russia declined to confer Soviet citizenship on him, although he was told he could stay as a resident alien. He moved to Minsk and found a job.

More disillusionment

But Oswald's new religion of Marxism failed to satisfy him. Sixteen months after entering the Soviet Union, he initiated efforts to return home, only to find that the Soviets refused to expedite an exit visa. Two months later, Oswald complicated his problems by marrying a Russian girl named Marina Nicholaevna, a pharmacist in Minsk. Then he discovered that the Marine Corps, because of his attempt to renounce his U.S. citizenship, had issued him an "undesirable" discharge, and his irritations grew. On January 30, 1962, he wrote an angry letter to John Connally in Fort Worth, not realizing at the time that Connally had resigned his post as Secretary of the Navy weeks before to run for the governorship of Texas. In his letter Oswald promised that he would "employ all means to right this gross mistake or injustice to a bona fied [sic] U.S. citizen and ex-serviceman." He had gone to live in Russia, he wrote, "much in the same way as E. Hemingway resided in Paris."

Two weeks after that his wife gave birth to a daughter. The couple named the baby June Lee.

On May 24, 1962, the State Department renewed Oswald's U.S. passport, confirmed his citizenship and lent him \$435.71 to purchase passage home. The Oswalds left Rotterdam on June 4.

It was a warm, bright afternoon, June 13, 1962, when the Holland-America Line steamship *Maastdam* lowered its gangplank in Hoboken, N.J., and Lee Oswald set foot on American soil again. But the country had never heard of Oswald then, and Americans had their minds on other things. In Texas a man named Billie Sol Estes was testifying before a grand jury. In New York the movie *Lolita* was opening to mixed reviews. In Washington the President of the United States was lunching with President Roberto F. Chiari of Panama.

It seems hard to believe that Lee Oswald had any idea at the time that his fate and President Kennedy's were to collide 17 months later on a street in Dallas. Most likely Oswald felt only that he was coming home again, after still another failure to find his niche in life, to try once more to make a new start.

Moving his family to Dallas, Oswald worked at various jobs—starting, as usual, better than he ended. But somehow he managed to repay the State Department loan. In January of this year he was hired as a trainee with the Dallas advertising typographic firm of Jaggars, Chiles and Stoval.

In May, 1963, Lee Oswald lost his job. His explanation to associates was "they

didn't have enough work." But there was another reason. Said Bob Stoval, president of the firm, "He was supposed to learn how to make photographic prints, but he wasn't competent. He was discharged." Then Stoval added, in a now-familiar refrain, "He was a quiet person. He didn't have much to say to anybody. I guess he was a bit strange in that way."

The quiet man, the orderly person, the strange fellow—these were words some people used to describe Lee Oswald to the end. But beginning in May of this year more people began to see a glint of steel beneath the calm and soft exterior. Lee Oswald took his wife and child to New Orleans, where they rented an apartment at 4911 Magazine Street.

"He had a military manner, walked very erect, looked straight ahead and never paid any attention to anyone," said his landlord, Jesse James Garner. And he had ordered a gun—an Italian 6.5 rifle, later fitted with telescopic sights, for which he paid a Chicago mail-order house \$12.78. The rifle was sent to a Dallas post-office box, addressed to "A. Hidell."

Another person who knew him in New Orleans, Mrs. Doris Eames, a next-door neighbor, remembered. "He wouldn't associate with anybody, never had any friends. No one ever came there to visit. He would never return a greeting, so people stopped greeting him. His little wife was just the opposite. She seemed very friendly—except when he was around. He didn't seem to want her to mix with anyone."

For two months in New Orleans Oswald held a job as a maintenance worker in a coffee-processing plant. Then again he was dismissed. "He simply wasn't doing the job," his boss said. "He was bright, quiet, but often tough to find."

One place where Oswald was not difficult to find in New Orleans, according to singer Connie T. Kaye, was the city's French Quarter. "He used to hang out in the Bourbon House," she recalled. "And sometimes he'd go to the bar at Pat O'Briens, where I work. When the crowd was heavy, he'd push in where the twin pianos are and see the show without buying a drink. I had a run-in with him a couple of months ago. I have a gag in my routine, something about 'Castro that

Bastro.' That gets a laugh. Well, this particular time, after the show, I went over to the Bourbon House, and Oswald came up to me and said, 'What are you using that line for? What are you knocking Castro for?' I knew from the way he looked that I was dealing with a character so I got up and left."

But Oswald was not just another French Quarter character. On June 24 he applied for a passport—for use, he said, in the late fall—to travel in the Soviet Union, England, France, Germany, Holland, Finland, Italy and Poland as a "photographer." Despite his previous record in foreign travel he was—inexplicably—issued the passport the next day. Six weeks later he provided another glimpse of a new and different Oswald. He made an attempt to pass as a double agent.

Carlos Bringuier, a fiercely anti-Castro Cuban exile, recalls, "I met him around August fifth. He came to our office to ask in what way he could help us fight Castro. He wanted information about the activities of the Student Directorate. He said he was an ex-Marine with experience in guerrilla warfare and gave me a Marine guidebook with his name on it."

Bringuier gave Oswald nothing. At first he thought that Oswald was a secret agent who had been sent from the CIA or the FBI to infiltrate the exile organization and gather intelligence information about their anti-Castro activities.

Four days later a friend ran into Bringuier's office to say that an American citizen was distributing pro-Communist literature on Canal Street. Bringuier hurried to the scene. "I was shocked," he said. "It was Oswald. He had one sign that said VIVA FIDEL and another that read HANDS OFF CUBA. He tried to shake hands with me, but I refused and called him a traitor. We had a small fight, because we got all his propaganda and we threw it up in the air."

During the fight, Oswald displayed a steel nerve. "He saw I was trying to hit him, so he put his arms down and said, 'OK, Carlos. If you want to hit me, hit me.' But I thought if I hit him, he would appear as the victim, so I didn't."

The brief skirmish and the resulting publicity attracted the attention of news-

(text continued on page 26)



Moments after the shooting police sweep into the building from which the firing had come.

M E M O R A N D U M

April 23, 1968

TO: JIM GARRISON, District Attorney

FROM: JAMES ALCOCK and LOUIS IVON

RE: CONNIE T. KAYE

*John...
Kaye files
Archives
Security*

*To: Archives
FOI: Oswald and
Thornley files*

CONNIE T. KAYE, a vocalist at Pat O'Brien's, was interviewed in our office on April 19, 1968. The interview was conducted as a result of statements attributed to her in the December 14, 1963, issue of the Saturday Evening Post magazine.

MISS KAYE told us she saw OSWALD in Pat O'Brien's about two or three times. He would slip in the back and stand in a corner. He never purchased a drink. The times she saw him he was wearing a white sport shirt open at the collar. The shirt was somewhat soiled and he looked very haggard and emaciated. He looked, to her, like many of the French Quarter male prostitutes. He never seemed to be with anyone, however.

At the time, during her routine MISS KAYE would refer to FIDEL CASTRO as "that Bastro". After one performance in which she used this gag, she had a run-in with OSWALD at the Bourbon House. He, without invitation, interrupted her conversation to castigate her for knocking CASTRO. From his looks, she deduced he was a "character" and did not engage him in any debate or conversation. As she recalls, this incident happened sometime in September, 1963. OSWALD was wearing his usual attire (slacks and white sport shirt open at the collar) and he had what appeared to be a couple of days' growth of beard.

All told, MISS KAYE saw LEE OSWALD two or three times at Pat O'Brien's and one time at the Bourbon House. She is sure it was OSWALD, but said he was thinner than his pictures indicate.