

Marina suspects grave

Widow uncertain whether first husband

By DAN CARMICHAEL
United Press International

For the first time since the assassination of President John F. Kennedy 17 years ago, the accused assassin's widow has explained why she is "99 percent" sure his body no longer lies in its grave.

And why she is not certain whether the man she married — the man charged with Kennedy's death — really was Lee Harvey Oswald or an impostor.

On Nov. 22, 1963, a volley of bullets in downtown Dallas ended Kennedy's life and changed history. Oswald, or the man his wife knew as Oswald, was arrested that day for the shooting. Two days later he was shot to death by Jack Ruby.

Now Marina Oswald Porter, 39, the accused assassin's Soviet-born widow, who has remarried, says she is without a country, tired of hiding and adamant that her first husband's grave in Rose Hill Burial Park in Fort Worth be opened so she — and the world — will know the truth, whatever it is.

She thinks the body may have been removed from its grave on Good Friday 1964 just after she signed papers she didn't understand for a "respectful" man who said he was from the government.

IN THE 3-HOUR interview this month, Mrs. Porter spoke of her anguish in trying to live down the Oswald name for 17 years, and her bitterness toward Oswald's older brother, Robert, who has fought her in court against opening the grave.

Mrs. Porter's second husband, Kenneth, also took part in the interview, saying it was the first interview he has granted since he married Marina in 1965.

Porter, a carpenter, said he and his wife granted the interview in an attempt to get legal or other help because of their limited financial resources.



Marina Oswald Porter . . .
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"One of the main reasons we are here, talking to you now, is to more or less appeal to the public or to appeal to anyone, attorney or somebody willing to help," he said.

Mrs. Porter said, "I don't have much time anymore" and wanted the case resolved and the many questions answered in her lifetime.

"At this point it's very hard to believe" the grave will ever be opened, she said. "I'm tired of begging and hiding in the closet. I'm just going to demand."

"I hope the public is interested enough to push this case off the dead end, the dead stop," Mrs. Porter said. "It's not just for my personal benefit, but I think it's for the benefit of the American people. That's the presi-

dent we're talking about, the assassination.

"I demand my rights. I ask for a very simple thing — to open a very simple grave and see if the body still exists. I think that's the right of any human being.

"I really 99 percent do not believe that the body is there. It's not there," she said.

"I really want to demand that (the exhumation) to answer my questions. Seventeen years I waited. I did not make any trouble for 17 years. And now such a simple matter (is being thwarted.) Which according to the Warren Commission is simple.

"They 'proved' that it was Lee Harvey Oswald. They never believed in any kind of spying connection, (or) anything else. Isn't it better for even the government to prove their theory? Here's the possibility. If I were them, I would jump at the chance."

THE CASE of Oswald's grave was brought to a "dead stop" recently when his brother Robert Oswald obtained a temporary injunction in a Texas court against reopening the burial place.

Attorneys for British author Michael Eddowes, who says he has information Oswald was a Soviet impostor, have filed a notice of appeal against the temporary injunction. They are awaiting hearing dates for the appeal and also are seeking an expedited hearing. Otherwise, the appeal itself might not be heard for a long time.

In addition, Mrs. Porter's attorney is preparing a friend-of-the-court brief to bolster Eddowes' legal position.

Until recently, Mrs. Porter said, she accepted and trusted the official government version of the assassination as presented by the Warren Commission. She considered all the conspiracy theorists "loony."

In fact, she said, she first signed a form authorizing exhumation of the

empty was Oswald

Doubts on Oswald termed ridiculous

grave and autopsy of its remains because she thought it would disprove Eddowes' theory.

Mrs. Porter revealed for the first time that she signed the consent form only after Eddowes signed a promise that if his theory were disproven, he would make a public apology to the Oswald family and the U.S. public.

"I did not start all this to prove Lee's innocence," she said. "I did not believe in conspiracy theories before. But now I don't know what to believe. They (the government) had the facts and they told me the conclusions they came up with and I swallowed it just like a pill.

"I thought the conspiracy people were loony. But then I said 'Open the grave and see for yourself.' And all this opposition comes up. I don't know who's right or who's wrong or what. I would like to find out."

Her piercing blue eyes growing more intense, she said, "It's up to someone stronger than me to get to the bottom of this."

She said she is not positive — but suspects — that Robert Oswald may have been involved in opening the grave in the early 1960s and having the body taken elsewhere, perhaps for cremation.

"I do not know" if he was involved, she said.

"That's just a thought," she said. "But how can I prove it? I will know for sure when the grave is opened. Is it simple vandalism that nobody knew about it (a secret grave opening)? Then they shouldn't be protesting against opening the grave — if you don't have anything to hide."

She said she never expected Robert "to turn against me or to not respect my wishes." Had their situations been reversed, she said, "I would have never done that to him. If he was doing what I am doing and ex-

The former chief deputy counsel of the House Assassinations Committee said Friday it is "really ridiculous" for anyone to harbor doubts that Lee Harvey Oswald was buried in his designated grave in Fort Worth.

Cornwell said the committee assembled a panel of five of the nation's top handwriting experts to examine letters Oswald wrote before he defected to Russia in 1959, while he was in Russia and after he returned to the United States in 1962.

"All five experts concluded it was the same person who wrote all those letters," Cornwell said. "People go to jail all the time on handwriting, so you would think

it is relatively persuasive evidence."

Cornwell, former chief of the federal organized crime strike force in Kansas City, also said the committee hired fingerprint experts who matched the prints of Oswald taken as a Marine before he defected to those of the accused assassin in Dallas in 1963.

"They (pro-exhumation forces) totally ignore what the select committee had done," Cornwell said.

The committee's term expired at the end of 1978. The panel found the assassination was probably the result of a conspiracy basically on acoustical evidence showing the sound of four shots.

— EARL GOLZ

plained it to me, I would respect him for it

"If Robert is going to suffer all that mental anguish (if the grave is opened)," she said, "then he can take some tranquilizers and go to bed for awhile. Can you imagine what I've had to go through for 17 years?"

Robert, contacted at Wichita Falls, Texas, said he "would not be interested" in commenting.

Mrs. Porter said she was sad to suspect Robert of being less than candid about his motives in preventing opening of the grave.

"But he brings this all on himself," she said. She said he told her over the phone that the grave would be opened only "over my dead body."

Her attorney, she said, "wants to do everything quietly, the civilized way. I'm all for it, too. But it doesn't get me anywhere. He said, 'Keep quiet, be thick-skinned.' Well, I'm sorry, my skin is getting thinner and thinner by the minute. How long can one take abuse?"

MRS. OSWALD IS CERTAIN that

the man she married in Russia is the same man who was shot by Ruby and buried in Fort Worth. But now she isn't sure that man was, in fact, who he said he was — Lee Harvey Oswald, the U.S. Marine who went to Russia in 1959.

"I did not know him when he was 14, or 8 or 17 years old," she said. "So how can I testify (to his actual identity)? Legally, I can't. . . . I really rightfully cannot say that that's the man, Lee Harvey Oswald, that's the man I met in Russia who claimed, I mean said, that he was Lee Harvey Oswald and that's the same man that was buried right here.

"It's up to people who knew him longer to say that he was Lee Harvey Oswald," she said.

Her husband, a carpenter, quickly said: "The two people that could positively identify him as Lee Harvey Oswald are his mother and Robert, and Robert is the one giving all the

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