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FACE TO FACE WITH MURPHY MARTIN  
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Interview with Robert Oswald  
By Murphy Martin  
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Martin..Robert, why did you write this book?

Oswald..There's alot of reasons why. I proceeded with the book, number one, and foremost in my mind, I have two fine children and i wanted them to have this book of mine to review and to consider along with everything else that has been written on the assassination. Number two, I felt that it was a duty as far as I'm personally concerned to proceed with this. There are some areas in there that are very difficult to cover and to write about frankly, as I have. But I could no longer side step these issues. And basically, it was his going back and reviewing the entire thinking on my behalf of what I considered was pertinent and how I evaluated my final conclusion that I did accept the Warren Commission's final conclusion that Lee did in fact, assassinate the President of the United States and kill Officer Tippit.

Martin..Robert, I've read the book, it's a very good book, you leave the very definite impression in the book, I think, that your mother must share some of the responsibility for the way Lee Harvey thought, and his attitudes. Am I correct in this assumption?

Oswald..Yes, you are. As I started to ask myself the major question of why Lee did, in fact, assassinate the President of the United States and kill Officer Tippit. I had to go back and review his entire life and my life with him, and my older brothers life with him and see why John and I were different from Lee. Now, going back, to the very day he was born,

in looking at everything that I could find and read and recall, it comes out in the final end, really, that the one adult in Lee's life, is my mother, and it dominates his entire life. I can no longer sidestep this fact, her peculiarities, her domination, of all of us. She did in fact, really alienate herself from all three of us. We did in fact, from my standpoint, become a burden to her at very early age. And, to cover that point a little bit more, it was not really the loving atmosphere that I have with my family and my children. It was the atmosphere of the bare essentials that she would furnish us, and that was it. So, hence it comes out as we were a burden to her and she just did the bare minimum essentials that she could do.

Martin..As I read your book, and as you talk of your mother in this book, I get the impression that the reason that the reason perhaps that you feel you and your older brother were different from Lee was the fact that you were not around your mother nearly as much as Lee Harvey was around her. Is that the point that you were getting across?

Oswald..Right, that is correct. Because as you go back through all three of our lives, all three of us boys, the thing that comes up, John and I were very fortunate, John is two years older than me, and we were very close, we still are. But John had his father, and my father, and I had my father for five years. Now Lee never did know his father, and at a very early age both John and I were put first in one orphan home then another. And at the age of three, Lee was placed in the same orphan home with us. Shortly thereafter, mother married for the third time, and for the very first time in Lee's life, he had a father around the

house. I think that this is very important, because this lasted for a very short time in Lee's life, and I think that it had a devastating effect when they did finally end up in divorce because Lee was there during the arguments and everything else that incurred. John and I were not, John and I were in military school during this marriage, and we saw them just on visits and Christmas time and so forth during vacation period. Mr. Ekdahl was very kind to all three of us, and I think that it had a very important effect on Lee's life at that time.

Martin..Mr. Ekdahl was your mothers third husband?

Oswald..That's correct. Now I think Lee, if he would have had the opportunity that John and I had of going to the military school that we did or a similar type school where other adults had a opportunity to mold and influence him I don't believe there would have been an assassination on the 22nd of November.

Martin..Have you seen your mother, do you see your mother very often these days?

Oswald..No, I have not, I haven't seen my mother in a number of years. There's been constant, oh, I'll call them constant, telephone calls from her. During the period of the assassination. We have always been at odds, it's not something that occurred because of the assassination, this has broadened the gap between us.

Martin..I'm sure the fact this woman is your mother and there must be the normal love that one has for a parent. Did you find it difficult to have to write and to say these things about your mother that you feel you must.

Oswald..Well, extremely so. It was very difficult for me to do this, but in one sense of the word, I have confirmed what alot of other

individuals already realized, and as time goes on, more and more people have realized the peculiarities of my mother.

Martin..Robert, we sat in these same studios back in September of 1964, the day that the Warren Commission Report was made public. At that time, of course, you said as you said a moment ago that you felt that your brother did, in fact kill the President and Officer Tippit. But has anything happened since September of 1964? Do you have any questions today that you did not have then, when the Warren Commission Report came out?

Oswald..Yes, I do, Murphy. I don't claim to be an expert on the Warren Commission Report or anything else, for that matter. But there is an area, other than my knowledge, my personal knowledge, of Lee's habits, and going back and studying the areas that was a void to me for many years. But there is one area, and that's the area of Lee's capability as a rifleman. Now, we hunted together a few times. Lee, in fact, never used a high powered bolt action rifle before in his life.

Martin..To your knowledge, you hunted and so forth.

Oswald..To my knowledge, right. And my research has confirmed this, that no one has said that, look, Lee and I were out hunting on such and such date, you know, two, five years ago, whatever it was, you know, before the assassination. He never, in fact, used a telescopic sight on a rifle before. Now, here is two things that he had to get accustomed to. He had to practice and this is one area where I say that the Commission did not establish. They had 6 people that testified that Lee was seen practicing at a rifle range in Irving, Texas. Now, for some reason or another, the Commission sets this aside. Well, I think that's all well and good, if he didn't practice there, he practiced

somewhere. So, I know, I feel that he definitely had to practice. Well, if you get area, you get into an area of, because Lee did not drive an automobile, you get into the area of transportation. How and when did he go someplace to practice with his rifle? He had to consistently do this. Now, they base his ability as a rifleman mainly on his Marine Corps experience. When he qualified in Marine Corps boot camp, in 1956, he was out there for a week firing 50 rounds a day for 5 days to qualify. He did good to qualify as an expert, I believe it was a 212, where a 210 takes to qualify. A year and a half later, with the same caliber rifle, not the same identical rifle, but the same type of rifle. He does good to make a marksman. This points out to me that he had the ability to learn and to fire the required ability that was used on the 22nd of November. But he had to practice to acquire this, he did not have the innate ability to pick up a weapon of this nature and fire within the time, or the approximate time that is established by the Warren Commission.

Martin..Robert, there are some people in this country who say that the Warren Commission investigation should be reopened. There's one man in particular, Jim Garrison, District Attorney of New Orleans, who has an investigation of his own going, as a matter of fact, he was on this program last week, coming up with what he called new evidence and a new theory. I showed you over in Dealy Plaza where that phase of his theory was, you got down into the manhole and you looked out through the gutter at the curb. What do you think of the Jim Garrison investigation in general, and in particularly this new theory of his?

Oswald..Well, in general, let me express this, Murphy, that I think that we will always be faced with these theorys and new theorys

continually through our lifetime with regards to the assassination.

Now, I think if someone, Jim Garrison or anybody else can concretely produce significant evidence that warrants the reopening of the quote, "Warren Commission" unquote, I think it should be done, perhaps on a legislative basis, I do not know.

And I'm prepared at any time to accept any concrete evidence that will prove that, perhaps, Lee wasn't involved, or other people were involved. But at this particular time, I conclude that Lee alone fired the three shots that killed the President.

Martin..You have seen, in other words, no concrete evidence that would make you change this?

Oswald..No, I have not.

Martin..You, at one time expressed to me that you wondered, I believe you phrased it by saying that you would like to know, no, I believe you said that you felt that someone consciously or subconsciously placed the thought to do this in Lee's mind. Do you still feel this way?

Oswald..Yes, I do. I think this deals a lot in the area of his rifle capability and everything. From this standpoint, let's go back to the Walker <sup>incident</sup> instance in April of 1963. Now, why eventhough he was taking photographs of Walker's house and so forth, it was quite obvious that he was planning something. Now, to what extent we don't know, we will never know. So, let's speculate for a minute there on that. Was it the final act of actually firing at General Walker, was that produced because somebody else agreed with him? Or disagreed with him? Why did he finally take this final step to proceed with this? This is a question in my mind. And I think to understand this question and to understand more about the assassination on November 22nd, you have to understand

and study the individuals that we know Lee knew. I think that this is important, I do not have the answers to these questions.

Martin..You have studied some of those individuals, though perhaps.

Have you arrived at any conclusions about any of the people that he was associated with and so forth. Do you think that some of those people were a bad influence on Lee?

Oswald..I think that this is a strong possibility. And I think that someone should study these people to a great extent and to question them to a further extent that what has been done to date. And see, because as I study Lee's life, his entire life, and as I come up to the last year of his life, I find him highly susceptible to influences outside his own thinking. He was reaching for something, he was searching for something. Now, if somebody happened to agree with one of his far ideas or something, or really disagree with him, somebody he really looked up to as a father image or something, they could either agree or disagree I think it could have the same effect on him.

Martin..Robert, how much did Lee change from the brother you knew prior to his going to Russia and the brother you knew after he returned from Russia?

Oswald..Well, I think I was quite shocked when he did go to Russia, I couldn't understand why, this was something that you would not expect of him and so forth. When he did return there was no noticeable change to me, I felt at the time that he went, after he wrote a letter in early December, 1959, that he was no longer going to have any contact with me, or write us.

Martin..He wrote you from Russia?

Oswald..Right, from Russia, that he was severing all contacts from his family and so forth. And I commented to my wife then, that I said

that it would take about a year and he would be back. Well, I missed it by a little bit, but I had a feeling then, that he would finally realize whatever he thought was ideal situation over there, he would finally realize that it was not so, and he would come back. And when he did come back I was not so very surprised, I was surprised that he brought a wife back with him. Of course, we had knowledge about this about a year before he came back. But I felt like, well, he had sewn his wild oats over there, in a matter of speaking. And he had come back, and I expected that he would just settle down to a normal life.

Martin..I believe, in your book, you point out that, when you met him at Love Field, met him with his wife, that, as he got off the plane, one of the things he said, "What, no reporters here?". Was that something new, a new attitude for him to express?

Oswald..Well, he was a little bit concerned, I had expressed myself during 1959 to various reporters, of not understand why Lee had gone over there. And, he had written from Russia when he found out for sure that he was coming back and approximately when, and asked me to not comment to news people, and, of course I didn't have time to answer him back on that, but I went along with his wishes and some of them had learned that he was due to be back, and I managed to keep it quite. But he did seem a little bit surprised that they were not out at Love Field when he arrived. Now, I didn't think too much of it at the time and I still don't. Other than this, I think that definitely he was disappointed that they were not there.

Martin..Robert, tell us what went on in those immediate hours following the assassination. Of course, you learned about it while having lunch at a resturant in Denton where you were living at the time. And



then tell us what happened after you got to Dallas, and about going to the jail, and finally, getting to see and talk briefly with Lee, tell us about that, if you would.

Oswald..Well, it was pretty difficult, really to get into to see Lee, this covering quite detailed in the book. I first came to Dallas, and before leaving Denton I had received word that the FBI had contacted our Ft. Worth office wanting to talk with me, and I had called them and told them that I was coming to Dallas, and asked me to come up here and speak with the FBI here, which I agreed to do and which I did just as soon as I came to town. I spent about an hour or so up there being interviewed, wanting to know when the last time I saw Lee, and so forth like this, you know. From there, I went to the Dallas jail, where I met Captain Fritz and...

Martin..The City Jail?

Oswald..Right, The City Jail, Captain Fritz and Chief Curry there, they indicated that they would like to talk to me, but I never did manage to get around to this conversation with the, at that particular time. The next day, finally, after quite a delay, I did..

Martin..This was Saturday?

Oswald..Right, Saturday, the 23rd of November, I did receive a pass to go up to see Lee, and we had a conversation that lasted for approximately 8 to 10 minutes. And, of course, the very first thing he said to me, when we pick up the telephones that we were speaking...

Martin..There was a partition separating you, you were looking at each other through a glass and talking on the phone?

Oswald..Right, right, that this is taped, you know, and this was the..

Martin..He said it was taped?

Oswald..Right, he said it was taped. And this was the setting we was in. And it wasn't a conversation that either one of us felt real easy

with from the standpoint that perhaps this was so, you know, I half expected it myself and I'm sure he felt like it definitely was, even though we later learned that it was not. But, during the conversation, as we talked along there, the one thing that really has stuck with me during that, and his talking is that he was very unconcerned, he talked originally in the first part of the conversation, very mechanical to me, and I had to interrupt him, to sort of get him back down to earth. And, we started talking about a lot of different things, and I did ask him point blank, to the effect of "What in the Sam Hill is going on?" and, from that point on we went in, I pointed out to him, they have your rifle, they have your pistol, and his comment was, "Well, brother, don't believe this so called evidence." And this is more or less, the general text of the conversation that we went into. I do feel, and I still do now, had I been allowed, the next two or three days, or a week or so, of having a conversation with him of 30 or 40 minutes, in an atmosphere where he felt comfortable, and free to talk with me, I think I would have found out, for myself, at least, some reason why he was involved with the assassination.

Martin..While you were there talking to him at the Dallas City Jail, I believe you told me at one time you looked into his eyes. He knew you were looking into his eyes, and what did he say to you?

Oswald..He said, "Brother, you won't find anything there." And, that was the truth, there was no expression, there was no guilt, there was simply nothing, no type of expression within his eyes.

Martin..Within hours after the assassination, I believe, Federal Authorities took you, Marina, and your mother to the Inn of the Six Flags. And they detained you there for how many days? And what went on there while out at the Inn of the Six Flags?

Oswald..Well, the reason we left from Parkland Hospital after Lee was killed, from the hospital to the Inn of the Six Flags, we did not know the destination at that particular time. And we did stay from that Sunday afternoon, I stayed until Friday evening, the day after Thanksgiving, and Marina left the next morning, my mother had left the day before, on Thanksgiving day, I believe, or perhaps Wednesday night, I'm not real sure. But, that was a very difficult situation out there, we were cut off, for the most part, as to what was going on and what was happening.

Martin..You couldn't read newspapers, or watch television?

Oswald..Right, this was applicable during Sunday and Monday especially, even though on Monday morning Marina found out that the President's funeral was going to be on television, she wanted to watch it, and we both watched it over some mild objections of the Secret Service, they didn't think this was a good thing. The difficulties that arose out there with Lee's funeral arrangements, and everything are covered in the book, this is another area that was difficult for me, things didn't go along as we, as I had planned, as arranged. First there was the problem of having a minister, and this was quite..

Martin..You contacted several before you found one that would perform the service.

Oswald..Right, and then the one that agreed to perform the services did not show up and the very capable The Reverend Mr. Sanders appeared on his own accord out there and officiated at the simple service that were held. I did not appreciate, at that time, under the circumstances, what I'll call the invasion of privacy by the news media that were out there. I had in mind a private, family type funeral, and I did not appreciate this even though they conducted themselves very well, I still felt that this was an invasion in privacy, it was very hard

for me to understand it then.

Martin..I was there, Robert, I remember just as before the service ended, and in the book, I believe you say that you asked the Secret Service and the Ft. Worth police, asked all the members of the press to move back, and we moved back beyond a given line, not the given line, but a distance away. Because you did want some privacy, and I agree wholeheartedly that you should have had some privacy. After the funeral service, you went back to the Inn of the Six Flags and the questioning continued. What point in there, did the Secret Service move out and the FBI move in at the Inn of the Six Flags?

Oswald..Well, actually, there was no point that it changed completely, it was on the Wednesday of that week before the FBI actually showed up out there to interview, specifically, Marina. Prior to that time, and after that they were just out there on an interview type basis with Marina, on two occasions. The first occasion, now, she was not willing to talk with them. And they were implying that perhaps she would be deported, and Marina did have the fear of this, she wasn't quite sure what exactly her legal position was in this country, and everything.

Martin..So, she was not a citizen?

Oswald..Right, and finally, I think we was able, through an interrupter to insure her that as long as she conducted herself as a responsible citizen, a responsible individual, and was not involved with this or had any prior knowledge of it, I think there was no danger of her being deported. Finally, she did agree to talk with the FBI and she did proceed with them. Now, prior to that, she had given complete cooperation to the Secret Service out there, their approach was a person to person basis (Over Martin: Right.) where the FBI approach, uh, I couldn't quite understand, because, they were very

cold, and very factual, and it wasn't conducive as far as I'm concerned, as being willing to talk to 'em. And it was very difficult for her to talk to someone of this nature at the particular time.

Martin..During this period of time, Robert, did you have concern for your, the members of your immediate family, your wife and two children?

Oswald..Well, I'd, before I left Denton on the 22nd, Murphy, I had arranged for my wife and children to be taken to my in-laws in Weis County. And I felt that they were perfectly safe out there. Uh, there was area of, that I was concerned with of possible dangers to the family, not only my personal family, but Marina and my mother and so forth. And this was over, perhaps over emphasised to us, or to me out there at the Inn of the Six Flags, due to the precautionary actions that the Secret Service had taken for our safeguards. A number of guards were posted, we were always very close to the Secret Service Agents that were protecting us, and they were very alert to this and also the Arlington police officers that were out there. And it gave an atmosphere of possible danger, you know.

Martin..Robert, you are the brother of the man the Warren Commission says, and you believe, killed the President and Officer Tippitt. You have never, at any time, tried to run from the situation. You have maintained, I believe, a listed telephone number, uh, how difficult has it been to do this, being the brother, the man with the same name, Oswald. Uh, how much pressure is applied on you as you go about your daily chores, in a responsible job, sales manager of a brick firm. What problems are encountered by you?

Oswald..Murphy, it has been very gratifying to me and to my wife and to my family that at very early stages, after the assassination, that our friends, our acquaintances, my business associates, they came forward, without exception, hardly, without hesitation, you know. And

gave us their support, their moral support, they let us know that they were available to assist in any way possible. And it was very, very interesting to me, and it has from this standpoint. We had moved into Denton, Texas area approximately two months before this had happened. We really wasn't acquainted with our neighbors to any great extent, only the business associates there in Denton. And it was a college town, you know, and you felt, well, boy, you gonna be gettin' alot of calls, alot of crank calls, alot of bad letters and things of this nature. This never happened. It was just the complete opposite, people just seemed to accept us, as I think it should be in the final analysis, as individuals. And as long as we were responsible individuals, there was no reason in the world to hold anything against us.

Martin..Robert, would you like to see your mother admit publicly, accept the Warren Commission report? Do you think it would be good for the country, and would you feel better about it when she does? Or, do you feel that she has already done this inwardly, but just has not admitted it publicly.

Oswald..Well, I think that she has done this inwardly, and I think that, through one statement that I son't try to quote her on directly, has admitted it publicly. And this statement goes to the effect that "I'll tell you something, Mr. President Johnson, that, were it not for the grace of God, and me, and my son's action you would not be where you are", words to this effect. When you analyse that, she says 'my son's action', what does that mean?

Martin..Right. Robert, what about your youngsters, you have written the book, you say you want to leave a record for them. And you have done so with this book, but do the youngsters, because they are young, and youngsters are youngsters, do they have any problems from associates

In school, a playmate or anything, because they are the niece and nephew of Lee Harvey Oswald?

Oswald..Not to any great extent, children being what they are, there has been a couple of comments that they were made to them in both my daughter and my son, both come home from school and say, well, somebody said something about Jack Ruby killing his uncle or something like this. They know, they feel this and they understand it. The one thing that I am particularly proud of when my daughter realized what I was doing in writing the book, as to what it covered and so forth, generally, you know. She said quote, "Daddy, I'm proud of you" unquote, and I could ask for nothing more than that.

Martin..Robert, we want to thank you for stopping by to visit with us today (Oswald..thank you), and we want to thank you. Thats our time, thank you for yours.