

had left Russia, Oswald replied, "Because I did not find what I was looking for."

Q. And did you ask him what he was looking for?  
A. A Utopia. I knew what he was looking for—Utopia.

A manuscript found among Oswald's belongings shows that he did, indeed, have visions of forming a party and was constructing his own Marxist doctrine. In a long, rambling discussion on politics, he wrote:

It is readily foreseeable that a coming economic, political or military crisis, internal or external, will bring about the final destruction of the capitalist system; assuming this, we can see how preparation in a special party could safeguard an independent course of action after the debacle.

He proposed a new system of pure communism controlled at the local level, with civil liberties, heavy taxes on profits but none on individuals, an abolition of fascist organizations and racial discrimination, and strict gun controls. His idealistic goals were teamed with a grandiose fanaticism that de Mohrenschildt apparently never detected:

Resourcefulness and patient working towards the aforesaid goals are preferred rather than loud and useless manifestations of protest. Silent observance of our principles is of primary importance. But these preferred tactics now, may prove to be too limited in the near future, they should not be confused with slowness, indecision or fear, only the intellectually fearless could even be remotely attracted to our doctrine, and yet this doctrine requires the utmost restraint, a state of being in itself majestic in power. . . . Membership in this organization implies adherence to the principle of simple distribution of information about this movement to others and acceptance of the idea of stoical readiness in regards to practical measures once instituted in the crisis.

Years later, de Mohrenschildt wrote a manuscript about Oswald that was published in the House Assassinations Committee hearings. In it he said, "What I liked about him was that he was a seeker for justice—that he had highly developed social instincts. And I was disappointed in my own children for the lack of such instincts." His manuscript described many of their conversations, as de Mohrenschildt remembered them. Although his account may not be entirely reliable—de Mohrenschildt was known to exaggerate—it may still provide some revealing insights into Oswald's thinking.

*Why did she put to my of the exact that she K 11/11/63  
I was read plenty after the power of psychokinetic communication*

De Mohrenschildt wrote that Oswald had been disappointed by his reception as a defector because he had naively expected "to be treated as a special person, a prominent refugee, and nothing happened." Oswald admitted that living conditions in Russia were poor. "But what does it matter," he said, "if everyone is in the same boat, if everyone suffers." At least there were no rich exploiters there. Oswald said, and no great contrast between the rich and the poor. He said he got out of Russia "because all bureaucrats, all over the world, are stupid." Here, in de Mohrenschildt's words, are Oswald's opinions on other subjects:

*On integration:* Lee's faith, his strongest belief was—racial integration. He told me on many occasions, "It hurts me that the blacks do not have the same privileges and rights as white Americans." "Segregation in any form, racial, social or economic, is one of the most repulsive facts of American life. . . . I would be willing any time to fight these fascist segregationists—and to die for my black brothers." Because of his poor, miserable childhood, he probably compared himself to the blacks.

*On world politics:* "Under dictatorship people are enslaved but they know it. Here the politicians constantly lie to people and they become immune to these lies because they have the privilege of voting. But voting is rigged and democracy here is a gigantic profusion of lies and clever brainwashing. . . . Free people should not remain mere pawns in the world game of chess played by the rulers."

*On J. Edgar Hoover:* Also he said something about the FBI which did not strike me at the time as very clever, but history proved his judgment correct. "Knowledge is a great power, especially if you know it about very important people." Obviously J. Edgar Hoover's files must come to your mind.

*On death:* "I have had enough time in this short existence of mine. What shall I do with eternity? When a rich man dies, he is loaded with his possessions like a prisoner with chains. I will die free, death will be easy for me."

*On Marina:* "I never wanted a middle-class wife, mediocre, obscure, money loving. . . ."  
George seemed to agree with this opinion of Marina. He wrote that he found no "substance" in her: "She was amusing sometimes, witty, naive mostly, like some Russian peasants, yet with a great deal of shrewdness underneath. My wife used to call her affectionately 'that racial Marina'—and that description fitted her perfectly."  
According to de Mohrenschildt, Oswald "thought that someday

there would be a 'coup d'etat' in this country organized by the Pentagon and that the country would become a militaristic, nazi-type dictatorship."

Concerning President Kennedy, de Mohrenschildt wrote, "Lee actually admired President Kennedy in his own reserved way." He recalled Oswald praising a picture of Kennedy on the cover of *Time* and remarking on how different he looked from "the other raty politicians." He said that Oswald hoped Kennedy would accept coexistence with the Communist world after the Bay of Pigs.

De Mohrenschildt said he told Oswald, "If you want to be a revolutionary, you have to be a fool or to have an inspiration. And your actions will be judged by the success or failure of your life"—and Oswald agreed. But he also claimed that he urged Oswald to be more flexible, saying, "Live pleasantly and keep your own ideology to yourself." And to that Lee replied, "You are right. But this society we live in, it's so disgusting and degrading. How can you stand it?"

The approving audience Lee Oswald received from this eccentric but sophisticated man was undoubtedly encouraging to him. During this time, de Mohrenschildt spoke highly of Oswald to at least one acquaintance, who testified, "According to George, . . . he had great intellectual powers; he was a very clever person . . . and very well-read. . . . He told me on several occasions that . . . he's just an idealistic Marxist."

In September 1962 a black student named James Meredith tried to enroll in the all-white University of Mississippi at Oxford. On the evening of September 30, a mob of segregationists rioted against the federal marshalls who were protecting Meredith on campus. Two people were killed, and after President Kennedy called out the National Guard, former Major General Edwin A. Walker, who was believed to have instigated the riot, was arrested for insurrection. This latest violence in the struggle for civil rights in the South made headlines around the world.

Walker had resigned from his army command in West Germany in 1961 after being reprimanded for trying to indoctrinate his troops with the rightist philosophy of the John Birch Society. Since then he had become a national political figure speaking against integration and Castro's Cuba. His home base was Dallas. Oswald was aware of Walker's history. At some point, when Oswald wrote up his theory that a military coup was possible in America, he argued that the army had too many conscripts and bases to lead a coup, and that "The case

of General Walker shows that the Army . . . is not fertile enough ground for a far-right regime to go a very long way." He contended that the coup might come instead from the smaller Marine Corps—"a right-wing-infiltrated organization of dire potential consequences to the freedom of the United States." He concluded, "I agree with former President Truman when he said that 'The Marine Corps should be abolished.'"

After Walker's arrest, the news media followed him closely. He was released on \$50,000 bond on October 7 and arrived at Love Field, where he was greeted by two hundred supporters. During the next few months, Walker would repeatedly make headlines as he prepared to stand trial in Mississippi.

As it happened, a group of the émigrés came to Oswald's apartment on the same Sunday Walker returned, and Oswald announced that he had been laid off from his job. (This was, in fact, untrue. His employer was satisfied with his performance. Oswald was simply planning to quit.) Feeling sorry for Marina and the baby, the émigrés offered to help. It was settled that Marina and June would move in with de Mohrenschildt's daughter Alexandra and her husband Gary Taylor for a few days, and then go to live with Elena Hall while Oswald went to Dallas to look for another job.

There were evidently several reasons behind his decision to move to Dallas. He probably wanted to live in a city where the FBI didn't know his address. And he wanted to get away from Marguerite, who had been visiting his family despite his strong objections. He didn't tell her where he was going and didn't see her again until after the assassination. And, just possibly, he may have already turned his attention to the right-wing leader, General Walker.

On arriving in Dallas the following Tuesday, Oswald rented a box at the main post office. A few days later he got a job at a graphic arts firm, Jaggars-Chiles-Stovall, as a trainee in photographic reproduction. Making no reference to Fort Worth, he told his new boss he had recently gotten out of the Marines.

Oswald began receiving his copies of *The Worker* at the post office. In the October 2 edition there was an appeal for support for two Communist party officials who were being prosecuted after failing to register under the McCarran Act. The article spoke of the work being done by the Gus Hall-Ben Davis Defense Committee with John Abt as chief counsel. The committee's address was given with the comment that it needed and invited financial support. After Oswald began working at Jaggars-Chiles-Stovall, he made up some poster-like blow-

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ups of an anti-McCarren Act slogan and sent them to the defense committee as a contribution. On the front page of the same issue, big headlines proclaimed: "Gen. Walker Arrested for Insurrection" and, alongside:

Nation Supports the President's Action  
Punish the Guilty!  
Gov. Barnett      Gen. Walker  
White Citizens Council

One year ago on Nov. 12, 1961 *The Worker* exposed the fascist character of Gen. Edwin A. Walker and warned the Kennedy administration and the American people of the need for action against him and his allies. A front-page article asserted:

"The general thus becomes the first open candidate for leadership of the mass movement which the military-monopolist-pro-fascist plotters are now hoping to organize throughout the nation. . . ."

Critical of the "indecisiveness of the Kennedy administration in this situation," *The Worker* insisted last November that "firmness is essential" to defeat the ultra-Rightists. . . .

In the October 7 issue another front-page story, headlined "Gen. Walker Bids for Fuehrer Role," again warned "the Kennedy Administration and the American people of the need for action against him and his allies." Two weeks later an article, headlined "Oxford Campus Plot for Bloodbath Bared," contained the assertion that "a coded file, arms and other materials" found in a car driven by one of Walker's cronies would reveal that "financial backers of extreme right wing groups" were "seeking the violent overthrow of the government."

Oswald probably read, and agreed with, a good deal of this. After his attempt to murder Walker the following April he told Marina he did it because Walker was another Hitler and by killing Hitler in time many lives could have been saved. Nothing in *The Worker's* call for political action advocated violence. Many other American newspaper editorials were saying much the same thing about Walker. Oswald already had his own ideas about the former army general. In his view, the man must have had three strikes against him—he opposed fair play for black Americans, he opposed Castro to the extent of calling for an invasion of Cuba, and he was a potential leader of a right-wing coup. But as we'll see, Oswald evidently came to believe that he could become a hero to the Left by doing away with him.

She had no wife or spouse or two because it is not true that she needs money to make the Dallas paper and still want weapons, FBI kept under arrest

## 8... Taking Action

FOR most of October and part of November 1962, when Oswald was living alone in Dallas, Marina and June were dependent on the charity of the Taylors and the Halls. From this time onward his family would stay almost a third of the time with other people. When Oswald came to visit Marina at the Taylors, their relationship seemed so impersonal to Gary that he thought it was "like two friends meeting." Oswald would play with his daughter but never attempted to be alone with his wife. Taylor decided Marina's feelings simply weren't important to him.

In fact, the Oswald marriage had been strained ever since the couple arrived in the United States. In Fort Worth, Oswald had struck his wife, giving her a black eye, for allowing Bouhe to teach her some English. This was only one of the ways in which he tried to exert his control over her. He was often rude and overbearing to his wife in front of other people, ordering her around in a domineering voice. As a teenager, he had yelled orders at his mother in the same manner.

Most of their quarreling reflected their differences over his obsession with politics. Although Marina agreed with some of his views—she admired Castro, too—she felt the family should come first. To Oswald, such mundane concerns were bourgeois and stupid. She thought he had—as a later friend of Marina's would put it—"an overblown opinion of himself, and of what he could and should achieve in the world." He in turn complained about her lack of interest in politics. One of the émigrés, Kalya Ford, was questioned about the Oswalds' relationship:

Q. Did she tell you whether or not they discussed politics?  
A. She said she was arguing with him about that. Certainly, in fact, [as] he called her, she was a typical American girl, . . . not interested at all in politics. . . . She said she wanted a house and family and he said "All the American girls think that way" . . .

For the rest of their life together, Marina would continually wonder whether Lee loved her or not and would continue to hope he would give up this rival, politics, and settle down.

Occasionally Oswald would get into some friendly political arguments with the Taylors. He talked about the ideal society he had written about. Alexandra said, "He believed in the perfect government, free of want and need, and free of taxation, free of discrimination, free of any police force . . . total and complete freedom in everything." She felt he was "extremely devoted" to his ideas and "very, very rigid." And she found him persuasive: "He could almost make anybody believe what he was saying." But her overall opinion was negative. She thought he expected things to be given to him on a silver platter.

Gary Taylor was a Democrat who often expressed a strong disapproval of the John Birch Society, but there was little else he and Oswald could agree on. He gathered that Marina's husband was pro-Communist but anti-Russian, and that Oswald was disappointed when the Russians assigned him to a factory job instead of giving him "something important to do."

Max Clark, a Fort Worth attorney and friend of George de Mohrenschildt, met Oswald at about this time and got a similar impression about Oswald's ambitions and his reasons for leaving the Soviet Union. Oswald told him he had been unhappy about his work assignment in Minsk and had finally made up his mind that the Russian system was not "true communism" and that he would "never be able to get ahead or make his mark" in the Soviet Union. Clark told the Warren Commission that Oswald "seemed to have the idea that he was made for something other than what he was doing."

In October 1962 a serious international crisis developed over the introduction of Soviet nuclear missiles into Cuba. In a dramatic television appearance President Kennedy announced that he had ordered a naval blockade to prevent Soviet ships carrying more missiles from entering Cuban waters. After almost two weeks of worldwide fear of a nuclear war the confrontation ended on October 28, when the Soviet Union agreed to withdraw the missiles—over the strong protest of

*Q. Does she tell why he left the USSR? Because they like to do something which amounts to a lie? Because they like to do something to the extent she is telling me that all the actual revolution made of the USSR is done on the part of the USSR?*

Fidel Castro.

We have only a glimpse of Lee Harvey Oswald's reaction to this crisis. According to one man who met him at a party the following February, after citing the Bay of Pigs and the missile crisis as examples of imperialist interventions, Oswald suggested that Kennedy's actions had set the stage for a nuclear holocaust. He added that even after the missiles had been withdrawn, American-sponsored acts of terrorism and sabotage against Cuba were continuing. This was presumably a reference to the sporadic paramilitary raids conducted by Cuban exile groups. (This account was, incidentally, the only report of Oswald's saying anything critical about President Kennedy before late September 1963.)

A day or two after the missile crisis ended, Oswald clipped a coupon from a pamphlet the Socialist Workers party had sent him, checked the box "I would like to join the Socialist Workers Party," and sent it via airmail to the New York headquarters. Writer Albert H. Newman has suggested that this action may be read as a sign of Oswald's feelings about the missile crisis. A Trotskyist group, the Socialist Workers party vehemently supported Castro and often criticized the Soviet Union for being too soft on Western imperialism. Since there were no chapters of the organization in Texas at that time, Oswald was unable to join. On the back of the coupon, now a Warren Commission exhibit, a portion of the party's message can be seen, and its tone suggests another reason Oswald may have been attracted to this group:

... that you are helping in the greatest cause ever undertaken, and that your weight really counts.  
Socialism is the only road leading away from poverty, inflation, unemployment, imperialist war, totalitarianism—all the world-wide scourges of decaying capitalism. Socialism can save us from capitalist barbarism and open up a new world for humanity. The most courageous workers, those capable of the greatest sacrifices, those intelligent enough to see the task and endowed with the will to carry it out, must take the lead. That is our historic . . .

In November Oswald finally rented an inexpensive apartment for his family on Eisebeth Street in the Oak Cliff section of Dallas. His landlady, Mrs. Mahlon Tobias, remembered that when he looked the place over, he particularly wanted to be shown the back entrance. Weeks later, when she rang his doorbell, Oswald came out the back

*and here is a club one in a room in Dallas*

106 ... Oswald's Game

*She quips only selectively from Marina's writing omitting what disputes her preconceptions and Marina's self-contradictions. But if she quips Marina why not Phil Oswald who was a funny shark?*

and around the side of the building to see who it was. The Taylors helped the Oswalds move in on November 4, and for once Oswald thanked them. "Very briefly, thank you, and that was all," Alexandra said.

Before a week had passed the Oswalds were quarreling again. It had started over a trifle—or so Marina thought. Perhaps because he wanted no more visits from the FBI, Oswald had told Mrs. Tobias that his wife was from Czechoslovakia. Marina later wrote:

When the landlady asked me, I told her that I was from Russia, not knowing what Lee had told her. In this way a misunderstanding arose. I did not understand why Lee was hiding the fact that he was married to a Russian. . . . He got angry with me, said that I did not understand anything, and that I was not supporting him. I answered that it was hard to understand such stupidity, and that he was simply stupid. He told me that if I didn't like it I could go where I wanted. I was terribly hurt. I had no one there close to me except him and if this man rejected me, why should I stand in his way. I took June and left Lee to go to my Russian acquaintances.

Taking only her child, a few diapers, a shirt, and a baby bottle, Marina took a taxi to the Mellers' home. This time when the émigrés got together and agreed to look after her, it was with a condition. George Bouhe told her he didn't think Oswald would ever treat her as he should and, "If you leave him, of course we'll help. But if you say one thing now and then go back, next time no one will help." Marina assured him she would never go back "to that hell."

Bouhe took her to stay at the home of Katyra and Declan Ford. Oswald found out where she was living and called asking her to come home. He had been invited to his brother Robert's for Thanksgiving and wanted her with him—it would be humiliating if he had to go alone. Marina was curt with him at first but soon began to relent. A few days later Valentina Ray offered to let Marina live with her until she could learn enough English to find a job. Marina agreed, but she told her husband where she was, and when he telephoned her there, she consented to see him.

At the Rays' home they went into a bedroom to talk, and Marina reported that only after he begged her to return did she give in: "We talked alone in the room, and I saw him cry for the first time. What woman's heart can resist this, especially if she is in love? Lee begged me to come back, asked my forgiveness, and promised that he would

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*Did they ask? I would not do that for them they're with and it is obvious he could not have been gone with her in CP & the SWP, who were known*

try to improve. . . . Knowing Lee's character, I can say that this is perhaps the first time in his life that he had to go and ask someone a favor, and what is more, show his tears. . . . Lee was not particularly open with me about his feelings, but always wore a mask."

Whether the scene represented his true feelings or was just another manipulation to get what he wanted, he recovered his composure very quickly. What Valentina Ray remembered from that day was Oswald arguing politics with her husband. He offered to drive the reconciled couple home, and the political lecture continued en route. Valentina said her husband came home "tuffing, puffing, said he never met anybody dumber in his life, doesn't understand simple economics or how anything works in this country."

After Marina moved back, most of the émigrés threw up their hands. Only the de Mohrenschildts remained friendly, exchanging visits and taking them to a few parties. For a short while, the Oswald household was peaceful. Marina said of this period, "He used to bring home dozens of books from the library and just swallowed them down. . . . Sometimes it seemed to me that he was living in another world which he had constructed for himself, and that he came down to earth only to go to work, to earn money for his family, to eat, and to sleep."

In early December 1962 Oswald began making use of the Jagars-Chiles-Stovall facilities and materials for his own purposes when he was working overtime. Using the photographic techniques he'd learned, he made some advertising posters for the Socialist Workers party and *The Worker*, as well as the Hall-Davis Defense Committee. (The *Worker's* poster said, "READ THE WORKER / If you want to know about / PEACE / DEMOCRACY / UNEMPLOYMENT / ECONOMIC TRENDS.") Along with the blowups, he sent letters offering to do further photographic work at no charge. Each organization wrote a polite letter of acknowledgment, and Oswald carefully saved these replies—he would find a use for them in the months ahead.

In mid-December he took out a subscription to *The Militant*, the Socialist Workers' newspaper. Like *The Worker*, it was critical of General Walker and of Kennedy's policies on Cuba and the civil rights struggle. One of the first issues he would have received in January commented on the speech President Kennedy gave in the Miami Orange Bowl on December 29. Before a crowd of 40,000 Cuban exiles, Kennedy greeted a group of Bay of Pigs veterans who had just been ransomed from their imprisonment in Cuba. When the president was presented with the Cuban brigade's battle flag, he spon-

tanecously declared, "I can assure you that this flag will be returned to this brigade in a free Havana"—a prediction that drew tumultuous cheers from the audience. *The Militant* called it "the most barefaced and disgusting display of immorality, ignorance and bad taste ever put on by a U.S. President." In its January 21 issue, *The Militant* published Castro's response to Kennedy's Miami appearance, a speech headlined, "We Will Not Stop Being Revolutionists." Castro said Kennedy had "conducted himself like a pirate." After citing the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban citizens who had been killed in exile raids and in internal counter-revolutionary attacks, he declared, "Mr. Kennedy, too much blood has flowed between you and us."

At the beginning of 1963 Oswald began making specific plans to assassinate General Walker. The final decision apparently came after January 21, when a federal grand jury in Mississippi released Walker after declining to indict him. The next day, the *Dallas Morning News* quoted Walker: "I am glad to be vindicated. . . . Today my hopes returned to the Cubans and millions of others who long to return to their homes. . . ." On January 27, Oswald ordered a Smith & Wesson .38 snub-nosed revolver from a Los Angeles mail-order firm, using "A. J. Hidell" as an alias.

This was his first known use of the Alek James Hidell alias. "Alek" had been his nickname in Russia. "Hidell" was probably an altered "Fidel," embraced by two of his own initials. The "James" is less certain but may have come from a fictional character he was known to have admired—James Bond.

It was apparently around this time that he printed up a phony ID in the name of Alek James Hidell—perhaps he thought he might need identification to pick up the gun at the post office. He also began studying a city map and a bus schedule to lay out an escape route from Walker's home on Turtle Creek Boulevard. And he began putting pressure on Marina to return to the Soviet Union with June. The Warren Commission evidently never realized why Oswald wanted to send his family to Russia. Marina testified, "Lee wanted me to go to Russia . . . and I told him that if he wanted me to go then that meant he didn't love me and . . . in that case what was the idea of coming to the United States in the first place. Lee would say that it would be better for me to go to Russia. I did not know why. I did not know what he had in mind. He said he loved me but it would be better for me if I went to Russia."

Q. Did he have a job then?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you feel that you were getting along on what he was making?

A. Of course. . . .

Q. Did you understand when he suggested you return to Russia that he was proposing to break up your marriage?

A. I told him that I would go to Russia if he gave me a divorce, but he did not want to give me a divorce.

Q. Did he say why?

A. He said that if he were to give me a divorce that would break everything between us, which he didn't want. That he wanted to keep me as his wife.

When she was asked if she now understood why Oswald wanted her to return to the Soviet Union, she said, "Yes . . . I think I know why[,] he had in mind to start his foolish activity which could harm me, but, of course, at that time he didn't tell me the reason. . . . At that time when I would ask him he would get angry because he couldn't tell me."

While he was waiting for the pistol to arrive, something happened to delay his plans. On February 14 the *Morning News* announced that Walker would be going out of town on a nationwide tour, dubbed "Operation Midnight Ride," from February 27 to April 3 to make speeches warning about the dangers of Castro and communism. Three days later Oswald forced the reluctant Marina, who wanted to stay in America, to sit down and write the following letter to the Soviet Embassy in Washington:

I beg your assistance to help me to return to the homeland in the USSR where I will again feel myself a full-fledged citizen. Please let me know what I should do for this, i.e., perhaps it will be necessary to fill out a special application form. Since I am not working at present (because of my lack of knowledge of the English language and a small child), I am requesting you to extend to me a possible material aid for the trip. My husband remains here, since he is an American by nationality. I beg you once more not to refuse my request.

It is not too difficult to see Oswald's hand in this, especially in the phrase "full-fledged citizen" and in the request for "material aid." Since he couldn't afford to send his family to Russia, he expected the Russians to take care of it.

On February 22 Lee and Marina went to a party given by Everett

Glover, a friend of de Mohrenschildt's. One of the guests was Ruth Paine, a Quaker who had recently separated from her husband Michael and who was studying the Russian language. Ruth was eager to meet someone who spoke modern Russian because she hoped to be able to learn the language well enough to teach it. She and Marina began a friendship that evening which Oswald encouraged for his own reasons. Marina said later that "from the moment he met Ruth, Lee [though] only how to use her."

Marina would remember February 1963 as by far the worst month of their marriage. Oswald often flew into a rage and beat her whenever she seemed to go against his wishes. Their landlady noticed that Marina was always quiet around Oswald and that he never seemed to want her to be out of his sight when he was home. She thought Marina seemed "very lonely." During this period Oswald sometimes wouldn't come home until seven o'clock or later, and Marina never knew where he was. On one such night in late February, Mrs. Tobias testified that Marina came knocking on her door:

... and wanted to know if she could use the phone. She said, "I don't know where my husband is." ... I said to her, "Mrs. Oswald, Marina, can you read English?" She said "Yes"—and I went and got a tablet of paper. ... took a pencil and wrote "When he gets home give him a good kick in the shin." And she started laughing. ... and she said she would.

Marina then called several numbers and spoke in Russian but, said Mrs. Tobias, "She never did find him." One of Marina's calls was to George de Mohrenschildt, who telephoned Jaggars-Chiles-Stovall for her and found out Lee wasn't there. Oswald, of course, was angry when he discovered she'd been checking up on him. Later that week their fighting got so noisy the owner of the building told Oswald he would have to stop fighting or move. Oswald decided to move.

On March 3 they carried their belongings to another furnished apartment several blocks away at 214 West Neely Street, using June's stroller as a carrier. Mrs. Tobias watched them go: "They moved away in that stroller. ... They didn't have very much—all he had was books and what little dishes they had, and that wasn't very many, and the baby bed." The new apartment had a small room Oswald appropriated for a study—it had an interior door that could be locked and another door leading to the outside. Now he could come and go without Marina's knowledge, and he could have privacy while he worked out his plans.

At least some of Oswald's mysterious activities undoubtedly had to do with General Walker. He may have rehearsed his route by riding the buses he intended to use to and from Walker's home. At any rate, it is certain that after Walker left town, Oswald undertook a reconnaissance. On the weekend of March 9-10 he used his Imperial Reflex camera to photograph the alley behind Walker's house and an area near a railroad where he would hide the weapon. (The pictures, found among Oswald's possessions, could be dated because of some construction work going on in the background.) He recorded a detailed description of the house and its surroundings in a notebook he kept in his study.

Evidently his survey of Walker's property changed his mind about the appropriate weapon, for on March 12 he ordered a Mannlicher-Carcano rifle from Klein's Sporting Goods in Chicago, again using the Hiddell alias. By coincidence both weapons were shipped on March 20 and arrived about five days later. When Walker returned to Dallas, he'd be ready.

Ironically, it was during this month that the FBI took a renewed interest in the Oswalds. It was FBI practice to interview immigrants from the Soviet bloc countries on a selective basis, and Marina was one of those selected. When John Fain retired he left her case marked pending inactive. On March 4 Fain's successor, James P. Hosity, Jr., obtained Marina's Elisabeth Street address from the Immigration and Naturalization Service records. On the 11th, the day before Oswald ordered his rifle, Hosity drove over and spoke to Mrs. Tobias, who told him that they had moved. Hosity obtained the Oswalds' new address. But having learned of their frequent quarrels from Mrs. Tobias, he decided to allow them a certain "cooling off period," as required by FBI regulations, before he talked to Marina. (Even though he was going by the book, this decision would ultimately earn him a reprimand and the eternal wrath of J. Edgar Hoover.) Hosity checked Lee Oswald's file and found that he was on *The Worker's* mailing list. At Hosity's request, Oswald's case was reopened on March 26. But when he finally went to the Neely Street apartment in late May they had moved without leaving a forwarding address.

Would it have made a difference if agent Hosity had caught up with Oswald before he attacked Walker? Probably not. Oswald already knew the FBI was interested in him, and the watchful eye of the authorities had never stopped him in the past.

On Sunday, March 31, Oswald had Marina take several pictures of him in their backyard. Dressed in black, he wore a pistol on his belt,

holding the rifle in one hand and a recent copy of both *The Militant* and *The Worker* in the other. He told her he wanted photographs to send to *The Militant*. Oswald was clearly proud of what he was about to do. He inscribed one of the prints "For Junie from Papa" and gave it to Marina as a keepsake for their daughter, so that "maybe someday June will remember me." Marina put this print and one like it in June's baby book.

Oswald obviously believed that *The Militant* would applaud his attack on Walker. He undoubtedly got this idea from the general editorial line of the newspaper, which advocated revolutionary violence where necessary. In the February 25 issue there was a review of a book by Robert F. Williams that called for blacks to arm themselves. The review noted, "John Brown and the Abolitionists did not fight slavery with prayers but with armed struggle against the evil system. Williams thus stands in the American tradition of struggle for freedom, the best of our heritage and legacy. [Martin Luther] King's Gandhism runs counter to this spirit. . . . [and] is racist in its outlook." The review spoke of the "inadequacy of narrowly conceived tactics of non-violence."

On April 2 Ruth Paine invited the Oswalds to dinner and had her husband Michael pick them up at their apartment. An engineer with Bell Helicopter, Michael was an intelligent and well-educated man whose father had been a Trotskyite after leaving the Communist party in the 1940s. Michael could remember being taken to Party meetings as a child and being bored by them. Like Ruth, he was tolerant of political dissidents even when he disagreed with them. That night one of the few things he and Oswald could agree on was their opinion of General Walker—they both criticized the Far Right. Naturally Oswald said nothing about his secret plan. At the Oswalds' Neely Street apartment, Paine was shocked by Oswald's rudeness to his wife. At Ruth's, he became annoyed when he tried to include Marina in their conversation and Oswald seemed to resent having to translate for her. But Oswald was pleased with the evening, for he saw once more how Ruth's interest in Marina could serve his purposes. The Russian visas hadn't come through, and if he went ahead with his plan to kill Walker, Marina might need a friend who spoke Russian. During the week Oswald practiced with the rifle.

On April 6 he lost his job. He never held any job for very long, mostly due to his attitude. He resented his employers—any employers. As he had said in Moscow, if he lived in the United States he would face the choice of being an exploiter or one of the exploited.

*NEFB did not work for him. No, didn't of walking*

and rather than assume either role he would end up being one of the unemployed. Oswald appeared to like his job at Jaggars-Chiles-Stovall, but eventually began to show his resentment by reading Russian magazines at work—it was reminiscent of the way he had openly read Russian newspapers in the Marines. His employer noticed it, and he also noticed that Oswald's work often had to be redone. Around the first week of April he informed Oswald he would have to let him go.

To help Oswald find another job, de Mohrenschildt referred him to a friend, Sam Allen, a native of New York who served on the boards of several Dallas corporations. During a two-hour interview with Ballen, Oswald didn't mention his recent employment and instead claimed to have learned reproduction work in Russia and New Orleans. Inevitably the conversation drifted into Oswald's politics: his opposition to race prejudice and what Ballen later called his "compassion for mankind generally." Oswald complained that he too was the victim of prejudice because of his stay in the Soviet Union. Although sympathetic, Ballen decided that this young man wouldn't fit into a team operation—he was "too hard-headed, too independent." Ballen considered Oswald to be "a truth-seeking decent individual with a bit of Schweitzerian self-sacrifice in him—so much so that I didn't want him working for me." For his part, Oswald seemed uninterested in a position that required conformity. He told Ballen, "Don't worry about me."

Sometime in early April—the exact time isn't certain—Oswald staged his first pro-Castro demonstration. With a placard saying "Hands Off Cuba! Viva Fidel!" hanging on his chest, he handed out Fair Play for Cuba literature briefly on a downtown street. Two policemen later reported seeing the demonstration. According to a passerby, when Oswald spotted them coming toward him he muttered, "Oh hell, here come the cops," and ducked into a nearby store. He wrote the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in New York to report his demonstration (omitting the appearance of the police) and asked the group to send him "40 or 50 more" of their pamphlets.

Having completed his speaking tour, General Walker came home. Oswald may have been following his progress in the Dallas newspapers. On March 6 the *Times Herald* had reported on a speech Walker gave in Savannah in which he challenged President Kennedy to take "one U.S. Army division . . . and liquidate the scourge that has descended upon the island of Cuba." This was only a few days before

*Not to me  
from me  
NW*



Newsmen from the New York Times, the Dallas Morning News, and the FBI's Texas office were in the room when Oswald was shot. The FBI's Texas office was in the room when Oswald was shot.

114... Oswald's Game

Oswald reconnoitered the Walker house and grounds and ordered his rifle.

On the evening of April 10 Oswald went to Walker's home with the Mannlicher-Carcano, which he had concealed under a raincoat. He took a position in a dark alley behind a stockade fence, 120 feet from the back of the house. Inside he could see Edwin A. Walker through a lighted window sitting at his desk. The light obscured a strip of the window casing and the bullet missed, striking the wall just above Walker's head and leaving bits of wood and glass in his hair. Oswald ran without waiting to see the result. He hid the rifle and escaped on a city bus (exactly as he would do after the assassination of President Kennedy).

Around 10 o'clock that evening Marina grew restless wondering where he was. She went into his study and found a key and a note of instructions written in Russian:

1. This is the key to the mailbox which is located in the main post office in the city on Ervay Street. This is the same street where the drugstore, in which you always waited is located. You will find the mailbox in the post office which is located 4 blocks from the drugstore on that street. I paid for the box last month so don't worry about it.
2. Send the information as to what has happened to me to the Embassy and include newspaper clippings (should there be anything about me in the newspapers). I believe that the Embassy will come quickly to your assistance on learning everything.
3. I paid the house rent on the 2d so don't worry about it.
4. Recently I also paid for water and gas.
5. The money from work will possibly be coming. The money will be sent to our post office box. Go to the bank and cash the check.
6. You can either throw out or give my clothing, etc. away. Do not keep these. However, I prefer that you hold on to my personal papers (military, civil, etc.).
7. Certain of my documents are in the small blue valise.
8. The address book can be found on my table in the study should you need same.
9. We have friends here. The Red Cross also will help you (Red Cross in English) [sic].
10. I left you as much money as I could, \$60 on the second of the month. You and the baby can live for another 2 months using \$10 per week.
11. If I am alive and taken prisoner, the city jail is located at the end of the bridge through which we always passed on going to the city (right in the beginning of the city after crossing the bridge).

She had written in note referring to no delay in response of Moscow was at Walker.

Taking Action... 115

Marina testified that when her husband got home that night he was pale. He told her what he had done, and defended his action by describing General Walker as "the leader of a fascist organization." She responded by saying even though that might be true, he had no right to take his life. She made him promise never to do such a thing again, and tucked the note of instructions he had left her into one of her books. She told the Assassinations Committee that Oswald "felt quite strongly that he was doing a justice to the people" and considered her a fool for not understanding him. She quoted Oswald: "Well, what would you say if somebody got rid of Hitler at the right time? So if you don't know about General Walker, how can you speak up on his behalf?" She reported that after reading the news accounts the next day Oswald was "kind of angry" that he missed him, but at the same time "kind of pleased with himself, with the clever fellow he was" in getting away with it.

Oswald destroyed the notebook he'd used for the planning, but kept the photographs of Walker's house and its surroundings and the photographs of himself holding the rifle. He evidently wanted a record of the attempt for some future use. It's possible he was even considering another attempt to kill Walker, at some later date after the police attention subsided.

One may ask why Marina didn't immediately go to the Dallas police. In retrospect it is easy to condemn her. But Marina evidently didn't leave her husband or go to the police for much the same reasons other battered wives often choose to stay with their husbands—at times, she was afraid of him. Someone on the Assassinations Committee asked her, "What do you think he would have done if you had gotten rid of the rifle?" And she answered, "Well, he probably would have got rid of me." She had no one else, no way of supporting herself and June; and she was three months into a second pregnancy. But despite everything she still loved him and hoped he would change. Marina did not realize that Oswald could not change without giving up the image he had of himself as an idealist who acted on his principles. His feelings of self-worth derived not from his work or personal relationships, but from his ideology. The assassination attempt against Walker, like his defection, revealed Oswald's extreme dedication to his political beliefs. All else was secondary to him—his family, even the question of whether he lived or died. At the same time, Oswald expected and craved recognition as a revolutionary hero. Both these events were clearly designed to attract worldwide attention to himself as well as to his cause. Giving up these ideas, as

1/ Effort to make something out of nothing by omission: There are also

116 ... Oswald's Game *Every minute this up for her*  
I read the book from in the book - which had to look on board, not  
has know why Darwin especially that Marina's "physically  
delivered when that Darwin who is aware of it, really, Marina's

Marina wanted, would have meant scrapping his identity and constructing a new one—or becoming a hypocrite in his own eyes, someone who sat around and talked but did nothing.

The attack on Walker resembled his defection in another respect: it was carefully planned. Part of the excitement must have been in the detailed anticipation. The note he left Marina indicates that he had considered every eventuality—that he might be killed or arrested, or that he might escape, possibly to another country. Albert Newman believes that had Oswald assassinated Walker he intended to go to the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City, tell the officials there what he had done—proving it with his notebook and photographs—and ask for asylum in Cuba, an "extradition-free" country. McMillan suggests that in the event of an arrest he might have used his trial as a forum to denounce American fascism, before asking for asylum in Russia. At any rate, as Marina later said of the backyard photographs, "He must have had something in his mind—some grandiose plans."

On April 21 Oswald staged another dramatic scene. After reading the morning newspaper he got dressed and put his Smith & Wesson pistol into his belt. He informed Marina that former Vice-President Richard Nixon was coming to town and that he wanted "to go and have a look." Marina has testified that she replied, "I know how you look"—and physically restrained him from leaving the apartment. (In fact, Nixon was not coming to Dallas, but that day's *Morning News* reported a speech he had made in Washington. The banner headline read, "Nixon Calls for Decision to Force Reds Out of Cuba/Open U.S. Support of Rebels Urged.")

When skeptical Commission members questioned her about this incident, Marina admitted that she could not have kept her husband from leaving their apartment if he had really wanted to go. She said that at first he was angry and told her, "You are always getting in my way," but then rather quickly gave in. "It might have been," she continued, "that he was just trying to test me." (Thinking back on it, Marina saw the incident as a "kind of nasty joke," an example of a sadistic streak he had. She also told the Commission that he would make her write letters to the Russian Embassy asking to be allowed to return to the Soviet Union: "He liked to tease me and torment me in this way . . . especially if I interfered in any of his political affairs, in any of his political discussions.")

It isn't clear why Oswald now decided to move to New Orleans. Marina has said it was her suggestion that he go to his hometown to find work, because she wanted to get him away from the temptation

of trying to kill Walker again. But it also appears that Oswald had, as usual, some political goal in mind. When Ruth Paine visited the Oswalds on April 24, she found them waiting with their bags packed ready to be driven to the bus station. Rather than see the pregnant Marina make the long bus trip with a small child, she offered to let them stay with her while Lee went ahead to look for a job. This was evidently exactly what Oswald had intended all along: She drove him to the terminal to check his baggage, and the next day Oswald took a bus to New Orleans.

## 9... The Activist

**F**ROM our perspective twenty years later, America's undeclared war on Cuba looks like a hysterical overreaction. It did not seem so to most Americans at the time. The Kennedy administration was under intense public pressure to do something about Cuba. Thousands of refugees had fled to the United States bringing horror stories about life under communism, and many of them were prepared to fight to liberate their country. (Other refugees, according to the *New York Times*, were Castro agents who were sent to create disunity and promote agitation against the U.S. government among the exiles.) Castro had proclaimed himself an ally of the Soviet Union and was boasting that his revolution would spread throughout Latin America. Occasionally it looked as though his dream might come true. Shortly after the missile crisis, for example, pro-Castro guerrillas knocked out one-sixth of Venezuela's oil-production capacity.

The White House was still uncertain what to do about Cuba. After the October crisis, the MONGOOSE operation was disbanded, and the Special Group committee, chaired by presidential assistant McGeorge Bundy, took control of covert actions in Cuba. On January 4, 1963, and again in April and June, Bundy proposed to the president the idea of opening communications with Castro with an eye to taking Castro "out of the Soviet fold." This option was to be explored on a "separate track," however, while other proposed actions, such as sabotage, were going on. In February 1963 *Time* carried an article called "The Hardening Soviet Base in Cuba," which quoted a top administration official as saying that present U.S. policy toward Cuba was "not containment; it's getting rid of Castro"—through economic

and political pressures. It stated that the administration was hoping for an uprising against Castro and quoted President Kennedy on what his reaction might be: "Probably the first U.S. response would be diplomatic.... But a real uprising in Cuba would not be like a Bay of Pigs invasion financed from abroad. It would be a cry for help which the U.S. could not afford to ignore." Another report on a Kennedy news conference that month quoted him as conceding "that Soviet troops in Cuba are surely being used to train Cubans to export revolution and sabotage throughout Latin America." One White House estimate reported that at least 13,000 Latin American students were being trained.

Early spring brought the first public talk about the possibility that Fidel Castro might be assassinated by someone dissatisfied with his rule inside Cuba. On March 15 the *Wall Street Journal* quoted unnamed Washington officials as declaring that Castro's assassination had become "the major U.S. hope for de-communizing Cuba"—explaining that "rising public discontent in Cuba" was "bound to bring a successful assassination attempt sooner or later." This item was picked up for brief mention by both *The Worker* and *The Militant*. Both papers omitted the reference to rising discontent in Cuba. At approximately the same time an exile group called Alpha 66 raided a Cuban port and shelled a Russian ship, eliciting a strong protest from the Soviet government. The FBI and Coast Guard responded with an official crackdown nationwide on exile raiders starting the first week of April. This new policy, in turn, brought protests from the exiles and Republican leaders.

In an April 19 speech President Kennedy attempted to counter demands for a second invasion of Cuba by predicting that "in five years" Castro would likely no longer be in power and that ultimately the United States would be seen to have contributed to his downfall. In recent years this speech has sometimes been interpreted as a sign that Kennedy was aware of a CIA effort to kill Castro. But he was clearly referring to the *long-term* effect of administration pressures on Cuba in general, which he hoped would eventually result in Castro's overthrow. It would have been illogical for him to suggest that an American contribution to Castro's murder would someday be applauded—none of the plotters wanted the U.S. role ever to be revealed. Moreover, according to the Church committee investigation, there were no ongoing assassination plots during this period. The plots involving members of the Mafia had been terminated in February after producing no results whatsoever. (It appears that the Mafia

participants weren't seriously interested in eliminating Castro but were stringing the CIA officials along for their own purposes.)

But at the time, Fidel Castro apparently saw the president's statements as a threat. His response came two days later in an April 21 *New York Times* headline that today seems startling:

**CASTRO SAYS U.S. PLANS SLAYINGS  
Declares Assassination Plot Replaced Second Invasion**

The story began, "Premier Fidel Castro said today that the United States had abandoned plans for a second invasion of Cuba in favor of a plot to assassinate Cuban leaders." Castro then gave his version of recent Cuban-American history, asserting that after the Bay of Pigs the Soviets had introduced missiles into Cuba to prevent a second invasion attempt, and had withdrawn them in return for Kennedy's promise that Cuba would not be invaded. The American government, said Castro, understood that new military attacks on Cuba would provoke a world war. But, Castro added, "We cannot rest on our laurels. . . . They are now making plans to assassinate the leaders of the revolution."

(This story was picked up by the *Dallas Times-Herald* the same afternoon, but Lee Oswald almost certainly didn't see it. This was the day of Oswald's "nasty joke" about shooting Nixon, and therefore the events of April 21 were vividly impressed on Marina's memory. She testified that Oswald didn't leave their apartment after going out for the morning newspaper, and if she is right, Oswald couldn't have bought a *Times-Herald* that afternoon.)

In May 1963, the National Security Council's Standing Group discussed several contingencies, and found that the prospect of Castro's death resulting in favorable developments inside Cuba was "singularly unpromising." The CIA's Office of National Estimates agreed. The memorandum it prepared concluded that Castro would be replaced by his brother Raul or someone else who had Soviet backing, and warned, "If Castro were to die by other than natural causes the U.S. would be widely charged with complicity. . . ."

The president's speech on April 19 and the negative conclusions of the Standing Group and the CIA may be taken as further evidence of the administration's continuing sense of frustration concerning Cuba. The tension of those times was reflected in an April 29 issue of *The Militant* which quoted a statement Robert Kennedy had made

on April 22: "We can't just snap our fingers and make Castro go away. But we can fight for this. We can dedicate all our energy and best possible brains to that effort."

Lee Oswald hadn't been in New Orleans since 1959 when he had passed through on his way to the Soviet Union. The city was much the same. In late April it was already getting hot and humid. During the months ahead there would be frequent afternoon thunderstorms, and swarms of mosquitoes blown in from nearby salt marshes would attack pedestrians on downtown streets. One could still get off a streetcar in the middle of Canal Street and walk into the French Quarter, with its carnival atmosphere of jazz and strip shows, lawdy souvenir shops, sidewalk artists, and occasional young black boys offering a quick softshoe routine in exchange for money. But there *had* been a considerable influx of Cuban exiles, some of whom were active in anti-Castro organizations.

Oswald called his Aunt Lillian from the Greyhound Bus station. She was surprised to hear from him, since she didn't know he had returned from the Soviet Union, nor did she know he had married and was a father. She agreed to put him up while he looked for a job. He stayed with her family for a couple of weeks.

Oswald applied for and received unemployment benefits from Texas, and then found a job as a maintenance mechanic at the William B. Rely Company, a distributor of Luzianne coffee. Lillian remembered him coming home excited.

. . . and he grabbed me around the neck and he even kissed me and he said "I got it! I got it!" . . . I said, "Lee, how much does it pay?" and he said, "Well, it don't pay very much but I will get along on it."

. . . I said, "Well, you know, Lee, you are not really qualified to do anything too much. If you don't like this job why don't you try to go back to school again at night time and see if you can't learn a trade or whatever you think you can prepare yourself to do." And he said, "No, I don't have to go back to school. I don't have to learn anything. I know everything" . . .

Q. Did you get the impression . . . that he really believed he was that smart?

A. He believed he was that smart, yes, sir.

Q. You don't think he was spooning you?

A. No; I think he really thought he was smart, and I don't think he envied anybody else, because he thought he knew it all, I guess.

That same morning Oswald began looking for a place to live. He went to see his mother's old friend Myrtle Evans, who was still managing apartments. She had nothing available, but they drove around in search of "For Rent" signs. They found a vacant apartment at 4907 Magazine Street for \$65 a month, and Oswald took it. That evening he called Marina at Ruth's house in Irving, Texas, to tell her the news. Marina had been spending a lot of time discussing with Ruth the question of whether Lee loved her or not, and now, after hanging up the phone, she kept repeating to her daughter, June, "Papa *was* lubet . . . Daddy loves us, he got work and he wants us to come." The next day Ruth, Marina, and their children left Irving to drive to New Orleans.

Seeing the Magazine Street apartment with its dark rooms and roaches was a bitter letdown for Marina, and Ruth noticed that Oswald seemed disappointed by her reaction. Although their meeting had been cordial, the Oswalds began quarreling almost immediately, and Ruth decided to leave earlier than she had planned. The fighting stemmed from the problem they had always had: their priorities were not the same. For after his family was settled, Oswald turned to political activities.

On May 14 he mailed a change-of-address card to the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, and eight days later the National Director, Vincent T. Lee, wrote a routine reply: "We received your notice of change of address. . . . We hope to hear from you soon so that we may again have your name amongst those who continue to support the efforts of our Committee." Much to Vincent Lee's subsequent regret, Oswald needed no encouragement. He responded quickly:

I am requesting formal membership in your organization.

In the past I have received from you pamphlets etc., both bought by me and given to me by you.

Now that I live in New Orleans I have been thinking about renting a small office at my own expense for the purpose of forming a F.P.C.C. branch here in New Orleans.

Could you give me a charter?

Also I would like information on buying pamphlets etc. in large lots, as well as blank FPCC applications etc.

Also a picture of Fidel, suitable for framing would be a welcome touch.

Offices down here rent for \$30 a month and if I had a steady flow of literature I would be glad to take the expense.

Of course I work and could not supervise the office at all times but

I'm sure I could get some volunteers to do it.

Could you add some advice or recommendations?

I am not saying this project would be a roaring success, but I am willing to try.

An office, literature, and getting people to know you are the fundamentals of the F.P.C.C. as far as I can see so here's hoping to hear from you.

Why this sudden burst of political activism? Albert H. Newman has suggested that Oswald wanted to establish a pro-Castro record in New Orleans so he could attain a visa to Cuba which he could then use as an escape route after he returned to Dallas to make another attempt on Walker's life. Newman pointed out that during his stay in Dallas Oswald had gone out of his way to conceal his whereabouts. On his job applications and correspondence, he had given a box number, not a home address. And as far as Oswald knew, the FBI hadn't tracked him from Fort Worth to Dallas. In New Orleans, however, he made no secret of his Magazine Street address, and he would soon become engaged in political activities that would inevitably draw the attention of the local police and FBI. Oswald wanted visibility in New Orleans, but had wanted to stay hidden in Dallas. Newman believes that the sentence in the letter above beginning, "Now that I live in New Orleans . . ." reflects this change in tactics. But it doesn't necessarily follow that Oswald planned to go back to Dallas. It may be that he simply realized he would have to establish his reputation as an activist somewhere else—making himself known as a Castro supporter in Dallas might have made him a suspect in the still-unsolved Walker shooting.

The first part of Newman's theory is well established. There's little doubt that Oswald's pro-Castro activities were designed to help him get into Cuba and be warmly received once he got there. Marina has testified that although her husband wanted to help the Cuban revolution, she knew "that his basic desire was to get to Cuba by any means, and that all the rest of it was window dressing for that purpose." There is more than Marina's testimony to support this: Oswald's attempt to enter Cuba would be a repetition of his earlier defection, but with a difference. He had had some difficulty being accepted by the Soviets because he carried no credentials. They had asked for papers to show who and what he was, and he had none. This time he would have plenty of papers showing his ideological record. Throughout that summer he would write to the Fair Play Committee, the

Communist party, and *The Worker* telling them of his political work, and he would save their replies. He would write up the details of his work under such headings as Marxist, Street Agitation, Radio Speaker, and Lecturer. In the fall he would present this material when he applied for a Cuban visa in Mexico City. (We know this because the resumé material was found among Oswald's belongings after the assassination, and an employee at the Cuban Embassy described some of these credentials to the Mexican police.)

What did Oswald hope to do after he got to Cuba? Certainly, he didn't expect to be given factory work or be sent to a Cuban equivalent of Minsk. Oswald had a rigid and willful personality, seemingly incapable of fundamental change; he kept repeating the same patterns over and over. Disappointed by his reception in Russia, he probably expected that the Cubans would recognize his abilities and give him the important assignment he thought he deserved.

It may be that he returned to the dream he had discussed with Nelson Delgado just four years before—becoming an officer in Castro's army to lead a revolution in another country. This was not as fantastic an ambition as it might seem. In 1963 it was illegal for Americans to travel to Cuba. But during March there had been a flurry in the press about a so-called "subversion airlift" flying between Mexico City and Havana. Some of these stories appeared in *Time*, a publication Oswald subscribed to (although it isn't known whether he saw them). On March 29, for instance, the magazine reported that there were twice-weekly flights from Mexico City and that, in 1962 alone, approximately 1500 Latin Americans and others had been taken to Cuba for "indoctrination and guerrilla warfare training." *Time* claimed that "thousands of students, small-time labor leaders, intellectuals and professional men" were getting "all-expense-paid tours" of Cuba and that many returned to their countries to become "terrorists, guerrillas, and Communist party workers." The article said that until February 15 "it was no trick to fly to Mexico, where the Cuban embassy issued a visa on a slip of paper. No telltale stamp marred the passports. Now the Mexicans stamp passports 'Saló a Cuba' in bold letters. But, of course, passports can be conveniently 'lost,' destroying the evidence." *Time* also noted that the airlift had figured prominently in the questions and answers at President Kennedy's press conference a week earlier.

During the summer a group of 58 students sponsored by the Fair Play for Cuba Committee defied the U.S. ban on travel to Cuba. President Kennedy publicly condemned their action, and the State

Department lifted their passports when they returned. In July Edwin E. Willis, the chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee, gave a speech in New Orleans in which he charged that many of the travelers had Communist backgrounds and had returned to this country "to lecture on the glories of Castro's Cuba."

At some point Oswald considered hijacking a plane to Havana. He studied airline schedules and maps, and when Marina refused to go along with the scheme, he told her he would go ahead on his own. On July 30 the *Times-Picayune* covered the Cuban flights from Mexico City and noted, "Any American with a valid passport and a clean criminal record can enter Cuba via Mexico without State Department authorization provided he is acceptable to Cuban authorities and aerial transportation is available." After this—Marina thought it was in late August—Oswald burst into the apartment with the news that he had found a legal way to get to Cuba. According to McMillan, he told her, "There's a Cuban Embassy in Mexico. I'll go there. I'll show them my clippings, show them how much I've done for Cuba, and explain how hard it is to help in America. And how above all I want to help Cuba."

In late May Oswald's campaign to establish his pro-Castro credentials was just beginning. He was also trying to get Marina to answer a letter she had received from the Soviet Embassy in Washington in April, asking her to state her reasons for wanting to go back to the Soviet Union. On the same weekend that Oswald wrote the Fair Play for Cuba Committee asking for a charter, Marina sent a plaintive letter to Ruth (in Russian): "... As soon as you left all 'love' stopped, and I am very hurt that Lee's attitude towards me is such that I feel each minute that I bind him. He insists that I leave America, which I don't want to do at all. I like America very much and think that even without Lee I would not be lost here. What do you think. This is the basic question which doesn't leave me day or night."

Without waiting for a reply from the Committee, Oswald dropped by the Jones Printing Company opposite his workplace. Using the alias "Osborn," he ordered, for \$9.89, one thousand copies of a handbill reading:

HANDS OFF  
CUBA!

B ut friends  
the FBI + me  
who not Oswald

Join the Fair Play for Cuba Committee  
NEW ORLEANS CHARTER MEMBER BRANCH

*Free Literature, Lectures*

LOCATION:

[space left blank]

EVERYONE WELCOME!

In the meantime, Vincent T. Lee had written a cautious reply to Oswald's requests, and sent him a membership card, but not the charter or application forms he had wanted. The Fair Play director said that although the Committee would like to see a New Orleans chapter opened, "It would be hard to conceive of a chapter with as few members as seen to exist in the New Orleans area." He added, "You must realize that you will come under tremendous pressures with any attempt to do FPCC work in that area." He told Oswald that most chapters operated semi-privately out of a home using a post office box for mailings to avoid violent opposition from "the lunatic fringe." Vincent Lee advised against taking an office so soon, suggesting that Oswald wait and see how he could operate in the community through several public experiences first.

Oswald was, of course, not prepared to "wait and see." On June 3 he rented Post Office Box 3060f, listing his own name and that of A.J. Hidell and Marina Oswald as persons authorized to pick up mail. In addition, he gave Fair Play for Cuba as an organization receiving mail at that box. He visited another printer and ordered five hundred offset copies of a membership application form he had made up. A few days later Oswald responded to Vincent Lee and enclosed one of the hand-bills:

I was glad to receive your advice concerning my try at starting a New Orleans F.P.C.C. chapter. I hope you won't be too disapproving of my innovations but I do think they are necessary for this area.

As per your advice, I have taken a P.O. Box (No. 3060f).

Against your advice, I have decided to take an office from the very beginning.

[As] you see from the circular I had jumped the gun on the charter business but I don't think it's too important, you may think the circular is too provocative, but I want it to attract attention, even if it's the attention of the lunatic fringe. I had 7,000 of them run off.

In any event I will keep [you] posted, and even if the office stays open 1 month more people will find out about the F.P.C.C. than if there had

never been any office at all, don't you agree?  
Please feel free to give advice and any other help.

Not surprisingly, the national director thought better of offering any more advice. Although Oswald would continue sending reports of his activities throughout the summer, hoping to get some favorable response, Vincent Lee never again wrote back.

On June 10 Oswald wrote *The Worker*:

... I have formed a "Fair Play for Cuba Committee" here in New Orleans. I think it is the best way to attract the broad mass of people to a popular struggle.

I ask that you give me as much literature as you judge possible since I think it would be very nice to have your literature among the "Fair Play" leaflets (like the one enclosed) and pamphlets in my office.

Also please be so kind as to convey the enclosed "honorary membership" cards to those fighters for peace Mr. Gus Hall and Mr. B. Davis. Yours Fraternally,

The "membership cards" were evidently two copies of the forms he had printed. If the Party officials Hall or Davis happened to send even a perfunctory letter of thanks, it would look good in his resume. They did not. (As far as the FBI could later determine, Oswald never rented an office, as he claimed.)

On June 16 an FBI informant in New York reported that Oswald had written a letter to *The Worker*. The information may have come from someone in the New York post office who made a note of his return address on the envelope. In any case, the information was sent to the FBI in New Orleans, which relayed it to Dallas, where agent James Hosty had recently lost track of him. In early July Hosty asked the New Orleans office to verify Oswald's presence there. It wasn't until August that the office confirmed Oswald's residence in that city. Keeping track of Oswald was apparently not high on the FBI's list of priorities, but the agency didn't have, at this point, any reason to believe that it should be.

During the second week of June there was a drumbeat of political developments in the news. On the 11th newspapers across the country carried reports of Governor George Wallace's flight to the University of Alabama to block the admission of a black student, and of a South Vietnamese monk who had burned himself to death to protest the anti-Buddhist policies of Premier Ngo Dinh Diem. A day later, civil rights activist Medgar Evers was killed by a sniper in Mississippi. On

not so  
D. Patrick  
FBI work  
I-131 work  
Marty  
Sandra  
W. P. C.  
M. C. C.  
W. P. C.  
W. P. C.

June 14, a front-page headline in the *Times-Picayune* played up a local story. It announced the arrival of the U.S. carrier *Wasp* at the Du Maine Street wharf, where it was greeted by state dignitaries and relatives of the 2800 officers and men on board. The accompanying story also mentioned that the *Wasp's* planes had provided aerial reconnaissance during the October naval blockade of Cuba.

This news gave Oswald an idea. That weekend he appeared at the Dunaine Street dock and began handing out his "Hands Off Cuba" handbills and a Fair Play pamphlet called "The Truth About Cuba is in Cuba." One of the enlisted men he solicited complained to a patrolman, who approached Oswald and told him he needed a permit and would have to leave or be arrested. Oswald argued strenuously, but he left.

During this period Oswald was still greasing and oiling machinery at Rely's coffee company. It was the sort of dirty manual work he hated. A fellow worker named LeBlanc remembered that Oswald approached him one day on the job:

... and I asked him, I says, "Are you finished all your greasing?" He said yes. So he asked me... "Well, can I help you?" I said, "No, what I am doing I don't need no help." So he stood there a few minutes, and all of a sudden he said, "You like it here?" I says, "Well, sure I like it here. I have been here a long time, about 8 1/4 years or so." He says, "Oh, hell, I don't mean this place." I said, "Well, what do you mean?" He says, "This damn country." I said, "Why, certainly, I love it. After all, this is my country." He turned around and walked off.

Oswald spent a large portion of his work time at the Crescent City Garage next door looking at gun magazines in their waiting area. The garage owner later said they had talked about rifles—trajectory and feet per second and the supposed deadliness of a small-caliber bullet.

On June 24 Oswald applied for a new passport in New Orleans and was routinely issued one the next day. Later that week Marina noticed that he seemed depressed. He stole a glance in her direction, then put aside something he was writing and went into the kitchen. She found him seated on a chair in the dark, his head down. When she embraced him, he began to sob. He told her he was lost and didn't know what to do, and then asked, "Would you like me to come to Russia, too?" Marina was delighted. He held her by the shoulders and told her to write the Soviet Embassy and say he would be coming back with her. He said he would add his own request to her letter. That

weekend he helped her compose her second letter to the embassy. This time she requested visas for the entire family, explaining that she was homesick and her husband was frequently unemployed. ("More tears and fewer facts," Oswald directed.)

Marina didn't discover until she was questioned by the Warren Commission that before Lee mailed her letter, he had included the following note.

Dear Sirs:

Please rush the entrance visa for the return of Soviet citizen, Marina

N. Oswald.

She is going to have a baby in October, therefore you must grant the entrance visa and make the transportation arrangements before then.

As for my return entrance visa please consider it separately.

His major concern was the same as before—to get Marina and June back to Russia.

For the past few weeks Ruth Paine had been considering Marina's predicament, and on July 11 she wrote to tell her friend that if Lee insisted she go back to Russia alone, she could come and live with her instead. They both had small children, and Marina could keep her company now that Michael had moved out, and help her improve her Russian. Later Ruth wrote that she would be making a trip east and would stop by for a visit around September 18. Ruth's offer would fit neatly into Oswald's plans.

Because of his general lack of interest, the William B. Rely Company fired him on July 19. Oswald again signed up for unemployment benefits from Texas. He now had more time for reading. Among the library books he read that summer were a biography of John Kennedy, a book on communism by J. Edgar Hoover, *Russia Under Khrushchev*, *Brave New World*, *The Huey Long Murder Case*, and four James Bond spy novels. The first book he had checked out was *Portrait of a Revolutionary*: *Mao Tse-tung*. He was also subscribing to some Russian magazines (including *Agitator*, a Party manual on the techniques of propaganda and agitation), as well as *The Worker*, *The Militant*, and *Time*.

In July Oswald's cousin Gene Murrett, who was studying to become a priest at a Jesuit college in Mobile, Alabama, invited Oswald to come to the college to give a talk on his experiences in the Soviet Union. The Murrettis drove the Oswalds to Mobile, and by all ac-



counts, Oswald handled himself well. His audience of students and faculty had expected to hear a man who had been disillusioned by Soviet communism. Instead, Oswald implied that he was disappointed in Russia only because the full principles of Marxism weren't being lived up to. He criticized capitalism, claiming its foundation was based on the exploitation of the poor. Perhaps to draw a laugh, he said, "Capitalism doesn't work, communism doesn't work. In the middle is socialism, and that doesn't work either." Yet he told them he still believed in the Marxist ideals. During the question and answer session, Oswald seemed reluctant to discuss religion with the Jesuit students, but when one asked what atheism in Russia does to morality, he answered, "No matter whether people believe in God or not, they will do what they want. . . ."

While Charles Murret and his son attended Oswald's all-male lecture, Robert J. Fitzpatrick, a student who spoke Russian, showed Marina and Lillian around the seminary grounds. It had been several months since Marina had been able to converse with anyone except Lee in her native tongue, and her remarks to Fitzpatrick were more revealing than anything her husband had to say to his audience. She told him that she liked the United States, but that at least in Russia people had no difficulty making a living. Then she told him about Lee's troubles. He was out of work and they were having financial problems. He did a lot of haphazard reading. She told him her husband was away from home a great deal and she did not know any of his associates or any of his activities. She said she had no opportunity to learn English because Oswald kept her away from other people. Fitzpatrick thought she appeared to be happy with Oswald, but that he "was definitely the head of the family."

## 10... "Street Agitation . . . Radio Speaker and Lecturer"

**S**ummer, 1963: The Cuban exile community in New Orleans was the largest in the United States outside of Miami. One of the militant groups represented in the city was the Cuban Student Directorate, or DRE, which had claimed responsibility for an offshore shelling of Havana in 1962.

On August 1 the official crackdown on such raids, begun in April, reached New Orleans. A front-page story in the *Times-Picayune* announced that FBI agents had impounded a large cache of dynamite and bomb casings in nearby Mandeville. A follow-up story indicated that the ammunition belonged to an unnamed Cuban exile. The *Picayune* said that the FBI was investigating a possible plan "to carry out a military operation against a country with which the United States is at peace"—a violation of the U.S. Code. The implication was clear that there was Cuban exile paramilitary activity going on in the area. In fact, as it later came out, the cache had been earmarked for a ragtag group of volunteers who had assembled at a secret guerrilla training camp near Mandeville. After the FBI raid on their depot, the group quickly disbanded.

It was apparently common knowledge that some of the exile groups were looking for ex-GIs to train their guerrillas. In the June 8 *Saturday Evening Post*, for instance, a story called "Help Us Fight" reported that, following the Bay of Pigs, exile leaders had asked the CIA for money and "a few tough men in green berets from the U.S. Special Forces to train leaders in the techniques of guerrilla war." The exiles

complained about being turned down: "They told us that Fidel's spies would infiltrate our movement." The article concluded, "The pin prick raids have been outlawed. . . . There is still work, however, that brave men could do—as they were doing in small independent groups before the suppression came. It is the silent, dangerous work of organizing an underground." (It isn't known whether Oswald saw this article, but it's conceivable that the Post's cover photo of Fidel Castro with the caption "The Mounting Chaos in Castro's Cuba" may have caught his eye.)

In any case, it was evidently the discovery of this exile ammunition dump near New Orleans that inspired Oswald's next move. Oswald made some inquiries. On page 87 of his notebook, there appears:

Cuban Student  
Directorate  
107 Decatur St.  
New Orleans La.  
Carlos Bringuiet

This was followed by the names of a local "City Editor" and a reporter—and two other street addresses labeled "Cuban exile stores."

Carlos Bringuiet, the Directorate's only official in New Orleans, ran the Casa Roca clothing store in the French Quarter. In the front window he displayed a 3 X 4-foot sign showing the Statue of Liberty being stabbed in the back. The hand holding the dagger was connected to a long chain wrapped around Cuba. The sign said, "Danger! Only 90 Miles from U.S.A., Cuba Lies in Chains." Although his organization wasn't associated with the Mandeville training camp, Bringuiet had heard about it when two of their volunteers came to him seeking transportation back to Florida.

On August 5 Bringuiet was in his store speaking with two teenaged boys who had been trying to collect donations for his organization by selling so-called "war bonds." The boys had brought the bonds back when they found out Bringuiet didn't have the required city permit. As they were talking, Oswald walked in and eaned into their conversation. He introduced himself to Bringuiet and said he was an anti-Castro ex-Marine who wanted to fight Castro. He said he had been trained in guerrilla warfare and was willing not only to train exile guerrillas but to lead their raiding parties into Cuba.

Bringuiet was immediately suspicious. He thought Oswald might be an agent of either Castro or the FBI. He had heard rumors that there was a Castro agent in the Mandeville camp. Bringuiet told him he wasn't interested because he wasn't involved in any paramilitary activity.

At some point, apparently while Bringuiet was waiting on a customer, Oswald had a talk with the two anti-Castro boys. He told them how to make gunpowder and a zipgun, how to derail a train by locking a chain around one of the rails—and how to blow up the New Orleans Huey P. Long Bridge. One of the boys testified, "He told us to put powder charges at each end of the bridge from the foundation to where the foundation meets the suspension part . . . blow that part up and the center part of the bridge would collapse."

Before he left, Oswald offered Bringuiet a cash contribution, but the Cuban refused it by saying he had no city permit to accept money. The next day Oswald returned to the store and left his Marine Corps guidebook with Bringuiet's brother-in-law. In his political résumé, Oswald wrote:

I infiltrated the Cuban Student Directorate and then harassed them with information I gained including having the N.O. City Attorney General call them in and put a restraining order pending a hearing on some so-called bonds for invasion they were selling in the New Orleans area.

So far as is known, there was no such restraining order. Oswald was puffing up his résumé with a false claim. The important thing here is that he stated his purpose: to infiltrate and harass the Directorate. This entry also seemed to explain why he offered Bringuiet a contribution—that is, to get him into trouble with the law for raising money illegally.

The résumé didn't mention the other tactics he used—posing as a guerrilla trainer and suggesting violent activities to the boys. Probably he didn't want to put anything in writing that was potentially incriminating. But his evident intention was to cause as much damage to the DRE as he could. The offer to lead guerrilla raids into Cuba may have back to his old hero, William Morgan, who had posed as a counter-revolutionary to lead some anti-Castro rebels into a trap. Had Oswald gotten that far, he could have made himself a hero by turning the raiding party over to the Cubans—or so he may have imagined. And even if he only got as far as the training camp, he might have gained some information he could pass along to the Cubans when he

*was in Mandeville, he said he met on a camp  
of out on a private home in which up 1000 were spread. 24 LHO  
had gotten to all of them before getting no more from a lawyer*

*He did in  
Mandeville,  
where he  
was with  
the one  
camp and  
was who  
was they  
camp.*

*was not true. He also only knew who fired the shot*

went to Mexico City—a nice boost for his credentials.

In any event, practically every source agrees that Oswald's approach to Carlos Bringuier was an infiltration attempt.

Oswald was not done with Bringuier yet, however. On August 9 a friend of Bringuier's came into the store and told him he had seen someone with a sign saying "Viva Fidel" and "Hands off Cuba" passing out literature a few blocks away on Canal Street. Bringuier grabbed his sign from the window, and then went with his friend and another Cuban to confront the pro-Castro demonstrator. They finally located him near Walgreen's Drug Store. To Bringuier's surprise, it was the same Lee Harvey Oswald who had offered his services to fight Castro. When Oswald saw him coming, he smiled and offered to shake his hand. Outraged, Bringuier called him a Castro agent and began to "blame him in the street." A crowd gathered and took Bringuier's side. According to Bringuier "they started to shout to him, 'Traitor! Communist! Go to Cuba! Kill him!' and some other phrases that I do not know if I could tell in the record."

A policeman came and asked Bringuier to keep walking and let Oswald hand out his literature, but Bringuier explained what Oswald had done to him a few days earlier and refused to go. When the policeman left to telephone headquarters, one of Bringuier's friends took Oswald's batch of handbills "and threw it on the air." Carlos took off his glasses and was about to hit Oswald:

but when he sensed my intention, he put his arm down as an X. . . .  
Q. He crossed his arms in front of him?

A. That is right, put his face and told me, "O.K. Carlos, if you want to hit me, hit me." At this moment, that made me to reaction that he was trying to appear as a martyr if I will hit him, and I decide not to hit him, and just a few seconds later arrive two police cars. . . . When we were in the First District of Police, we were in the same room, one small room over there, and some of the policemen started to question Oswald . . . and Oswald at that moment—that was in front of myself—was really cold blood. He was answering the questions that he would like to answer, and he was not nervous, he was not out of control, he was confident of himself at that moment. . . .

The Cubans bailed themselves out, but Oswald spent the night in jail. Marina stayed up until 3 A.M. not knowing where he was. Worried, she checked the closet where he kept his rifle and was relieved to see it was still there.

The next morning Oswald was questioned by police lieutenant *1st Lt. [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]*

Francis L. Martello of the intelligence squad. Among the ID cards Oswald produced at his request was his New Orleans Fair Play chapter membership card with the signature of A.J. Hidell shown as chapter president. (Marina had signed the name at his insistence, after she commented that the name was obviously an "altered Fidel.") Oswald led Martello to believe that the chapter was thriving. Oswald then asked to speak with someone from the FBI, and an agent named Quigley came over to see him. Oswald gave him a similar song and dance, showing him the card with Hidell's name.

Albert Newman has pointed out that Oswald told both Martello and Quigley that he had moved to New Orleans from *Fort Worth* about four months before. Oswald apparently wanted to accomplish several things by talking to Quigley: he wanted to be sure the FBI knew he was now living in New Orleans and that he had been in Fort Worth, not Dallas, when the Walker shooting occurred, and he wanted to give the impression that A. J. Hidell was a real person, not an alias.

After speaking to Quigley, he called the Murrets' number and reached his cousin Joyce, who came down to the police station but decided not to post bail when she realized what he was in for. But she did speak to L. Martello and told him that her cousin Lee had been in Russia and wouldn't let his wife learn English. That was the first in Martello had heard about Oswald's stay in Russia, and he decided to question him again. Oswald admitted that he had lived in the Soviet Union, and when Martello asked him his opinion of Russian communism, he replied, "It stunk." Martello reported:

He said they have "fat, stinking politicians over there just like we have over here" and that they do not follow the great precepts of Karl Marx, that the leaders have everything and the people are still poor and depressed. I asked Oswald why he would not allow members of his family to learn English. . . . He stated the reason why he did this was because he hated America. . . . I then spoke to him about the Fair Play for Cuba Committee again and asked him if he knew that Castro had admitted he was a Marxist-Leninist and he said he did. He was then asked if he truly believed Castro was really interested in the welfare of the Cuban people and he replied that he was not going to discuss the merits and demerits of Castro but was primarily concerned with the poor people of Cuba and that if this country would have good relations with the poor people of Cuba and quit worrying about Castro, that was his main concern. . . .

*no mention of Oswald's death in the pamphlet  
connecting him with Russia.*

136... Oswald's Game

In two other comments Oswald seemed to be following his old practice of telling the literal truth, but with a secret twist. Martello asked him which country he would choose, Russia or America, if he had to place his allegiance and Oswald told him, "I would place my allegiance at the foot of democracy." As an example of Oswald's Marxist bias, Kerry Thornley mentioned that "he could look upon the Soviet system today as a democracy by, of course, giving a completely different definition to the word 'democracy.'" When Martello asked him what he thought about Kennedy and Khrushchev, he said he thought "they got along very well together." Khrushchev had recently come to an agreement with Kennedy on the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, a conciliatory move that both China and Cuba had criticized.

After he got out of jail later that day, his uncle Charles ("Dutz") Murret paid him a visit and noticed a picture of Fidel on his living room mantel. As Lillian recalled it, Murret "asked Lee in a fatherly way, what was he doing, you know, who he was connected with, and so forth, and whether he was with any Commie group, and Lee said no, he wasn't, and Mr. Murret told him, he said, 'You be sure you show up at that courthouse for the trial,' and Lee said, 'Don't worry, I'll show up,' and he told Lee, he said, 'You ought to get out and find yourself a job.'" Oswald didn't attempt to argue, but after Murret left he told Martina, "Well, these are just bourgeois . . . only concerned with their own individual welfare."

Carlos Bringuiet described their court appearance on August 12: "I came first with my friends, and there were some other Cubans over there and I saw when Oswald came inside the court. . . . See, here in the court you have two sides, one of the white people and one for the colored people, and he walked directly inside of the colored people and he sat directly among them in the middle, and that made me to be angry too, because I saw that he was trying to win the colored people for his side. When he will appear in the court, he will defend Fidel Castro, he will defend the Fair Play for Cuba, and the colored people will feel good for him, and that is a tremendous work of propaganda for his cause. That is one of the things that made me to think that he is really a smart guy and not a nut."

Oswald pleaded guilty and paid a \$10 fine. He came home smiling. The next day the *Picayune* gave him a small write-up:

Pamphlet Case Sentence Given

"Street Agitation . . . Radio Speaker and Lecturer" . . . 137

Lee Oswald, 4907 Magazine, Monday was sentenced to pay a fine of \$10 or serve 10 days in jail on a charge of disturbing the peace by creating a scene.

Oswald was arrested by First District Police at 4:15 P.M. Friday in the 700 block of Canal while he was reportedly distributing pamphlets asking for a "Fair Play for Cuba." Police were called to the scene when three Cubans reportedly sought to stop Oswald. Municipal charges against the Cubans for disturbing the peace were dropped by the court.

He cut clippings and sent one to Arnold Johnson, the information director of the Communist party, and another to Vincent Lee. To the latter, he wrote:

Continuing my efforts on behalf of the F.P.C.C. in New Orleans I find that I have incurred the displeasure of the Cuban exile "worms" here [the Cuban government's term for the exiles]. . . .

I am glad I am stirring things up and shall continue to do so. The incident was given considerable coverage in the press and local T.V. news broadcast. I am sure it will be all to the good of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

Another clipping went into his pro-Castro file.

When Martina was questioned about the purpose of his pro-Castro activities in New Orleans, she said, "I think that Lee engaged in this activity primarily for purposes of self-advertising. He wanted to be arrested. I think that he wanted to get into the newspapers. . . ."

Q. Do you think that he wanted to be advertised and known as being in support of Cuba before he went to Cuba?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think he thought that would help him when he got to Cuba?

A. Yes.

Q. Did he tell you anything about that, or is that just what you guess?

A. He would collect the newspaper clippings about his—when the newspapers wrote about him, and he took those clippings with him when he went to Mexico.

On August 16 Oswald staged another demonstration in front of the International Trade Mart. A friend of Bringuiet's picked up one of the leaflets and saw that Oswald had his name and address stamped

on it. They decided to turn the tables on him. The friend went to Oswald's house posing as a Castro sympathizer and talked to him for about an hour on his front porch. Oswald reportedly told him that the United States didn't have the right to invade Cuba or overthrow its government, and that if it tried to, he would fight for Castro. He wasn't taken in by the visitor. Afterward, Marina testified, "I asked Lee who that was, and he said it was probably some anti-Cuban, or perhaps an FBI agent."

The Oswalds were getting along better by this time. He no longer hit her—she was seven months pregnant—and he even confided in her to some extent. According to McMillan's book, Marina tried to tell Oswald he wasn't the outstanding man he thought he was. She reminded him that Cuba had gotten along without him so far, and told him, "Poor great man sits here all by himself. He's part of a great cause, and yet he has nothing to eat. Nobody sees that he's a genius."

"You laugh now," he replied, "But in twenty years, when I'm prime minister, we'll see how you laugh then." He told her Cuba was "a tiny country surrounded by enemies" and that he hoped his leaflets would help wake up the American people. When Marina commented that America obviously wasn't ready for a revolution, he agreed: "You're right. I ought to have been born in some other era, much sooner or much later than I was."

Marina explained to the Warren Commission, "I was not exactly happy with this occupation of his, but it seemed to me better than his 'games' with the rifle as in Dallas. To tell the truth, I sympathized with Cuba. . . . But I did not support Lee since I felt that he was too small a person to take so much on himself."

As a result of the publicity he'd been attracting, Oswald was invited to appear on a local radio show called Latin Listening Post. The moderator, William Stuckey, found him to be self-assured and "very well qualified to handle questions"—if his speaking style had a fault, it was that Oswald seemed "a little stiff" and too academic. On the air, Stuckey asked him about his background, and Oswald said that after he had been honorably discharged from the Marines as a buck sergeant, he had gone back to work in Texas, and had recently moved to New Orleans with his wife and child. No mention of Dallas or Russia. (Because of his court-martials he had never gotten above the rank of private first class.)

In response to Stuckey's questions, he denied that Castro was controlled by the Soviet Union, and pointed out that when Khrushchev

had asked him to allow on-site inspections of his rocket bases during the missile crisis, Castro refused. He called Castro an "experimenter," a person who is trying to find the best way for his country." But he insisted that the Fair Play Committee did not support Fidel Castro as an "individual"—rather, it supported "the idea of an independent revolution in the Western Hemisphere, free from American intervention."

If [Castro] chooses a socialist or a Marxist or a Communist way of life, that is something upon which only the Cuban people can pass. We do not have the right to pass on that. . . . We cannot exploit that system and say it is a bad one, it is a threat to our existence and then go and try to destroy it.

According to Oswald, the "current of history" indicated that "countries emerging from imperialist domination" would choose socialism in one form or another. "Cuba," he declared, "is irrevocably lost as far as capitalism goes and there will never be a capitalist regime again in Cuba." Here Oswald was repeating two themes expressed in a letter to his brother Robert from Moscow four years earlier: opposition to American imperialism and a classic Marxist belief in historical inevitability.

When Stuckey asked him why so many people were fleeing Cuba, Oswald mentioned the criminal class and said that many of them were "the same people who are in New Orleans and have set themselves up in stores with blood money." He said he thought that the Cuban government's attitude was "good riddance." Stuckey pressed him on this issue, asking why so many workers and peasants were leaving Cuba while few were leaving dictatorships like Nicaragua, and Oswald turned the question to his advantage.

Well, a good question. [The] Nicaraguan situation is considerably different from Castro's Cuba. People are inclined not to flee their countries unless some new system, new factor, enters into their lives. I must say that very surely no new factors have entered into Nicaragua for about 300 years. In fact the people live exactly as they have always lived in Nicaragua. I am referring to the overwhelming majority of the people in Nicaragua, which is a feudal dictatorship with 90 per cent of the people engaged in agriculture. These peasants are uneducated. They have one of the lowest living standards in all of the western hemisphere and so because of the fact that no new factor, no liberating factor, has entered into their lives, they remain in Nicaragua.

To Newport the moment most and we was in the  
5-14 Camp St. Address

He explained the flight of workers and peasants from Cuba this way:

You know, it's very funny about revolutions. Revolutions require work, revolutions require sacrifice. . . . These people are the people who do not remain in Cuba to be educated by young people, who are afraid of the alphabet, who are afraid of these new things which are occurring, who are afraid they would lose something by collectivization. . . . You know, it used to be that these people worked for the United Fruit Company or American companies engaged in sugar refining, oil refining in Cuba. They worked a few months every year during the cane cutting or sugar refining season. . . . They feel that now they have to work all year round to plant new crops, to make a new economy . . . they feel that they have been robbed of the right to do as they please. . . . What they do not realize is that they have been robbed of the right to be exploited, robbed of the right to be cheated, robbed of the right of New Orleans companies to take away what was rightfully theirs. Of course, they have to share now. Everybody gets an equal portion. This is collectivization and this is very hard on some people, on people preferring the dog-eat-dog economy.

Oswald was good at this. When Stuckey brought up the lack of press freedom in Cuba, he compared it to the voluntary press censorship during wartime in the United States and complained about the *Times-Picayune* and *States-Item* syndicate, which he spoke of collectively as "the only newspaper we have in New Orleans and a very restricted paper it is." He said, "The Fair Play for Cuba Committee has often approached this paper with information or comments and this paper has consistently refused, because it is sympathetic to the anti-Castro regime. It has systematically refused to print any objective matter, giving the other man's viewpoint about Cuba." (This answer shows that he had been following the local newspapers' coverage of Cuba.) He also claimed that he had gone to their offices and asked for coverage of his Trade Mart demonstration and they refused.

The other answers he gave indicate that he was well-informed about Cuba. His reference to young people teaching the old was an allusion to the Alphabetization or Literacy Campaign of 1961, in which young Cubans went into rural areas to teach older people to read. Oswald also complained about the U.S. restrictions on travel to Cuba. And he referred to the anti-Castro underground—the "Batisstaires"—still in Cuba who had gone into hiding and had been "engaged in counter-revolutionary activities ever since the Bay of Pigs and even before that, just after the revolution. In other words, they have remained

underground."

He probably obtained this information from a variety of sources, but primarily from his reading, including the pamphlets Fair Play had sent him and articles about Cuba in *The Militant* and elsewhere. He had also spent time with Cuban students in the Soviet Union—one of his best friends there was a Cuban student named Alfred. And although there's no direct evidence for this, he may also have been in contact with some other Cubans in New Orleans. (Back in Dallas, George de Mohrenschildt had noticed that Oswald knew quite a bit about the history of several Latin American countries. He later wrote that Oswald told him he'd learned a lot from talking with refugees from those countries when he was a teenager in New Orleans—"no better source of information.")

After this broadcast, Stuckey and the station manager decided to arrange a debate between Oswald, Carlos Bringuer, and another anti-Communist, Ed Butler. Oswald showed up promptly on the afternoon of August 21. He was wearing a Russian-made suit—heavy gray flannel, badly cut—a shirt and tie, and carried a black looseleaf notebook under his arm. Since the initial interview, Bill Stuckey had learned, through a telephone call to the FBI, that Oswald had lived in Russia. He confronted him with this on the air and caught Oswald offguard.

STUCKEY: You did live in Russia for three years?  
OSWALD: That is correct, and I think that those, the fact that I did live for a time in the Soviet Union gives me excellent qualifications to repudiate charges that Cuba and the Fair Play for Cuba Committee is communist controlled.

Naturally, his opponents didn't agree.

Later in the debate Bringuer asked him if he concurred with Castro's recent characterization of President Kennedy as "a ruffian and a thief." Oswald replied, "I would not agree with that particular wording. However, I and the Fair Play for Cuba Committee do think that the United States Government through certain agencies, mainly the State Department and the CIA, has made monumental mistakes in its relations with Cuba." Bringuer was referring to recent press reports of a speech in which Castro charged that the United States hadn't delivered all the food and medical supplies it had promised Cuba in return for the release of the Bay of Pigs prisoners. Castro had said, "The ruffian Kennedy operates this way. We freed the mercenar-

ies and already they are organizing new aggressions against Cuba." Oswald's remark that he didn't agree with Castro's particular wording suggests that he may have instead agreed with the substance. But he went on to blame the State Department and the CIA, and this too may have reflected his attitude toward John Kennedy. Marina has said that he considered Kennedy the best American leader one could expect at that point in history. And he seemed to feel that Kennedy might have pursued a softer line on Cuba if it hadn't been for the political pressures he had to contend with. He explained how a president had to reckon with the opinions of others. His only negative comment was that Joe Kennedy had bought the presidency for his son—but this criticism was directed against capitalism. "Money paves the way to everything here," he said. Thus, he seemed to put most of the blame for America's policy toward Cuba on conservative elements, not on Kennedy himself. But it should be kept in mind that Oswald considered his wife unqualified to discuss political issues with him, and he knew she admired Kennedy.

Although Lee Harvey Oswald was a clever debater, the revelation about his defection won the debate for his opponents. Stuckey later said, "I think that we finished him on that program. . . . Oswald seemed like such a nice, bright boy and was extremely believable before this. We thought the fellow could probably get quite a few members if he was really indeed serious about getting members. We figured after this broadcast of August 21, why, that was no longer possible."

After the program Stuckey noticed that he looked "a little dejected" and invited him to a nearby bar for a beer. At the bar Stuckey thought he seemed to relax for the first time, and they talked for about an hour. When Stuckey asked if his relatives had influenced him to become a Marxist, Oswald seemed amused. No, he said, they were "pretty much typical New Orleans types." He told Stuckey that he had started reading Marx and Engels when he was 15 and that his service in Japan had convinced him that "something was wrong with the system," so he decided to go to Russia and see for himself how a revolutionary society operates. But he became disillusioned with Russia, he said, and he believed that Cuba was now the only revolutionary country in the world. Stuckey's impression was that Oswald regarded himself "as living in a world of intellectual inferiors." He thought Oswald knew he was intelligent and wanted "to have an opportunity to express his intelligence."

A week after the debate, Oswald wrote the Central Committee of

#### the Communist Party USA:

Please advise me upon a problem of personal tactics.

I have lived in the Soviet Union from Oct. 1959 to July 1962.

I had, in 1959, in Moscow, tried to legally dissolve my United States citizenship in favor of Soviet citizenship, however, I did not complete the legal formalities for this.

Having come back to the U.S. in 1962 and thrown myself into the struggle for progress and freedom in the United States, I would like to know whether, in your opinions, I can continue to fight, handicapped as it were, by my past record, can I still, under these circumstances, compete with anti-progressive forces aboveground or whether in your opinion I should always remain in the background, i.e. underground.

Our opponents could use my background of residence in the U.S.S.R. against any cause which I join, by association, they could say the organization of which I am a member is Russian controlled, etc. I am sure you see my point.

I could of course openly proclaim (if pressed on the subject) that I wanted to dissolve my American citizenship as a personal protest against the policy of the U.S. government in supporting dictatorships, etc.

But what do you think I should do? Which is the best tactic in general?

Should I dissociate myself from all progressive activities?

Here in New Orleans, I am secretary of the local branch of the "Fair Play for Cuba Committee," a position which, frankly, I have used to foster communist ideals.

On a local radio show, I was attacked by Cuban exile organization representatives for my residence etc. in the Soviet Union.

I feel I may have compromised the F.P.C.C., so you see that I need the advice of trusted, long time fighters for progress. Please advise.

The information director of the party, Arnold Johnson, eventually replied on September 19, saying that, as an American citizen, "you have a right to participate in such organizations as you want," but that "often it is advisable for some people to remain in the background, not underground."

Marina has said that Oswald thought more highly of the American Communists than he did of the Party members in Russia. He showed her a letter from a Party official in New York—perhaps this one—and said in effect: see, here is someone important who understands what I'm trying to do. But Oswald wanted another letter for his records, not advice. And it must have seemed to him, after the debate, that he

He had no "paw" paw. It was in back of on side. He  
prefers to "mingle" but in "Marx" group he "pretend"  
was "dry firing" only at night - when he would not see!

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could no longer work openly as a pro-Castro organizer, certainly not in New Orleans—and that he would now have to remain in the background, i.e., underground.

In late August he began practicing dry-firing his rifle several times a week on his front porch. He explained the practice to Marina: "Fidel Castro needs defenders. I'm going to join his army of volunteers. I'm going to be a revolutionary."

During the second half of the summer, Oswald was seen with two Latin Americans who have never been identified. Dean Andrews, a colorful New Orleans attorney, claimed that in July Oswald came to his office more than once in the company of a short, stocky Mexican, about 26 years old. He called the Mexican "Oswald's shadow." Although the Warren Commission discounted Andrews' testimony, one part of his story rings true. He said that Oswald came to see him about getting his less-than-honorable discharge upgraded. Oswald had been trying to get the Marines to reinstate his honorable discharge ever since he returned to the United States, and that month had received official notice that his request had been rejected. Considering Oswald's persistence when he believed he had been wronged, it makes sense that he might have then gone to an attorney. (Andrews said that since Oswald couldn't pay his fee, nothing came of it.)

Also, about this time, Oswald was reportedly seen in the Habana Bar with a Mexican or Cuban by both the bartender and Crest Pena, the owner. The Habana Bar was said to be a hangout for Spanish-speaking seamen, both pro- and anti-Castro. The man with Oswald was described as being approximately 28 years old, short and muscular, with very hairy arms and a receding hairline.

Finally, during the August 16 Trade Mart demonstration, Oswald was photographed by a local TV news crew while he was handing out his leaflets with two young men. One was a teenager Oswald approached and offered \$2 for an hour's work. But the other was a Latin American who has never been identified. The House Assassinations Committee published a photograph taken from the news film and suggested that this second man should be investigated further.

Oswald was always on the lookout for people who agreed with his political ideas. Under a paragraph entitled "Organizer" in his résumé, he wrote: "I hired persons to distribute literature. I then organized persons who display receptive attitudes toward Cuba to distribute pamphlets. . . . I caused the formation of a small, active, FPCC organization of members and sympathizers where before there was

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none." It has been assumed that Oswald was lying when he claimed to have organized a small group of supporters. It may be that he was simply exaggerating—possibly his support consisted of only one or two unidentified Latin Americans.

The Warren Report described Oswald's completed résumé as consisting of

. . . several sheets of notepaper which he presumably intended to call to the attention of Cuban and Soviet officials in Mexico City to convince them to let him enter Cuba. On these sheets he had recorded facts about his Marine service, including the dates of his enlistment and discharge; the places where he had served, and the diplomas that he had received from military school. Recorded also were notes on his stay in the Soviet Union, his early interest in Communist literature, his ability to speak Russian, his organization of the New Orleans chapter of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, his contact with police authorities in connection with his work for the Committee, and his experience in "street agitation," as a "radio speaker and lecturer," and as a photographer.

At the end of many of these sections Oswald attached some of the letters and other documents he'd collected. The handwritten sheets appear in the Commission's published exhibits.

This material is more revealing than the Commission realized. The section on his military service was probably intended to show that he was qualified to serve as a revolutionary soldier. There would otherwise seem to have been little point in giving so many details. The other material seems designed to demonstrate that he was versatile and well-qualified to serve the revolution in other capacities—as a political organizer or translator, for example.

Under the heading "Marxist," he wrote that he had attended "numerous Marxist reading circles and groups" at the factory where he worked in Minsk, "some of which were compulsory and others which were not," and indicated that he had learned still more about the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin from Russian newspapers and TV, adding that "such articles are given very good coverage daily in the USSR." That last statement indicates that he wrote this résumé with the Cuban officials in mind and not the Russians, who would certainly have known about such articles.

In a brief section entitled "Russian" he said that he was "totally proficient in speaking conversational Russian" and appended the letter Peter Gregory had given him back in June 1962. Knowing that



there were Russian technicians and advisers in Cuba, Oswald may have thought his knowledge of the language would be useful. Throughout, the document presents not only what he had done, but something of what he thought he was capable of doing. For instance, in phrasing similar to that of an ordinary job resumé, he wrote, "I am experienced in street agitation having done it in New Orleans. . . ."

But probably the most telling part of the resumé came under the heading "Photographer." It reveals a corner of Oswald's fantasy life that had first surfaced in 1961, when he told Marina he would have loved the dangerous life of a spy. When he worked at Jaggars-Chiles-Stovall, he struck up an acquaintance with a co-worker, Dennis Hyman Ofstein, who taught him how to use some of the photographic equipment. After they had become friendly, Oswald asked him if he knew what the term "microdot" meant. He then explained to Ofstein that microdots were highly reduced photographs used to transmit secret information—and indeed they are, as any reader of spy novels knows. Very likely, Oswald was hoping Ofstein could teach him how to reduce a photograph to that size. But Ofstein had never heard the term, and the equipment at the plant wasn't capable of producing any such photographs. The word "microdot" also appears in a notebook of Oswald's next to the name Jaggars-Chiles-Stovall. In his resumé, Oswald wrote down the dates he had worked for them and that he was familiar with "blowups, miniaturization, etc."

Overall, this document suggests that Oswald didn't consider himself a miserable failure who, as the Warren Report put it, saw Cuba as "his last escape hatch, his last gambit to extricate himself from the mediocrity and defeat which plagued him throughout most of his life." Instead, these credentials indicate that he saw himself as an experienced political operative who was qualified to work for the Cuba revolution as a soldier, lecturer, organizer, agitator, translator, or spy. His ambition was evidently much the same as it had been in 1959. As Kerry Thornley had guessed, he expected to be welcomed aboard, and he would then go out and distinguish himself in the Communist world and work his way up—after twenty years, he might even get to be prime minister. For someone who couldn't hold a job in the United States, he had some extraordinary ambitions.

During the first six months of 1963 there had been little, if any, American sabotage activities against Cuba—the results were not considered worth the effort. But in June 1963 the Special Group of the National Security Council decided, with the president's approval, to

158 p. 114, 115 (1963) are not "witnessed" by all the CIA only by Oswald and are far from the best (30-26) for Oswald

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step up covert operations inside Cuba.

Sabotage missions were carried out by Cuban exiles led by paramilitary specialists under contract to the CIA. Operating out of Florida, they ran boats to Cuba that dropped off agents and supplies. As in many other such underground operations, the chief purpose was to sabotage the economy and promote disaffection with the government among the people. But some of the raiders had ideas about more direct action. As far as they and their American advisers were concerned, there was a war going on. The CIA's deputy director of intelligence during that period, Ray Cline, later told a journalist, "I'm almost positive that there was no serious CIA-controlled effort to assassinate anybody, but I think the intention of some infiltration teams was to do it." And one of the Cuban raiders said, "The papers now want to say there were plots. Well, I can tell you there were plots. I took a lot of weapons to Cuba. Some of them were very special weapons for special purposes. They were powerful rifles with sophisticated scopes—Springfields with bolt actions, rifles only used by snipers. . . . Everyone in the underground was plotting to kill Castro, and the CIA was helping the underground." Occasionally some of the infiltrators and their supporters inside Cuba were captured and shot.

On August 18 anti-Castro commandoes shelled and machine-gunned a Cuban factory. On the 21st, the day of Oswald's radio debate, the *Times-Picayune* reported that the Cuban government had charged that the raid was planned, organized, and supplied by the CIA. Ten days later a front-page story headlined "Policy Changed on Cuba Attacks" quoted a *Washington Post* report that the new U.S. policy was to "neither encourage nor discourage" such raids, if they were militarily feasible and not carried out simply for publicity purposes. The reported change was seen as "an encouragement to activist exiles."

In early September the CIA renewed its contact with one of its informants, a high-level Cuban official codenamed AM/LASH. Although the CIA was primarily interested in keeping AM/LASH in place for intelligence purposes, AM/LASH now proposed that he engineer a coup involving, as a first step, Castro's assassination. The case officers who talked with him in Brazil cabled headquarters on September 7 saying that AM/LASH was interested in attempting an "inside job" against Castro and was awaiting a U.S. plan of action. Even while covert activities continued, however, the White House was considering an attempt to establish communications with the Cuban government. Beginning in September, an adviser to the Ameri-

actually do not all dump down in sum up

can delegation to the United Nations, William Attwood, had a series of informal talks with the Cuban ambassador to the U.N. to try to open negotiations leading to an accommodation between the two countries. When Attwood individually informed Robert Kennedy and McGeorge Bundy of his effort, each agreed it was worth pursuing. Thus, American policy was proceeding along two distinct and contradictory roads. Attwood had advised the White House of his diplomatic efforts, but the CIA officials involved with AM/LASH didn't inform the White House of theirs. Richard Helms testified that he didn't believe it was necessary,

... given this Cuban of his standing and all the history... of trying to find someone inside Cuba who might head a government and have a group to replace Castro... this was so central to the whole theme of everything we had been trying to do, that I [found] it totally unnecessary to ask Robert Kennedy at that point [whether] we should go ahead with this.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, Oswald was pursuing his own covert activities, evidently determined to play a role in the international chess game.

On September 5 two planes dropped bombs on Santa Clara, Cuba. Late in the evening of September 7 Premier Castro gave an impromptu, three-hour interview to Associated Press reporter Daniel Harker during a reception at the Brazilian Embassy in Havana. Two days later the *Times-Picayune* reported:

**CASTRO BLASTS RAIDS ON CUBA**

**Says U.S. Leaders Imperiled by Aid to Rebels**

Havana (AP)—Prime Minister Fidel Castro said Saturday night "United States leaders" would be in danger if they helped in any attempt to do away with leaders of Cuba. Bitterly denouncing what he called US-promoted raids on Cuban territory, Castro said, "We are prepared to fight them and answer in kind. United States leaders should think that if they are aiding terrorist plans to eliminate Cuban leaders, they themselves will not be safe."

Castro went on to accuse the United States of "double-crossing" policies and called President Kennedy a "cheap and crooked politician." A similar story appeared in the *States Item*. What were these terrorist plans Castro referred to? Although it's

possible that Cuban intelligence had learned of the AM/LASH operation, Castro implied that the plot was connected to the recent raids carried out by Cuban exiles. As the Church committee noted, talk of assassinating Castro was common among the more militant exile groups. It was "part of the ambience of that time" for militant exiles to say that the best way to get their country back was to shoot Fidel. The committee report says, "Castro's September 7 statement could have been referring to information he received relating to such assassination plots hatched by exile leaders. In addition there were paramilitary raids on Cuba by exile leaders shortly before Castro's interview." In any case, Raymond Rocca, a CIA official who had been assigned to work with the Warren Commission, wrote in 1975, "There can be no question from the facts surrounding the Castro appearance, which had not been expected, and his agreement to the interview, that this event represented a more-than-ordinary attempt to get a message on the record in the United States."

Castro was mistaken to assume, as a matter of course, that President Kennedy had ordered or had specific knowledge of any of these attempts. They grew out of the crisis atmosphere that prevailed, when it seemed to many people that Castro had to be removed by any means necessary. So far as anyone knows, the president never saw Castro's intended message. But among the potential readers was Lee Harvey Oswald, a disturbed young radical who had been following the local papers looking for a way to help Cuba. With his taste for violence and his subjective interpretations of everything he read, Castro's warning may indeed have seemed like the kings outcry against Becket quoted earlier by Senator Charles Mathias: "Who will rid me of this man?" The irony is that the CIA plots may have evolved in the same manner.

During September Oswald eagerly awaited Ruth Paine's arrival. After Marina and June went to stay at Ruth's home in Irving, he would be free to go to Mexico City to apply for a Cuban visa. He informed his wife that he would also visit the Soviet Embassy in Mexico and try to speed up her return to the Soviet Union. He assured her that if everything worked out he would arrange for her to join him in Cuba or for him to visit her in Russia. When Ruth arrived he led her to believe that he was going to Houston or Philadelphia to look for work, and cautioned Marina not to tell her anything about his actual destination.

The women left for Texas on September 23. Oswald was seen hurrying out of his apartment, suitcases in hand, the following after-

*How could he have known? I don't know.*

*no down and will be like we have*

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noon. After a gap of two nights and a day, he was spotted in south Texas on a Trailways bus headed for the Mexican border. During the intervening period, Oswald was reportedly in Dallas. His appearance there provides the first indication that Oswald had read Castro's warning and that he was responding to it with his own idea of political action, much as he had to other news reports about Cuba that summer.

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# 11... The Troubling Testimony of Sylvia Odio: "A MATTER OF SOME IMPORTANCE TO THE COMMISSION"

**D**URING 1963 Sylvia Odio, an attractive, 26-year-old Cuban exile, was a leader of the anti-Castro movement in Dallas. Mrs. Odio had a personal reason for wanting to see Fidel overthrown. She came from a wealthy Cuban family that had supported Castro before the revolution but later turned against him. Since 1961, her parents had been imprisoned in Cuba, her father at the prison on the Isle of Pines. At about nine o'clock on the evening of September 25, 1963, the doorbell rang at Sylvia Odio's apartment in Dallas. Her sister Annie answered, then went to call Sylvia to the door. Standing under the outside light were three strangers. Keeping the chain latch on, Sylvia took a good look at them. Two were Latin Americans in T-shirts who looked tired and scruffy. One was taller and had an unusual bald spot on one side of his hairline. The other one—she thought he looked Mexican—was shorter, heavier, and "very hairy." The third man standing between them was an Anglo-American who vaguely needed a shave. One of the Latins asked, "Are you Sarita Odio?" She told him she was not. "That is my sister [who is] studying at the University of Dallas. I am Sylvia." Then he asked, "Is she the oldest?" "No, I am the oldest." And he said, "It is you we are looking for."

He told her they were members of the Cuban Revolutionary Junta (JURE), the anti-Castro organization Sylvia Odio belonged to. Suspicious, she asked their names. She later recalled, "One of them said his name was Leopoldo. He said that was his war name. In all this underground, everybody has a war name. This was done for safety in Cuba. So when everybody came to exile, everyone was known by their war names." It was Leopoldo, the taller one, who did most of the talking. The other Latin gave his war name as something like "Angelo."

After she refused to let them in, Leopoldo told her, "We are friends of your father." He gave her "almost incredible details" about her father's past, which she believed only someone who knew him, or was very well-informed, would have known. Mrs. Odio later testified, "After they mentioned my father they started talking about the American. He [the Latin American] said, 'You are working in the underground.' And I said, 'No, I am sorry to say I am not working in the underground.' And he said, 'We wanted you to meet this American. His name is Leon Oswald.' He repeated it twice. . . . And they introduced him as an American who was very much interested in the Cuban cause."

The American attempted a few words in Spanish, "trying to be cute." She asked him if he had ever been to Cuba and he said he hadn't, but that he was interested in her movement. Afterward he stood silently, watching and listening—as Odio would put it, "sort of looking at me to see what my reaction was, like somebody who is evaluating the situation."

One of the Latin Americans took out a letter written in Spanish that requested money for her organization to buy arms to overthrow Castro. He asked if she would translate the letter into English for him and "send a whole lot of them" to American businessmen. Mrs. Odio refused. (She had been shown a similar petition by a Dallas leader of JURE, and had turned him down too.) She asked who had sent them, and Leopoldo told her that they had "just come from New Orleans," where they were trying to get their movement organized, and that they were doing this on their own. He apologized for the late hour, saying they were leaving on a trip that night or the next evening. The entire conversation lasted about fifteen minutes. Sylvia told them she had to go and, still suspicious, she added that she was going to write to her father about their visit. As they were leaving, Leopoldo asked, "Is he still in the Isle of Pines?" Then they drove away in a red car, with Leopoldo at the wheel.

*No contact. This is not in the book testimony*

The next day Leopoldo telephoned her after she got home from work. It was a conversation Odio wouldn't be likely to forget. From what he said, it was clear he continued to believe she had contacts with the anti-Castro underground. Leopoldo asked her what she had thought of the American. When she replied, "I didn't think anything," he said, "Well, you know, he's a Marine, an ex-Marine, and an expert marksman. He would be a tremendous asset to anyone, except that you never know how to take him. . . . You know, our idea is to introduce him to the underground in Cuba, because he is great, he is kind of nuts." He said, "He could go either way. He could do anything—like getting underground in Cuba, like killing Castro."

Then, while Mrs. Odio listened uneasily, he raised the possibility of another assassination. "The American says we Cubans don't have any guts. He says we should have shot President Kennedy after the Bay of Pigs, because he is the one that was holding the freedom of Cuba actually. He says we should do something like that." He added that "Leon" had told him, "It is so easy to do it." He told her again that he and his friends were going on a trip, and that he wanted to talk to her again on their return. Their conversation ended, and she never heard from any of them again.

Alarmed, Odio had suspected at once "some sort of scheme or plot," though she didn't know what. There had been something too calculating about Leopoldo's approach: "When I had no reaction to the American, he thought that he would mention that the man was loco . . . and would be the kind of man that could do anything like getting underground in Cuba, like killing Castro. He repeated several times that he was an expert shotman. And he said, 'We probably won't have anything to do with him. He is kind of loco.' . . . He was feeling her out. Then, 'When he mentioned the fact that we should have killed President Kennedy . . . he was trying to play it safe. If I liked him, then he would go along with me, but if I didn't like him, he was kind of retreating to see what my reaction was. It was cleverly done."

A few days later Odio wrote to her father describing her visitors. (His eventual response would be a warning to stay away from these men, because he didn't know them.) She almost succeeded in putting the incident out of her mind. On November 22 she was at work when word came that the president had been shot. Immediately she remembered what Leopoldo had said about the exiles taking revenge against Kennedy. After her boss sent everyone home, Sylvia fainted on her way to the parking lot and was taken to a hospital by ambulance.

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In another part of town, Annie Odio had watched the Kennedy motorcade pass by on its way to the Book Depository around noon. An hour or so later, when she saw Oswald's picture on television, her first thought was, "My God, I know this guy and I don't know from where. . . . Where have I seen this guy?" After learning of her sister's collapse, Annie Odio visited her at the hospital and mentioned the feeling that she had seen Oswald before. Sylvia, who started to cry, reminded her of the three men who came to her apartment. There was a TV set in the room, and Oswald's picture came on. Sylvia later described their reaction: "Annie and I looked at one another and sort of gasped. She said, 'Do you recognize him?' She said, 'It is the same guy, isn't it?' I said, 'Yes, but do not say anything.'"

The women were too afraid to go to the authorities with their story, but Sylvia told another sister about it, who told an American friend. Eventually the information made its way to the FBI, who came to question Sylvia in mid-December and then relayed her story to the Warren Commission.

Odio's account of her meeting with Oswald was arguably the most important new information given to the Commission. Here was a witness who said she had seen Oswald with two unknown companions, one of whom reported a threat Oswald had made against the president's life—this scarcely two months before the assassination. Odio's experience might well provide the key to the mystery of why Kennedy was killed.

From the outset it was clear that Odio was a credible witness. The FBI checked her out, and her reputation was excellent. More important, her physician insisted that Sylvia had told him about her mysterious visitors soon after she saw them, well *before* the assassination. And she was able to produce the letter her father had written denying the visitors were his friends. Furthermore, the details of her account matched up with other evidence about Oswald she almost certainly couldn't have known about. For instance, Leopoldo had said they had just come from New Orleans and were leaving on a trip—at a time when Oswald had left New Orleans and would soon be in Mexico. Her description of one of the Latin Americans was similar to that of the "Mexican" Oswald had reportedly been seen with in New Orleans. In short, Sylvia Odio's story held up, and she was, and still remains, quite certain the man she saw that night was Lee Harvey Oswald.

Even before Odio was called to testify before the Warren Commission,

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sion, one of its staff lawyers, W. David Slawson, was trying to pin down Oswald's movements from the time when he was last seen in New Orleans by Marina and Ruth Paine on Monday, September 23, to the time when he was next spotted on the bus heading for Mexico shortly after 6 a.m. on Thursday, September 26. If Oswald's whereabouts during that period could be accounted for, Odio's story—and its disturbing implications—could be quickly disposed of.

As it turned out, this was not easy to do. There were no eyewitnesses who could establish Oswald's presence in New Orleans after neighbors saw him leave his apartment on the afternoon of the 24th, and no evidence could be found that he left the city by bus, train, or commercial airline. Thus, the evening of the 24th and the entire next day and night were a blank. Slawson had one slim piece of paper with which to bridge the gap—Oswald's weekly Texas unemployment check that was cashed at a Winn-Dixie supermarket on the 24th or 25th. The local postal officials told Commission investigators that the check probably would not have reached Oswald's post office box before the early morning hours of Wednesday, September 25. Slawson reasoned that if Oswald stayed over somewhere in New Orleans until Wednesday morning to wait for this check, and was next seen on his way to Mexico, he must have caught the connecting bus that left New Orleans for Houston on Wednesday afternoon.<sup>2</sup> And if he was on that bus, he could not have been at Odio's apartment.

Slawson's analysis seemed reasonable enough on the surface, but there were problems with it. No witness could be found who saw Oswald on the 10-hour bus ride from New Orleans to Houston—an unusual circumstance, since there were passengers who had seen him on every other leg of his bus trip to Mexico City and back to Dallas. Furthermore, the driver of the connecting bus said he had never seen Oswald "at any time."

There was also good reason to believe that the postal authorities had for once underestimated the efficiency of the U.S. mails. Marina testified that Oswald always picked up his weekly Texas unemployment checks on a *Tuesday*. Indeed, elsewhere in the Warren Report (in knocking down a rumor that Oswald had been in Mexico the preceding week), the Commission asserted that Oswald "cashed a check from the Texas Employment Commission at the Winn-Dixie Store no. 1425 in New Orleans" on "Tuesday, September 17." Thus it appears that Oswald could have cashed his next check on Tuesday the 24th and left town, perhaps in a private car, the same day. Meanwhile, another staff lawyer, Wesley J. Liebeler, had by now

Do she had make any real inquiry, husband's explanation of all

of this would probably have been included. I have it on file

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taken Sylvia Odio's deposition, and Liebler wasn't satisfied with Slawson's analysis. He wrote an internal memo saying, "There are problems. Odio may well be right. The Commission will look had if it turns out she is." Liebler pointed to the testimony of lawyer Dean Andrews and the bartender at the Habana Bar, who each said he had seen Oswald with a similar-looking Latin American. Liebler noted that Oswald would have had time to travel to Dallas to see Odio and still get to south Texas in time to catch the bus to Mexico.

The response of the Commission's chief counsel, Lee J. Rankin, has often been quoted by critics of the Warren Report. He told Liebler, "At this stage we are supposed to be closing doors, not opening them." The Commission's work was winding down, and President Johnson was pushing for the release of their report well before the November election to avoid having the investigation become a campaign issue.

Nevertheless, in August 1964 Rankin wrote FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover: "It is a matter of some importance to the Commission that Mrs. Odio's allegations either be proved or disproved." Rankin suggested that the two Latin Americans might have been either members of an anti-Castro group other than JURE or "pro-Castro individuals attempting to infiltrate the anti-Castro groups in Dallas."

Rankin asked Hoover to conduct the investigation necessary to find out who these men were. He continued, "We are also concerned about the possibility that Oswald may have left New Orleans on September 24, 1963 instead of September 25, 1963 as has been previously thought. In that connection Marina Oswald has recently advised us that her husband told her he intended to leave New Orleans the very next day following her departure on September 23, 1963." Rankin concluded that since Oswald was in Mexico after the 26th, "the only time he could have been in Odio's apartment appears to be the nights of September 24 or 25, most likely the latter."

Hoover subsequently reported back, saying the FBI had located an anti-Castro activist named Loren Hall who claimed that he had visited Mrs. Odio that September in the company of Lawrence Howard, a Mexican-American from East Los Angeles, and William Seymour from Arizona. Seymour was said to resemble Oswald. When the Warren Report was published a few days later, the doubts expressed in Rankin's letter were nowhere to be seen. Even though no other new evidence had turned up, the report asserted that Oswald probably left New Orleans by bus on the 25th. Its discussion ended: "While the FBI had not yet completed its investigation into this matter at the time the

While the CBS withheld Oswald's name the review was used for

Report (I made the words what I did in it before these the letter) Hall report admitted that to me and then in my presence to go for my SR, that he would have been there, He also stated that he known as Wash to (Oswald) as having been there not identified. The Troubling Testimony of Sylvia Odio... 157

Report went to press, the Commission has concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald was not at Mrs. Odio's apartment in September of 1963."

Before the ink was dry, the FBI's explanation collapsed. After both Lawrence Howard and William Seymour denied having visited Odio, Loren Hall retracted his story (he later claimed the FBI had misquoted him in the first place), and Mrs. Odio failed to recognize pictures of any of them.

The Warren Commission had not succeeded in closing the doors against its critics. Sylvia Odio's testimony, and its handling by the authorities, would be a central issue in nearly every conspiracy book. Clearly, the Odio incident—as it came to be called—could not be explained away as a simple case of mistaken identity because, as the critics were quick to point out, the report had left a huge question dangling in mid-air: If Oswald wasn't at Odio's apartment, why was a look-alike using his name?

The critics believed they knew the answer. In *Accessories After the Fact*, Sylvia Meagher presented a careful analysis of the Commission's evidence and demonstrated, almost beyond question, that Oswald could have been at Odio's apartment on the night of September 25. And since Odio's account "coincided with facts to which she had no access," the likelihood of fabrication was "thus virtually destroyed." However, Meagher then proceeded to a strangely narrowed conclusion. She wrote, "That leaves two possibilities open: that the real Oswald visited Mrs. Odio with two companions, one of whom deliberately planted highly incriminating information about him without his knowledge; or that a mock-Oswald visited her, to accomplish the same purpose." Either way, it was a frame-up, for, as she saw it, Leopoldo "took pains to plant seeds which inevitably would incriminate Oswald in the assassination carried out on November 22, so that an anonymous phone call would be enough to send police straight after him even if he had not been arrested within the hour." Who was behind this scheme to frame Oswald? In Meagher's hypothesis, they were probably Cuban counter-revolutionaries and their ultra-right associates, who may have taken notice of Oswald after his attempt to infiltrate Carlos Bringuier's organization in New Orleans. Their purpose would have been "to revenge themselves not only against the President whom they considered a Communist and a traitor but also against a marxist and suspected double-agent who had tried to infiltrate the anti-Castro movement." Since it's true that the Far Right and many Cuban exiles were bitter

again most of the evidence is that he was not Oswald's name was given to me by the FBI

Woman must be "well known" but

Why the CIA would identify him - a real deal  
Oswald, made the work with contacts (CIA) <sup>Spanish clearly is</sup> and who else? 158 ... Oswald came before in England?

about Kennedy's performance at the Bay of Pigs, this hypothesis has a certain appeal. But take a closer look.

What would Meagher's anonymous caller have told the police? Presumably, that they should question a woman named Sylvia Odio—who would then tell them what she later told the Warren Commission: that Oswald and his companions claimed to be members of an anti-Castro organization, that Oswald had been offered as a potential assassin of Castro, and that he said the exiles should kill the president because of the Bay of Pigs. How could this revelation, coming in the heat of the moment following Kennedy's death, have helped the anti-Castro movement or the Far Right? Indeed, Meagher's plotters had painted Oswald as a violent ally of the very factions that were supposedly trying to frame him. Meagher herself noted that Odio didn't call the police, perhaps because she "feared that the Cuban exiles might be accused of the President's death."

If this was an attempt by Cuban counter-revolutionaries to implicate a marxist, it was a peculiar way to go about it.

Nevertheless, almost all of the theorists who came after her have followed the direction of Meagher's accusing finger. For the critics, the Odio incident could only have been an effort to frame Oswald. They assume that since Leopoldo's report of Oswald's remark about killing Kennedy was incriminating, it must have been intended as incriminating. This is a natural, common-sense view, and it's probably wrong. It's easy to forget that these events from the past, which are now set in concrete from our point of view, actually took place in the uncertain flux of the present. For some reason, since we know what was going to happen on November 22, we tend to assume Leopoldo did, too. But when these men visited Odio's apartment, Kennedy's trip to Dallas had not even been scheduled, let alone announced. Strange as it may seem, no one on earth could have known that Oswald would ultimately land a job in a building that would overlook a Kennedy motorcade. Which Oswald made a few months  
But the frame-up theory's ultimate weakness involves the critics' conception of Lee Harvey Oswald. In every conspiracy book, Oswald is a piece of chaff blown about by powerful, unseen forces—he's a dumb and compliant puppet with no volition of his own. If the man Odio saw was an impostor, how could the plotters be certain no witnesses would be able to establish Oswald's presence somewhere else that evening—unless they ordered the unsuspecting patsy to stay out of sight? And if the real Oswald was used, how did the anti-Castro plotters get their Marxist enemy to stand at Odio's door to be intro-

There is no more to the assumption that a patsy is why the CIA would have more often tried to discredit any misstatements and give the guilty man to get away. Also, he can be killed + still live

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duced as a friend of the Cuban exiles? No one has come up with a plausible scenario that can answer those questions.

In years to come, Odio would be interviewed by two other government commissions—the Church committee and the House Assassinations Committee—and those investigators would also conclude that she was a truthful witness. After its relatively brief examination of the president's assassination, the Church panel reached no public conclusion—Odio's testimony wasn't mentioned in its final report. The Assassination Committee's report was hardly more helpful. It said, "The committee was inclined to believe Sylvia [sic] Odio" and "did not agree with the Warren Commission's conclusion that Oswald could not have been in Dallas at the requisite time." But it could go no farther: "Based on a judgment of the credibility of Sylvia and Annie Odio, one of these men at least looked like Lee Harvey Oswald and was introduced to Mrs. Odio as Leon Oswald." A fuller account of their indiscretion was later given by the Committee's chief counsel and director, G. Robert Blakey, who wrote:

Based on all [fals] evidence, we believed Sylvia [sic] and Annie Odio: three men, who identified themselves as members of an anti-Castro organization, did visit their apartment in Dallas about two months prior to the Kennedy assassination; and one of them, who was either Lee Harvey Oswald or his look-alike, was introduced to them as Leon Oswald. Rather than dismiss the incident, as the Warren Commission had, we considered it a significant, if mysterious association of Oswald (or someone posing as Oswald) with two individuals who were engaged in anti-Castro activities, or acting as if they were.

To sum up, there have been only two explanations for Odio's disturbing testimony. It was a case of mistaken identity, as the Commission said, and a "Leon Oswald" and two other men visited her for unknown reasons. Or it was an attempt to frame Oswald by planting incriminating statements. The first is no explanation whatsoever, and the second is based on several unreasonable assumptions: (The point to be stressed is this: Sylvia Odio gave testimony of obvious, even crucial importance, and no one could explain what it meant.

Some mysteries defy rational analysis. It takes a moment of unearned insight—or what has been called the Aha! reaction—to understand them. There is a picture psychologists use showing a white goblet on a black background. Stare at it long enough and, with

what is the man behind the door?

There is no more to the assumption that a patsy is why the CIA would have more often tried to discredit any misstatements and give the guilty man to get away. Also, he can be killed + still live  
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Oswald to prove himself. He had already made one attempt to penetrate the enemy underground. Now, if he could just make contact with the exile leaders involved in these "terrorist plans," he might come up with an even bigger trophy: inside information about the plots to kill Cuba's leaders. Once again he would seek out an exile group and offer his help—not as a guerrilla leader this time, but as a marksman who could assassinate Fidel. He would try to infiltrate as a volunteer, as he had before. While he was at it, he'd plant another little seed of provocation. He'd attempt to goad the exiles into retaliating against Kennedy.

In other words, the Odio incident was Oswald's reaction to Castro's warning.

Although I was fairly convinced of this by 1976, I still didn't understand why Oswald and the others went all the way to Dallas to carry out this scheme. Why did they go to Sylvia Odio, in particular? An article in the *Saturday Evening Post* that year provided an answer. The authors, George O'Toole and Paul Hoch, had apparently discovered more about Odio's father from some of the large number of Warren Commission records that were declassified in 1976. It turns out that Odio's parents weren't ordinary political prisoners, as the Warren Report suggested. They had been indirectly involved in a spectacular plot to assassinate Castro in 1961.

The plot was the work of Antonio Veciana and Reynaldo Gonzales, members of the anti-Castro underground. Veciana's mother had rented an apartment near the presidential palace from which they planned to fire a bazooka to kill Castro and other officials. Before their plan could be carried out, however, word of it reached the Cuban police. Veciana and his mother escaped to Miami, while Gonzales fled to a farm that was owned by Sylvia Odio's parents. Gonzales was tracked down and arrested, as were the Odios. Castro himself announced the breaking up of this plot at a public meeting in Havana in October 1961. At the time, the Odio daughters were already out of the country.

Having somehow learned of her father's background, her visitors apparently concluded (however mistakenly) that Amador Odio's eldest daughter might be interested in introducing a volunteer hit man to her. They talked first about the details of her father's activities in Cuba. Then, "after they mentioned my father they started talking about the American. He said, 'You are working in the underground.' And I said, 'No, I am sorry to say I am not working in the under-

*Shirley  
M. Witt*

ground.' And he said, 'We wanted you to meet this American. His name is Leon Oswald.' ... And they introduced him as an American who was very much interested in the Cuban cause." Oswald told her the same thing, then stood silently, evaluating the situation. The underlying logic seemed to be: *We know about your father's connection with a terrorist plot to kill Castro. We believe you have contacts with the underground. Here is an American you can use.* Had Odio invited them in, she might well have heard the rest of their proposal about Oswald that evening.

What did they want from Mrs. Odio? Apparently, they hoped she would know, and tell them, the name of the right person to see—the leader behind these new assassination plots. And, in fact, it appears that Odio may have had a reputation for being able to put people in touch with the anti-Castro underground. Mrs. Odio told the Commission that in June 1963 she had spoken with a Uruguayan named Johnny Martin who claimed he could provide the exiles with second-hand weapons if she could put him in touch with an appropriate leader. As she later said, she had "jumped at the opportunity that something could be done," and arranged a meeting between Martin and an exile leader in Miami.

Mrs. Odio believed it would not have been difficult for anyone to find her. She testified that shortly before the Oswald incident, a speaker at an anti-Castro meeting in Dallas had mentioned that he knew her father in Cuba and that Amador Odio's daughters were living in that city. Odio said she could have been located by calling the Catholic refugee relief agency or even by consulting the phone book.

Overall, one gets the impression that Cubans in this country formed a tightly knit community in which news got around easily and secrets were hard to keep. Oswald may have found Mrs. Odio the same way he apparently found Bringer—simply by asking around. Another New Orleans anti-Castro exile, Ernesto Rodriguez, has recently claimed that Oswald had also visited him to offer his services as a guerrilla warfare specialist, and that it was he who sent Oswald to see Bangner. Thus, it appears that Oswald made more forays into the anti-Castro camp than anyone realized, or wanted to admit.

The real names of the two Latin Americans will probably never be known. We know enough only to speculate about their roles. The evidence suggests they were not anti-Castro activists, as they claimed. Angelo was likely the Latin American of similar appearance that Oswald was seen with in New Orleans. Both men evidently lied when

*Who was it?  
Who was it?  
Who was it?*

*Circle  
two well  
known  
names  
who were  
to see with  
him?*

*circle  
who were  
to see with  
him?*

*circle  
who were  
to see with  
him?*

*Followed?*

They did not say they were Oswald's friends, they did not say they were Oswald's friends.

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they said they were members of JURE and friends of Odio's father. (The other leaders of JURE said they had never heard of them, and Odio's father, now living in the United States, still insists they were no friends of his.) And if they were from New Orleans, as they said, they would almost certainly have known of the splash Oswald had made there in August as a Fair Play for Cuba activist. None of this rules out the idea that one or both of these men were anti-Castroites who had infiltrated Oswald's one-man operation. Leopoldo may have been an anti-Castro militant who truly believed Oswald would be an asset to his cause. But his telephone conversation with Odio followed Oswald's line with Bringuer so closely that this seems doubtful. And Leopoldo's parting shot about Amador Odio—"Is he still in the Isle of Pines?"—sounds almost like a jeer. It seems more reasonable that these three were birds of a feather than that they were working at cross purposes.

showing  
no time  
Leopoldo  
had the

But let's pull back for a moment to get a broader view. Was there someone behind the scenes telling Oswald what to do?

Let's make that question more specific: Who would have had a reason to order Oswald to get inside the exile underground? Not the CIA, apparently, since the CIA already had plenty of contacts with that group—the CIA was, in fact, running the war against Cuba. The FBI? Maybe, though it's difficult to imagine that Hoover's boys would have wanted one of their operatives to go around suggesting that Castro's opponents should murder the president. Besides, it's hard to picture Lee Oswald working for the FBI or the CIA, unless we crop out everything else we know about him.

There is another possibility. Although the House Assassinations Committee concluded, "on the basis of the evidence available to it," that the Cuban government was not involved in the assassination, its report called the CIA investigation of the question of Cuban involvement grossly inadequate—and it attached a fine-print footnote:

With respect to the incident at the home of Sylvia Odio in Dallas, the CIA had developed since 1963 the ability to identify from physical descriptions possible intelligence agents who may have been involved. In fact, at the committee's request, the CIA attempted to identify Odio's visitors, and it determined that they may have been members of Cuban intelligence. The committee showed photographs supplied by the CIA to Odio who stated they did not appear to be the visitors in question. The committee came to the conclusion that had the been shown photo-

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graphs in 1963, when the event was clearer in her mind, she might have been able to make an identification. It is also regrettable that the CIA did not make use of a defector from Cuba who had worked in intelligence and who might have been able to identify the Odio visitors.

An extraordinary footnote. And yet, it's hard to believe that Leopoldo and Angelo were Cuban intelligence agents. Anything this trio hoped to get out of Mrs. Odio they must have hoped to get right away, before she could check their authenticity with her father. The whole affair had an improvised, amateurish flavor. As we'll see later on, although Oswald wanted to work for the Cubans, he apparently got no further with them than he did with the Russians.

"As far as taking orders," Marina told the House Assassinations Committee, speaking generally, "I knew him personally and he didn't like to take orders." There's no reason to assume that Oswald was following orders when he went to see Bringuer or Odio, because he had a motive of his own—or, rather, two motives. He wanted to help Cuba, and he wanted to make a name for himself as a Castro supporter and revolutionary. He was operating in the uncertain present, with specific short-range goals in mind. Oswald was on his way to Cuba, he hoped, and he evidently wanted to come bearing gifts—much as he had done when he went to Russia with his military information.

The simplest and most reasonable conclusion is that the Odio incident was Oswald's idea. Looked at more closely, each of the tactics used was typical of Oswald in some manner. It was like him to pose as a leader: the guerrilla warfare expert, the expert marksman. He was putting his military training to ironic use—as an enlisted man, Oswald had once complained that all the Marine Corps did was teach you to kill, and after you got out you might be a good gangster. The second tactic—trying to draw the exits into a violation of the law—also sounds like Oswald, who often showed a tendency to be legalistic. And finally, the threat against a president's life was also in character, since he had already made a verbal threat against Eisenhower. *WV*

But it wasn't just the tactics. The entire incident had the imprint of Oswald's personality on it. Consider another remark of Marina's. She was asked if she thought her husband would have prepared for his defection by learning Russian: "Was that a trait of his . . . that when he got ready to do something he felt was important he spent a period of time preparing for it?" She answered, "I would say yes," and a few minutes later circled back to the same question: "Going back

to say that Lee was always preparing for something, he not always prepared himself [sic], but he was quite calculating in that respect, and sometimes quite clever. He would masquerade somehow." George de Mohrenschildt, too, saw this trait of his. Concerning the theory of the conspiracists that Oswald was working for the anti-Castro side in New Orleans, he wrote:

I cannot visualize Lee being in cahoots with these Cuban refugees in New Orleans . . . but he might have played his own game, meeting some of them, checking just for the hell of it what their motivations were.

The amazing and attractive side of Lee's personality was that he liked to play with his own life, he was an actor in real life. A very curious individual.

On the other hand, I can very easily visualize Lee joining a pro-Castro group.

The Odio incident was characteristic of Oswald. There was even, perhaps, a model for it from his childhood, although this was probably an event he had long forgotten. In Fort Worth sixteen years earlier, Marguerite had also stood outside a rival's door with two confederates. As the ringleader, she told one of them what to say—"Telegram for Mrs. C\_\_\_\_"—to trap her wandering husband, Edwin A. Ekdahl. As Robert said, his brother's "imagination and love of intrigue" were a lot like his mother's.

The compelling aspect of Sylvia Odio's testimony is the window it provides on Lee Harvey Oswald's thinking just two months before Dallas. Up until then, there was little indication that Oswald felt any animosity toward John Kennedy. In fact, he seemed to favor him over the other politicians on the scene. In August he had publicly blamed the CIA and State Department for America's policy toward Cuba. But sixteen days after Castro's warning appeared, Oswald not only tried to penetrate the plots Castro spoke about, he suggested that Kennedy should be killed. The September 9 warning evidently had an effect: Oswald now believed that Castro was in danger and that the Cuban leader held Kennedy responsible.

This conclusion is admittedly based on inferences—I have deduced Oswald's thinking by reading Odio's testimony in light of his past behavior. The method I've used is an old one. During closing arguments in a trial, each attorney will attempt to weave the available evidence into a reconstruction of the events in question. It is then up

to the jury to decide whose account is more likely to be true. I have presented the Odio incident within a narrative of Oswald's other activities showing how the pieces mesh. Although I don't claim to have conclusive proof, I do maintain that my interpretation is more credible than the alternative theories.

Only two other explanations of this incident have been given—that it was an extraordinary case of mistaken identity, or a plot to frame a Marxist by presenting him as an anti-Castro hit man. Neither view can be totally disproved. But neither encompasses the other evidence about Oswald nearly as well as the solution I've proposed.

I found new support for my argument in 1977, when I learned that Lee Harvey Oswald had made a second threat against Kennedy's life just a few days after he left Sylvia Odio's doorstep. The man who revealed this threat was not an unknown named "Leopoldo," but Fidel Castro himself.

Can it possibly be that Duran did not know she was the most difficult way to get to Russia then, perhaps impossible in any circumstances

# 12... Castro's Revelations

ON Thursday afternoon, September 26, Oswald's bus crossed the Mexican border at Laredo, Texas. A fellow passenger, an Englishman named John McFarland, recalled that Oswald told him he was en route to Cuba and explained that he had to travel via Mexico because it was illegal to go there directly from the United States. When McFarland asked why he wanted to go to Cuba, Oswald replied, "To see Castro, if I could."

The bus arrived in Mexico City the following morning, and Oswald registered at the Hotel Comercio four blocks from the bus station using the alias Harvey Oswald Lee. He immediately set about arranging his travel plans. According to Marina, he went to the Soviet Embassy first. Exactly what he said there isn't known, since the Russians didn't allow the Warren Commission to interview its embassy personnel. However, from Marina's testimony and other evidence it's apparent that he asked them to expedite the visas he and Marina had applied for through the Washington Embassy, and that he told them he would be going to Russia through Cuba. He also seemed to believe that the Russians could smooth his way at the Cuban Embassy.

A Commission lawyer later asked Marina, "Did he tell you why he went to Mexico City?"  
"From Mexico City he wanted to go to Cuba—perhaps through the Russian Embassy in Mexico he would be able to get to Cuba."  
"Did he say anything about going to Russia by way of Cuba?"  
"I know that he said that in the Embassy. But he only said so. I know that he had no intention of going to Russia then."

"How do you know that?"  
"He told me. I know Lee fairly well—well enough from that point of view."

Next he went to the nearby Cuban Embassy, where he requested an in-transit visa, that is, a permit to travel to Cuba en route to the Soviet Union. (An in-transit visa would have allowed him to visit his family in Russia if their visas came through.) On his application, Oswald wrote that he wanted to leave for Cuba on September 30 and remain there for two weeks—or longer, if possible. He was interviewed by Silvia Duran, a Mexican citizen and Castro supporter who worked in the consular section. After the assassination her name and office phone number were found in Oswald's notebook, and she was brought in for questioning by the Mexican police. On November 23, 1963, she gave them the following statement:

... On the night of Nov. 22, Senora Duran heard over the radio the name of LEE HARVEY OSWALD, which caused her to remember that this name refers to a North American who in the last days of September ... appeared at the Cuban Consulate and applied for a visa to Cuba in transit to Russia and based his application on his presentation of his passport in which it was recorded that he had [lived] in the latter country for a period of three years, [and] his work permit from that same country written in the Russian language and letters in the same language, as well as proof of his being married to a woman of Russian nationality and being the apparent Director in the city of New Orleans of the organization called "Fair Play for Cuba" with the desire that he should be accepted as a "friend" of the Cuban Revolution, as a result of which the speaker, in compliance with her duties, received all of his data and filled out the appropriate application, and he left to return in the afternoon, this time with his photographs [for the application], and the speaker, recognizing that she [was exceeding] her duties, semi-officially called the Russian Consulate by telephone because of her interest in facilitating the handling of the Russian visa for LEE HARVEY OSWALD, but from there they answered her that the operation [of getting him a visa to Russia] would require approximately four months, which annoyed the applicant, since (as he affirmed) he was in a great hurry to obtain the visas which would permit him to travel to Russia, insisting that he was entitled to them because of his background and his partisanship and personal activities in favor of the Cuban movement, ... [and] that his wife, of Russian nationality, was at that time in the city of New York from where she would follow him, although his place of origin was the aforementioned city of New Orleans; that as soon as Oswald understood that it was not possible to give him a Cuban visa

They would not give me Oswald's name

without his previously obtaining a Russian one, because the former was for transit, he became highly agitated and angry, as a result of which the speaker called [Consul Eusebio] Azcua, who, at that time, was in his private office in company with his ultimate replacement, MIRAVALL, but came out and began to argue in English with OSWALD in a very angry manner and . . . concluded by saying to him that, "As far as he was concerned, he would not give him a visa," and that "A person like him, in place of aiding the Cuban Revolution, was doing it harm." . . . that in spite of the argument the speaker handed to OSWALD a piece of paper . . . in which she recorded her name . . . and the telephone number of the Consulate . . . and, at any rate, she initiated the handling of the visa application by sending it to [Cuba, from which] a reply was received in the normal manner some fifteen to twenty days later approving the issuance of a visa, but conditioning it on his previously obtaining the Russian [one], although she does not recall whether OSWALD subsequently called her or not on the telephone . . . and that upon seeing his photograph which appears in today's newspapers, specifically the newspaper "El Die," she immediately recognized and identified it as being the same person she had been referring to as LEE HARVEY OSWALD.

Of course, Marina was not in New York—this was but a lie to heighten the sense of urgency, as was the statement that he was in a great hurry to reach *Ruzsa*. But note that even after the scene with Azcua, Oswald took Duran's telephone number so that he could check back about his application. And despite the argument, Oswald kept trying. On Saturday and the following Tuesday, October 1, he made several visits to both the Russian and Cuban embassies, with a continued lack of results.

The Cuban government provided the Warren Commission with the application from which bore Oswald's photograph and signature, as well as its letter, dated October 15, which conditionally approved his in-transit visa. The Warren Report said that the CIA had been able to corroborate Duran's account through several means, adding, "By far the most important confirmation of Senora Duran's testimony, however, has been supplied by confidential sources of extremely high reliability available to the United States in Mexico. The information from these sources establishes that her testimony was truthful and accurate in all material respects. The identities of these sources cannot be disclosed without destroying their future usefulness to the United States."

The CIA's "confidential sources" in Mexico included wiretaps on the Soviet Embassy's phones. On Tuesday, October 1, Oswald re-

turned to the Cuban Embassy. At his request Duran again called the Soviet Embassy and handed the receiver to Oswald. Speaking in Russian to a Soviet guard, he asked if there was any news concerning a telegram that had been sent to Washington. The guard asked to whom Oswald had spoken at the embassy. "Comrade Kostikov," whom Oswald replied, whereupon the guard suggested that he again speak in person to Kostikov. "I'll be right over," Oswald replied, and hung up.

The CIA recorded this conversation and a transcript was made, but the tape was retained for only a week or so. The reference to Kostikov had aroused the agency's interest, for in addition to his routine consular duties, Valery Vladimirovich Kostikov served as a KGB intelligence officer.

The agency's Mexico station also had surveillance cameras outside the Soviet Embassy, which was considered to be a center of espionage activity directed against the United States. After hearing the phone call, the CIA staff went through its photographs of persons recently entering and leaving the embassy, and found one of a blond, heavyset American type that it guessed might be the man who had identified himself as Oswald during the call. (This tentative identification would cause the CIA considerable embarrassment later on. The man in the photo was never identified, but he evidently had no connection with Oswald whatsoever, and the Mexico station never came up with a picture of Oswald. This circumstance led to a theory that the heavyset man had impersonated Oswald at the Soviet Embassy.)

Meanwhile, CIA headquarters was alerted, and on October 10 the agency informed the FBI, the State Department, and the Office of Naval Intelligence of Oswald's contact with the Soviet Embassy. The notification omitted Oswald's reference to Kostikov, however.

In 1976 David Phillips, a CIA official who was serving in Mexico at the time, added an important detail about Oswald's conversations with the Russians. Phillips told the *Washington Post* that, in a phone call to the embassy, Oswald had tried to make a deal. (Whether this was the call mentioned earlier or another one isn't clear.) According to Phillips, Oswald said in effect, "I have information you would be interested in, and I know you can pay my way [to Russia]." The translator and typist who had worked on the transcript of the conversation confirmed Phillips's story. This sounds like Oswald, since he had already asked the Washington Embassy to make travel arrangements back to Russia for his wife and child. By the Commission's estimate, Oswald had only about \$214 on hand when he left New

As they determined that?

no Oswald called

Orleans, hardly enough to pay transportation costs for the trips he had in mind. Furthermore, Phillips's story would help explain the CIA's interest in Oswald's contact with Kostikov.

But what information could Oswald have had of interest to the Soviets? A possible answer came in 1975 from a second Ernesto Rodriguez—not the New Orleans Cuban exile mentioned earlier, but another man who was a former CIA contract agent in Mexico City. Rodriguez claimed that Oswald had told both the Soviets and the Cubans that he had information about a new CIA attempt to kill Fidel Castro. According to Rodriguez, Oswald offered the details in return for a Cuban entry visa. He said that Oswald had also talked about this planned assassination attempt in conversations with Fair Play for Cuba members in Mexico City.

Rodriguez's story is uncorroborated and should be approached with caution, but in light of Oswald's known activities, it is not implausible. This wouldn't have been the first time Oswald offered secrets to get what he wanted. More important, he had recently tried to penetrate the exile plots through Sylvia Odio. We have learned of only two infiltration attempts Oswald made—there may have been others. Anyone who had told him about a plan to kill Castro would have been understandably reluctant to come forward with his testimony after the president's death. We know from Odio's testimony that this was the kind of information Oswald was seeking. Thus, it's conceivable that he did find out details of a Castro assassination plot from some unknown source, or that he at least *claimed* that he had.

Another question that remains unsettled is what Oswald did with the rest of his time in the city. Silvia Duran told the House Assassinations Committee that she had suggested to Oswald that he might be able to get a Cuban visa if he could obtain a letter of recommendation from a Mexican in good standing with the Cuban government. From other evidence the Committee concluded that she had referred him to a philosophy professor at the local National Autonomous University who had held seminars on Marx in her home. In late September Oswald was reportedly sighted at the university, where he approached four left-wing philosophy students. One of them, Oscar Contreras, who had contacts in the Cuban Embassy, later said that Oswald had introduced himself and told them that he wanted to go to Cuba because the FBI was bothering him and life in the United States was not for him but that the Cuban consulate was refusing to give him a visa. He asked if they could help him out, and the students agreed to try. According to Anthony Summers, who interviewed Contreras in

1978, Contreras then got in touch with his contacts at the embassy, including Consul Azcue and an intelligence officer—who told him that Oswald was suspected of being a provocateur "sent by the United States to go to Cuba with evil intent." Although Contreras's story is also uncorroborated, his statement about the Cuban officials' reaction to Oswald should be kept in mind.

What else did Oswald have to say to Cuban officials in Mexico City? We should remember that he was angry at being denied a visa, and made some comments to Azcue that provoked the Cuban to say that someone like him was actually hurting the revolution, not helping it. Azcue evidently considered him to be a hothead.

In 1964 new evidence turned up about a statement Oswald had made at the Cuban Embassy. After the assassination an American Communist party member—who was also an FBI informant—made a trip to Havana and spoke with Fidel Castro. On June 17, 1964, J. Edgar Hoover sent a top-secret letter by a special courier to the Warren Commission's chief counsel, J. Lee Rankin. Hoover wrote that "through a confidential source which has furnished reliable information in the past, we have been advised of some statement made by Fidel Castro, Cuban Prime Minister, concerning the assassination of President Kennedy." The existence of this letter didn't come to light until 1976, when it was declassified along with many other Commission papers in the National Archives—but the crucial paragraph containing what Castro said had been deleted from the declassified copy. The following year, however, TV newsmen Daniel Schorr obtained the deleted passage from his own sources. In his book *Clearing the Air* (excerpted in the *New York Review of Books*), Schorr revealed that the missing paragraph quoted Castro as saying "that Oswald, on his visit to the consulate, had talked of assassinating President Kennedy. The consul had taken this as a deliberate provocation. The Cuban ambassador in Mexico City had reported the incident to Havana. It had not been taken seriously at the time, but after Kennedy's assassination, Castro had come to suspect that the effort to get Oswald into Cuba was part of a right-wing conspiracy. Oswald would return from Cuba, then assassinate the president, and it would look as though Castro had been responsible."

This information was never pursued by the Commission or mentioned in its report. In fact, two of the staff lawyers, W. David Slawson and David Belin, don't recall ever having seen Hoover's letter. But the FBI informant's account would be supported by another report three









he said it in 1978, it was certainly not true in earlier years. In 1974 Castro took the visiting writers Mankiewicz and Jones to an Arab restaurant "in the middle of nowhere" and table-hopped to greet all the patrons. And in *Castro's Cuba, Cuba's Fidel*, published in 1967, Lee Lockwood described how Castro drove around a Havana suburb after midnight until he found an "all-night pizzeria" where Castro, Lockwood, and the Swiss ambassador talked for an hour and a half. Mankiewicz and Jones later wrote, "Fidel is a former trial lawyer and he shows it. All his arguments follow a carefully structured presentation. By the time he has built his case, if you do not watch out, he has you convinced of things you do not believe."

### 13... October 1963—Reading between the Lines

ONE can only guess at Oswald's thoughts on the long bus ride back to Dallas. It seems clear that he was genuinely disappointed and angry about the red tape he had run into at the Mexican embassies.

Oswald's life was a constant circling over the same ground. His quarrel with Azcue might have reminded him of the trouble he'd had getting the Russians to accept him—or of the angry scene at the American Embassy when he tried to give up his citizenship. Bureaucrats were always blocking his path, and whenever he was thwarted he usually reacted with outrage or with some kind of dramatic manipulation. But apparently nothing he tried in Mexico worked.

When his first defection hadn't given him what he wanted he came back, much the same as he was, and tried again. One might expect a similar reaction to this latest setback. Oswald seldom gave up on an idea. Faced with an obstacle he maneuvered around it, but he had never reversed his direction.

But first, there were other matters to attend to. The Warren Commission calculated that Oswald had about 1929 left when he returned from Mexico. As soon as he arrived in Dallas on October 3, he filed a claim for his last unemployment check. He spent the night at the Y, and the next day began looking for work. He applied for a job with the Padgett Printing Corporation, and only afterward did he call Marina and hitchhike out to the Paine house in Irving.

When they were alone he told Marina about his recent disappointment at the Cuban Embassy: "Ah, they're such terrible bureaucrats

that nothing came of it after all." He gave her the impression he'd changed his mind about going to Cuba and sending her to Russia. According to the Warren Report, Oswald had apparently lost his enthusiasm for the Castro regime and had given up his plans to go to Cuba. McMillian agrees. She wrote that after returning from Mexico, "Lee's disenchantment with Castro and Cuba was complete. He never again talked about 'Uncle Fidel,' nor sang the song 'Viva Fidel,' as he used to. . . ." But a part of Marina's testimony disputes this. She told the Commission that, after Lee came back to Dallas, "this was his favorite subject, Cuba, and he was quite—a little bit cracked about it, crazy about Cuba."

It was agreed that Marina would stay on at Ruth's until after the baby was born while Oswald took a room in Oak Cliff. The Padgett company job fell through when one of the owners of Jaggars-Chiles-Stovall recommended against him, saying he was a troublemaker with "communist tendencies," and several other applications brought no offers. At the end of his first week at the rooming house, Oswald's landlady decided she didn't want to rent to him any longer. ("I didn't like his attitude. He was just kind of like this, you know, just big shot. . . . Just didn't want him around me.") When Oswald moved into another rooming house, he signed the register as O.H. Lee.

In a letter to her mother on October 14, Ruth mentioned that Lee was looking for work in Dallas.

... He spent last weekend & the one before with us here and was a happy addition to our expanded family. He played with Chris (Ruth's son), watched football on TV, planned down the doors that wouldn't close, and generally added a needed masculine flavor. From a poor first impression I have come to like him. . . .

If Lee can just find work that will help so much. Meantime, I started giving him driving lessons last Sunday (yesterday). If he can drive this will open up more job possibilities & more locations.

I feel committed to seeing Marina & Lee through this difficult period in their lives. This may mean (tho' I think it somewhat unlikely) having her & the babies here until spring if Lee has to go East or somewhere looking for work.

What I would like most is Marina to stay through Christmas (which she has never celebrated—at least American style) then have you in Feb.

Later that day she and Marina had coffee at a neighbor's house, and one of the women there, hearing that Lee needed a job, suggested he might try the place where her brother, Wesley Frazier, worked—the

Texas School Book Depository. When Oswald telephoned that evening, Ruth told him about this possibility, and he applied the next day. The superintendent, Roy S. Truly, later said, "He looked like a nice young fellow to me—he was quiet and well mannered. He used the word 'sir,' you know, which a lot of them don't do at this time." Truly told him he could start work the following day as temporary help, filling book orders at \$1.25 an hour.

In the days ahead Oswald would often read a local newspaper during his break in the Depository lunchroom. One of his co-workers once noticed him reading something about politics. On the weekends he got a ride to Ruth's house with Wesley Frazier, and he would read newspapers there, as well. There was a good deal going on that might have interested him. On October 8 President Kennedy signed the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty with the Soviet Union. Cuba immediately denounced the treaty, contending that while the U.S. was making an agreement with the Soviet Union, it was increasing its acts of sabotage against Cuba. Kennedy was meanwhile trying to prod the Russians into getting their troops out of Cuba. There were also several newspaper reports on pro-Castro terrorist attacks going on in Venezuela. In South Vietnam the political situation was deteriorating. For some time the American government had been attempting to get Premier Ngo Dinh Diem to make peace with his Buddhist opponents and get on with the real war against the Communists.

During the weekends Oswald spent at Ruth's he sometimes talked with Michael Paine, who, although separated from his wife, spent part of his weekends there. Michael didn't notice any change in Oswald's political views since he last saw him in April. Oswald's major theme remained the exploitation of man by man, which he called an unforgivable moral sin. Not only did Oswald feel that American workers were exploited, Paine said, but "he also thought they were brain-washed . . . that churches were all alike, all the religious sects were the same and they were all apparatus of the power structure to maintain itself in power." When Paine pointed out that his church was financed by people like himself, Oswald just shrugged. Paine said, ". . . his views still stood and it also permitted him, I think, gave him the moral ground to dismiss my arguments because I was here just a product of my environment . . . and therefore I was just spouting the line that was fed me by the power structure."

Despite Lee's pious concern for the working man, Michael observed that, with the exception of his daughter June, "people were like cardboard" to him. People were either stupid or malicious—the ex-

plotted or the exploiters. As for the president, he got the impression that Oswald "didn't like anybody," but that he disliked Kennedy less than the politicians to the right of Kennedy. (After one of their conversations, Oswald told Marina that Michael didn't understand anything about politics. Michael had religion, he said, but he had no philosophy.)

Like de Mohrenschildt, Paine saw Oswald as a revolutionary—someone who assumed that "the church and the power structure and our education was all the same vile system and therefore there would have to be an overthrow of the whole thing." Michael thought Oswald had "unreasonable and unrealistic and pervasive" feelings of hostility toward American society in general. He testified, "I thought that he was of the mind that something small or evolutionary changes were never going to have any effect. It had to be, though he never revealed to me what kind of actions or policies he would have advocated or did advocate . . . it had to be of a rather drastic nature, where kindness or good feelings should not stand in the way of those actions." When Paine felt moved to say that his own values were diminished in a situation of violence, Oswald, in obvious disagreement, remained silent.

Michael also noticed that Oswald sometimes got "hot under the collar" but exerted self-control as though he had had considerable practice in holding his position firmly and not getting ruffled. It reminded him of the movie about Lawrence of Arabia, when Lawrence held a match while it burned down to his fingers and said that "you just learn how to stand the pain."

Despite the theoretical talk about violence and revolution, neither Michael nor Ruth had any idea that Oswald was capable of acting on these beliefs. They had no idea he had once tried to assassinate Walker—or that the weapon he used now lay disassembled and wrapped in a blanket among other belongings of the Oswalds in their garage. Michael had moved the bundle out of his way a couple of times and imagined that it contained camping equipment.

When Oswald left New Orleans he had given Ruth's address to the post office as his forwarding address, where he continued to receive his copies of *The Worker* and *The Militant* as well as the Russian magazines he subscribed to, and *Time*. The Commission asked Michael Paine if he had ever discussed these publications with Oswald.

A. Yes, we talked with regard to the . . . *Worker*. He said that . . . you could tell what they wanted you to do by reading between the

lines, reading the thing and doing a little reading between the lines. He then gave me an issue to look and see.

Michael took the paper and glanced over it, thinking to himself, "Here is a person who is pretty, well, out of it again if this is the way he gets his communications from headquarters." It suggested to him that Oswald "wanted to be a party to something or a part of a group that had objectives." This conversation happened "fairly soon after his coming back, so let's say the middle of October." He didn't remember which issue of *The Worker* it was.

The Commission questioned him further about the incident.

Q. Did you draw any inference at the time as a result of this conversation with Oswald?

A. Well, it made me realize that he would like to be active in some kind of—activist. It made me also feel that he wasn't very well connected with a group or he wouldn't have such a tenuous way of communication, and I thought it was rather childish . . . to think that this was his bona fide way of being a member of this Communist cause or something.

This was the situation Oswald was in—the situation he had been in since he tried to join the Communist cause in New Orleans when he was sixteen. He had recently failed to reach "headquarters" in Cuba. Operating on his own, he had to obtain his ideas by reading between the lines of *The Worker* and other newspapers. Not that he saw these ideas as literal messages to him—Paine did not think he was irrational. Oswald simply thought he was smart enough to deduce what was going on in the world and decide what to do about it. But Oswald's statement about *The Worker* suggests that he believed the newspaper's call to political action had given him a sanction of some kind to act against Walker.

The call to revolutionary violence was not entirely in Oswald's imagination. An October 1963 issue of *The Militant* contained a major speech by Castro entitled "What is Our Line? The Line of Consistent Anti-Imperialism." Speaking just after the failure of a leftist coup attempt in Santo Domingo, Castro pointed to "a great lesson for the Dominican people and for all the peoples, that there is only one way, there is only one remedy: to liquidate the militarists, to fight the militarists, to defeat the militarists and shoot their leaders. . . . We must know how imperialism is trying to tighten the knot, when the imperialists are launching a counter-revolutionary offensive. They do

not impress us. We are already veterans in this struggle. . . . But we must know what our duties are in the struggle against the counter-revolutionary offensive of imperialism and in the struggle for the economy. With the rifle and the work-tool, the work-tool and the rifle, with these, with both, we must bring our victory."

Friday, October 18, was Oswald's twenty-fourth birthday, and when he arrived in Irving Marina and Ruth surprised him with a cake and wine. He seemed touched and self-conscious. Lee and Marina were getting along well. Michael noticed that she sometimes sat in his lap and whispered "sweet nothings" in his ear. On the day following his birthday they went into the living room after supper to watch television together. Marina lay with her head in his lap, half-asleep, while he watched two old movies. Occasionally she felt him sit up straight and strain toward the television set, greatly excited.

What was he watching that caused this unusual reaction? By an eerie coincidence, the double feature he had chosen echoed the theme of Castro's public warning: murder plots against Cuban leaders could lead to a retaliation.

The first movie was *Suddenly*, in which Frank Sinatra played an ex-GI who planned to shoot an American president. Sinatra's character took over a house overlooking a railroad station. Holding a rifle, he waited at a window for the president's train to arrive. But at the end, the train passed by without stopping and Sinatra was killed. The second movie, *We Were Strangers*, was based on the overthrow of Cuba's Machado regime in 1933. John Garfield played an American who had gone to Cuba to help a group of rebels assassinate the Cuban dictator by digging a tunnel and planting explosives.

Oswald's strong reaction to these films made an impression on his wife. A Secret Service report two weeks after the assassination quotes her as saying that her husband had seen a movie on TV "depicting a plot to kill a Cuban dictator with a bomb where the plotters had to dig a tunnel and that Lee did not like the picture as he said that was the way they did it in the old days." She later testified, "One film about the assassination of the president in Cuba, which I had seen together with him, he said that this was a fictitious situation, but that the content of the film was similar to the actual situation which existed in Cuba, meaning the revolution in Cuba."

Q. Do you recall anything else he said about either of these films?  
A. Nothing else. He didn't tell me anything else. He talked to Ruth

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a few words. Perhaps she knows more. . . . They spoke in English. [So far as the record shows, Ruth was never asked about this.]

After Marina's testimony was revealed, the movie dealing with an American president's assassination, *Suddenly*, received considerable attention in the press. But the other movie—the one Oswald commented on—did not. Since the Commission staff was unaware of the plots to murder Castro, Oswald's statements attracted no further attention. Apparently even Marina didn't fully understand what he meant. For Oswald, however, "the revolution in Cuba" was the Castro revolution, not only his takeover of power but the continuing social revolution. The most reasonable explanation for Oswald's remarks is that he saw the parallels between this movie and the American-backed plots against Castro. The movie was a fictionalized account of the actual situation which existed in Cuba—except that the methods shown were out of date. That observation, in turn, suggests that Oswald somehow knew of the methods being used in *ongoing* plots.

I believe that, together with the two recent threats he made against President Kennedy's life, this excited reaction and his comments indicate that Oswald was, in fact, aware of Castro's warning about American-backed plots to assassinate him. He was excited because the double feature had practically read his mind. Coincidences like this one can make almost anyone believe that fate has intervened. If I'm right, these two movies must have seemed like a tug at his sleeve.

On the next night, a Sunday, Marina's labor pains began. Ruth drove her to the hospital while Oswald stayed behind to babysit June and the Paine children. When Ruth returned, the children were in bed and Oswald was in his room. Although his light was still on, he didn't come out to ask her about Marina. Shortly after eleven Ruth called the hospital and was told that Marina had delivered a girl. By then, Oswald's light was out. Much annoyed, Ruth decided he might as well wait until the following morning to hear that he was a father again. Evidently, Oswald was extremely preoccupied.

Even at this point, there are signs that Oswald hadn't yet made his decision. The president's tentative plans to visit Dallas had been announced, but the visit would not be made definite until November 8, and even then there was no word of a motorcade.

During the next two weeks Oswald resumed his old routine of building his political credentials, and he once again turned his atten-

*Continued*

tion to Edwin A. Walker. On Wednesday, October 23, he attended a large right-wing rally at which Walker spoke. The next evening some of Walker's followers created a national furor by jostling and spitting on the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Adlai Stevenson. Over dinner at the Paines' that Friday, Oswald mentioned going to the Walker rally. Michael, who was also interested in finding out more about the Far Right, gathered that Lee was going around to right-wing groups to familiarize himself with them. That evening Michael was going to an American Civil Liberties Union meeting and invited Oswald to come along.

During the meeting one of the speakers made the remark that all members of the John Birch Society shouldn't be considered anti-Semitic. "Lee at this point got up," Paine recalled, "speaking loud and clear and coherently, saying that . . . he had been to this meeting of the right-wing group the night before or two nights before and he refuted this statement, saying names and saying how . . . people on the platform speaking for the Birch Society had said anti-Semitic things and also anti-Catholic statements." One of the names Oswald mentioned was Walker's.

A friend and co-worker of Paine's, Frank Krystinik, was at the ACLU meeting and heard Oswald's remarks. He got the impression that Oswald was "stirring in dirty thoughts that you shouldn't like General Walker. He didn't say General Walker is a bad guy. He just made comments that General Walker is anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic and he was spreading a little seed of thought."

After the formal meeting broke up, discussion continued over coffee. Krystinik joined Oswald and Paine at the back of the room, and approached Lee by saying that Michael had told him a bit about his political background. Knowing that Frank was about to defend free enterprise, Michael excused himself, because he had heard it all before. Krystinik asked Oswald what Russia had to offer that was better than he could find in the United States, and recalled, "He kind of shrugged his shoulders and didn't make any particular comment then." Frank mentioned that he had met Marina and June at the Paines' and told him he should be "real proud of them"—to which Oswald replied that they were nice, and let it go at that. Soon they were debating about capitalism. Krystinik told him he was an employer and paid two men \$3 an hour and made \$4, but he bought the machinery and material. Oswald said he was exploiting labor but, "That is all right for you. In your society it is not a crime."

Frank sensed that Oswald was talking down to him and acting "as

if he had complete command of the argument." He felt that there were moments in the discussion when he thought he had him practically beaten but Oswald wouldn't accept his opinion. Lee "turned his back and would go down a different avenue." Frank agreed with Michael, who had told him that Oswald was interesting to talk to but that once he had said his piece, he got very repetitive—he "had a certain fixed image in his mind, and was reluctant to have it improved or changed."

The only time President Kennedy's name was mentioned Oswald had said he thought Kennedy was doing "a real fine job" in civil rights—Krystinik thought that he placed a special emphasis on the way he said it. (There was continuing racial violence in the South. The month before, several black children were killed in the bombing of a Birmingham church. *The Worker's* position was that the president and the attorney general weren't taking a strong enough stand against the racists.) Eventually an older man interrupted their discussion, and he and Oswald talked about civil rights and Cuba. Before the meeting ended Oswald went to speak to the man who had operated the movie projector that night and asked him how the projector worked. Then he picked up an application form for membership in the ACLU. As they were going out the door, Krystinik joked to Paine, "We are going to have to set this boy up in business and convert him," and Oswald answered lightly, "The money might corrupt me."

On the drive home Paine explained that the function of the ACLU was to protect civil liberties. Oswald told him that he couldn't join such an organization because it didn't have political objectives. He asked Michael if he knew the older man he had been talking to. Paine recalled, "I think he said the man seemed to be friendly to Cuba, or rather he said, 'Do you think that man is a Communist?' And I said 'No.' And then he said something, 'I think he is.' Then I asked him why and I think he said something in regard to Cuba or sympathy with Cuba, and then I thought to myself, well, that is rather feeble evidence for proving a Communist."

"But he seemed to have the attitude of, felt he wanted to meet that man again and was pleased to have met him." And once again Paine thought, "If this is the way he has to meet his Communists, he has not yet found the Communist group in Dallas."

Oswald now gave some thought to how he might use the American Civil Liberties Union. On November 1 he mailed in the ACLU application form he had taken with him and rented a post office box, giving the ACLU and the Fair Play for Cuba Committee as organizations which might receive mail at that box. On the same day he sent another

letter to Arnold Johnson, the Communist party official in New York. Even allowing for Oswald's deviousness, it doesn't sound like someone actively planning an assassination:

... I have settled in Dallas, Texas for the time.

Through a friend, I have been introduced into the American Civil Liberties Union local chapter, which holds monthly meetings on the campus of Southern Methodist University.

The first meeting I attended was on October 25th, a film was shown and afterwards a very critical discussion of the ultraright in Dallas.

On October 23rd, I had attended an ultra-right meeting headed by General Edwin A. Walker, who lives in Dallas.

This meeting preceded by one day the attack on A. E. Stevenson at the United Nations Day meeting at which he spoke.

As you can see, political friction between "left" and "right" is very great here.

Could you advise me as to the general view we have on the American Civil Liberties Union?

And to what degree, if any, I should attempt to heighten its progressive tendencies?

This Dallas branch of the A.C.L.U. is firmly in the hands of "liberal" professional people, (a minister and two Law professors conducted the Oct. 25th meeting.) However, some of those present showed marked class-awareness and insight.

Oswald seemed about to launch another campaign of "above-ground" political work involving the Fair Play Committee and the ACLU. But when he arrived at the Paine house that afternoon, he learned that the FBI had been there looking for him.

During October, William Attwood continued his effort to open a line of communication with Cuba. So far, he had gotten little response from Cuban officials. In mid-October Attwood and the president's friend Ben Bradlee, then with *Newsweek*, urged Kennedy to meet with Jean Daniel, a French journalist who was on his way to Havana to speak with Castro—perhaps the president could convey a personal message to Fidel. Kennedy saw Daniel on October 24, and gave him his views on Cuba. He told Daniel that he understood the Cubans' desire for a genuine revolution after the Batista regime, which the Americans had wrongly supported, but that the United States couldn't tolerate Communist subversion in Latin America. The problem, he said, was that Castro had betrayed the revolution by becoming

"a Soviet agent in Latin America." Kennedy asked Daniel to come back to see him after he talked with Castro, and Daniel understood that he was to be an "unofficial envoy."

Meanwhile, CIA officials again met with AM/LASH. The Cuban was told that his proposal for a coup was under consideration. AM/LASH requested a meeting with Robert Kennedy to obtain assurances of high-level American support. Instead, Desmond Fitzgerald, the senior official of the CIA section handling Cuba, decided to meet with AM/LASH personally on October 29. Fitzgerald used an alias and was introduced as a "personal representative" of the attorney general. Fitzgerald indicated that the United States would support a coup but drew the line at providing a high-powered rifle with a telescopic sight, the assassination weapon AM/LASH had requested.

But in early November AM/LASH's case officer was directed to inform the Cuban he would be given the rifles and explosives he had asked for.

*re Warren*

## 14... November: The Decision

**F**BI agent James Hosty wanted very much to speak to Lee Harvey Oswald. The FBI had lost track of him when he left New Orleans. On October 3 the New Orleans office advised Hosty that Marina had recently left town in a station wagon with a Texas license plate "4 driven by a woman who could speak the Russian language," and that Lee Oswald had remained behind and then disappeared the next day. (This information apparently came from a neighbor.) Hosty was asked to try to locate Lee and Marina Oswald. He had then checked their old neighborhood in Dallas and contacted Robert Oswald, but came up empty.

On October 25 his interest in Oswald intensified considerably when New Orleans advised him that it had been informed by the CIA that Oswald had been in touch with the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City in early October. Hosty's worry now was that the Russians might have recruited Oswald for espionage. Four days later New Orleans sent him the forwarding address Oswald had left with the post office—2515 West Fifth Street in Irving, Ruth Paine's home. Hosty immediately checked out the Paines and found that they were reputable. Ruth was said to be a Quaker and a "kindly" lady.

On November 1 Hosty went to her house to find Oswald. Ruth was cordial and invited him in, but she didn't know Oswald's rooming house address. She knew the phone number, but didn't think to offer that, and Hosty didn't request it. When Hosty asked if she knew where Oswald worked, Ruth hesitated. She explained that Lee had told her the FBI had gotten him fired from jobs in the past. Hosty assured her that this wasn't so, that the agency never interviewed

people at their jobs, and that he wanted to know where Oswald worked to see if he was employed in a sensitive industry. Ruth told him, and when Hosty realized that Oswald was a laborer in a warehouse, he was relieved—Oswald wasn't in a position to commit espionage at work.

While they were talking, Marina walked into the room. When Ruth introduced Hosty as an FBI agent, Marina looked alarmed. Hosty thought she reacted like other people he had interviewed from Soviet bloc countries who seemed to be afraid of any kind of police. But this was only part of the reason. Marina knew her husband's attitude toward the FBI, and something of that attitude had rubbed off on her. Using Ruth as an interpreter, Hosty tried to reassure her. He told her that his duty was to protect people and that if anyone should ever try to put pressure on her by threatening her relatives in Russia she could come to the FBI for help.

Hosty mentioned Oswald's pro-Cuba activities in New Orleans, but gave nothing away regarding his knowledge of the trip to Mexico. Marina recovered her composure enough to tell him that Lee was no longer passing out his pro-Castro leaflets. As Ruth remembered it, Marina also told Hosty that she thought Castro wasn't getting fair treatment in the American press. Before he left, Hosty gave Ruth his office address and telephone number, which she would give to Oswald that day.

When Oswald arrived a few hours later, Marina told him an FBI agent had been there looking for him. Irritated and upset, he questioned her in private, going over exactly what had been said. He was especially concerned and suspicious about Hosty's remark that Marina could go to the FBI for help if she needed it. McMillan reports that he told Marina, "You fool. Don't you see? He doesn't care about your rights. He comes because it's his job. You have no idea how to talk to the FBI. As usual, you were probably too polite. You can't afford to let them see your weaknesses." Oswald warned her that if she ever agreed to let the FBI "protect her rights," she would get into trouble with the Soviet Embassy. Even as he spoke Marina could tell that he was inwardly calculating at great speed and trying to conceal his anxiety. Oswald instructed his wife that if Hosty returned, she should take down his license plate number. That way, if Oswald saw his car parked near Ruth's house, he would be forewarned. He now had to think of some way to handle the FBI.

One should keep in mind Oswald's attitude toward authority, as he had demonstrated in the past. Oswald evidently felt he should be able





the United States.

I had not planned to contact the Soviet Embassy in Mexico, so they were unprepared, had I been able to reach the Soviet Embassy in Havana as planned, the Embassy there would have had time to complete our business.

Of course the Soviet Embassy was not at fault, they were, as I say unprepared, the Cuban [consul] was guilty of a gross breach of regulations, I am glad he has since been replaced.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is not now interested in my activities in the progressive organization "Fair Play for Cuba Committee," of which I was secretary in New Orleans (state Louisiana) since I no longer reside in that state. However, the FBI has visited us here in Dallas, Texas, on November 1st. Agent James F. Hasty [sic] warned me that if I engaged in F.P.C.C. activities in Texas the F.B.I. will again take an "interest" in me.

This agent also "suggested" to Marina Nichlayeva that she could remain in the United States under F.B.I. "protection," that is, she could defect from the Soviet Union, of course, I and my wife strongly protested these tactics by the notorious F.B.I.

Please advise us of the arrival of our Soviet entrance visas as soon as they come.

Also, this is to inform you of the birth, on October 20, 1963 of daughter, AUDREY MARINA OSWALD in DALLAS, TEXAS to my wife.

Several points should be made. On his application at the Cuban Embassy, Silvia Duran had written, "He appeared at the Embassy of the U.S.S.R. in this city and requested that his visa be sent to the Soviet Embassy in Cuba"—thus Oswald's reference to completing their business in Havana.

Second, Oswald went out of his way to assure the Russian officials in Washington that he didn't hold the Soviet Embassy responsible for his difficulties in Mexico City. It was as though he was afraid they might have gotten the "wrong" impression. In Mexico he had contacted the Soviet Embassy several times after learning there would be a four-month delay in getting a visa. He probably showed his anger there as he had at the Cuban Embassy. Thus, he may have had some fence-mending to do: "They were unprepared," "Of course the Soviet Embassy was not at fault," and so on.

Consul Azcue had been replaced before Oswald's in-transit visa was conditionally approved on October 15—but how did Oswald know this? Azcue's replacement, Alfredo Mirabel, had been in the consul's office when Oswald had his quarrel with Azcue, and it's quite possible

he picked up the information that Azcue was leaving from Duran or someone else at that time. But it's also conceivable that Oswald checked back with Duran about his visa after he returned to Dallas—she said she couldn't remember if he had ever called her or not—and learned that Azcue was no longer there. Although there's admittedly no evidence of a phone call or other communication, this slim possibility might explain why he was now renewing his request for Soviet visas. Obtaining them would clear the path to Cuba. In any case, Oswald said nothing to Marina about this new request for Soviet entrance visas. Perhaps he wanted no arguments from her until the arrangements were an accomplished fact. With the FBI pursuing him, he may have wanted an exit out of the country, if he needed it.

Finally, Oswald had given his own interpretation to what Hasty told Marina. Hasty hadn't suggested that she "defect," and he hadn't "warned" Oswald of anything—Hasty hadn't, of course, even seen Oswald on November 1. But Oswald had found a way to use even the FBI's renewed interest in him to his advantage. By making it appear that a Soviet citizen was being harassed, he could perhaps speed up those long-awaited visas.

On the day he began working on this letter, Ruth drove Lee, Marina, and the children to a shopping center where Oswald could apply for a learner's permit to drive a car. But since it was an election day, the driver's license bureau was closed. Ruth recalled that on the way home, "Lee was as gay as I have ever seen him. . . . He sang, he joked, he made puns, or he made up songs mutilating the Russian language, which tickled and pained Marina, both at once."

Oswald stayed over an extra night on that Veteran's Day weekend, and when he called Marina the following Thursday she suggested he not come out that week—he may have overstayed the last time, and besides, Ruth was giving one of her children a birthday party on Saturday. Oswald agreed. On Saturday morning he went back to the license bureau alone and filled out an application for a learner's permit. <sup>WMA, WMA WMA?</sup>

There was still no indication that Oswald was planning the president's assassination. On the same morning, November 16, the *Morning News* announced that the president would "drive west on Main Street at noon next Friday while en route to a luncheon at the Dallas Trade Mart beside Stemmons Freeway." From this a reader familiar with the downtown streets might have deduced that the motorcade would have to pass by the Depository, but the president's route was not explicit. Another front-page headline the next day said, "Incident-