

OSWALD'S LETTER TO THEN SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CONNALLY

The Commission has made much of an excerpt from a letter Oswald wrote to Governor John Connally at a time Oswald thought he was Secretary of the Navy. This letter appears in Vol. XIX at 3 different places, p.248, 281, and p.713, each time as a different exhibit used at the hearings for a different purpose.

The one on p.281 was used in a handwriting analysis. The other two, I believe the one on p.713 is more distinct.

Oswald had received an honorable discharge under conditions I think are highly suspicious. He had 43 days of his enlistment yet to run when he was discharged as a hardship case, because his mother needed help. He left almost immediately for the Soviet Union, having received his passport with the assistance of an as yet unidentified Marine officer.

In the Soviet Union he learned that his discharge had been changed to a less than honorable one, and he began a series of correspondence intended to get what he considered an injustice rectified. There appears to be ample legal justification for Oswald's complaint. His Marine record (which appears in Vol. XIX) shows he served honorably. The alteration in his discharge was not based upon any of his military service. I believe this principle has since been tested in court. In any event, he was consistent in doing what he could to rectify what he considered an injustice.

From Minsk on January 30, 1961, he wrote Connally. Buried in the middle of the 4th and last paragraph is a ~~xxx~~ statement reading, "I shall employ all means to right this gross mistake or injustice to a boni-fied U. S. citizen and ex-service man."

This is the sentence the Commission has used, from out of context it is certainly clear, to indicate that Oswald was of a violent bent

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of mind or inclined to the making of threats. His next sentence reads, "The U. S. government has no charges or complaints against me." In the following sentence he asks Connally to look "into this case and take the necessary steps to repair the damage done to me and my family".

There seems to be absolutely nothing unusual about this. Oswald was, as a matter of fact, employing all the means available to him to obtain rectification of what he considered an injustice.

But the use of this ~~except~~, even if out of context, is clear proof that the Commission had the letter and used it in its deliberations.

The Commission, with its usual straw man technique, addressed itself to the question of whether Oswald was or was not an American agent by saying that his mother had made the charge completely without foundation and that was the whole story. As a matter of fact, this was not the case. There were many other reasons and for many other reasons other people did believe Oswald was some kind of American agent. This letter contains at least a very clear inference of this. The paragraph they quoted begins with this language which I believe to be significant: "I have and always had the full sanction of the U. S. Embassy, Moscow U S S R, and hence the U. S. Government". Oswald was, on occasion, given to the use of extravagant language. It is possible that these use of the word "sanction" at this point is extravagant. The Commission, however, did not address itself to this sentence or to this word in this sentence. The following sentence reads, "In as much as I am returning to the U.S.A. in this year with the aid of the U.S. Embassy ..." That certainly is a fair statement. The Embassy broke its back to get Oswald and his family back.

There remains always the possibility that Oswald was lying or

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exaggerating. He addressed himself directly to this possibility in the very last sentence of the letter which reads, "For information I would direct you to consult the American Embassy, Chikovski St. 19/21, Moscow, U S S R."

It is clear that Oswald meant what he said. If the Secretary of the Navy wrote to the Embassy in Moscow and got a story in conflict with Oswald's, that certainly would have hurt Oswald. And if Oswald said he had "the full sanction" of the Embassy, and the Secretary of the Navy found out otherwise, what chance would Oswald have had for rectification of his claimed injustice?

Everything the Commission quotes from the Embassy in Moscow is at least, to use the Commission's favorite evasion, "consistent with" Oswald's story in this letter.