

MEMORANDUM

June 2, 1964

TO: ~~J. Lee Rankin~~
Howard P. Willens
Norman Redlich
Wesley J. Liebeler

FROM: W. David Slawson *WDS*

SUBJECT: Conference with Mr. Isaac Don Levine on May 28, 1964

Attached is a rough transcript of a conference held on May 28, 1964 in the offices of the Commission. Present during the entire conference were Allen Dulles, Mr. Levine and W. David Slawson. Mr. Rankin was present for portions of this conference.

The conference was called at the request of Mr. Dulles, who was interested in having Mr. Levine speak with someone on the Commission staff about his ideas concerning the assassination and in particular about what he had learned while he was working with Marina to write her story. (Mr. Levine is no longer working with Marina for this purpose.) Mr. Rankin and I contemplated that the only record of it would be whatever notes I found appropriate to take. Mr. Dulles, however, felt that some sort of transcript would be advisable and therefore at the last minute Mrs. Welsh and later Mrs. Heckman were asked to take notes as best they could.

At the end of the conference Mr. Levine assured Mr. Rankin and me he would be happy to return at any reasonable time to repeat any portions of this discussion which we wanted to put into the form of sworn testimony.

Also attached hereto is a list of 33 "Fresh Clues" to the assassination. These were given to us about a week before the conference by Mr. Levine. There is frequent reference to them in the attached transcript. Also attached is a sort of biography of Mr. Herminio Portell-Vila. This was mailed to me by Mr. Levine shortly after the conference at my request. Mr. Portell-Vila is the Cuban historian mentioned in the latter part of the transcript.

Of special interest are the following:

1. On page 14 through 18, some discussion about the alleged attempt to shoot Richard M. Nixon.

2. At pages 19 through 26 there is some discussion about the "party line" being pushed by the Militant (which we know "Oswald was reading), to the effect that Kennedy and Khrushchev were hatching some "deal" which would sell true communism down the river.

3. At the very end of the transcript Levine says that when the Oswalds left Russia they smuggled out a message to one of the relatives of the Zigers who was living in the United States and that this message pleaded for help in getting the Zigers' daughters out of Russia. The theory of the note was that the two daughters having been born in Argentina could claim Argentine citizenship and thereby be taken out of Russia if the Argentina Government would take an interest in the matter. Levine suggested that some confidential source in the American Government such as the CIA should contact the Argentine Government to set machinery in motion to bring the Ziger daughters back to Argentina. Once they were out of Soviet Russia, of course, they could be questioned about Oswald and would constitute the very best kind of witnesses. The practicality of Levine's suggestion is questionable. However, I see no reason why we do not at least bring it to the attention of the CIA.

Enclosures (3)

multi copy

ISAAC DON LEVINE

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The 33 Fresh Clues to the Mind of Kennedy's Assassin

(Based on a behind-the-scenes investigation
at Dallas and New Orleans)

1. The documentary evidence destroyed by Marina Oswald, at the direction of Oswald's mother, the night of the assassination.
2. The story of the rifle on November 22 as told by Marina.
3. The history of the rifle in the Paine's garage, and its fate since the April attempt on General Walker.
4. Marina's surprise at the discovery of Oswald's handwritten note to her about his attempt on General Walker, and the sensational circumstances of how it was found.
5. A White Russian friend drops in on the Oswalds the evening following the attempt on General Walker, and Marina's report of the curious incident.
6. A full account of Oswald's abortive attempt on the life of Richard Nixon.
7. Oswald's hostile attitude towards the FBI as revealed in a handwritten draft of a letter by him dated Nov. 9, and his lying as demonstrated by the document.
8. Marina and the FBI interview of Nov. 5.
9. The Oswalds move to New Orleans. Marina's six intimate letters from New Orleans to Ruth Paine. Oswald's planned trip to Russia.
10. Oswald's unpublished first interview on the radio in August, 1963, as recorded on tape.
11. Marina's own story of her husband's departure for Mexico and projected trip to Cuba and Russia.
12. The drilled "peso" necklace from Mexico and Marina's earlier denial of prior knowledge of his Mexican trip.
13. The missing wedding ring from Oswald's finger and where Ruth Paine found it.
14. The unexpected arrival of Oswald Thursday evening, Nov. 21. His hour in the garage.

15. Oswald urges Marina to move from the Paine house.
16. He asks about the new shoes for Marina.
17. How Marina knew he was wakeful in bed the last night they were together.
18. How he left Marina the morning of Nov. 22. His superstition about bidding adieu.
19. How the news of the assassination came to Marina.
20. Oswald's courtship of Marina at Minsk. His apartment there.
21. The Cubans in Minsk and the report on his relations with the Cuban embassy in Moscow.
22. The Cuban student who visited the Oswalds at New Orleans, and his report on the meeting.
23. The contradiction between Oswald's letter to Senator Tower and her diary entry on their exit visas. The mysterious background of the letter to Tower.
24. The Argentinian family in Minsk and the Oswalds.
25. His concealment from Marina of his attempt at suicide.
26. Oswald's view of Trotskyism.
27. Oswald's view of Communist China.
28. Oswald's vision of the son he expected from the pregnant Marina.
29. Marina's Komsomol career and the story of "Kamo" -- the Soviet revolutionary hero.
30. Oswald's ideological attitude towards Marina.
31. How she displays in her diary her Soviet indoctrination -- her attitude towards Lenin and Khrushchev -- her knowledge of foreign literature. The ballet incident.
32. The true political motive of the assassination.
33. Marina's last remark to Ruth Paine (March, 1964) about this author's inquiry.

Discussion with Mr. Don Levine and Mr. Dulles, Mr. Rankin
and Mr. Slawson

May 28, 1964

Mr. Slawson requested Mr. Levine to start with Item 1 on his list.

Mr. Levine: I spoke to Marina on the telephone from California around the 13th or 14th of January and asked her if she wanted me to do her story - that I wanted to hear that from her own lips. She said "Yes". Present at her end of the telephone was Katya Ford, the wife of Declan Ford. At that time the telephone was put through on a Sunday by pre-arrangement by me on the way from Santa Barbara to Carlsbad at 3:00 PM, Dallas time.

I told her because of speaking engagements I could not make Dallas before 27th of January. On the 27th of January my wife and I arrived on a Delta liner at Dallas. It was 4:40 PM or thereabouts when we landed. Meeting us there, much to our surprise, was first Marina at the airport, Jim Martin at her side, two U.S. Secret Service men in the background. I took Marina under the arm --it was not difficult after I looked at her -- and I let the rest of the entourage follow, and we made a wild dash for Martin's home because that was the day when she had been interviewed for the first time by Cronkite on TV and she had not seen it, but in the traffic we missed the 5:00 PM show, arriving a few minutes after, and stayed in that house until roughly 11:00 PM that night.

My wife does not speak Russian, nor does Jim Martin, nor did the two Secret Service men. Office McDonald was on duty that night (the man who seized Tippit in the theater) at the Martin home.

Before the night was over, we also got an earful, which had nothing to do with my inquiry, from McDonald, who is a hell of a nice guy.

This was the first conference. In the course of this week I spent considerable time in between odd hours at Jim Martin's house and it ended, I believe, on a Saturday, the day she flew out to testify here. The night before, or the morning of the same day, we took off for Los Angeles, picked up our car and drove back to Carlsbad.

Mr. Dulles: How many hours a day did you spend?

Mr. Levine: The first time - six hours. I should say probably another 8 or 9 hours altogether -- not the first day. During the next weeks, having established contact with C. V. Jackson and Ed Thompson, I got her a proposition of \$25,000 advance for her story from Meredith Press on condition that I am satisfied that she has material of historical significance to reveal. Jim Martin understood it -- I drove that point very hard -- that I did not want a Cinderella story. In the course of the next couple of weeks it developed that there was trouble

between her (after she returned from Washington) and Martin; whereupon I loaded my station wagon, took my wife, and headed for Dallas because the pressure from New York from the publishers of LIFE and others was such I felt I had better be on the spot. Then I stayed for three weeks in Dallas; I cannot give you a date -- it was the middle of February -- at a hotel with my wife.

By this time she was now with the Fords. His brother, who is a professor of sociology, I knew in Los Angeles, and in the course of these three weeks, a great deal of what is here came out, but I saw very little of her the latter part of the three weeks. I have a letter from her in her own handwriting in answer to a letter from me. As the Fords moved in -- and they moved in -- upon her, displaying not a disinterestedness which the brother had told me about in Los Angeles, but an interest in it (financial interest).

During the first evening at the Fords, this little scene occurred. She (Marina) took me into the living room alone. We sat down on the couch. We started talking. She wanted me to get to work right away the following morning (in her naive way). Within 10-15 minutes Katya came through the front room and brought Dec along, and the first thing she said in a very gruff sort of manner, "Did Marina tell you that Dec is going to be her business manager?" Marina had not told

me. I was completely floored because Joe, the professor, told me "For God's sake, don't bring my brother's name into this. He doesn't want to be associated with this."

It was not that evening but on a subsequent evening at the Fords' home that this number one item broke loose.

Mr. Dulles: How much time did you spend during the three weeks?

Mr. Levine: Roughly, during these three weeks, two to three evenings, eight to nine hours -- very little with her alone -- always the sense of Katya around. I should say 12 hours for the entire three weeks.

Mr. Dulles: Were you alone with her?

Mr. Levine: Yes I was alone with her but for brief moments. There were times, may be once or twice, when I had talks with her alone. The talks revolved around the settlement. I kept telling her everybody has troubles with business managers; everybody in the United States has troubles with lawyers. My rule has been keep away from lawyers as far as possible, all my life, but once in a while when you are in real trouble you have to have a lawyer. Mr. McKenzie, I understand, is a responsible lawyer; settle with these people -- they wanted to settle for peanuts at this time.-- and get on with what you want to do. Don't get involved in long-term litigation. Suddenly, Katya would be there.

I had no business discussions with her; no financial discussions. I spoke to her (Marina) "We will have arguments

about the text, maybe strong arguments, but I don't want to have any arguments with you about financial matters.

Mr. Slawson: Do the Fords speak Russian?

Mr. Levine: Katya - yes - that was the beginning of the contact. Katya is Russian, of WWII vintage, a Salsburg Camp refugee.

Mr. Dulles: Do you trust her?

Mr. Levine: Katya? Definitely no. She is out for the money and she is out to get her husband something to do because for one and a half years he had been unemployed. He was dropped by the firm and was looking for work. Katya is ambitious and a very able lady and she wanted her husband to put his fingers in this pot of gold because at that time one-half million dollars was small talk about what her story was worth. She having known the Oswalds before felt, maybe with some justification, why should strangers walk in when she could render the service and at the same time Dec (completely unfit for the job) could be business manager.

Dec had applied to Gregory for work. When I asked Gregory "Do you know Dec is going to be her business manager?" He said "I cannot think of anyone who is less qualified to be a business manager."

I was in the habit of reading to her what was published about her from the English into the Russian. When the TIME story appeared, TIME magazine at the Fords was lying around minus the pages about her and she asked me to bring it. The next time I showed up I forgot to bring it so she reminded me "Where is the text, I'd like to know what they wrote about me", so next time I brought it.

When the LIFE cover story with the famous picture of the rifle appeared (I don't recall whether I brought it or it was there) I read some of it to her. I also read to her that either Marguerite Oswald, the mother-in-law, or Mark Lane, or both, according to press reports that day or day before, Marguerite was definitely in it, had said that this picture was doctored. Both my wife and both Fords were present. Again it was in the large sitting room in the rear. Again she (Marina) was sitting on the couch. She nearly jumped out of her seat. "That's a lie!" Those were the strongest words I have heard from her and the strongest voice.

Mr. Slawson: Was this Marina who made this statement?

Mr. Levine: Yes. She said "She is the one that made me burn those two pictures." I said "What two pictures?" I did not fully realize at the moment that the picture had been developed from a negative. Well, she said there were two pictures one of which was inscribed "To Junie, my daughter" with words to the effect that "save this because this will be some

|| some day of great historical value."

Mr. Dulles: When were these pictures taken and when was the inscription made?

Mr. Levine: Before he went out to do the job on General Walker or around that time; I don't know, late March or early April. I regretted that I never asked the question who took the pictures. I think she operated the [camera] picture with the rifle. Then I attempted to find out more about the negative and we found out, of course, you know that the negative was in a book; that that book later was picked up by Ruth Paine. This information came to me from Ruth Paine not from Marina or the Fords, that she took that book without knowing that it contained the negative plus another book that was left in her home by the authorities who made the search, to the police station together with some letters that already Marina had received. The police station in her neighborhood sent it to Dallas, and Mr. Gopadze came running a day or two later after they found the negative and started belaboring Ruth Paine on the theory she knew this picture had been there.

Mr. Slawson: Do you think Ruth Paine was telling the truth?

Mr. Levine: I am convinced Mrs. Paine is truthful in every respect. The question as to whether this happened the night of the assassination -- the burning of the two pictures -- or

whether it happened the following night when she was with her mother in the motel Inn of the Seven Flags is an open question. In my memory first is that she said that night. I did make notes but I don't have them with me.

Mr. Dulles: How did she describe the scene of the destruction of the pictures?

Mr. Levine: She accused her mother-in-law of having prior knowledge of these pictures and of making her burn these two pictures. The inference, and this is my guesswork after we thought the whole matter over, was that she either forgot that she had the negative in a book or could not find it. Russians stick things in books and they sometime lie there for hundreds of years.

Mr. Slawson: We will now go on to Item 2.

Mr. Levine: The story of the rifle on November 22, as told by Marina, was that when the first news came through of the assassination of the President or the shooting, she made a dash for the garage. The package in which the rifle had been lying seemed to her intact so she says "Thank God, the rifle is there", and then when the authorities arrived and went to the garage and showed this assembled thing that he left wrapped up as though it was intact, then she said her heart sank.

Mr. Dulles: Does that indicate, in your mind, that Marina knew there was a rifle in this blanket in the garage?

Mr. Levine: No question about that. The rifle had been to New Orleans and she knew about the rifle. There were many occasions that it was implicitly implied throughout the conversation that the rifle was in the garage.

Mr. Slawson: We will now go on to Item 8.

Mr. Levine: This is not her account. This is Ruth Paine's account, not everything here is drawn from Marina. The FBI interview of November 5 took place, I believe, in a car that Marina had jotted down the tag or license number of the car afterwards that she had made one slight error in jotting down the number, that later it was found either by Ruth Paine or by the authorities, I don't know, it was found that Marina on that day was very impatient and irritated over the FBI visits, that she regarded the FBI as unfriendly or hostile. Marina blamed Ruth Paine of prying and ransacking her papers (Marina told me this). I never told this to Ruth Paine, I tried to make peace between the two of them. The little license number and other little items which Ruth Paine found and turned over and which later became subject of inquiry, led Marina to blame Ruth Paine, for as she said, she was ransacking, she poke into all my effects.

Mr. Dulles: She was suspicious?

Mr. Levine: Yes. She certainly displayed fear or hostility toward FBI. That is understandable in a so-to-speak "Green" Russian coming here. She thought the FBI was a counterpart of the Russian KGB or MVD.

Mr. Dulles: Did Marina go into any more detail about that visit? You recall her saying it was in a car.

Mr. Levine: No, as I indicated before, this information came from Ruth Paine. The footnote which I added was simply Marina's charge that she was prying and ransacking.

Mr. Slawson: Now we'll go onto Item 3 - how did she know about the rifle?

Mr. Levine: She had known it all along. The history of the rifle as I put it in an article begins with my asking first Ruth Paine "When you brought all the effects back from New Orleans the rifle must have been there." She said "Yes, but I don't know anything about the rifle. I never would have stood for that." Then I asked Mr. Paine who was present at this time, "When did you discover that there was a rifle in the garage?" and he said, "I thought when I saw the package with certain hard items lying inside that those were parts of a tanning equipment. It never occurred to me that it was a rifle. I never would have stood for that."

Mr. Dulles: Do you think he was telling the truth?

Mr. Levine: Yes. I think both Mr. and Mrs. Paine are completely truthful people. I think also that I asked her when they loaded up the station wagon when they went down there in the spring to New Orleans there was obviously (that is a matter of speculation) the rifle was there. No place where that rifle was left. It was not hidden anywhere. We cannot establish for sure. Neither Mr. Paine nor Mrs. Paine knew that the rifle was in their garage. Mrs. Paine felt, and still feels, that Marina had done the wrong thing in not confiding to her, her knowledge of the rifle. Furthermore, Ruth Paine told me what undoubtedly she told here, that the night before the assassination she noticed after they retired (the Oswalds) Thursday, November 21, that there was a light in the garage. He had spent about an hour in the garage; she didn't know what he was doing, she saw the light and went out there and turned it off and noticed nothing unusual. I asked her in connection with the rifle, were things upset. She noticed nothing unusual and knew nothing about the rifle until after the murder and the arrival of the police.

Mr. Slawson: Let us go now to Item No. 4.

Mr. Levine: This starts with Marina. When Marina spoke of prying, she spoke with such feeling that in my conversation with Ruth Paine subsequently, I diplomatically hinted at things she might have done, that she might have found. She spoke of his ring, etc. Oh, she said, maybe she's mad at me because of that letter and this letter

Question: Is this the letter which was left in the cook book?

Mr. Levine: I think my wife's memory clashes with mine on that. I'm not sure that it wasn't a Russian Child Care book. The note as you know was addressed to her (Marina) requesting her in case of trouble to go to the Soviet Embassy. Marina blame, and Jim Martin, before I brought this subject up, blame Ruth Paine for turning this note over to the Fort Worth newspaperman who first, I believe, sprang the fact of its existence, whereupon Ruth Paine telephoned the editor of the Fort Worth press and said "I am accused of having given you this note for publication", and she said who gave it to you? He said "Of course, I cannot tell you but you can tell anybody that you did not give it to us and I will tell them that."

I am not sure without my notes that we made statement earlier whether this is the one that Gopadze found or whether I didn't mix up the negative of the picture with this. If this refers to the Gopadze note, then Gopadze came out

with this Russian note. Therefore, I was somewhat in error with the negative although the negative did go from Ruth Paine in a package to the police and Gopadze read the note.

Mr. Slawson: Did you learn from anyone about the circumstances surrounding the note at the time it was written?

Mr. Levine: The only other circumstances in connection with the note that I recall at the moment is that De Mohrenschildt visit at 11:00 o'clock ^{at night} denied following(?) the attempt on Walker's life.

Question: Not on the night of the attempt but the night after?

Mr. Levine: At least the night after, and that de Mohrenschildt walked in and that led to the whole de Mohrenschildt affair and said why didn't you do a better job. 3

Question: Did Marina say that to you?

Mr. Levine: I think that is something that was a subject for levity. Either Marina and the Fords, or Marina and Jim Martin, who came out in one of those light moments. That is why I call de Mohrenschildt a crackpot. I don't recall anything else but if there is something additional, I will look up my notes.

Item 5. Marina did report this incident - the de Mohrenschildt visit.
Mr. Levine:

Item 6
Mr. Levine: The Nixon story. I suppose you know that I want to see Rose Mary Woods since I saw you (Nixon's secretary) and Nixon's papers are now brought from San Francisco to the New York office. The first I heard of it was from Jim Martin during the last week in January, (my first visit). He told me about it and said that of course this is something that Marina herself would not want to talk about but he wanted me to know about it.

Question: Did Jim Martin say when he got it?

Mr. Levine: He didn't say at the time. Before I left Dallas he told me that he got it from his wife Wanda, whereupon when he was in Oklahoma I drove out with my wife and we visited Wanda alone. We had one or two hours with her and she told us the story as it happened that Marina one evening in conversation opened up and told her that a week or so after the attempt on Walker's life, he came home disgusted. He had been out hunting for Nixon who had been reported as due to attend some sort of an affair in Dallas. She naturally tried to quiet him and to do what she could.

Question: Did he say he had been out with a gun?

Mr. Levine: Yes. He had been out with the rifle

Question: When did he come back?

Mr. Levine: In the evening. The following morning he dressed neatly, put on his best suit, necktie, shirt, and was going out with the rifle, and he went into a tirade saying he was going to get that so and so. She locked him in the bathroom. The two women burst out laughing at the thought of this little woman locking her husband in the bathroom. (I regard Wanda as a reliable witness.) That went on some hours before she finally quieted him down.

My search of the papers in the library and otherwise did not go earlier than the Walker assassination attempt. When I finally got to Miss Woods and she told me that the girl was out in California brining the Nixon papers, she gave me the following information: She believed a certain Ted or Tad Smith, an influential Republican - maybe Treasurer - had sent an invitation sometime before to Nixon to attend a Republican fund-raising dinner; that she thought there was one clipping in the press announcing the fact of Nixon's being invited and coming. There may have been a radio announcement -- maybe a Walter Winchell-type column. I looked for straight news from April 10 onwards.

Last week I spoke on the phone to Rose Mary and she said they are short staffed and there are many immense cartons and she doesn't know whether they can get to it and check on

the dates of the invitation and who it came from.

I am convinced there was no reason for Marina to tell that story of a late evening to Wanda, where she locked him up in a bathroom. How she locked him up in a bathroom I didn't inquire, but in my reading of Oswald's ideological development, coupled with the fact that Nixon was making speeches at that time against Castro's Cuba and raising hell, and the papers were full of that, including Communist proscribed papers blasting Nixon on that, is completely consonant with his thinking that he regarded Nixon as the major influence in stimulating another assault on Castro.

Mr. Slawson: Did Marina give any indication how Oswald went looking for Nixon with the rifle?

Mr. Levine: She gave no indication but, of course, you know what happened the night after the Walker assassination attempt you know there were two witnesses who saw Oswald or two men in a car.

Question: Has Marina made any comment on that?

Mr. Levine: No.

Mr. Slawson: Has she indicated that in any of these circumstances -- Kennedy -- Walker, Nixon, ~~Kennedy~~, that he ever had anybody with him?

Mr. Levine: No. She never indicated that. But that is not relevant to the question. She stated flatly in connection with this incident -- she quoted him and I am quoting her -- "If Hitler had been assassinated there would have been no World War II."

He said it to her between, to the best of my recollection, the Walker and the Nixon incident in April. I think this came out after the Walker thing around April 10. His line was - "these people are heading us for another World War, I'm out to do what should have been done to Hitler. Somebody should have eliminated Hitler." I am quoting Marina's quoting Oswald. The suffering of humanity is what she said, whether this was hers or his, I don't know.

Mr. Slawson: This would not have been said the evening before the Walker attempt?

Mr. Levine: I don't think so. In the days when Marina wanted him to get away from Dallas, the days preceding, they are moving to New Orleans, this man had struck out on a path (in my opinion) to lead to disasters; therefore, she wanted to get him away from Dallas and during those days there were many conversations and arguments between them.

Question: She felt the environment of Dallas was bad for him?

Mr. Levine: Within a week of the Nixon thing, they packed for New Orleans.

Mr. Slawson: Did she ever indicate to you what exactly it was in the environment of Dallas she feared -- TV, radio, or the people he was meeting?

Mr. Levine: No. She never intimated anything about the environment of Dallas except when it referred to some of the so-called White Russians whom he thoroughly disliked or took a disliking to. That was a different type of conversation - not on this topic. He didn't want her to associate with those people - Monarchist Russians.

Question: Your previous statements - that was your opinion?

Mr. Levine: Correct. It is an opinion, not based on concrete statements of hers. There were between 12-15 Trotskyites in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. That is stated in one which which I believe was written (strictly my opinion) by him to the Militant. He praised the Militant as the greatest Labor paper in the world.

Mr. Rankin: How did she lock him in the bath?

Mr. Levine: You can take a broomstick and put it through a handle and lock the door. Russians know how to lock somebody in better than anybody else. It may have been a closet -- she may have embellished this and said it was a bathroom. The important thing is the state of mind of this man after the attempt on Walker - his belief on Hitler - this was told by Marina.

Mr. Dulles: Do you think he was a Trotskyite at this time?

Mr. Levine: Yes. This is the time, April, in the next 3-4 months when his Trotskyite creed really obsessed him to a greater extent than some of the others.

Question: Can you tell us what the creed is?

Mr. Levine: To him, the Trotskyite creed was that Castro in Cuba and Mao in China were carrying out the Trotskyite ideas of world revolution as distinct from Khrushchev, who developed a "have" psychology as against the "have not". It was a crude simplification based upon the remarkable coverage which the Militant gave throughout 1962 and 1963 to the Chinese and the Cuban revolutions - far more profuse, in giving their premises, than anything you would find in New York Times, Herald Tribune or Washington Post. Again, giving their premises sufficient not to indoctrinate but to turn the minds of those who were waiting for some sort of fresh ^{revelation.} revolution.

I would like to tell you here what came to me from Marina.

When I asked Marina about his beliefs and points of view during the middle of 1963, after the New Orleans period, she said, "Of course, you know he was a Trotskyite" and that was the first evening, January 27, in Martin's place.

I said, well you mean you are saying (this is the lesson.?)

She said, "No, he told me himself, I am a Trotskyite."

Then I picked up a little bit later and I continued my probing conversation and she put the following:

"He believed that Russia should help the 'have not' nations. He believed that Russia now has reached the point where they have so much that the other communist countries should share in what Russia has." I asked her whether *she - he?*

believed that

and she said he called me a "Miss Chumka", meaning bourgeoisie.

But actually she was expressing the sentiments of most of the people of Russia. They are just beginning to have a little something and so immediately these guys like Oswald tell these Russians you should share this. I am interpreting her point of view. She is completely sold on Khrushchev's line of co-existence taken at its face value; whereas, he was in the clouds with his theories.

Question:

Did she indicate the time when he started to make statements of Trotskyite?

Mr. Levine:

She referred to his statements around the period of the New Orleans Fair Play for Cuba Committee in connection with conversations or references of that period.

I broke down his development - from 15 to 24 - in seven different stages ideologically. He was no social rebel such as . I think it was only after June 1963 that he became a Maoist. He turned completely over.

This is the period when Castro was playing Moscow against Peking and Peking against Moscow. This was the period before Castro's second trip last winter to Moscow, and what most people don't understand, and I am coming to my 32nd point, is how a man who could take a rifle to shoot Walker and Nixon, to him two shades of the same wing, could go after the President of the United States at the end of November. Anyone who follows the Daily Worker, the Militant, and the pamphlets which the Chinese send in in English for sale in radical bookshops in the U.S., could easily ascertain that a violent change occurred between April and November in the climate of the radical communist world everywhere. The beginning of the storm was when I was in Russia in June when some Russians talked of the possibility of war; when the Russians rounded up the Chinese in Russia who were distributing leaflets that were anti-Khrushchev. This was reflected in the radical literature in the splinter groups. Fragmentation was going on not only in the Communist Party but in Trotskyite groups trying to put a foot in the Castro camp, another foot in the China camp.

Question:

Was this reflected in the Militant?

Mr. Levine:

Completely. The articles in the Militant analyzing the Russo-Chinese fight beat anything by six months or a year that has appeared in the columns of our leading newspapers,

but given the premises, the quotations, the whole ideological attack upon the actions of those who are looking for a Utopia-kind of communism is overpowering if you are acquainted with that. The Militant, with reservations, sided with Mao. What Marina said to me, "we regarded Castro like Jesus Christ." By "we" she mean the young people of Russia.

Question: Do you know from any evidence, what portions of this literature beside the Militant Oswald may have read in 1963?

Mr. Levine: He was also reading The Worker, Corliss Lamont, and other pamphlets on Castro. There was a little group in New Orleans and a fellow named Hoffman from Tulane University, that published some sort of hectograph which was eulogies of Castro. The pamphlets which the government stamps imported in the U.S. and sold for 10-25¢ are the standard intellectual food for all these young people. The Chinese run it in English, print it, and distribute throughout the world. All I know, according to Paines, there were batches of books and pamphlets which were taken to Robert's which the police and Secret Service have not impounded.

Question: Do these publications deal with description of ideologies, etc.?

Mr. Levine: With expositions of the ideologies, yes.

Question: They were not trying to stimulate to action?

Mr. Levine: No.

Question:

Where did he get that element? Did the Rosenbergs have any effect on him?

Mr. Levine:

No. The press reported that the President of the United States was conducting a secret correspondence with Khrushchev. He read everything and he knew that. The Militant and the Chinese pamphlets months before our big press reported it, said again and again that an alliance is in the making between two great powers to sell international communism down the river.

Mr. Rankin:

A detente.

Mr. Levine:

"Betrayal" was used, not "detente." They were making a "deal"; that means capitalism will be restored, communism will be betrayed, and world revolution is out. That became crystal clear in print after the June 14 blast from Mao when the flood gates were opened everywhere in the radical communist world including Trotskyites and this was the great debate. Hyde Park and Union Square scap boxes were at each others throats about this.

This young man became convinced in June that in the following seven days something has to be done. Then on June 24 or 25 he goes to validate his passport; he takes it into his head that he is going to Russia alone. Why was he going to Russia? In my mind, to take a shot at Khrushchev. Somebody has to do

what he tried to do to Walker and Nixon to save the world from another Hitler. Communism is going to be out of the picture - social revolution. Then he ran into heavy weather. It took him 3-4 months of worrying until all the evidence began to accumulate that Kennedy is really playing with Khrushchev and the act followed, in my own opinion, as the result of a supreme effort on his part to save the world which he believed was going to be a communist world, because the picture he inscribed for Junie indicated that. When he wanted a boy, he said he will be the Premier of a future America, not the President of the U.S. When he told Marina that today Russia is the number one power, ten years from now Red China will be the number one power in the world, all of these indicates an evolution toward a firm Maoist line.

Question:

How do you reconcile this with going to Cuba?

Mr. Levine:

Just a way of Stalinism? You don't go to Cuba and part from your wife, who is pregnant, for two years. She told me, although she didn't tell Ruth Paine, that for the first time there were tears in his eyes. He gave her \$10 and said he was going away for two years. She contradicted herself. At one time she said he was going to Cuba, another time he bade her goodbye for two years. She said, who is going to take care of her. He said, you have friends, meaning Ruth Paine.

The point I am trying to make here is his mental violence. He was going to Russia for two years. He thought he would find an opportunity to take a shot at Khrushchev.

Mr. Dulles: Russia was not a halfway start to China?

Mr. Levine: No Sir. I think he was obsessed in the last months with the quarrel between China and Russia with Castro inbetween.

Mr. Slawson: Did anyone indicate to you ^{what} ~~how~~ the going to Cuba ~~did~~ *had to do* ^{with} ~~into~~ his going to Russia?

Mr. Levine: She indicated at one time "he was using Russia in effect as a cover, disguise, because what he really wanted was to go to Cuba", but when I went home I said to my wife, at one time she tells me he is going away for two years - you don't go to Cuba for two years - not for a man who thinks he has an underground railway.

Question: Do you think the phrase two years meant goodbye forever?

Mr. Levine: Yes. It was that kind of parting.

Question: Did she so state?

Mr. Levine: Yes.

Question: Did you consider this was the act of a martyr?
(Klein?)

Mr. Levine: Very well put.

Question: Or was he trying to eliminate this threat to Trotskyism or world communism and martyrdom was incidental?

Mr. Levine: I think it was approximately the act of a martyr. If John Wilkes Booth thinking on April 14, 1865 that he could save the South when everybody knew the South was gone, if he was not a martyr then this man was not a martyr. I think he was out to save communism from what he thought was a catastrophe that was pending, and he had to sacrifice himself.

LEVINE: (Cont) (In reference to Oswald's radio debates on New Orleans radio in August 1963.) Socialist Communist cause that he was not profound -- that nevertheless he was experienced and skilled enough to handle opponents with the skill of a trained Socialist. He was a fierce antagonist -- knew how to discipline and control himself which is an unusual thing among dedicated Communists unless trained. Unless trained a boy of 24 when provoked will shoot the works and lose his temper. This fellow was provoked and he acted very carefully. Reminded me of the sympathizers I have heard in the years long in the various debates, the various radical debates.

RANKIN: Mr. Paine discussed same in controversies with him and observed that Oswald really did not know very much but what he knew he was firm about.

LEVINE: With due respect to Mr. Paine, as little as Oswald knew, Paine knew much less.

DULLES: In this field or generally?

LEVINE: In the field Oswald operated in, Paine was and remains a babe in the woods and Oswald, - let me tell you something Mr. Rankin. There are people in this, that I talked to in Moscow, elsewhere, who occupy fairly important positions, who haven't got the training, - you know in the Soviet hierarchy, - the knowledge that Oswald had. That does not make him profound. You can't put him up against a man like Norman Thomas or the editor of a paper like the Militant who is well read in literature. But picked up little Marx from pamphlets and speeches. He knew a little Lenin, a little Trotsky, a little _____ and fit it into confused _____ pattern.

DULLES: Where did he get this training?

LEVINE: That, of course, is the \$64 question. When I heard this tape recording of August, I was convinced right then and there instantly - which is not a good way of becoming convinced - that this man had had training. The first one, not the panel

(Levine)
discussion. One published, but never released.

DULLES: Get that one for me please.

LEVINE: Early in August. I think that the fact that they had Cuban friends in Minsk [might be significant] Marina told me about them. They played the guitar.

DULLES: Ask her about Cuban friends in Minsk.

LEVINE: I can't answer your question except that I have a very strong feeling, bolstered by the letter which he wrote to Senator Tower, which to me is a phoney letter, as I indicated to you that he [alone] wouldn't have written the letter. All the letter bears the marks of a translation from the Russian, and you can show it to several experts, providing they are really expert, and the fact that from Russia he sent a letter to a man who in Russia is synonymous with Walker, not Nixon, with Goldwater, according to the Soviet line with McCarthy, with absolutely the most fascistic elements in the United States.

DULLES: I don't remember that.

LEVINE: Senator Tower of Texas.

DULLES: That I know.

LEVINE: That letter to me is sort of devious evidence, of vicarious evidence that behind him stood a man who dictated the letter and translated from Russian. And selected Tower.

Get the most reactionary man to write to because they will give you absolute protection in the eyes of security.

SLAWSON: Wouldn't he also pick a man who would help him get out of Russia? A man who violently hated Russia?

LEVINE: No. The way to get out of Russia under Kennedy Administration according to people in Minsk would not be by the way of Tower. If you could get -- there are any number of names which would suggest themselves -- to which they have had lines -- legitimate lines -- who have interfered because senators do that.

DULLES: He is a Texan so he wrote to Senator or Congressman --

RANKIN: Tower is from Oswald's area.

SLAWSON: Tower was born in that area, I think.

LEVINE: That is the argument on the other side. Check on the text of the letter. Like anything that Oswald has written before. I don't see --

DULLES: I would like to get this No. 10 -- that document. I haven't read that. I think the FBI had that. Now let us hear Marina's own story on Oswald's departure to Mexico.

LEVINE: I think her story that he was going off for two years.

He gave her \$10. He had friends take care of her. That there were tears for the first time, and the suspicions of his. She mentioned the peso necklace. There is a peso with a hole drilled in it and he could only have brought it from Mexico.

It was a Mexican coin and it was left. And he made up something for Marina from it -- a necklace -- a very cheap one, of course. And it was left on a dresser or a table or somewhere

(Levine)
and for Ruth Paine this was a shock because she found evidence
of something that her friend had not confided in her.

On this tape recording, Mr. Dulles was talking about,
there is a flat statement: "have you ever been abroad?" This
was before his trip to Mexico. He hesitated, then said, "in
Mexico once." He may have lied and he may have been.

SLAWSON: When was the peso necklace found?

LEVINE: Within days after.

SLAWSON: In October 1963?

LEVINE: November 1963. The end of November -- after.

DULLES: "Did he leave the ring?" [This and following questions
are mostly read from the attached list of "33 Fresh Clues."]

LEVINE: They were different times. She found one thing then
the other. I cannot tell you when, but after assassination.

RANKIN: "About silver necklace he gave her."

LEVINE: I think she did mention -- my wife would know about
that. I don't claim this is exhaustive.

DULLES: "He urges Marina to move from Paine house."

LEVINE: That is another one of the controversial items with my wife, but not very controversial. I am sure -- but in my notes that the night before the assassination, according to Marina's story this is -- he wanted her out of Paine's house that night. According to my wife and according to Ruth Paine, it is not at all sure that that is what Marina said. I reported in my notes because that is something that struck me forcibly. Here he was planning to assassinate the President and if his wife's whereabouts were unknown and they were known, of course, that is how they got in an hour and a half, then he would have more of a chance to escape and every assassin thinks of a road of escape before. So, when Marina said that he wanted her to leave that night --

DULLES: She told you that?

LEVINE: Yes. According to my past recollection and to Ruth -- my wife and Ruth Paine -- there was talk about it, but not as decisive as I recall it, and it was a conversation that went on

(Levine)

Thursday night November 21. As to the line of conversation as I indicated the recollections differ, but Marina would, I am sure, answer that question when she is asked.

DULLES: When asks about new shoes -- was for children wasn't it?

LEVINE: No, she said he gave her money to buy shoes. I thought was for her. Was just one of those silly little things. He had on mind to murder President and talks about did you buy those shoes. What did you do with money?

DULLES: How did she know he was wakeful in bed?

LEVINE: She was sleeping with him. They were sleeping together and her leg touched once and he drew away and she told me that in answer to my question. She knew he wasn't sleeping. How would you know? Actually without touching you know, from breathing.

DULLES: (question about hour of awakening)

LEVINE: She told one story, another to Ruth Paine, According to her story she woke up and went to the kitchen. She felt the pot and it was cold and she was startled. He was gone.

According to Ruth Paine she always got up late and I know this is true from observations. However, I don't see why with his having been nervous and tense all night she wouldn't get up and go to kitchen. She was up around 10 o'clock in the morning. Ruth had gone out and attended to errands and come back.

DULLES: How did news of assassination come to Marina?

LEVINE: That story you already have.

RANKIN: Listened to announcement and how Marina acted at first. Marina told us the story. She went into considerable detail.

LEVINE: I have noticed, but nothing startling there. She dashed out, found that package which she thought was rifle in tact. She breathed more easily and was hanging children's clothes on the line when the word came through. The final word

(Levine)
and it is just a human interest thing.

DULLES: "Oswald's courting of Marina."

LEVINE: You know from her manuscript of January 4 in Russia which I read of course. I read in Russian from beginning to end and when I speak of the apartment -- the fact that Oswald had an ultra-modern one room plus kitchenette plus refrigerator and balcony apartment with all the facilities. In Minsk that takes him out, in my firm conviction, of the class of ordinary metal sheet workers. That plainly is a privileged status for which any Russian girl would give an awful lot to enjoy such facilities.

DULLES: Marry anyone who had it?

LEVINE: At the drop of a hat. The way they live is beyond comprehension. She married him within six weeks. But I think that was inducement. He had the apartment before marriage. It simply points one more item so to speak to the fact that

(Levine)
that man was not treated as an ordinary proletarian.

DULLES: "The Cubans."

SLAWSON: The Cubans who visited Oswald at New Orleans, or
at Minsk?

LEVINE: That is a very curious thing. This Cuban professor
of history who is here. I gave his name to the investigators
who came to see me. He told me an extraordinary story, and, of
course, you can't take story at face value but he said that
Castro -- it is all second hand -- that Castro had called in
the two men who had served as envoys of Castro in Moscow within
days after the assassination. He gave me the names. I haven't
got them here. One figured in famous trial in which Castro
testified several weeks ago. This professor is author of 18
historical works. He is living in Washington on Connecticut
Avenue. I have his address and telephone number. He said that
from Mexico he telephoned Havana or New Orleans -- Oswald,
that is. I think from Mexico. He thought he talked to one of

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these Cubans or he tried to reach these Cubans that he knew
in Moscow. The rest is speculation. Mainly the Cubans in
Minsk were there to get training, according to my views, and
the Cubans in Minsk would put Oswald in touch with the Cuban
Embassy in Moscow. That is what I and he [The Cuban professor
of history] thought.

DULLES: How did professor get this information?

LEVINE: He claims that is just one of these things. When you
run into a man of 62 whose academic record is impressive and
he tells you these things you do not question him. I talked
with him myself right here in a restaurant on the Hill. I got
a tip from a certain source and I met him for lunch and talked
to him. Professor of history at Havana University and no
question of his character. Anti-Castro all right. He is
completely anti-Castro. He reported to me on conversations,
believe it or not, that occurred between Castro and these
Soviet people within a few days after the assassination. "What

(Levine)

do you know about Oswald?" was the line.

DULLES: Castro know the two who lived in Minsk?

LEVINE: One official ambassador. The other the rank of minister.

DULLES: I though you implied some of these Cubans had come back.

LEVINE: That is a misunderstanding. All I stated was that these two men as of record had served in diplomatic service in Moscow and are now back in Havana. The question is, Did Castro call them to say, "What do you know about Oswald?"

DULLES: Would they know anything about Oswald?

LEVINE: I think according to this man that is a good question.

Of course, they gave Castro the dope on Oswald.

SLAWSON: Does he know what they talked about?

LEVINE: I think it had to do with his trip.

DULLES: "Cuban student visits Oswald at New Orleans."

LEVINE: I'm sure you have it in your papers, because I have both a Spanish and English translation in my papers of his report. This was a man sent by anti-Castro people in New Orleans and Marina was there and the baby was there. "What language are you speaking? How do you know Russian? I am studying Russian at Tulane University."

DULLES: Tower story well covered.

LEVINE: I think I have covered most of the rest. I told you about the Argentinian family -- gave all details. I ascribe utmost importance to whole matter of those Argentinians. The two girls. They were in Minsk, but Marina has address of relative in United States. Marina and Lee Oswald smuggled out a letter or a manuscript for the Argentinian family with them when they came.

DULLES: What did Marina say about his concealing attempted suicide?

LEVINE: Simply that she did not know about it. He did not

(Levine)

tell her.

SLAWSON: How about this document Marina had smuggled out?

LEVINE: It was not clear whether it was she or he who smuggled it. I was surprised and asked her how did Lee take out something like that? Well, the implication was rather nice -- that he was warm-hearted -- that he was kind. They were stuck and it had to do with a communication to one relative in the United States and others in Argentina. To try to get those two girls out and the girls are still there for five years. She said they wrote letters from Minsk to Moscow to Argentine Embassy and never had a word. The old folks had given up their Argentine citizenship, but the girls were born in the Argentine and claimed by that right their citizenship and wanted to get out and set around to get out. If it could be arranged, it would be worthwhile.

SLAWSON: It would take years, if it could be accomplished at all, I would think.

LEVINE: No, it is a matter of personal contact. If

Mr. Dulles -- not Khrushchev he wouldn't do it. The Argentine ambassador. After you get the name from Marina and you state there are a couple of girls who are of special interest there.

Certainly you may ask a similar favor. There is a relative here that would give them the tickets. With present means of communications I would have had them out two months ago. It is a matter of finding the proper contact. The Soviet Union is not going to hold two Argentine citizens even though they were friends of Oswald's. They are not quite that smart. If it is handled in a discreet way.

DULLES: "Question re Marina's status as Communist."

LEVINE: Yes. She told me she was bored with Communist indoctrination which I believe knowing something about her life outside of working ---

DULLES: She told you about Leningrad?

LEVINE: She was there about 15 months and when she applied to

(Levine)

go to the United States they looked up her record and found
was not attending the indoctrination courses or lectures at
Minsk and was not keeping up with dues so according to her,
dropped her from the Komsomol. She told some things which
indicated that she had been around the theatre and ballet.

She told some things which I don't think I ought to tell this
lady. I don't think it should be told in her presence. It
has to do with her strictly personal experiences beginning
with the age of 16 and all that I know is the----

DULLES: Talked about it fairly frankly?

LEVINE: No not to me -- to Wanda. What she told my wife the
first day when I told her about our trip to the Soviet Union
and about being in Leningrad about being in the Church of the
Holy Trinity where her mother had been in the bier. Then my
wife told her a story to make a little conversation-how we
found in the Hotel Europe a striking Russian girl
and gentleman who was film director and she told us that she

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was a ballet dancer in the Minsk Theater and I said we were at the Minsk Theater at a performance of Faust. Oh, she said. This woman she says the name is Lapahova. Are you related to the wife of John Maynard Keynes? Her name is Lapahova. She said I am married to her brother. He is a very old man. She was 40 or 50 years younger and he is since so was out with director. Marina knew Lapahova. A woman of 28 or 30, but a beauty -- maybe 27 to 30 and how this little girl who was in Leningrad would know a leading ballerina of the Leningrad Operat made me ponder. In other words there was a time when she was out for a film or theatrical career. Was good looking enough.

RANKIN: Oswald's attitude to Marina's ideology?

LEVINE: Was one of petty bourgeois. She really is interested in a modern American home. The home of the Fords which they built -- a \$45,000 suburban home -- is her idea of heaven. A kitchen with all modern equipment. Radio and TV, a dishwasher,

(Levine)

an electric toaster. All the silk stockings in the world, dresses galore and she already has quite a lot.

_____ : What last remark to Ruth Paine about inquire

Item 3---

LEVINE: This is a remark which is worth preserving for posterity and if I ever write. In the presence of Katcha Ford on March 9, after I left, when, Ruth Paine for the first time since the assassination, visited Marina and not in new home but in Ford house. The subject of Don Levine came up and Katcha said the trouble with Don Levine was that he was asking (Russian word) really means more than fresh, almost insolent questions. I said did Marina say that. No, Marina chimed in and said that I was asking probing questions. Now the Chief Justice, Marina said, didn't ask me such questions. He was very kind to me. And that was all -- didn't say. I regard that and believe me, I said to her and to Martin many times.

(Levine)

the full story from the beginning on the phone from California to the end. This is a story of great historical importance. You know. And you and I wanted the Fords and Martin and you must make a contribution to history to the best of your ability. If this is not a contribution to history, I am not interested and there is not enough money for me to touch your story unless you can reveal the things. But she didn't. Don't get the idea that she gave. She never answers honestly and forthrightly the question of how she got the visa. I certainly think that that visa has got a long history behind it. I just don't think a guy by the name of Oswald who is a sheet metal worker goes into Moscow and gets a visa for a Russian girl in ten days.

DULLES: ----

LEVINE: She never. She keeps telling me again and again not political. The time when I pulled out picture taken. This

(Levine)

very picture which I carry with me with wife in front of

Stalin's birthplace and as picture of (Russian word).

Do you recognize picture. "Kamo" She knew about Kamo. She

has to know a great deal about politics even in the Soviet

Union, to know about Kamo.