

UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE
TREASURY DEPARTMENT

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ORIGIN <u>Field</u>	OFFICE <u>New York - New York</u>	FILE NO. <u>CO-2-34,030</u>
TYPE OF CASE <u>Protective Research</u>	STATUS <u>Investigation Continued</u>	TITLE OR CAPTION <u>Lee Harvey Oswald -</u>
INVESTIGATION MADE AT <u>Locust Valley, New York</u>	PERIOD COVERED <u>11/29/63 to 11/30/63</u>	<u>Priscilla JOHNSON's</u>
INVESTIGATION MADE BY <u>Special Agent George J. Sershen</u>		<u>1959 interview</u>
DETAILS		<u>with OSWALD, including</u>
		<u>copies of handwritten</u>
		<u>notes and resulting</u>
		<u>articles.</u>

SYNOPSIS

Priscilla Johnson, a journalist, interviewed Lee H. Oswald in 1959 after his defection to the Soviet Union.

DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION

This investigation is predicated on telephone call November 29, 1963 from ASAIC Sweeney, Boston to ASAIC Jukes advising of a request received from SAIC Bouck, Protective Research Section, to interview Miss Priscilla Johnson residing in Cambridge, Massachusetts. ASAIC Sweeney stated inquiry disclosed Miss Johnson was residing in New York, telephone OR 6-2620. ASAIC Jukes telephoned this number and ascertained Miss Johnson was residing on Feeks Lane in Locust Valley, New York.

(Miss) Johnson was interviewed on November 30, 1963 at her home in Locust Valley. She is presently attending the Russian Research Center at Harvard University studying Soviet Literature. In 1959 she was employed as a correspondent for the North American Newspaper Alliance, with offices in New York City, and was representing that firm in Moscow when she was given the assignment of interviewing Lee H. Oswald who had defected to the Soviet Union. She recalled interviewing Lee H. Oswald at the Hotel Metropole in Moscow advising she was aware Oswald's room had been wired. Accordingly, she exercised care in questioning him, especially since he informed her the Soviet authorities had instructed him not to permit any interviews by the American press and he was violating their "trust".

1 att h/w

DISTRIBUTION ✓ Chief New York Dallas	COPIES Orig & 3 cc's 2 cc's 1 cc.	REPORT MADE BY <u>George Sershen</u> SPECIAL AGENT	DATE <u>12/2/63</u>
		APPROVED <u>George Sershen</u> SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DATE <u>12/2/63</u>

Miss Johnson had retained the notes she took at the time of her interview with Oswald and exhibited copies of articles she wrote appearing in the Boston Sunday Globe of November 24, 1963 and the Christian Science Monitor of November 26, 1963 relating to her interview with Oswald. The articles are self-explanatory.

According to Miss Johnson, Oswald in her opinion was a "loner", a person who did not mix socially and kept to himself very much. He was a self-taught Marxist who stated he had read Marx's book, Das Capital, when he was only fifteen years of age. He taught himself to read and write Russian and his decision to defect arose out of his bitterness toward the United States, particularly the plight of the American negro and the exploitation of workers. He was reared in poverty and his mother, a widow, had worked extremely hard to bring up her family. He also expressed resentment at his treatment by the U. S. Marine Corps and accused the United States of military imperialism. He informed Miss Johnson that he had petitioned the Soviet Government for citizenship and stated he had no intention of ever returning to the United States.

Miss Johnson stated she questioned him about the manner in which he traveled to Russia suggesting that he must have been aided by other persons or organizations. He specifically stated he made the trip on his own initiative on monies he had saved while in the Marine Corps and that he positively did not receive assistance from any persons or organizations. She attempted to impress upon him the folly of his actions and in a roundabout manner tried to get him to change his mind about defecting but without success. She concluded that he was a fanatic and that further attempts to dissuade him from seeking Russian citizenship would be futile.

In her description of Oswald, Miss Johnson stated he was touching, likeable and quiet. She felt he was a malcontent who was unsure of himself and probably would be unhappy wherever he was. Although she considered him a fanatic, she did not think he would resort to violence. She does not know whether he had been questioned by the Soviet Secret Police but obviously he had received some instructions from a Soviet authority concerning his activities while in Russia. He stayed very close to the hotel and according to his own statement, he did not attempt to establish friendship with any Russians.

Oswald promised to let her know if he was leaving the hotel. When she inquired at the hotel for him two days later she found he had disappeared and concluded the Soviet authorities had whisked him away having naturally learned of the interview. She has not seen him since.

Miss Johnson stated she was interviewed November 23, 1963 by FBI Agents Curry and Sullivan in Boston and that she gave them a deposition concerning her interview with Oswald. She is leaving New York on December 1st for Boston

and on the following day, December 2 is flying to Washington where she has an appointment with Mr. Andrew Lowenfeld of the State Department. Mr. Lowenfeld works in the office of a Mr. Shea, a legal counsel for the State Department. While in Washington she will be staying with her brother, Stewart H. Johnson, Jr. at 2906 N. Street, N.W. and expects to remain there until the end of the week.

Verifax copies were made of the newspaper articles previously referred to, and the notes made by Miss Johnson at the time she interviewed Oswald and are being forwarded with this report.

ATTACHMENTS

Copies of 2 newspaper articles
Copies of Miss Johnson's notes

GJS/mm

NOT SUITABLE FOR MICROFILM

COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN HONOLULU GOVERNMENT 26, 1953

Oswald Investigated in Moscow

By a Staff Writer of The Christian Science Monitor
What kind of man was Lee Harvey Oswald?

Did this admitted Marxist ever incidentally be a capable of attacking the president of the United States, as Dallas police say he assassinated John F. Kennedy last Friday—just two days before he was almost shot and killed in the back on a street walk?

Few people really seem to have known the 24-year-old New Orleans native well. Most describe him as a quiet sort of a loner, one who did not mix well—a loner. He gave few the opportunity to really understand him.

But in a rare moment of fraternization he gave one American such a glimpse. She is Miss Russian woman, and at the time she was 22, only through a two-year stay in Moscow by a correspondent for the North American Newspaper Agency.

Interview in Moscow
The letter was early November, 1952, the place—the Hotel Metropole, Moscow's principal hotel for foreigners.

Oswald had arrived in the Soviet Union on Oct. 30 that year with the announced intention of seeking Soviet citizenship.

Ten days later Miss Johnson, now doing research at Harvard for a book, learned he was staying at the hotel and asked if he would give her an interview. He said he would, and they talked quite freely for seven hours.

The impression of Oswald that emerged from that meeting is one of a young man intensely bitter at the United States, who displayed absolute single-mindedness about whatever he was attempting to do—at that moment trying to obtain Soviet citizenship.

Is this the sort of man who might have assassinated the President?

Staff-Selected Data

Bitterness Detected in Long Talk

When the Soviet Union, he put the same single-mindedness for learning whatever he needed to learn for this act (the assassination), he said, "I never, ever, never he came in the kitchen for the help to the man, the said, "I tried to get there a while ago so he could get there a while ago. Within two days of his death, he was on a boat for the Soviet Union.

"I just think this is the kind of person that might; he would have gone about it in a methodical way. He would have planned whatever he needed to know."

Reports Detailed
This description dovetails with the FBI report that back on March 29 of this year Oswald, using an assumed name, ordered from a small-order firm the rifle with which President Kennedy was shot during a motorcade in Dallas.

He was bitter, Miss Johnson said, against "capitalism" and "worker exploitation" in the United States—classic Communist as well as Marxist phrases.

But he never expressed any hatred of the praxis or of John F. Kennedy, when a young assassin's Senator "I didn't speak about politics in a personal way."

Capability Indicated
During their long conversation nothing he said indicated he favored using murder as a political weapon.

"But from our conversation, I could see that he was a man capable of a whole lot" because of his raw bitterness, she said.

"My brother," he told her, "has been a worker for her whole life. She had to produce a good example of what happens to workers in the United States."

When the talk turned to the past, he revealed a fondness for the game of chess, and he recalled that he had been in the Soviet Union about 10 days. He didn't know Russian, and he wasn't very curious about

year when they talked, had people generally were being sent to Russia at about that time that the Cuban leader was a Communist.

No Mention of Cuba
Yet never once during the seven-hour interview did Oswald mention Cuba or Castro, though he later became a member of a club named after the Cuban leader.

After talking a good deal about Marxist philosophy as he understood it, he said at one point: "I have had practical experience in the world. I am not an idealist completely. I have had a chance to watch military imperialism in action.

Miss Johnson recalled.

And it's because he knew Marxism so poorly that I know it must have been hatred of the United States, rather than a real understanding of what he was doing, that motivated him to renounce his American citizenship and attempt to become a Soviet citizen.

Of Bitterness

After five years of reading socialist literature," he told her, "observing treatment of minority groups (Communists, Negroes, and workers especially) watching the treatment of workers in New York and seeing how they're exploited—I'd read about it in socialist literature and thought the description was quite correct."

He indicated he wanted Soviet citizenship primarily to escape the United States society (since he either be a worker exploited for capitalist profit in the United States) or else an exploiter," he had said, "I'd have been one of the unemployed" rather than assume either role.

At the time "he was terribly bitter against the American Embassy," she said, "because they would not allow him to take the oath renouncing his

ing to him of Soviet citizenship, and the Soviet Government didn't. He was when I talked with him."

Their talk was deep and plausible, and unbroken emotional.

She never saw him again. He told her "once the Russians accepted him he would give me his full story.... He promised to come and live with me before he jumped to Russia."

"About two days later I

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1
 Huey Oswald - 20
 12 W. 10th, Texas born in
 New Orleans
 To US Embassy Oct 31
 used my Am. citizenship
 which as they would be when
 we time - however I
 requested that my citizenship
 issued. Was not allowed
 was on note that we
 need - Refused to allow
 to take out at that time.
 said they would not allow
 to act without confirmation
 for citizenship.
 I re-impounded passport
 and not act until
 citizenship confirmed -
 they have confirmed
 that I would not have
 any ID, be forced to,
 if I go, so refuse
 request for citizenship.
 They have said they
 were fighting possibility
 my continuing my
 location at Lubbock -

2
 at age 17, enlisted in Marine
 Corps, discharged in Sept -
 14 months in Japan +
 Philippines, Indonesia,
 France - radar operator
 finished high school educa -
 while in Marine Corps
 Hair brown, gray eyes -
 5' 11", 150 lb -
 Oct 18, 1939 birth date
 Marines 2 yrs, 9 months, 3 days
 Overseas 1 yr, 2 months, 24 days
 3. in New Or., childhood in
 Louisiana + Texas -
 NY 2 yrs -
 then Louisiana - enlisted
 in Dallas
 father died before born -
 I believe he was an
 insurance salesman
 Has 1 brother -
 Good Conduct medal from
 Marines
 Mother alive + living in Ft.
 Worth -

3
 had hearing records on
 - ago - along with my
 ex-wife's parents -
 to write from Beverly -
 have trouble speaking in
 a + teacher -

was in ~~USA~~ while in
 Army Corps -
 would give no statement
 if FBI had it + wanted
 I would never leave since
 group. To my head
 I'd like to give my side
 of story give people in
 US something to think
 about -
 was having been assured
 I'd not have to return
 US, I assumed it would
 sell for me to give
 my side of story -
 There was always
 a visa would not
 extend -

There was Sup Rm in T
in late Oct - no action -
#5 met

Been warned that
if I not my opp's, even
that of Sup opp's, but
I would be Polit. atmosphere
that will be Curative -
I don't want to take years,
my for citizenship

But I am safe in the
time being that I can
leave no longer stay.
Was read me about
Yudis, I could get into
Dad first thing dried

discussed me
I asked to be allowed to
take over - they made
excuses so as to refuse
over - said I would come
back, Pelly burning!
I would sell out to Cuba
or that. ~~older part.~~

3) At times I -> for citizenship,
this "my own" in D
landed it. Then I would
diplomatic channels -

3. Bitter at refusal -
I was there, Sat. Oct 31,
applied on passport consul
official on good time to
set papers together -
he (D) then wanted to
make his will. I was then
+ there - I be too hard on
them, but they are asking
in an illegal way, but
he is supposed to carry
that primarily through
Nov. I wrote letter of
inquiry to US Ambassador -
received this letter back -
(Anketa may Snyder had
carried out his duties)
"It is a principle of the
Am gov't that the right of
expatriation is a natural +
inherent right of any
person + that the manner
prescribed by law for
renunciation of Am. citizenship
is the exercise of a right
a diplomatic or consular officer
of the U.S. in the certab.

...

11/11 from New Orleans
 Sept 19 (?) Fri by ship -
 13 days to see Havre -
 booked plus 24 to Atlantic
 got routine - \$30
~~11/11~~ By train from
 He 15/6: 76 received -
 10 days on vouchers I have
 for the past 2 yrs I have
 been waiting to see this
 and trip - raised
 voice, 2 yrs I was
 waiting to leave Marine
 Corps, make financial
 arrangements -
 I have had practical
 experience in world war
 not our idealism completely
 have had eleven to
 make Am military
 in revolutions in action
 because a Marxist
 at 15 why? I had
 discovered Socialism in
 at that time ~~the~~
~~at that time~~ 5 yrs of
 reading Soc. Lit., observing

progress of minority groups:
 Can't, negroes, + few
 others in esp - the
 water in NY - the
 workers in thing are
 fact that they are
 exploited -
 I'd read about it in
 Socialism lit, + I saw that
 the doctrine was quite correct.
 Saw I would see a worker
 exploited for cap, see there
 an exploited or, since there
 are many in this category
 and many of the unemployed
 I'd be one of the unemployed
 Designation one national, not
 sparked by any light in the
 wide since there no wife -
 At 15, I was looking for
 something that would give
 me a way to my
 environment. I was born
 My mother was born
 a worker all her life
 I was produced profit
 for capital - a good
 ex. of what happens to
 workers in US - decline

13. Orthodox they don't have
 a & many hot water level
 + meat gives they with
 20 yrs, there an econ-
 system which is cheap
 US for believe is cheap
 Can material shift -
 Omings to a not influence
 me to refuse -
 It's the social system,
 not the success,
 the & attract to me -
 Of same time SU with
 undoubted by the US -
 low of out. For out's sake
 have seen tourists attractive
 people's homes - in role
 city of Moscow - in private
 city. We see every private
 and. By our it's all toward
 peacefully & all - purpose
 people here are so well of
except large it have a lot
of large in the future of
the is an important
Still making greatly
not to be seen here

14. hated for will imperialist
in Japan you'd expect
it - but if you'd ever
been regard base at
the Libri you'd know
what 1 mean -
Sympathetic with
Comm elements there,
the hated of Am
Am look upon all
foreign peoples as smut
to be exploited for profit
Philippines who are well
they are those who cooperate
with Am
the part of Indonesia
in vacation in March 1958 -
Comm - inspired social
turn over - out of power
with annihilation - even
1958 - see crisis
we told we might have to go
in 1 took part ?
I went into thawed
to see we even good &
1 didn't want to be
burden on my country

14. The Russ / meet Syri -
 patrice, understand -
 Ask me why I am very
 curious - Understand
 when I speak of ideal's -
 local reasons that have
 brought me there while an
 our world + understand
 our latered in material of
 situation, of US workers
 Russian, + head me as
 ability -

Refers to Sov. Gov't
 repeatedly as "my
 Gov't"
 I've already asked
 them to prepare papers
 I'm sure if I did an
 Enb they'd just give me
 the same rubbish
 Hanes = Sov. citizenship
 labor-saving device
 dissolve citizenship

Pres high + labor-saving

15. Sov. people, like US, still
 wage - But the profit
 thing produced is used
 be used for all the people
 They have econ. syst
 not based on credit +
 speculation -

has a very primitive under
 ding of economics, that's
 as Marx is Das Kapital

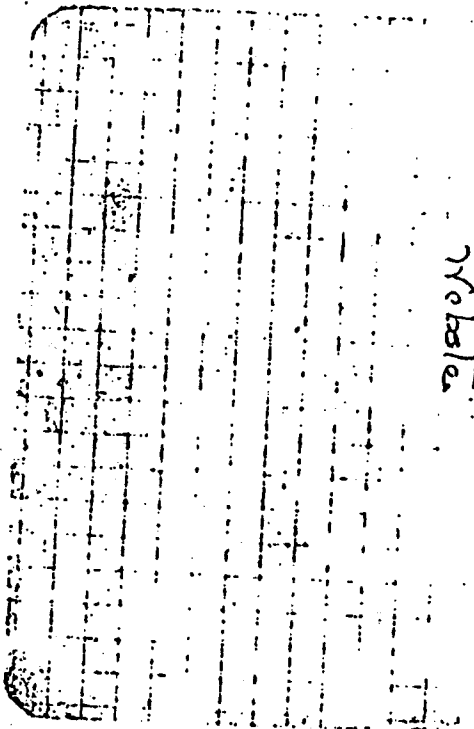
18

15. I was doing it to do it, but under obligation to see us via through.

To said we needed more time get papers. communication with Washington. Law says we are under oblig. To permit him to receive legislation says must be since he's of age 21 and not active totally.

Nicholas Pakull:

Rebata



19

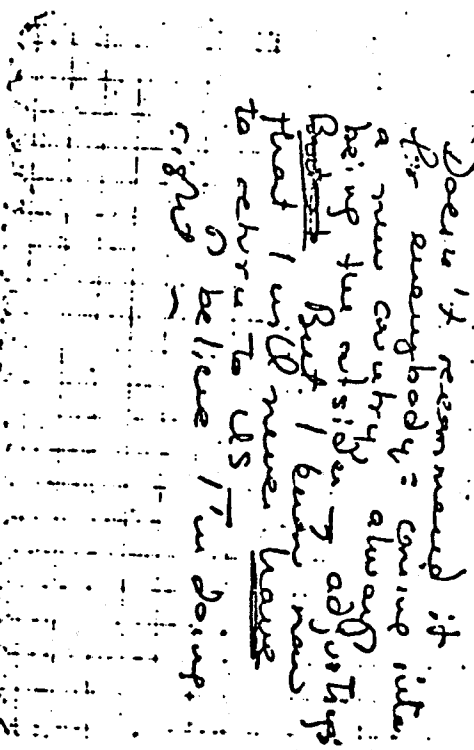
16. My reason's are very sharp - road to me

gave permission to US Embassy - along with verbal & written state treaty

Light Sather's account

Bite

Doesn't seem named it for everybody: giving into a new country always being the subject of adjustments. But I believe I'm doing right to return to US.



Interview With Suspect Oswald in Moscow in 1959

The Stuff of Which

The author was Moscow Correspondent for *NANA* in 1959. A few years before, in 1953, she had been research assistant on Viet Nam for John F. Kennedy, then a senator. She is perhaps the only person to have been good friends with both the late President and his suspected assassin. She is today a free-lance writer on Soviet affairs.

By PRISCILLA JOHNSON

(Copyright, 1961, Dutton Group, North American Newspaper Alliance)
CAMBRIDGE, Mass.—“For two years now I have been waiting to do this one thing. To dissolve my American citizenship and become a citizen of the Soviet Union.”

The time was November, 1959. The place was my room on the third floor of Moscow's Hotel Metropol. The speaker was Lee Harvey Oswald, prime suspect in the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

With his suit of charcoal gray flannel, dark tie and tan cashmere sweater, Lee looked, and sounded like Joe College with a slight southern drawl. But his life hadn't been that of a typical college boy.

His father, an insurance salesman in his hotel room, salesman, died before he was just one floor below mine at birth. Raised in Texas and the Metropoli. He had no Louisiana, the boy spent two friends in Russia and he didn't early teens. At 17, he en- The only sightseeing he'd done listed in the U.S. Marines. was to “Densky” Mir, a child. “I did it,” he said, “because didn't store one block from our we were poor and I didn't want hotel. He'd managed to buy to be a burden on my mother.” an ice cream cone there, he Later, he spent 14 months as told me proudly. a licensed radar operator in the Far East.

As we sat in my hotel three-year hitch nearly done, the early hours of morning, the Marines gave Lee a de- he talked quickly about his pendency discharge. Just one plans to defect to Russia. month later, after an exhaust- However, I soon came to feel ing trip by land, sea and air, that this boy was of the stud- he arrived in Moscow to pe- of which fanatics are made. tion the Supreme Soviet. highest legislative body in the U.S.S.R., for Soviet citizenship. Even though Russian officials warned him Soviet citizenship, became a Marxist.

Saw Fanatic is not easy to obtain, Lee was Later, as a Marine private, For days, Oswald had been already referring to the Soviet in Japan and the Philippines when and if, he became a cit-

Government as “my govern- he “had a chance to watch ment.” But,” said Lee, “Even American militarist imperal- If I am not accepted, on no ac- count will I go back to the United States. I shall remain here, if necessary, as a resident alien.”

All Soviet officials would promise at the time was that Lee could stay on in Russia, whether or not he became a citizen. Meanwhile, they were “investigating the possibility of sending him to a Soviet higher technical institute.”

At an age when angry young rebels all over the world find release in aping the heathens, what brought this serious, soft-spoken southern boy to Moscow with no other ambition but to spend the rest of his life as a Soviet citizen? Evidently, it was a combina- tion of poverty, the plight of Lee U. S. Negro, and the U. S. Marines.

“My mother,” said Lee, “has been a worker all her life. She’s a good example,” he added, “of what happens to workers in the United States.” He declined to elaborate.

“At the age of 13,” he added, “after watching the way workers are treated in New York, and Negroes in the South, I was looking for a key to my environment. Then I discovered Socialist literature.” Lee was struck, in particu- lar, by Marx’s “Das Kapital.” He concluded that, as an American, “I would become, either a worker exploited for capitalist profit; or an ex- ploiter or, since there are many in this category, I’d be at the unemployed.” Lee Lee would not go back there.

Lee was bitter at U.S. Con- sidered, stalled him when he asked to take the oath on Oct 31, the only time Lee had been in the Embassy. As a result, He would let the Soviet gov- ernment handle legal details when and if, he became a cit-

Year's Planning

Fully a year before, Lee be- gan getting ready to go to Russia. Using a Berlitz gram- mar, he taught himself to read and write Russian. Never, with gray eyes and brown hair, did he consider deserting the Marine Corps.

Did it occur to Lee that So- viet officials might be embar- rassed by his efforts to become a citizen of their country at a moment when Russia was cultivating good relations with the United States?

Russian officials, he said, “don't encourage and don't discourage me.” They warned, however, that neither Lee's wish, nor theirs, would deter- mine whether his citizenship application was to be accepted.

They said it depended on the “over-all political atmosphere at the moment.” Meanwhile, they offered Lee the same “year of a prolonged stay in the U.S.S.R.”

As for officials at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, they were torn between their desire to give Lee time to think it over, and their legal obliga- tion to hear his oath renounce- ing American citizenship if he insisted.

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Fanatics Are Made'

been of the Soviet Union. Lee answered when I knocked he would mean while, he handed over his passport to the American Embassy. "I'm going back to the U.S.A.," he said, "in a few hours later, he came to see me in my room, I never learned."

I asked Lee if the ordinary Russians he met expressed surprise at his desire to defect. "Well," he said, "they're very curious and they ask me why. But materialist Muscovites, he added, "understand when I'm doing right."

That was why Lee wouldn't speak of the idealistic reasons that brought me here. And he answered the phone when his mother was calling from Ft. Worth, trying to plead with him to return home. He had refused to speak to any American correspondents. Just why before closing the door, that know.

As he was leaving I asked him to come see me again. The second time I called, he said, "I had a terrible feeling of futility. I was sure, awaited him."

As our conversation drew to a close--we ate nothing, and had been slipping early tea elevator. Illusion, I was sure, awaited him.

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