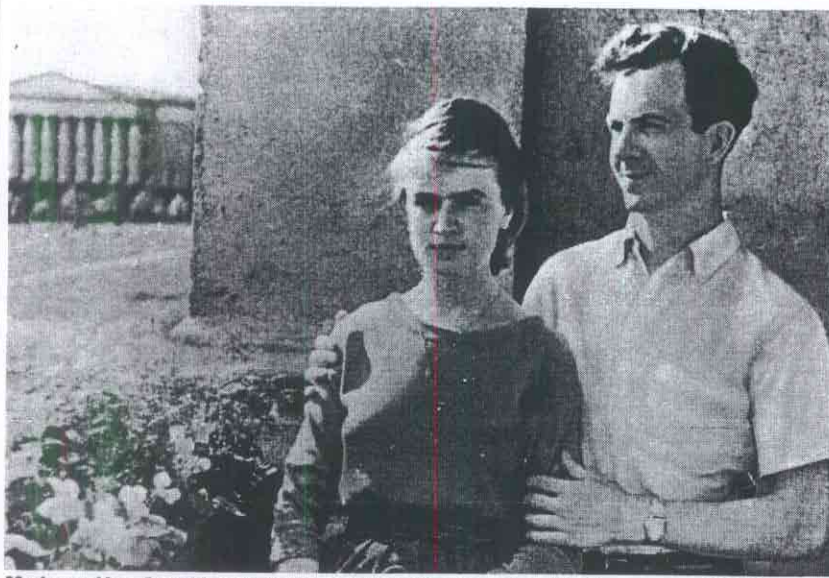


extra - for the

Books



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Marina and Lee Oswald on the balcony of their Minsk apartment in the summer of 1961

The Making of an Assassin

MARINA AND LEE by Priscilla Johnson McMillan
Harper & Row; 527 pages; \$15

Conspiracy theorists beware! Priscilla Johnson McMillan has come forward with the first plausible explanation for Lee Harvey Oswald's assassination of John F. Kennedy. Plots will doubtless continue to be spun out of the coincidences, contradictions and inconsistencies that surround the crime. But McMillan amply demonstrates that Oswald had no need of any of the world's intelligence services to steady his hand, eye and malevolent will as the Kennedy motorcade rolled into his line of fire in Dallas. He had long before been possessed of the essential preconditions for his crime: abundantly sufficient interior motives and a proven predisposition for homicidal violence.

Sovietologist McMillan knew Oswald. As a news agency correspondent in Moscow in 1959, she interviewed the would-be defector who was then holed up in the Metropole Hotel. Lee was recovering from his first public act of violence—a suicide attempt prompted by the Soviets' initial reluctance to let him stay in Russia. To McMillan, Oswald made the astonishing statement that is the epigraph to her book: "I want to give the people of the United States something to think about."

For this biography of Oswald, McMillan went to Texas to conduct a series of exhaustive interviews over a seven-month period with Oswald's Russian wife, Marina, and also talked with many of the people who had known Lee after his return to the U.S. in 1962. The author brought together the material on Oswald scattered through the 26 volumes of the Warren Report and in many recently de-

classified documents. Out of these data, covering all 24 years of Oswald's life, McMillan has constructed a remarkable portrait of a man on his way to a murder.

Few men have absorbed as much bile in their mother's milk as the son of Marguerite Oswald. Her sense of grievance against a world that she felt owed her a living pervaded Lee's life, causing him, at the age of 20, to seek some fancied re-

dress in the U.S.S.R. Though the Soviets finally accorded the American defector privileged status—with perquisites that included an apartment of his own and a cash subsidy—the Soviets' largesse could not satisfy Lee's inexhaustible demands. Soon disabused of Mother Russia, he clung to a half-baked Marxism that served his sociopathy. Later he would contrive to stretch his ideology to encompass Kennedy and right-wing General Edwin Walker as targets for assassination.

Marguerite Oswald also nourished Lee with the delusions of grandeur displayed in the celebrated interviews she gave Novelist Jean Stafford: "Lee Harvey Oswald even after his death has done more for his country than any other living human being." Once Lee emerged from Marguerite's cocoon, he seemed to regard himself as a rare and vivid specimen, on the wing in an ungrateful world. Unlettered and unskilled, Lee compared himself favorably with the great men whose biographies he read, such as Mao Tse-tung and John F. Kennedy. He declared that in 20 years he himself would be President, or maybe Prime Minister, of the U.S. Such a rich fantasy life had to be concealed from the real world, so Lee became a compulsive liar and profoundly distrustful, like his mother. As McMillan points out, his personality made him an unlikely recruit in an assassination plot that would require accepting orders, obeying plans and working with co-conspirators. Instead, she believes he acted alone to affirm his uniqueness the only way he knew how—by violence.

Violence was ever ready to erupt in Lee. At nine, he lunged at his half broth-

Excerpt

“ Marina gave up trying to forget Anatoly [an old Russian beau]. In fact, she bought a photograph of President Kennedy . . . Marina saw a resemblance between the two men . . . Lee had seen Anatoly on the night he first met Marina, and if a resemblance truly existed and was marked, he may have observed it for himself. He was, justifiably, jealous of Anatoly. And he was jealous of Kennedy, whether he had seen a resemblance or not. Once Marina said casually: 'He is very attractive—I can't say what he is as President, but, I mean, as a man.'”

Marina admired Kennedy in his own right—not only as a reminder of Anatoly. The more she saw of him the better she liked him, and it got so she would flip through the pages of every magazine she could lay her hands on, asking: "Where's Kennedy? Where's Kennedy?" Lee translated everything for her, every article, every caption—about the President, his wife, their children, and the Robert F. Kennedy family . . . He seemed nearly as interested in the Kennedys as she was and, if the article was favorable, he seemed to agree with it.

Marina speculated—to herself, not to Lee—about the President as man and lover. Since he looked like Anatoly, she wondered if he kissed like Anatoly. Marina did her best to convince herself that because he had a bad back, he probably wasn't much of a lover. Even so, the words Marina now uses to sum up her feelings toward the President are identical to the words she uses of only two other men in her life until then, Anatoly and Lee. The words are: "I was in love with him."

Marina had her photograph of President Kennedy and Lee had his of Fidel Castro, which he clipped out of the Soviet magazine *Ogonyok* and pinned to the living room wall. ”

Books

er with a butcher knife—an attack that their mother dismissed as one of Lee's "little scuffles." A New York City social worker, who interviewed Lee when he was a truant of 13, reported that he had fantasies of being powerful and killing people. Before he turned 16 he confided to a friend that he would like to kill President Eisenhower "because he was exploiting the working class." After Lee shot at and very nearly killed General Walker, Marina became convinced that he intended to murder Richard Nixon. Her own life was in jeopardy. During the eleven months preceding the Kennedy assassination, Lee repeatedly beat up his wife and raped her when she was in the last stages of her second pregnancy. When she failed to cook a dish of beans and rice to his satisfaction, he tried to strangle her.

Still, Marina was not quite the typ-



Oswald after arrest shows defiance

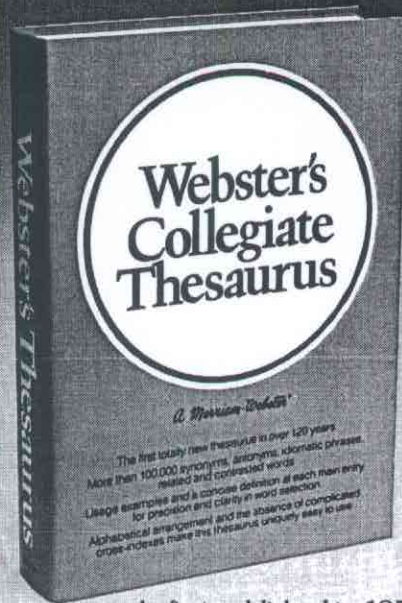
No need to steady his malevolent will.

ical battered wife. She was Oswald's mate, in the strict sense of the term. The squalid tale of their symbiotic relationship—told in excruciating detail by McMillan—makes it difficult to imagine Lee without Marina. When he proposed to her, she was the belle of the Minsk Culture Palace dance hall and, at 20, a full-grown shrew. Her own childhood, featuring an indifferent mother and a wicked stepfather, had scarcely been more propitious than Lee's, though she developed no homicidal tendencies. Both Marina and Lee, however, were infantile and dependent. Once married, they provoked each other in a classic case of *folie à deux*. In bed, Marina put Lee down mercilessly for his premature ejaculations and deliberately aroused his pathological jealousy by praising her past boy friends or her current pinups. One of Marina's revelations to McMillan is that she provoked Lee's fury with talk of her sexual attraction for Kennedy. It may well have been one reason why Lee's free-floating rage finally settled on the President. That is a compelling notion—more so than many of the conspiracy theories that depersonalize Oswald by pointing to some cold-blooded organization with a hired gun. The truth may be appallingly more human.

—Patricia Blake

TIME, NOVEMBER 14, 1977

From Merriam-Webster, the first totally new Thesaurus in 120 years.



Thesauruses have not changed significantly for over a century; most are merely rearrangements of Roget's

work, first published in 1852. But now comes Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus. As soon as you look at one page, you'll know the difference. It's as fast and easy to use as a dictionary.

No complicated cross-references here. Instead, over 100,000 synonyms, antonyms, idiomatic phrases, related words, and contrasted words are at your fingertips in simple alphabetical listing. An organizational tour de force. New from Merriam-Webster. Just \$9.95, wherever books are sold.

Merriam-Webster, Springfield, Mass. 01101

glance 369

glad *adj* 1 characterized by or expressing the mood of one who is pleased or delighted < he was glad to be on vacation >

syn happy, joyful, joyous, lighthearted

rel delighted, gratified, pleased, rejoiced, tickled; blithe, exhilarated, jocund, jolly, jovial, merry; gleeful, hilarious, mirthful

idiom filled with (or full of) delight

con blue, dejected, depressed, downcast, melancholy; despondent, dispirited, heavyhearted, sadhearted, unhappy; forlorn, joyless, sorrowful, woeful

ant sad

2 full of brightness and cheerfulness < a glad spring morning >

syn bright, cheerful, cheery, radiant

rel beaming, sparkling; beautiful; genial, pleasant

con dark, dim, dull, gloomy, somber

gladden *vb* *syn* PLEASE 2, arrire, delatant...

ity happy...