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# Marina Oswald Tells Her Story-

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HEATH, Texas — Many people in this small community east of Dallas may have passed her this week—at the gas station, grocery store or nearby shopping mall—and never given her a second glance.

For that, Marina Oswald is grateful.

Her name is Mrs. Kenneth Porter and it has been 14 years since her shy, pony-tailed face was on the front page of newspapers all over the world.

Friends say she is still slightly uncomfortable going out in public today. But when she does, dressed casually, usually with one of her three children in the back of her white station wagon, she is indistinguishable from thousands of other suburban housewives.

AFTER YEARS of notoriety as the widow of Lee Harvey Oswald, Marina Nikolaevna Prussakova Oswald Porter, 36, has used time, distance and a new name to escape the public stigma of her husband's alleged crime—the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Occasionally a stranger still notices her Russian accent, studies her sharp features and there is a flicker of recognition. But the inevitable question, "Aren't you Marina Oswald?" is met with such icy stares and curt denials the queries usually go no farther.

Marina, her second husband, Kenneth Jess Porter, and their three children have carefully faded into obscurity in the rural tranquility of this Rockwall County community, 30 miles east of Dallas.

Now, for the first time since the assassinations of Kennedy and Lee Harvey Oswald, Marina has finally agreed to tell her story in a book, *Marina and Lee*, to be released by Harper and Row in October. The book has already been sold for serialization to a national magazine and is expected to return Marina to the public eye.

Readers looking for exciting new revelations may not find them. Several of her friends claim the book will simply be Marina's story, her feelings as a young girl moving to a foreign country and her first experiences in America.

*Marina and Lee* was written by



Marina Oswald, left in 1963 after the assassination, right in 1965 after her marriage to Kenneth Jess Porter.

## —Finally

Priscilla McMillan Johnson, a former journalist who met and interviewed Lee Harvey Oswald while he was in Russia trying to defect to that country.

"The book is written in a very probing way," Marion Wyeth, Harper and Row editor, said. "It follows the Oswalds' day-to-day life in a very personal manner. I don't know that it contains any new information that has not already been brought out by the Warren Commission, but I believe it will give a number of new insights into Oswald's personality."

THERE WAS a time, with the aid of interpreters, when the youthful Marina Oswald basked in the attention of the media. For several years during the late 1960s it was an obvious game of mutual exploitation. Substantial sums of money were the only tickets to an interview with Marina. And for a fee, she routinely repeated her belief that her husband had shot President Kennedy and that he had acted alone.

Those who knew Marina in the early days following the assassination—attorneys, relatives, reporters and business associates—estimate she received between \$200,000 and \$300,000 in donations from the



sympathetic American public, interview fees and the sale of Oswald possessions. She and her mother-in-law, Marguerite Oswald, were branded "a post-assassination sideshow in themselves" by *Newsweek* magazine. *Time* magazine put Marina on its cover in February, 1964. At one point she even agreed to play herself in a planned, but never produced film, "Countdown In Dallas."

But by 1970, Marina Oswald had quietly dropped out of sight. Today there are no more interviews with Oswald's widow. Period. Anybody interested in talking with Marina has to check first with her agent in New York City.

**HER RETREAT** from the public began in 1965, when she and her second husband, Kenneth Porter, literally fled to Rockwall County, Texas, to escape reporters and photographers and be married by a justice of the peace.

They returned to Dallas and tried, unsuccessfully, to live a private life. Marina claimed Kenneth lost his job as a foreman with Texas Instruments over the publicity their marriage attracted. With her new wealth, she bought him a rundown tavern. But they failed to make a go of it and returned to Rockwall County several years later, this time with their son, Mark, now 11, and Marina's two daughters by Oswald, June Lee, 15, and Rachel, 13.

They bought a 17-acre farm on an isolated stretch of farm road. Their modest yellow brick ranch house sits well back from the road, looking out onto a peaceful lake in the front yard and miles of open fields.

"No Trespassing" signs are posted at the entrance to their farm. Rockwall County Sheriff Harry Knight and his deputies feel a special commitment to protect the Porters' privacy. Outwardly, Marina's life today is one of rural tranquility. Neighbors for miles around all know Marina's identity and they leave her alone. They adamantly refuse to talk to reporters and photographers.

**MANY OF** her neighbors view Marina as a victim who has been repeatedly misrepresented and lied about in the media.

Rockwall school officials have gone to great lengths to protect the privacy of Marina's children. Several years ago, at the 10th anniversary of the Kennedy assassination, photographers showed up in Rockwall and snapped pictures of the three children boarding school buses. School and local officials reacted angrily and tightened security in all the district schools.

"We never avoided the subject of

the assassination in any of our classes just because Marina's children were here," one teacher recalled. "The students all know about June, Rachel and Mark and they seem to accept it."

Despite the hundreds of thousands of dollars Marina reportedly received in the years following Oswald's death, her life-style today shows little evidence of wealth. Kenneth drives a 1960 pickup truck and Marina occasionally sets out in their 1969 station wagon. Their home is pleasantly but plainly furnished, and the Porters do not farm their 17 acres, leaving the land fallow.

**THEIR MARRIAGE** has been stormy. Kenneth filed for a divorce on July 18, 1974, which was granted four months later by Judge Thomas Crofts. In an unusual decision, Judge Crofts granted Kenneth Porter the bulk of the settlement. He was awarded custody of his son, Mark, possession of the acreage, the house, the pickup truck and station wagon, unnamed stocks and his personal property. Marina retained custody of her two daughters by Oswald, but was awarded only the household furniture and her personal belongings, and a promise from Porter to pay \$25 per month for Rachel's orthodontist bill.

Although there is no record in

Rockwall County that they remarried, neighbors say they are now back together.

Dallas residents who knew Marina in the days after Oswald's death noticed rapid changes in her personality. The American public's outpouring of money to the Russian widow caught her by surprise. She admitted later she was not prepared for so much so quickly and had been extravagant.

She enjoyed dancing and going to clubs in Dallas. She had many dates, but also went out alone, according to a former business associate. There was a succession of business deals that fell her way. Among them, Tex-Italia Film Co. offered her \$75,000 for TV and movie rights to her story, plus \$1500 for each personal appearance she made. Meredith Publishing Co., of Des Moines, bid \$25,000 for her memoirs; Germany's *Der Stern* magazine paid \$12,500 for German and Italian serialization rights to her story.

Marina was quoted on several occasions as saying the American people were "crazy and gullible" for sending her so much money. She gradually feuded with or fell away from most of the attorneys, close

friends and advisers she initially depended on following her husband's death, including Oswald's older brother, Robert.

**BUT THREE** months after their marriage, Marina was in Dallas Justice of the Peace Bill Richburg's office seeking a peace bond against her husband for allegedly threatening her with a gun.