

Oswald's Widow Tells of 'Very High Level of Anger' at Him for the Legacy

By CAREY WINFREY

In a little while Marina Oswald Porter would read a statement to a room full of reporters, reiterating her conviction that Lee Harvey Oswald, her husband at the time, had assassinated President John F. Kennedy and had done so alone.

But now, sitting in the office of the publisher of a new book that she had come to New York to promote, she was worried. As she talked about Lee Oswald in English that was only faintly accented by her native Russian, the diminutive Dallas housewife fidgeted and chain-smoked menthol cigarettes. She was nervous about the news conference, and worried that the reporters would be "disappointed" that she had nothing new to say.

She will receive approximately 60 percent of the royalties earned by "Marina and Lee" for her cooperation with its author, Priscilla Johnson McMillan. But she expressed fears about

losing the equilibrium that time, a new life and a measure of anonymity have helped her to achieve.

"I feel like an animal caged in a zoo," she said, "with people pointing their fingers at you."

Young and immature,

At 36 years of age, she is still pretty. Her eyes are almost indelicately blue. She is poised but guarded, as if she holds her emotions in tight rein. Beneath the surface, there appears to be sadness.

Her greatest regret, she said, is that when she first came to this country, she was not stronger, more independent, better able to judge her former husband's precarious psyche.

"I was so young and immature," she said, "I didn't realize he had a sick mind. I didn't analyze him or me or our marriage that deeply and seek real help for him. I was too blind."

The residue of guilt she feels about

what she refers to simply as "November" comes from her belief that she might have prevented the 1963 assassination either by seeking psychiatric help for her husband, or after he told her that he had fired a rifle at Gen. Edwin A. Walker, by reporting that incident to the police.

"Lee was the only person I had in this country," she said. "He had gone to so much trouble to bring me here, I feared of losing him if I betrayed him."

As the years have passed and as she has learned more about him and his motives by reading his diaries, her feelings for her former husband have hardened.

"It's a very strong word to use: hate. Perhaps a very high level of anger is closer," she said. "How dare he ruin my name, and that of my children forever? And I do not believe in killing other people."

During an hour-and-a-half interview before the news conference, she re-

of Shame

axed only occasionally, mainly when she talked of her family—her daughters, June, who is 16 years old, and Rachel, who is almost 14, and her son, Mark, 11. The girls never knew their father. He was shot and killed by Jack Ruby. Mark's father is Lenneth Porter, a sewing-machine salesman and repairman who likes to go fishing. Mrs. Oswald was married to him in 1965, and she lives quietly with him today on 17 acres of Texas prairie outside Dallas. She insists that, newspaper reports to the contrary, they are not "well to do."

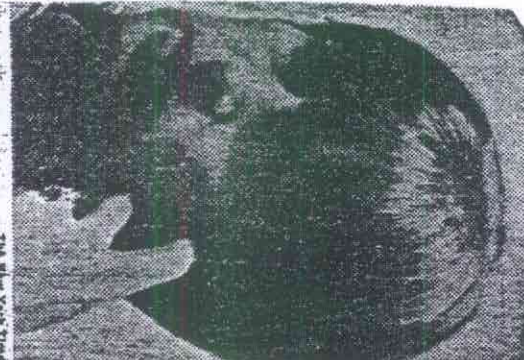
Her children are the centerpiece of her new life. "I hope their dreams are strong enough for them to meet the goals they set for themselves," she said. "The main thing I want for them is to be good and compassionate people. I didn't do anything great in my life, but maybe my children will be able to do something for their homeland."

She had read the book, the first half of which is almost pure biography of her only a few days before. She had always said she wouldn't read it, but "my curiosity got the best of me."

"When your mistakes are printed in black and white," she said, "it forces you to think harder about yourself and try to correct them."

She says she has tried to put Russia behind her, that she even thinks in English now. She does not read Russian books or magazines, has very little contact with the Russian community in Dallas and makes no effort to get in touch with friends and relatives there for fear of putting them in jeopardy.

Someday, when the children are grown, she might like to take some courses in agriculture (she's an avid gardener) or interior decorating, but "I live one day at a time now. I don't make any plans."



Marina Oswald Porter during interview in New York yesterday.