

Sunday, October 5, 1980

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NEWS/VIEW

If there's a body in Oswald's grave Widow of assassin wants mystery cleared up

By DAN CARMICHAEL
United Press International

DALLAS — Marina Oswald Porter, widow of the man accused of killing President John F. Kennedy, says continuing doubt, mystery and unanswered questions about the assassination speak eloquently of the need to open her husband's grave — a crypt she strongly believes is empty.

Now remarried, Mrs. Porter says the past few months have been a struggle for her, highly upsetting.

Nonetheless, she still wants to open the grave of Lee Harvey Oswald, located in Rose Hill Burial Park at Fort Worth, Tex., so her children can be spared years of trauma.

Her efforts have placed her in a legal battle against her husband's older brother, Robert Oswald, who has obtained a temporary restraining order preventing the opening of the grave.

Mrs. Porter said in an interview that her decision to sign a form — requesting exhumation and autopsy of any remains in her husband's grave — was "a very hard decision to make." She agonized for weeks, but decided her children's future would be easier if she dealt with the unending "questions and mystery" that continue almost 17 years after the Nov. 22, 1963, assassination of President Kennedy.

"I have been emotionally upset by Robert's lawsuit," she said. "With all respect for his rights and feelings, I have to say that very few times my family's feelings have been considered."

In testimony, Mrs. Porter mentioned several events as cause for her doubt: a report at her husband's funeral that his body had been stolen an hour before; a suggestion that she tour the nation and place Oswald's body on display; the theft of the grave's original tombstone; and

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Marina Oswald Porter

... whose is it?



Lee Harvey Oswald



Robert Oswald

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the possibility the body may have been stolen as well.

"Taken all this in consideration, I strongly believe in the possibility of the body not being there," she testified at the hearing on Oswald's request for the order preventing an exhumation.

During her testimony, Mrs. Porter carefully limited comment about her husband's identity to the time they were married. Her refusal to say anything about Oswald's pre-marital activities or identity bolstered the theory of British author and attorney, Michael Eddowes.

Eddowes began the exhumation controversy by publication of a book extending the "50-50 possibility" that Kennedy's assassin was a Soviet agent who assumed Lee Harvey Oswald's identity after Oswald defected to the Soviet Union in 1959. Mrs. Porter has said she met a man at a dance in Minsk in 1961 and thought he was Russian because of his accent and mannerisms.

She was later told he was an American by the name of Lee Harvey Oswald. Under Eddowes' theory, the "switch" must have been made prior to the dance.

Mrs. Porter avoided disputing that contention in court, although in pre-

vious public statements she had said she doubted the theory.

"We will have very simple proof — when the casket is opened for the medical examination," she said.

Civil District Judge James Wright, however, ruled on Sept. 19 that no grave opening could occur until at least a full trial on Robert's lawsuit. Wright said "speculative theory" and "public curiosity" were inadequate reasons to open a grave.

Mrs. Porter remains the key to the final outcome. Her attorney, Richard Levin, says she is firm in her resolve to see the case to the end.

Eddowes' efforts to obtain an ex-

humation essentially went nowhere until one of his attorneys, Jerry M. Pittman, persuaded Mrs. Porter to help.

Eddowes, 76, had spent nearly 17 years investigating the assassination. He supervised a complex plan, weeks in the formation, designed to lead to the opening of the grave in total secrecy.

The body, if there was one, was to be taken to the Institute of Forensic Sciences in Dallas where a team of nationally recognized medical experts would perform an autopsy and determine whether the grave contained the remains of the accused assassin.