

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

U. S. SECRET SERVICE

CO-2-34,030

DATE: February 26, 1964

TO : Mr. J. Lee Rankin, General Counsel
President's Commission on the
Assassination of President Kennedy

FROM : Mr. James J. Rowley, Chief
United States Secret Service *JJR*

SUBJECT: Assassination of President Kennedy - Dallas

There is forwarded herewith the report of ATSAIC Leon L. Gopadze of our Los Angeles Office concerning his contacts with Marina Oswald as they relate to her contractual agreements with James Martin, John Thorn and Robert Oswald.

Att.

February 26, 1964

Chief

ATSAIC Leoa L. Copadze - Los Angeles

Assassination of President Kennedy - Dallas

This memorandum is submitted upon the request of Inspector Thomas J. Kelley for the purpose of ascertaining whether the questioning of Marina Oswald by the Reporting Agent was ever conducted in the presence of James Martin, her Business Manager. Inspector Kelley also requested the Reporting Agent to relate any conversations, in which he participated as translator, occurring between Marina Oswald, James Martin and Attorney John Thorn, relative to any business transactions.

The first time the Reporting Agent met James Martin was on the afternoon of November 27, 1963, at the Six Flags Inn, Arlington, Texas. At this time Marina Oswald was being questioned by FBI Special Agents Hosty and Brown. The Reporting Agent participated as translator only. The meeting was very brief and no conversation occurred between the Reporting Agent and Martin, other than Martin stated that he was sorry for Marina Oswald and that he was doing everything to make her comfortable at the Inn. The following day, which was Thanksgiving Day, the Reporting Agent translated conversations between Marina Oswald and Martin in connection with the Thanksgiving Day dinner given by the Martins at their residence for Marina Oswald. The Reporting Agent was not at the dinner.

On November 29, 1963, the Reporting Agent interviewed Marina Oswald at the Six Flags Inn concerning Lee Oswald. Following this interview the Reporting Agent translated to Marina Oswald various suggestions made by Robert Oswald and James Martin concerning the request of the Rosehill Cemetery officials for the removal of the body of Lee Oswald from his grave. This request was made by the officials because of

Chief

threats received by them concerning the disinterment and destruction of the body of Lee Oswald. Marina Oswald reluctantly agreed to the cremation of Oswald's body provided the cemetery officials would assume the expenses incurred, including the burial urn and all subsequent expenses connected therewith. During this interview Marina Oswald requested the Reporting Agent to translate to James Martin her appreciation of the Thanksgiving Day dinner at the Martin home. She also asked the Reporting Agent to express her gratitude for their kindness and hospitality and further wished to know if the Martin family liked her. Apparently a previous offer had been made by the Martin's to Marina Oswald to move into their home and become a part of their household. Apparently Marina Oswald had accepted this invitation at a previous time. The Reporting Agent was not present at the time the conversation concerning her living with the Martin's took place. Marina Oswald, after learning from the Reporting Agent's translation of Mr. Martin's assurance that his family liked her, then wished to know how long she might remain with the Martin's and under what conditions. James Martin stated that she could stay with them as long as she wished, that they wished no compensation from her other than helping around the house. Although arrangements had been made to move her into the Martin household that night, Marina Oswald requested this be postponed until the following day.

At the conclusion of the conversation between Marina Oswald, Robert Oswald and James Martin, Robert Oswald told the Reporting Agent of his personal dislike of Ruth Paine. Robert Oswald also mentioned his mother's dislike of Ruth Paine and stated that they did not wish Marina to have anything further to do with Ruth Paine. He did not elaborate on his reasons, merely stating that Mrs. Paine was a bad influence on Marina. At this particular time Marina indicated that she would do anything Robert wished her to do and stated that she trusted Robert completely.

Chief

On November 30, 1963, Marina Oswald and her two children, accompanied by the Reporting Agent, were transported by James Martin in his automobile from the Six Flags Inn to the Martin residence, located at 11611 Farrar Street, Dallas, Texas. During this ride the Reporting Agent questioned Marina concerning Lee Oswald in the presence of James Martin who was driving the car. Upon arrival at the Martin residence, the Reporting Agent met Mrs. James Martin who appeared somewhat perturbed with Marina's presence in the household because of the neighbors' possible feelings of animosity toward her. Mrs. Martin suggested changing Marina's appearance, changing her name, etc. James Martin mentioned at this time that he was encountering difficulty with the local banks in Dallas in opening a bank account under the name of Marina Oswald. However, he stated that he had found a solution with one of the banks wherein he would open an account in the name of Marina Martin and would negotiate the donation checks by endorsing them in his name and then depositing the cash to Marina's account. This use of a pseudonym for her bank account name appeared agreeable at this time to Marina Oswald. During this same afternoon the Reporting Agent suggested to James Martin that he obtain the services of a professional translator to translate numerous letters and correspondence received by Marina Oswald, and further suggested to Martin that he find a reputable lawyer to transact her legal affairs and a competent financial adviser to assist in her business affairs.

On the following days of December 1, 2 and 3, Marina Oswald was interrogated by the Reporting Agent concerning Lee Oswald's background and also concerning the attempted assassination of General Walker by Lee Oswald. These interviews were solely concerned with fact finding on the assassination. During these days of interrogation Marina Oswald indicated apparent satisfaction with her life at the Martin household, and strongly indicated her trust of Mr. Martin in his handling of her affairs. Mr. Martin was not present at any of the above interviews.

Chief

On December 4 while interviewing Marina at the Martin home concerning a rifle range where her deceased husband might have done some rifle practice, Mr. Martin appeared at the house with an individual whom he introduced to the Reporting Agent as Attorney John M. Thorn, who maintained offices in Grand Prairie, Texas. Mr. Martin stated that he had known Mr. Thorn for sometime and that Mr. Thorn was willing to handle Marina's legal affairs. Mr. Thorn immediately asked the Reporting Agent whether Marina Oswald had been involved in any criminal actions with her husband as he, Thorn, was not a criminal lawyer. Mr. Thorn stated he was willing to represent Marina Oswald only in connection with her personal business affairs. The Reporting Agent told Mr. Thorn that insofar as Marina was concerned at present there were no indications that she had been involved in her husband's alleged assassination of President Kennedy. However, the Reporting Agent stated that it was entirely up to Mr. Thorn whether he chose to accept Marina Oswald as his client.

Mr. Thorn stated that he could not represent Marina without compensation and also suggested at that time that Mr. James Martin be appointed by Marina as her Business Manager. Marina Oswald agreed to have Mr. Thorn act as her representative in legal matters and also agreed to have Mr. Martin as her Business Manager. Upon Mr. Thorn's additional suggestion she further agreed that appropriate contracts should be drawn by Mr. Thorn for the purpose of binding this agreement. At this time no mention was made relative to the matter of compensation and fees.

On December 6, 1963, while interviewing Marina Oswald at the Martin residence concerning the attempted assassination of General Walker and other matters, Mr. Martin telephoned the residence and asked to speak with the Reporting Agent. In the ensuing telephone conversation with the Reporting Agent, Mr. Martin asked if this Agent had read the contracts drawn up by Attorney Thorn. The Reporting Agent stated he had not. Mr. Martin stated that the terms of the contracts provided for 10% of Marina Oswald's income to go to Mr. Thorn for attorney's fees; 10% of her income to go to Robert Oswald as her adviser; and 15% to go to Mr. Martin as her Business

Manager. Mr. Martin stated that he actually wanted only 10% as his fee and the additional 5% was to be considered as incidental expenses in connection with finding writers for Marina's stories, etc. Mr. Martin was asked by the Reporting Agent if the above percentage fees were based on monies received by Marina Oswald from various contribution and donations from people throughout the United States. Mr. Martin stated that even though the contracts drawn up by Mr. Thorn seemed to indicate this would be the case, that it could be specifically stated in the contracts that the contracts did not refer to monies received as donations and contributions, and it would be a simple matter to so correct the contracts. The Reporting Agent stated that it was not his duty nor within the sphere of his work to become involved in Marina Oswald's personal affairs or affairs of a business nature. The Reporting Agent further stated that this telephone conversation would be related in full to Marina Oswald. When the above information was reported to Marina Oswald, she stated that she had seen the contracts but that she had not understood them. However, the terms as related to her were agreeable as to the percentages as she felt that if the parties involved could make money for themselves, it would mean money for her, too. Again the Reporting Agent suggested she obtain the services of an interpreter or translator from among her Russian friends to assist her in going over the contracts before she signed them. She stated that she trusted both Mr. Martin and Mr. Thorn implicitly.

On December 10, 1963, Marina Oswald advised the Reporting Agent that she had signed the contracts the previous evening. She stated that she had signed on the aforementioned terms the contracts between her and Mr. Thorn, Mr. Martin and Robert Oswald for a period of ten years, and that Robert Oswald had read and approved the contracts, also.

On December 11, 1963, Marina was seen by the Reporting Agent and other Agents at the Parkland Hospital where she and her children were driven by Mr. Martin for check-up examinations.

Chief

There was no conversation with Marina Oswald or Mr. Martin regarding business matters. The Reporting Agent translated various matters pertaining to her visit to the hospital.

The last time the Reporting Agent saw Marina Oswald, Mr. Martin and Mr. Thorn in Dallas was on December 12 when the Reporting Agent assisted Reverend Saunder and Reverend Foot of the Protestant Churches in Fort Worth, Texas, in translating to Marina their good will toward her and conversations relative to various contributions received by them to help her in establishing her life in America. There was a lengthy conversation between Reverend Saunder, Reverend Foot, Mr. Thorn and Mr. Martin, relative to the handling of the contributions but the Reporting Agent did not participate in the discussion.

It should be stated in this report that the Reporting Agent heard no other conversations, either directly or indirectly, between Marina Oswald, Mr. Thorn and Mr. Martin, while in Dallas other than herein stated. Further, it was the observation of the Reporting Agent that during his stay in Dallas there seemed to be pleasant and affable relations between the parties involved.

Dictated by ASAC Boggs from
notes of ATSAIC Gopadze - 2-26-64

Taken by telephone - aka