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Oswald's Widow Rejected Conspiracy, Papers Show

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Associated Press

Five years after John F. Kennedy's assassination, Lee Harvey Oswald's widow faced a district attorney's insistence that Oswald "might have been set up." But she clung to a belief that her husband was the president's killer and acted alone.

Documents made public yesterday show the intensity of New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison's pursuit of his conspiracy theory. He even told Marina Oswald Porter that when her husband, during 12 hours of questioning, consistently asserted his innocence, "he was telling the truth."

But Porter would not accept the conspiracy theory.

Near the end of a long day of interrogation before the grand jury, she was asked point-blank, "Marina, do you believe your husband killed the president?"

"As much facts as I know, I do," the Russian-born woman said in broken English.

Later, an unidentified member of the grand jury broke in to ask, "Do you think he was capable of planning, plotting this whole thing by himself?"

"I think so," she replied. "I don't think he would be involved in any conspiracy with anybody, in my opinion."

The previously secret grand jury records offer little to support Garrison's belief that people in his own

city were part of a conspiracy to kill Kennedy.

The Garrison investigation, from 1967 through 1969, resulted in the indictment, 34-day trial and hasty acquittal of New Orleans businessman Clay Shaw.

Harry Connick, the current New Orleans district attorney, sought to keep the record of Garrison's proceedings secret, but a court ruled that Connick had to surrender the records to the Assassination Records Review Board; last month, the Supreme Court refused to intervene.

Congress created the board to amass all records concerning Kennedy's killing and the subsequent investigations.

Porter, who remarried after Oswald was killed in a Dallas jail three days after the shooting of Kennedy in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963, was one of 40 witnesses who appeared before the grand jury.

Pursuing his conspiracy theory, Garrison told Porter that no fingerprints had been found on Oswald's guns and that a nitrate test "exonerated" Oswald. And an assistant district attorney reminded her that friends of Oswald doubted he could kill the president. To which she replied: "They don't know much about Lee. He could have violent temper, he could be mean. He kept everything kind of secret."

Over the years, however, she changed her mind about Oswald's guilt, eventually accepting conspiracy theories.