

SFX
1 JAN 79
P. 23



Marina
OSWALD
talks

Mon., Jan. 1, 1979 ☆



First of five articles

On Sunday, when the U.S. House Select Committee on Assassinations officially ends its two-year inquiry, it will have spent \$5 million more than in any other congressional investigation. More than triple that amount has been spent in probing the murder of President John F. Kennedy during the past 15 years, by not only the Warren Commission, FBI, CIA, Secret Service and U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee, but thousands of assassination buffs and pretentious organizations ranging from responsible researchers to cynical buckchasers.

Hundreds of books have been published and much more has been spoken and written about the controversial national tragedy, which four out of five Americans, according to polls, still believe was a conspiracy. A conspiracy industry continues to thrive, pouring forth a seemingly endless river of lectures, books, articles, TV and radio programs and movies, often more concerned with commerce than truth, and having little to do with good taste. The Readers's Digest reportedly spent more than a half-million dollars on research trying to prove that Lee Harvey Oswald was a Soviet spy, for what the Washington Post calls an "essentially dishonest book." University of Wisconsin history Prof. David Wrono has listed approximately 500 book titles on the President Kennedy assassination.

This is the first candid interview Marina Oswald has done in 15 years. Jack Harrison Pollack is a freelance writer and a former Senate committee investigator.

By Jack Harrison Pollack

"**I** OWE AMERICAN PEOPLE and world explanation of that terrible thing," says Marina Oswald. "The same questions that have bothered others also have bothered me. All these years, my regrets, in private, have been very great."

Marina Prusakova Oswald Porter, 37, still evokes mixed feelings of curiosity, contempt and compassion ever since her late husband, Lee Harvey

Oswald — a frightened, pathetic, frumpy young Russian who spoke no English. Today she is an American woman of maturity and dignity. She speaks fluent English, even though she still often inquires earnestly, "Do you understand me?" when trying to explain something. "Lee refused to let me learn English, because he said he wanted somebody to practice his Russian on, but he just wanted to keep me dependent on him." After the assassination, she learned English from the Secret Service men who sometimes babysat for her, the FBI agents who grilled her, and afterwards in an intensive eight-week course at the University of Michigan English Language Institute in February, 1965. Like many Russians speaking English, she drops her articles.

In recent years, Marina Oswald has lived quietly with her handsome common-law husband, Kenneth Jess Porter, a Dallas small businessman, and her three teen-age children, in rural Rockwall, Tex. Last September she emerged from seclusion to testify once again in the nation's capital — for the first time in public, on TV

— before the House Assassination Committee.

In our conversation, Marina revealed many illuminating non-legal facts about the century's most controversial crime, her assassin husband and herself — none of which was included in the 385,000 word Warren Report in 1964, the 80,000 pages released by the FBI in 1977, or the book, "Marina and Lee," published last year, or her two-day testimony before the House Assassination Committee in September.

She now looks back on her enigmatic husband and the chaos that arose from her marriage to him with considerable bitterness and much regret, but also with surprising insight and philosophic detachment. She seemed both smart and sophisticated, tough and tender, certainly not the bewildered wooden matchstick most of the world remembers from assassination time. Now a forthright personality with a gaming charm; she can be at once flirtatious, teasing and manipulative. Though slow to warm up, she is eventually congenial and cooperative.

"Like any wife I would be the first to want to believe that Lee was innocent, if only for my children's sake," she remarked while chain-smoking menthol cigarettes, which she tried to screen from the photographer, "but Lee definitely killed President Kennedy. There is no doubt in my mind about that. His palm prints were found on the rifle in the book depository building. I'm sure that he also killed Officer Tippett."

Though most people reject the theory that a lone gunman killed JFK, Oswald's widow accepts it, as did the Warren Commission.

"I'm sure that Lee acted alone," she insists. "If there was any conspiracy, it was entirely separate from what he did. Maybe some other crazy people planned to kill President Kennedy that day, too. I've tried to — and yes, wanted to — but can't believe any of those conspiracy theories. If there was anything to them, I'm sure it would have come out by this time. The Watergate cover-up didn't even last six months. How could they hide this 15 years with so many people working on it? Do you really think it's possible to have a conspiracy and nobody really proving it all these years? All that conspiracy talk leads to nothing. Anyway, Lee was too much of a loner to conspire with anybody about anything. He kept everything to himself and couldn't obey orders. He didn't trust anybody. He couldn't confide in anybody. Still, some people will believe anything they want to believe, I guess."

But aren't wives often the last to know about their husbands' clandestine activities? Couldn't her husband



Marina Oswald on Nov. 23, 1963, at the Dallas police station with her mother, left, holding her daughter have been a spy for the CIA, FBI, Kussian or Cuban government? Marina swiftly shook her head. "I might have thought he was a spy in Russia before we were

married," she retorted over a cloud of smoke. "But I sure don't think so now. No government would have trusted Lee with anything important or confidential. He was too mixed up and — what do you call it? —

unstable. He changed his feelings too easy. From Russia, the United States and even Cuba. He didn't even know what country he wanted to live in. Right after we were married, he complained about the bad weather in Minsk, his dirty factory job and the Russian politicians. A spy is supposed to be quiet, but Lee always made big noises about all his causes. If he was a spy, I'm sure I would have known about it somehow, even though there are still some things I don't understand."

Did he have any connection with Jack Ruby? "I doubt it. He never met Ruby. Of course I have no proof of that. I can't argue with somebody else's opinion. But Lee never went to night clubs or bars. He didn't fool around with girls. He didn't smoke. My smoking annoyed him. And he didn't drink except Coke and Dr. Pepper."

"I'm against capital punishment," she continued. "I didn't want Ruby to go to the electric chair or anything like that. He executed himself every day that he lived after killing Lee. Ruby was a human being, too."

Marina volunteered that her husband was more interested in sex when they lived in Russia and she more so in the United States. When they first married in Minsk April 1961, he often ejaculated prematurely. He would watch their lovemaking in the mirror in front of the bed. "Later Lee became a lot better lover, and I really enjoyed sex with him, even though I sometimes teased him not fairly for not being a real man."

She recalled the stormy period after the assassination when she was accused of being promiscuous. "I was just lonely and searching for love and understanding," she confesses. "Some people even used to call me a nymphomaniac — I learned that word then — because I dated so many different men. Some other people even called me a lesbian, which is not so. I'm nothing like that."

TOMORROW: Chastity memory.

Copyright © 1978 by Jack Harrison Pollock. Distributed by Hearst-Future Syndicate, Inc.