

The one issue on which he did not change his mind during this time was his desire to leave Russia and return to the States. By the beginning of July, the embassy had still not answered his May letter disclosing his marriage and his wife's desire to join him. Oswald decided to visit Moscow, obtained Soviet permission to travel, and unexpectedly arrived at the embassy on Saturday, July 8, 1961. It was the same day of the week he had arrived in 1959 to try and revoke his U.S. citizenship, and again he was asked to return Monday. This time he did.

Oswald telephoned Marina in Minsk, and she joined him in Moscow,* waiting outside the embassy while he met with American consul Richard Snyder, the same official who had encountered him in 1959.⁷⁴ Snyder found him remorseful. Unknown to Snyder, Oswald told him several lies—that he had never applied for Soviet citizenship, had not made derogatory statements about the U.S., and was not a member of the factory trade union. He truthfully told Snyder that he had never given the Soviets any military information and that the KGB had not debriefed him.

Convinced Oswald had learned his lesson, Snyder had him fill out an application for renewal of his American passport. The renewal was necessary since his passport was set to expire on September 10, 1961, and Snyder considered it very unlikely that the Soviets would issue an exit visa in the next two months. On the questionnaire, Oswald repeated that he was still an American citizen.†

returning to the U.S., Oswald complained to his brother, Robert, that the firing pin on his rifle was defective. "I went hunting with Lee plenty of times," says Robert. "He was a good shot who always got his game."

* Unknown to Oswald, Marina, frustrated by their unsatisfying sexual contact since her pregnancy, slept with a former suitor, Leonid, on the day Oswald had left for the embassy (McMillan, *Marina and Lee*, p. 129).

† Some question why Snyder approved Oswald based upon his answers on the carbon copy of the questionnaire. At the bottom of the form, four acts were listed that would indicate a person had forfeited his American citizenship. All the prohibitions related to actions in a foreign state, including swearing allegiance, serving in the armed forces or the government, or voting in an election. Next to these prohibitions were the words *have* or *have not*. On Oswald's form, *have not* was apparently stricken, indicating he had committed one or more of the prescribed acts. In approving Oswald, therefore, it appeared that Snyder had bent the rules. The real explanation is more mundane

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oor
fter

13n, 49-50
-13, 26, 30, 78-

6, 210
27-28, 29, 47,
1-75, 104-5,
135, 155-56
2, 61, 67-68,

, 104-5
3, 28, 32, 33,
412
-15

m, 7, 8
with, 5-6, 8-
13, 14-15, 19n,

testimony of,
82
5n, 28n, 55,
147, 155-56,
10, 202, 205-
3

-8, 209-10
3

l, 7n, 8-9
93-94
by, 106-8
n for

2
80-81
d
ker, 111-17
, 80n, 82,
96, 98, 101,

of, 62

4-65
uns home

h English
167
ith, 64-65,
-88, 95-96,
4-25, 127-

28, 133-34, 168-69, 198, 199,
206-7, 218, 220-22
on Oswald's rifle practice, 162-63
Oswald's weekend visits with,
198-99, 203, 204-5, 209, 210-11,
217-18, 220-22
second pregnancy of, 19n, 99, 101,
102, 119, 127, 131, 164, 168, 198,
199, 200
Soviet embassy's correspondence
with, 99-100, 101, 102, 128, 133-
34, 150n
Soviet exit process and, 67-72
suicide attempt of, 101
Warren Commission testimony of,
116n, 210n, 213n, 404
Oswald, Robert, 5, 6, 7, 10, 18, 19,
28, 74, 76, 80, 82, 90n, 95, 97,
213n, 344
Oswald's correspondence with, 24,
47, 52, 61, 69

Oswald, Robert Edward Lee, 5, 122
Oswald, Vada, 76, 79, 95
Oswald Affair, The (Sauvage), 413
Oswald: Assassin or Fall-guy?
(Joesten), 412

Padgett Printing Company, 197, 202n
Pago Club, 389

Paine, Michael, 100, 110, 111, 125,
128, 134, 199, 203, 204n, 204-6,
216, 217, 257, 344n, 345-46

Paine, Ruth, 110, 111, 118-19, 124-
25, 128, 171, 212, 216, 221, 257,
344, 347n, 463

FBI interview of, 207-8, 209-10
Marina Oswald's friendship with,
100-2, 105, 120, 127-28, 134-35
Marina Oswald's stay with, 164,
168, 169, 171, 197-98, 206-7, 208
Oswald's arrest and, 280-81
Oswald's Book Depository job
and, 200-1, 202n
Oswald's weekend visits to home
of, 198-99, 203, 204-5, 209, 210-
11, 217, 221

Palmer, Henry, 146
Pappas, Ike, 378
paraffin tests, 348-49

Parkland Hospital, 118n, 203, 231,
239, 292, 298n, 395

Kennedy's emergency treatment
at, 285-91, 303-4
Ruby at, 371-73, 401

Partin, Edward, 457
Passport Office, U.S., 68
Patterson, B. M., 275
Paul, Ralph, 366-67, 372n, 374, 376,
387n, 388-89, 488

Pawley, William, 497
Pecora, Nofio, 156n, 363, 364n
Pelou, François, 385

Pena, Orest, 166n
Pence, Art, 103, 325
Perrin, Robert, 446n

Perry, David, 464
Perry, Malcolm, 287, 288, 289, 290-
91, 304, 308, 310-11, 313

Peters, Paul, 288, 291, 309n, 310, 311
Peterson, Niles, 439

Pfisterer Dental Laboratory, 17
Phelan, Jim, 435-36, 437-38, 446
Philby, Kim, 35

Phillips, David Atlee, 165n, 187
Pic, John, 5, 6, 7, 8-9, 17n, 19
Oswald's relationship with, 10-11,
95

Pic, Marge, 10
Pierce, Rio, 393, 394, 395n

Pitts, Elnora, 390
Pitzer, William, 494

Piziali, Robert, 333, 334, 339
Plausible Denial (Lane), 465
Playboy, 433n, 440, 445, 449
Plot to Kill the President, The
(Blakey), 456

Plumeri, James, 496
polygraph tests, 400, 405, 452
Popkin, Richard, 413, 414n, 431, 446
Portrait of a President
(Manchester), 134n

Portrait of the Assassin (Ford), 415
Postal, Julia, 279-80

Powdrill, Jerry, 283
Powell, John, 228
Powers, Daniel, 21, 23, 25, 27

Powers, Francis Gary, 498
Pravda, 82

NO 67N

Mr. OSWALD. That is correct.
Mr. JENNER. Just the two of you, or did anybody accompany you?

Mr. OSWALD. Three of us.

Mr. JENNER. Did you have a rifle?

Mr. OSWALD. Yes, sir; I did.

Mr. JENNER. Those I take it were .22's.

Mr. OSWALD. All three were .22 caliber, that is correct.

Mr. JENNER. Where did you obtain them?

Mr. OSWALD. Two of them belonged to me and one of them belonged to my brother-in-law.

Mr. JENNER. Your brother-in-law?

Mr. OSWALD. My brother-in-law.

Mr. JENNER. What is his name?

Mr. OSWALD. S. B. Mercer, Jr.

Mr. JENNER. What was the occasion of this trip? How did it come about?

Mr. OSWALD. The day that I recall that Lee stayed with us in—between the time he was discharged and the time he was supposed to be leaving for New Orleans was a period of 2 to 3 days. One of those days, I feel sure was a Saturday, either we spent all day out at my in-laws' farm or the afternoon at the farm at which time Lee and I, and my brother-in-law went hunting.

Mr. DULLES. Was this a couple of days before he left for Russia?

Mr. OSWALD. This was a couple of days before he left for New Orleans or about 1 day or 2 days before he left for New Orleans.

Mr. DULLES. And then he shipped out?

Mr. OSWALD. To locate a job.

Mr. JENNER. On that occasion, that incident, did he have occasion to discharge the .22 caliber rifle he was carrying?

Mr. OSWALD. Yes, sir; he did.

Mr. JENNER. Did you see him do so?

Mr. OSWALD. Yes, sir.

Mr. JENNER. From what shoulder did he, against which shoulder did he place the butt of the gun?

Mr. OSWALD. The right shoulder.

Mr. JENNER. And with which hand or fingers of which hand did he pull the trigger and discharge the gun?

Mr. OSWALD. The right hand, sir.

Mr. JENNER. Did he exhibit any proficiency in the use of that .22 caliber gun on that occasion?

Mr. OSWALD. I would say an average amount.

Mr. JENNER. Hunting rabbits or squirrels with a rifle takes pretty good marksmanship. Did any of you boys bring down a rabbit or squirrel, on the fly, I mean?

Mr. OSWALD. As I recall, one small, very small cottonball as he ran across the peanut field, all three of us were shooting at him, and my weapon that I had, one of the weapons that belonged to me, was a semiautomatic .22 and I perhaps had a burst of four or five rounds that I said I got him. But all three of us were shooting at him.

Mr. MCKENZIE. Did all three of you claim him?

Mr. OSWALD. No, sir; I did.

Mr. JENNER. Was that your only victory on that hunting trip or did someone else shoot down a squirrel or a rabbit?

Mr. OSWALD. No squirrels were killed that day and perhaps I believe this was the occasion that we went into what we called a briar patch located off to the left of the farmhouse, at that particular time it was very thick with cottonballs, and I believe we exterminated about eight of them at that time between the three of us because it was the type of brush and thorns that didn't grow very high but we were able to see over them, so getting three of us out there it wasn't very hard to kill eight of them.
Mr. JENNER. Now, had you and your brother engaged in this very light form of hunting at any other time during your lifetime?

Mr. OSWALD. Yes, sir.

Mr. JENNER. Would you indicate the frequency of that?

Mr. OSWALD. If I recall, only one other occasion that we had been hunting together. This was during a leave that Lee had from the Marine Corps.

Mr. JENNER. During a leave that he had?

Mr. OSWALD. Yes, sir. And at which time, if I may correct myself there, another time comes to mind, I recall two times that we had this type of light hunting out there at that farm, at the same place. One time was during a leave that he had from the Marine Corps. I don't recall of any game at that particular time that we shot. I know we did handle the rifle and fired maybe target practice, something along that line. I don't recall of anything.

Mr. JENNER. The second time that I now remember is during his stay after he returned from Russia, during his stay at my home in Fort Worth, that my wife and I and our children took him and his wife and child out to the farm to meet our in-laws, my in-laws, and also to do a little hunting while we was out there, and which we did just a very little bit. I believe this was on a Sunday afternoon and we didn't stay out very long.

Mr. OSWALD. On that occasion, I believe the same weapons we used before.

Mr. JENNER. Would that be true of all three occasions?

Mr. OSWALD. I believe on the first occasion, which was the occasion that Lee came home on leave, that at that time I only owned one .22 rifle.

Mr. JENNER. Was that the semiautomatic?

Mr. OSWALD. No, sir; it was not the semiautomatic, it was a bolt action rifle, with a clip on it. However, I believe Lee either used my brother-in-law's rifle—

Mr. JENNER. Was that a bolt-action rifle?

Mr. OSWALD. Yes, sir; it is a bolt-action rifle. He either used that rifle or a single-shot, bolt-action rifle, another .22 that was out at the farm.

Mr. JENNER. On the occasion during which you went hunting during that 3-day period, interregnum his return and his discharge and his departure for New Orleans, was the weapon he employed a bolt-action weapon?

Mr. OSWALD. Yes, sir; it was.

Mr. JENNER. Is it a fair statement on my part that on all the occasions that you recall hunting with Lee he employed a bolt-action rifle?

Mr. OSWALD. That is correct, sir.

Mr. JENNER. During your youth and prior to these occasions about which you testified, do you know of the fact or know by rumor or otherwise that your brother engaged in this light hunting or other kind of hunting where he used a firearm even though he was not with you or you did not accompany him?

Mr. OSWALD. I feel sure that he did, without recalling any particular time that he told me, but his interest along that line was generally like mine, that is hunting and fishing, and I am sure when he had an opportunity to hunt that he did do so.

Mr. DULLES. Did he ever tell you about hunting in Russia?

Mr. OSWALD. Yes, sir; he did.

Mr. JENNER. Would you relate that, please, tell us when the conversation took place and the circumstances, if it was a conversation?

Mr. OSWALD. The circumstances was it was in a letter I received from him.

Mr. JENNER. Is that one of the letters you produced?

Mr. OSWALD. Yes, sir; it is.

Mr. JENNER. Did you have any conversation with him in addition to the letter, apart from the letter?

Mr. OSWALD. I believe I did along that line because as I stated our interests in hunting and fishing was mutual and he did state that he was able to—

Mr. JENNER. In response to Mr. Dulles' question, would you give the conversation? We will take care of the letter in the morning.

Mr. OSWALD. No, sir; I am trying to give the conversation.

Mr. JENNER. Thank you. Proceed.

Mr. OSWALD. That we talked about hunting over there, and he said that

he had only been hunting a half dozen times, and so forth, and that he had only used a shotgun, and a couple of times he did shoot a duck.

Mr. JENNER. It was all shotgun shooting, no rifle shooting?

Mr. OSWALD. No rifle shooting, no sir. That is all they were allowed to have, the shotgun.

Mr. JENNER. This conversation took place, as I understand it, on his return from Russia when he was living with you for that month, that would be June-July of 1962?

Mr. OSWALD. Yes, sir; that is correct.

Mr. JENNER. And that is the extent of the conversation?

Mr. OSWALD. Yes, sir; that is.

Mr. JENNER. As you now recall it—there have been some reports, and they are only reports as far as we of the staff are concerned, of speculation about a television set, whether your brother purchased or owned a television set and whether he purchased it outright or on time with a guarantee from you.

What information or knowledge do you have in that connection?

Mr. OSWALD. I am not aware that he purchased a television set, sir. I did at his request, when he and Marina and the baby were living in Fort Worth.

Mr. JENNER. Where in Fort Worth?

Mr. OSWALD. Mercedes Street in Fort Worth, in a small duplex which was—

Mr. JENNER. Can you fix even more definitely the time of this event?

Mr. OSWALD. This was approximately the latter part of September, 1962. And at his request—

Mr. JENNER. He came to you, excuse me.

Mr. OSWALD. He called me, sir.

Mr. JENNER. He called you by telephone?

Mr. OSWALD. Yes, sir; he called me at my office from his place of employment in Fort Worth at that time.

Mr. JENNER. Give us the substance of what he said.

Mr. OSWALD. We talked briefly about how each family was doing, and so forth, and he said that he would like to establish credit and he had tried to charge something at Montgomery Ward's at Fort Worth, the West 7th Street store, and they had stated that he needed to have somebody cosign or vouch for him, and this was his request to me, and I said gladly I would do so, and late that afternoon after work, this was approximately 5:30 by the time I arrived at Montgomery Ward, I did sign for Lee's charge account. However, I was not aware of what he was charging.

Mr. JENNER. There was no discussion, I take it, at that time of what—the use to which he intended to put his credit?

Mr. OSWALD. No, sir; I believe perhaps he did mention something about a baby chair and a baby bed.

Mr. JENNER. Was there ever any discussion between you about his purchase or acquisition of a television set?

Mr. OSWALD. No, sir; there was not.

Mr. JENNER. Were you ever in his home or apartment?

Mr. OSWALD. Yes, sir; I was.

Mr. JENNER. Did you see a television set there?

Mr. OSWALD. Pardon me, you are referring to the apartment on Mercedes Street, is that correct?

Mr. JENNER. Yes.

Mr. OSWALD. Yes, I was in his home quite a few times and there was not a television set that I remember.

Mr. JENNER. On any occasion that you were there?

Mr. OSWALD. No, sir.

Mr. JENNER. On any occasion when you were, in any place of residence of your brother after his return to the United States, did you see in those premises a television set?

Mr. OSWALD. Yes, sir.

Mr. JENNER. Where was that?

Mr. OSWALD. At my house and at my mother's house.

Mr. JENNER. I should have been more specific and identified a residence as one of his own rather than living with you or living with your mother.

Mr. OSWALD. At no residence that he lived in that I was aware of at any time did I see him with a television set that I would take to be his own.

Mr. JENNER. Did you ever have any discussions—did any discussion ever occur between the two of you with respect to his acquisition of a television set?

Mr. OSWALD. None that I recall, sir.

Mr. JENNER. This is, as far as you are concerned, a total blank, this television set matter?

Mr. OSWALD. That is correct, sir.

Mr. DULLES. I think we had better adjourn pretty soon. This man has had quite an ordeal for the day.

Mr. JENNER. It is acceptable.

Mr. DULLES. Is it acceptable to you?

THE CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Mr. OSWALD. I have no objection to continuing.

Mr. MCKENZIE. If you would prefer to reconvene tomorrow morning we can reconvene then.

Mr. RANKIN. I think 9 o'clock is better. I think we can finish up in the morning.

Mr. DULLES. Thank you. At 9 o'clock in the morning. (Whereupon, at 5:15 p.m., the President's Commission recessed.)

Friday, February 21, 1964

TESTIMONY OF ROBERT EDWARD LEE OSWALD RESUMED

The President's Commission met at 9 a.m. on February 21, 1964, at 200 Maryland Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C.

Present were Chief Justice Earl Warren, Chairman; and Allen W. Dulles, member.

Also present were J. Lee Rankin, general counsel; Albert E. Jenner, Jr., assistant counsel; Wesley J. Liebeler, assistant counsel; and William McKenzie, attorney for Robert Edward Lee Oswald.

The Chairman. Gentlemen, the Commission will be in order. As yesterday, I will only be able to be here for a comparatively short time, because we have our weekly conference of the Supreme Court today. And when I leave, Mr. Allen Dulles will conduct the hearing. We will now proceed with the testimony.

Mr. JENNER. Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice.

I would like to return, Mr. Oswald, to the time that your brother Lee was discharged from military service and spent approximately 3 days at home. You recall that period?

Mr. OSWALD. Yes, sir; I do.

Mr. JENNER. Now, would you please describe his physical appearance the last time you saw him during that 3-day period?

Mr. OSWALD. His hair was brown and curly, a full set of hair. His physical appearance—he was trim, weighed approximately 140 pounds, he was approximately 5 foot 9½, he seemed to be in fine physical shape at that time.

Mr. JENNER. I mentioned 3 days. Was I wrong about the 3 days, or was it a little longer period?

Mr. OSWALD. No, sir; my recollection on that period was 2 or 3 days, and only during one of these days do I remember seeing him. He spent the day at our house.

Mr. JENNER. It was your impression, sir, that he was in good health, bright and alert mentally at that time?

