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Dannelly claimed another worker had brought Oswald to her desk, but when asked, the other employee, Jesse Skrivanek, did not remember anyone who looked like Oswald or anyone using that name.²⁰ Others in the Austin Selective Service office swore they never saw him or heard the name before the assassination.²¹ Actually, there were fifteen Oswalds in the Austin office files, but Dannelly refused to admit she might be mistaken. All of the facts Mrs. Dannelly recounted about Oswald in her story were available locally in the media before she told anyone of the alleged visit. The FBI discovered that the waitress who claimed she too saw Oswald turned out to have Wednesday, the day of the alleged Oswald appearance, as her day off.²² None of the other employees at the coffee shop recalled ever seeing Oswald or hearing of anyone with that name before the assassination.²³

Another witness who claimed to have seen Oswald elsewhere at the time he was traveling to Mexico is Sylvia Odio. Summers calls her testimony "the strongest human evidence."²⁴ Sylvia Meagher dubs it "the proof of the plot."²⁵ Robert Groden writes that Odio is "among the strongest witnesses to conspiracy in the case. . . ."²⁶ According to Odio, three men visited her Dallas apartment near 9:00 P.M., near the end of September. Her sister answered the door, and the men claimed to be members of JURE, the Junta Revolucionaria, an anti-Castro group that Odio had helped form several months earlier in Puerto Rico.²⁷ "Two were Cubans, "the greasy . . . kind of low Cubans, not educated at all," recalled Odio.²⁸ She later said they "looked very much like Mexicans." One of the Cubans said his name was Leopoldo and asked if she was in the underground, and she said no. "And he said, 'We wanted you to meet this American. His name is Leon Oswald.' He repeated it twice," recalled Odio.²⁹ "Then they introduced him as

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*Odio's father was in a Cuban jail for political actions against the Castro regime. He had been a business tycoon before Castro's revolution, and Odio came from a wealthy and pampered background.

**JURE members used "war names," fictitious names, so that Castro agents could not unmask their real identities. Odio said that the Cubans gave their war names, but she assumed Leon Oswald was a real name for the American. However, she evidently never considered the possibility that Oswald would have been a perfect war name for any anti-Castro Cuban

someone very interested in the Cuban cause. Leon said very little, "just a few little words in Spanish, trying to be cute . . . like 'Hola,'" she said. The men said they had just come from New Orleans and were in a rush because they were on their way to either Miami or Puerto Rico.³⁰ They left in a red car.

The next day Leopoldo telephoned her. According to Odio, "He said, 'What do you think of the American?' And I said, 'I didn't think anything.' And he said, 'You know our idea is to introduce him to the underground in Cuba, because he is great, he is kind of nuts.' . . . He [Leon Oswald] told us we don't have any guts, you Cubans, because President Kennedy should have been assassinated after the Bay of Pigs, and some Cubans should have done that, because he was the one that was holding the freedom of Cuba actually. . . . He said he had been a Marine . . . and would be the kind of man that could do anything like . . . killing Castro. He repeated several times he was an expert shotman [sic]. And he said, 'We probably won't have anything to do with him. He is kind of loco.'³¹ Odio said the conversation made her nervous and she soon ended it, and never heard from or saw any of the three men again until after the assassination, when she claimed to realize that Leon Oswald was the man charged with assassinating President Kennedy. *no source*

The House Select Committee's report on Odio concluded her "testimony is essentially credible" and "there is a strong probability that one of the men was or appeared to be Lee Harvey Oswald."³² The conspiracy critics cite the testimony of Odio's sister, Annie, to support her story. They also refer to a letter Odio wrote to her father before the assassination, in which she discussed the visit.

A reexamination of the Odio story, however, as well as of her credibility, casts doubts on its accuracy. Annie Odio cannot corroborate key parts of her sister's story because she did not hear

since the name had been in the newspapers, radio, and television in New Orleans as a virulently pro-Castro advocate.

*The House Select Committee report on Odio was researched and written by Gaeton Fonzi, the assassination buff who researched the Banister and Ferrie connections to Oswald.

the American introduction from Leopoldo's conversation with her. In her assassination letter to her father, she wrote the names of the three men as "Leon Oswald." She was the only American was in the area.

But there is much more to the Oswald story. Odio could not show photos during her visit. She thought this man was too handsome, too sure of that picture. He had a small stubble and a little moustache, and that did not look like the man in the picture than the shaky photograph of Oswald. She was disappointed. She was in Dallas on October 1, because she was in her apartment.³⁷ Her sister came on the last day according to Odio, her sister arrived on September 26, or Friday. The three men arrived, Odio said, "and there were no photos" and there were no photos she had worked the case. She did not work Saturday or the 27th, for sure. He worked his twenty-hour bus schedule. He arrived on the 27th for seven days. It was the day Odio in Dallas when she was in Dallas.

If it was not Oswald, who was the imposter Oswald? It was as her sister, Annie Odio, said in her mystery in 1964. She visited her apartment in Dallas. Odio described as a prominent anti-Castro. She visited her apartment on September 16, 1964.

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versation from Leopoldo the following day.³³ As for the preassas-
sination letter to her father, which no longer exists, Odio says she
wrote the names of the two Cubans but did not mention the name
"Leon Oswald." She was not even sure if she mentioned that an
American was in the group.³⁴

But there is much stronger evidence that the visitor was not
Oswald. Odio could not positively identify him when shown
photos during her Warren Commission testimony. She said, "I
think this man was the one that was in my apartment. I am not
too sure of that picture. He didn't look like that."³⁵ She said he
had a small stubble of beard growth around his mouth, almost "a
little moustache," and another thing that "confuses me is the lips
that did not look like the same man."³⁶ But more problematical
than the shaky physical identification was the time element she
pinpointed. She was certain the men had visited before Tuesday,
October 1, because on September 30 she moved to a different
apartment.³⁷ Her sister was living with some American friends
and came on the last weekend to help her pack for the move. Ac-
cording to Odio, her sister had arrived on either Thursday, Sep-
tember 26, or Friday, the twenty-seventh. By the time the three
men arrived, Odio and her sister had "already started to pack to
go" and there were boxes in the living room. Odio remembered
she had worked the day the three visitors arrived, and since she
did not work Saturday or Sunday, she said "it would be the 26th
or the 27th, for sure."³⁸ Starting on September 26, Oswald began
his twenty-hour bus journey from Houston to Mexico City, where
he arrived on the twenty-seventh. He did not return to the U.S.
for seven days. It was physically impossible for Oswald to visit
Odio in Dallas when she claims he did.

If it was not Oswald, then what of Odio's story? Was there an
imposter Oswald? There is no doubt that three men visited her,
as her sister, Annie, confirms. The FBI thought it had solved the
Odio mystery in 1964 when it found three men who might have
visited her apartment near the end of September. Loran Hall, a
prominent anti-Castroite, bore a marked resemblance to the man
Odio described as the leader, Leopoldo. Hall told the FBI on Sep-
tember 16, 1964, that he was in Dallas soliciting funds during

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September 1963 and had been to the Odio apartment. He named his two companions as Lawrence Howard and William Seymour. The three of them had been arrested in Florida in December 1962, as part of the Kennedy administration's crackdown on anti-Castro paramilitary operations.³⁹ Howard looked like the second of the Cubans/Mexicans described by Odio. But the most staggering coincidence was that Seymour, who spoke only a few words of Spanish, greatly resembled Oswald. Seymour also constantly wore a beard stubble, the same as what Odio described on "Leon." However, four days later, September 20, 1964, Hall recanted his statement. Seymour and Howard also later denied they were at Odio's apartment.⁴⁰ When Odio was shown photos of the three and was asked if it was a case of mistaken identity, she stuck to her story and said she could not identify them.

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But even if the visitors were Hall, Howard, and Seymour, what about the introduction of "Leon Oswald" and Odio's explicit details of the following day's telephone conversation about his being a Marine sharpshooter who thought President Kennedy should be dead? For a possible answer to this, Sylvia Odio herself has to be briefly examined. By the time of her Oswald story, she had a history of emotional problems. In Puerto Rico, where she had lived before moving to Dallas in March 1963, she had seen a psychiatrist over her fractious marriage. According to FBI reports, he decided she was unstable and unable, mentally or physically, to care for her children.⁴¹ A doctor who was called to treat her once for "an attack of nerves" discovered she had made it up to get the attention of her neighbors. He described her as a very mixed-up young lady, and was told by others that she had also been under psychiatric care while living in Miami, when she moved to the States in 1961.⁴²

In her divorce proceeding in 1963, she lost custody of her four children, because of charges of neglect and abandonment.⁴³ Near the time of her divorce, her friends recalled that she began having more "emotional problems," suffering total blackouts "when reality got too painful to bear."⁴⁴ In Dallas, she sought more extensive psychiatric help from Dr. Burton C. Einspruch. By the time of the assassination, she had been seeing him for more than seven months, at least weekly, sometimes more frequently.⁴⁵

Odio insists she told a friend that three men, in her apartment. One of the people the FBI questioned her about Oswald after she told her about Oswald after she only knew Oswald, but she was a refugee in Dallas.⁴⁶ This before the assassination was not questioned until years after the event. For the three visitors, but not Leon or about the Leon Oswald story.⁴⁷

On the day JFK was shot, she was in seizures, passed out, a day after the assassination, she was around in circles," she said. This is when he first remembered the assassination is "exaggerate," connection "in a sort of hysteria" described how his sister described the Kennedy assassination year later.⁵⁰ He blamed his parents in Cuba for his mother-in-law, went to an actress who could not wish.⁵¹ A confidential source told the Bureau "she cannot rationalize her daughter of a wealthy man, and she will become the center of attention for the FBI that Odio's family has the opinion that she is a woman of great condolences at her death. Other friends confirm she is in Dallas, sought excellent imagination."

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Odio insists she told at least two people, before the assassina-
tion, that three men, including Oswald, had visited her apart-
ment. One of the people she told was Lucille Connell. But when
the FBI questioned her in 1964, Connell said that Odio only told
her about Oswald after the assassination, and then said she not
only knew Oswald, but he had given talks to groups of Cuban
refugees in Dallas.⁴⁶ The second person Odio contended she told
before the assassination was her psychiatrist, Dr. Einspruch. He
was not questioned until 1978, by the Select Committee, fifteen
years after the event. He said he was certain she had told him of
the three visitors, but he did not remember hearing the name
Leon or about the Leopoldo telephone call before the assassina-
tion.⁴⁷

On the day JFK was killed, Odio suffered one of her emotional
seizures, passed out, and was hospitalized. "My mind was going
around in circles," she recalled.⁴⁸ Dr. Einspruch spoke to her the
day after the assassination, while she was still hospitalized. That
is when he first remembered that Odio, who had a tendency to
"exaggerate," connected her visitors to Oswald and the assassina-
tion "in a sort of histrionic way."⁴⁹ One of Odio's brothers, Cesar,
described how his sister suffered a nervous breakdown after the
Kennedy assassination, and that she still had the effects nearly a
year later.⁵⁰ He blamed her divorce and the imprisonment of their
parents in Cuba for her emotional collapse. Silvia Herrera, her
mother-in-law, went so far as to say that Odio was an excellent
actress who could intelligently fabricate such an episode if she
wished.⁵¹ A confidential FBI informant, who was an Odio friend,
told the Bureau "that one of her main difficulties [is] that she
cannot rationalize herself to the fact that she is no longer the
daughter of a wealthy individual who will grant her every re-
quest, and she will perform various actions in an attempt to
become the center of attractions."⁵² The informant advised the
FBI that Odio's family is "split in their opinion . . . some being of
the opinion that she is almost crazy, and the others offering their
condolences at her troubles and offering her assistance."⁵³ An-
other friend confirmed to the FBI that Odio was extremely lone-
some in Dallas, sought to gain attention from others, and had an
excellent imagination and a tendency toward exhibitionism.⁵⁴

One of the most unusual aspects of the Odio case is that though she thought she had met the assassin, she never contacted any government or law enforcement agency to tell her story.⁵⁵ Carlos Bringuier, the New Orleans anti-Castro leader who was arrested in a street fracas with Oswald, had met Odio once. He considers her failing to report the Oswald sighting a telling factor: "I believe it is possible that she was visited by someone—there were a lot of people with different organizations out there. But after the assassination, I believe her immediate reaction would have been the same as mine, to have jumped up and called the FBI and say, 'Hey, that guy visited me!' Instead [after being released from the hospital], she casually told a neighbor, and that neighbor told the FBI, and that's the only reason it came out. That makes me suspicious of her story. It doesn't sound right, and I know from my own personal experience on what I did and how I felt when I realized I had some contact with the man who killed the President of the United States. I heard the name Lee Harvey Oswald and I jumped from my seat. I didn't finish my lunch—I called the FBI immediately. Maybe with all the news after the assassination she became confused and put Oswald's face and name onto the person she actually met. I have seen this as a lawyer in criminal cases. There is an accident with four witnesses and they give four different versions and they all believe they are telling the truth, and could even pass a lie detector. She thinks she is telling the truth. I hate to say she is lying, but she is mistaken."⁵⁶

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Three men did visit Odio, probably on September 26 or 27, 1963. There is not a single piece of corroborating evidence, however, for her postassassination claim that one of the men was introduced as 'Leon Oswald' and that the next day one of the Cubans called to discuss a Marine sharpshooter and his Kennedy death threats.

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While Odio thought she had been visited by Oswald in Texas, he was actually undergoing one of his most important encounters since he had tried to renounce his American citizenship in Moscow in 1959. At the Cuban embassy, it was a typical Friday morning for Silvia Duran, the young Mexican woman who worked as

the secretary to the Cuban consulate in New York. Duran arrived before noon. During the day, she discovered she spoke Spanish. She told her a monologue that lasted several minutes. She told her he was going to stop in New York to get a transit visa to stop in Mexico. She began placing documents on the desk for a short explanation. During the day, she worked papers, members of the Cuban committee and the American people with Communist organizations. She learned from his arrest in New York that he had promptly issued a visa. She told her that he was in New York several days later. His Russian name was in New York, he claimed to be similar to Oswald. When she was unusual, he seemed surprised. She began filling out a letter on Eusebio Azcue to see if she could get a young American.

Azcue recalled: "She asked me for an examination of those documents immediately. I answered her questions. Her documents are not enough. She needs an authorization from the

*The Cuban consulate is in the same compound. The Soviet consulate is in the same building. They are near the Soviet embassies. It is near the Soviet embassies. He told his version of the author's interpretation of the events. He stated them first.

**No membership card in Oswald's belongings. The Cuban embassy claimed that Oswald was a Communist party denier. He had been counterfeit, made a