

advance notice, the consulate in Helsinki (a KGB plant) granted Oswald a six-day visa to enter the Soviet Union. This easy access has led researchers to believe that the Soviets were expecting him. This suspicion was reinforced by the claim of Swedish intelligence that they detected a flying visit by Oswald to Stockholm where he may have visited the Soviet embassy. All of this is strangely sophisticated behavior for a twenty-year-old high school dropout who had never traveled anywhere except in the Marines and had very little experience in anything.

Oswald was mustered through the Soviet consulate in Helsinki with unusual speed, and on October 16 he arrived in Moscow by train. There he was met by a Russian representative and taken to the Hotel Berlin where he registered as a student. Two weeks later, Oswald walked into the American embassy in Moscow and renounced his American citizenship. He also said that he had voluntarily told Soviet officials that he would make known to them all information concerning the Marine Corps and the specialty radar operation knowledge he possessed. He added that "he might know something of special interest."

Despite the fact that he was a U.S. Marine who had close access to one of America's top military secrets, the U-2 plane, and knowledge of top-secret radar operations, in addition to his flagrant flaunting his belief in communism, Oswald's defection to the Soviet Union and outrageous statements did not create a stir in the CIA, ONI, or the FBI. After the assassination, these agencies would deny any interest in Oswald other than routine. Two years later, when Oswald returned to the U.S. with his Russian bride, there was little debriefing of Oswald or Marina and no major investigation of them—at least none admitted by these agencies; the only action taken was that he was given a dishonorable discharge. Agency officials would strangely claim that they had nothing on Oswald in their files; no interviews, no debriefing. This flies in the face of the fact that he was a known defector possessing top military secrets, and his wife was a member of the Communist Party.

Years later, in 1978, Senator Richard Schweiker, a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee that investigated the performance of the intelligence agencies at the time of the Kennedy assassination, told Anthony Summers, "*Either we trained and sent him to Russia and they went along and pretended they didn't know to fake us out, or in fact, they inculcated him and sent him back here and were trying to fake us out that way.*"

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During Oswald's time in Russia he was sent to the city of Minsk where he was put up in a roomy apartment with a balcony overlooking a river that was considered luxurious by Soviet standards. He was given a job in a Russian radio and television factory and put on a monthly allowance. He proceeded to have the time of his life and wrote in his diary that he was "living big." But there may have been another reason for him being in Minsk and that was to be trained as a KGB agent in a spy training school known to the CIA. The school had been in operation as far back as 1947. This was brought up by FBI director J. Edgar Hoover when he wondered aloud to the Warren Commission on the subject.*

It was in Minsk that Oswald met Marina, whom he would marry within six weeks after a whirlwind courtship. Marina later remarked that when she met Oswald he spoke flawless Russian and she actually thought he was a native citizen.

In the previous chapter we described the way in which, in the last sixty days before the assassination, Oswald was being set up as a fall guy, at times by the use of an Oswald impersonator and at other times by the use of the real Oswald—in one case to establish Oswald as a left-wing, pro-Castro activist; in another case as a lone nut speaking sympathetically of going back to Russia; or in another case as a wild rifleman practicing on the rifle range and annoying people; and, in yet another case, possibly as part of a conspiracy of leftist anti-Castro activists.

But the use of Oswald impersonators goes back far beyond that. One case that is indeed strange goes back to January 20, 1961, the time of Kennedy's inauguration, *when Oswald was in Russia*. This event occurred in New Orleans at the Bolton Ford dealership on North Clayborne Avenue when two men came into the dealership on that day and said they wanted to buy ten Ford pickup trucks. One man was a Latin who identified himself as "Joseph Moore." The other was a young Anglo who confirmed that they wanted to buy the trucks and said his name was "Oswald." When the first man said that the bid should be in the name of Oswald, the truck salesman, Oscar Deslatte, printed the name Oswald on the sales form. The two men dealing for the trucks said they should get a good bid because they were buying them for a patriotic cause in that they were members of the Friends of Democratic Cuba. This

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