

Dear Hal,

3/24/92

Thanks for your 3/21 and the enclosures, of which I've read all but the clippings.

That Mark Lane was picketed is interesting!

Marita Lorenz never had any credibility. If anyone had followed her supermarket-tabloid type "disclosures" that she is a liar would have been obvious.

I have no clear recollection of my interview with Storey. I find some notes that are not my typing, perhaps Lil retyped them for me. I enclose it. May have been Mary 'errell's or someone else's because I interviewed him at his SKU office. I find nothing else in that folder. I'm pretty sure I was not in Dallas that day, too.

I never paid much attention to Priscilla Johnson so I can't say much about your article. Oswald, by the way, had a shotgun, not a rifle, in the USSR.

I don't know why the CIA would have prevented Johnson's story from appearing because there were other published stories on the "defection."

Does it necessarily mean that the 1962 added as a note had to have been added in that year? Might it not have been later, to date it?

That Snyder had worked for the CIA is not questioned. I know of no disproof of his statement that he had left the CIA when he worked for State. That I know of no disproof does not mean that he was not still CIA, tho.

I think you may be putting more emphasis on "encountered" that may be justified.

She could have just bumped into them and had no interest in them, although I think that most reporters would have had an interest.

Not much new here. I enclose a hurried contribution to TIKKUN.

More nutty books are coming out and several very bad ones are out. You enclosed a clipping on Howard Donahue's wretched thing that I've not yet read. I was sent xeroxes of the pages referring to me. He is a liar. When he was here what he says happened did not happen and he did not want to look at any of the records I have, including those he says are of no value.

Glad to have that summary of what went on at ASK. Nutty stuff. But I'm sure that most there enjoyed it.

Pressed for time right now. If I think of anything later I'll add it. If not, again thanks and our best,

Hal

P. O. Box 421815
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March 21, 1992

Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Md. 21702

Dear Hal:

I'm enclosing a number of articles which I've collected the past few weeks and I'll make a few comments on a few of them.

First, on the top of the pile enclosed is a copy of my article on Priscilla Johnson which appeared in the Jan.-March issue of Jerry Rose's "The Third Decade". Please let me know what you think of my analysis. I'm also enclosing a very fine article by a researcher, Martin Shackelford, who had an article in the same issue which deals with the Dallas Symposium both he and I attended in NOVEMBER, 1991. We had a long conversation and I was quite impressed with his knowledge of the assassination. He does not appear to be a person who engages in idle speculation..

Several of the articles I enclosed deal with Mark Lane. I heard him speak March 9th in Berkeley which was also an opportunity for him to autograph his book, "Plausible Denial". Outside of Cody's bookstore where he spoke someone was handing out leaflets entitled "Don't Be Fooled By Mark Lane". I've enclosed a copy for your records.

Naturally, Lane defended his book's thesis that it was the CIA that killed JFK and to support this he said that under intense pressure from various governmental agencies (such as the CIA, of course,) Stone changed his early script which, Lane claimed, showed the CIA was behind the whole affair. The alleged "pressure" forced Oliver Stone to put the blame not on the CIA but a combination of various forces at the head of which was the "Military-Industrial Complex". I, of course, didn't buy Lane's contention and a researcher I know who was sitting near me did not buy it either but it would seem that Lane otherwise had a captive (and helpless) audience who did buy into Lane's "explanation."

Lane said he had called up Jerry Hemming and asked him what he thought of Lane's new book. Hemming, according to Lane, said that Marita Lorenz's alleged account of two caravans going to Dallas in November, 1963 shortly before the assassination was not correct. There were three caravans (these were intended for the assassination and Frank Sturgis is alleged to have been part of the caravan). As one researcher pointed out to me, in Lane's book Marita claims to have met a well known CIA agent Alexander Rorke on that alleged trip (she so testified in the Hunt trial) but Rorke died in a plane crash in September, 1963. Ironically, enough I've read elsewhere that Sturgis, himself, had a long time back referred to this plane crash where he attempted to make a hero of Rorke who was then engaged in smuggling guns to overthrow Castro. How was Marita able to meet a

dead man on her alleged "trip" to Dallas???

There is one request I'd like to make of you. As I mentioned previously I'm working on an article on Oswald as an FBI informant which makes use of the Secret January, 1964 Transcript. Can you fill me in on any information you have on Robert Storey. He is mentioned in Whitewash IV, Page 13. On page 154 you note that at one time he may have worked for the CIA. Apparently you spoke to both Henry Wade and Storey. What was your impression of him? He is important for my article.

Thanks,


Hal Varb

Copy to Harold Weisberg

...Had the opportunity to mix coffee and tales of the Dallas police department with two of the nicest men that you would ever want to meet: Mr. R.W. "Rusty" Livingston and Mr. Gary Savage. A former employee of Dallas crime lab boss Lt. J.C. Day, "Rusty" tells for the first time of his involvement in the assassination investigation in a book being written by nephew Gary. The book, JFK First Day Evidence, will feature first generation copies of crime scene photographs that have been languishing in a brief case in "Rusty's" closet all of these long years. Among the items discussed in the proposed book: seeing the palmprint taken off Oswald's rifle before it was released to the FBI, and witnessing the actual arraignment of Lee Harvey Oswald for the murder of President John F. Kennedy.

Gary expressed feelings of frustration at the Symposium in that he was constantly being called upon to defend the actions of the Dallas police department; when in fact all he was doing was trying to make the public aware of the valuable evidence that his uncle possessed. His only intent is a genuine wish to help bring the truth to the surface and provide assassination researchers with previously unavailable first generation photographs and facts that "came through no one, not the FBI, not the Warren Commission, but directly from the Dallas police crime lab."

Gary is in search of a publisher and may eventually have to turn to self-publishing to get this valuable evidence out. If you would be interested in purchasing a book, please let Gary know by writing: The Shoppe Press, PO Box 2741, Monroe, LA 71207-2741.

...Larry Ray Harris hit the nail right on the head when he said, "This may be the Woodstock of assassination conferences!"

...The dates for next year's A.S.K. Symposium will be October 21-25, 1992.

*1529 Elizabeth St. Bay City, MI 48708

PRISCILLA JOHNSON: WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION

by
Hal Verb*

Apparently we have not heard the last word from Priscilla Johnson (McMillan) who these days is acting more like a witness for the prosecution (with Lee Harvey Oswald in the dock) than as a writer or reporter who is supposed to be uncovering the true facts and hard evidence surrounding the murder of President John F. Kennedy which occurred twenty eight years ago.

Johnson appeared on "Nightline" (Ted Koppel's nation-wide television show) on November 22, 1991. The program seems to have been rushed to coincide with that date since the KGB files had been recently opened with respect to Oswald's stay in Russia. (Of course, not all the files were opened, which ABC made clear to its audience.)

My reason for stating that the program seems to have been "rushed" (apart from the close timing of the KGB in letting ABC into its once closed doors) is suggested by the fact that I received a phone call from a reporter for ABC who said he was working on a story on Oswald and he said he was "having trouble" locating some of Oswald's Marine Corps "buddies" and wondered if I could help him out. I didn't receive the call directly but the message came over my phone answering machine. There was no mention of when the program on Oswald would be aired (I didn't know at that point that the program would air on November 22). The message was received barely two days before the "Nightline" show. I called the very next morning (the

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→ should be out in

reporter was in) and left word with a secretary that yes, I did have names in my files and I could help out. ABC never returned my call and this despite the fact that in my files I had a listing of close to one hundred names of Marines who served with him either in the Philippines, at Atsugi (in Japan) or El Toro (California). Although I didn't mention to the secretary how many names I had or that I could give the present locations of all of the names I had in my files, nevertheless ABC saw fit not to return my call. (As Weisberg noted to me, "they [ABC] probably had an agenda that included how much they'd say and what they wouldn't.")

There's some evidence to support what Weisberg asserted. Who, finally, did "Nightline" have appear on their show but none other than fellow Marine Mack Osborne, who repeated the official Warren Commission line that Oswald was a genuine ex-patriate. "I'm totally convinced," Osborne assured his listeners, "he meant his defection to Russia."

Osborne, as probably most readers of THE THIRD DECADE know, does appear in the Warren Commission's volumes (see volume 8). But why was he chosen, considering there were dozens that could have been reached, including those who also appeared in the volumes? Could it be, perhaps, because another Marine would introduce evidence which was 180 degrees opposite of Osborne's conclusion that Oswald was the "real article" as a defector?

It would be interesting to get hold of the raw TV-footage on this show, particularly with respect to the interviews ABC conducted of the Marine (or Marines?) It is difficult for me to believe that ABC had only one person in tow; in fact, I reject it---but, of course, ABC had its "agenda" and this they would not waver from in any degree or fashion.

One can discern in the show the boundaries of any possible dissent as to the "genuine defector" scenario or the "final solution" story of the Warren Commission (Oswald as "lone nut assassin"). On this the noted participants were all in agreement, including Priscilla Johnson, Forrest Sawyer (who conducted the investigation into the KGB files) and finally TV commentator Daniel ("I'd rather be Schorr than right") Schorr who put foot in mouth again defending the Commission's version of "truth." Intoned Schorr, "He did it as a self-motivated individual---not as part of a conspiracy, but only as a conspiracy of a diseased mind." Schorr immediately reacted to this last statement as if he had just caught a football and was running with it the wrong way: "I know," he declared, "I'll get a lot of mail on this!"

Priscilla, for her part, "helped" out ABC in her own way by pointing out how much of a misfit Oswald was while he was in Russia and, while she made no mention of Oswald being a "genuine" defector or the Sawyer/Schorr "double hit" conclusion that Oswald, the "lone nut," did it all by himself, the line of ABC was pretty clear even to the unsophisticated viewer. (I wondered, though, how listeners reacted to the evidence that Oswald was notoriously poor with a rifle. Even after he joined a Russian hunting club it was noted by some Russians that "he didn't practice---he shot very badly." Another Russian said he went on a rabbit hunt and he "felt sorry" for Oswald since he about the only one who didn't come back with a rabbit. And then ABC noted that Oswald was so disgusted he finally sold his rifle for \$20.00. Perhaps, I thought, I would have been better if he had smuggled it into the U.S. after his "defection:---he would probably have done better with that weapon than the infamous Carcano!)

But let us return to the fabulous career of "journalist" Priscilla Johnson and her meeting with Lee Harvey Oswald in Russia.

Peter Whitney's excellent article on Priscilla in the November, 1991 issue of THE THIRD DECADE related that "upon returning to the United States in November 1962 (according to her affidavit filed with the HSCA) Miss Johnson was, unlike her first

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two trips, debriefed by an agent of the CIA---a meeting which took place at the Brattle Inn in Cambridge (which had been written at the bottom of the of the November 1959 report sent to NANA (North American Newspaper Alliance) based on her interview with Oswald."

The date of Johnson's 1959 report sent to NANA was November 16, 1959. To be more precise, the Commission's volume XX (pp. 286-289) claims the interview was held with Oswald "on or about November 16, 1959." The "copy" of the full typed version of the interview has a date that looks like November 18th (not November 16, as the Commission claims), that being the date she was to have sent NANA the copy.

But did the copy ever reach NANA? It may have for all I know, and there could have been a story done on Oswald in 1959, but if so it does not appear in the volumes. The articles that do appear are a Sunday Boston Globe article dated November 24, 1963 and an article in "Harper's" magazine dated April, 1964. There is also a typed statement dated December 5, 1963 which Johnson gave to the State Department; all of these dates are after the assassination and not before.

But the meeting Johnson had with the CIA took place in November, 1962 and Whitney's noting that the "Brattle Inn" notation was "written in at the bottom of the November, 1959 report" which was supposed to have been sent to NANA would indicate that it was most likely the CIA agent himself who wrote the words and not Priscilla herself who wrote those words in. For one thing, the writing pattern: Johnson's signature and the "Inn" notation appear to be two different styles of writing.

If so and the CIA did make the notation, what is going on here? There are three possibilities, as I see it: (1) Johnson did send the November 18, 1959 piece to NANA and they chose not to print it (for whatever reasons); (2) Johnson did not send the copy to NANA; or (3) she did send it and the CIA prevented the story from appearing.

Could the CIA have prevented it from happening? Recall that Carl Bernstein wrote an article for "Rolling Stone" (October 20, 1977) on the CIA and the media. In it, I believe, he mentioned the figure of 400 journalists who worked "hand in glove" for the CIA. With that number of "media assets," I would feel fairly certain that NANA would be a "top priority" in this arrangement. The Boston Globe would be an ideal asset for the CIA to use. (Perhaps some reader of THE THIRD DECADE can document that NANA and/or the Globe were definitely used by the CIA.)

There is something rather odd, too, about Priscilla Johnson's November 18, 1959 typed copy and I cannot recall that, in any of the literature on the assassination, this curiosity has been mentioned. If you refer to page 288 of Volume XX, which reprints the typed version of Johnson's November 1959 article, you will read the following:

"Embassy officials admit, they're a bit gunshy. It's their third case of attempted defection this fall. The first, Nicholas Petrulli, xxxxxx (sic) changed his mind about defecting just before Russia refused his citizenship. Petrulli had a long history of mental illness. The second Webster, an employee of the Rand Co., asked for and received Soviet citizenship xxxxx after he had spent the summer xx working at the U.S. Fair in Moscow's Sokolniki Park. But Webster and Petrulli had had marital troubles back home."

There are two striking things about this paragraph that bear calling attention to.

First, this whole typed November 1959 version was apparently sent via airmail to NANA on the day of the assassination of Kennedy (Nov. 22, 1963) and an article based on it was printed in the Sunday Boston Globe, November 24, 1963---see Volume XX, pp. 290-291 for the full article. But left out of the article was the paragraph just

quoted. Was the heavy hand of the CIA at the receiving end of the Boston Globe when a decision was made to delete this paragraph?

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There is another and perhaps even more intriguing angle to this than the deletion of this paragraph. Note that there is a space before the word Webster. The amount of space between the "second" and "Webster" is exactly the amount of space required to type Webster's first name and middle initial: Robert E. Why, as it appears, was the "Robert E." left out of the text; and who made the deletion?

It does not seem likely that Johnson herself did this, so the only other conclusion is that the CIA agent who made the notation "Brattle Inn" (at the end of the type-script) did it. But if he did do it, you'll note that this was in 1962 and Miss Johnson's typed version was sent in November, 1963. If the version that appears in the volumes is the actual one that NANA received (in 1963), then Miss Johnson must have known that that space (deleting "Robert E.") was in the copy she sent in 1963. Therefore she was acting in collusion with a CIA agent to hide something she (and the agent) didn't want known. What might this have been?

Examine that paragraph again. The full name of Petrulli is typed out but not that of Webster. And why is this important, you will ask? For this reason: if, indeed, Petrulli were truly a "mental case" as indicated by Johnson, he would not be of consequence (as to whether he was a genuine defector or not); but if Webster was acting out a role as a "defector" pretending to be something he was not, the CIA (and whatever other agency was "handling" Webster) would not want to call attention to his full name. The less said about him the better. (Apparently the Boston Globe agreed with this notion and left out the reference to Webster.)

Beyond the concealment of a fake defectors program of which Webster (and Oswald) may have been a part, the downplaying of Webster may have been designed to conceal a more intimate relationship between Robert Webster and both Lee and Marina Oswald. In Epstein's Legend, p. 141, appears this interesting statement:

"On Monday morning (July 10, 1961) Oswald brought Marina with him to the embassy [in Moscow]. There she was interviewed by John McVickar and filled out a 'petition to classify status of alien for issuance of immigrant visa.' While waiting, Oswald reportedly asked about Robert Edward Webster, another American who had attempted to renounce his citizenship in the fall of 1959. and who had been interviewed by Snyder in a Moscow police station just days before Oswald stormed into the Embassy for the first time." (emphasis mine)

Epstein then goes on to mention that Snyder "interviewed" Oswald. Snyder, of course, was then a senior consular officer in the Moscow Embassy. Other writers have indicated that Snyder was probably working for the CIA in that capacity.

Marina Oswald's possible connections with Robert Webster are another intriguing item of speculation. According to Penn Jones, Jr., (see Forgive My Grief, vol. 4, p. 169), Marina told her friend Katya Ford that her husband Lee had gone to Moscow for the Rand Co. to help set up the American Trade Exhibition and had defected from that assignment. Obviously Marina had her defectors mixed up---and one wonders if the subtle coaching of Marina by Priscilla Johnson had just slightly misfired in this case; or was there some intimate relationship between Marina Oswald and Robert Webster? A straw in the wind in that direction is the finding (reported by Summers, in Conspiracy, p. 191) that Marina's address book contained the address of an apartment building near Leningrad at which address Robert Webster had also lived.

The significance of Webster/Oswald is that both seem almost carbon copies of what appears to be a "false defector" scam being carried out against the Soviets. The CIA certainly would not want to publicize this dual quality of both "defectors" who had similar backgrounds and appear on the scene at almost the same time---and who may have somehow been personally associated with one another.

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Finally, to round out this intriguing scenario: in Johnson's article "Oswald in Moscow" for Harper's, April, 1964 (in which she states flatly that "Oswald was, in fact, the assassin") there is this little tidbit which raises even more questions than the ones I have already alluded to:

"Finally, Oswald impressed me because he was the first and, as it turned out, the only 'ideological' defector I met in Moscow. Of the two or three other American defectors I encountered [my emphasis], none claimed to be motivated by a belief in communism."

ENCOUNTERED? This must be news to her readers since, so far as I know, she profiled no one else except Oswald. If indeed she did "encounter" these "defectors," under what circumstances did she do so? And to whom did she report when she interviewed these "defectors" in her encounters?

A whole series of questions, I know, but since she is a "witness for the prosecution," the defense has a right to ask (and learn the answers to) these questions.

I rest my case!

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UP ON THE ROOF

by

Bill Cheslock*

The JFK Symposium held in Dallas, Texas last November 14 to 16 was a continuous flow of vital information, from beginning to end. However, sometimes information can be dispensed at a gathering like this, not only from the expertise of panelists, but from someone who has an assassination experience to share, and is willing to drive from great distances to tell it. Stanley Paulauskus was sitting home in his Indiantown, Florida residence when, on Larry King Live, he heard about the ASK program on the assassination of John F. Kennedy being conducted in Dallas, Texas. He decided to drive and join us, and share an experience he says stayed with him every day of his life for the past twenty eight years. He told of his harrowing experience, and he looked as if he was transposed back to that day he was telling about.

Stanley Paulauskus was a thirty one year old sheet metal worker in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1963, and was employed by the Ohio Blow Pipe Company. This company accepted contracts out of state, and in November he was sent as part of a job crew to Dallas. The Container Corporation was to be the job site, located in the Brook Hollow Industrial Site in Dallas.

On the morning of November 9, 1963, he was working on the roof of the job on Regal Row, when he heard three rifle shots. He said, "One of the bullets flew by my ear, and I hit the deck in a hurry, crawled to the ladder, but I don't remember climbing down." When Stanley hit the ground he hurried to tell his foreman, who promptly waved him off and told him to forget it, because they shoot rifles around here all the time, and they probably weren't shooting at him. Still greatly shaken by a bullet screaming by his ear, he was adamant about calling the police, but the foreman laughed and reassured him that it was probably an accident, it happens all the time, and no one was trying to kill him. Not as confident as his boss, Stanley spent a very uncomfortable remainder of the day at work. The remainder of his stay in Dallas was uneventful, and after work was completed, he packed his bags and went back to Cleveland. However, this was not to be the end, mainly because President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, a city he worked in a couple of weeks earlier,