

UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE
TREASURY DEPARTMENT

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ORIGIN Field	OFFICE New York - New York	FILE NO. CO-2-34,030
TYPE OF CASE Protective Research	STATUS Investigation Continued	TITLE OR CAPTION Lee Harvey Oswald -
INVESTIGATION MADE AT Locust Valley, New York	PERIOD COVERED 11/29/63 to 11/30/63	Priscilla JOHNSON's 1959 interview with OSWALD, including copies of handwritten notes and resulting articles.
INVESTIGATION MADE BY Special Agent George J. Sershan	DETAILS	
<p><u>SYNOPSIS</u></p> <p>Priscilla Johnson, a journalist, interviewed Lee H. Oswald in 1959 after his defection to the Soviet Union.</p> <p><u>DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION</u></p> <p>This investigation is predicated on telephone call November 29, 1963 from ASAIC Sweeney, Boston to ASAIC Jukes advising of a request received from SAIC Bouck, Protective Research Section, to interview Miss Priscilla Johnson residing in Cambridge, Massachusetts. ASAIC Sweeney stated inquiry disclosed Miss Johnson was residing in New York, telephone OR 6-2620. ASAIC Jukes telephoned this number and ascertained Miss Johnson was residing on Feeks Lane in Locust Valley, New York.</p> <p>(Miss) Johnson was interviewed on November 30, 1963 at her home in Locust Valley. She is presently attending the Russian Research Center at Harvard University studying Soviet Literature. In 1959 she was employed as a correspondent for the North American Newspaper Alliance, with offices in New York City, and was representing that firm in Moscow when she was given the assignment of interviewing Lee H. Oswald who had defected to the Soviet Union. She recalled interviewing Lee H. Oswald at the Hotel Metropole in Moscow advising she was aware Oswald's room had been wired. Accordingly, she exercised care in questioning him, especially since he informed her the Soviet authorities had instructed him not to permit any interviews by the American press and he was violating their "trust".</p>		
DISTRIBUTION ✓ Chief New York Dallas	COPIES Orig & 3 cc's 2 cc's 1 cc.	REPORT MADE BY George Sershan SPECIAL AGENT APPROVED [Signature] SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE
		DATE 12/2/63 DATE 12/2/63

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Miss Johnson had retained the notes she took at the time of her interview with Oswald and exhibited copies of articles she wrote appearing in the Boston Sunday Globe of November 24, 1963 and the Christian Science Monitor of November 26, 1963 relating to her interview with Oswald. The articles are self-explanatory.

According to Miss Johnson, Oswald in her opinion was a "loner", a person who did not mix socially and kept to himself very much. He was a self-taught Marxist who stated he had read Marx's book, Das Capital, when he was only fifteen years of age. He taught himself to read and write Russian and his decision to defect arose out of his bitterness toward the United States, particularly the plight of the American negro and the exploitation of workers. He was reared in poverty and his mother, a widow, had worked extremely hard to bring up her family. He also expressed resentment at his treatment by the U. S. Marine Corps and accused the United States of military imperialism. He informed Miss Johnson that he had petitioned the Soviet Government for citizenship and stated he had no intention of ever returning to the United States.

Miss Johnson stated she questioned him about the manner in which he traveled to Russia suggesting that he must have been aided by other persons or organizations. He specifically stated he made the trip on his own initiative on monies he had saved while in the Marine Corps and that he positively did not receive assistance from any persons or organizations. She attempted to impress upon him the folly of his actions and in a roundabout manner tried to get him to change his mind about defecting but without success. She concluded that he was a fanatic and that further attempts to dissuade him from seeking Russian citizenship would be futile.

In her description of Oswald, Miss Johnson stated he was touching, likeable and quiet. She felt he was a malcontent who was unsure of himself and probably would be unhappy wherever he was. Although she considered him a fanatic, she did not think he would resort to violence. She does not know whether he had been questioned by the Soviet Secret Police but obviously he had received some instructions from a Soviet authority concerning his activities while in Russia. He stayed very close to the hotel and according to his own statement, he did not attempt to establish friendship with any Russians.

Oswald promised to let her know if he was leaving the hotel. When she inquired at the hotel for him two days later she found he had disappeared and concluded the Soviet authorities had whisked him away having naturally learned of the interview. She has not seen him since.

Miss Johnson stated she was interviewed November 23, 1963 by FBI Agents Curry and Sullivan in Boston and that she gave them a deposition concerning her interview with Oswald. She is leaving New York on December 1st for Boston

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and on the following day, December 2 is flying to Washington where she has an appointment with Mr. Andrew Lowenfeld of the State Department. Mr. Lowenfeld works in the office of a Mr. Shea, a legal counsel for the State Department. While in Washington she will be staying with her brother, Stewart H. Johnson, Jr. at 2906 N. Street, N.W. and expects to remain there until the end of the week.

Verifax copies were made of the newspaper articles previously referred to, and the notes made by Miss Johnson at the time she interviewed Oswald and are being forwarded with this report.

ATTACHMENTS

Copies of 2 newspaper articles
Copies of Miss Johnson's notes

GJS/mm

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Oswald Interview in Moscow Recorded

By a Staff Writer of the Christian Science Monitor
 What Kind of Man Was Lee Harvey Oswald?

Biermeso Detected in Long Talk

Did this admitted Marxist ever indicate he might be capable of shooting the president of the United States, as Dallas police say he acknowledged when Kennedy last Friday—just two days before he was slung shot and killed as the case took on a bizarre twist?

Few people really seem to have known the 24-year-old New Orleans native well. Most describe him as a quiet sort of a person, one who did not mix well—a loner. He gave few the opportunity to really understand him.

But in a rare moment of extroversion he gave one American snuff magazine, She is Miss Patricia Johnson, and at the time she was being interviewed through a two-year stay in Moscow by a correspondent for the North American Newspaper Alliance.

The first was early November, 1959. The place—the Hotel Metropole, Moscow's principal hotel for foreigners.

Oswald had arrived in the Soviet Union on Oct. 30 that year with the announced intention of seeking Soviet citizenship.

Ten days later Miss Johnson, now doing research at Harvard for a book, learned he was staying at the hotel and asked if he would give her an interview. He said he would, and they talked quite freely for seven hours.

The impression of Oswald that emerges from that meeting is of a young man intensely bitter at the United States, who displayed absolute single-mindedness about whatever he was attempting to do—at that moment trying to obtain Soviet citizenship.

Is this the sort of man who might have assassinated the President?

"I struck me," Miss Johnson said in an interview this week.

Let the Soviet Union put the same single-mindedness for learning whatever he needed to learn for this act (the assassination).

"I just think this is the kind of person that might... he would have gone about it in a methodical way. He would have learned whatever he needed to know."

This description dovetails with the FBI report that back on March 20 of this year Oswald, using an assumed name, ordered from a small-order firm the rifle with which President Kennedy was shot during a motorcade in Dallas.

He was bitter, Miss Johnson said, against "capitalism" and "worker exploitation" in the United States—classic Communist as well as Marxist phrases.

But he never expressed any hatred of the presidency or of John F. Kennedy, then a young Massachusetts Senator. "I didn't speak about politics in a personal way."

During their long conversation nothing he said indicated he favored using murder as a political weapon.

"But from our conversation, I could see that he was a man capable of a whole lot" because of his gnawing bitterness, she said.

"My mother," he told her, "has been a worker for her whole life. She had to produce a good example of what happens to workers in the United States."

"But," she added, "he wouldn't say what work she did."

Of Prearranged Gun

When they talked, had people been told before beginning to shake up at about that time that the Cuban leader was a Communist?

No mention of Cuba yet never once during the seven-hour interview did Oswald mention Cuba or Castro, though he later became chairman of Dallas branch of Fair Play for Cuba, a left-wing pro-Castro group.

After talking a good deal about Marxist philosophy as he understood it, he said at one point: "I have had practical experience in the world. I am not an idealist completely. I have had a chance to witness military imperialism in action," Miss Johnson recalled.

He also told her that "he had seen tremendous poverty in the United States, and he had been shocked by the plight of the Negro."

But again and again he returned to theoretical Marxism. "He said he'd become a Marxist at 15," Miss Johnson recalled.

"After five years of reading socialist literature," he told her, "observing treatment of laboring groups (Communists, Negroes, and workers especially) watching the treatment of workers in New York and seeing how they're exploited—I'd read about it in socialist literature and thought the description was quite correct."

He indicated he wanted Soviet citizenship primarily to escape the United States society he viewed in such a light.

"Since I'd either be a worker exploited for capitalist profit [in the United States] or else an exploiter," he had said, "I'd [have been] one of the unemployed" rather than assume either role.

At the time "he was terribly bitter against the American Embassy," she said, "because they would not allow him to take the oath renouncing his citizenship."

Can't Leave

At this point he had been in the Soviet Union about 10 days. "He didn't know Russia, and he wasn't very curious about the place," she said, "even though he was defecting to it."

"As he talked, you know, I got the idea that he didn't know Marxism at all well," although he claimed "he'd been studying it since 15."

"And it's because he knew Marxism so poorly that I knew it must have been hatred of the United States, rather than a real understanding of what he was doing," that motivated him to renounce his American citizenship and attempt to become a Soviet citizen.

"Also," she said, "he taught himself to read and write Russian from Berlitz [School of Languages], but he said he had a lot of trouble speaking it, and he seemed to be quite helpless."

"He sat in his hotel room, and his mother would telephone from Fort Worth and beg him not to defect, and he just wouldn't answer the phone."

A Trip for Ice Cream "He wouldn't go out at all into Moscow. And he told me that the one expedition he had made had been to a children's store only one block away, and he recalled that he'd managed to get there by himself and buy himself an ice cream in the crowds."

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 Harvey Oswald - 20
 Fort Worth, Texas born in
 New Orleans
 up to US Embassy Oct 31
 dissolved my Am. citizenship
 as much as they wd let me
 the time - however I
 requested that my citizenship
 dissolved. Was not allowed
 swear on oath that he
 renounced - refused to allow
 me to take oath at that time.
 they said they would not allow
 me to act without confirmation
 by Sov citizenship.
 I am impressed passport
 they wd not act until
 citizenship confirmed -
 they want confirmed
 that I would not have
 leave SO, be forced to,
 even if Sov refuse
 & require for Sov citizenship.
 They have said they
 investigating possibility
 my continuing my
 education at Institute -

2
 Vol age 17, enlisted in Marine
 Corps, discharged in Sept -
 14 months in Japan +
 Philippines, Indonesia,
 France - radar operator
 finished high school educa -
 while in Marine Corps

Hair brown, gray eyes -
 5' 11", 150 lb -
 Oct 18, 1939 birth date
 Marines 2 yrs, 9 months, 3 days
 Overseas 1 yr, 2 months, 24 days
 3. in New Or., childhood in
 Louisiana + Texas -
 NY 2 yrs -
 Then Louisiana - enlisted
 in Dallas
 father died before born -
 I believe he was an
 insurance salesman
 Had 1 brother -
 Good Conduct medal from
 Marines
 Mother alive + living in Ft.
 Worth -

3.

his leaving Oswald a
 ago - along with my
 in Paris -
 to take myself to
 write from Berlin -
 have trouble speaking
 a + teacher -

in on I saved while in
 Marine Corps -

and give no statement
 if FBI had not released
 I wd never have said
 bump to any body
 I'd like to give my side
 story, give people an
 AS something to think
 about

was training been assured
 wd not have to return
 SO I assumed it wd
 sold for me to give
 or side of story -
 There was always
 sib my visa wd not
 extended -

3011

For me #
that you are open in (wired)
that you may appear at the
end of any time during the
normal business hours & require
that the club prepare the
necessary documents for
renewal of citizenship.

Just treat it like legal
personality, don't encourage
you & don't discourage
you. They do of course
know you, that it is not
easy to be accepted as a
citizen of SL. But even
if I am not accepted, it
will not consider returning
to US.

Since I do go on 14 hours
ranging standard room +
food rate - I want to make
it clear they are not
sponsoring me
I wish it was possible
of my studying

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Did I mess up? I have
1) I would get a
2) you would be in
3) partner - he was
partner in session & considered
Gaw that is considered
I ever seriously
decision

if nobody
would you mind about friends
ever family & know
my partner about exactly
in preparing about exactly
my wife to Pitt - Not hard
2 yrs to do it - Not to
how it make refitting
was it or with bar
personnel in favor of
personnel in favor of
Had in favor of
later -

To say what she does -
D's side old beyond years
hard out etc. that's usual
kind of people in US.

It's a S. of why they
paid up under what
system they work. It's
why of everyone to work -

It's a S. of why they
paid up under what
system they work. It's
why of everyone to work -

books by league -
change of strategy -
with shift, dark tie
tax cashmere sweater -
to believe that sooner or
later, Comm will replace
capitalism - depressive

Comm = aggressive itself
ideal. which implants itself
in every system + which
shows - power + in control
US, so I shall remain

US, so I shall remain

There, if nec., are republicans
also -

There's a capital -
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13. Perhaps they don't have
 as many hot water heaters
 + meat grinders they will in
 20 yrs, this an econ-
 system which is leaning
 US far behind -
 Can material shift -
 Can't see a world influence
 me to reverse -
 It's the social system
 not the success
 that affects me -
 At same time SU with
 undoubted by this part US -
 have of out. For out's sake
 have seen tourists attacking
 people's homes - in hotel
 city of Moscow - in que-
 city because every part
 and by gov't is all toward
 peacefully + all - purpose
 people here are so well
 kept - people + have a lot
 of people in future of
 this - our time
 Still making poverty
 not to be seen here

14. looked for mil. imperialism
 in Japan you'd expect
 it - but if you'd ever
 been through base out
 in Philippines you'd know
 what I mean -
 by imperialists with
 Can't see a world
 their hatred of
 Am look upon all
 foreign people as Soviet
 to be exploited for profit -
 Philippines who are well
 off are those who cooperate
 with Am -
 who part of Indonesia
 invasion in March 1958 -
 Communist inspired Soviet
 turn over - set off a
 with ammunition - even
 1958 - just cruise
 were told we might have to go
 to take part -
 I went into classroom
 to see we were poor +
 I didn't want to be
 a soldier on my country

14. The less I meet you -
 practice, understanding -
 Ask me why I am very
 curious - understand
 when I speak of id cards -
 local reasons that have
 brought me here while an
 (in world I + understand)
 I've learned in material
 situation of US workers
 Russian, it had me as
 ability -

Refers to Sov. Gov't
 repeated by as "my
 Gov't" -
 I've already asked
 them to prepare papers

I'm sure if I did not
 know they'd just give me
 the same answer
 Hence = Sov. citizenship
 labor-saving device
 dissolve citizenship

Prash's + labor-saving

15. Sov. people like US. sev
 wage - B.A. the profit
 thing - produce is use
 be profit all the profit
 Turn based on credit
 speculation -

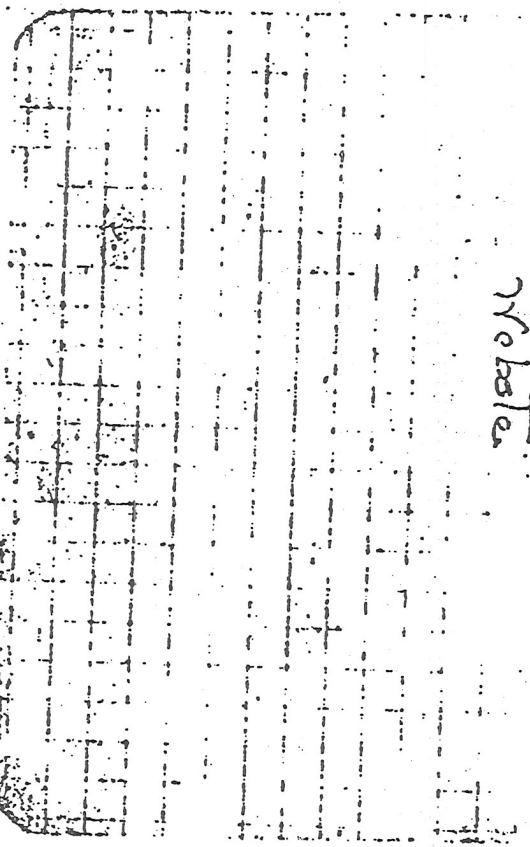
has a very primitive under
 ding of economies, that's
 as Marx is Das Kapital

18. I can't delay it to do it, but
under obligation to see his
friend -

So said we needed more
time get papers communcation
with Mustang
Law says we are under
oblig. To permit him to renounce
regulation says must be
gone by 5 of July 24 and is
not acting early - ~~extended~~

Nicholas Petrulli

Roberts



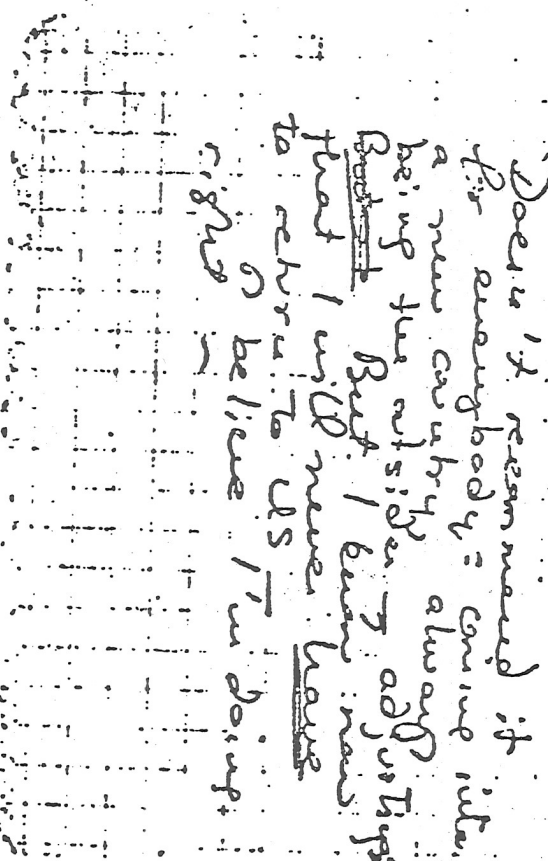
16. My reasons are very
sharp & good to me -

gave permission to US Emb -
along with verbal & written
statements

Light Sather & accord

Bite

Doesn't recommend it
for everybody - crime rate
a new category always
being the subject of
~~books~~ But I believe
that I will never have
to return to US in doing
right -



Interview With Suspect Oswald in Moscow in 1959

The Stuff of Which

The author was Moscow Correspondent for NANA in 1959. A few years before, in 1953, she had been research assistant on Viet Nam for John F. Kennedy, then a senator. She is perhaps the only person to have been good friends with both the late President and his suspected assassin. She is today a freelance writer on Soviet affairs.

By PRISCILLA JOHNSON

(Copyright, 1963, Boston Globe, North American Newspaper Alliance)
CAMBRIDGE, Mass.—“For two years now I have been waiting to do this one thing. To dissolve my American citizenship and become a citizen of the Soviet Union.”

The time was November, 1959. The place was my room on the third floor of Moscow's Hotel Metropol. The speaker was Lee Harvey Oswald, prime suspect in the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

With his suit of charcoal gray flannel, dark tie and tan cashmere sweater, Lee looked, and sounded like Joe College with a slight southern drawl. But his life hadn't been that of a typical college boy.

His father, an insurance salesman sitting alone in his hotel room, died before he was just one floor below mine at born. Raised in Texas and the Metropoli. He had no Louisiana, the boy spent two friends in Russia and he didn't years in New York during his speak a word of the language. early teens. At 17, he en-“The only sightseeing he'd done listed in the U.S. Marines. was to “Delsky Mir,” a child-“I did it,” he said, “because dren's store one block from our we were poor and I didn't want hotel. He'd managed to buy to be a burden on my mother.” an ice cream cone there, he Later, he spent 14 months as told me proudly. a licensed radar operator in the Far East.

In September, 1959, his room all evening and into three-year hitch nearly done, the early hours of morning, the Marines gave Lee a de- he talked quietly about his pendency discharge. Just one plans to defect to Russia, month later, after an exhaust-! However, I soon came to feel ing trip by land, sea and air, that this boy was of the stuff he arrived in Moscow to pe- of which fanatics are made. tion the Supreme Soviet.

Even though Russian officials highest legislative body in the U.S.S.R., for Soviet citizenship. warned him Soviet citizenship. Saw Fanatic is not easy to obtain, Lee was For days, Oswald had been already referring to the Soviet in Japan and the Philippines.

Government as “my govern- he “had a chance to watch ment.” “But,” said Lee, “Even American militarist imperal- if I am not accepted, on no ac- count will I go back to the United States. I shall remain here, if necessary, as a resident alien.”

All Soviet officials would promise at the time was that Lee could stay on in Russia whether or not he became a citizen. Meanwhile, they were “investigating the possibility of sending him to a Soviet higher technical institute.”

At an age when angry young rebels all over the world find release in aping the heathens, what brought this serious, soft-spoken southern boy to Moscow with no other ambition but to spend the rest of his life as a Soviet citizen? Evidently, it was a combina- tion of poverty, the plight of the U. S. Negro, and the U. S. Marines.

“My mother,” said Lee, “has been a worker all her life. She's a good example,” he added, “of what happens to workers in the United States.” He declined to elaborate.

“At the age of 15,” he added, “after watching the way workers are treated in New York and Negroes in the South, I was looking for a key to my environment. Then I discovered Socialist literature.” Lee was struck, in particu- lar, by Marx's “Das Kapital.” He concluded that, as an American, “I would become either a worker exploited for capitalist profit; or an ex- ploiter or, since there are many in this category, I'd be one of the unemployed.” Lee became a Marxist.

Later, as a Marine private, when, and if, he became a cit-izen, he would let the Soviet gov-ernment handle legal details.

Year's Planning

Fully a year before, Lee began getting ready to go to Russia. Using a Berlitz gram- mar, he taught himself to read and write Russian. Never, Lee, a nice-looking young man with gray eyes and brown hair, did he consider deserting the Marine Corps.

Did it occur to Lee that Soviet officials might be embar- rassed by his efforts to become a citizen of their country at a moment when Russia was cultivating good relations with the United States?

Russian officials, he said, “don't encourage and don't discourage me.” They warned, however, that neither Lee's wish, nor theirs, would deter- mine whether his citizenship application was to be accepted. They said it depended on the “over-all political atmosphere at the moment.” Meanwhile, they offered Lee the sanctuary of a prolonged stay in the U.S.S.R.

As for officials at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, they were torn between their desire to give Lee time to think it over, and their legal obligation to hear his oath renounc- ing American citizenship if he insisted.

Lee was bitter at U.S. Con- sult Richard Snyder, who, he charged, stalled him when he asked to take the oath on Oct. 31, the only time Lee had been at the Embassy. As a result, Lee wouldn't go back there. He would let the Soviet gov-ernment handle legal details.

Fanatics Are Made'

men of the Soviet Union, shortcoming in Moscow, Lee answered when I knocked he would never go at his door and why, a few hours later, he came to see me in my room, I never learned.

I asked Lee if the ordinary Russians he met expressed surprise at his desire to defect. "Well," he said, "they're very curious and they ask me why. But materialist Muscovites," he added, "understand when I speak of the idealistic reasons that brought me here. And they ask me many questions about conditions of workers in the United States."

'Never Go Back!'

Regardless of any material

can correspondents, just why before closing the door, that know.

As he was leaving I asked him to come see me again. The

Russians, Oswald told me, had

him to return home. He had warned that he mustn't talk to

refused to speak to any Amer-

Americans. But he promised to

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know.

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I was

sure, awaited him.

As our conversation drew

to a close--we ate nothing,

and had been sipping only tea

--I had a terrible feeling of

frustration. I was

sure, awaited him.

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