

'I Am Sorry, I Don't Know Why' He Did It, Mrs. Oswald Says

At News Parley She Recalls Husband 'Changed' After Return From Soviet

By WILLIAM M. BLAIR
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WASHINGTON, Feb. 7—Mrs. Lee H. Oswald said today her husband "changed" after having returned from the Soviet Union with her in 1962.

She regarded him "normal" when she met and married him in the Soviet Union, the Russian-born widow of the accused slayer of President Kennedy told a news conference.

"I don't know why" he changed, she added.

"Looking back over the events of the past few months, do you have any idea now why your husband might have shot President Kennedy?" Mrs. Oswald was asked.

"I am sorry, but I do not know why," she said.

In halting English she recalled that Oswald had practiced shooting with a rifle, but not often, months before the assassination last Nov. 22.

He went to Mexico last Sept. 26 to try to get a visa "because he wanted to live in Cuba," she said, after which he thought he would go to Russia again.

Answering questions in a television studio here, Mrs. Oswald said she did not want to talk with Oswald's mother, Mrs. Marguerite Oswald of Fort Worth, because she was "too much bad for me."

Oswald's mother will be the second witness to appear before the Presidential commission investigating the assassination. She is due Monday, at her own request, to present evidence purportedly showing her son's innocence. She has challenged Mrs. Marina Oswald's belief that Oswald killed Mr. Kennedy with rifle shots from the window of a book warehouse in Dallas.

Mrs. Oswald, who finished her testimony before the commission yesterday, was asked how she felt toward her husband.

"I feel very sorry for Lee Oswald," she replied. "You know this is my husband. I don't want if Lee shot Kennedy."

She explained why she had not informed the police after he had told her of his attempt to shoot former Maj. Gen. Edwin A. Walker, Texas right-winger, on April 10, 1963.

"Because I am a wife," she said.

The slim, brown-haired Mrs. Oswald was interviewed by a small group of reporters at station WTOP. For twelve minutes she answered questions with composure.

She sat at a table under bright lights as television cameras recorded the session on tape for the three major networks and for radio. With her were her lawyer, John M. Thorne of Grand Prairie, Tex., a suburb of Dallas, and James Martin, her business adviser.



Associated Press Wirephoto

DISCUSSES HUSBAND:
Mrs. Lee H. Oswald during news conference yesterday.

Several times she groped for English. At times her advisers sought to explain the meaning of words to her. But generally she had no difficulty.

She was quick to smile when asked about her treatment by the commission, before which she spent four days this week, and in speaking of her desire to stay in Dallas and perhaps work as a pharmacist. She was trained as one in Russia.

Mrs. Oswald wore a chartrreuse jumper over a long-sleeved white blouse with silver cufflinks, buttoned at the neck. Her shoes were brown and black, with medium heels, and she carried a two-toned brown handbag.

She had a gold band on the third finger of her left hand and a ring of an Alexandrite semi-precious gem, set in silver, on the third finger of her right hand.

She smoked a cigarette as she talked with newsmen before and after the conference. As she left the studio she said, "Now I go to church."

She was accompanied by Secret Service agents, who brought her from Texas last Sunday.

She said she did not know if anyone had helped her husband in the assassination. Asked what he had thought of the President, she said he "never say much—nothing bad."

Earlier Mr. Thorne said that Oswald had read to her articles "favorable" to Mr. Kennedy.

She was asked whether Oswald had been a violent, angry man.

"He was normal," she replied.

Did she feel that it was normal to shoot at Mr. Walker?

"This was not normal, to shoot at anybody," she said.

As to whether the assassin might have been aiming at Gov. John B. Connally Jr. of Texas, who was wounded in the shooting, Mrs. Oswald said, "I don't know."

She was asked whether Oswald had ever said anything about the Governor.

"He said only good, fine," she replied.

About the rifle practice she said, "He don't tell me why the reason." The questions also covered Oswald's alleged trips to a rifle range, causing some confusion in her answers. After the interview Mr. Thorne said she apparently had misunderstood the questions.

Mrs. Oswald did not know, he said, whether her husband went to a rifle range to practice. What she meant, he said, was that he had the rifle at home and practiced sighting it when it was empty, and that she did not see him fire it.

On the question of how Oswald's trip to Mexico last September had been financed, she explained that "we have a little bit of money before he go to New Mexico—no, Mexico City." He got the money by working, she said, and added "we keep money."

Would Stay in Texas

As to how she had regarded Oswald when she met him in Russia before their marriage, she said that "he was American in man; he was interested for me."

She went on to say that "he was normal, but changed character here."

Mrs. Oswald was asked whether she had considered his behavior strange, particularly his maintenance of a boarding room in Dallas while their home was in suburban Irving.

She replied that she lived in Irving because Mrs. Ruth Paine, who had befriended the Oswalds, had "wanted to live with me, and I helped her to study Russian."

As for her plans, she said she wished to remain in Texas because "I like Texas very much"; resume her work as a pharmacist—"I like my profession"—and become an American citizen.

She also said she hoped to give her children, June Lee, 2, and Rachel, 3 months, a "good education."

Her face lit up and she replied with a firm "no" when asked if she would like to remarry. As for changing her children's names, she said quickly, "I do not want to change."

She appeared pleased on learning that one question was whether she had been treated well by the Presidential commission.

"Oh, yes, sir," she said with a smile.

"Looks like my grandfather, the Chief," she added in a reference to Chief Justice Earl Warren, commission chairman.

At the beginning of the interview Mr. Thorne thanked the newsmen for their consideration of Mrs. Oswald in her appearance before the commission.

He said clarification was needed about her role as a witness, because there "seems to be some talk on the street and in the coffee shops that she is here, perhaps, in the role of a defendant."

He said the Chief Justice had stated that her "sole role" had been that of a witness to give any information she had, identify exhibits and provide any aid in the inquiry.

Mr. Thorne disclosed that donations to Mrs. Oswald totaled more than \$35,000, and had been placed in a trust fund administered by a bank.

To increase her income, he said, she is interested in having a book written about her experiences.