

Oswald—Man Without Motive

American Tragedy

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WASHINGTON — The Lee Harvey Oswald of the Warren Report emerges as an American tragedy, a bright, failure-ridden child whose hostility multiplied until on Nov. 22 he did the unthinkable.

Without any apparent motive.

From hundreds of interviews with his acquaintances, from his pinched and ungrammatical writings, from official reports on him, the voice of his wife, Marina, shoots out like a bell-tone. Where could he have been happy? She answers:

"Only on the moon, perhaps."

"While Oswald appeared to most of those who knew him as a meek and harmless person—in the Marine Corps, he was known as 'Ozzie the rabbit'—he sometimes imagined himself as 'the Commander' and, apparently seriously, as a political prophet—a man who said that after 20 years he would be prime minister. His wife testified that he compared himself with the great leaders of history . . . there was some quality about him that led him to act with an apparent disregard for possible consequences . . . Oswald apparently started reading about Communism when he was about 15."

HINT OF MOTIVE

The commission can give only a hint of the assassin's motives, saying:

"No one will ever know what passed through Oswald's mind during the week before Nov. 22. . . ."



LEE HARVEY OSWALD — NAMED AS THE ASSASSIN
A grim climax to his life-long search for fame

"Since Oswald is dead, the Commission is not able to (say whether) he was 'sane' under prevailing legal standards . . . perhaps the most outstanding conclusion of such a study is that Oswald was profoundly alienated from the world in which he lived. His life was characterized by isolation, frustration and failure. . . . He does not appear to have been able to establish meaningful relationships with other people."

Oswald, born in New Orleans Oct. 18, 1930, like Jack Ruby, the man who killed him, spent time in a foster home when poverty and a wrecked family first began to build up his hates. With an I.Q. of 118, his early grades were "A's" and "B's." But his 13th birthday he was a truant "with schizoid features and passive-aggressive tendencies," as psychiatrists put it.

REFUSED TO SALUTE

"He refused to salute the flag, did little work," his teachers reported.

The elements of violence were there. He once chased his brother with a knife and later threatened his sister-in-law "with a pocket knife during a quarrel," the report records.

Oswald is overall a moody, withdrawn youngster; he reveals troubling sentiments in a talk with a friend such as "he would like to kill Presi-



MARINA, OSWALD'S RUSSIAN WIFE—A PUZZLING RELATIONSHIP
'He wouldn't be happy anywhere—except maybe on the moon'

President Eisenhower because he was exploiting the working class."

Finishing the ninth grade, he enlists in the Marines, is courtmartialed on a gun charge, requests and is put on reserve status. Then in 1959 he defects to Russia—a country whose Communism intrigued him since he was 15.

He is arrogant and ignorant but intelligent. He reads Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," but can't spell the word "desire," and writes of his suicide attempt when Russia at first denies him residence:

"Soak rist . . . then slash

my left wrist. Than plaug wrist into bathtum."

RUSSIAN WEDDING

In Russia, he weds Marina Prusakova on the rebound from his rejection by another Russian girl. Again discontented, he returns to the U.S. The Warren Commission comments:

"His attempt to renounce his (U. S.) citizenship had been an open expression of hostility against the United States . . . His return to the United States publicly testified to the utter failure of what had been the most important act of his life." Once back, he turns his hatred again on America and tries to go to Cuba—or the U.S.S.R. again. This, suggests the report, ominously, is "Oswald's

last escape hatch . . . to extricate himself from the mediocrity and defeat which plagued him throughout most of his life."

Using the name "A. Hidell," perhaps because it rhymes with "Fidel," Oswald buys a rifle. He has become even more sulky, withdrawn, beats Marina, alienates both of them from their former friends.

FIRES AT WALKER

By now, time has clearly begun to run on the life of John F. Kennedy.

On April 10, 1963, Oswald fires a shot at Maj. Gen. Edwin A. Walker, who resigned from the Army to conduct a right-wing crusade. He misses, but it is the first overt attempt at assassina-

tion, opening the way for Nov. 22.

The hatreds build up, this time against President Kennedy whose strong stand against Castro has been reported in Dallas. On Nov. 22 at 12:30 p. m. Oswald's bitter cup runs over.

The Commission weighs his motives, and acknowledges its answer is at best incomplete:

"Oswald was moved by an overriding hostility to his environment. He sought for himself a place in history—a role as the 'Great Man' . . . His commitment to Marxism and communism appears to have been another important factor . . . He had demonstrated a capacity to act decisively and without regard to the consequences."