

maybe, but nothing for me." Even if that was kind of insulting to him, he would try to handle it. "Come on," he would say, "you know I love you." He would play that he was a little boy and make jokes. Sometimes she would give in. She thinks he really liked sex but she resents talking about it. "Nobody asks Jacqueline Kennedy what Jack Kennedy was like in bed." And here she has to discuss most private thing--what it is to get inside a person and live through it. There is nothing dirty about sex unless you invite someone into your own bed and let people watch--degrading. But she would say no matter what their difficulties, people ask if Lee was a homosexual and she would say she never had any sense with Lee that he'd be partial to a man, never. Maybe he could be gay somewhere else but not around her.

Lee liked to stand in front of his mirror and admire himself, that was true. "How unbashful he was," said Marina. "He felt free like a bird to walk naked. Didn't show inhibitions. He would admire himself. He was not tall but he was well-proportioned. He had beautiful legs. And he knew I liked them, so he would flirt. 'Don't you think I have gorgeous legs?' he would say. Just begging for compliments. Kind of a joking relationship. Private, but of the sort people do have, no matter how silly." Her understanding: he really liked women. That was her interpretation. He could

probably sleep with twenty men but she had no idea of that.

When told how Lee went for months without trying to seduce Ella, never forcing her, Marina asked if it was possible that Ella was embarrassed to talk? "You know, I'm holier right now than I was then, know what I mean?" And then she thought, "Maybe he liked her so well that if she don't want him that bad, he didn't push."

Lee did tell her, and with a lot of admiration, about this beautiful Japanese girl who had been first woman he knew. That left Marina with an image of some lovely Oriental blossom Lee still longed for. Maybe was still in love with. It made her jealous. Of course. But Marina never saw one picture of her or knew who she was. Yet there in his mind was a lovely woman. Was that his way to influence her to pay more attention to all kinds of sex, to learn new ways? She wanted to compete when he described--always with great admiration--sexual things this Japanese girl did to him, this unknown beauty.

His last meeting with Marina remains as a bruise in Sasha's memory. It was not pleasant. She said that she had met someone more worthy than himself, more solid, and she was

going to get married. He didn't know whom she was talking about, and thought maybe it was someone from his group. Then she said her wedding was going to be soon, and it was Alik. Sasha said, "Marina, I courted you for a year, you didn't refuse, but all of a sudden, you decide that everything's changed." She said, "Don't insist on seeing me. I'm not going to meet you again." And he knew then that he wasn't a man of substance as far as she was concerned.

Maybe she had been hard on him to make certain that he did not come back again, but it brought him to understand that she was very tough. Now he comprehends: She needed a man as a partner. In those days he had never thought about sexual intimacy. It was enough that they dated and they would kiss. He dreamed of getting married to her, having a family, being happy. But he wasn't a good match. He sees now he couldn't be.

She had been his first love, and after Marina, he avoided women for a year and a half. Looking back on it now, he thinks that no young person in his group was suitable for her as a husband. Certainly Marina had not been happy with just his kisses. She needed more than kisses. This is what he thinks now. Maybe Oswald was able to give her more as a man than he, Sasha, could give. That's what he thinks now. . . she needed a man.

He also wonders whether Marina's decision not to marry him was affected by his having to work so hard. It undermined his social position. He was certainly not a member of the elite.

The interviewers remarked to Sasha that most medical students take pride in being cynical about sex. After all, they are in a dissecting room for a year. Most young medical students tend to be hard-nosed and cold.

"I understand," Sasha said, "I understand."

"Yet you were very romantic in your views, very pure."

Sasha answered: "The difference was in how I was brought up. I want to say a little about my biography, very briefly. My father was a military pilot. During the war, he perished. He was a general. He was Twice-Hero-of-the-Soviet Union. He bombed Berlin. After that war, my mother got married again to my stepfather. My mother was an engineer, and was educated. But my stepfather was 25 years older than her, without education: a hairdresser. And in our family at home, there was always a great deal of respect for women, which was expressed in this way: My stepfather carried out my mother's every wish. I think my way of treating women is a result of

my family background.

"Maybe because of that, I have one kind of attitude toward women: absolute respect. Absolute respect."

Since his father was Twice-a-Hero-of-the-Soviet Union, didn't that give him some social standing?

Sasha replied, "Nobody knew about that, and I didn't tell anyone. I never used privileges I could have had because he was a hero and he perished. I think maybe even Marina didn't know. You may be first people I've told this to in many years. My wife knows. In 1962, I met my future spouse, my wife, and she and I have been living together for 31 years. So what am I getting at?

"I'm a one-woman man. I don't believe in Christ, in Communists, or in anything. But I do like to look at beautiful women. And I like to flirt--although not seriously."

When Albina found out from Anita Ziger that Alik was going to get married, she was a little surprised. She was told that he had found an attractive woman with big (gray or blue) eyes and Albina said, "Congratulations to him; send that to him, and send him my best regards." But in fact, she felt

bad. She'd always thought that maybe something would happen with him, maybe they would start a relationship that would grow and become something special. She even thought she'd lost the man she'd really loved and cared about.

Valya thought Marina was happy with her new life because she'd become more established, more stable. She was now a dame, not a girl but a young woman. When you get your position in society in Russia, you're a dame.

Once after she was married, Marina said to Valya, "My husband may do factory work, but I never see him dirty. He comes back from his job as if he's an engineer. Never looks as if he's a fitter."

Valya wanted Marina and Alek's apartment to be just as neat as he looked, as she often came to help. Once Valya went with Alek to wash their balcony, a hard job and dirty, a labor job, and she had been at it for three hours when Alek came home from work to have lunch. Marina was cooking, and put food on the table for him but didn't invite Valya. Later, she said to Marina, "It's not hungry or poor or anything, but it's disgusting when you clean up for people to be offered something. Yet, some people sit and eat and don't offer anything, OK, please?" She was very offended. Marina went back and told Alek, because after that, whenever Valya visited, Alek was all over her saying, "Valya, do you want

Chapter 14 -- Early Married Days

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Once after she was married, Marina said to Valya, "My husband may do factory work, but I never see him dirty. He comes back from his job as if he's an engineer. Never looks as if he's a fitter."

Valya wanted Marina and Lee's apartment to be just as neat as he looked, so she often came to help. Once Valya even went over to wash their balcony, a hard job and dirty, a long job, and she had been at it for three hours when Alik came home from Horizon to have lunch. Marina was cooking, and put food on their table for him but didn't invite Valya. Later, she said to Marina, "I'm not hungry or poor or anything, but it's tradition when you clean up for people to be offered something. Yet, some people sit and eat and don't offer anything, OK, please!" She was very offended. Marina must have told Alik, because after that, whenever Valya visited, Alik was all over her saying, "Valya, do you want

this? Would you like that?" Maybe they wanted an hour alone that day, wanted privacy, but still after you wash their balcony, you shouldn't be treated like a servant.

[From the narrative of Marina Prusakova Oswald prepared for the Warren Commission]

May was our honeymoon month. On May 1 we strolled through the streets of Minsk in the warm spring rain and got soaked through, but we did not notice it. Of course we were both working but we had evenings after 5 o'clock and Sundays entirely to ourselves. We ate in restaurants, in the first place because I did not have time to cook dinner. . . and in the second place because I did not know how to cook properly. . . .He and I loved classical music. We had many Tschaikovsky records, as he was Lee's favorite composer, and also Grieg, Liszt, Rimsky-Korsakov, Schumann. Lee's favorite opera was "Queen of Spades." In Russia, a film was made of this opera, a beautiful film. Lee went to it four or five times and at home I even came to be jealous of this opera. After work he would immediately start playing this record, not once but several times [and] we often went to the opera, theatre, the conservatory or the circus. Lee liked to visit my uncle and aunt. My aunt [who] tried to make things as agreeable as possible for Lee, told me I should not bother him with little things. We bought some furniture and many

of my friends envied the way we lived. Lee was very anxious to have a child and very grieved when the honeymoon was over and there was no sign of a baby. (n.1)

They wanted her to be pregnant right away. For the first month, nothing happened, and Lee and Valya were equally disappointed. Valya even said, "We were hoping you would have a child, but you're probably going to be like your uncle, won't be able to." Said it after one month! Lee wanted to have a boy. He would call him David. Their boy, he assured Marina, was going some day to be President of the United States. And then whenever Marina would go to the bathroom, at least during days when her period was approaching, he wouldn't let her shut that door. He wanted to know for sure whether she was having a period. When she asked him why he didn't trust her, Alik said, "Well, you work in a hospital. If you don't want to have a child, you could have an abortion. So I want to know." It didn't hurt her feelings; she wanted a child too: she thought he was being stupid but she brushed it off. She even said, "Well, leave the door open"--took it like a joke. She said, "Lee, I want a child as much as you. I'm not going to do anything foolish." So, it was not such a big deal. It

wasn't like he stood there and said, "You must pee-pee in front of me"--no, it was more gentle. After all, late spring had come, and her mood was, "I'm going to have a child and I'm going to have a family right here," and she wanted them to be as young and happy as they could be.

May--The transition of changing full love for Ella to Marina was very painful, especially as I saw Ella almost every day at the factory, but as the days and weeks went by I adjusted more and more to my wife mentally. . . She is madly in love with me from the very start--boat rides on Lake Minsk, walks through the park, evening at home or at Aunt Valya's place mark May.

During first weeks of their marriage, Lee would meet her at pharmacy entrance, and walk her home and when evening came on their balcony, Alik would take out his binoculars and look at sights far off. At night, he would wash breakfast dishes and on days when they had hot water, he would do their laundry. When Marina would climb up their entryway from Kalinina Street, she could hear him singing Volga Boatman from four flights down. He wouldn't be one for a choir, but he could sing with zest. A pleasant voice. And he was washing

his own work clothes. He didn't want her going near them.

She didn't know how to interpret it, but he just didn't want her near his dirty things.

One day, he was doing something on their balcony, hammering a piece of furniture, and hit himself on his finger. She knew it hurt--would you believe it--she was physically hurt for him. She really went all the way. She felt their souls touching in his pain. He was that same way about her many times, she believed. But then he would turn cold and inquisitive and she would become guarded.

Of course, he also liked to be pampered. He had been like a little boy when she put that bandage on his finger.

She soon learned that he didn't enjoy his job. At work, he said, they resent him and his privileges. But she didn't know how true it could be. Lee played people. That she soon learned. Maybe he even played her. He was very secretive.

A few weeks after they were married, letters arrived from America and in one, was a picture of Marguerite Oswald. She was sitting in a white nursing outfit, just sitting in a chair. "That's my mother," he told Marina. He studied the picture and said, "she's gained some weight. As I remember her, she wasn't that plump." That was it. Marina said, "You told me your mother was dead." He said, "Well, I don't want to talk about my mother."

She wouldn't confront him because she did not know how to deal with it. He had said he was an orphan. Now, she thought to herself, "Stupid me! There I was believing late at night that God really sent me someone because he was an orphan like myself, and I have a scar on my arm, Lee has a scar on his arm. Had Alik lied to her in order to play on her sympathies?

He wasn't really. But he had known enough to know there was a sign should be, even if he was a liar--which was enough to make her sick.

[From the narrative prepared for the Warren Commission by Marina Prusakova Oswald]

planted Oswald's name, which their beloved dear day they got

Sometime in the middle of June we were out on Lake Minsk with one of his friends who spoke English very well lying in the sun and swimming. That was a wonderful day, and that evening, Lee told me that he was sure that after the required time, starting from that day, we would have a baby. I did not believe it, but a week later we were eating in a cafe and I fainted. I think this was the first sign of the baby. It was a great joy for us and for my aunt. . . but the doctors told me I might lose the baby since I have Rh negative blood. Lee was very upset by this, but when he had his own blood checked, it turned out that he was also Rh negative. Only a very small percentage have Rh negative blood, and this very unusual coincidence--in which husband and wife were both Rh negative--pleased us very much. (n.2)

Lovers can dislike each other so intensely in a fight, that good signs are important. They enable you to forgive. Similar Rh negative was so important. You could call it fundamental. Other signs as well. They were orphans, even if he wasn't really. But he had known enough to know where such a sign should be, even if he was a liar--which was enough to make her sick.

She could forgive him. There were good signs. He had planted a seed in a pot on their balcony same day they got their marriage license. When he was in that hospital for his bad ear, she had known somehow that he loved dried apricots. Who else would? And now they had found out: They had exact same blood type. They could have babies together. Were destined for each other. She still thought maybe God had chosen Lee for a certain girl from Leningrad.

June -- a continuation of May except that we draw closer and closer now and I think very little of Ella. . .

Chapter 15 -- Back to America

After she became pregnant, Lee showed her Dr. Spock's book one night. She didn't know whether he had had it all this time or had it sent by his mother. But every day he read translated passages from it for her until Lee, courtesy of Dr. Spock, was informing Marina, one expectant Russian mother, how their embryo would develop. What would come next. He was very proud. He played doctor with her and they would get closer. Even his Russian got better. He was making progress.

He had a habit she liked. A good habit. He could always put everything else aside. Nobody could push him when he was reading. His spelling was horrible but that could be forgiven. Russian--it's a hard language. Many Russians do not spell it well. And he did not know grammar. But for speaking, yes. He applied himself. He would stumble only occasionally. His vocabulary was not large but pronunciation was good.

However, she was pregnant--"an entirely different language." She felt distant from him. He wasn't angry; maybe in pregnancy such condition was normal. "You still love me," he would say, "it's just a chemical imbalance." But she felt

distaste for him. Now that she had got to know her husband a little, Marina decided he was a miser. So stingy. They had an apartment that she wanted to fix up, and he kept putting a stop to that. "No," he would say, "we have everything we need." Well, sure, but she wanted some feminine touches and there he was in charge of all money.

She didn't like that. She gave him what money she earned at work and now she didn't have money of her own. It wasn't like they each had their own little drawer. He had it all.

Before they married, she felt there was no need for him to control her or for her to control him, but then she didn't know much. She thought she could be her own person and feel comfortable with him. She had had no idea that he was going to tell her what to do. So she would bristle when he took a domineering attitude. During courtship, she had been in control but now rules were changed. Other times, however, she would still be pleasantly surprised. They would listen to an hour of classical music on their radio, and he would know what was playing. Very often they would start a game: Who was that last composer? She would say one, he would say another, and many times he was right. It was great; he recognized whether some piece was by Bach or Chopin or Wagner.

Also, Lee taught her to play gin rummy. Her grandmother wouldn't allow cards in their house in Archangelsk. Playing

cards was to please the devil. So Marina had never been interested. But now she played gin rummy with Lee and he beat her usually. He would enjoy winning: "See, I won again!"--it was important for him. But nothing to her. It never bothered her. Somebody had to lose.

Sometimes he would put down his shield and she would get a glimpse--if only for a little while--of what was in him. Then he would lift his shield again. He was embarrassed to show vulnerability. Only in intimate moments could he be himself, this little boy who wanted attention. Lost. Then he would play like I don't need anything. "He would isolate himself," said Marina, "play games with people. Treat them like they were not people."

Once, on a day when everyone was supposed to vote for some praesidium or something, election workers started knocking on their door at 7 A.M. Lee told them to go away, it was too early. They came back again and Lee wouldn't open up. He kept yelling, "This is a free country." He gave them lectures while they stood outside. She doesn't remember whether she went to vote, but Lee kept telling her that Soviet constitution said it was a free country. They were not supposed to drag you out to vote. So she got a speech on politics early that day. Of course, she had never studied this stupid constitution. That is, she had studied, had

passed exam, but she couldn't recall it. So he was teaching her about her own system and how they were practicing everything wrong.

He also liked her to be at home when he arrived. If she came in even 10 minutes late he'd be upset. "Where were you?" he'd ask. "How come you're late?" She thinks maybe that's how control over her began. His hours at his factory were always the same, and hers were always the same, but sometimes she might stop by a store, so you never knew who would come home first.

When she became pregnant, maybe her chemistry changed, because now she was very sensitive to odor. Their walls seemed to smell, even her balcony seemed rank when she opened its door. She was always sniffing somebody else's cooking. She couldn't eat. And there was Lee--if you boiled him in water, he would still have his special body odor. So, after her first month of pregnancy when he started treating her not so nice, she wanted fights. She looked for them. She had second thoughts--had she made a mistake? Maybe she didn't love this man.

Soon enough, she learned that Lee not only had a mother

but a brother who had a wife and children. All of a sudden it was family--Lee kept getting more correspondence. Since she couldn't read English she didn't know what these letters were about. Then one Sunday morning he woke up and said, "If I have a chance to go to America, would you go with me?"

"You're joking," she said.

He said, "No, it's a possibility. I don't know for sure, but would you go with me?"

That gave her a feeling that he truly loved her. And she said, "I don't know. I'm kind of scared." She took a breath, and added, "OK. I'll go."

It wasn't all that short a conversation--maybe it took an hour, maybe it took three days, but by its end, she said OK. He said, "I told them at American Embassy I was giving up my passport so it could be they won't allow me to go back. There might be complications. I'll have to write a lot of letters, and maybe my mother will help. Will you go?" When she finally said yes, he said, "I don't want you to tell Aunt Valya or any of your relatives. Nobody at work. Not yet. Because maybe it won't go through."

Marina did not believe it could happen. Even when she filled in her own applications by the following month, she still didn't believe it. Her dream of marrying a foreigner had not included leaving her country. She would not marry a

man who had no apartment--that was a real point in her life, practical. You don't go looking for love on wrong side of railroad tracks. She wanted to fall for a man who had respectability. And of course, that also meant a place to live. She didn't want to huddle in somebody else's corner, unwanted. So that was largest thing about marriage. Your own apartment. To meet and marry a foreigner was, in addition, flattering to her, adventurous. Sometimes she dreamed, boy, wouldn't it be great to work in Czechoslovakia for a couple of years? Or East Germany? Buy a sporty coat, look nice. When she married an American it was also to tell her girls at work: "See what I got? You just have your Russian nothing." They would say back to her, "Is your husband a worker?" She would answer, "It doesn't matter. He's still a foreigner. He's Oswald, not Vanya."

But now it was scary. Going to America! It gets scarier if you don't tell your relatives, and also keep it to yourself at work. Then, in July, Alik began to talk of taking an illegal trip to Moscow so that he could visit his American Embassy. She wondered if KGB would come and get her then, or send a letter, or call at work--she didn't know how KGB got in touch with you.

Part Book Two Partisan

Part I -- The Partisan

Chapter 1 -- An Entrance by the Author

It would be agreeable if this book could be written with virtually no intrusions by an authority that might be ideal.

It will not need to pass. The author must be obliged to appear in his own defense and more often. At this point, the author, if it necessary to intrude himself, must not leave the ground he has been occupying for months with the American Embassy in London or even to get back to America. Indeed, a full month before he left, in February, 1941, he had already sent a letter to the Embassy, requesting the return of his property, that was property he had left on Richard Snyder's desk in late October, 1940, before he had ever heard of him.

Part I -- The Partisan

Chapter 1 -- An Entrance by the Author

It would be agreeable if this book could be written with virtually no intrusions by an author; that might be ideal.

It will not come to pass. The author shall be obliged to appear in his own voice--and more and more often. At this point, for instance, it is necessary to intrude because Marina does not know that Oswald has been corresponding for months with the American Embassy in Moscow on ways to get back to America. Indeed, a full month before he met her, in February, 1961, he had already sent a letter to the Embassy, requesting the return of his passport, that same passport he had left on Richard Snyder's desk in late October, 1959, before he had ever heard of Minsk.

Snyder sent an answer to Minsk suggesting that Oswald might take a trip to Moscow. There was, after all, much to discuss. They had been in communication since. Oswald would tell Marina many a lie over their years together, but no single deceit may have been as large as his decision not to inform Marina and Valya and Ilya that in his heart he was already on his way to America before they got married. He had not advertised that he was a man who could live and work in two opposed directions at once.

We have come, therefore, to an obligatory shift in the tone of this work. Until now, our witnesses have been Russian, but such focus must shift, even as Oswald's center of attention moves from Soviet friends, girlfriends, and workers to American government officials. A navigation through powerful bureaucracies will consume his attention once more.

So be it. This is, after all, a book that revolves through separate scrutiny and small revelations of separate points of view. We are, in effect, studying an object (to use the KGB's word for a person under scrutiny) as it tumbles beneath the prisms of a kaleidoscope. It is as if we hope by such means to begin to penetrate the mystery of Lee Harvey Oswald and so be offered a glimpse of his motivation in killing President Kennedy--if, indeed, he did.

Which, of course, is another mystery. If the act and

repercussions of this assassination have come to compose the largest mountain of mystery in the Twentieth Century, then Oswald has to be one of the more mysterious figures of our time. Small wonder, then, if he was drawn to Russia, that enormous presence once characterized by Winston Churchill as "a mystery concealing a riddle wrapped around an enigma."

[CK]

Given the mystification that surrounds him, Oswald has existed among us as a cipher, a vague protagonist in a set of opposed scenarios that begin with Mark Lane who was ready to open the case and visited more recently by Gerald Posner who was more than ready to close it. We need not even begin to list the honorable and dishonorable practitioners of the art of investigative writing who have attempted to fit Oswald into one logic or another.

Perhaps it is more felicitous to treat him as a Martian who has landed among us. In such circumstances, we would study our visitor from every available point of view, hoping by the collision of numerous angles of interpretation to strike a few points of light, or even obtain an intimation that would enable us to say, "I have a clue. I believe I am beginning to see this man."

Be it said that long before we can have even a notion as to whether Oswald was a killer, and why, we must first

discover a few of our own feelings for him. What kind of man was he? Would we have liked him in any fashion, or respected him in some manner? Would we feel compassion for his humanity, assuming some part of him was human, or would we be repelled by the person? Would we see him as a disgorgement from the errors and perversities of the cosmos, a monster?

It is the question to pursue. What kind of man was he? Will we ever be able to approach his inner reality?

This book will take us through more than one of these bends before we can decide whether such a method of approach--to search for the man before we seek the plot--is of use to our collective American obsession to find out who killed Kennedy: Until we do, however, we will keep asking who was behind it all, and which plot was operative. It is almost unassimilable to our reason that a small lonely man felled a giant in the midst of his limousines, his legions, his throng and his security.

If, indeed, a nonentity destroyed the leader of the most powerful nation on earth, then a world of misproportion is upon us, a universe that is absurd. So the question reduces itself to this degree: If, indeed, it was Oswald who killed Kennedy, then let us try to comprehend whether he was a killer with a vision or an assassin without one. That has to be a most curious and frustrating inquiry since we must not only

look at him from many points of view, first Russian, and soon American, but must even try to perceive him through bureaucratic lenses (because all too often that is all we will have). Let us recognize, however, that it makes some difference to our commonweal, each and every time, if an act of murder is visionless, mindless, and all but passionless, or is a deep cry of wrath that rises from a skewed and tortured heart, but yet a soul maddened by its own vision of injustice.

We have come at least to the philosophical crux of our inquiry. It is to find a clue as to whether Lee Harvey Oswald did or did not possess the small inner grandeur of a soul alive within him. If he was the murderer, that will make some difference. For the sudden death of a man as large in his possibilities as John Fitzgerald Kennedy is more tolerable if we can honestly perceive his killer as tragic rather than absurd.

Absurdity corrodes the soul. The mounting ordure of our post-modern media fling (where everything is equal to everything else) is all the ground we need for such a remark.

Chapter 2 -- A Family Report

Let us go back, then, to April 1960, to Oswald's first spring in Minsk. An FBI agent, John W. Fain, was making inquiries about him then:

On April 28, 1960, Mrs. MARGUERITE C. OSWALD, who was then employed at Methodist Orphans Home, 1111 Herring Avenue, Waco, Texas, volunteered the following information:

Mrs. OSWALD stated that she has been very much upset and uneasy concerning her son LEE HARVEY OSWALD, since she learned during the Fall of 1959, with much to her surprise, that he had gone to Moscow, Russia, where he had renounced his United States citizenship and had apparently sought Soviet citizenship. She stated that following his discharge from the U.S. Marine Corps in September, 1959, he visited her for a few days in Fort Worth and left town stating that he was going to New Orleans, Louisiana, to resume employment with an export-import company in New Orleans. . . .

Mrs. OSWALD stated that shortly after subject arrived in New Orleans, she received the following letter postmarked at New Orleans, Louisiana, from subject:

Dear Mother:

Well, I have booked passage on a ship to Europe. I would have had to sooner or later, and I think it's best that I do now. Just remember above all else that my values are very different from Robert's or yours.

It is difficult to tell you how I feel. Just remember that this is what I must do. I did not tell you about my plans because you could hardly be expected to understand.

Lee.

Mrs. OSWALD stated that she was very much shocked and surprised to learn later that he had gone to Moscow, Russia. She stated that she had no idea how he arrived there but that she does know he had saved up about \$1600 from his services in the U.S. Marine Corps. She stated that he did not previously discuss with her any intention to go to Moscow, Russia. She also stated that he had never shown any proclivities for the ideologies of communism [but] subject was always a studious type of individual and that he read books that were considered "deep." . . .Mrs. OSWALD. . .felt that subject had a right as an individual to make his own decisions, however, she stated that she was very greatly surprised and disappointed that he had taken this action [and] since January 22, 1960, she had sent three different letters to her son but that all had been returned to her undelivered. She stated that she feared that he might have become stranded and in danger [so] she has had correspondence with her Congressman and with the U.S. State Department inasmuch as she has been very much alarmed for fear that

something might have happened to subject.

Mrs. OSWALD stated that she would gladly report any contacts made to her by Soviet officials. She volunteered her eagerness to cooperate in any way possible. She stated that she had not been requested to furnish any items of personal identification to subject in Russia.

(n. 1)

Later, in that same report, Special Agent Fain would summarize his interview with a neighbor of Marguerite Oswald:

Mrs. TAYLOR stated that the subject was a student in Arlington Heights High School and was only about 16 or 17 years of age when the OSWALDS moved to this address [and] that the subject was a peculiar boy inasmuch as he read a great deal and kept very much to himself. . .Mrs. TAYLOR stated that she actually felt sorry for the subject inasmuch as it appeared to her that he had few if any friends and no social life. She stated she pitied the boy because he had never known his father who had died before his birth [and also] remarked that she has never seen anyone stay at home more closely than did the subject. She stated that Mrs. OSWALD often quarrelled at him for staying at home so closely and on occasion urged him to go out and seek employment but that he preferred to sit at home and read.

Mrs. TAYLOR stated that Mrs. OSWALD was in poor health and extremely nervous and that she often quarelled very loudly with . . .the subject. (n. 2.)

Chapter 3 -- Mother to the Man in Question

Mrs. Oswald. Yes, sir. 262 is a picture of Lee in Atsugi, Japan, in 1958, showing his strength.

Mr. Rankin. That shows him in his Marine uniform, does it?

Mrs. Oswald. In his Marine uniform showing his muscles to his father. (n. 3)

In his interview with Fricilla Johnson reception at the Matigule Hotel back in December, 1958, Oswald told her that his father, Robert F. Lee Oswald, had a heart attack a few months before he was born, and his mother "in order to spare herself and the child she was carrying, . . . had him buried on the same day, an act which so horrified his relatives by the 'oldname' that they had avoided her ever since." (n. 3)

Yes, we can picture Lee telling the story in his Monaco hotel room as an example of his mother's weakness if not wholly lovable qualities. They had lived together, mother and

Chapter 3 -- Mother to the Man in Question

Mrs. Oswald. Yes, sir. 262 is a picture of Lee in Atsugi, Japan, in 1958, showing his strength.

Mr. Rankin. That shows him in his Marine uniform, does it?

Mrs. Oswald. In his Marine uniform showing his muscles to his mother. (n.1)

In his interview with Priscilla Johnson Macmillan at the Metropole Hotel back in December, 1959, Oswald told her that his father, Robert E. Lee Oswald, had a heart attack a few months before he was born, and his mother "in order to spare herself and the child she was carrying. . .had him buried on the same day, an act which so horrified his relatives by its 'coldness' that they had avoided her ever since." (n.2)

Yes, we can picture Lee telling the story in his Moscow hotel room as an example of his mother's uncommon if not wholly lovable qualities. They had lived together, mother and

son, all of his first seventeen years, except for two months in New York when Lee was remanded by Juvenile Court for truancy, and put under observation in a Youth House. Otherwise, he would not be separated from her until he went into the Marine Corps at seventeen, and for most of his life until then, he saw his older brothers John and Robert only in periods, for they lived in orphanages or were away at military school. For a large part of his first seventeen years, he and Marguerite Oswald were alone and Lee even slept in the same bed with her until he was eleven, a lonely boy, yes, who came home from school most days to an empty house and read by himself and watched television. "I Lived Three Lives for the FBI" was his serial favorite until Marguerite came back each day from work.

No large surprise, then, if they were attuned to one another. In January of 1961, after breaking up with Ella, Lee Harvey Oswald is certainly reconsidering his desires, and his options. He is composing the letter he will now have to write to Richard Snyder. His mother, some six or seven thousand miles away, must be sensing his prodigious anxieties, because Marguerite Oswald will take the last of her savings and make a trip to Washington before the month is out.

She had made efforts earlier to find out what had happened to him. She had written to her Texas Congressman,

Jim Wright, on March 6, 1960, and to Christian Herter, then Secretary of State, just a day later.

Fort Worth, Tex.

March 7, 1960

Hon. Christian Herter
Secretary of State

Dear Sir:

In October 1959 my son (age 20 years) Lee Harvey Oswald (serial no. 1653230) went to Moscow, Russia, three days after his discharge from the Marine Corps. He went of his own free will. In November the news was received here and my other son wired you asking for aid but no acknowledgement of that wire was received from either yourself or your office.

I am very much concerned because I have no contact whatsoever with him now. . .

I am writing to you because I am under the impression that Lee is probably stranded and even if he now realizes he has made a mistake he would have no way of financing his way home. He probably needs help.

I also realize that my son might like Russia. That he might be working and be quite content. In that case, feeling very strongly that he has a right as an individual to make his own decisions, I would in no way want to hinder or influence him in any way.

If it is at all possible to give me any information concerning my son, I would indeed be very grateful.

Thanking you in advance for your kindness in this matter.

I remain

Sincerely,

Mrs. Marguerite Oswald

1605 8th Ave.

Ft. Worth, Tex. (n.3)

Dear Mrs. Oswald:

. . .A copy of your letter addressed to Representative Jim Wright has been forwarded to the American Embassy at Moscow with the request that that office endeavor to obtain a report concerning your son's present welfare and inform him of your continuing desire to help him. . .

Sincerely yours,

George H. Haselton, Chief

Protection and Representation

Division

(n.4)

Confidential

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM

To: Department of State

Date: March 28, 1960

From: Amembassy, MOSCOW

Subject: WELFARE-WHEREABOUTS: Lee Harvey Oswald

The Embassy has had no contact with Oswald since his

departure from the Metropole Hotel in Moscow in November, 1959, and has no clue as to his present whereabouts.

The Embassy has no evidence that Oswald has expatriated himself other than his announced intention to do so, and the Embassy is, therefore, technically in a position to institute an inquiry concerning his whereabouts through a note to the [Soviet] Foreign Office. We believe, however, that there might be less utility in such an approach than if the Embassy were to transmit to the Foreign Ministry. . .a personal letter to Oswald from his mother with the request that it be forwarded to Oswald. . .

The Embassy will withhold action pending the Department's views on the above suggestion.

RESnyder:vb

(n.5)

Confidential

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM

To: Amembassy MOSCOW

Date: May 10, 1960

From: The Department of State

Subject: CITIZENSHIP AND PASSPORTS -- Lee Harvey Oswald

. . .[it] is not believed that the Department at this time should propose to a member of Mr. Oswald's family that this case should be pursued further along the lines discussed. . .The Department nevertheless appreciates the Embassy's continued interest and suggestions. (n.6)

testimony to the Warren Commission of this visit to the State Department.

It has fallen between the cracks. Bureaucracy is the only form of human organization that can manage to pass a hot potato through a small crack. Eight and one-half months will go by before State will hear from Marguerite Oswald again. That lady, however, has been gathering her forces.

Department of State
Memorandum of Conversation

Date: January 26, 1961

. . .Mrs. Oswald said she had come to Washington to see what further could be done to help her son, indicating that she cannot feel that the Department had acted as much as it should in this case. She also said she thought there was some possibility that her son had in fact gone to the Soviet Union as a US secret agent, and if this were true she wished the appropriate authorities to know she was destitute and should receive some compensation. (n.7)

But why not provide ourselves with Marguerite Oswald's

testimony to the Warren Commission of this visit to the State Department.

Mrs. Oswald. . . .I arrived at Washington 8 o'clock in the morning. I took a train and borrowed money on an insurance policy I have, which I have proof. I had a bank account of \$36, which I drew out and bought a pair of shoes. I have all that in proof, sir, the date that I left for the train. I was 3 days and 2 nights on the train, or 2 days and 3 nights. Anyhow, I took a coach and sat up.

I arrived at the station 8 o'clock in the morning and I called the White House. A Negro man was on the switchboard, and he said the offices were not open yet, they did not open until 9 o'clock. He asked if I would leave my number. I asked to speak to the President. And he said the offices were not open yet. I said, "Well, I have just arrived here from Fort Worth, Texas, and I will call back at 9 o'clock."

So I called back at 9 o'clock. Everybody was just gracious to me over the phone. Said that President Kennedy was in a conference, and they would be happy to take any message. I asked to speak with Secretary Rusk and they connected me with that office. And his young lady said he was in a conference, but anything she could do for me. I said, "Yes, I have come to town about a son of mine who is lost in Russia. I do want to speak--I would like personally to speak to Secretary Rusk." So she got off the line a few minutes. Whether she gave him the message or what I do not know. She came back and said,

"Mrs. Oswald, Mr. Rusk said"--so evidently she handed him a note--and Mr. Boster was on the line--"that you talk to Mr. Boster who is special officer in charge of Soviet Union affairs."--if I am correct. And Mr. Boster was on the line. I told him who I was. He said, "Yes, I am familiar with the case, Mrs. Oswald." He said, "Will an 11 o'clock appointment be all right with you?" This is 9 o'clock in the morning. So I said--this is quite an interesting story--I said, "Mr. Boster, that would be fine. But I would rather not talk with you." I didn't know who Mr. Boster was. I said, "I would rather talk with Secretary of State Rusk. However, if I am unsuccessful in talking with him, then I will keep my appointment with you."

So I asked Mr. Boster--I said, "Mr. Boster, would you please recommend a hotel that would be reasonable?" He said, "I don't know how reasonable, Mrs. Oswald, but I would recommend the Washington Hotel. It will be near the State Department and convenient to you."

So I went to the Washington Hotel. And as we know, gentlemen, there were nothing but men. They asked me if I had a reservation. I said, "No, I didn't but Mr. Boster of the State Department recommended that I come here." So they fixed me up with a room. I took a bath and dressed. I went to the appointment--because it is 9:30, I am on the phone, and I had to take a cab to the hotel. I arrived at Mr. Boster's office at 10:30.

But before arriving at Mr. Boster's office, I stopped at a telephone in the corridor and I called Dean Rusk's office again because I didn't want to see Mr. Boster, and I asked to speak to Dean Rusk. And the young lady said,

"Mrs. Oswald, talk to Mr. Boster. At least it is a start."

So then I entered around the corridor into Mr. Boster's office. I have all the pictures of the State Department and everything to prove this story is true. I told the young lady, "I am Mrs. Oswald. I have an 11 o'clock appointment." Mr. Boster came out and said, "Mrs. Oswald, I am awfully glad you came early because we are going to have a terrible snow storm and we have orders to leave early in order to get home."

So he called Mr. Stanfield--the arrangements had been made--now the other man, I don't have that name for you here, Mr. Rankin.

Mr. Rankin. Is it Mr. Hickey?

Mrs. Oswald. Yes, Mr. Hickey. You are correct. So then we were in conference. So I showed the papers like I am showing here. And I said, "Now, I know you are not going to answer me, gentlemen, but I am under the impression that my son is an agent." "Do you mean a Russian agent?" I said, "No, working for our Government, a U.S. agent. And I want to say this: That if he is, I don't appreciate it too much, because I am destitute, and just getting over a sickness," on that order.

I had the audacity to say that. I had gone through all of this without medical, without money, without compensation. I am a desperate woman. So I said that.

Mr. Rankin. What did they say to you?

Mrs. Oswald. They did not answer that. I even said to

them, "No, you won't tell me." So I didn't expect them to answer that.

The Chairman. Did you mean that you were seeking money from them?

Mrs. Oswald. No, sir. I didn't think that my son should have gone--in a foreign country, and me being alone. What I was saying was that I think that my son should be home with me, is really what I implied.

The Chairman. Did you tell them that?

Mrs. Oswald. In the words that I said before--I didn't come out and say I want my son home. But I implied that if he was an agent, that I thought he needed to be home.

Mr. Rankin. Did you say anything about believing your son might know full well what he was doing in trying to defect to the Soviet Union, he might like it better there than he did here?

Mrs. Oswald. I do not remember saying this. I know what I did say, and they agreed with me. I said--because I remember this distinctly. I said, "Now, he has been exploited all through the paper as a defector. If he is a defector"--because, as we stated before, I don't know he is an agent, sir--and if he is a defector, that is his privilege as an individual.

And they said, "Mrs. Oswald, we want you to know that we feel the same way about it." That was their answer.

Mr. Rankin. Did you say anything about possibly he liked the Soviet way of life better than ours?

Mrs. Oswald. I may have. I do not remember, sir. Honestly. I may have said that. I recall that they agreed with me, and they said, "We want him also to do what he wants to do."

So now this is January 21, 1961, my trip to Washington.

(n.8)

The Warren Commission's twenty-six volumes are a much maligned and misunderstood manifest of a great work. As an investigative effort, these volumes are compendious enough to bear resemblance to the Encyclopedia Britannica (if the Britannica had been devoted to one subject) and small riches collect throughout the Hearings and Exhibits, but it is also-- which is why it is so despised--a singularly bland, slow-moving, even limp set of polite inquiries that reflexively fail to pursue a thousand promising trails and certainly never open a thousand doors.

This is, however, to mistake its avowed purpose for its actual achievement. It is so pedestrian as an investigation, so benignly void of the inquiring spark of a touch of paranoia striking on a hitherto unassimilable fact, that the good motives of the Warren Commission have long been under

suspicion. For if the seven august men who sat were not trying to blur every outline but one--that paradigm of the twisted lonely killer--then one has to assume the opposite: that the most accomplished judges, lawyers, and government figures really do not know how to conduct an inquiry of this sort and so return to us the plodding steps of a million mediocre insights.

Yes, as inquiry, the Warren Commission's work bears resemblance to a dead whale decomposing on a beach, but it is a mistake to view their work in that fashion. For one, and now two generations of Americans, the Warren Commission's twenty-six volumes of Hearings and Exhibits has become a modern American Talmud, there as text begging for commentary and further elucidations. To novelists and historians writing a hundred years from now, if, that is, people are still writing, it will be a Comstock Lode of novelistic material, and local color, not much use for solving a mystery but to be honored for its short stories, historical vignettes, sociological insights, and its detailed presentations of bureaucracies interacting with one another until an Appalachian Trail of government paper tracks through the wilderness of motive surrounding Oswald and the government people who dealt with him.

So, let us give due regard to the Warren Commission's

twenty-six volumes. The work is never to be applauded for the acumen of its inquiry, but what a treasure trove of American mores, customs and trivia in the midst of our century, what a compilation of exhibits on the workings of the American mind under the stress of wishing to reveal and to conceal a matter in the same intellectual reflex.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE INSTRUCTION

February 1, 1961

SUBJECT: WELFARE-WHEREABOUTS: Lee Harvey Oswald

TO: The American Embassy, MOSCOW

. . .The Embassy is requested to inform The Ministry of Foreign Affairs that Mr. Oswald's mother is worried as to his personal safety, and is anxious to hear from him.

RUSK

(n.9)

On February 13, however. . .Embassy received a letter from Lee Harvey Oswald. It had no date but was post-marked Minsk, February 5, 1961, and it had taken eight days to reach Richard Snyder in Moscow.

Dear Sirs:

. . . I am. . . asking that you consider my request for the return of my American passport.

I desire to return to the United States, that is if we could come to some agreement concerning the dropping of any legal proceedings against me. If so, then I would be free to ask the Russian authorities to allow me to leave. If I could show them my American passport, I am of the opinion they would give me an exit visa.

They have at no time insisted that I take Russian citizenship. I am living here with non-permanent type papers for a foreigner.

I cannot leave Minsk without permission, therefore I am writing rather than calling in person.

I hope that in recalling the responsibility I have to America that you remember yours in doing everything you can to help me since I am an American citizen.

Sincerely,

/s/ Lee Harvey Oswald (n.10)

AIR POUCH

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

From: Amembassy MOSCOW

February 28, 1961

To: The Department of State, Washington

Subject: Citizenship and Passports, Lee Harvey Oswald

. . . Oswald's present address. . . is: Ulitsa

Kalinina, House 4, Apartment 24, Minsk. The Department may wish to transmit this address to Mrs. Marguerite Oswald. . .

The Embassy is writing to Oswald [whose] reference in his letter to his being unable to leave Minsk without permission may indicate that he desires to come to the Embassy, in which case an invitation from the Embassy may facilitate his traveling to Moscow. The Embassy would, as a last resort, if the Department found no objection, and provided the Embassy were reasonably sure that Oswald had not committed an expatriating action, return his American passport to him by mail for what help this may be in facilitating his application for a Soviet exit visa.

The Embassy would like to be informed whether Oswald is subject to prosecution on any grounds should he enter the jurisdiction of the United States and, if so, whether there is any objection in communicating this to him.

For the Ambassador

Edward L. Freers

Minister Counselor (n.11)

American Embassy

Moscow, USSR

February 28, 1961

Mr. Lee Harvey Oswald

Ulitsa Kalinina

House 4, Apartment 24

Minsk, USSR

Dear Mr. Oswald:

We have received your recent letter concerning your desire to return to the United States. . .

Inasmuch as the question of your present American citizenship status can be finally determined only on the basis of a personal interview, we suggest that you plan to appear at the Embassy at your convenience. The consular section of the Embassy is open from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

. . .

Very truly yours,

Richard E. Snyder

American Consul (n.12)

Oswald's reply to this letter from Snyder will be written just five days before he will meet Marina at the Trade Union Palace dance.

March 12, 1961

Dear Sirs,

In reply to your recent letter, I find it

inconvenient to come to Moscow for the sole purpose of an interview.

In my last letter, I believe I stated that I cannot leave the city of Minsk without permission.

I believe there exists in the United States also a law in regards to resident foreigners from socialist countries traveling between cities.

I do not think it would be appropriate for me to request to leave Minsk in order to visit the American Embassy. In any event, the granting of permission is a long drawn-out affair, and I find that there is a hesitation on the part of local officials to even start the process.

I have no intention of abusing my position here, and I am sure you would not want me to.

I see no reason for any preliminary inquiries not to be put in the form of a questionnaire and sent to me. I understand that personal interviews undoubtedly make the work of the Embassy staff lighter than written correspondence, however, in some cases, other means must be employed.

Sincerely,

Lee Oswald (n.13)

Representative Ford. And according to the records, the letter written by Oswald on February 5, 1961, was received February 12, 1961.

Mr. Snyder. Yes.

Mr. Lee Harvey Oswald
Ulitsa Kalinina

American Embassy
Moscow, USSR
March 24, 1961

House 4, Apartment 24
Minsk, USSR

Dear Mr. Oswald:

We have your letter of March 12, 1961. . .

The Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs has always assured the Embassy that it interposes no objections or obstacles to visits to the Embassy on the part of American citizens in the Soviet Union. As stated in our previous letter, a final determination of your present American citizenship status can only be made on the basis of a personal interview. . .

We suggest that you inform us in advance of any intention to visit the Embassy so as to be assured of an appointment without delay. You may, however, drop in at any time during normal office hours. You may wish to present this letter to the authorities in Minsk in connection with an application for permission to travel to Moscow.

Very truly yours,
Richard E. Snyder
American Consul (n.14)

Representative Ford. And according to the records, the letter written by Oswald on February 5, 1961, was received February 13, 1961.

Mr. Snyder. Yes.

Representative Ford. And . . . a reply was given February 28, is that correct?

Mr. Snyder. I think that is correct, sir.

Mr. Dulles. Does that mean it took 8 days to go from Minsk to Moscow?

Mr. Snyder. Yes, sir.

Mr. Dulles. Isn't that an unusually long time?

Mr. Snyder. Well, not too much of that time is transit time.

Representative Ford. It also shows it took 15 days to get out of the American Embassy.

Mr. Snyder. You must remember that in my eyes, as the officer on the spot, Mr. Oswald had no claim to prior action from the Embassy among other cases. And although the consular officer attempts to be as impersonal as he can about these things, as a matter of fact it is very difficult to be entirely impersonal.

Mr. Oswald had no claim to any unusual attentions of mine, I must say. (n.15)

Mrs. Oswald. . . Well, on January 21 was my trip to Washington, 1961. Approximately 8 weeks later, on March

22, 1961, I received a letter from the State Department informing me of my son's address, which you probably have, if you don't, sir, I have the copies. And also stating that my son wishes to return back to the United States--just 8 weeks after my trip to Washington.

Now, you want to know why I think my son is an agent. And I have been telling you all along.

Here is a very important thing why my son was an agent. On March 22 I receive a letter of his address and stating that my son wishes to return back to the United States. You have that, sir?

Mr. Rankin. Yes.

Mrs. Oswald. On April 30, 1961, he marries a Russian girl--approximately 5 weeks later.

Now, why does a man who wants to come back to the United States, 5 weeks later--here is the proof--April 30, 1961 is the wedding date--marry a Russian girl? Because I say--and I may be wrong--the U.S. Embassy has ordered him to marry this Russian girl. And a few weeks later, May 16, 1961, he is coming home with the Russian girl. And as we know, he does not get out of the Soviet Union with the Russian girl, with money loaned to him by the U.S. Embassy. I may be wrong, gentlemen, but two and two in my book makes four. . . . (n.16)

She is worthy of Dickens. Like Micawber, like Uriah

Heep, no word she utters will be out of character. She puts her stamp on every phrase. Few people without a literary motive would be able to bear her company for long, but a novelist can esteem her. She does all his work for him.

Mr. Rankin. Is that what you mean?

Mrs. Oswald. I would say that.

Mr. Rankin. Now, was there any time that Marina said anything to you to lead you to believe that she thought your son, Lee, married her because he was an agent?

Mrs. Oswald. No, sir, no, sir. Not at any time at all.

Mr. Rankin. You think she loved him?

Mrs. Oswald. I believe that Marina loved him in a way. But I believe that Marina wanted to come to America. I believe that Lee had talked America to her, and she wanted to come to America. I say this for a lot of little things that happened--that Marina wanted to come to America. Maybe she loved him. I am sure she did, anyway. She said that she did.

Mr. Rankin. I am not clear about this being ordered to marry her. You don't mean that your son didn't love her.

Mrs. Oswald. Well, I could mean that--if he is an agent, and he has a girl friend, and it is to the benefit of the

country that he marry this girl friend, and the Embassy helped him get this Russian girl out of Russia--let's face it, well, whether he loved her or not, he would take her to America if that would give him contact with Russians, yes, sir.

Mr. Rankin. Is that what you mean?

Mrs. Oswald. I would say that.

Mr. Rankin. And you don't think it was because your son loved her, then?

Mrs. Oswald. I do not know whether my son loved her or not. But I am telling you why he would do this in five week's time. . .

Mr. Rankin. . . .I think it is a very serious thing to say about your son, that he would do a thing like that to a girl.

Mrs. Oswald. No, sir, it is not a serious thing. I know a little about the CIA and so on, the U-2, Powers, and things that have been made public. They go through any extreme for their country. I do not think that would be serious for him to marry a Russian girl and bring her here so he would have contact. I think that is all part of an agent's duty.

Mr. Rankin. You think your son was capable of doing that?

Mrs. Oswald. Yes, sir, I think my son was an agent. I
certainly do. (n.17)

Chapter 4 -- Bureau of Consular Affairs

In March and April and May of 1961, the State Department is facing less speculative matters than whether Oswald is a CIA agent. Technical questions abound. Just what is Oswald's status? If he has not renounced his citizenship, then under what circumstances is his passport to be returned to him? Of course, they have not been told as yet that he is married. He will not inform them until May--a further turn of the screw for all concerned.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE INSTRUCTION

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

SUBJECT: CITIZENSHIP AND PASSPORTS: Lee Harvey Oswald
To: The American Embassy MOSCOW

1. If you are fully satisfied that he has not expatriated himself in any manner, you are authorized to send his United States passport to be valid for his direct return to the United States and effect its delivery to him by mail under proper safeguards.

The Department is not in a position to advise Mr.

Chapter 4 -- Bureaucratic Soundings

In March and April and May of 1961, the State Department is facing less speculative matters than whether Oswald is a CIA agent. Technical questions abound. Just what is Oswald's status? If he has not renounced his citizenship, then under what circumstances is his passport to be returned to him? Of course, they have not been told as yet that he is married. He will not inform them until May--a further turn of the screw for all concerned.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE INSTRUCTION

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

SUBJECT: CITIZENSHIP AND PASSPORTS: Lee Harvey Oswald

To: The American Embassy MOSCOW

. . .if you are fully satisfied that he has not expatriated himself in any manner, you are authorized to amend his United States passport to be valid for his direct return to the United States and effect its delivery to him by mail under proper safeguards.

The Department is not in a position to advise Mr.

Oswald whether upon his desired return to the United States he may be amenable to prosecution for any possible offenses committed in violation of the laws of the United States or the laws of any of its States. . .

Drafted By: PPT: BWaterman:bjb 3/27/61 (n.1)

Four days later on March 31, the bureaucratic sanctity of "being not in a position to advise Mr. Oswald" whether he might be arrested should he return, is obliged to encounter a set of good reasons why he should not only be allowed, but encouraged to come back to the United States.

MEMORANDUM

CONFIDENTIAL

TO: PT/U Mr. Edward J. Hickey Date: March 31, 1961

FROM: PT/F John T. White

SUBJECT: Instruction to Moscow drafted March 27, 1961

. . .it is believed that whatever risk might be involved in transmitting the passport by mail. . .would be more than offset by the opportunity provided the United States to obtain information from Mr. Oswald concerning his activities in the Soviet Union. For the best interests of the United States, therefore, and as the

possession of a passport might facilitate his obtention of an exit visa it is believed that we should do everything within our power to facilitate Oswald's entry into the United States.

Attachments: As stated

PPT: GCacciatore:bjb

(n.2)

This will become subtext for all correspondence to come. The State Department will end with a voluminous file containing a host of intricacies, caveats, precedents, loopholes, directives, waivers and sanctions before they will give a visa to Oswald and his wife, but finally, this subtext is going to prevail. Oswald is needed, Oswald is useful. The intelligence to be gained from him about Soviet life and the propaganda benefits that will accrue worldwide from a Marine defector who decides to come back from the Soviet Union will be factors powerful enough to take Oswald through many a bureaucratic lock and gate.

[Receipt stamp:
Embassy of the United States
of America
May 25, 1961
MOSCOW]

May 1969

Dear Sirs,

In regards to your letter of March 24. I understand the reasons for the necessity of a personal interview at the Embassy, however, I wish to make it clear that I am asking not only for the right to return to the United States, but also for full guarantees that I shall not, under any circumstances, be persecuted for any act pertaining to this case. I made that clear in my first letter, although nothing has been said, even vaguely, concerning this in my correspondence with the Embassy. Unless you honestly think that this condition can be met, I see no reason for a continuance of our correspondence. Instead, I shall endeavor to use my relatives in the United States to see about getting something done in Washington.

As for coming to Moscow, this would have to be on my own initiative and I do not care to take the risk of getting into an awkward situation unless I think it worthwhile. Also, since my last letter I have gotten married.

My wife is Russian, born in Leningrad, she has no parents living and is quite willing to leave the Soviet Union with me and live in the United States.

I would not leave here without my wife so arrangements would have to be made for her to leave at the

same time as I do. . . .

So with the extra complication I suggest you do some checking up before advising me further.

I believe I have spoken frankly in this letter. I hope you do the same in your next letter.

Sincerely Yours,
Lee Harvey Oswald

(n.3)

May 3, 1961

Dear Robert,

It's been a long time since I have written you, more than a year, a lot has happened in that time.

I am now living in the city of Minsk which is 400 miles southwest of Moscow. Minsk is the capital city of the Soviet state of Byelorussia.

I have been living here already a year and three months. I came to live in Minsk after I wrote my last letter to you. I have been working at the local radio-television plant as a welder.

On April 28 of this year, I got married. My wife is nineteen years old. She was born in the city of Leningrad which is the second-largest city in the USSR. Her parents are dead and she was living with an aunt and an uncle here in Minsk when I first met her. Not too long ago I received a letter from mother, but I lost the address. I would like you to send it when you write.

Chapter 5 --

Earlier that month, Oswald has written a letter to Robert Oswald. Since he knows it will be read at least once before it reaches his brother, he writes with an eye on the censor:

Regards to Walter and Kathy,

May 5, 1961

Dear Robert,

It's been a long time since I have written you, more than a year, a lot has happened in that time.

I am now living in the city of Minsk which is 450 miles southwest of Moscow. Minsk is the capitol city of the Soviet State of Byelorussia.

I have been living here already a year and three months. I came to live in Minsk after I wrote my last letter to you. I have been working at the local radio-television plant as a metalsmith.

On April 30 of this year, I got married. My wife is nineteen years old, she was born in the city of Leningrad which is the second-largest city in the USSR. Her parents are dead and she was living with an aunt and an uncle here in Minsk when I first met her. Not too long ago I received a letter from mother, but I lost the address. I would like you to send it when you write.

We have a small flat near my factory and are living nicely. In general I have found the living conditions here to be good but there are a lot of things still to be done. I hope to send you something from here if you like. The Soviet Union is one of the most interesting countries I have seen in my travels. You should try to visit us sometime. I sometimes meet American tourists here especially in the summer.

Well, that's about it for now, hope to hear from you soon.

Regards to Walter and Kathy,

Lee (n.1)

It is a flat letter, declarative of facts, empty of nuance, precisely the sort of non-affective epistle that family members who are no longer close to one another feel obliged to deliver when a gap is to be closed. How it contrasts with his previous letter to Robert Oswald. That was a long communication written in a Moscow hotel room fifteen months earlier by a young man just turned twenty and temporarily placed on hold by Soviet authorities, certain of their verdict that he was ignorant of Marxism.

Of course, he was not as ignorant as described. Basic was his knowledge of Marxism and full of passionate idealism, a pre-World War I Marxism is perhaps its closest

description. Doubtless, that is why the Soviets saw him as ignorant. He had no idea of the ponderous immensity of the new system, or the elephantiasis of the bureaucracy that had burgeoned out of Lenin's vaulting confidence that human nature was a river like any other, there to be dammed and channeled by the will and foresight of social engineers imbued with the correct revolutionary spirit.

Nov. 16, 1959

Dear Robert,

I shall begin by answering your question on why I and my fellow workers and communists would like to see the present capitalist government of the U.S. overthrown.

Do you remember the time you told me about the efforts of your milk company to form a union? Try to see why workers must form unions against their employers in the U.S.. It is because the government supports one economic system which exploits all its workers, a system based upon credit which gives rise to the never-ending cycle of depression, inflation, unlimited speculation (which is the phase America is in now) and war. In this system, art, culture, and the spirit of man are subjected to commercial enterprising, religion and education are used as a tool to suppress what would otherwise be a population questioning their government's unfair economic system and plans for war. Science is neglected unless it can be directly used in making war or producing more

profit for the owners of businesses. These are some of the reasons. Look around you, and look at yourself. See the segregation, see the unemployed and what automation is, remember how you were laid off at Convair? . . .

I will ask you a question, Robert: What do you support the American government for? What is the ideal you put forward? Do not say "freedom" because freedom is a word used by all peoples throughout all of time. Ask me and I will tell you I fight for communism. This word brings to your mind slaves or injustice, this is because of American propaganda. Look this word up in the dictionary, or better still, read the book which I first read when I was 15, "CAPITAL," which contains economic theories and most important, the "Communist Manifesto."

I will not say your grandchildren will live under communism, look for yourself at history, look at a world map! America is a dying country. I do not wish to be a part of it, nor do I ever again wish to be used as a tool in its military aggressions.

This should answer your question and also give you a glimpse of my way of thinking.

So you speak of advantages. Do you think that is why I am here? For personal, material advantage? Happiness is not based on oneself, it does not consist of a small home, of taking and getting. Happiness is taking part in the struggle where there is no borderline between one's own personal world and the world in general. I never believed I would find more material advantages at this stage of development in the Soviet Union than I might have had in the U.S. . . .

I have been a pro-communist for years and yet I have never met a communist. Instead I kept silent and

observed, and what I observed plus my Marxist learning brought me here to the Soviet Union. I have always considered this country to be my own. . .

You probably know little about this country and I will tell you about it. I did find, as I suspected I would, that most of what is written about the Soviet Union in America is for the better part fabrication. The people here have a seven hour work day now and only work till three o'clock on Saturdays with Sundays off. They have socialization which means they do not pay for their apartments or for medical care. The money for this comes from the profit they help to create in their labor, which in the U.S. goes to capitalists. Here in Moscow there is a housing shortage because of the War but it is not bad now. There is no unemployment here and in fact a slight shortage of manpower even with a 250,000,000 population. This is because the country is building at a pace which will put it first in all fields of endeavor in 15 years. Most important is the fact they do not work for employers at all, a milkman or a factory supervisor are both socially equal. This does not mean they have the same salary, of course. This just means their work goes for common good of all.

These people are a good, warm, alive people. They wish to see all peoples live in peace, but at the same time, they wish to see the economically enslaved people of the West free. They believe in their ideals and they support their government and country to the full limit.

You say you have not renounced me. Good, I am glad, but I will tell you on what terms I want this arrangement.

I want you to understand what I say now, I do not say lightly or unknowingly, since I have been in the military

as you know, and I know what war is like.

1. In the event of war I would kill any American who put a uniform on in defense of the American government--any American.

2. That in my own mind I have no attachments of any kind in the U.S.

3. That I want to, and I shall, live a normal, happy and peaceful life here in the Soviet Union for the rest of my life.

4. That my mother and you are (in spite of what the newspapers said) not objects of affection, but only examples of workers in the U.S.

You should not try to remember me in any way I used to be since I am only now showing you how I am. I am not all bitterness or hate, I came here only to find freedom. In truth, I feel I am at last with my own people. But do not let me give you the impression I am in another world. These people are so much like Americans and people the world over. They simply have an economic system and the ideal of communism which the U.S. does not have. I would never have been personally happy in the U.S.

I wish you would do me a favor. . . If you would, give the contents of this letter (except that which is for your benefit) to some reporter. It will clarify my situation. Use your own judgment, however.

I have no money problems at all. My situation was not nearly as stable then as it is now. I have no troubles at all now along that line.

It is snowing here in Moscow now, which makes everything look very nice. I can see the Kremlin and Red Square and I have just finished a dinner of Miaso i Kartoshka, meat and potatoes. So you see the Russians are

not so different from you and I.

Lee

HOTEL METROPOL

RM 201 (NEW ROOM NO.)

MOSCOW, USSR

(n.2)

Doubtless, he had written that letter for Soviet eyes as well. How much he had wanted to impress his new country with his desire to serve.

Now it sits there in all the irony of a repudiated testament, equal in its romantic excess to a love letter to a former mate one now detests. We can measure the hardening of his spirit in the distance he has traveled from that long outburst to the second letter he will send to Robert this May, wise, moderate, tough-minded, practical.

May 31, 1961

Dear Robert,

. . .I can't say whether I will ever get back to the States or not. If I can get the government to drop charges against me and get the Russians to let me out with my wife, then maybe I'll be seeing you again. But, you know it is not simple for either of those two things. So

I just can't say for now. I am in touch with the American Embassy in Moscow so if anything comes up I'll know. . . . (n.3)

Chapter 4 -- A Return to Moscow

He had to be debating the benefits versus the risks of taking an unauthorized trip to Moscow to visit the American Embassy. It is obvious, given the slow pace of his correspondence with Snyder and the non-appearance of his passport by mail, that he will probably have to make such a move. But what a gamble!

In an interrogatory that J. Lee Rankin sent from the Warren Commission to Abram Chaykin of the State Department in May, 1964, the situation is restated:

Question 1

Your file reflects the fact that Lee Harvey Oswald believed that he could not travel from Minsk to Moscow for the purpose of discussing his return to the United States with American officials without first obtaining the permission of Soviet officials in Minsk, and that Oswald was reluctant to seek this permission . . . do you have any information or observations regarding the practicality of such travel by Soviet citizens or persons in Oswald's status?

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In an interrogatory that J. Lee Rankin sent from the Warren Commission to Abram Chayes of the State Department in May, 1964, the situation is assessed:

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Answer

It is impossible to generalize in this area. We understand from interrogations of former residents in the Soviet Union who were considered "stateless" by Soviet authorities that they were not permitted to leave the town where they resided without permission of the police. In requesting such permission they were required to fill out a questionnaire giving the reason for travel, length of stay, addresses of individuals to be visited, etc.

Notwithstanding these requirements, we know that at least one "stateless" person often travelled without permission of the authorities and stated that police stationed at railroad stations usually spotchecked the identification papers of every tenth traveler, but that it was an easy matter to avoid such checks. Finally, she stated that persons who were caught evading the registration requirements were returned to their home towns by the police and sentenced to short jail terms and fined. These sentences were more severe for repeated violations. (n.1)

It is a species of Russian roulette. If one traveler in ten is given a spot-check, then the odds are 9 to 1 in his favor. Since he has to return to Minsk as well, such odds reduce to 9 to 2. Of course, if there are six chambers in a revolver and only one bullet is placed in the cylinder, the odds are 5 to 1 that you will pull the trigger and still be alive, but it is a fair surmise that if one were to perform

such an act, the chances of failure, at least as measured by one's anxiety, would have to seem equal to success, not 5 to 1, but even money that one would lose.

Say as much for the trip to Moscow. All through Marina's early pregnancy in June, and into the onset of summer, Oswald is living with the anxiety that so soon as he has his vacation in July, he will dare to take that trip. It can improve neither his mood nor his confidence that the man he will have to face at the Embassy is bound to be Richard Snyder.

July I decide to take my two week vacation and travel to Moscow (without police permission) to the American Embassy to see about getting my U.S. passport back and make arrangements for my wife to enter the U.S. with me.

Earlier, back in the winter of 1960-61, Oswald had wanted to visit Moscow on a bus with other factory workers, and was quietly refused. That is, his fellow workers left without discussing it with him. "It was our opinion then," said Igor, "that he should not go with a group from his radio factory." Igor could list their reservations: What, after all, did

Oswald plan to do in Moscow? Perhaps he had a safe place to visit where he could receive equipment or instructions or make a radio transmission. Maybe he would visit a drop and leave something. It was very important that they be able to control his behavior. If they didn't have proper people available for such surveillance in Moscow, then they had to block his trip. They were most interested in what Oswald would attempt to do on such a visit, but only if they could organize proper surveillance on him. Otherwise, they thwart his intentions.

When Oswald did go to Moscow during his vacation in July of 1961 and did visit the American Embassy to discuss returning to America, it raised no suspicions. After all, they knew by now that he didn't like it here, so from a political point of view, there was no reason to keep him. Relationships with America had improved and Oswald wasn't a good worker anyway. With all favorable conditions created for him, he still didn't want Soviet citizenship. OK. Let him go to America. KGB would not interfere with his illegal trip to Moscow since now they knew his intentions through his correspondence, and didn't need any more than that. If he had left Minsk illegally and there had been no idea where he was going nor with what purpose, they would have taken measures. But Oswald's goal was evident. During the two weeks of his vacation he made no attempt to go anywhere but to Moscow.

If Oswald, on the other hand, had decided on visiting some district where extremely important objects were located, that would have given KGB another course of action.

In Moscow in July, he was, nonetheless, under surveillance. Everything was done properly. It could be said that he didn't do anything there to evoke suspicion.

July 8 I fly by plane from Minsk at 11:20. Two hours and twenty minutes later after taking a tearful and anxious parting from my wife, I arrive in Moscow. From the airfield I arrive in the center of the city, make my way through heavy traffic. I don't come to the Embassy until 3 in the afternoon. It's Saturday--what if they are closed? Entering, I find the offices empty but manage to contact Snyder on the phone (since all Embassy personnel live in the same building). He comes down to greet me, shakes my hand after the interview, he advises me to come in first thing Monday.

Chapter 7 -- French Champagne

Being close to her husband's fear, she would feel similar fear. It was fear of that sort which goes on for days--he was so worried about being arrested when he went to Moscow. So he tried to prepare for what was to come; he kept analyzing his situation, said Marina. He used to write down each item he thought about so that he could cover all points. Later, when she was involved with visa applications for herself, he would give her detailed instructions, even try to program her so that she would not be caught unaware by unexpected questions in her interviews. He was meticulous.

In July, when he made his final decision to go to American Embassy in Moscow, he did not even know if he could enter without being stopped by Russian guards. "But as soon as I walk through that gate, I'm in America," he said. Marina learned that American Embassy grounds were not Soviet soil. If he had just one foot across, Russians could still stop him. Second foot in, Russians would not be able to touch him.

She would ask herself later whether he was more worried about Soviets not letting him leave, or of Americans arresting

him for giving secrets to Russians. Marina was frightened. She expected that her people would just go ahead and arrest him for travelling without a permit.

All the same, nothing could stop him. He had said to her, "One more winter in Russia and I am going to die."

So this was the time in summer, in July, on eighth of July, when Lee left for Moscow. Same day, telephone at pharmacy telephone rang for her. A voice said, "Marina, this is Leonya." A voice from her past. Leonid. Leonid Gelfant. "What are you doing tonight?" asked the voice. It belonged to Leonid, her elegant friend she had seen maybe six times before she met Lee. She asked, "Why are you calling? You know I'm married." He said, "It's Saturday; I thought I'd call." She said, "It happens to be that my husband's away. And I'm not doing anything. I'm just going to go home from work, take a shower, be at home." He said, "Would you have dinner with me? I have some French champagne."

She went home, fixed herself up, and they saw a movie. Then they went to his friend's apartment. She had decided she was going to test some waters. Maybe she didn't love Lee. Maybe one reason for seeing Leonid is that she was afraid of

going to America. So maybe she was wondering if Leonid was still a possibility: she liked him, he was Jewish, he had wonderful manners. Maybe if he loved her enough, she would divorce Lee. She did want to see if there might be more between them now than there used to be. By end of evening, however, she had to tell him that it was still too early for Gelfant to get married.

She felt dirty. So full of shame. She ran home. How, she kept asking herself, could I have betrayed Lee? When she reached her own apartment, she nearly threw up. There she was in their bathroom on her knees. Even now she does not like to recall that day, "although time, the bitter medicine, is the best medicine," she said to her interviewers.

Later, in America, she would even tell Lee about it but he didn't believe her. He said, "You want to make me jealous." There she was trying to purify herself by telling him, but of course, he manipulated everybody so much with his lies that he just had to assume she was looking to manipulate him.

In July of 1961, one of his friends who had a very good apartment asked Leonid to stay there while he was away. On an impulse Leonid called Marina at her pharmacy, and said it might be nice, in this type of environment, to see her. He did not know she was already married, although she had told him she was going to be, but he was not really all that interested. More important was that she was charming on this occasion, she was happy. It was not just as if she felt happy with him but as if she felt happy in life. She was warm and tender and they had nothing negative between them on that day, no bad memories to keep. And they didn't talk about continuing this situation, indeed, he thought that might harm her. After all, he, personally, was not interested in going with her, and he now knew she was married. He did not ask her any personal questions on this occasion so he did not know she was already pregnant. When she became sad--which was not untypical of her--this was his usual Marina. Leonid didn't feel that she thought she had made a mistake.

Reminded of her remark that it might be still too early for him to marry, he replied that since she now had a sexual relationship with Lee, she was perhaps more experienced than himself. However, she hadn't said anything insulting. Indeed, he didn't feel she treated him unkindly. He was very green in those days and had just started his own sex life.

She was a great help.

He never rushed into sex with women. He liked to meet them emotionally, so to speak. He even went to the Caucasus with one woman and still didn't have sex. He had remained very romantic and was looking for his princess, that person who could satisfy his intellectual point of view, and his emotional point of view, Mrs. Right for Mr. Right. That was why Marina could never stay in his life.

SUBJECT: CITIZENSHIP AND PASSPORTS: Lee Harvey Oswald

Lee Harvey OSWALD appeared at the Embassy on July 3 on his own initiative in connection with his desire to return to the United States with his wife.

Oswald... was questioned at length concerning his activities since entering the Soviet Union. No evidence was revealed of any act on his part which might have caused loss of American citizenship. He exhibited Soviet internal "stateless" passport... No. 3114 issued by the Moscow city government on January 18, 1960, which is prima facie evidence that he is regarded by the Soviet authorities as not possessing Soviet citizenship. Oswald stated that despite the wording of the statement which he handed to the Embassy on October 21, 1959, . . . he never in fact actually applied for Soviet citizenship. . .

Oswald stated that he has never been called upon to give any statements for radio or press or to address audiences since his arrival in the Soviet Union and that he has made no statements at any time of any exploitable nature concerning his original decision to reside in the

Chapter 8 --

AIR POUCH

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOREIGN SERVICE DISPATCH July 11, 1961
FROM: Amembassy, MOSCOW Dept. No. 29
TO: The Department of State, Washington
SUBJECT; CITIZENSHIP AND PASSPORTS: Lee Harvey Oswald

Lee Harvey OSWALD appeared at the Embassy on July 8 on his own initiative in connection with his desire to return to the United States with his wife.

Oswald. . . was questioned at length concerning his activities since entering the Soviet Union. No evidence was revealed of any act on his part which might have caused loss of American citizenship. He exhibited Soviet internal "stateless" passport... No. 311479 issued by the Moscow city government on January 14, 1960, which is prima facie evidence that he is regarded by the Soviet authorities as not possessing Soviet citizenship. Oswald stated that despite the wording of the statement which he handed to the Embassy on October 31, 1959, . . . he never in fact actually applied for Soviet citizenship. . .

Oswald stated that he has never been called upon to make any statements for radio or press or to address audiences since his arrival in the Soviet Union and that he has made no statements at any time of any exploitable nature concerning his original decision to reside in the

Soviet Union. . . .When queried about a statement which he had made to the interviewing officer on October 31, 1959, to the effect that he would willingly make available to the Soviet Union such information as he had acquired as a radar operator in the Marine Corps, Oswald stated that he was never in fact subjected to any questioning or briefing by the Soviet authorities concerning his life or experience prior to entering the Soviet Union, and never provided such information to any Soviet organ. He stated that he doubted in fact that he would have given such information if requested despite his statements made at the Embassy.

Oswald indicated some anxiety as to whether, should he return to the United States, he would face possible lengthy imprisonment for his act of remaining in the Soviet Union. Oswald was told informally that the Embassy did not perceive, on the basis of information in its possession, on what grounds he might be subject to conviction leading to punishment of such severity as he apparently had in mind. It was clearly stated to him, however, that the Embassy could give him no assurance as to whether upon his desired return to the United States, he might be liable to prosecution for offenses committed in violation of laws of the United States or of any of its States. Oswald said he understood this. He had simply felt that in his own interest he could not go back to the United States if it meant returning to a number of years in prison, and had delayed approaching the Soviet authorities concerning departing from the Soviet Union until he "had this end of the thing straightened out."

Oswald was married on April 30, 1961, to Marina Nikolaevna PRUSAKOVA, a dental technician. He is

attempting to arrange for his wife to join him in Moscow so that she can appear at the Embassy for a visa interview in the next day or two.

Oswald intends to institute an application for an exit visa immediately upon his return to Minsk within the next few days. His American passport was returned to him for this purpose after having been amended to be valid for direct return to the United States only. The possession of a foreign passport or similar travel document is typically a prerequisite to being permitted to file an application for a Soviet exit visa, and it was felt that there was little prospect that Oswald could accomplish anything with the Soviet officials concerned unless he displayed his American passport. . .

Twenty months of the realities of life in the Soviet Union have clearly had a maturing effect on Oswald. He stated frankly that he had learned a hard lesson the hard way and that he had been completely relieved of his illusions about the Soviet Union at the same time that he acquired a new understanding and appreciation of the United States and the meaning of freedom. Much of the arrogance and bravado which characterized him on his first visit to the Embassy appears to have left him. He stated that he is in contact with his mother and a brother in the United States. He stated that he had about 200 rubles and that he and his wife would save more for eventual costs of traveling to the United States. . . (n.1)

July 8 I don't come to the Embassy until 3 in the afternoon. It's Saturday--what if they are closed? Entering, I find the offices empty but manage to contact Snyder on the phone (since all Embassy personnel live in the same building), he comes down to greet me, shakes my hand after the interview, he advises me to come in first thing Monday.

July 9 Receive passport, call Marina to Moscow also.

July 14 I and Marina return to Minsk.

July 15 Marina, at work, is shocked to find out that everyone knows she entered the U.S. Embassy. They were called at her place of work by some officials in Moscow. The bosses hold a meeting and give her a strong browbeating, the first of many indoctrinations.

To: American Embassy, Moscow
July 15, 1961

Dear Sirs,

As per your instructions I am writing to inform you of the process and progress of our visas.

We have approached the local "OVIR" office and the results are not discouraging. However there have been some unusual and crude attempts on my wife at her place of work. While we were still in Moscow, the foremen at her place of work were notified that she and I went into the Embassy for the purpose of visas. Then there followed the usual "enemy of the people" meeting, in which, in her absence, she was condemned and her friends at work warned against speaking with her. However, these tactics are

quite useless, and my wife stood up well, without getting into trouble.

We are continuing the process and will keep you informed as to the overall picture.

Sincerely yours,
Lee H. Oswald (n.2)

July 14, 1961

Dear Robert,

On the 8th of July I and my wife went to American Embassy. I cannot write you what went on there because the Russians read all letters going in and out. But anyway I have the American passport and we are doing everything we can to get out.

You don't know what a test this is. I could write a book about how many feelings have come and gone since that day.

The Russians can be cruel and very crude at times. They gave a cross-examination to my wife on the first day we came back from Moscow. They knew everything because they spy and read the mails but we shall continue to try and get out. We shall not retreat.

As for your package, we never received it. I suppose they swiped that too, the bastards.

I hope someday I'll see you and Vada but if and when, I'll come with my wife. You can't imagine how wonderful she stood up.

Write often.

Your brother,

Lee

P.S. Marina sends her regards to Vada and you and the
kids! (n.3)

FROM KGB MAIL SURVEILLANCE

Addressee: M. Oswald
USA, Texas
Cromwell, P.O. 608

Sender: Oswald
Minsk
Kalinina St., h.4, apt. 24

[translated from English into Russian by KGB and now
translated back from Russian into English]

Dear Mother!

My wife and I will soon see you. On June 8th we went
to the American Consulate to arrange our trip.

You can't imagine how strongly I want to leave, but I
will go only with my wife.

As to your reading of "New Times"--this is a damned
Russian magazine and you mustn't believe anything in it.
I hope you feel good, and this letter will not bring you
harm, but I consider it necessary for you to know this. I
know that Russians read my letters, they will read this
letter too before you receive it.

But we will win, whatever it costs us.

Best from Marina.

With love, Lee

17.07.61

FROM KGB TRANSCRIPTS

For Object: OLH-2658

For Period: 17, July, 1961

[In these transcripts, OLH (Oswald, Lee Harvey) has been changed to LHO. Marina was always referred to as Wife.]

LHO: I can't tell you what to do. Do what you want to do. If you want, you can go with me.

Wife: I don't want to.

LHO: Why?

Wife: I'm simply afraid.

LHO: Of course you're afraid.

Wife: I don't know America, I only know Russia... You can go back to your own people. . .I don't know how things will be there. Where will you find work?

[Note: All underlinings in all transcripts by Stepan. The KGB transcriber's comments are in parentheses, like stage directions.]

LHO: I'll find everything, everything. I'll do everything. That's my job.

Wife: How will they treat me there?

(Radio drowns out conversation.
Impossible to get in entirety.)

FROM KGB TRANSCRIPTS

For Object: OLH-2658
For Period, 19, July, 1961

Wife: All you know how to do is torture. . .

(LHO goes out, yells something from
the kitchen)

Wife: Go find yourself a girl who knows how to
cook . . . And what did you do of all the things
you promised?

(LHO answers from another room.)

Wife: I work, I don't have time to prepare
cutlets for you. You don't want soup, you don't
want kasha, just tasty tidbits, please!

LHO: I can go eat at a restaurant.

Wife: Go to hell! When are you ever going to
leave me alone? I'll probably never live to
see the day when you leave me alone.

LHO: But you don't know how to do anything.

Wife: Leave me alone!

[Last three lines are bracketed in
the left margin.]

(They are silent.)

FROM KGB TRANSCRIPTS

For Object: OLH-2658

For Period: 21, July, 1961

LHO: Well, why are you crying? (pause) I told you crying won't do any good.

(Wife cries.)

You know, I never said that I was a very good person.

(Wife cries and LHO calms her down.)

Wife: (through tears) Why did I get married?
You tricked me.

LHO: But at that time I really did think that way. You shouldn't cry. I understand, you don't understand yourself why.

Wife: (through tears) My friends don't recognize me.

LHO: Well? I've also lost weight, right?

Wife: (cries) Why did I get married?

LHO: Well, what am I supposed to do? Is it my fault that you have a lot of work? I mean, you don't ever cook, but other women cook. And I don't say anything about it. I don't yell. You never do anything and you don't want to do the wash. What do you do? The only thing you ever talk about is how tired you are at work.

Wife: I didn't get any rest.

LHO: Well, what can I do?

(Pause)

Wife: Everything was so good, but lately everything has gotten bad, nothing's right. You can't please a man like you.

(They are silent.)

Later that night

LHO: Well, what? This is ridiculous!

Wife: I want to sleep, don't bother me!

LHO: (yells) You're going there!

Wife: (yells) Leave me alone! I'm cold. Get the blanket.

LHO: No! Cold! What an idiot!

Wife: You're so crude! I'm tired, I swear, I'm tired.

LHO: And what did you do that you're so tired? You didn't do anything. You didn't cook anything.

Wife: The cafeteria's good enough.

LHO: And who's going to wash the shirts, the socks?

Wife: Everything's already washed, go and take a look. You'll leave and then you'll be unhappy alone, you'll see.

LHO: (adjusts the radio) (Pause) Well, what do you want? Are you going to eat or not? Why aren't you eating?

Wife: I can't eat like that.

(Pause)

LHO: Get up!

Wife: Go away! I'm tired at work and at home too. Get off my back. What is it you want from me, anyway, what? For God's sake, just don't torture me. Soon enough you won't have me, and that's all there is to it.

(Pause)

LHO: You're going with me. Well, what did I do to you? . . .

Wife: You're laughing, but you'll cry later . . .
(Pause)
I don't want to now. I'm tired.

LHO: What did you do that you're tired?

Wife: Don't throw things around. . .

LHO: What can I do? (mocks Wife) "I don't want to!" Well, what can I say! We're going to be here four or five months anyway.

Wife: I'll be here. Let the baby stay by itself.

LHO: Are you crazy!? (yells) You should be ashamed! A child without a father! You should be ashamed! (laughs) You're still my wife, you're going! And if I leave, I'll send you an invitation.

Wife: You'll leave on your own.

LHO: You should be ashamed! You don't believe yourself what you're saying . . .

Wife: I'm not going to promise. If I don't go then that's it.

LHO: You're my wife, you're going.

Wife: No.

LHO: Why?

Wife: I know why.

LHO: Well, why? You don't know yourself. There, you see. Do you know how many foreigners live there?

Wife: They won't take me there, and they won't create the conditions for me, they won't create them. The American Embassy won't look after me.

LHO: Why do you think that? I mean, I wrote that I was obligating myself. (Note in left margin: "Obviously, he is obligating himself to provide her with everything she needs in United States.") You understand that you're my wife and that you're going with me. When I arrived here it was difficult for me too.

Wife: That is an entirely different matter.

LHO: But I'm obligating myself! I'll do everything.
(pause)

Wife: Of course, you might think this is just a mood of mine.

LHO: You can think that I'm a bad person and everything, but it won't be that way there.
(pause)

Wife: You won't convince me.
(pause)

LHO: You're just stubborn.

Wife: And you're always yelling.
(radio drowns out conversation)

American Embassy
Moscow, USSR
July 24, 1961

Mr. Lee Harvey Oswald
Ulitsa Kalinina
House 4, Apartment 24
Minsk, USSR

Dear Mr. Oswald:

We have received your letter of July 15, 1961 in regard to your desire to return to the United States with your wife and to your application for Soviet exit visas.

You will recall that further action on your petition for nonquota status for your wife is pending the receipt from you of a copy of your marriage certificate. One copy is sufficient for this purpose, but others will be required later and so I suggest that you obtain three official copies at the same time.

Very truly yours,
John A. McVickar
American Consul (n.4)

FROM KGB TRANSCRIPTS

For Object: OLH-2658
For Period: 24, July, 1961

21:20

Wife: Alik! Look, I forgot to iron the bed-sheets, there's one lying over there. Alik! Look how warm my ears are.

(They joke around, they laugh.)

LHO: Not bad songs they're singing.

Wife: There's some festival going on. Everyone's going to Moscow and people can say what they want. Before you couldn't say anything: not on the street, not on the street-car, not on the trolley. When Stalin was alive there was a

microphone in every house and you couldn't say anything. Nowadays it's a different matter.

LHO: Yes, yes, my sister.

FROM KGB TRANSCRIPTS

For Object: OLH-2658

For Period: 25, July, 1961

20:10

Wife: Well, are you going to let me write it or not?

LHO: I'm advising.

Wife: I didn't advise you when you were putting together your papers.

LHO: You have to put a question here.

Wife: An answer, not a question. That's the way it's done in your country but not here. Don't bother me, I know how. Do you understand that that's not the way we do things here?! I'm not going to do it that way! And that's that!

LHO: Calm, calm.
(Pause)
So, did you write it or not?

Wife: Are you going to stop torturing my soul or not? Do you think I'm a complete fool? I studied longer than you and you can be sure I know more than you. If you think I'm such a

fool, why did you marry me? You should have married a girl who finished graduate school and was a professor. [Whole remark is bracketed in the left margin.]

LHO: You don't know how to do anything.

Wife: You think you know how to do it? Sit down and. . .well?

LHO: Write that you want them to. . .(doesn't finish his sentence)

Wife: (interrupts) I can't write it the way I want, but the way it's supposed to be, got it? I'm not as much of a fool as you think. I graduated more than second grade. Is this really the way to treat a woman? All you ever do is yell.

LHO: I wasn't yelling, I was advising.

Wife: No, you were yelling.

(They argue about whether LHO was yelling or not.)

LHO: All right, I'm going to be quiet and not bother you.

When Inessa met Lee Oswald, he seemed not exactly unfriendly but very suspicious about things. They exchanged a few words and then he sat down in a chair and became completely occupied with some comic books his brother had sent him from America. He seemed peaceful this first meeting but

not too excited. Inessa stayed chatting with Marina for a few hours.

After that she began to come over more often and Alik's suspicions began fading away. Before long, Inessa was eating with them in their kitchen. Indeed she even liked it that he hadn't become open at first opportunity but had waited and observed. She thinks she probably wouldn't have believed him if he had been too friendly right away. In fact, she liked him as a husband for Marina. He did all the man's work around their apartment without needing reminders. Which is not too often true of Russian men.

What she wasn't so comfortable with was that all of a sudden he could announce what he liked about Soviet Union and what he didn't like and do it in the open--never pretending. Then there were other little things. She really couldn't say that she approved of him entirely, even if they were only small things. He would carry on if dinner wasn't cooked on time and in her opinion, Marina didn't fit into his American standards of what a wife should be. When they had fights, she saw them as children, one more stubborn than the other. She liked them both and was comfortable with both, and--maybe she was just lucky--but in her presence they never had any really big arguments. Just small things. She does remember that Marina would get irritated when Lee would read his American

comic books, and begin to laugh: she thought it childish. Marina would also become irritated by that, and besides, she was dissatisfied with Alik's mind. He was too pedantic.

He also had bad habits. Like a worker or a crude soldier. He was always spoiling the air with gasses. That was shocking, shocking to everybody, and he did it as naturally as drinking water. So, maybe there were little things.

All the same, she always felt that Alik was more calm than Marina. Outside of those gasses, he was very organized. Liked perfection in everything, and Marina used to complain about this trait. On other hand, Inessa never really thought that Marina was deeply in love with him. She thinks Alik loved her more.

About her years in Leningrad, Inessa thinks that, yes, Marina did fear people in Minsk talking about it. Not that she might accidentally reveal something to Alik by body language; Marina never was vulgar. It was impossible to tell anything about her past experience by the way she looked or the way she walked. But Marina could never feel free and comfortable. Of course in those days she felt terribly upset by that decision of Komsomol to expel her.

FROM KGB TRANSCRIPTS

For Object: OLH-2658

For Period: 26, July, 1961

LHO: So, there was a meeting?

Wife: Yes, there was a meeting.

LHO: Where?

Wife: In our clinic.

(pause)

You see, they would have been satisfied if I had said, no, I'm not going, I won't leave motherland. Never tell them any truth. Really, I shouldn't have said anything at all. I should have said that my position was such that I don't know what to do.

LHO: And what did they say?

Wife: They said that I was rude. . . .So, I said, I don't need a good reference, I don't care. . . .I'll go with a bad reference if necessary. I told them that I wasn't such a criminal. I told them that I love pharmacy girls a lot as girlfriends and that I'm not a bad friend and that I would give everything for the girls because they're simple, good girls. (Pause) I came right out with it. If you don't like me, I don't like you--no skin off my back.

LHO: And you. . . (doesn't finish his sentence.)

Wife: . . . They're going to kick me out.

LHO: . . .They're just Komsomol members.

Wife: They said people like you don't belong in Komsomol, that you should be expelled. I said that was fine, I'm very happy. . . . Why don't you want to [be a member of Komsomol?] They asked me a million times. Well, because I don't like it, because it's boring. And why

didn't you say so earlier? Because I didn't want people to think I was different. I shouldn't have said that part. . . I said a lot of things I probably shouldn't have, but I couldn't hold back. [They asked]. . . What do you think of Komsomol? I answer Komsomol is Komsomol. (Pause.) Actually, I'm an anti-Soviet element. Let's make it easier for them.

(pause)

And then, you know, he asks me what's your relationship to this man you went to Moscow with? And someone else says that it's her husband.

LHO: (laughs)

Wife: And who is your husband, what sort of person is he? I say you better ask MVD. And why MVD if we can ask you? And I say, because I might not tell you. . .

LHO: They know the most important thing is that I want to leave.

Wife: He longs for his homeland, I told them, everyone longs for their homeland. But didn't you try to convince him to stay here? No, I say. Then. . . I say, I don't think it'll be better there, not because I'm looking for something better. I'm just going with my husband. It's possible it'll be worse there. . . I say, you know, I haven't been there and you haven't been there, so how can we express an opinion? . . .

(Pause)

I said that I wouldn't leave my husband. He's a good person and I'm satisfied with him. . . he's more dear to me than their opinion. . . I behaved rudely, very rudely. I said, what are you going to do, confront people who gave me good references and yell at them? . . . I ask that you not persecute them. . . Better to reprimand me. . .

"We respect you, we love you," they said. "You won't have friends like us there," they say. And I say, "I don't want to have friends like that. I see how much you love me."

LHO: Don't worry, everything will be fine...

(Pause)

Wife: The most important thing now is leaving.

LHO: I know that, we're leaving, no need for scandals. . .

(Pause)

Wife: Don't look for truth, you'll never find it anyway. I was told that by my mother. . .

LHO: Everything will be fine.

Wife: You think so?

(pause)

Wife: Why do I feel sad? My husband isn't throwing me out of the house.

LHO: I love you.

Wife: That's what you say now, but afterwards you'll say that you don't love me.

LHO: Your husband loves you. . .

Marina's friend, Sona, was, of course, a member of Komsomol. That was practically automatic. In school, you started as Pioneer and when you reach 7th or 8th form automatically you go into Komsomol. They have a saying: you are born, go to school, become a Pioneer, become Komsomol. Like everyone else.

Not so big a matter, however, Sona remarked, to be excluded from Komsomol. You can ignore it. If Marina had changed her mind and stayed in Soviet Union, it wouldn't have been a bad mark in her life. It was not like being excluded from Communist Party--that's serious. But, Komsomol, you're a young person. Everybody thinks, maybe you made a mistake, slipped a little bit. Marina's main worry, Sona thinks, was whether she was making a right decision or a wrong one to go to America. Komsomol was not so important. After all, Komsomol had a rule that whenever you go to a foreign country, you are not a member any more. You give it up. This organization did not want members in another country. Could cause international trouble. So, before you go away, you come in with your special member's ticket and give it up. Nobody wants you to take such papers with you.

Administrative Bureau of Komsomol might meet once or twice a week with their salaried professionals, volunteers, but big meetings of Komsomol were only scheduled once every three months, unless something was urgent. Maybe their meeting to expel Marina was urgent. Sona thinks so. It was not regularly scheduled. People remember special events like that.

FROM KGB TRANSCRIPTS

For Object: OLH-2658

For Period: 29, July, 1961

(Quiet)

(They walk in.)

Wife: It's not your nerves, you're psychotic.
Why did you attack me? I'll show you how to yell.

(LHO kisses her.)

LHO: Come here, lie down.

(Quiet)

19:40

Wife: My God, your pants are so wrinkled.

LHO: It's been a while since you ironed them.

Wife: Four days ago.

LHO: A week.

Wife: So? You could wear them for a week [but]
you lie around in them.

LHO: Take it easy.

19:50 (They leave.)

21:45 (They come back. Talking in the
kitchen, conversation can't be
made out.)

(They come into the room.)

Wife: You're so wicked! (squeals) It's true
what they say about men not having any brains
until they're 30. (laughs) Ay!.. .(laughter)

What did you do?

(They go to bed.)

LHO: Don't touch me, damn you.

Wife: No, damn you. In a minute I'm going to cut off a particular place. Oy, mama.
(They laugh.)

(They talk about pregnancy. Wife tells about conversation with her doctor.)

Wife: When the baby first starts moving, it'll be exactly half. Give or take one or two days. Why does it seem to me that everything smells, my clothes, pillow, blanket? I look so horrible. We all look horrible in last months [of pregnancy.] And if I'm dying, who will save me? I have narrow hip bones.

LHO: Me.

Wife: The medical profession won't help, but you will.

LHO: Be a composed lady. You're a lady. The very first day you became a lady. Good night. That's all.

(They are silent.)

23:00

Tamara Alexandrovna, who was den mother to their pharmacy and knew everything about every girl's personal life, was approached: Marina asked, "Tamara, would you go to America with your husband or not?" She and Yanina and others discussed it. Many of them were newly married--so Marina

would hear advice of this sort: "Listen, I know my husband," one girl would say, "and with my husband I'll go to America. Do you know your husband well enough to go there? That's your question." They told her: you should analyze your situation. You work in socialist country; you're going to capitalist country. They have their culture, their habits, rules, laws. Can you cope with it? If you think you are able, OK, but it's your decision. Yanina knew she didn't want to take responsibility for giving more advice than that, but maybe Marina had already made her own decision.

When Komsomol excluded her, nobody thought about that too much. Komsomol was helpless. What could they do? Only thing was to exclude her, but who cared? It was no big deal to be kicked out. Only reason people belonged was because you couldn't not belong to it.

Valya was their only relative who would visit them once they admitted they were trying to go to America. None of Ilya's sisters ever did, nor did Ilya. Valya was only person who visited, said Inessa.

As for her situation at work, there, too, were problems.