

17 May

1994

Dear Mike,

Here is the first third of the "epilogue." More to follow soon.

Also, I have begun digging down to the 8th layer of Troy (i.e., Norman's desk) and mirabile dictu, found answers of some sort to your questions. Sorry they mouldered down at the bottom of the pile unnoticed when they could have been useful, but I pass them along now for whatever interest/use they may have.

I managed to sort the "important" mail folder, and after further triage, your book proposal is in the much skinnier "you MUST WITHOUT FAIL look at this" folder.

Best,

Judith

EPILOGUE

Chapter 1. A word to the reader

One stimulus to the writing of this book was an offer from the Belarus KGB to allow a look into their files on Oswald. While it proved to be less of a purview than promised, it was still an authorial equivalent of an Oklahoma land-grab to be able to move into such a large and hitherto unrecorded part of Oswald's life. As a corollary to such researches, the termination of the Cold War encouraged people who would not or could not have spoken to us even ten years earlier to free up habits of discretion as old as themselves and as ancient as the Russian centuries. So we had interviews that gave us a reasonable portrait of Alik and Marina and of their lives in Minsk.

Then, an old hunger came alive. One wished to come closer to an answer: Did Oswald kill President Kennedy? To anyone who has read this far, the only answer that Minsk provides is that one cannot tell as yet--much too much of Oswald's story lies ahead.

Of course, the task in Minsk was not to look for such answers. We are dealing, after all, with the largest mountain of mystery in the Twentieth Century, a metaphor first employed when approaching KGB officers for interviews. Why are you here, they would ask; what do you expect to find? And for reply one could only say that this was not a search for a smoking gun, no, it was more one's aim to come close enough to this Russian period of Oswald's life to be able to set up a base camp on the slopes of such a mystery. To the degree that one could have a comprehensible picture of Oswald as he lived in Russia--a portrait drawn by Russian eyes--one might be contributing to a future attempt by others on the summit of the mountain. So, our venture might prove of real use. Oswald was forever being put on a bed of Procrustes to fit the dimensions of a plot, or was portrayed as a patsy to fit the dimensions of someone else's plot. In this welter of scenarios, much of our understanding of what did happen might be improved by coming to know Oswald better; we could then, at least, avoid plots he did not fit. Before we can understand a murderer--if he is one--we must discover his motive. But to find the motive we do well to encounter the man. In Oswald's case, that is no simple task. How many young men are as timid and bold, tortured and complex, as hysterical yet single-minded as Lee Harvey Oswald?

If this metaphor of a base camp proved useful to explain our presence to those KGB officers who did not look upon us with the bemused suspicion that we were representatives of some new exotic venture of the CIA, it can also be admitted that it proved useful to us, first as a metaphor, and then it became real. Few who build a base camp have no ambitions on the summit.

The book on Oswald in Minsk is done, but questions remain. Working through the fall of 1992 and the winter of 1993 in Minsk with but short trips back to the U.S., or further east to Moscow, consuming nearly a half-year in interviews and absorption with the first 15 volumes of the House Select Committee on Assassinations and the 26 of the Warren Commission Hearings, one's own thoughts had to reach the surface after so much immersion in a subject, precisely those thoughts without proof or witness on what might have happened--speculation, in short.

Of course, the impulse to speculate beyond one's facts is a product of the conceit that a half year of intense research will inevitably produce--one begins to feel that one understands Oswald fairly well. After all, to know a man is to be able to do no more than predict what he will do next even if you do not have a clue as to why he does it. To understand a person, however, is to have comprehension of his

reasons for action. One acquired the conceit that one understood Oswald.

Hence, this other book. Naturally, to understand Lee Oswald more definitively, one could wish for a major biography of him. Our best resource--despite all its torpid stretches--remains the Warren Commission Hearings. They are filled with insights (if one does the work to locate such passages), and it is startling to discover as one pans these government volumes for bits of gold, how much gleams in the sludge. One can make a career as a minimalist writer (of the second rank) by laying out these testimonies in two and three-page narratives.

An attempt to approach the full twenty-four years of Lee Harvey Oswald's life seems in order then--we can appreciate it all the more for our knowledge of his behavior in Minsk. Indeed, to encompass his life in this manner, an author need occupy the foreground no more than would a literary usher who makes certain that all transcripts are assigned to their proper pew.

To this form of biography, then, of Lee Harvey Oswald, an author's self-indulgence, for we will wander out into those Indian territories of speculation where every fact can turn into an ambush.

After all, Oswald was a secret agent. There is no doubt

coming
back to
this passage
after
reading
all 900-
odd pages,
I find
it troubling
and
defensive
why
bad-mouth
your
own
effort?

about that. The only question was whether he was working for any more established service than the power centers in the privacy of his mind. At the least, we can be certain he was spying on the world in order to report to himself. For he is one of the principalities of his universe, or so, at least, he is forever being assured by his ego. We will understand the proportions of Oswald's psychology better when we comprehend that ego has analogies to architecture. Most egos are comparable to a peasant's hut, a trailer home, or a ranch house, but a few take on resemblance to such separate and immense edifices as Mont St. Michel, the Pentagon, the Eiffel Tower or the World Trade Center. It helps our understanding of Oswald if we look to locate his sense of certainty (and his mother's) in the ego-land of mansions, palaces, and consummately ugly high-rises.

Chapter 2--Mama's Boy

The first personage to escort down the aisle has to be
Marguerite Oswald:

. . .Chief Justice Warren, I will start with Lee as a
baby.

Lee was born October 18, 1939, in New Orleans,
Louisiana. His father's name was Robert Edward Lee, he was
named after General Lee

Lee was born 2 months after the death of his father,
who died from a heart attack, coronary thrombosis.

Lee was a very happy baby.

I stayed home with the children as long as I could,
because I believe that a mother should be home with her
children.

I don't want to get into my story, though.

Lee had a normal life as far as I, his mother, is
concerned. He had a bicycle, he had everything other
children had.

Lee has wisdom without education. From a very small
child--I have said this before, sir, and I have publicly
stated this in 1959--Lee seemed to know the answers to
things without schooling. That type child, in a way, is
bored with schooling because he is a little advanced.

Lee used to climb on top of the roof with binoculars, looking at the stars. He was reading astrology. Lee knew about any and every animal there was. He studied animals. All of their feeding habits, sleeping habits . . . that is why he was at the Bronx Zoo when he was picked up for truancy--he loved animals.

Lee played Monopoly. Lee played chess . . . Lee read history books, books too deep for a child his age. At age 9 he was always instructed not to contact me at work unless it was an emergency, because my work came first--he called me at work and said, "Mother, Queen Elizabeth's baby has been born."

He broke the rule to let me know that Queen Elizabeth's baby had been born. Nine years old. That was important to him. He liked things of that sort...

(n.1)

Robert E. Lee Oswald was Marguerite Claverie Oswald's second husband. Her first was Edward John Pic who lived with her long enough to father a child, Lee's half brother, John Pic, who joined the Coast Guard in 1948 when Lee was nine years old.

By 1948, however, Marguerite had come to the end of two other marriages, the last being to Edwin A. Ekdahl who will appear briefly. Between Edward Pic and Ekdahl, she was married in 1933 to Robert E. Lee Oswald, and they soon had a son, Robert Lee Oswald, Lee's middle brother. Five years

later, Robert E. Lee Oswald died while Marguerite was in her seventh month of pregnancy with Lee who then was born on October 18, 1939.

So much for natal and nuptial facts. The immediate reality of Robert E. Lee Oswald's death was borne in isolation by Marguerite who was proud of her self-acquired Southern gentility, just as proud as any good-looking younger sister in a large working-class family who is full of airs and aspirations, and even achieves a measure of gentility with her second marriage. After his death, however, Marguerite was reduced to genteel penury. Her life had become a journey through stunted little commercial enterprises--moves from low-paying jobs to business ventures so small that the heart of their profit was chewed out before she began. But we can leave these details to John Pic, Lee's oldest brother.

Mr. Pic. Well, while we lived on Bartholemew Street, my mother opened in the front room a little store called Oswald's Notion Shop. I think she sold spools of thread and needles and things like this.

Mr. Jenner. Did she sell any sweets or candy for children?

Mr. Pic. Yes, sir; I remember we used to go there and swipe it.

Mr. Jenner. And it was in a segment of the home at 1010 Bartholemew?

Mr. Pic. Yes, sir; it was the very front room . . . we had a dog and the dog's name was Sunshine . . . I remember the house.

Mr. Jenner. Was it a nice neighborhood? . . .

Mr. Pic. Well, digging back in my Sociology courses, I would say it was upper-lower class, if there is such a classification . . .

Mr. Jenner. Now, I ask you again to recall the circumstances under which you entered the Bethlehem Orphanage, you and your brother Robert?

Mr. Pic. . . . I think properly the notion store wasn't a booming business, and she had to go to work and since we were reminded we were orphans all the time, the right place to be would be in an orphan home.

Mr. Jenner. Would you elaborate on that, please?

Mr. Pic. Well, sir; she constantly reminded us that we were orphans, that she didn't have the money to support us in everything . . . and I remember she . . . went to work at about the same time that [Robert and I] entered Bethlehem.

Marguerite had an older sister, Lillian Murret, who had five children, but Lillian would add Lee to her household for periods.

Mrs. Murret. Yes, that's when I took care of him. I told her, I said, "Well, I'll keep Lee for a while, as long as I could." I offered to keep Lee at an age when he was a very beautiful child. I would take him to town, and he would have on one of these little sailor suits, and he really looked cute, and he would holler "Hi" to everybody, and people in town would stop me and say, "What an adorable child he is," and so forth. The children at home liked him. I had 5 children in 7 years, had to get my own five children ready for school, and I didn't have any help on that and it kept me pretty busy, and that's why I guess it was that Lee started slipping out of the house in his nightclothes and going down the block and sitting down in somebody's kitchen. He could slip out like nobody's business. You could have everything locked in the house, and he would still get out. We lived in a basement house, and we had gates up and everything, but he would still get out.

(n.3)

Lillian Murret's daughter, Dorothy, is more than ready to corroborate her mother's description of Lee's agreeable presence.

Mr. Jensen. And she was sufficiently vociferous about it?

Miss Murret. She was very independent. She didn't think she needed anyone at any time, no matter how much anyone

Miss Murret. . . . He had a certain manner about him that other children never had. I mean he was very refined, he really was, and extremely well-mannered. . . .

. . . When he was a very young child, he was very--he was darling, and very outgoing and a very pretty child. He was adorable, and I mean if you walked on the street with him, everybody would stop because he lived with us until he was two, a little over two, but if my mother took him to Canal Street, everyone stopped to admire him. He was a very pretty child, and very happy, very cute.

(n.4)

Retrospective orphanage, Lee would go back and forth from the orphanage to the Murrets.

Relations, however, between Marguerite and Lillian were frequently on edge.

Mr. Jensen. The record shows he was released from the home on the 15th of January, 1944, and that he entered the home on the 15th of September, 1942.

So he was there 2 years.

Mr. Fio. No, sir; that is not right. . . . He didn't spend

Mrs. Murret. . . . You couldn't explain things to her, I mean. If you thought differently, then you were just wrong.

Mr. Jenner. And she was sufficiently vociferous about it?

Mrs. Murret. She was very independent. She didn't think she needed anyone at any time, no matter how much anyone would try to help or how much they would try to do for her, she never thought that anyone was actually helping her. Sooner or later it seemed like she would just take one little word or something that she would think was wrong, and we would have these little differences.

(n.5)

While his brothers John Pic and Robert Oswald were in Bethlehem Orphanage, Lee would go back and forth from the orphanage to the Murrets.

Mr. Jenner. The record shows he was released from the home on the 19th of January, 1944, and that he entered the home on the 26th of December, 1942.

So he was there 2 years.

Mr. Pic. No, sir; that is not right . . . he didn't spend

full time there that long. You see she may have pulled him out for a couple of weeks to stay with the Murrets, or even longer and still have him charged against Bethlehem.

Mr. Jenner. I misspoke when I said 2 years. It would be the period from December 26, 1942, to January 29, 1944, which is 1 year and 1 month. . .

Mr. Pic. Well . . . I know he wasn't in there a full 13 months at a clip. He was in and out of there in 13 months. At that school if your parents wanted to they took you home for a couple or 3 weeks.

(n.6)

He has a reason for recalling this so well . . .

Mr. Pic. . . . Robert and I enjoyed Bethlehem. I mean we were all there with the kids with the same problems, same age groups, and everything. Things for myself became worse when Lee came there, that is why I know he wasn't there too long.

Mr. Jenner. Tell us about it.

Mr. Pic. At Bethlehem they had a ruling that if you had a younger brother or sister there and they had bowel movements in their pants the older brothers would clean them up, and they would yank me out of classes in school

to go do this and, of course, this peeved me very much.

Mr. Jenner. He was only [2 or] 3 years old?

Mr. Pic. Yes; but I was 10. . .

(n.7)

In the course of those difficult years, Marguerite met an electrical engineer, a Yankee from Boston described by John Pic as "Tall...over six feet. He had white hair, wore glasses. Very nice man." He proved to be one electrical engineer who had an eye for ladies with verve, and he and Marguerite travelled together on his business trips through Texas for months, and Lee travelled with them until he was old enough for school at which point, Mr. Ekdahl bought a house outside Fort Worth in a suburb, Benbrook, Texas, and married Marguerite.

Her economic situation now eased, John and Robert came out of the orphanage and were sent to military school in Mississippi at an academy called Chamberlain-Hunt which they liked, but Marguerite's life with Ekdahl soon began to deteriorate. Their disputes were many and usually over money; they would quarrel and separate, come together and fight once again. During one of these separations in the summer of 1947

when John Pic was home from Chamberlain-Hunt and closing up the store in which he worked, Marguerite and Mr. Ekdahl "drove up and told me that they were going downtown to the Worth Hotel. This was one of their reunions." (n.8)

Mr. Pic. . . . So, I went back and told Lee and Robert, and this seemed to really elate Lee, this made him really happy that they were getting back together. Mr. Ekdahl, while Robert and I were at the academy would write us, he was a great one for writing poetry. He would send us a poem about ourselves or something, treated us real swell.

Mr. Jenner. . . . did Lee like him? . . .

Mr. Pic. Yes, sir; I think Lee found in him the father he never had. He had treated us real good and I am sure that Lee felt the same way, I know he did. He felt the same way about it, because Mr. Ekdahl treated all of us like his own children. (n.9)

The marriage, however, proceeded to come further apart. Marguerite had "strong suspicions."

Mr. Pic. . . . Mr. Ekdahl was seeing another woman and she was following him [but] she knew where the woman lived and everything.

So, one night my friend Marvin, Goldie, Sammy, my mother and I all piled into this young couple's car, went over to these apartments, and Sammy acted as a messenger, and knocked on the door and said, "Telegram" for this woman, whoever she was, I don't remember the name. When she opened the door, my mother pushed her way in, this woman was dressed in a nightgown negligee, Mr. Ekdahl was seated in the living room in his shirt sleeves and [my mother] made a big fuss about this. She's got him now and all this stuff. . . . (n.10)

Lillian Murret tells the same story with more detail:

Mrs. Murret. . . . this woman opened the door.

When [Marguerite] pushed the door back, Mr. Ekdahl was sitting in the living room . . . his coat and tie and shirt was off, and he had his athletic shirt on . . . so she questioned him about that, and he said he was there on business, which was absurd, because you know you don't disrobe yourself on business, so that's what started off the Ekdahl case, and then of course she wanted to get a divorce from him right away, you see, and that's why I say

she's quick, you see, because I would not have gotten a divorce. I would have got a separation, because he was making a big salary, and so forth, but anyway, she wanted a divorce it seemed like, but it seemed like he had connections and he must have gone to get the divorce before she could get it, or whatever it was. She had gone to her pastor and told her pastor about it, and her pastor told her that if she would press this case against Ekdahl, that he would have a heart attack and that would make her a murderer, that she would be the cause of him dying, so he was in the hospital, I think, so she went to the hospital to see him, and I think they had a roarup there (n.11)

Mr. Pic. . . . Then sometime in the summer of 1948, the divorce took place in Tarrant County, city of Fort Worth. I had to testify. I think they attempted to put Lee on the stand but he said that he wouldn't know right from wrong or truth from falsehood so they excused him from being a witness being he was under age.

I don't remember my testimony completely. I do remember that my mother had made the statement that if Mr. Ekdahl ever hit her again that she would send me in there to beat him up, something which I doubt that I could have done.

I was told by her that she was contesting the divorce so that he would still support her. She lost, he won. The divorce was granted. I was also told that there was a settlement of about \$1,200 and she stated that just about

all of this went to the lawyer . . . money to your (n.12)

"It wasn't very long," said Lillian Murret, "before Mr. Ekdahl died, so that was the end of the Ekdahl affair."

Mr. Pic. . . . At this time Robert and I were informed that we would not return to Chamberlain-Hunt in the fall. This, I think, was the first time that I actually recall any hostility towards my mother.

Mr. Jenner. On your part?

Mr. Pic. Yes, sir; this was quite a blow to me because . . . I did want to finish there.

Mr. Jenner. How did Robert react to that?

Mr. Pic. He felt the same way, sir. He wanted to go back. But we were informed because of the monetary situation it would be impossible . . . I was 16 at this time. In September, Lee and Robert returned to school, and I went to work. I obtained a job at Everybody's Department Store which belonged to Leonard Bros. I was a shoe stock boy at the salary of \$25 a week.

Mr. Jenner. Did you pay some of that money to your mother?

Mr. Pic. I think at least \$15 out of every pay check I did . . . (n. 13)

As soon as he is old enough, John joins the Coast Guard and so is able to leave home. Robert was going to school in Fort Worth and working. Marguerite was working, and Lee was alone much of the time at home.

Mrs. Murret. Yes; she told me that she had trained Lee to stay in the house; to stay close to home when she wasn't there; and even to run home from school and remain in the house or near the house. She said she thought it would be safer to have him just do a few chores in the house, like taking the garbage cans out and things like that, than to have him outside playing when she wasn't there. She figures he wouldn't get in any trouble in the house. Maybe she thought she was making it safer for him by doing that, rather than being out with the other children, but I don't know. I guess that's what happened. He just got in the habit of staying alone like that. That's probably the time that he got like that; he was

with himself so much.

(n.14)

Chapter 3. Indian Market, New York

John Pic adds the telling detail:

In 1952 Marguerite sold her house, got into her car with Lee and drove to New York.

Mr. Jenner. Do you have an opinion as to whether this atmosphere in which Lee lived had an effect upon him and his personality?

Mr. Pic. I am sure it did, sir. Lee slept with my mother until I joined the service in 1950. This would make him approximately 10, well, almost 11 years old.

Mr. Jenner. When you say slept with, you mean in the same bed?

Mr. Pic. In the same bed, sir.

(n.15)

August 1952, because I had to get there in time for Lee's school. Robert joined the Marines in July of 1952. And that was my reason for going. So at this time I was living in my daughter-in-law's home and son. And we were not welcome, sir.

Mr. Pic. The impression that my wife and myself had was

Chapter 3. Indian Summer, New York

In 1952 Marguerite sold her house, got into her car with Lee and drove to New York.

Mrs. Oswald. . . .my older son, John Edward Pic . . . was in the Coast Guard, as a military man, stationed in New York. So I had no problem of selling my home and going there . . . the main thing was to be where I had family.

Mr. Rankin. And what date was that?

Mrs. Oswald. That was exactly August 1952, because I wanted to get there in time for Lee's schooling . . . Robert joined the Marines in July of 1952. And that was my reason for going. So at this time I was living in my daughter-in-law's home and son. And we were not welcome, sir. (n.1)

Mr. Pic. The impression that my wife and myself had was

they were coming to visit, sir, and we had nothing against this. My mother-in-law . . . was visiting her other daughter, in Norfolk, Va . . . so we had room for them.

(n.2)

It was a railroad apartment, what John called "a freight-car type," one room after another--in the Yorkville section of Manhattan.

Mr. Jenner. . . . And your impression was that your mother and Lee were just visiting for the summer months . . .

Mr. Pic. Just a minute, sir. That is where I begin my notes. August 1952, my mother and Lee came to New York. They brought with them quite a bit of luggage, and their own TV set. On my way home from work I had to walk about 8 or 10 blocks after the subway, and Lee . . . decided to go up and meet me. We met in the street and I was real glad to see him and he was real glad to see me. We were real good friends. I think in a matter of a few days or so I took my leave. Lee and I visited some of the landmarks of New York, the Museum of Natural History, Polk's Hobby Shop on 5th Avenue. I took him on the Staten Island Ferry, and several other excursions we made.

Mr. Jenner. Go ahead.

Mr. Pic. Well, sir; it wasn't but a matter of days before I could sense they moved in to stay for good, and this not being my apartment, but my mother-in-law's apartment, my wife kind of frowned upon this a little bit . . . my mother-in-law . . . was due back in a matter of a month or so.

During my leave I was under the impression that I may get out of the service in January of 1953, when my enlistment was up, so I went around to several colleges. My mother drove me to these colleges, Fordham University, for one, and Brooklyn . . . I remember one conversation in the car that she reminded me that even though Margy was my wife, she wasn't quite as good as I was, and things like this. She didn't say too many good things about my wife. Well, naturally, I resented this, because I put my wife before my mother any day.

Things were pretty good during the time I was on leave but when I went back to work, I would come home and my wife would tell me about some little problem they would have. The first problem that I recollect was that there was no support for the grocery bill whatsoever. I don't think I was making more than \$150 a month, and they were eating up quite a bit, and I just casually mentioned that and my mother got very much upset about it. So every night I got home and my wife would have more to tell me about the little arguments . . . It seems that there was an argument about the TV set one day between my wife and my mother. According to my wife's statement my mother antagonized Lee until he was very hostile towards my wife and he pulled out a pocketknife and said that if she made

any attempt to hit him that he would use it on her. At the same time Lee struck his mother. This perturbed my wife no end. So, I came home that night, and . . . my wife told me this in private, sir. I went and asked my mother about it.

Mr. Jenner. Was Lee present when you spoke with your mother?

Mr. Pic. I am getting to that, sir. So I approached Lee on this subject, and about the first couple of words out of my wife he became real hostile toward me, and let me get my notes on it. When this happened it perturbed my wife so much that she told them they are going to leave whether they liked it or not, and I think Lee had the hostility toward my wife right then and there, when they were getting thrown out of the house as they put it.

When I attempted to talk to Lee about this he ignored me, and I was never able to get to the kid again after that. He didn't care to hear anything I had to say to him. So in a matter of a few days they packed up and left, sir. They moved to the Bronx somewhere . . .

(n.3)

Marguerite's version has a few variations on this:

Mr. Rankin. Was there any time that you recall that there was a threat of Lee Oswald against Mrs. Pic with a knife or anything like that?

Do you remember that?

Mrs. Oswald. Yes, I do. I am glad you said that . . . it was not a kitchen knife--it was a little pocket knife, a child's knife, that Lee had. So she hit Lee. So Lee had the knife--now, I remember this distinctly, because I remember how awful I thought Marjory was about this. Lee had the knife in his hand. He was whittling, because John Edward whittled ships and taught Lee to whittle ships. He puts them in the glass, you know. And he was whittling when this incident occurred. And that is what it occurred about, because there was scraps of wood on the floor.

So when she attacked the child, he had the knife in hand. So she made the statement to my son that we had to leave, that Lee tried to use a knife on her.

Now, I say that is not true, gentlemen. You can be provoked into something. And because of the fact that he was whittling, and had the knife in his hand, they struggled.

He did not use the knife--he had an opportunity to use the knife.

But it wasn't a kitchen knife or a big knife. It was a little knife.

So I will explain it that way, sir.

So immediately then I started to look for a place. I did find a place, I think off the Concourse . . . in the Bronx. And it was a basement apartment . . .

(n.4)

Mr. Pic. Well, prior to this particular incident, I would consider us the best of friends as far as older brother-younger brother relationship. My wife always said he idolized me and thought quite a bit of me . . .

(n.6)

Robert, taking his first leave as a Marine came to visit Lee and Marguerite at their apartment, and John and Marjory travelled to the Bronx for a family dinner.

Mr. Pic. . . . Robert was already there when we arrived. When Lee seen me or my wife he left the room and sat in the front room watching TV and didn't join us whatsoever . . . Didn't speak to me or my wife.

Mr. Jenner. That kind of put a pall on the visit, did it not?

Mr. Pic. Yes, sir. . . Lee walked out and my mother informed us that he would probably go to the Bronx Zoo. We had Sunday dinner, and in the course of the conversation my mother informed me that Lee was having a truancy problem and that the school officials had

suggested that he might need psychiatric aid to combat his truancy problem.

She informed me that Lee said that he would not see a head shrinker or nut doctor, and she wanted any suggestions or opinions from me as to how to get him to see him, and I told her just take him down there. That is all I could suggest.

Mr. Jenner. What was her response to that?

Mr. Pic. Well, Lee was still the boss. If he didn't want to go to see the psychiatrist, he wasn't going . . .

Mr. Jenner. Did you discuss that with her?

Mr. Pic. No, sir; she discussed it with me. I mean she told me that she couldn't control him and so forth . . . He was definitely the boss . . . I mean if he decided to do something, regardless of what my mother said, he did it. She had no authority whatsoever with him. He had no respect for her at all. (n.7)

Mrs. Oswald. I have that information here.

Went to school in the neighborhood, Public School 117, which is a junior high school in the Bronx. It states here he attended 15 of 47 days. This is the place we were living that Lee was picked up by the truant officer in the Bronx Zoo.

I was informed of this at work, and I had to appear before a board, which I did.

Lee went back to school.

Then he was picked up again in the Bronx Zoo. And I had to appear before a board committee again.

Then the third time that Lee was picked up, we were-- I never did get a subpoena, but we were told he had to appear at Children's Court . . . I did not think it was anything serious, because the Texas laws are not like the New York laws. In New York, if you are out of school one day you go to Children's Court. In Texas the children stay out of school for months at a time.

(n.8)

Chapter 4. The Youth House

Mr. Carro. Yes, he was remanded. . .to the Youth House because he had not even bothered to report to school. I forget whether he had just turned 13 or was still 12, but in New York State we have a law that requires each boy to attend school until at least 16, and this was a young man of tender age who had at this point taken it upon himself to just not bother to go to school any more, and furthermore, this was not the usual hooky-playing type-- when I say hooky, the type of boy who [goes] to truant with his other friends, to go to the park, fish, play, or whatever it is. This is a boy who would not go to school just to remain home, not do anything.

The judge felt that since there was no father figure at home and it was just a mother who worked, that this was not a salutary situation for a boy this tender age to be in, and he felt he wanted to find out a little more about this boy before he made a decision, and consequently he asked for the study at the Youth house . . .

(n.1)

Mr. Liebeler. Would you say that Oswald was more mentally disturbed than most of the boys that you had under your supervision at that time?

Mr. Carro. Not at all, actually. I have handled cases of boys who committed murders, burglaries, and I have had some extremely disturbed boys, and this was just initially a truancy situation, not one of real disruptive or acting out delinquent behavior. No; I would definitely not put him among. . . boys whom we have placed who turned out to be mentally defective, mentally retarded, quite psychotic, and who really had gradations of mental illness of disturbances that were far, you know, greater in depth than those displayed by Oswald.

Mr. Liebeler. . . . would you say that it was just as much a function of environment, the environment that he found himself in here in New York?

Mr. Carro. . . . in my mind there was an inability to adapt from the change of environment. One of the things that probably influenced me in this is that I came to New York City when I was 9 years of age and when I came here I didn't speak a word of English, and I lived in what we call East Harlem, in an area where there was a Puerto Rican community within a Negro area, and I recall when I went to school there were four Puerto Rican boys in a class that was otherwise all Negro, and I used to virtually run home every day in the first 2 months I lived in the city because at one point or another the Negro boys would be waiting for me outside to take my pencils, my money, and anything that I had in my hands.

Then eventually I made friends with the three other boys, and when somebody took my books, one of the other boys stayed with me, and I fought with the Negro boys until things worked out--and, as I remember, things didn't work out. I had to transfer to another school.

But . . . you meet the situations. Either you meet them head on or you retreat from them.

Now he apparently had one or two incidents where he was taunted over his inability to speak the same way that the kids up here speak and to dress the same way [and] apparently he could not make that adaptation, and he felt that they didn't want any part of him and he didn't want any part of them . . . (n.2)

There are Youth House reports.

Lee has constituted a problem here of late. He is a non-participant in any activity on the floor. He has made no attempt at developing a relationship with any member of the group and . . . seems content just to sit and read whatever is available . . . Each evening at 8:00 p.m. he asks to be allowed to go to bed. (n.3)

Later, Marguerite would tell the social worker who interviewed her that she had never had any difficulty in Fort Worth. He had always been a very quiet boy.

A psychiatric social worker, who writes well, Evelyn Strickman, seems to take an interest in her.

. . . he volunteered almost nothing about himself. Toward the end of the interview he occasionally would say something gratuitously without my asking him, but on the whole everything had to be pulled from him. What is really surprising is that this boy has not lost entirely his ability to communicate with other people because he has been leading such a detached, solitary existence for most of his life.

He told me that he was at Youth House for truancy and his truancy is caused because he feels he would prefer to do other things which are more important. Questioning at first elicited "Oh, just things," but what I finally learned from him is that he spends all of his time looking

at television, leafing over various magazines or just sleeping . . . (n.4)
. . . he feels almost as if there is a veil between him and other people through which they cannot reach him but he prefers this veil to remain intact. When I questioned whether it was painful or disturbing for him to [talk with] me today. . . he let me know that. . . he was not as disturbed in talking about his feelings as he thought he might be. This gave me an opening to inquire into his fantasy life and what I got was a complete rejection of any probing and a reminder that "this is my own business." I let him know that I respected this but there were some things I had to know. Suppose I asked him questions, and if he wanted, he would answer. He agreed to this and actually answered every question that I asked. He acknowledged fantasies about being all-powerful and being able to do anything he wanted. When I asked if this ever involved hurting or killing people, he said that it did sometimes but refused to elucidate on it. None of these fantasies, incidentally, ever involved his mother. . . .

[He did confide] that the worst thing about Youth House was the fact that he had to be with other boys all the time, was disturbed about disrobing in front of them, taking showers with them, etc. Actually if he could have

his wish he would like to be out on his own and maybe join the service. He acknowledged the fact that in the service he would have to live very close to other people and obey orders and follow a routine which he finds extremely distasteful, but he said he would steel himself to that and make himself do it . . . (n.5)

There is a rather pleasant, appealing quality about this emotionally starved, affectionless youngster which grows as one speaks to him. . . (n.6)

. . . His face lighted up from its usual impassive expression when he talked about the three-month-old baby [at his brother's house] and admitted that he had found a good deal of enjoyment in playing with it. (n.7)

Concerning his home life with his mother in the apartment off the Grand Concourse in the Bronx, the interviewer noted:

. . . His mother had found work as an assistant manager in a women's wear shop and she is away again all day. He

mostly makes his own meals . . . (n.8)

Mr. Pic. I remember once, it may have been . . . this hosiery shop that you are referring to, that she told me that they let her go because she didn't use an underarm deodorant. That was the reason she gave me, sir. She said she couldn't do nothing about it. She uses it but if it don't work what can she do about it? (n.9)

Perhaps there are spiritual illnesses that will assert themselves through any deodorant. Marguerite may be passing through the worst period of her life up to this point.

Mrs. Oswald. . . . And I hope someday to rectify this because I think conditions of this kind in our United States of America are deplorable. And I want that to go down in the record . . . I had to stand single file approximately a block and a half, sir, with Puerto Ricans and Negroes and everything, and people of my class, single file, until we got to the main part of this building, which had a wire, a very heavy wire, partition wire, a man sitting back of the desk, but a man in front of the gate

that let me in. I had packages of gum and some candy for my son. And the gum wrappers were taken off the gum, and the candy wrappers were taken off.

And my pocketbook was emptied, Yes, sir, and I asked why. It was because the children in this home were such criminals, dope fiends, and had been in criminal offenses, that anybody entering this home had to be searched in case the parents were bringing cigarettes or narcotics or anything.

So that is why I was searched.

So I was escorted into a large room where there were parents talking with their children.

And Lee came out. He started to cry. He said, "Mother, I want to get out of here. There are children in here who have killed people, and smoke. I want to get out."

So then I realized--I had not realized until I went there what kind of place we had my child in.

We don't have these kinds of places in Texas or New Orleans, sir. (n.10)

Evelyn Strickman is less taken with the mother than the son.

Mrs. O. is a smartly-dressed gray haired woman, very self-possessed and alert, and while making a superficial appearance of affability, I felt that essentially she was

defensive, rigid, selfish, and very much of a snob.

One of the first things she wanted to know was why Lee was at Youth House because she had no clear understanding of the purpose of the institution. Before I even had a chance to explain to her, she went on to ask me if he had received a complete medical examination and in my answering in the affirmative, confided to me that she had noticed lately he had gotten very big "down there" and that while of course he was getting a little too big for her to look at him, she had been worried lest anything was the matter with his genitals.

Mrs. O., incidentally, bathed all her children herself until the time they were 11 or 12 and then said in an embarrassed manner that at that age they got a little too old for her to look at . . .

She went on to tell me that she had had him to a doctor six months ago for a head to toe examination and the doctor had examined the boy in her presence. He had apparently not examined the boy's genitals and Mrs. Oswald had insisted upon this so he asked her to step from the room. She said she wasn't gone but a few minutes when he called her back and said there was nothing the matter, and she somehow felt very dissatisfied with the examination . . . When I indicated we had found nothing the matter with his genitals, she then looked at once relieved and I felt a little disappointed.

Mrs. O. gave her current "analysis" of the reason for Lee's truancy--the upset in moving from Fort Worth. She went on to tell me. . .that she had found it very difficult to adjust to New York and is sorry she came here. She indicated that she has always been a manager of shops of one kind or another and made it a point never to

mix with her help. She said they were always respectful to her at home but here in New York, employees talk back to her, etc., and she finds it extremely difficult to take, complaining of their arrogance. Furthermore, she feels that life moves at a much faster pace here; living conditions are unsatisfactory, etc. Later on in the interview after I had gained her confidence much more, she confided in me that she had come from Fort Worth because she thought that it might be better for Lee since he was suddenly left alone after Robert joined the Marines and she wants to be close to what family she had for his sake. With her eyes filled with tears at this point, she told me that she had come to New York to be close to her son, John. There had been an exchange of letters and long distance phone calls and apparently John and his wife were very anxious for her to come, but she said that when she got here, she found an extremely cold reception. Her daughter-in-law is only 17 and apparently went out of her way to let Mrs. O. know that she could not settle with John and herself permanently. She said she was made so uncomfortable, that she moved just as soon as she could to an extremely inadequate one-room basement apartment. The living conditions were extremely miserable and she felt that Lee was becoming very depressed but she could not help herself. Just as soon as she was able, and had found another job, she took a three-room apartment in the Bronx and said that Lee seemed to perk up considerably after that. (n.11)

Lee did perk up. He would go out in the morning and take the subway to the Bronx Zoo. We can enjoy the thought that Lee was happy with the animals. Wild beasts and little children were natural companions. Nothing in the record tells us, however, which animal he was studying at ten in the morning when a truant officer collared him long enough to ask a few questions.

Near the end of the interview she confided in me in a burst of confidence that she had lost her husband when she was seven months pregnant with Lee. He died suddenly one morning at 6 A.M. of a heart attack [and] she had had a rupture with her husband's family at this time, since . . . she wanted him buried the same day. Her thought had been for herself and the baby she was carrying, since she felt she could do her husband no good by having a wake and a funeral, and she thought it would be just decent to get him out of the way as quickly as possible. His family had been completely aghast, said that they never saw anything as cold in their whole life, and had not spoken to her from that day to this. She had to rely upon her neighbors' help when Lee was born and she had never had anything to do with her husband's family since that time. She justified herself at great length to me, said that she did not feel it was cold but only sensible, and that her husband, when he used to joke with her had always said,

"Mag, if anything ever happens to me, just throw some dirt in my face and forget about it," and she felt she had acted according to his instructions.

When I offered that it must have been rather difficult for her to have to be both parents and bread-earner at the same time, she told me very proudly that she had never found it so. She said she was always a very independent, self-reliant person who had never wanted any help from anyone, had always had "high fulutent" ideas, which she felt she had to a large measure accomplished, and she always was able to pull herself up by her own bootstraps . . . (n.12)

She could. She did. At a certain point, enmeshed in the counselling that followed upon Lee's provisional discharge from Youth House, she made her move.

Mr. Carro. . . . the judge ordered a referral to the psychiatric clinic of the court, and to the Big Brothers who subsequently accepted the boy for working with. With that the mother took off in January, without letting us know . . . (n.13) I wrote to her to come in, having heard, and the letter was returned, "Moved, address unknown." I was asked about what happens then, and, well, there is very little that one can really do. We don't have extra-

state jurisdiction and we didn't even know where she had gone. . . (n.14)

Marguerite had a quality that would have been valuable to an actress. She could be harsh and poignant at once. As the coda to her sad adventures in New York, we can use John Pic's account of one of his rare visits to her after she was asked to quit his apartment.

Mr. Pic. . . . I was usually alone, I went to see her myself, my wife didn't care to see my mother . . . and when I would ask her about how Lee was doing she would say, "OK," but would not elaborate.

Said, "He is OK, but he doesn't have a brother, an older brother to talk to or no one to do anything with." (n.15)

If, to all the dismay of established faith and liberal reason, reincarnation should prove to be indeed a revolving wheel of humanity, then what an interesting explanation might

be offered for Marguerite Oswald's most special character. One could suppose she was a queen in her previous life, a cruel queen in a kingdom of many grievances and so was punished in this life by being obliged to live as a commoner among the masses while brimming over with her own grievances. That would help to account for Lee as well. He could be seen as the prince of a kingdom not quite large enough for two.

Chapter 5 -- Macho Teen-age Marxist

What is insufficiently appreciated about manhood is that it is an achievement, not a gift of gender. To be bold, forthright, honest, competitive, individual, brave, and innovative does not arrive in a package attached to a male infant's penis and scrotum. A man attains to his portion of such virtues or fails to do so and spends his later years conserving whatever manhood he has acquired. It must, of course be noted that more than a few women would assert that those virtues are but manly so-called, and belong to them as well. It is hardly the purpose of this book to jump--as Lillian Murret would put it--into a roar-up with attendant polemics on such a matter; let it suffice that we are dealing with the psychological realities of the late Fifties when some enormous majority of Americans still believed that men and women had highly separated roles, and that the first obligation incumbent on a male was to behave like one. It is almost certain that Lee Oswald at fourteen and fifteen shared this point of view--how else account even in part for his dedicated reading of the Marine Corps manual, and his dreams, as we shall soon see of daring deeds?

When we encounter him again, therefore, after the debacle of New York, he has changed to some degree from the terrified twelve and thirteen year old who wept during his mother's visit to Youth House from the shock of being incarcerated with killers his own age who smoke! Having passed through vats of shame and fear, he seems to take on more strength as he enters into adolescence. New York has done something for him after all: He is much more ready for combat.

Mrs. Murret. . . . He said they were calling him "Yankee," and so forth, names like that, and this one time he got into the bus and he sat in a seat in the Negro section, which he didn't know, because he had come from New York, and he didn't know that they sat in special seats, so he just got on the bus and sat down where he could. The bus stopped in front of the school, and you can hardly get a seat anyway, so he just ran to the bus and jumped on and got a seat, like I said, in the Negro section, and the boys jumped him at the end of the line. They jumped on him, and so he came home, and that was the end of that. He didn't say anything to me about that.

Another time they were coming out of school at 3 o'clock and there were boys in back of him and one of them called his name, and he said, "Lee," and when he turned around, this boy punched him in the mouth and ran, and it ran his tooth through the lip, so [Marguerite] had to go

over to the school and take him to the dentist, and I paid for the dentist bill myself, and that's all I know about that, and he was not supposed to have started any of that at that time.

Now, at the Beauregard School at that time, they had a very low standard, and I had no children going there and never did. My children went to Jesuit High and Loyola University, but they did have a very bad bunch of boys going to Beauregard and they were always having fights and ganging up on other boys, and I guess Lee wouldn't take anything, so he got in several scrapes like that.

Mr. Jenner. These were things that Mrs. Oswald told you; is that right?

Mrs. Murret. Yes; most of it, except when he was in my home, and I observed the way he acted. He was a lonely boy most of the time, I think . . .

Mr. Jenner. Did you have the impression that Lee Harvey was doing well in school, or what was your feeling along that line?

Mrs. Murret. I think he was doing very poor work in school most of the time. Then he got to the point where he just didn't think he ought to have to go to school, and that seemed to be his whole attitude, and when I mentioned that to Marguerite, that seemed to be the beginning of our misunderstanding. She didn't think her child could do anything wrong, and I could see that he wasn't interested . . . I can't say that Lee ever showed that he liked school.

(n.1)

Well, no, he wasn't about to like it. He had dyslexia. At that time, dyslexia had not yet been recognized in most schools as an affliction which so distorted your spelling that it was guaranteed to make a teacher think you were stupid. And then of course there were always students around to beat up on him in twos and threes. No, he didn't like school.

Still, it could not be said that he gave up all at once.

Mrs. Murret. . . . I remember one morning he came over to the house, and he said that he wanted to get on the ball team, but he didn't have any shoes and he didn't have a glove, so I said, "Well, Lee, we can fix you up," and I gave him a glove, but I don't think we had shoes to fit him. Joyce's husband sent him a pair of shoes from Beaumont, a pair of baseball shoes, and I told Lee, I said, "Lee, when you need anything, just ask me for it, and if there's a way to get it for you, we will get it." So then he got on the team, I think, but he got off as quick as he got on. I don't know why. He never discussed that with us as to why that was, and we never found out . . . I don't think he was the type of boy who was too good an athlete.

Not good in school, not special at sports, and no money
to date girls . . .

Mrs. Murret. . . . Most of the boys had money, you know, and went out on the weekends with girls and so forth, but Lee couldn't afford those things, so he didn't mix, but he did like to visit the museums and walk around the front and go to the park and do things like that, and you very seldom can get a teenager to do that kind of thing these days, not even then. They don't all like that type of life you know, but that's what he liked. (n.3)

[One time] we went to the store and we bought Lee a lot of clothes that we thought he might need so he would look presentable to go to school, you know, whatever a boy needs, and when we gave them to him, he said, "Well, why are you doing all this for me?" And we said, "Well, Lee, for one thing, we love you, and another thing we want you to look nice when you go to school, like the other children." So that was that.

Mr. Jenner. Did he wear this clothing to school?

Mrs. Murret. Oh yes; he wore the clothing that we bought him.

Mr. Jenner. Did he say anything else with regard to your purchasing this clothing for him?

Mrs. Murret. No; he never would discuss anything. He was very independent. Like one time I remember asking him a question about something, and he said, "I don't need anything from anybody," and that's when I told him, I said, "Now listen, Lee, don't you get so independent that you don't think you don't need anyone, because we all need somebody at one time or another," I said, "so don't you ever get that independent, that you should feel that you don't need anybody, because you do need somebody, sometime you will."

Mr. Jenner. Do you think that a little of this independence might have rubbed off from his mother, in the light of your experience with your sister?

Mrs. Murret. Well, she was independent herself all right
... (n.4)

Marguerite was doing her best. She might be living above a pool hall on Exchange Alley at one of the wrong ends of the French Quarter, but you could survive in a slum with some modicum of style.

Mrs. Murret. Yes; that was a nice apartment that she had. A lot of people would be surprised, because with all those poolrooms and everything down below it looks like a pretty rough section, but she had a real nice apartment. . . . She had her own bedroom, and she had a large living room, and breakfast room and bath. It was a very nice place, and she fixed it up real nice . . .

Of course, they had these poolrooms and so forth in that section but I don't think that Lee ever went into those places, because he never was a boy that got into any trouble. For one thing, he never did go out. We all knew that he should have been going out, but he stayed in and read or something. The average teenager who was going to school at Beauregard would have probably been in there shooting pool and things like that, but he didn't do that. His morals were very good. His character seemed to be good and he was very polite and refined. There was one thing he did: He walked very straight. He always did, and some people thought that was part of his attitude, that he was arrogant or something like that, but of course you can't please everybody.

Mr. Jenner. But he did have a good opinion of himself, did he not?

Mrs. Murret. Oh, yes; he did.

(n.5)

It is only fair to give Marguerite Oswald much of the credit for this:

Mrs. Oswald. . . . Lee continues reading Robert's Marine Corps manual . . . Lee read this manual. He knew it by heart. I even said, "Boy, you are going to be a general if you ever get in the Marines." (n.6)

People who have a good opinion of themselves tend to experience less difficulty with a double life. At this time, he was reading Karl Marx and the Marine Corps manual. It could be said that he was looking for a destiny that would allow him to be the synthesis of that thesis and antithesis within him.

Mr. Voebel. . . . I don't exactly remember when I first saw him. . . but I really became acquainted with him when he had this fight . . . with a couple of boys . . . the Neumeyer boys, John and Mike [which] started on the school ground, and it sort of wandered down the street in the

direction naturally in which I was going [and] it kept going on, across lawns and sidewalks, and people would run them off, and they would only run to the next place, and it continued that way from block to block, and as people would run them off one block, they would go on to the next.

Mr. Jenner. That was fisticuffs; is that right?

Mr. Voebel. Right.

Mr. Jenner. Were they about the same age?

Mr. Voebel. I don't know; I guess so.

Mr. Jenner. How about size?

Mr. Voebel. I think John was a little smaller, a little shorter than Lee . . .

Mr. Jenner. All right, what happened as this fight progressed down the street?

Mr. Voebel. Well, I think Oswald was getting the best of John, and the little brother sticking by his big brother stepped in too, and then it was two against one, so with that Oswald just seemed to give one good punch to the little brother's jaw and his mouth started bleeding.

Mr. Jenner. The little boy?

Mr. Voebel. Yes, sir. Mike's mouth started bleeding, and

when that happened the whole sympathy of the crowd turned against Oswald for some reason, which I don't understand, because it was two against one, and Oswald had a right to defend himself. In a way, I felt that this boy got what he deserved, and in fact, later on I found out that this boy that got his mouth cut had been in the habit of biting his lip. Oswald might have hit him on the shoulder or something, and the boy might have bit his lip, and it might have looked like Oswald hit him in the mouth, but anyway, somebody else came out and ran everybody off then, and the whole sympathy of the crowd was against Lee at that time because he had punched little Mike in the mouth and made his mouth bleed . . . then a couple of days later we were coming out of school in the evening and Oswald, I think, was a little in front of me and I was a couple of paces behind him, and . . . some big guy, probably from a high school--he looked like a tremendous football player--punched Lee right square in the mouth, and . . . ran off.

Mr. Jenner. He just swung one lick and ran?

Mr. Voebel. Yes; that's what they call passing the post . . . That's when somebody walks up to you and punches you . . . I think this was sort of a revenge thing on the part of the Neumeyer boys, so that's when I felt sympathy toward Lee for something like this happening, and a couple of other boys and I . . . brought him back to the restroom and tried to fix him up, and that's when our friendship, or semi-friendship, you might say, began. . . . I think he even lost a tooth from that.

Mr. Jenner. Well, you had a mild friendship with him from

that point on, would you say?

Mr. Voebel. Right.

Mr. Jenner. Tell me about that.

Mr. Voebel. . . . sometimes I would stop off at Lee's and we would play darts and pool. Lee's the one who taught me to play pool. In fact, he invited me to come and play pool with him. He lived over the top of the pool hall . . . On Exchange Alley . . . or Exchange Place, whatever you call it.

Mr. Jenner. Did you find him adept at playing pool?

Mr. Voebel. You see, I had never played before and he showed me the fundamentals of the game, and after a couple of games I started beating him, and he would say "Beginner's luck," so I don't think he was that good, because I am not really that good at playing pool. I mean, I don't think he was a great pool player . . .

Mr. Jenner. How about Lee, was he a drinker?

Mr. Voebel. Well, you see, we were only at the age of about fourteen or fifteen, and smoking and drinking just wasn't of interest to a lot of people of our age at that time . . .

Mr. Jenner. All right, those are the things I am interested in . . . I am trying to get a picture of this boy as he became a man. . .

Mr. Voebel. Right. Now I want to make one thing clear. I liked Lee. I felt that we had a lot in common at that time. Now, if I met Lee Oswald, say, a year ago, I am not saying that I would still like him, but the things I remember about Lee when we were going to school together caused me to have this sort of friendship for him, and I think in a way I understood him better than most of the other kids. He was the sort of personality that I could like . . . and if he had not changed at all, I probably would still have the same feeling for Lee Oswald, at least more so than for the Neumeyer brothers . . .

Mr. Jenner. . . . Would you say there were other boys of the type of the Neumeyer brothers at Beauregard School while you were attending there?

Mr. Voebel. Oh, yes . . . it was almost impossible [not to get] involved in a fight sooner or later. You take me, I am not a fighter but I had to fight at that school.

Mr. Jenner. You did?

Mr. Voebel. Well, no; I will say this: I would back down from a fight a lot quicker than Lee would. Now, he wouldn't start any fights, but if you wanted to start one with him, he was going to make sure that he ended it, or you were really going to have one, because he wasn't going to take anything from anybody. I mean, people could call me names and I might just brush that off, but not Lee . . . You couldn't do that with Lee . . . he didn't take anything from anybody. . . . [I, however,] used to try to avoid it as much as possible [and] I think a few of the

boys at that time got the wrong impression of me. They thought I was just a fat kid and I wouldn't do anything, and I used to take a little pushing around In fact, I had an incident like that happen to me . . . where this boy marked me out. He said he didn't like the way I looked, so he just kept talking and trying to force me into an incident, and finally he got it. I beat the dickens out of him, and it was just after school, almost the same way it happened to Lee . . . (n.7)

Mr. Jenner. And you also would say you had an interest in guns; is that right?

Mr. Voebel. . . . we had guns around the house all the time . . . I learned to shoot a pistol when I was about, oh, 7 years old, you see.

Mr. Jenner. Did Lee share your enthusiasm for collecting weapons? . . .

Mr. Voebel. . . . I like weapons because I like mechanics. I like anything you can take apart and especially weapons, and I've always liked reading about the history of different guns. . . . I don't think Lee was interested in the history of any weapons. For example, he wanted a pistol . . . just to have one, not for any purposes of collecting them or anything.

Mr. Jenner. Did Lee ever own a weapon?

Mr. Voebel. A real one? . . . Not that I know of. . . . Well, he did own a plastic model of a .45. . . and he showed that to me. I guess you want to know now about his plan for a robbery. Actually, I wasn't too impressed with the whole idea at first, [and] it really didn't bother me until he did shock me one day when he came up with a whole plan and everything that he needed for. . . stealing this pistol from a place on Rampart Street, [from] a show window, on Rampart Street . . . It might have been a Smith & Wesson. I think it was an automatic, but I really didn't pay too much attention to it. . . . The following week I was up at his house and he came out with a glasscutter and a box with this plastic pistol in it, and . . . he had a plan as to how he was going to try to get in and get this pistol.

Mr. Jenner. You mean in the Rampart Street store?

Mr. Voebel. Yes. Now, I don't remember if he was planning to use this plastic pistol in the robbery or not, or just . . . cut the glass and break it out . . . I don't think he was really sure even then how he wanted to do it . . . and I didn't know what to tell him, so he said, "Why don't you come over and look at this pistol and tell me what kind it is, and what you think of my plan?" So I said all right, and so we walked over there to this store and we looked at this pistol in the window . . .

He said, "Well, what do you think?" and I . . . happened to notice this band around the window, a metal tape that they use for burglar alarms, and I got working on that idea in the hope that I could talk him out of trying it, and I told him, I said, "Well, I don't think

that's a good idea, because if you cut that window, it might crack that tape, and the burglar alarm will go off," and I don't think he believed me, but . . . I convinced him that it would be too dangerous to try it . . . and so anyway, he finally gave up the idea . . . and that was the end of that . . . I don't think he really wanted to go through with it, to tell you the truth. . . . It was just some fantastic thing he got in his mind . . . I think maybe he was just thinking along the lines that if he went through with it, that he would look big among the guys, you know, but I am just speculating on that, of course.

(n.8)

It is the commencement of a new theme in his life. He will dream of daring actions until he is obsessed with them and probably feels a sense of loss, even a species of spiritual nausea when he gives up the desire to take a plunge into the great Unforeseeable.

It is in this period that Oswald began to read Marxist literature. Just which books is somewhat in question. He would tell several people in Moscow and Minsk that his radical politics were first stirred by being given a pamphlet in 1952 about the execution of the Rosenbergs handed to him by an old lady outside a subway stop in New York, and he would also remark that he took out Das Kapital and The Communist Manifesto from his local library in New Orleans. On the other

hand he is reading Das Kapital seriously in Minsk, and his remarks suggest it is for the first time. In New Orleans, it is probably The Communist Manifesto which is giving him all the fire and certainty he needs for striking radical opinions at the age of sixteen.

William E. Wulf, a studious young man, contributes to such a picture. Oswald worked for a time at Pfister's Dental Laboratory in New Orleans as a delivery boy and had made friends with another runner there named Palmer McBride who also belonged to the New Orleans Amateur Astronomy Association (of high school students) of which Wulf was president. Oswald was interested in astronomy, he informed McBride. After a preliminary phone call, Oswald and McBride dropped in one night around ten or eleven P.M. at Wulf's house.

Mr. Wulf. [I told him that] we were not very much interested in teaching some fledgling all this data we had already gone through over the years, and he would actually be hampered in belonging to the group, and I actually discouraged him from joining for that reason. This is all I can remember of the first contact, because it was kind of late, it was probably 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

(n.9)

Oswald came over again, however, with Palmer McBride and this time began to expound on politics.

Mr. Wulf. . . . McBride had always told me that he wanted to get into the military service as a career, especially rocket engineering and rocketry--like we were all nuts on rocketry at the time--and I told him, I said, "This boy Oswald, if you are associated with him, could be construed as a security risk. . ."

Mr. Liebler. What led you to make that statement to McBride?

Mr. Wulf. . . .Oswald [and I] some way or another we got around to communism. I think Oswald brought it up, because he was reading some of my books in my library, and he started expounding the Communist doctrine and saying that he was highly interested in communism, that communism was the only way of life for the worker, et cetera, and then came out with the statement that he was looking for a Communist cell in town to join but he couldn't find any . . . that would show any interest in him as a Communist, and subsequently, after this conversation . . . my father came in the room, heard what we were arguing on communism, and that this boy was loud-mouthed, boisterous, and my

father asked him to leave the house and politely put him out of the house, and that is the last time I have seen or spoken with Oswald . . .

Mr. Liebler. Did Oswald generally impress you as a loud or boisterous person?

Mr. Wulf. Well, he impressed me as a boy who could get violent over communism, who if you did not agree with his belief, he would argue with you violently over it. This, as you know, was the period right before he moved, I believe, to Dallas. I did hear that he had moved to Dallas.

Mr. Liebler. Did he strike you as boisterous in any other respect, or strongheaded about other things?

Mr. Wulf. Generally a strongheaded boy that knew his own mind, thought he knew his own mind, and would do his own will. He wanted his way, in other words.

Mr. Liebler. Then there never was any question of physical--

Mr. Wulf. No.

Mr. Liebler. Contact over this thing?

Mr. Wulf. No, no.

(n.10)

On his sixteenth birthday with a birth certificate forged with Marguerite's connivance, he tries to enlist in the Marine Corps and is rejected as too young. Marine Corps recruiting officers must have been adept in those years at spotting young applicants who were under age. So, he has to undergo another year of memorizing that Marine Corps manual. How much he must have absorbed about positioning the M-1 rifle in prone, standing and sitting positions, how much he knew about the erection of pup tents and squad tents, care of one's weapon, close order march, proper salute, disassembly of the .30 caliber machine-gun, dress uniform, guerilla tactics, traversing a 3-rope bridge, aims and standards of the Marine Corps obstacle course. He may have been the only sixteen-year-old alive in America who knew as much about that and could also quote Marx and Engels.

Marguerite moved back to Fort Worth in July of 1956, three months before he would be seventeen and eligible to enlist. On October 3, 1956, just 15 days before his birthday, and only 21 days before he would enlist on October 24, he returned a coupon from an advertisement found in a magazine-- put his X in the square for the choice: "I want more information about the Socialist Party." Then, he added a personal letter to the coupon:

"Dear Sirs,

. . . would like to know if there is a branch in my area, how to join, etc. I am a Marxist and have been studying my Socialist principles for well over fifteen months. I am very interested in your YPSL . . ."

John Pic had a short comment on why Lee had gone into the Marines:

Mr. Pic. He did it for the same reasons that I did it and Robert did it, I assume, to get from out and under.

Mr. Jenner. Out and under what?

Mr. Pic. The yoke of oppression from my mother.

Mr. Jenner. Had that been a matter of discussion between you and for example, between you and your brother Robert?

Mr. Pic. No, sir; it was just something we understood about and never discussed. (n.11)

Chapter 6--The Loose End

There can be little doubt that the Warren Commission came to the unvoiced conclusion that it was all for the best if Oswald was homosexual. That would have the advantage of explaining much even if it explained nothing at all. The Warren Commission did have, after all, a lone killer as their desired objective but there was no evidence of particular animus by Oswald toward Kennedy, and more than a few key witnesses, notably Marina and George De Mohrenschildt testified on several occasions of Oswald's positive utterances concerning JFK. So, a history of homosexuality located in Oswald's closet would prove helpful to them. In 1964, homosexuality was still seen as one of those omnibus infections of the spirit that could lead to God knows what further aberration.

Nonetheless, there is a real chance that Oswald had considerably more of a sexual career as a homosexual than as a heterosexual through his Marine Corps days, and his first year in Minsk. Paradoxically, it would help to explain the patience with which he wooed Ella, and the haste with which he married Marina. Indeed, his young life is a study in one

recurring theme: "I am not yet a man and I must become one," --which in the late Fifties and early Sixties was a compelling motif for many young men terrified by homosexual inclinations and ready to go to great lengths to combat it and/or conceal it.

One must always read accounts of Oswald's behavior with double vision: Yes, he was serious--no, he was jesting; yes, he was gay--no, he was merely shy with women; yes, he was obsessed with violence--no, he had only a small and intermittent interest in such matters. Any attempt to put a thematic stamp on him quickly will run into contradictions--his actions are almost never conventional--but given the oppressive psychological climate of the time, we have to entertain the possibility that one of the major obsessions in Oswald's life was manhood, attaining his manhood. If he was in part homosexual, then the force of such a preoccupation would have doubled and trebled.

Mr. Jenner: On what?

Mr. Rivers: On a homosexual or leading a normal life, and again, now, this is a personal opinion.

[from the affidavit of David Christie Murray, Jr.]

. . .Oswald did not often associate with his fellow Marines. Although I know of no general explanation for

this, I personally stayed away from Oswald because I had heard a rumor to the effect that he was homosexual. . . .

(n.1)

There is more to this effect by Daniel Patrick Powers, a high school football and wrestling coach at the time of his Warren Commission testimony. He must have seemed an ideal Marine to the Commissioners. Powers was a large man, and his testimony gives off an impression of sincerity.

Mr. Powers. . . . he had a large homosexual tendency, as far as I was concerned, and . . . a lot of feminine characteristics as far as the other individuals of the group were concerned, and I think possibly he was an individual that would come to a point in his life that he would have to decide one way or the other.

Mr. Jenner. On what?

Mr. Powers. On a homosexual or leading a normal life, and again, now, this is a personal opinion.

And I think this, more than any other factor, was the reason that he was on the outside of the group in Mississippi.

He was always an individual that was regarded as a meek person, one that you wouldn't have to worry about as

far as the leadership was concerned, a challenge for leadership or anything . . .

He had the name of Ozzie Rabbit, as I recall . . .

(n.2)

In the course of his testimony, Powers mentioned that while they were stationed at Keesler Field in Mississippi, Oswald used almost all of his weekend passes to go to New Orleans, about one hundred miles away. Powers assumed that he was visiting his mother. Marguerite, however, was working back in Fort Worth and Lillian Murret remembers but one telephone call from Lee in that period. Given the testimony they were receiving, the unspoken subtext for the Warren Commission may well have been that Oswald was picking up a little extra money in the gay bars of the French Quarter. It must be added that no reports justifying the pursuit of such an inquiry was ever offered by the FBI.

The question is curiously paradoxical and may hinder our understanding of Oswald more than it helps. Why not assume, rather, that he had the sort of double nature that would leave him miserable after gay activities and more certain than ever he was really heterosexual. Whereas, conversely, when with a woman a year or two later, he might feel more powerful homosexual inclinations than when he was with men. The best

grasp that we can take on the question is that his extraordinarily untypical childhood had left an obvious imbalance; it may have mattered less what he did than what he was tempted to do. In any event, we can be reasonably certain of one matter. By the age of seventeen and a half, he had not yet had a woman.

We are advancing ahead of him, however. Powers did not meet Oswald until Lee had been in the Marines for almost half a year and so Powers' account skips over one of the most telling periods in any soldier's life--his basic training. The Warren Commission, however, was given virtual if gnostic instruction from Lyndon Johnson not to delve too deeply into anything--certainly not into Oswald's military career where the seeds of it all could have started. After all, what if Oswald turned out to be some spawn of military intelligence or a paid agent of FBI or CIA, or, worse, some fancy unregistered combination of government agencies and Mafia, or was--worst of all--point of a pyramid whose base was in Russia or Cuba. He could be the fuse to a nuclear war. No, subliminal consensus is the way committees and commissions get through onerous tasks, and the FBI who were their only instrument for ferreting out evidence on any large scale, also happened to be on J. Edgar Hoover's special leash. Any conspiracy that succeeded in assassinating a president would be

catastrophically embarrassing and could demolish Hoover's power altogether. Ergo, said Hoover, no conspiracy, none at all. If he mouthed it silently, FBI agents accustomed to his signals, heard it lie a sound boom.

Assassination by conspiracy was never a likely topic then for the Warren Commission--their emphasis was on family values. A bang-up job they did, and we can take the benefit of that, but no one could ever say that keen inquiry was the Warren Commission's prevailing passion. Their treatment of Oswald's Marine Corps days can only be termed slack.

Edward Epstein, supported financially in his research by Reader's Digest (a heartwarming thought that not everything that magazine touched turned out to be glop) was able, however, to uncover a dozen or more Marines who had known Oswald in service: Epstein's landmark work, Legend, gives us a richer portrait than of Oswald's upsets and activities in the Marine Corps than all the volumes of the Warren Commission.

All the same, there is still very little about boot camp, just enough to let us know that Oswald had a hard time. The Marine Corps Manual could hardly prepare him for the reality. A trainee in Oswald's platoon named Sherman Cooley, described it as "holy hell."

The men would be awakened in the middle of the night, told to dress with full packs on their backs, and then ordered to run for great distances, holding their M-1 rifles at port arms.

(n.3)

On regular mornings, however, they were allowed to get up as late as five A.M. Et cetera. Et cetera. All basic training is the same--it was just that the Marine Corps liked to pack two basic trainings into one. Oswald, according to Cooley, was soon being called shit-bird. He had trouble managing to qualify with his rifle, and that was horrific. The Marine Corps laid it out for you: Your ability with an M-1 was equal to your virility--there was no reason to be in the Marine Corps if virility was not the center of your focus.

From there, Oswald went on to combat training at Camp Pendleton in California--full menu--infantry assaults in coordination with tanks, bayonet drill built around hand-to-hand combat, training for amphibious landings--it is a little painful to think of this mother's boy, over-loved and much neglected, lonely prince to Marguerite's much-mortified queen, conceiving in his fantasies of great and noble Marine glory

(to accompany his Marxism), now reduced to a bedraggled prince lowered to the spiritual rank of sad sack, shit-bird. He had begun to toughen up in New Orleans, but hardly enough to be prepared for the kind of tests the Corps would lay on him. In the most degrading use of the word, he felt feminized by his failures. Repeat!--we are dealing with the psychological realities of those days, and to be weak among men was to perceive oneself as a woman.

Can we accustom ourselves to the opposites in him? Hysterical and timid in one half of himself, he still has an ego ready to rule the world--he has not taken Mein Kampf from the library for too little--not at the age of sixteen! The form it develops in his personality is to be cool, reserved, sardonic, whenever and wherever he can--his first nine months in the Marine Corps offer little opportunity for that. Powers describes how Lee on the boat over to Japan (after aircraft and radar control school at Keesler) would play chess with him all day and would virtually do a war dance of delight when he would win: "Look at that. I won. I beat you."

On September 12, 1957, two years and one month before he will enter Russia, Oswald lands at Yokosuka in Japan, close to Tokyo. He and Powers have read Leaves of Grass on the troopship and he gives the book to the big Marine.

On October 24, 1956, almost a year earlier, the day he enlisted, his medical examination had him measured at five feet, eight inches, weighing 135 pounds. In the next nine months he had grown an inch but may have weighed less. At Atsugi air base, 35 miles southwest of Tokyo where he was now based in a two-story wooden barracks, he had a Corporal, Thomas Bagshaw, as his roommate. Bagshaw, who was making a career in the Marines, told Epstein that Oswald was "very thin, almost frail, shy and quiet." Bagshaw . . .

also recalls feeling sorry for him when other Marines in the barracks began "picking on him." The rougher Marines in the barracks, who generally preferred spending their liberties carousing in Japanese bars and finding women, considered Oswald (who spent his early liberties in the television room of the barracks alone, watching American Bandstand and replays of football games) a natural object of derision. They called him Mrs. Oswald, threw him in the shower fully dressed and hassled him in every other conceivable way. Oswald would not fight back; he would just turn away from a provoker and ignore him.

(n.4)

To this should be added a keen observation by another of Epstein's Marines, Jerry E. Pitts who pointed out that there was an unspoken rite of passage for every new recruit, and the initiation took different forms.

"...the guys found out he didn't like to be called Harvey or Harve, so that's what a lot of the guys called him." [Pitts] explained that savvy Marines could breeze right through such treatment, laughing off the insults and swapping them back. But Oswald was the exception. He seemed to take each insult seriously and responded with a quiet fury that he was incapable of converting into physical violence. "We all had to go through the same thing," Pitts recalls, "but Oswald never understood that . . . if he could have just taken the initial insults, he would have become one of the boys."

Pitts remembers. . ."certain areas--such an indecent references to his mother--that really set Oswald off."

(n.5)

Let us include one sympathetic portrait of this period. Gator Daniels who had been an alligator wrestler in the

Florida swamps, a huge man who had spent his first eighteen years fishing and trapping, described Oswald as "simple folk, just like I was . . . we were a bunch of kids--never been away from home before--but Oswald came right out and admitted that he had never known a woman . . . It was real unusual that a fellow would admit that. Like me, he was naive about a lot of things, but he never was ashamed to admit it." Daniels, who was greatly admired by the other Marines in the unit . . . took Oswald under his wing . . . "He was just a good egg," Daniels remembers. "He used to do me favors, like lending me money until payday . . . He was the sort of friend I could count on if I needed a pint of blood." He also came to admire Oswald's innate intelligence. "He had the sort of intelligence where you could show him how to do something once and he'd know how to do it, even if it was pretty complicated." (n.6)

Nonetheless, much of the hazing continued, and Epstein collected several accounts that Oswald discharged a pistol one day while several Marines were riding him cruelly.

It is a complex account well worth avoiding since descriptions are at variance, but one Marine, Pete Connor,

"insists the Derringer which Oswald was playing with as he sat on a bunk, discharged and sent a bullet seven inches above Connor's head to slam into a wall locker." Since Connor, by his own admission, was one of the Marines hazing Oswald, "the initial suspicion was that the shot could have been on purpose."

Then, there is another episode, perhaps a couple of weeks later, when Oswald wounded himself with the same Derringer. What confuses matters further is that MACS-9, Oswald's outfit, had been alerted--they were shipping out in a few days or a few weeks to parts unknown, and scuttlebutt had it that Oswald nicked himself purposely to avoid going with the others, but this is hardly verifiable.

What is on record is that Oswald grazed his upper left arm with a .22 calibre bullet from his mail-order Derringer, and said to the several witnesses who rushed in, "I believe I shot myself."

Brought to a nearby Navy hospital for treatment of the wound, the official medical report first had it that Oswald shot himself by accident in the course of letting a .45 calibre automatic fall to the floor whereupon it discharged. This, apparently, was what Oswald had reported, rather than confess to having bought a pistol; it was a court-martial offense to own a hand-gun. But on removal, the bullet was

found to be .22-calibre. His derringer was located as the culprit.

He might have faced an immediate court-martial, but what with the imminent departure of his outfit, such proceedings were put on hold, and Oswald, in turn, would be put on mess duty of indefinite duration as soon as he was discharged from the hospital. In fact, he came out just as MACS-1 (his outfit--Marine Air Control Squadron-1) left Atsugi for Far East parts unknown on November 20, 1957. Oswald and the others lived on an old World War II LST as it lumbered along past Okinawa to the Philippine archipelago. Their mission was as yet undetermined, but the Marines heard talk of military intervention. Oswald may have been one of the few men on board who could make an educated guess on the political situation. As Epstein explains it, "The civil war in Indonesia was heating up, and the United States, which had up to this point only secretly supported the Moslem generals against President Achmed Sukarno (through the CIA), was now considering . . . a Marine landing in Borneo." MACS-1 would be there with their radar bubble in support of Naval aircraft. After landing at Subic Bay in the Philippines, however, they embarked again ten days later and in rendezvous with some thirty or more ships of the Seventh Fleet, never saw a coastline for a month. It was hot and monumentally boring in

the South China Sea.

Through these doldrums they played poker. Gator Daniels even instructed Oswald.

" 'Some of us were sorry we ever taught Oswald . . . penny ante,' " Daniels recalls. 'He got real good at it.' Then he added, 'He did a little growing up in that time. . . started acting like a man.' Finally, after a hot and dreary Christmas at sea near the equator, the LST returned to Subic Bay." (n.7)

They made camp at a place called Cubi Point off Subic Bay, set up a radar tent and stood guard duty in the awareness that many of the Filipinos in the area might be hostile to them and friendly to the Hukbalahap--Communist Guerillas.

The football season now over, and the Far East Armed Services bowl games having all been played, Powers rejoined MACS-1.

Mr. Jenner. Now, was the same group that you described earlier that came from Jacksonville, Fla., still together

at Cubi Point when you rejoined the squadron?

Mr. Powers. [Of] the people in my particular group that originated in Jacksonville, the only [ones] left were Schrand, Oswald, and myself. . .

Mr. Jenner. And did an incident occur with respect to Mr. Schrand?

Mr Powers. [Schrand] was on guard duty one evening and he was shot to death. Now, I have never seen the official report or anything, but the scuttlebutt at that time was that he was shot underneath the right arm and it came up from underneath the left neck, and it was by a shotgun which we were authorized to carry while we were on guard duty. . .he was either leaning against the shotgun or was fooling with it, but he was shot anyway.

Mr. Jenner. . . . you don't know what the official finding was . . . ?

Mr. Powers. No . . . we could never realize how a guy could have shot himself there other than he was leaning on it this way [indicating], and "boom," it went off.

Mr. Jenner. As far as you both were concerned at that time, was there any scuttlebutt or speculation about anyone of you being involved in that incident?

Mr. Powers. Not to my recollection at all.

Mr. Jenners. When I say "you," that includes Oswald.

Mr. Powers. Not that I know of; no, sir.

(n.8)

Affidavit of Donald Peter Camarata:

"Either en route back to the United States or subsequent to my return I heard a rumor to the effect that Oswald had been in some way responsible for the death of Martin Schrand."

(n.9)

Schrand and Powers and Oswald had travelled in the same car from aviation school in Florida to radar school in Biloxi, Mississippi, and all three had gone on together to Atsugi, and then to Cubi Point. Another Marine named Persons suddenly

. . . heard an explosion, which he instantly knew was a shotgun blast, and bloodcurdling screams from the area that Schrand was patrolling. "The screams were like some

wild thing . . . I knew I wasn't supposed to leave my post, no matter what happened, but I just said, 'Hell, the guy's in trouble,' and took off over there," he later recounted.

About 50 yards away he found Schrand in a pool of blood, mortally wounded. His shotgun was about six feet away on the ground behind him . . . It was determined that Schrand had been shot under the right arm by his own shotgun. Suicide was ruled out because the barrel of the gun was longer than Schrand's arm and no object with which he could have pulled the trigger was found at the scene.

At first . . . it was assumed that he had been attacked by a Filipino guerilla and, in the scuffle, shot with his own weapon. But when no other evidence of infiltrators could be found, the death was ruled "accidental." An assumption was taken that the weapon had accidentally gone off when Schrand dropped it. The enlisted men, continuing to suspect that something more was involved in Schrand's death, grew increasingly nervous about guard duty.

To this, Epstein adds the following note:

"A number of Marines asserted that Oswald was on guard duty that night and was possibly involved in the Schrand

incident," but adds, "After questioning nine officers and enlisted men who were at Cubi Point that night, I was unable to find any corroborating evidence. . ." (n.10)

There is an uneasy gap in this evidence. How can a man be in position to get killed by a shotgun blast that enters under his right arm and exits by his neck? The unspoken assumption is that someone who was being forced to commit fellatio had picked up the shotgun from where it had been placed on the ground at their feet and fired it.

There is no record whether Schrand, who had travelled from Florida to Mississippi to California to Japan to Cubi Point in the Philippines with Oswald, is to be characterized as his friend or his tormentor, but given Oswald's sexual reputation, there is no wonder that scuttlebutt involving his name eddied around this event. A greater likelihood, probably, is that Schrand was killed by a Filipino guerilla who might even have made advances for that purpose. In World War II, it was not uncommon for many a redneck combat veteran in the Philippines, hardened, mean-spirited, and never in the least evident doubt about his heterosexuality, to use Filipino boys while on guard duty. Nor was it an act they seemed to look back upon with shame. In fact, they would brag about it.

They were being serviced.

What was not uncommon guard duty practice in early 1945 had probably not altered a great deal by early 1958, and Schrand could have been killed by a Filipino.

If it was Oswald, however, and let us assume that the probability of that is small but not inconceivable, then what an effect it would have on his psyche, what a sense thereafter of being forever an outlaw, an undiscovered and as yet unprosecuted criminal--a man never free from the border of his doom.

Of course, it would be a mistake to base any serious interpretations on this possibility since other events will soon occur that will also be capable of creating such a metamorphosis in him.

They would be away from Atsugi another eight weeks and would move from Cubi Point all the way over to Corregidor, where Oswald would spend hours exploring the old tunnels and fortifications of World War II. Still assigned to mess duty for the illegal possession of his derringer, he seems to have found his own skewed (and shrewd) sense of balance, of the best possible way to act under the circumstances. He has

begun to comport himself just a little like a clown. While working breakfast in the mess, he exhibits his own modus operandi for scrambling dozens of eggs. One of Oswald's fellow Marines, George Wilkins, told Epstein: "Ozzie would take a mess tray and slide it under the puddle of eggs [on the griddle] and flip them all at once. It was quite a sight." (n.11)

When his outfit returned to Atsugi in March, Oswald began drink with other Marines. Now that he had buddies, he would pull stunts, he would be drunk on return from a liberty. He would wake up his end of the barracks by shouting, "Save your confederate money, boys. The South will rise again!" If only for this brief hour, he has come into union with American life, he is a Marine, happy when shit-face drunk. Soon enough, given the new underwriting of his position, his drinking buddies

. . . introduced him to a vast array of cheap bars near the base and the girls who worked in them. From neonrise

to neonset the bars served as bargain-basement brothels for enlisted men from the base. And they cheered him on when he finally had his first sexual experience with a Japanese bar girl. (n.12)

Mr. Powers. . . .this is where I could see that he had started to be more aggressive, and outgoing in his manner . . .now he was Oswald the man rather than Oswald the rabbit. (n.13)

Machismo had, of course, its many mansions.

Several witnesses recall a wild place in Yamato pronounced "Negashaya," where men wore dresses and lipstick. One witness described the place as a "queer bar" and reported that he and Oswald once went there--at Oswald's suggestion--and took out two deaf-mute girls. "Oswald seemed to know his way around the place," the witness, who prefers not to be identified by name, recalls. "I don't remember that he knew anyone by name, but he was comfortable there." (n.14)

Part of his bravura may have come from a reasonably successful resolution of his court-martial for possessing the derringer. He was found guilty on April 11, a month after they had come back from Atsugi, and was sentenced to hard labor for twenty days, a \$50 fine, and loss of his PFC stripe but this judgement was not final and would be cancelled in six months if he got into no more trouble.

That proved unworkable. He could flip three gallons of eggs at once, but mess duty was still demeaning. He wanted to do the work he had been trained to perform, which was to recognize on radar all incoming aircraft friendly and hostile and engage in any one of the hundreds of technical responses called for--in class at Keesler, he had finished seventh in proficiency in a training group of enlisted men with high IQ's. He liked the work; it was a job that required a security clearance. Oswald's erect posture and quiet voice, the frequently stiff-lipped set to his mouth, suggested a divinity student, and everything that was priestly in him must have resented the greasy routines of a military mess hall and kitchen.

Oswald finally took his resentment out on the man who had reassigned him to mess duty, Technical Sergeant Miguel Rodriguez [who] recalls Oswald swaggering over to him at . . . the Bluebird Cafe, the local hangout for the Marines in "Coffee Mill."

In the course of complaining to Rodriguez about his mess duty, Oswald spilled a drink on him, Rodriguez shoved him away and Oswald then invited the sergeant outside to fight. When Rodriguez refused, Oswald called him yellow. (n.15)

Oswald, by general consensus, was no match for Rodriguez who was as well-built as a Marine sergeant would have to be, but friends who were with Rodriguez talked him out of engaging in any immediate response. Rodriguez and his fellow non-commissioned officers had been recently been made aware that . . .

. . .there was going to be a crackdown on Marines who persisted in getting into fights in town bars. The NCOs were told that the best place to start was among themselves. Rodriguez believes that he possibly would have been demoted if he had got into a fight with Oswald at the Bluebird. (n.16)

Instead, next day, Rodriguez filed a complaint. Judged guilty at his summary court martial for using provoking words, Oswald was given four weeks in the brig, his sentence to commence July 27.

If the Marines prided themselves on basic training that would be unequalled by any other branch of the military, their brigs were ready to compete with maximum security prisons in Texas. Indeed, a Marine brig had an advantage. The power of a military hierarchy in support of the guards was bound to make for extremes of discipline that an average warden would not be ready to underwrite.

Besides, Marine logic was different. When a term of confinement was short, the incarceration had to be made more memorable.

Prisoners were not allowed to say a solitary word to one another. Except for sleeping and eating periods, [they] were made to stand at rigid attention during every moment they were not performing menial duties. The guards, or turnkeys, were especially brutal: when a prisoner had to use the toilet, he had to toe up to a red line and scream his request over and over again, until the turnkey was satisfied and granted permission. (n.17)

Joseph D. Macedo, another young operator in [MACS-1] remembers meeting Oswald soon after he was released from the brig. He found him "a completely changed person from [those] "happy hours" in the evenings [when] Oswald began drinking "mixed drinks with the men and became more extroverted and moderately humorous." Now Macedo found him to be again cold, withdrawn, and bitter. "I've seen enough of a democratic society here . . ." Oswald said. "When I get out I'm going to try something else. . . ."

(n.18)

There is a fair amount of circumstantial evidence that Oswald was by now in touch with Japanese Communists. Atsugi air base, given its technical center and high security clearances, its U-2 flights and its warehousing of nuclear

materials was a focus for hostile espionage efforts in the Far East.

Two lawyers for the Warren Commission, W. David Slawson and William T. Coleman, Jr., suggested in a report which was released under the Freedom of Information Act: that ". . . there is a possibility that Oswald came into contact with Communist agents at that time, i.e., during his tour of duty in the Philippines, Japan, and possibly Formosa. Japan, especially because the Communist Party was open and active there, would seem a likely spot for a contact to have been made . . . Whether such contacts, if they occurred, amounted to anything more than some older Communist advising Oswald, who was then eighteen or nineteen years old, to go to Russia and see the Communist world is unclear." The Warren Commission did not, however, pursue this in its final report. (n.19)

No, the Warren Commission was not about to pursue connections to any intelligence organization, American or foreign, but it may be fair to say that what they call a possibility is a probability for it explains a good deal about Oswald's actions then and later.

Let us begin by noting that Oswald had learned to use a 35-mm camera, an Imperial Reflex, and was seen taking many a photograph of objects and buildings on the Atsugi base including the radar antennas with which he worked. Epstein concluded from his interviews that:

Oswald seemed to associate more than ever with his Japanese friends and less with Marines. He frequently went to Tokyo or otherwise disappeared on his passes. One of Oswald's Marine friends recalls meeting him at a house in Tamato with a woman who was working there as a housekeeper for a naval officer. He was impressed at the time that Oswald had found a girlfriend who was not a bar girl or prostitute. In the house was also a handsome young Japanese man for whom Oswald had apparently bought a T-shirt from the PX on base. While the girls cooked sukiyaki on a hibachi grill, the men talked, but the Marine was unable to understand exactly what Oswald's relation was to the group. (n.20)

Mr. Powers. [He] procured or secured a female companionship and set up housekeeping or whatever you want to call it in Japan, and this was common practice--and it seems to me at one time he made a statement that he didn't care if he returned to the United States at all. . . .

Mr. Jenner. Did he set up housekeeping, set up some Japanese girl; is that what you mean? . . .

Mr. Powers. Yes; he said that, and again looking back, he was finally attaining a male status or image in his own eyes, and this is why he wanted to stay in that particular country. (n.21)

So far, it is a small matter. He takes somewhat suspicious photography, and may be living in a menage-a-trois with a Japanese man and woman. He doesn't care to return to the United States. He will never forgive the Marine Corps for what those four weeks in the brig have done to his pride. New lacerations have been put into wounds but half-healed. We can hardly have a case against him, merely a lingering suspicion.

He forms, however, one relation which is almost without explanation other than as a quid-pro-quo between Oswald and a beautiful Japanese agent who worked at one of the best and most expensive nightclubs in Tokyo, the Queen Bee, where any

hostess one chose for a night cost more than Oswald could earn in a month. The Queen Bee was for officers, not enlisted men, but Oswald

went out with this woman from the Queen Bee with surprising regularity, even bringing her back to the base area several times. "He was really crazy about her," observed [a Marine named] Stout, who met the woman with Oswald on several occasions in local bars around the base. Other Marines, less friendly to Oswald . . . were astonished that someone of her "class" would go out with Oswald at all. (n.22)

That the Queen Bee and similar places were nests of espionage, marketplaces for the pursuit (and purchase) of bits and pieces of military information seems to have been taken for granted. A Marine lieutenant, Charles Rhodes:

recalls an incident at Atsugi when a girl he was friendly with informed him that she was sorry to hear that he was going on maneuvers to Formosa. Rhodes, an officer

assigned to MACS-1 as an air controller, told her that she was misinformed--that there were no plans for the unit to go to Formosa. Ten days later Rhodes was officially informed of the maneuver. (n.23)

MACS-1 had been dispatched to Formosa to provide radar surveillance. The Chinese Communists had laid siege to two small islands, Quemoy and Matsu, just off their mainland but still Nationalist in allegiance, and U.S. military expected a possible invasion of Formosa and/or a serious naval battle with the Communists.

Once arrived in Formosa, however, and installed in their radar bubble, the officers in command of Oswald's outfit discovered that their most crucial signals--the ones by which planes flying by could identify themselves as friendly

had been totally compromised. The Communist Chinese seemed to know all the code signals, which, on one occasion, allowed them to penetrate air defenses and appear on the radar screens as "friends" rather than "foes." [Lieutenant Rhodes] vividly recalls the Communist Chinese jets "breezing right through the IFF system."

Someone with access to the [codes] had apparently passed them along to the enemy. "We never knew how they got their planes through," Rhodes observed, "but they all had the signals . . . we really caught hell about that."

(n.24)

One night, soon after they had arrived, Oswald was on guard duty at about midnight when Rhodes . . . suddenly heard "four or five" shots from the position Oswald was guarding. Drawing his .45-caliber pistol, the Lieutenant ran toward the clump of trees from which the gunfire emanated. There he found Oswald slumped against a tree, holding his M-1 rifle across his lap. "When I got to him, he was shaking and crying," Rhodes later recounted. "He said he had seen men in the woods and that he challenged them and then started shooting . . ." Rhodes put his arm around Oswald's shoulder and slowly walked him back to his tent. "He kept saying he just couldn't bear being on guard duty." (n.25)

Rhodes reported the incident to his commanding officer, and almost immediately after that, on October 6, Oswald was returned to Japan on a military plane . . . Rhodes believed then, as he does today, that Oswald planned the shooting incident as a ploy to get himself sent back to Japan. "Oswald

liked Japan and wanted to stay. . . . I know he didn't want to go to Formosa and I think he fired off his gun to get out of there . . . There was nothing dumb about Oswald." (n.26)

It could have been calculated, it could have been honest panic. The memory of Schrand's death may have been close to Oswald that night, or if he was giving or selling secrets to Japanese Communists he might have been full of the fear of being found out. It would not take a great deal of imagination while being on guard duty in the dark in a strange land to begin to assume that the enemy, some enemy, was approaching him for his misdeeds.

Returned to Atsugi, with his outfit still in Formosa, Oswald was soon transferred hundreds of miles south to an air base at Iwakuni which housed the Tactical Air Control Center for the Northern Pacific area.

Owen Dejanovich, a tall, lanky native of Chicago who went on to play professional football, immediately recognized Oswald in the center as someone he had gone to

radar school with at Keesler Air Force Base and tried to renew the acquaintanceship. He quickly found that Oswald had grown enormously bitter since he had last known him. "He kept referring to the Marines at the center as 'You Americans,' as if he were some sort of foreigner simply observing what we were doing," says Dejanovich. His tone was definitely accusatory. He spoke in slogans about "American imperialism" and "exploitation" which made Dejanovich think at the time that Oswald--whom he called Buggs--was merely being perverse for the sake of shocking the other Marines at the center. (n.27)

As Oswald would remark to reporters in Moscow in the fall of 1959, he had by now decided to defect. It would take almost another year after his return to America in November, 1959, but he had arrived at a determination: He would become a citizen of the Soviet Union.

He was, of course, speaking in Moscow then and after the fact. And, of course, it is Oswald full of impulse and counter-impulse. In America, that last year, stationed in California, he would also think of going to Cuba and becoming one of Castro's lieutenants.

Chapter 7 -- The Man Who Would Take Over the Team

After his thirteen-month stint in Japan, Oswald was given a thirty day leave and spent it with his mother at her small apartment in Fort Worth. Robert Oswald, newly married, took Lee out hunting with .22s for squirrel and rabbit--by the record, an uneventful leave.

Then he reported to another Marine Air Control Squadron 9 in California--Santa Ana, near San Diego--and worked in still one more fenced-off radar bubble performing a job not unlike the ones he had done before.

He would first scan the radarscope for unidentified planes (or ones in distress) in the area south of Los Angeles; then he would be rotated back to the plotting board, where he would wait for someone else to spot a "bogey" aircraft. But unlike Atsugi, where occasional enemy planes strayed into the allied Air Defense Identification Zone, causing alerts to be sounded and intercept paths plotted on the board, little happened in California to break the tedium . . .

(n.1)

Oswald, however, was busy studying Russian. As we know from every report of his lack of proficiency in Moscow and Minsk, the conversational levels he attained in America had to be rudimentary, but, of course he must have been suffering several varieties of shock during his first months in the Soviet Union.

In any case, he did study while at Santa Ana, California, and two months after his arrival, took a Marine Corps proficiency examination where he scored a plus 4 in reading Russian--that is, he had four more answers right than wrong, and in the writing of Russian he was plus three but in comprehension of the spoken language he was minus 5, all in all, a poor to mediocre performance which only seemed to inspire him to study further:

For hours on end he would sit with a textbook and Russian-English dictionary, testing himself on words, then scribbling them down in a notebook he kept. He subscribed to a Russian-language newspaper (and renewed his subscription to the People's World, the organ of the Socialist Workers Party).

When astonished clerks in the mailroom reported the

fact that Oswald was receiving this "leftist literature" to their operations officer, Captain Robert E. Block, he questioned Oswald about this reading matter. Oswald explained that he was only trying to indoctrinate himself in Russian theory in conformance with Marine Corps policy. Although not entirely convinced by Oswald's answer, Block did not press the matter. (n.2)

The lack of more serious inquiry by Captain Block and other Marine officers has been a cause of much suspicion after the fact. The likelihood, however, if one is to guess, is that Oswald was not being taken too seriously. Known as odd, off-beat, one quart low, and a clown, he may instinctively have been doing his best to fortify such impressions.

Two affidavits prepared for the Warren Commission support this premise:

[from the affidavit of Richard Dennis Call]

During this time . . . many members of the unit kidded him about being a Russian spy; Oswald seemed to enjoy this sort of remark. At that time I had a

phonograph record of Russian classical pieces entitled, "Russian Fireworks." When I would play this record, Oswald would come over and say, "You called?" I had a chess set which contained red and white chessmen; Oswald always chose the red chessmen, making some remark to the effect that he preferred the "Red Army." In connection with this general joking about Oswald's interest in Russian, he was nicknamed "Oswaldskovich." (n.3)

The next is by a Marine named Mack Osborne.

He spent a great deal of his free time reading papers printed in Russian--which I believe he bought in Los Angeles--with the aid of a Russian-English dictionary. I believe he also had some books written in Russian, although I do not remember their names.

I once asked Oswald why he did not go out in the evening like the other men. He replied that he was saving his money, making some statement to the effect that one day he would do something which would make him famous. In retrospect, it is my belief--although he said nothing to that effect--that he had his trip to Russia in mind when he made that statement. . . . (n.4)

He never moves, however, in one direction without exploring another. Three years later, in the last months before coming back from Russia to America, Oswald would after all his correspondence with OVIR and the State Department still vacillate on the time of his departure and wonder if it might not be more agreeable to spend the summer and fall in the relative cool of Minsk than under the sun of summer-days in Texas. So, it is not clear-cut now in his mind that Russia is the only country to go to. Cuba appeals to him immensely. Oswald and a Puerto Rican corporal named Nelson Delgado became friends. In the main, on Delgado's side, the friendship is based on Oswald's relation to him. "He treated me like an equal," is the corporal's account of it, and we can feel how much Hispanic pride and injury lies behind such a remark.

Mr. Delgado. . . . we got along pretty well. He had trouble in one of the huts, and he got transferred to mine.

Mr. Liebeler. Do you know what trouble he had in the other hut?

Mr. Delgado. Well, the way I understand it, he couldn't hold his own. Came time for cleanup, and general cleanliness of the barracks, he didn't want to participate, and he would be griping all the time. So the sergeant that was in charge of that hut asked to have him put out, you know. So consequently, they put him into my hut . . .

Mr. Liebeler. Did you ever notice that he responded better if he were asked to do something instead of ordered to do something?

Mr. Delgado. Right . . . that's what I worked with him. I never called him Lee or Harvey or Oswald. It was always Oz.

Mr. Liebeler. Oz?

Mr. Delgado. Ozzie. I would say, "Oz, how about taking care of the bathrooms today?" Fine, he would do it. But as far as somebody from the outside saying, "All right, Oswald, I want you to take and police up that area"--"Why? Why do I have to do it? Why are you always telling me to do it?" Well, it was an order, and he actually had to do it, but he didn't understand it like that. (n.5)

Liebeler brings the conversation back to Cuba, and reminds Delgado that he and Oswald had spoken of going there

to fight for Castro in future battles now that Fidel had entered Havana.

Mr. Delgado. . . . it just so happened that my leave coincided with the first of January, when Castro took over. So when I got back [Oswald] was the first one to see me, and he said, "Well, you took a leave and went there and helped them, and they all took over." It was a big joke. . . . We are dreaming now, right? So we were going to become officers. So we had a head start, you see . . . I speak Spanish and he's got his ideas of how a government should be run . . .

Mr. Liebeler. Oswald?

Mr. Delgado. Right. So we could go over there and become officers and lead an expedition to some of these other islands and free them too . . .

Mr. Liebeler. That is what you and Oswald talked about?

Mr. Delgado. Right. Things like that. . . . And we would talk about how we would do away with Trujillo, and things like that, but never got no farther than the speaking stage. But then. . . he started making plans, he wanted to know, you know, how to get to Cuba and things like that.

I was shying away from him. He kept on asking me questions like how can a person in his category, an English person, get with a Cuban, you know, people, be part of that revolution movement?

I told him, to begin with . . . the best way to be trusted is to know their language, know their customs, you know; so he started applying himself to Spanish, he started studying. He bought himself a dictionary, a Spanish-American dictionary. He would come to me and we would speak in Spanish. You know, not great sentences but enough. After a while he got to talk to me, you know, in Spanish. (n.6)

That project goes nowhere, but it is Delgado who shies off. As the American media becomes more and more critical of Castro and his growing ties with Communists, Delgado seems to think less and less of endangering his years ahead in the military by such a move. He and Oswald begin to draw apart. It is a slow process, however, and Delgado will have his interesting items about Oswald and Cuba yet to relate.

There are other assessments of him during this period. To the degree that he is preparing to defect to Russia, he

seems to draw into himself, become more collected and proficient at work. One of the lieutenants in his control center gives him good marks on the job.

Mr. Donovan. . . . Sometimes he surveilled for unidentified aircraft. Sometimes he surveilled for aircraft in distress. Sometimes he made plots on the board. Sometimes he relayed information to other radar sites of the Air Force or Navy. And sometimes he swept the floor when we were cleaning up and getting ready to go home. I found him competent in all functions.

Sometimes he was a little moody. But . . . in working with most people, as long as they do their job, if they are moody, that is their business . . . I have been on watch with him when an emergency arose, and in turning around and reporting it to the crew chief and to myself . . . he would tell you what the status of the emergency was . . . and what he thought the obvious action we should take. And he was right. There was usually an obvious solution. Then he waited for you to tell him what to do, and he did it, no matter what you told him.

Mr. Ely. Did he remain calm at all times; or was he excitable with regard to his job?

Mr. Donovan. I don't recall him being particularly excitable. (n.7)

Sometimes, they would play chess together.

Mr. Donovan. . . . as a matter of fact, he was a pretty good chess player. I won the base championship that year in chess. I know that on occasion he beat me. That was not a very big base. But he and I were comparable players. I think I beat him more times than I lost to him. (n.8)

His relation with Lieutenant Donovan warmed up to the point where they would enter discussions during quiet times on duty.

Mr. Donovan. . . .I think he enjoyed international affairs in all respects. He enjoyed studying them. He thought there were many grave injustices concerning the affairs in the international situation.

I know that he constantly brought up the idea that our government must be run by many incompetent people. . . . His bond with me was that I was a recent graduate of the Foreign Service School, at least fairly well acquainted with situations throughout the world. And he would take great pride in his ability to mention not only the leader of a country, but five or six subordinates in that country who held positions of prominence. He took great pride in talking to a passing officer coming in or out of the radar center, and in a most interested manner, ask him what he thought of a given situation, listen to that officer's explanation, and say, "Thank you very much."

As soon as we were alone again, he would say, "Do you agree with that?"

In many cases it was obvious that the officer had no more idea about that than he did about . . . polo matches in Australia.

And Oswald would then say, "Now, if men like that are leading us, there is something wrong--when I obviously have more intelligence and more knowledge than that man."

And I think his grave misunderstanding that I tried to help him with is that these men were Marine officers and supposed to be schooled in the field of warfare as the Marine Corps knows it, and not as international political analysts . . . (n.9)

In its general context, Dan Powers sums up Oswald's

attitude: "He probably was not resentful to authority; he was resentful of the position of authority that he could not command, not of the authority itself, I believe." (n.10)

This carries over to touch football. Oswald tried out for end on the squadron team that Donovan coached.

Mr. Ely. Was Oswald a proficient football player?

Mr. Donovan. No; I think the boy only weighed about 125, 130 pounds, as I remember. He had a slender build.

Mr. Ely. Would you say, however, that he was normal in terms of speed and agility?

Mr. Donovan. Oh, yes; he was fast enough.

Mr. Ely. So would you characterize him as athletic, but too light to be a really good football player?

Mr. Donovan. I don't think he would ever make first string high school in a good school. [On the other hand] he often tried to make calls in the huddle--for better or for worse, again, I should say, a quarterback is in charge

of the team and should make the calls. A quarterback did. And I don't know if [Oswald] quit or I kicked him off. But, at any rate, he stopped playing. (n.11)

If he is difficult and will always be difficult, arrogant, assertive, full of quirks, pretending to be as cool as the injunctions of reason itself and as ironic as any Oswaldkovitch can be, how his emotions nonetheless must bite and his fears mount.

We can obtain some insight into these states from the testimony of Kerry Thornley, who was one of the brightest Marines on the base.

Thornley was neither bewildered, overimpressed, contemptuous nor uneasy about Oswald's presence, but then Thornley may have been Lee's equal in the unspoken competition for Grand Master of Marine Mavericks since he subscribed to I.F. Stone's newsletter--which in those days by gung-ho Red-hating leatherneck standards was a sheet right next to the Daily Worker.

Mr. Thornley. My first memory of him is that one afternoon he was sitting on a bucket out in front of a hut, with some other Marines. They were discussing religion. I entered the discussion. It was known already in the outfit that I was an atheist. Immediately somebody pointed out to me that Oswald was also an atheist . . .

Mr. Jenner. What reaction did he have to that?

Mr. Thornley. . . . he wasn't offended by this at all . . . he just said to me with this little grin: "What do you think of communism?" And I replied that I didn't think too much of communism in a favorable sense, and he said, "Well, I think the best religion is communism." And I got the impression at the time that he said this in order to shock. He was playing to the galleries, I felt.

Mr. Jenner. The boys who were sitting around?

Mr. Thornley. Yes, sir. . . . He was smirking as he said this and he said it very gently. He didn't seem to be a glass-eyed fanatic by any means. (n.12)

Soon enough, Jenner becomes interested in Thornley's opinions on many a matter:

Mr. Jenner. What habits did he have with respect to his person--was he neat, clean?

Mr. Thornley. Extremely sloppy.

Mr. Jenner. Extremely sloppy?

Mr. Thornley. He was. This, I think, might not have been true of him in civilian life [but] it fitted into a general personality pattern of his: to do whatever was not wanted of him, a recalcitrant trend in his personality. [Oswald would] go out of his way to get into trouble, get some officer or staff sergeant mad at him. He would make wise remarks. He had a general bitter attitude toward the Corps. He used to pull his hat down over his eyes . . . and you got the impression he was doing this so he wouldn't have to look at anything around him.

Mr. Jenner. . . . so he would not be assigned additional work or--

Mr. Thornley. No . . . this was an attempt, I think, on his part, to blot out the military so he wouldn't have to look at it; he wouldn't have to think about it. In fact, I think he made a comment to that effect at one time; that . . . he didn't like what he had to look at. (n.13)

Thornley gives examples of Oswald's humor:

Mr. Thornley. . . . One day we were moving a radarscope off the truck and it slipped, and he said, "Be careful with Big Brother's equipment.". . . He did a lot of that.

I remember one day--as I was walking along with my hands in my pocket . . . I heard a voice, "Hey, Smith, Winston," and rattle off a serial number, "get your hands out of your pockets," which was a direct quote from the book "1984.". . .

Mr. Jenner. What about his powers of assimilation of what he read, and his powers of critique?

Mr. Thornley. I certainly think he understood much more than many people in the press have seemed to feel. I. . . think he was extremely intelligent. With what information he had at hand he could always do very well in an argument; he was quick. He was quick to answer, and it was not a matter of just grabbing at something [but] coming back with a fairly precise answer to your question or to your objection to his argument. [For example] Oswald had argued previously that communism was a rational approach to life, a scientific approach to life . . . I challenged him to show me any shred of evidence to support the idea that history took place in the manner described by Engels and Marx . . . and he, after some attempt to give me a satisfactory answer, which he was unable to do, became aware of that and he admitted that there was no justification, logically, for the Communist theory of history, but that Marxism was still, in his opinion, the best system for other reasons.

Mr. Jenner. Best as against what?

Mr. Thornley. As against, well, primarily as against religions. That first comment of his always sticks in my mind, about communism being the best religion. He did think of communism as, not as a religion in the strict sense, but as an overwhelming cultural outlook that, once applied to a country, would make it much better off than, say, the Roman Catholic Church cultural outlook or the Hindu Cultural outlook or the Islamic cultural outlook, and he felt that, as I say, to get back to this argument, he felt there were enough other things about communism that justified it that one could accept the theory of history on faith.

Mr. Jenner. What other things?

Mr. Thornley. Well, for one thing; the idea he felt--as did Marx--that under capitalism workers are exploited, [but] that under the present Soviet system, for example, that the money was spent for the benefit of the people rather than going to the individual who happened to be running the enterprise, and he thought this was a juster situation.

Mr. Jenner. Did you raise with him the price the individual had to pay for material accommodation accorded to the worker under the Communist system: for the substance or money of which you speak, being returned to the worker? The price paid in terms of individual liberty as against the capitalistic or democratic system?

Mr. Thornley. You couldn't say this to him. Because he would say: "How do you know? How do you know what is

going on there?" . . . whenever you tried to make any statement about the Soviet Union he would challenge it on the grounds that we were probably propagandized in this country and we had no knowledge of what was going on over there.

Mr. Jenner. Did he purport to know what was going on over there?

Mr. Thornley. No.

Mr. Jenner. Did you have any impression at any time that he . . . might like to experience by way of personal investigation what was going on in Russia?

Mr. Thornley. It never dawned on me. It was the farthest thing from my mind. Although I certainly will say this: When he did go to Russia it did seem to me a much more likely alternative for Oswald than, say, joining the Communist Party in the United States.

Mr. Jenner. Excuse me.

Mr. Thornley. It seemed to fit his personality . . .

Mr. Jenner. Would you elaborate, please?

Mr. Thornley. Well, Oswald was not militant. At the time it didn't seem to me he was . . . at all a fighter, the kind of person who would glory in thinking of himself as marching along in a great crusade of some kind. He was the kind of person who would take a quiet . . . approach

to something. For example, going to the Soviet Union would be a way he could experience what he thought were the benefits of communism without committing himself to storming the Bastille, so to speak. (n.14)

Thornley, however, is quick to explain that he doesn't pretend to understand Oswald past a certain point . . .

Mr. Thornley. He was extremely unpredictable. He and I stopped speaking before I finally left the outfit [in June].

Mr. Jenner. How did that arise?

Mr. Thornley. It was a Saturday morning. We had been called out to march in a parade for [some] staff NCO's who were retiring from the Marine Corps. This was a common occurrence. Every now and then we had to give up our Saturday morning liberty to go march in one of these parades and everybody, of course, having just gotten up, and having to look forward to a morning of standing out in the hot sun and marching around, was irritable. . . . We were waiting at the moment, in a parking lot by the parade ground. Oswald and I happened to be sitting next to each other on a log. I had just finished "1984" a couple of

days earlier, and I said something [but Oswald] seemed to be lost in his own thoughts, and. . . . Then he turned to me and said something about the stupidity of the parade . . . how angry it made him, and I said, I believe my words were, "Well, comes the revolution you will change that."

At which time he looked at me like a betrayed Caesar and screamed definitely, "Not you, too, Thornley." And I remember his voice cracked as he said this. He was definitely disturbed at what I had said to him and I didn't really think I had said that much. He put his hands in his pockets and pulled his hat down over his eyes and walked away and went over and sat down someplace else alone, and I thought, well, you know, forget about it, and I never said anything to him again and he never said anything to me again.

Mr. Jenner. You mean you never spoke to each other from that time on?

Mr. Thornley. No; and shortly thereafter I left the outfit for overseas. (n.15)

It is now more than likely that Oswald was engaged again on the periphery of espionage. Epstein makes a close calculation of what it cost Oswald to travel to Moscow (n.16) against what he had saved in the Marine Corps, and ends with a calculation that he arrived in the USSR with about one hundred

dollars. This, of course, cannot take account of the De Luxe arrangements Oswald had purchased from Intourist. There seems a shortfall of at least five hundred dollars, and the possibility can certainly not be ignored that Oswald had made up the difference earlier by selling information in Japan and in Los Angeles.

Mr. Delgado. . . .And, let's see, what else? Oh, yes, then he kept on asking me about how he could go about helping the Castro government. I didn't know what to tell him, so I told him the best thing that I know of was to get in touch with a Cuban Embassy, you know. But at that time that I told him this, we were on friendly terms with Cuba, you know, so this wasn't subversive . . .

After a while he told me he was in contact with them.

Mr. Liebel. With the Cuban Embassy?

Mr. Delgado. Right. And I took it to be just a--one of his, you know, lies . . . until one time I had the opportunity to go into his room--I was going out for the weekend, I needed a tie, he lent me a tie, and I seen this envelope in his footlocker, wall-locker, and it was addressed to him, and they had an official seal on it, and as far as I could recollect, that was mail from Los

Angeles. . . .

So then one particular instance, I was in the train station in Santa Ana, California, and Oswald comes in on a Friday night. I usually make it every Friday night to Los Angeles and spend the weekend. And he is on the same platform so we talked, and he told me he had to see some people in Los Angeles. I didn't bother questioning him.

We rode into Los Angeles, nothing eventful happened, just small chatter, and once we got to Los Angeles, I went my way and he went his.

I came to find out later he had come back Saturday.

Mr. Liebel. . . . tell me all that you can remember about Oswald's contact with the Cuban Consulate.

Mr. Delgado. Well, like I stated to these FBI men, he had one visitor; after he started receiving letters he had one visitor. It was a man, because I got the call from the MP guard shack, and they gave me a call that Oswald had a visitor at the front gate. This man had to be a civilian, otherwise they would have let him go in. So I had to find somebody to relieve Oswald, who was on guard, to go down there and visit with this fellow, and they spent some hour and a half, 2 hours talking, I guess, and he came back. I don't know who the man was, or what they talked about, but he looked nonchalant about the whole thing when he came back. He never mentioned who he was, nothing . . . it must have been close to 10 o'clock when he had that visitor . . . it was late at night . . .

Mr. Liebel. Did you connect that visit that Oswald had at that time with the Cuban Consulate?

Mr. Delgado. Personally, I did, because I thought it funny for him to be receiving a caller at such a late date--time. . . .

Mr. Liebeler. Did he tell you what his correspondence with the Cuban Consulate was about?

Mr. Delgado. No, he didn't. . . . The only thing he told me was that right after he had this conversation with the Cuban people was that he was going to--once he got out of the service he was going to Switzerland, he was going to a school . . . that's where he was going once he got discharged.

Mr. Liebeler. This conversation that you and Oswald had about going over to Cuba and helping Castro was just barracks talk?

Mr. Delgado. Right.

Mr. Liebeler. You didn't seriously consider--

Mr. Delgado. No, but that's when I started getting scared. He started actually making plans, about how he would go to Cuba, you know, and . . . about this time Castro started changing colors, so I wasn't too keen on that idea, myself. . . .

Mr. Liebeler. You mentioned that Oswald used to go in to

Los Angeles with you from time to time. Can you tell me

approximately how many times Oswald went to Los Angeles?

Mr. Delgado. Once he went with me.

Mr. Liebeler. Just once?

Mr. Delgado. Just once. That was, you know, he stayed just a night, as far as I can remember . . .

Mr. Liebeler. Did he later tell you he had been to the Cuban Consulate?

Mr. Delgado. Yes, but I thought it was just his, you know, bragging of some sort. . . .

Mr. Liebeler. You don't know of your own knowledge of any other times he went into Los Angeles?

Mr. Delgado. No. The only outstanding thing I can remember was that Oswald was a casual dresser. By that I mean he would go with a sport shirt, something like that, and in this particular instance he suited up; white shirt, dark suit, dark tie. (n.17)

The Warren Commission never pursued any of this, but Epstein, on interviewing Delgado twelve years later, had this to add:

As Oswald's tour of duty neared completion, Delgado noticed a stack of "spotter" photographs showing front and profile views of a fighter plane among Oswald's papers. He realized that they had probably been used as a visual aid in training classes, and wondered why Oswald had them in his possession.

Oswald stuffed the photos into a duffel bag with some other possessions and asked Delgado if he would bring the bag to the bus station in Los Angeles, put it in a locker, and bring him back the key. According to Delgado's recollection, Oswald gave him two dollars for doing this.

(n.18)

In a note, Epstein adds that Delgado did not mention these photos in his Warren Commission testimony and had some recollection of having shipped the duffel bag to Brooklyn, then in a later interview, Delgado "recalled that he had merely left the photographs in a locker."

In another note, Epstein quotes a memo "from a former CIA liaison with the Warren Commission [who asserts that] Delgado's testimony says a lot more of possible operational significance than is reflected by the language of the Warren Report." Doubtless, the memo was written and revealed in order to apply pressure on the Cuban and Soviet governments to disclose what was in their files on Oswald. It had, of

course, as much chance of success by means of such pressure as the Cuban and Soviet ose governments would have in their turn by asking the CIA to open its files--small bursts of sniper fire in the maw of the Cold War.

These matters are not being pursued therefore in the expectations that evidence as to whether Oswald did espionage work for the Japanese Communists, the KGB in Japan, or Castro's DGI is going to be revealed. Rather, these speculations offer some insight into what we can perceive of Oswald's character. If he did give away any radar spotting secrets or codes in Japan for pecuniary motives, and for balm to the lacerations of his ego, not to mention the larger more vivid, and more dangerous role he could see himself enacting--Oswald, the romantic, also needed spiritual nutrition--then, indeed, again in such activities once back in California. The evidence is obviously scanty, but the premise does offer comprehension of his character and his actions. (It also explains his fears in Minsk when walking with Ella that he could be ambushed by hostile Americans and accounts for his fear of arrest on return to America. He could certainly have defected to Russia without committing any acts of espionage in Japan or America, and we could still follow his motives--but not quite as well. It is coherence of character rather than hard evidence which leads to the assumption that he did, at

least, play at the edges of espionage with Japanese Communists and Cubans.

In any event, with considerable skill at finessing his discharge from the Marine Corps, he applies to Albert Schweitzer College in Switzerland (\$25 admission fee) thereby freeing himself of the obligation to remain in America for two years on inactive reserve. On the college application, he lists Hemingway and Norman Vincent Peale (the last must be as camouflage) as favorite authors, speaks of studying philosophy and psychology, and of becoming "a short story writer on contemporary American life" (n.19)--yes, he had material enough for that--and at the same time is arranging for an early hardship discharge by guiding Marguerite on how to apply at her end. Injured on her job by a can of candy which struck her on the bridge of her nose, she manages, by what subtle mixture of bullying and Southern gentility we can by now picture, to obtain affidavits from her doctor, her lawyer, and two friends--the accident has incapacitated her; she needs her son back from the Marines to support her.

He will, of course, as soon as he obtains his hardship discharge in September, 1959, stop off in Fort Worth just long enough to tell her that he is in the import-export business and is shipping out. With her, he stores most of his gear, leaves one hundred dollars, and from New Orleans writes to

Marguerite with restraint worthy of Hemingway:

I have booked passage on a ship to Europe. I would have had to sooner or later and I think it's best I go now. Just remember above all else that my values are different from Robert's or yours. It is difficult to tell you how I feel. Just remember this is what I must do. I did not tell you about my plans because you could hardly be expected to understand. (n.20)

Next day he embarks on a freighter which carries passengers, the S.S. Marion Lykes, New Orleans to Le Havre, where he lands on October 8. Then comes London and Helsinki. On October 15, visa in hand, he leaves in the evening for Moscow where he arrives on the morning of October 16, and falls into the not inconsiderable company of Rimma, our Soviet guide from Intourist.

Endless debates have gone on about how he obtained his visa and whether his entrance into the Soviet world was routine or stage-managed by the KGB. It is best to avoid such debates for now, and indeed, as our next chapter--a quick tour

of Moscow and Minsk--will try to point out, it is almost irrelevant how he arrived.

Rather, let us see him now for just a little longer in Santa Ana at MACS-9. Thornley and Lieutenant Donovan have interesting comments to offer.

Mr. Jenner. You said you had the impression . . . that here was a man whom you felt wanted to be on the winning side.

Mr. Thornley. Yes.

Mr. Jenner. What impression did you have as to why? . . .

Mr. Thornley. I think it is a mistake that many people make . . . he looked upon history as God. He looked upon the eyes of future people as some kind of tribunal, and he wanted to be on the winning side so that 10,000 years from now, people would look in the history books and say, "Well, this man was ahead of his time." . . . he wanted to be looked back upon with honor by future generations. It was, I think, a substitute, in his case, for traditional religion.

The eyes of the future became what to another man would be the eyes of God, or perhaps to yet another man the eyes of his own conscience.

Mr. Jenner. So it wasn't in the prosaic sense of merely wanting to be on the "winning side." . . .

Mr. Thornley. No. I don't think he expected things to develop within his lifetime. I am sure that he didn't. He just wanted to be on the winning side for all eternity.

(n.21)

Mr. Donovan. Shortly before I got out of the Marine Corps, which was mid-December 1959, we received word that he had showed up in Moscow. This necessitated a lot of change of aircraft call signs, codes, radio frequencies, radar frequencies.

He had access to the location of all bases in the west coast area, all radio frequencies for all squadrons, all tactical signs, and the relative strength of all squadrons, number and type of aircraft in a squadron, who was the commanding officer, the authentication code of entering and exiting the ADIZ, which stands for Air Defense Identification Zone. He knew the range of our radar. He knew the range of our radio. And he knew the range of the surrounding units' radio and radar.

If you had asked me a month after I had left that area, I could not have told you any [codes] but our own. Had I wanted to record them I certainly could have done so secretly, and taken them with me. Unless he intentionally with malice aforethought wrote them down, I doubt if he would have been able to recall them a month later, either. . . .

Mr. Ely. Are authentication codes changed from time to time as a matter of course?

Mr. Donovan. They are changed from time to time, that is right.

Mr. Ely. Are they changed even if there is no specific incident that elicits the change?

Mr. Donovan. They are methodically changed anyway.

(n.22)

This may indeed be one reason that the KGB showed no visible interest in debriefing Oswald on military matters. Soon enough we will discuss whether they were concealing much or little from the interviewers who approached them for this book, but if, as KGB would have known, all the spotter codes would have been changed overnight on news of Oswald's defection (if indeed they had not been changed routinely already) then, of course, they would be patient with Oswald and study him.

One last word from the Marines; it is in the affidavit of Peter Francis Connor:

. . . He claimed to be named after Robert E. Lee,
whom he characterized as the greatest man in history. . .
(n.23)

Chapter 2--Return to Moscow and Home

The conversation at Moscow Center following Oswald's
arrival is worth recording.

In Moscow, in late October, 1963, the astonishing report
of Oswald's defection was that he had been a marine. The
Soviet press report was exclusive. Khrushchev did not object.
They called it a "big lie". Oswald had disrupted a few cold
war calculations.

By contrast, the officer upon Moscow Center can be
described as a series of small, continuing disturbances.

Over the length of their sojourn in Moscow and Leningrad, the
interviewers (Richard L. Miller and Robert Miller) and their
interpreter and translator (Ludmila Kuznetsova) had
conversations with numerous KGB officers. These were active,
well educated, and of those recruited from the military
and the police. They were interviewed in depth--which is to
say that several meetings were held with each of them. Within
the limits of available information that people was willing to
share, with all due, a mixed view. A Russian newspaper was
learned. Another these few things were interesting, as
again calling the interviewers into question and the way

Chapter 8--Return to Moscow and Minsk

The consternation at Moscow Center following Oswald's arrival is worth recording.

In America, in late October, 1959, the astonishing aspect of Oswald's defection was that he had been a Marine. The journalistic impact was reflexive. Marines do not defect. They plant flags on Iwo Jima. Oswald had disrupted a few Cold War certainties.

By contrast, the effect upon Moscow Center can be described as a series of small continuing disturbances.

Over the length of their sojourn in Moscow and Minsk, the interviewers (Lawrence Schiller and Norman Mailer and their interviewer and translator Ludmilla Peresvetova) had conversations with seventeen KGB officers. Some were active, most had retired, and of these seventeen men, five including Igor and Stepan agreed to be interviewed in depth--which is to say that several meetings were held with each of them. Within the limits of receiving information from people who belong to what is, with all else, a closed club, a reasonable amount was learned. Whether these five officers were forthcoming, or merely gulling the interviewers into acceptance of one more