

KGB legend, can be debated, but if the interviewers, highly skeptical at first, ended by accepting the larger part of what was told to them, it is because an internal logic began to present itself.

For example, Oswald, by way of his Historic Diary, chooses 8:00 in the evening as the hour in which he cuts his wrist, whereas Rimma, Rosa, the Botkin Hospital doctors, and a number of medical reports have him coming to Reception at around 4:00 p.m. after making his attempt an hour and a half earlier. Now, it could, of course, have been possible for KGB to coordinate some twenty witnesses and falsify their reports and change the hour, but to what end? What conceivably could be gained? What dire purpose concealed? It seemed safe to assume that these hospital accounts were correct and that Oswald had, once again, misremembered, or was lying.

Obviously, not everything related by the KGB resolves itself so neatly. In addition, there was their collective desire to remain anonymous. Of the five main KGB sources, none wished his name to be used. "Please don't," said one, "or you will take away all my peace in retirement. The media will be all over me."

Their requests were honored. Igor and Stepan are pseudonyms, and the others will be gathered into one voice. Unlike Igor and Stepan, these three officers were signally

outspoken--their own reputations, after all, were not connected to the case. Besides, they were all of high rank and seemed to enjoy the curious nature of the inquiry. Their response to the interviewers was usually in direct relation to the intelligence of the queries. An etiquette soon developed: An incisive, well-placed question produced signally better response than an ill-formed attempt. Lack of intelligence was a cardinal sin. It must be kept in mind that what we perceive as the brute work of KGB interrogations--physical torture, gulags, overt intimidations in public places--were acts usually performed by MVD and were scorned by KGB as practises lacking finesse, even as CIA officers would look askance at more brutal activities in high-security prisons and feel no identification with security guards.

Under these circumstances, it was decided that one imaginary KGB officer named General Marov might as well become sole spokesman for these three separate KGB sources. While not all three were generals, they could still serve as a chorus of high-level KGB reflection on Oswald's sojourn in Russia.

General Marov, then. If one would look for a face to attach, let us assume he looks like the late William Paley who directed affairs at CBS for decades. The KGB men of higher rank looked astonishingly like a good many Americans--William

Philips of Partisan Review, Irving Howe of Dissent, Ben Bradlee of The Washington Post, Henry Miller, William Faulkner, one looked very much like Norman Mailer's editor, Jason Epstein, and there was even one who could have been mistaken in a dim room for Norman Mailer at the age of 70. Thomas Wolfe once remarked that people in the same occupation tend to look alike in all countries--waiters, for example, and taxi-cab drivers. The corollary to this is that there may be profound similarities of character and function between American intellectuals, writers, and media-chiefs--and high KGB officers. What wit resides in the cosmos!

Marov would not state whether Oswald had given military information to the Japanese hostess at the Queen Bee in Tokyo. He did, however, say that if it were so, such information probably would have been available at Moscow Center late in 1959 when Oswald arrived.

"Such a contact," said Marov, "is, of course, precious. Any American in any form--military, merchant, scientist--any slight record of contact will be kept for years."

Oswald's defection would not, however, have excited good reactions in Moscow Center. "If any such information had come

over from Japan in 1957 or 1958 and had given us any cause to value this man as a possible future agent, such value collapsed entirely," stated Marov, "in the moment Oswald declared that he wanted to remain here. The American community would know he had defected and his value would be zero as any kind of worker for KGB. Too tricky to play with. This," said Marov, "is an absolute fact."

The suicide attempt augmented that certainty. "A small disaster for the gentleman if he still clung to any ambitions to be trained as an agent. The KGB would never recruit such a man."

Then there was Oswald's adventure at the American Embassy. "He comes out of Botkin Hospital, visits his Embassy, and talks to the American official in a loud, clear voice as if he is also speaking to instruments that might be implanted in the wall. You know, my impression is that Oswald is not quite all right. A normal man would never come to such an Embassy and say, 'OK, I'll give my secrets to the Russians.' What for? What is to be achieved by such declarations? After this, no KGB man could accept his information. It is not precious enough to risk discrediting our Soviet authorities. Whatever is given to the KGB must be done secretly, very deeply, and with very strong secrecy. We would never take a person who tried to commit suicide and

wanted to defect. This is an abnormality."

In intelligence work, however, second thoughts have their own half-life. If Oswald's suicide attempt was superficial, as KGB could ascertain from the medical reports, then suspicion was ready to follow. Had Oswald been given an unorthodox agenda by American intelligence? Was he something new under the sun? Had he been dispatched to the Soviet Union as a man calculated to appear highly irresponsible? "These were questions we had to pose to ourselves because improbable as were his actions, nonetheless American intelligence could have sent him over as a probe, a monitor, to see how we would react to such a curious stimulus. It was an improbable hypothesis but not to be entirely discarded."

Under such circumstances, they decided, therefore, not to react but to observe. They would, for example, not seek to debrief him overtly for that would send too simple a signal to the Americans. KGB had numerous sources for obtaining military information in Japan--it was highly unlikely that they would lose anything of value by moving slowly with Oswald.

However, General Marov did not exclude the possibility that one of their people in Moscow might have had talks with Oswald, but never as an official representative of KGB. Maybe some officer with a cover story--in the guise of a Soviet

reporter, for example. "But certainly no debriefing under official KGB. This is not only my opinion, but my information."

In the actual event, he remarked, three Soviet journalists had, in fact, gone to interview Oswald on separate occasions. One might have been a bona fide journalist serving as a source, but the other two were from KGB. Their stories would never appear in a newspaper. One well-employed game in his service, Marov remarked, was to have all three ask the same questions; you could compare the different answers as part of an evaluation.

Since Oswald spent much of his time with an Intourist girl, Marov confirms that she, too, would have been coached and advised on what to tell him.

"Since she was young herself, and did not know as much about military and electronic units as would an expert, she was programmed each day, every day, with the next set of questions. Her case officer would ask for information on certain points, and she would come to understand more and more which kind of questions to ask."

There was another option as well. If a former Marine was so deeply displeased with the capitalist system that he defected, then this might serve to demonstrate that life in America was not as agreeable as U.S. publicity suggested.

Since there was a special department for propaganda in Moscow Center, they would have made, no doubt, an evaluation and it would have gone up to Mikoyan.

Nonetheless, General Marov insisted that any differences between Counterintelligence and KGB's propaganda department would have been resolved without conflict. "The aim is to have an understanding. If two generals sit together, we tend not to speak officially. One says, 'Look, what are we going to do with this guy Oswald?' 'Well, he's a mess.' 'OK, agreed. Now, do we make him go, or do we let him stay?-- whichever we agree upon.' And, of course, we knew of Mikoyan's desire to keep him. That was a huge factor."

The proposition would have been seen as follows: On the side of taking him as a political immigrant for propaganda purposes, General Marov would say, "Positive is the fact that this young man has come to the paradise of working toilers, etc." But on the negative side--"Very hot coal in one's hand--very hot. Where do you throw it? You have to give him money, and a job, you have to watch him constantly and defend him from the curious. A lot of curious people. You have to decide whether he is a source of future counter-propaganda against the Soviet Union because, of course, he could always go up to some Embassy or newspaper and start to tell stories about how bad it is in our provinces."

On the other hand, if he was sent back to the States, that would also be negative. "After all, why did our country reject him? Our call in those years, successful or not, was to try to be very human, even in a high sense of the word. Under the circumstances, Minsk proved a viable compromise." Marov shrugged. His favorite proverb, after all, would tell you that "When a child has seven baby-sitters, it will lose an eye."

So Oswald was put in a bell-jar. His actions were studied, and the Organs knew their own kind of frustration when he proved to be a poor worker. If he had accommodated himself to the radio plant, their own activities could have focussed on interesting alternatives: either Oswald was sincere, or he was skillful enough to pretend to be sincere. Instead, he put his feet on the table.

We ought to know Oswald well enough by now to understand how demoralizing was work in a radio factory for him. To labor collectively was so much the essence of anonymity that the finished product had more importance than his own person. He had not voyaged at the age of 20 from the Marine Corps to the Soviet Union in order to become anonymous. If to work

with no enthusiasm would attract more attention, then he would put his feet on the table. He wishes to make his mark and keep making it. So he dramatizes his presence by going to sleep. Given that boyhood spent in solitude, his fantasies have to be expansive, innovative, contradictory, explosive. His inner pressure is so intense that he is uncontrollably drowsy in the midst of team effort.

The House Select Committee on Assassinations would later say of Oswald, "His return to the United States publicly testified to the utter failure of what had been the most important act of his life," (n.1), but it is more likely that Oswald, when not in the worst of moods, would, on that return, still have seen himself as a most important man if, as yet, unrecognized. Who else had so manipulated the bureaucracies of the US and the USSR? He had done it, and had succeeded in his purpose against all attack, in fact, so well, that half of the analysts in CIA believed it had been impossible for him to manage it by himself and assumed he must have had KGB guidance for some as yet unfathomed purpose. It is staggering to recognize what limited view each of the superpowers in the Cold War had of each other.

At some point, either on the boat back or at some unspecified later time, Oswald wrote his credo on Holland-America line stationery:

I wonder what would happen if somebody was to stand up and say he was utterly opposed not only to the governments, but to the people, to the entire land and complete foundation of his society. (n.2)

Marguerite Oswald is waiting for her son. She has suffered in his absence. All the while that he has been in Minsk, she has been obliged to work and live in silence.

Mrs. Oswald. . . . I have had it very hard, Mr. Rankin and gentlemen--I have lost jobs, I was in a position if I was in a home and television was on, and something political was on television, and the people commented, I felt it was necessary to keep quiet because of it. Because of the defection. I thought if I would express my views they might think I was a Communist like my son was supposed to be. And in many a house I have been in--after three or four days they would tell me my services were not needed.

I cannot say, sure, it was because of Lee's defection. However, I feel sure that it is, because I am a respected person, and a very good nurse, as has been stated in the paper. And my jobs were gotten from word of mouth.

But you must understand that I deal with a lot of people. So naturally it is natural that some of them would feel resentful against me because of my son defecting to Russia and presumably being a Communist.

(n.3)

Chapter 9--Honeymoon in Fort Worth

Robert Oswald and his wife Vada had two children; Lee and Marina had June. Robert's house was small. Marguerite Oswald, visiting Lee and Marina on his second day home, read the situation and made an executive decision. She would give notice on her nursing job in Crowell, Texas, move to Fort Worth, rent an apartment, and Lee and Marina could dwell with her. Two or three weeks, therefore, after Oswald's return, he was back in his mother's domain. "Mr. Rankin," she tells her interlocutor at the Warren Commission, "we had no quarrels. This month was beautiful. Marina was very happy."

Marguerite Oswald. . . . I had the car and the television and we went around.

As I say, they were free to come and go like they want. They would take long walks.

If you are not familiar with Fort Worth, Texas, from the Rotary Apartment to Leonard Brothers is approximately 3 miles, and they used to walk there, and they came home--Marina came home with a Cancan petticoat and some hose that Lee bought her with a few dollars that Robert and I

had given him--he spent on his wife.

So that was a very happy time.

Mr. Rankin. How did Marina treat you then?

Marguerite Oswald. Fine. But then Marina was not satisfied with the things that I bought her.

As you see, the way I am properly dressed--I don't say I mean to be the height of fashion, but I have--before becoming a nurse I was in the business world, and I have been a manager in the merchandise field. So I do know clothes.

And I bought her some shorts. And she wanted short shorts, like the Americans. She pictured America in her mind, evidently.

And I bought her a little longer shorts.

And "I no like, Mama."

I said, "Marina, you are a married woman and it is proper for you to have a little longer shorts than the younger girls."

"No, Mama."

And I will stress this--that Marina was never too happy--"No, Mama, no nice, no, Mama, no this."

That was perfectly all right. I thought she didn't understand our ways. I didn't feel badly about it. . . .

(n.1)

"I didn't feel badly about it," Marguerite says, and

probably she is lying. Her youngest and favorite son is married to a girl he obviously adores, and Marguerite is still in love with him, hopelessly in love with all the full intensity of a soap opera triangle; that is to say she is ready to be his master, his slave, his karmic equal down the long aisles of organ music composed for eternity.

Marguerite, as described by others, including her sons John and Robert, is characterized as unfeeling, self-centered, keyed on money, a virago when she does not get her way. All this is true, doubtless, for those she does not really love. When it comes to Lee, however, she is ready to travel down the longest distance of her heart while encountering his rebuffs, his surprises, his betrayals: she helps to get him out of the Marines on a hardship discharge and he spends but one night with her before going down to New Orleans, shipboard, Europe, Russia, and all without warning. Yet she continues to love him with a full operatic passion equal to all the unutterable arias of those who are talentless at love, adores him as only a selfish woman who has been defeated in her ways with several husbands can love one child.

He, of course, whenever coming back to the tropical surround of a mother always ready to engorge his restricted capacity to love anyone else, is obliged to repel her. He and Marina stay with Marguerite for a month; he finds work at a

sheet metal factory called Leslie Welding where he earns fifty dollars a week, and, other than disbursements for can-can petticoats for Marina, spends nothing on rent or for food. Marguerite is taking care of all that from her savings. She cooks his favorite dishes. Marina will comment on how much Lee, a finicky eater, will gobble down when Marguerite cooks. Free rent, all the food you can eat . . . and an exorbitant demand for love. He saves one week's pay, then another, and puts down a monthly rent of \$59.50 in advance on a semi-detached little bungalow with semi-detached porch in a row of similar boxes on Mercedes Street, the leviathan store and warehouse of Montgomery Ward looking on at them from the end of the row. Then he enlists Robert and moves out with small or no warning. While Robert waits outside in his car and Marina looks bewildered, Lee and Marguerite have a passionate shouting match, a squall, after which Lee takes off with Marguerite left in the metaphorical doorway, like a dark-eyed heroine in a silent film. She does not know where he is going. She even runs after the car.

. . .his mother soon reappeared, wholly unchastened, on the steps of the house on Mercedes Street. No one

quite knew how she got there, since both Lee and Robert had been at pains to conceal the address.

Marina remembers her visit with merriment. About three days after their move, she heard a knock on the door. She looked out and there, to her astonishment, stood "Mamochka," looking just as blithe and unconcerned as if the hysterical scene of parting had never occurred. Marguerite brought a high chair for the baby and silverware, dishes, and utensils for Marina and Lee. Marina welcomed her in, Marguerite played with the baby, and then left. (n.2)

Mr. Rankin. [Can] you describe the relationship between your husband and your mother-in-law while he was at Merced Street?

Marina Oswald. . . . I felt very sorry for her. [Lee and I had a quarrel because he said to me, "Why did you open the door for her, I don't want her to come here any more." . . . It seemed peculiar to me, and I didn't want to believe it but he did not love his mother, she was not quite a normal woman. Now, I know this for sure.

Mr. Rankin. Did he tell you that at the time?

Marina Oswald. He talked about it but since he spoke in English to his mother, I didn't understand it. . . . Perhaps she thought I was the reason for the fact that Lee did not want to talk to her. And, of course, for a

mother, this is painful and I told him he should be more attentive to his mother but he did not change. I think one of the reasons for this is that she talked a great deal about how much she had done to enable Lee to return from Russia, and Lee felt that he had done. . . the greatest effort in that respect and didn't want to discuss it. . . . (n.3)

Marguerite Oswald. . . . I bought [a] highchair and brought it over there, and Lee was not at home. And Marina didn't know what a highchair was. I said, "How do they feed babies in Russia?" . . .

"We put baby on lap, Mama, and baby eat on lap." . .

So approximately 2 or 3 days later I go over there and Lee says to me, "Now, Mother, I want you to understand right here and now--I want you to stop giving all these gifts to me and my wife. I want to give Marina whatever is necessary, the best I can do. I want you to keep your money and take care of yourself, because today or tomorrow you take sick, and you spend all your money on us, I will have to take care of you." Which makes very good sense.

But he strongly put me in my place about buying things for his wife that he himself could not buy.

Mr. Rankin. What did you say to that?

Marguerite Oswald. I agreed with him. And I said--the shock of it--I realize what a mother-in-law I was in interfering. And, of course, that is part that we mothers

do unconsciously. We try to help out our children, and in a way we are interfering in their life. They would rather have their own way of doing things.

And I realize that I had interfered, and the boy wanted to take care of his wife. So no more was said about it.

I go into many homes, being a nurse, and I see this problem also . . .

So then I realized I was being a foolish mother-in-law, and that he was perfectly right.

I should save my money and take care of myself. He had a wife and baby to take care of. If I didn't have any money, he might have to take care of me. So I agreed with that.

(n.4)

If there was relative peace to be found now with Marguerite, their abode was disturbed by another visitation.

. . . One day Lee came home from work and had not yet changed his clothes when some man knocked at the door. He turned out to be an FBI agent and asked Lee to come into a car, which he had parked across the street. There was one other man in the car. They talked for two hours, and I started getting angry at these uninvited guests, since it is no fun to heat up dinner several times. Lee came home

very upset but tried not to show it. But from his face and from his behavior I could see this visit distressed him very much. (n.5)

There is a tall and mythic male figure against whose silhouette every American boy measures himself (if only to reject the figure) and this personage had come back to Lee Harvey Oswald in August on Mercedes Street in the form of that second visit from the FBI.

Mr. Stern. What was Lee Harvey Oswald's demeanor in the course of this interview?

Mr. Fain. He was tense, kind of drawn up, and rigid. He is a wiry little fellow, kind of waspy.

Mr. Stern. Did he answer all of your questions?

Mr. Fain. No, he didn't. . . .he was a little insolent in his answers. He was the type of individual who apparently doesn't want to give out information about himself, and we asked him why he had made this trip to Russia, and he looked like it got under his skin, and he got white around the lips and tensed up, and I understood it to be a show

of temper, and in a show of temper he stated he did not care to relive the past. He didn't want to go into that at all. . . . We wanted to find out whether or not the Soviets had demanded anything of him in return for letting him come on over.

Mr. Stern. As to that, had you formed a conclusion after this second interview?

Mr. Fain. Well, he said "No." . . . He downgraded it all the way through, and belittled himself. He said, "I was not that important." . . .

Mr. McCloy. You felt he constituted no security risk to the United States? . . .

Mr. Fain. Well, I am suspicious of any Communist, obviously, and I think any Communist is a threat because I think they are atheistic, materialistic; I don't think they know what the truth is, [but the] checks we made were to the effect that he was not a . . . member of the Communist Party. [So] I closed it because my investigation was completed. . . . The man had found a job, he was working, he was living with his wife, and he was not a member of the Communist Party. . . . I checked with the confidential security informants that we had there, and they said this man was not known to be a member of the party, and the party had not discussed him for membership purposes or anything like that.

Representative Ford. Do you have in this area, or did you

have at that time in this area reliable confidential informants?

Mr. Fain. Yes, sir; yes, sir. Excellent informants.

(n.6)

The American Communists (who were by the end of the 1950's as dangerous to the security of the United States as the last American buffalo) nonetheless stimulated an all-out FBI effort at penetration into their ranks. Since the hallmark of J. Edgar Hoover's genius was to furnish us only with major, and never with minor ironies, many of the most active members of the American Communist Party were, by the early 1960's, FBI men working under cover. But out in the field, wearing the badge, FBI Special Agents like John Fain subscribed to the innocent intellectual outlook that Communists were evil and materialistic. How then could a decent Godfearing inadequate man like John Fain, sent out to draw a bead on Oswald's mentality, even locate the target?

Marguerite Oswald. . . I said to Lee, "Lee, I want to know one thing. Why is it you decided to return back to the United States when you had a job in Russia, and as far as I know you seemed to be pretty well off. . . ."

He said, "Mother, not even Marina knows why I have returned to the United States."

And that is all the information I ever got out of my son. "Not even Marina knows why I returned to the United States." (n.7)

Would Oswald have been ready to admit that he came back to America to find fame? It is our first and most cherished commodity. For America is the place in the world where the weight of fame and its value is understood by all. From Oswald's point of view, he is one of the few world authorities on the separate and misunderstood character of Communism and Capitalism. His knowledge is unique. He comprehends the dire comedy of the Cold War--which is to say the near-fatal misperceptions and misinterpretations each nation has of the other.

A meeting, therefore, with John Fain where he was obliged to declare that he had not amounted to much in the Soviet Union had to leave him with more than a lingering depression.

Chapter 10--The China Closet

Oswald was no happier going in daily to Leslie Welding than he had been at the Minsk radio factory, and probably he worked even harder at Leslie putting together aluminum windows, doors, and louvers. He would come home dirty and tired from a hard day's work; once again it was not what he had been looking for. His dream when it came to labor was clean hands--dealing with nothing heavier than books and writing paper. Indeed, in the first week after he was back in America, he made a serious effort in that direction.

Mr. Liebel. Would you tell us about your first contact with Lee Harvey Oswald?

Mr. Gregory. Yes, sir.

It was in the middle of June 1962. On that particular morning, I was in the office, my telephone rang, and the voice on the other end told me that my name was given to him by the Fort Worth Public Library. He knew I was teaching Russian at the library, that he was looking for a job as a translator or interpreter in the

Russian and English languages, and that he would like for me to give him a letter testifying to that effect.

He spoke to me in English, so I suggested. . . that he might drop by my office and I would be glad to give him a test. He did. He came by the office about 11 o'clock that morning, and I gave him a short test by simply opening a book at random and asking him to read a paragraph or two and then translate it.

He did it very well, so I gave him a letter addressed to whom it may concern that in my opinion he was capable of being an interpreter or translator. . . .

Mr. Liebeler. Did you and Mr. Oswald have lunch together that day?

Mr. Gregory. Yes, sir. It was about noontime when I gave him that test, and so I invited him to lunch, and during the lunch being naturally curious about the present day life in the Soviet Union, I was asking him questions, asked how the people lived there and so forth. (n.1)

Mr. Liebeler. Did you notice anything about the way he was dressed or anything else about him that would seem strange to you?

Mr. Gregory. Yes; it was a very hot morning. You know in Texas in the middle of June, it is generally hot. I remember that he wore a flannel, woolen coat, suit, and atrocious looking shoes that were made in Russia.

I know he was very uncomfortable because he was too warmly dressed for that time of the year. (n.2)

Peter Paul Gregory was a petroleum engineer in his early sixties, a Russian born in Siberia who had come to America in 1923, and if his efforts on Oswald's behalf produced no results, still, he was sufficiently intrigued with the situation to tell his son, Paul, who was studying Russian and economics at the University of Oklahoma, about the lunch. "Paul expressed a wish to meet Marina. . .because her language was pure Russian language as compared to mine. . ." (n.3) and after a visit to Robert Oswald's house, Paul arranged to take conversational Russian lessons with Marina which would not begin, however, until August when he would be back from a trip to San Francisco.

When Paul returned, Peter Paul Gregory paid a visit to the Oswalds on Mercedes Street and was depressed by what he saw.

Mr. Liebeler. Would you tell us what the conditions in their home were like?

Mr. Gregory. It was practically a bare room. There was no furniture to speak of. There was the bare necessities;

there was no playpen or crib for the baby. The baby was playing in the middle of the floor in the living room, and the rest of the house was the same way. (n.4)

Peter Paul Gregory decided it was time to introduce the Oswalds to the Russian community in Dallas-Fort Worth and so he set up a dinner party in mid-August to which he invited his friend George Bouhe, an accountant born and raised in St. Petersburg, who was curious to meet Marina after hearing that she had grown up in Leningrad. Another friend, Mrs. Meller of Dallas, was also invited to meet the Oswalds.

Marina had her first social success in America. Bouhe was a bachelor, also in his early sixties, by general account bossy, fussy, opinionated, and powerfully fearful of complications. Before he even came to the dinner, he checked with a man named Max Clark who was not only a lawyer at General Dynamics and so presumably a guest in the inner councils of the FBI (not necessarily a weak presumption!) but was also married to the noblest Russian Texan of them all, Gali Clark, of the famous and royal Scherbatov family of Moscow, and therefore, by Bouhe's measure, an authority.

Clark, when he was consulted by Bouhe on the advisability of going to such a dinner, responded as follows:

Mr. Clark. . . .I said, "As far as Oswald coming back here, you can be assured or bet that when he returned to the United States the FBI has got him tagged and is watching his movements or I would be very much surprised." . . . I said, "You know that they know exactly where he is in town," and I said, "I imagine they know who he is contacting because I know enough about the boys in the FBI; they would keep a record." (n.5)

Having obtained his laissez-aller, Bouhe went to the dinner.

Mr. Liebeler. You also conversed with Marina in Russian, did you not?

Mr. Bouhe. Oh, yes; she is very good, I must say, to my great amazement. . . . I complimented her, because most of the displaced persons whom we met here who went through wars and mixtures and Germany and French speak a very, very broken, unpolished Russian, which I tried to perfect. . . .

And she said, "My grandmother who raised me"--I don't know what period--"she was an educated woman. She went to--"and she gave me a school for noble girls. Something like--I don't know, are you a Dallas man?--perhaps Bryn Mawr.

Mr. Liebeler. Some prominent school?

Mr. Bouhe. Yes. The grandmother was a graduate and she gave me the name, which is a top school. And when you come out of that school as a young girl, you are polished --Smolny Institute for Noble Girls. (n.6)

Did Marina steer him toward this misapprehension, or, did he choose to get it all wrong in order to justify his positive impression of Marina? Positive impressions are no trivial matter for a snob!

In any event, Bouhe began to focus on the Oswalds' lives. Appalled by the conditions in which this well brought up young waif and this American escapee from the Soviet system were now living, Bouhe organized a rescue food and clothing operation not unreminiscent of our efforts in Somalia.

Mr. Bouhe. . . . The sense of charity is very deep in me. Marina and the child, the latter sleeping on the floor, attracted me very much. As I repeated to the FBI and Secret Service many times, while they were not relatives of mine, I still felt that if I enjoy a good automobile and a good meal and if I know around the corner somebody's kid is sleeping on the floor, I will not digest that dinner so very good.

So being endowed with what I thought was boundless energy, when I saw the situation, I thought I would make an effort the first time to put them on their feet. I always thought that communism breeds among the down and out and the dissatisfied people. I certainly felt badly that there were no groceries in their icebox and the kid was sleeping on the floor and all that.

I thought that by, so to speak, putting a little meat on his bones, lift the kid into bed, get a little clothes for the kid, meanwhile assembling from all of the ladies some clothes for Marina, who was in rags, I thought I will make [Oswald] less bitter, which he was, and he will see, as I told him, that it can be done here if you apply yourself. And I added to him, "Lee, I am exceedingly uneasy, being a foreigner by birth, telling you, a native-born American, that you can lift yourself by your own boot-strap here and live a decent life because the opportunities are here if you just only take advantage of them."

Mr. Liebler. Did Oswald seem to appreciate your efforts?

Mr. Bouhe. No; he passed a remark shortly after the second or third visit to their house when the ladies

brought clothes to Marina and such--I even brought two shirts for him--not new, used, and this is where I saw him for the first time trying to show his displeasure over me.

He measured and he measured the shirts so many times, and those were not new shirts. Finally, I said, "Lee, this is go-to-work. Wear them 3 or 4 times, get them dirty, then throw them away." So finally he folded it up and gave it back to me. "I don't need any."

Then I understood that he objected that myself and a couple of others brought groceries to the kid and something for them when the icebox was empty. (n.7)

It is worth adding a few more comments from the rescue party.

5. Thereafter during September, while the Oswalds still resided on Mercedes Street near the Montgomery Ward store, I visited there with Mrs. Hall on two occasions. The reason for the earliest of these additional occasions was that Mrs. Hall and George Bouhe had asked me to inquire among the girls in my office for dresses and other wearing apparel for Marina. I collected some sweaters, skirts, and a dress or two. Mrs. Hall also inquired among her friends and collected some things. We put these together in one package and Mrs. Hall and I drove to the Oswald

apartment on Mercedes Street to deliver the package. We were shocked to find that the Oswald child had no baby crib or bed but was kept on the floor in the bedroom either in a suitcase or between two suitcases.

6. Within a few days we returned to the Oswalds with a baby bed that Mrs. Hall had obtained from some friend. We purchased a mattress for the baby bed and delivered these items to the Oswalds at the Mercedes Street apartment.

(n.8)

Marguerite Oswald. . . . Now, it has been stated in the paper that the Russian friends have come into the home and Mrs. Hall. . . . He didn't appreciate nothing, never. . . . He was just strange man, I guess. (n.9)

Mr. Liebel. Mr. Bouhe also bought a bed for the baby?

Mrs. Meller. No; he bought a playpen and it was for time bed for baby. I think we bought her one dress, probably couple underwears, couple pairs, and stockings; something she is really need and certainly more groceries. Then one day when came with groceries like that Lee Harvey come from work and Mr. Bouhe told him to come with and try to help pick up playpen. He was furious why we did all that and buy all that and he said, "I don't need"; he was in rage; "I don't need," he say. (n.10)

Marguerite Oswald, dependable as always in her advocacy of Lee's position, provides the counter-point:

Marguerite Oswald. . . .Now, it has been stated in the paper that the Russian friends have gone into the home and they are talking about this home, and found that they were in desperate straits, that there was no food in the house and no milk for the baby.

I say Marina nursed the baby.

They may have walked into this house where maybe they didn't have at that particular time any milk in the box. Maybe Lee was going to bring groceries home. But I know they were not in destitute circumstances in that respect. . . . I brought groceries and I brought a roll of scotch toweling. I had bought two packs and I gave them one.

And the next day when I went by, the scotch toweling was in the kitchen, on a coat hanger, with a nail.

And a think that is real nice, a young couple that doesn't have any money, that they can use their imagination and put up the scotch toweling to use on a coat hanger. They are just starting married life in a new country. And they have no money. But here is the point. The Russian friends, who were established, and had cars

and fine homes, could not see this Russian girl doing without. They are the ones that interfered. They are the ones that interfered . . .--and within a short time, then, this Russian girl had a playpen, had a sewing machine, had a baby bed, and a Taylor Tot. And this all came out in the paper--that they supplied this to the girl, because she was in need of these things.

I say it is not necessary for a young couple to have a playpen for a baby. We have millions and millions of American couples in the United States that cannot afford playpens for the children. I, myself, have been in that position.

So I think those things were immaterial.

The point I am trying to bring out is that these Russian friends have interfered in their lives, and thought that the Russian girl should have more than necessary.

And my son could not supply those things at that particular time. He was just starting to work. . . . it was in this period of time that all these things were accumulated from Russian friends.

And no man likes other people giving--interfering in his way of living, and giving all these things to his wife that he himself cannot supply. This is a human trait, I would say. . . . (n. 11)

Chapter 11--Deep in the Heart of Texas

Part of Oswald's tragedy was that he landed in Fort Worth. By 1962, a couple of hundred blacks and whites were rooming together at the Community of Faith and Light at the University of Texas in Austin. The Texas Observer was being printed every week. Radicalism, posed against the profound conservatism of most Texans, had real luster in the Southwest in those early years of the sixties; radicalism was even elegant in its stand against the conservative tide, the profound conservatism of Texas. Texans, poor but a generation ago, were now wealthy. Like Arabs, they owed it to oil--which was like owing it to the devil. Brought up as good Christians, and, for the most part, still clinging to the fragments of a strict upbringing, some rich Texans were uneasy with such new-found wealth and some were greedy for more, so greedy that they were uneasy with their greed and looked for confirmation of the way they lived. Anti-Communism satisfied that altogether. Americans in general, and Texans specifically, had profound faith in anti-Communism in the 1950's, in the early 1960's. It solved just about every moral and spiritual problem at hand. They could be Christian

without having to brood on any contradictions between washing the feet of the poor and gobbling up everything in the bowl.

If anti-Communism, patriotism, and the flag was all the philosophy required by the power elite of Texas, we need not be surprised that this serviceable world-view trickled down to the prosperous middle class that inhabited all the suburbs and sub-cities within the larger cities of Dallas and Fort Worth.

The Fort Worth and Dallas Russians (who will usually be referred to from now on as the emigres) are generally depicted to be "generous, outgoing and warm" (particularly by Priscilla Johnson McMillan).

It was an extraordinary community. . . . Because they had suffered so much themselves, they could not see another person suffer without doing what they could to help. While they embraced wholeheartedly the American ethos of individualism and hard work, they had also kept the values they had brought over from Eastern Europe: the spirit of community, of sharing, of the responsibility of each for all.

(n.1)

What comes through, however, in their Warren Commission

testimony seems more on the side of fear, pride of possession, untrammelled patriotism, and a fair share of the human desire to control others. Oswald, sensitive as always to any attempt by outsiders to manage his life, saw how much of their generosity depended on having power over Marina. To him, that was a declaration of war. As a husband, he knew how difficult it was to obtain any kind of power at all over her, and he was damned if these emigres with--as he saw it--their dirty track record were going to seduce her allegiance by the weight of their suburban homes and possessions.

If it be asked--what was their "dirty track record?--it was that many of them in the early years of the Second World War had been swept up by the German Army and brought to work in Poland and in Germany, much as Valya had been. The difference is that Valya went back to the Soviet Union with Ilya. They didn't. By the end of the war, they managed to make their way over to the Americans and not all of them can be said to have had an absolutely clear conscience about wartime associations with the Germans. H.L. Mencken is always there to remind us that "patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel,"--some of the emigres could be suspect. They do compete with one another in the size of their slavish adoration not only for America but for American capitalism, and the reasons may not be so mysterious: certain native

lands are more difficult to eradicate from one's heart-core of memories than others. Russia, for whatever myriad of reasons, keeps its call upon its expatriates and the call seems proof even against the legitimate detestation many of the emigres held for the Soviet system. If some of them had no record of collaboration with the Germans, if their conscience at defecting to America was relatively clear, their hearts were nonetheless pocked with unadmitted doubt at quitting their native land. Ergo, they did not wish to hear anything even remotely decent about it.

Shadowed by dubious conscience, it is hardly surprising that these emigre Russians came to detest Oswald. He had not only chosen to live in the Soviet Union, but now on his return, he saw the emigres as traitors; the curl of his lip when with them in public said as much; and they reacted to that as effrontery. Their comments tell us so:

Mr. Liebeler. It's been indicated to me, Mr. Bouhe, that you are regarded as the leader of a so-called Russian group here in Dallas and the Fort Worth area, and I would like to have you tell us briefly the nature of that group and how you came to be the, shall we say, so-called leader or its actual leader?

Mr. Bouhe. Yes. You have just mentioned some flattering remarks which I appreciate. . . .

In 1950, approximately, a great avalanche of displaced persons came to Dallas from Europe. Among these were probably 30, 40, 50 people, native of what I would say of various parts of the former Russian Empire.

By that I mean to say that they were not all Russians. They might have been Estonians, Lithuanians, Poles, Caucasians, Georgians, Armenians, and such, but we did have one thing in common and not much more, and that was the language. (n.2)

In chorus, they are all but cloned:

Mr. Liebeler. Why did the Germans take you from Russia, do you know?

Mrs. Meller. . . .I stay in country and worked for Germans for piece of bread so I wouldn't die of hunger because Russia was in bad shape, and then that very place, hospital, was retreated back. I went with, or I had to stay and die of hunger. That way, I was brought piece by piece further deeper into Poland and Germany. (n.3)

Alex Kleinlerer: I have always been very grateful to America. Americans have been very kind to me and I think a good deal of this country. It upset me when Oswald would say things against the United States. I did not argue with him because he appeared to me to be dangerous in his mind and I was frightened. I once said to him that unlike him, I had come to this country for freedom and not to look for trouble by criticizing the United States; that while I did not have much money, I had freedom and opportunity and Americans were kind to me. (n.4)

Mrs. Ford. . . .books like Karl Marx open in front of him, just lying there in the table, and he didn't even hide it when someone came in, and then someone else said there was a book laying there of How to Be a Spy, laying right open there.

Mr. Liebeler. Do you remember who told you that?

Mrs. Ford. I believe it was Lydia Dymitruk. (n.5)

Mr. Jenner. You have a personal aversion to Communism?

Mrs. Dymitruk. Yes, sir.

Mr. Jenner. And it's your viewpoint that if any American goes to Russia with the intention of living there that we ought to leave them there?

Mrs. Dymitruk. That's right.

Mr. Jenner. And not encourage him to return to the United States?

Mrs. Dymitruk. Not encourage--or if he ask to come back, just let him stay there. (n.6)

Mrs. Hall. . . . I don't think she ever loved him. . . . seems like she never did like him. . . . he is a Communist and nobody can change him. (n.7)

Mrs. Voshinin. . . . we were expecting, rather to hear from Oswald publicly some anti-Communist declaration, some, you know, reports, lectures, or a couple of articles in the newspapers, you know, we expected from him to behave like a person who got disappointed in Communism, came here sincerely--like people we know. For example, Eugene Lyons . . . So, his behavior after he came here, from what we heard about his behavior, was unnatural. . . . Now, wouldn't that be natural for an intellectual person

to get his living from lecturing against Communism?

(n.8)

Mrs. Meller. . . .On the third [visit] I noticed in the living room. . .several books; it was 'Kapital' book, Karl Marx, and literature about Communism. It caught my eye and I was real upset.

Mr. Liebeler. Did you say anything to Oswald?

Mrs. Meller. I said to Marina, "What's this book doing here?" something like that. I mentioned something and she said Lee takes all those books from the library and reading them. I did not say much after but I was real upset. (n.9)

Mrs. De Mohrenschildt. . . . He was. . .like a puppy dog that everybody kicked. And he was sort of withdrawn within himself. And his greatest objection was that people helped them too much, they were showering things on Marina. Marina had a hundred dresses given to her. The baby had a crib . . . he objected to that lavish help because Marina was throwing it into his face.

Mr. Jenner. She was?

Mrs. De Mohrenschildt. Absolutely--see people, how nice they are? And she is always telling me--the people are nice, giving all these things, and he is insulting them for it. He was offensive with the people. And I can understand why, and maybe I am the only one that understood him while he was offensive, because that hurt him. He could never give her what the people were showering on her. So that was very difficult for him, no matter how hard he worked--and he worked very hard. (n.10)

Mr. Rankin. Did he tell you why he did not like your Russian friends? . . .

Marina Oswald. Well, he thought they were fools for having left Russia; they were all traitors. I would tell him he was in the same position being an American in America but . . . he said they only like money, and everything is measured by money. It seems to me that perhaps he was envious of them in the sense they were more prosperous than he was. . . .he did not like to hear that. . . . (n.11)

Perhaps he was beginning to realize that when it came to political values, he and Marina were facing each other across a divide. They were political opponents. She loved middle

class values.

In Russia, he could not have sensed this so clearly. With every difference between them, they had nonetheless been together, both committed to going to America, dedicated to going, indeed, she disliked her Soviet system in much the way he had come to find it disappointing, dull in its privileges, corrupt, second-rate. Or so it seemed to him. But Marina's attraction to these local bourgeois values was enough to make him feel betrayed. If she neither cherished nor honored his values, indeed, didn't even know what they were, then she did not respect him; he could not begin to live in balance with himself unless he was respected by his mate.

It is a wholly unexpected turn in the road. Whatever troubles they had had in Minsk, they had been able to see themselves, nonetheless, as a married team--much in need of improvement, perhaps--but a team, and so were positively married--at least to some degree. The major theme in each life had been the same: they would go to America together with their beloved baby. They would manage despite all obstacles. She was following him. With every tug on her family sentiments for each relative she might compromise by her action, still she would follow him. They believed in the same thing.

Now, with the Russian community charmed by her and taking

to him not at all, now that Marina was enraptured by the dazzling if, to his eye, morally blind face of American commodities, he felt betrayed. She was not only shifting her allegiance away from him but turning against the project of his life--which was to give no quarter to the resplendent superiority of the moneyed enemy, but to stand proud, partisan, and a guerrilla fighter--if only in the privacy of his mind.

The irony is that today Marina would say that she never really fit in with the Fort Worth Russian community either. She certainly didn't feel inferior in their company, indeed she sensed that a few in that group did have a kind of Nazi mentality. She had an argument with Anna Meller because Anna said it was scientifically proven, some professor had said it, that black peoples' brains were smaller than white peoples', so black people were inferior to white people. With this kind of attitude, how could they ever look at Lee and herself and have understanding? So, as far as intellectual matters went, Marina would say she had not felt inferior to that Russian community. They had more money but that was all.

Of course, that is today. In the climate of Dallas after

the assassination, one did not rush to say such things.

We must not leave Marguerite in exile. If she is on the sidelines, turned away from the action, her keen nose still informs her that the demons of social opprobrium are gathering around her son. But then, she is sensitive to that. She has suffered social opprobrium herself.

Mr. Liebeler. What did she tell you about arguments concerning his mother?

Mrs. Ford. Well, . . .she would say something that he was badly brought up, or something like that. . . . and he would get mad and slam her for that or something and then he was telling her not to let mother in, and when mother comes to the apartment she would let her in and then they would argue over that. (n.12)

Marguerite might not be wholly welcome, Marguerite might be jealous of the marriage and ready to drive her wedge into

the wedding tree, she was a mother-in-law--but then she was also a mother; she would save the marriage. Not for too little had God given her god-like gifts as a sleuth. Just as she had been first to pick up the investigative trail when her husband, Mr. Eckdahl, had been acting oddly enough to suggest marital peccadilloes, so it did not take long for Marguerite to become suspicious of Marina. One day going to visit her daughter-in-law on Mercedes Street, Marguerite discovered that she was not at home.

Marguerite Oswald. . . .I sat in the car on Montgomery Ward's parking lot, where I could see the house, because I wanted to see who Marina was going to come home with. . .

I sat in the car all day long. She didn't show up.

Finally, I went home, had my supper, left my apartment, and on the way going back to the house Lee was leaving Montgomery Ward.

Now they did not have a phone. I am just assuming--this is not a fact--that Lee went to a telephone trying to locate his wife . . . He got in the car with me, and we had about a block to go. I entered the house with Lee and I said, "Lee, where is Marina?" Of course, I knew that she wasn't home because I had stayed in the car all day.

He said, "Oh, I guess she is out with some friends."

"Would you like me to fix your supper?"

"No, she will probably be home in time to fix my supper."

So I left. I am not going to interfere in their married life. . . . Two days later, I went to the home and my son was reading, he read continuously--in the living room and Marina was in the bedroom. I could not see Marina. And I said to Lee, "Tell Marina I am here."

Marina made no appearance.

So I went into the bedroom, and she was nursing June with her head down. And I started to talk. And she still had her head down. And I came around to the front and I saw Marina with a black eye.

Now, gentlemen, I don't think any man should hit his wife, as is stated in the paper, or beat his wife. But I will say this. There may be times that a woman needs to have a black eye. I am not condoning the act. But I strongly am saying that this girl was not home. And this man was working. And I saw, myself, that this man came home and didn't have any food. This couple doesn't have a maid or anyone to give this working man food. And I think it was her duty to be home and have his supper ready.

This is a little thing, maybe. But to me it shows the character of what I am trying to bring out.

And so there may have been reasons that the children fought. And I also know that many, many couples fight, of our finest people, because I made it clear before that I have worked in these very fine homes, and have seen very fine people fight. I have seen a gentleman strike his wife in front of me. We know this happens. It is not a nice thing to do. But it happens in our finest homes. I am not condoning the act. But I am telling you that there probably was reasons, we will say. The woman has a black

eye and he is a louse--he gave her a black eye, but we must consider why did he give her a black eye? We always must consider the second aspect of the case. (n.13)

Mr. Liebler. Was Oswald there at that time?

Mr. Meller. No. (n.14)

That black eye was the first order of gossip in the Russian community:

Mr. Liebler. Did you ever see or hear of Marina making fun of Oswald to groups of other people?

Mrs. Meller. One of these times we came to Marina's house and husband was still not at home, she has a terrible blue spot over her eye and I said to her, "What's the matter?" Marina was shy little bit. She's shy little, a little bit in nature, I think, too. She said, "I have to get up during night and quiet baby and I hit the door and hit my head here," and it was very blue.

Mr. Liebler. Around her eye?

Mrs. Meller. Under her eyes and over here [indicating] and it was very noticeable, I will say. I said, "You have to be careful," but I always felt like girl tried to hide something, you know. (n.14)

Mr. Meller. I . . . made a point of it never to be in Marina's house without somebody else being there.

Mr. Liebler. Now, can you tell us why you took such care

Mr. Bouhe. . . .she had a black eye. And not thinking about anything unfortunate, I said: "Well, did you run into a bathroom door?" Marina said, "Oh, no, he hit me."

Mr. Liebeler. Was Oswald there at that time?

Mr. Bouhe. No. . . . (n.15)

Mr. Liebeler. Did you ever see or hear of Marina making fun of Oswald in front of other people? . . .

Mrs. Hall. Oh, yes; she would do it.

Mr. Liebeler. Can you think of any specific examples?

Mrs. Hall. She was always complaining about him. He was not a man. He is afraid. I don't know, not complete, I guess, or something like that. Not complete man. (n.16)

Mr. Liebeler. Marina was never in your house in the absence of Lee Oswald?

Mr. Bouhe. I . . .made a point of it never to be in Marina's house without somebody else being there.

Mr. Liebeler. Now, can you tell us why you took such care

in this regard? . . .

Mr. Bouhe. Because he was a peculiar guy and I am not a fighter. I am an expert fighter with the word but not with the muscles. And by his smirking appearances or other expressions on the face, indicated that I am not welcome and I am persona non grata, because apparently he was jealous that I filled the icebox once. . . (n.17)

It is here in these first three months in Fort Worth that their marriage suffers a cumulative blow--perhaps its irremediable blow--and he withdraws from her, turns into himself, and the dank pit of the ugliest part of himself--that coward who had found no stature in the eyes of other men, most particularly American men, southerners, Texans, and so took out a crucially expensive portion of his rage by striking his wife, usually, be it noted, with two slaps to the face, a ritual two slaps, as if he is repeating a punishment he used to receive from Marguerite when he was a child.

Chapter 12--The Well-born Friend

While this biographical sketch of Oswald's life before and after Minsk, has been, until now, quick but incisive--or so one hopes--his last fourteen months of life, the period from September 1962 to November 1963, offers so many episodes that have been recorded, interpreted, and re-interpreted that the terrain bears resemblance to the trenches of No Man's Land in Flanders during World War I. It is that mucked up and muddled about. So many unexploded shells have been left that no narrative can find a through-path without engaging in a labor equal to a landscaper making a garden out of a town dump seeded with explosives.

Gerald Posner in Case Closed did his best to clear all the ground once and for all, and succeeded in removing a great deal of refuse, but his instrument, unfortunately, was a bulldozer; he rammed through evidence that still remained interesting.

Given the original intent of this work--to see what could be captured of Oswald's life while he lived in Moscow and Minsk, there was no later attempt to do interviews with people who knew Lee in Fort Worth, Dallas, New Orleans, Mexico, or in

Dallas again. Given the previously agreed-upon size of this project, such an effort was never intended. Considering what had been learned in Minsk, however, it seemed feasible, keeping a firm grasp on as much of Oswald's psychology as we had thereby acquired, to plunge through--or is it vault over?--the difficulties; one could offer one's theories in a reasonable number of pages without prodigious proof--in effect, choose a route and ignore the alternatives. The simple has power over the complex if one dares to be simple, but, of course, that is only true if the instinct which leads one to choose one's course is excellent. For that no guarantees can be given. One can only promise that no attempt will be made to summarize the majority of events surrounding Lee Harvey Oswald over the next year and two months for that is damned to textual overload, which is one more form of incoherence. It is better, if any theory of what happened on November 22, 1963, is to be offered, that no more than the essential elements are chosen, the central alter ego for Oswald, George De Mohrenschildt, is given his prominence, and a speculation on Oswald's possible motive--if he was the assassin--is presented.

What distinguishes the entrance of George De Mohrenschildt into Oswald's life is that he was the one emigre that Lee did like, indeed, he liked him very much. Of

course, De Mohrenschildt was no ordinary Fort Worth Russian. If there is a point more particular than any other where a narrative account of Oswald's life takes on the seductive ambiguity of a spy novel, it is with the appearance on stage of this tall, well-educated, powerful, handsome fifty-one-year-old with his incomparable biography.

. . .born in Mozyr, Belorussia, in 1911, he was. . . fond of pointing out that he was . . .a mixture of Russian, Polish, Swedish, German, and Hungarian blood. . . the Mohrenschildts traced their ancestry back to the Baltic nobility at the time of Sweden's Queen Christina--the proudest nobility in all Russia. The men of the family had a right to be called "Baron," but such were their liberal opinions that neither George's father, Sergei von Mohrenschildt, nor his Uncle Ferdinand (first secretary of the Czarist embassy in Washington, who married the daughter of William Gibbs McAdoo, Woodrow Wilson's son-in-law and Secretary of the Treasury), nor George himself, nor his older brother Dmitri, ever made use of the title. . .

(n.1)

Gary Taylor, who was married to his daughter, Alexandra, gives a good description of him:

Mr. Jenner. Now, give me your impression of De Mohrenschildt . . . What kind of personality is he?

Mr. Taylor. Uh--he is a rather overbearing personality; somewhat boisterous in nature and easily changeable moods--anywhere from extreme friendliness to downright dislike--just like turning on and off a light.

Mr. Jenner. What about his physical characteristics? . . .

Mr. Taylor. He's a large man, in height only about 6'2" but he's a very powerfully built man, like a boxer.

Mr. Jenner. Athletic?

Mr. Taylor. He is athletic. And he has a very big chest which makes him appear to be very much bigger than he actually is. . . .

Mr. Jenner. All right. Give me a little more about the personality of George De Mohrenschildt. . . .

Mr. Taylor. I would say that he has an inflammable personality. And he's very likable, when he wants to be,

and he oftentimes uses this to get something he wants, put a person in a good mood and then, by doing this, he tries to then drag whatever it is that he wants out of them.

Mr. Jenner. Is he unconventional? . . .

Mr. Taylor. Yes; oftentimes wearing merely bathing trunks, and things like this, that--for a man of his age, which is about 50 to 52--is a little unusual.

Mr. Jenner. You mean out on the street?

Mr. Taylor. On the street, as a constant apparel. . . .

In fact, during the times that I was married to his daughter, I have not known him to hold any kind of a position for which he received monetary remuneration. So, as a result, why, he could spend his time at his favorite sport, which is tennis. And this could be in 32-degree weather in the bathing shorts I mentioned--only.

Mr. Jenner. On any time during the week?

Mr. Taylor. Any time during the week. They have always owned convertibles and they would ride in them in all kinds of weather with the top down. They are very active, outdoor sort of people.

Mr. Jenner. When you say "they," you mean he and his present wife?

Mr. Taylor. Yes; uh-huh.

Mr. Jenner. Is she unconventional at times in her attire in the respects you have indicated in regards to him?

Mr. Taylor. Yes; very similar.

Mr. Jenner. She, likewise, wears a bathing suit out on the street, does she?

Mr. Taylor. Yes, quite a bit. And usually a bikini.

(n.2)

Inasmuch as Jeanne De Mohrenschildt was blonde and overweight, she, too, had her impact on observers. had known her Jacqueline Kennedy when she was a child and Marie DeMoulin when she was a wife and a widow. It was exactly the kind of observation you should expect on his to make. Told by Warren

In the course of his extended interrogation before the Warren Commission, De Mohrenschildt would fill 118 pages of testimony. Virtually half of this extended contribution was devoted by Commission Counsel to his biography and so there had been a tendency to wander afield:

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. Well, it is interesting to get people's reactions--if you check them. It is amusing to

Mr. Jenner. . . .the records show [that your brother Dmitri] was naturalized November 22, 1926, in the U.S. District Court at New Haven, which is where Yale University is located. . .do those facts square with your recollection?

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. Yes; approximately the right period. . . . I remember he went to Yale with Rudy Vallee--they were roommates. (n.3)

When it came to name-dropping, De Mohrenschildt had credentials. He was the only man in the world who had known both Jacqueline Kennedy when she was a child and Marina Oswald when she was a wife and a widow. It was exactly the kind of observation you could count on him to make. Twitted by Warren Commission Counsel Albert Jenner for arriving bare-chested at a formal dinner party--or so Jenner had already been told by a good number of witnesses besides Gary Taylor--George was asked if he didn't have a taste for shocking people.

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. Well, it is interesting to get people's reactions--if you shock them. It is amusing to

get people out of their boredom. Sometimes life is very boring.

Mr. Jenner. And get you out of your boredom, too?

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. Maybe my boredom also. (n.4)

He had, in fact, lived in so many countries, worked at so many occupations--cavalry officer in the Polish army, lingerie salesman in Belgium, moviemaker in New York, and petroleum engineer in Dallas--had finally accumulated so many adventures and married so often, (so well and so badly, sometimes for money, sometimes for love, having once been as wealthy as a gigolo who had hit on double-zero in matrimonial roulette, but reduced by 1962 to living on what Jeanne, his fourth and last wife, was making as a fashion designer at Nieman-Marcus,) that boredom could easily have been one of his afflictions: too much experience can prove as dangerous to maintaining a lively interest in life as a paucity of events.

It is more interesting, however, to go to his writings and to his testimony. In the process, De Mohrenschildt will give us an overview of Lee that provides its own surprises. Having heard in advance about Oswald from the other emigres, he

declares at first that his curiosity was aroused, and so, some time in the first or second week of September, he arranges that they meet and a window opens to banish the stale and unanimous verdicts of the other emigres. Some curious and tricky currents now blow in.

Someone gave me Lee's address and one afternoon a friend of mine, Colonel Lawrence Orlov, and myself drove to Fort Worth, some 30 miles from Dallas. We drove over the dreary sewage-smelling miles separating the two cities. Texas does have lovely open spaces, but here they were degraded and polluted. After some searching, we found a shack on Mercedes Street in a semi-detached, slummy area, near Montgomery Ward.

I knocked and a tawdry but clean young woman opened the door . . .

. . . To Orlov she was beautiful notwithstanding bad teeth and mousy hair. . . (n.5)

Marina offered us some sherry and said that Lee would soon be home from work. We spoke a little, fooling around; she had a pretty good sense of humor but the opinions she expressed seemed trite to me. And then entered Lee Harvey Oswald who was to become so famous or infamous. He wore overalls and clean workingman's shoes. Only someone who never met Lee could have called him insignificant. "There is something outstanding about this man," I told myself. One could detect immediately a very

sincere and forward man. Although he was average looking, with no outstanding features and of medium size, he showed in his conversation all the elements of concentration, thought, and toughness. This man had the courage of his convictions and did not hesitate to discuss them. I was glad to meet such a person and was carried away back to the days of my youth in Europe, where as students, we discussed world affairs and our own ideas over many beers and without caring about time. (n.6)

Such positive evaluations keep reappearing:

Lee's English was perfect, refined, rather literary, deprived of any Southern accent. He sounded like a very educated American of indeterminate background. (n.7)

. . . it amazed me that he read such difficult writers like Gorky, Dostoyevsky, Gogol, Tolstoy, and Turgenev--in Russian. . . I taught Russian at all levels in a large university and I never saw such proficiency in the best senior students who constantly listened to Russian tapes

and spoke to Russian friends. (n.8)

. . .both Lee and I were non-conformist, even revolutionary. . .but my long years of experience in Latin America, followed by my son's death and the ensuing sadness, made me commiserate with the fate of the poor and of the starving. As a younger man, I was career- and money-mad, a hustler. . . But Lee was the same since his childhood, which made him such a beautiful and worthwhile person to me. (n.9)

. . .He was socially motivated, was a dreamer and a seeker of truth. But such people have a very hard time in life and that's why so many people considered him a failure and a loser. (n.10)

. . .People in the "jet-set" or the "cafe society" are really very boring, the same the world over, while an eccentric like Lee was of great interest to me. (n.11)

Very often people ask me with suspicion why I, a person with several university degrees and of fairly good financial and social standing--with friends among the rich of this world-- became such a friend of that 'unadjusted radical'--Lee Harvey Oswald? Well, I hope that this book clarifies Lee's personality and endows him with a lot of most attractive features. I already spoke of his straightforward and relxing personality, of his honesty or his desire to be liked and appreciated. And I believe it is a privilege of an older age not to give a damn what others think of you. I choose my friends just because they appeal to me. And Lee did. (n.12)

The manuscript by De Mohrenschildt from which these quotations have been taken is called I am a Patsy. Jeanne De Mohrenschildt mailed it to the House Select Committee on Assassinations one day after De Mohrenschildt committed suicide in March, 1977, an hour or so after receiving notice that he would be subpoenaed to appear before the Committee.

In 1964, when he testified before the Warren Commission, he had not spoken in such favorable terms of Lee or of Marina:

De Mohrenschildt. . . .I found her not particularly pretty but a lost soul, living in the slums, not knowing one single word of English, with this rather unhealthy looking baby, horrible surroundings. (n.13)

. . .She is that type of a girl--very negligent, poor mother, very poor mother. Loved the child, but a poor mother that doesn't pay much attention. And what amazed us, you know, that she, having been a pharmacist in Russia, did not know anything about the good care of children, nothing. (n.14)

Mr. Jenner. Do you recall making this statement . . . "Since we lived in Dallas permanently last year and before, we had the misfortune to have met Oswald, and especially his wife Marina, sometime last fall."

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. Yes.

Mr. Jenner. What do you mean by the misfortune to have met Oswald and especially his wife Marina?

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. . . .it is not pleasant to have known the possible assassin of the President of the United States. And since he is dead, it doesn't matter. But we still know Marina. We had the misfortune of knowing her--it caused us no end of difficulty, from every point of view. . . people like us should have been protected against even knowing people like Oswald. Maybe I am wrong

in that respect. . . . (n.15) He is just a kid for me, with whom I played around. Sometimes I was curious to see what went on in his head.

But I certainly would not call myself a friend of his.

Mr. Jenner. Well, that may well be.

But Marina, at least, expresses herself that way-- that you "were the only one who remained our friend."

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. . . .We were no friends, nothing. We were just too busy to be with them--period. . . .they were very miserable, lost, penniless, mixed up. So as much as they both annoyed me, I did not show it to them because it is like insulting a beggar--you see what I mean. . . . (n.16) I did not take him seriously, that is all.

Mr. Jenner. Why didn't you? . . .

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. Well, he was not sophisticated, you see. He was a semi-educated hillbilly. . . . All his opinions were crude. . . . His mind was of a man with exceedingly poor background, who read rather advanced books, and did not even understand the words in them. . . . So how can you take seriously a person like that? You just laugh at him. But there was always an element of pity I had, and my wife had, for him. We realized that he was sort of a forlorn individual, groping for something. (n.17) I was not interested in listening to him because it was nothing, it was zero . . . After we found out what was going on in that town of Minsk, what was the situation, what were the food prices, how they

dressed, how they spent their evenings, which are things interesting to us, our interest waned. The rest of the times, the few times we saw Lee Oswald and Marina afterwards, was purely to give a gift to take them to a party, because we thought they were dying of boredom, you see--which Marina was. (n.16)

When we remind ourselves that De Mohrenschildt's negative testimony was in 1964 and his handsome appraisals were not written until 1977, the gap, nonetheless, between two such sets of evaluations is still too great. What is going on?

Chapter 13--Not in a Million Years

There is one place where De Mohrenschildt's reactions in 1964 and in 1977 do not conflict. It gives us a clue.

Oswald had his own manuscript, a fifty-page work in longhand (the first ten pages of which were typed by Pauline Bates a couple of days after he came back to America). It is an ungainly text, dense in its material but marred, in this case, only to a minor degree, by his dyslexia. Read closely, it offers an interesting and modestly novel view of life in the Soviet Union; at the time it would have been of value to American intelligence: Oswald was offering a working-day view of life in Minsk that was percipient.

Here, for example, are a couple of excerpts, dyslexia, et al:

. . .The numbers of meetings held a month average 20. 50% of these are political or by-political meetings. Meetings last anywhere from 10 minutes to two hours; usually the length of "Political information meetings" heldevery Tuesday is 15 minutes. An amazing thing in

watching these political lectures is that there is taken on by the listeners, a most phenomenal nature, one impervious to outside interference or sounds. After long years of hard fisted discipline, no worker will permit himself to be trapped and called out for inattentiveness by the ever present and watchful party secretary and members of the Communist party. This is mostly seen in political information or central committee party directive readings. At these times it is best to curb one's natural boistrous and lively nature. Under the 6' by 6' picture of Lenin, founder of the Soviet State, the party section secretary stands. In our section a middle aged poched man by the name of Sobakin, an average looking man wearing glasses, his wrinkled face and twinkling eyes give one the impression that at any moment he's going to tell a racy story or funny joke, but he never does. Behind this man stands 25 years of party life. his high post, relatively speaking for him, is witness to his efficiency. he stands expounding from notes in front of him, the week's "Information", with all the lack of enthusiasm and gusto of someone who knows that he has no worries about an audience or about someone standing up and going away.

(n.1)

. . .The radio and television station in Minsk is a four storied cement building located at no. 6 Kalinina Street near the small river "SVISHLICH", behind it stands the impressive 500 feet steel radio towers, the highest structure in Belorussia. This radio tower and building

are enclosed with high fences and patrolling armed guards with a dog. Entrance into the courtyard must be through the building itself and persons cannot enter without a special pass shown to an armed guard performers are taken to a separate studio near the city center where production and performers are fed back to the station and then to the broadcasting towers, in this way the all important communication system is guarded against sabotage or "take overs" of the sort often achieved by Latin American counter-revolutionary and melcontents elements.

Near the television towers, 4 blocks east on "Dalgobroadckay" Street, stands two more towers approximately 200 feet high each, they are not engaged in broadcasting, quite the opposite in fact, these very apparent land marks with high power cables strung between them, are jamming towers, used to blank out high frequency broadcast from abroad, the main target of these jamming towers is the Munich and Washington transmitters of the "Voice of America" programs, although they are sometimes employed to disrupt the B.B.C. and French broadcast in Russian. These towers are likewise guarded by armed guards and entrance to the wire enclosed black house and tower area is forbidden except by passes. The amount of voltage used by these towers is known to be tremendous when one considers that needed lighting at work places is only grudgingly turned on even on the cloudy days. (n.2)

In the same way, May Day and other "demonstrations" are arranged as well as spontaneous receptions for

distinguished guests. I remember when I was in Moscow in 1959 I was just passing in front of the Metropole restaurant when out of the side streets came a 10 man police unit which stopped all people on the street from passing on front of the restaurant, surrounding the crowd and keeping them hemmed in (not detouring the flow of traffic, as would be expected) for 3 minutes, until right on schedul, an obviouslt distinguished foreign lady was driven up to the restaurant, where a meeting in her honor had been arranged. She was taken through the "spontaneous" welcoming crowd, after which the police were withdrawn, allowing the passers by to continue.

another instance of this was in 1969 when a Chinese delegation arrived in Minsk and was driven from the Railway station to a house on the outskirts of the citty. Even though it was 10:30 at night all along the way members of the MVD (security) forces ran into apt. buildings and student dormatories ordering people out on to the streets to welcome the arriving guests.

Although there was no prior notice of any delegation, another "spontaneous welcoming comittee met the calvacade of black limosines and dutifully waved back at the darkened cars with the slightly proturding yellowish waving hands.

(n.3)

Oswald had already shown the manuscript to his brother Robert and to Peter Paul Gregory; later he would allow Alexandra and Gary Taylor to have a look as well. It was

hardly being kept a secret, and Oswald was soon induced to show it to his new friend George.

Here is De Mohrenschildt's verdict upon it in 1977:

"What do you think of this?" he asked.

"Remember, I am not a professional writer. I was lucky enough to have had some articles published. Your story is simple and honest but it is very poorly written. It is deprived of any sensational revelations and it's really pointless. Personally I like it because I know Minsk, but how many people know where Minsk is? And why should they have interest in your experiences? Tell me!"

"Not many," Lee agreed mildly.

I did not say, not to offend him, that his grammar was poor and his syntax was abominable. And those long, pompous words. . . (n.4)

For comparison, his remarks in 1964:

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. . . .It was just a description of life in a factory in Minsk. Not terribly badly written, not particularly well . . .Nothing that I really remember well. . . .I just glanced through. I realized that it is not fit for publication. You can see it right away. . .

Mr. Jenner. It is horrible grammar?

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. Horrible grammar.

Mr. Jenner. And horrible spelling.

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. Yes. (n.5)

De Mohrenschildt had to have been working from one agenda in 1964 and another in 1977. Yet, on this specific point concerning the value of Oswald's manuscript, the agenda is identical: De Mohrenschildt is doing his best to shift attention away from the thought that he had any interest in Oswald's manuscript. Evidence of interest, after all, could suggest the possibility that he had a task to perform, and one part of it was, precisely, to obtain Oswald's fifty pages long enough to have a few copies made and passed on to the proper people. By 1977, he was still unwilling at the

time of writing his manuscript--out of fear, presumably, of how much he had to tell--of revealing his connections. A few months later, desperate for money, he did--but then his suicide came crashing into the center of his confession. Too many turns and twists had developed in his relationship with Oswald.

It has to be understood that the Warren Commission in their own most decorous fashion was not unsuspicious of George. Having arrived in New York before the Second World War, the Baron from Mozyr had been busy at one point working for his cousin, Baron Konstantine Von Maydell, on a documentary about the Polish resistance. Maydell, however, following the partition of Poland in 1939 between the Soviet Union and Germany, became a Nazi agent, or so he was identified by the FBI; De Mohrenschildt, by his own declaration, was "collecting facts on people involved in pro-German activity" for another friend, Pierre Freyss who was head of the Deuxieme Bureau for French counterintelligence. "In the many-cornered world of intelligence, however, it is not possible to determine under whose control an agent is working simply by identifying other agents with whom he is associating." (n.6) De Mohrenschildt had to be serving as a double agent in that period, but whether for the French or the Germans is another matter. (It could even have been the

English!) By the following year he tried to join the OSS, and his name pops up in the intelligence files of various countries over the next fifteen years, to culminate finally in serious intelligence connections with the CIA, most notably, on geological surveys he did in Yugoslavia and West Africa for an overview of oil resources that involved much mapping of sensitive areas. On his return from Yugoslavia in 1957, he was debriefed by J. Walton Moore of the Domestic Contacts Division of the CIA in Dallas.

It is amusing to watch De Mohrenschildt steer away from any suggestion when speaking to the Warren Commission that he might have some sophistication in these matters:

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. . . . [Before] we met the Oswalds. . . we talked about them to Max Clark, and again to Bouhe. And I asked Mr. Bouhe, "Do you think it is safe for us to help Oswald?" . . .

Mr. Jenner. Why did you raise the question?

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. I raised the question because he had been to Soviet Russia. He could be anything, you see. And he could be right there watched day and night by the

FBI. I did not want to get involved, you see. (n.7)

In fairness, he did have reason to make such a remark. During the fall of 1962, De Mohrenschildt was arranging the largest business transaction of his life--a search for oil reserves in Haiti that could make him a wealthy man--with the aid, that is, of "Papa Doc" Duvalier, President of Haiti; George was hardly looking to take on any chance Soviet associations to his name at this point. His career, when reduced to the line items of a dossier, would cry out its wares to an eye trained in intelligence work; he had the classic background for a spy. "Papa Doc" was perfectly capable of seeing that much for himself. Since these were the years when it was considered possible, even likely, that Castro, after his success at the Bay of Pigs, might make a move on the Dominican Republic and Haiti, it was a question whether De Mohrenschildt, under the weight of his suspicious background, could arrange terms with Duvalier unless the CIA passed along a few hints that they were favorably inclined to De Mohrenschildt and the project. Before he would agree to meet Oswald, therefore, he not only checked with Max Clark, as had George Bouhe, but:

De Mohrenschildt. . . .I have the impression to have talked--to have asked about Lee Oswald with Mr. Moore, Walter Moore.

Mr. Jenner. Who is Walter Moore?

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. Walter Moore is the man who interviewed me on behalf of the Government after I came back from Yugoslavia--J. Walter Moore. He is a Government man--either FBI or Central Intelligence. A very nice fellow, exceedingly intelligent, who is, as far as I know--some sort of FBI man in Dallas. Many people consider him head of FBI in Dallas. Now, I don't know. Who does--you see? But he is a Government man in some capacity. he interviewed me and took my deposition on my stay in Yugoslavia, what I thought about the political situation there. And we became quite friendly after that. We saw each other from time to time, had lunch. . . I just found him an interesting person. (n.8)

De Mohrenschildt would have known that Moore was not FBI and that his middle name was not Walter but Walton! De Mohrenschildt was blurring his own relation to the CIA by projecting himself as an innocent. Since J. Walton Moore had

debriefed him on Yugoslavia, De Mohrenschildt would have had to know that Moore was CIA. Of course, testifying in 1964, De Mohrenschildt's game had been seriously skewed, skewed by the assassination--the CIA could injure him seriously in Haiti if he now associated them himself in any small way with Oswald.

Back in 1962, however, the CIA had had need of someone with real skills to debrief Oswald. Lee was an unknown quantity. Even as the KGB had contemplated the possibility that their marine defector was some new kind of CIA agent, now CIA could return the compliment by wondering if KGB was engaging in a novel ploy. Oswald could have been sent back from Russia for long-range purposes of Soviet propaganda. A direct debriefing, if it turned out badly and Oswald found a newspaper that would not hush it up, could prove internationally embarrassing, and worse, would injure relations once more with J. Edgar Hoover: Oswald was now ostensibly under FBI jurisdiction. Technically speaking, the CIA was not supposed to go near him. Yet, CIA needed to know what Oswald, after living in the Soviet Union for two and a half years, could tell them about life there. A debriefing in depth could fine-tune their knowledge. The need was real, but the operation, while small, had to be delicate. They would go in for an unwitting debriefing--even as Oswald had been debriefed in Moscow without formal declaration.

Mr. Jenner. Did the Oswalds, either together or separately, come to your home frequently or several times and spend the day with you?

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. I was trying to pin down how many times we saw them in all, and it is very hard, you know. I would say between 10 and 12 times, maybe more. It is very hard to say . . .

Mr. Jenner. And he was aware that you had approached . . . people to assist the Oswalds and also to have them out socially. . .

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. Yes. . . .I did ask some people to invite them because they were so lonesome . . . (n.9)

In the novel Harlot's Ghost, Hugh Montague, the spymaster known as Harlot, gives a lecture on procedures used to gain the confidence of a person who has been selected as a target for espionage. "Disinterested seduction," Harlot assures his CIA class, is the underlying mechanism. He then asks:

"Would any of you be familiar with the cardinal law of salesmanship?"

Rosen's hand shot up. "The customer doesn't buy the product until he accepts the salesman." . . .

"Perfect," said Harlot. "I, as the principal, am there to inspire the putative agent--my client--with one idea. it is that I am good for his needs. If my client is a lonely person with a pent-up desire to talk, what should be my calculated response, therefore?"

"Be there to listen," said several of us at once. . . .

"Clear enough," said Harlot. "In doubt, always treat lonely people as if they are rich and old and very much your relative. Look to provide them with the little creature comfort that will fatten your share of the will. On the other hand, should the client prove to be a social climber who gnashes his teeth at the mention of every good party he was not invited to, then sympathy won't get you much. Action is needed. You have to bring this person to a gala gathering. . . . However," added Harlot, "one has to keep a firm grasp on the intrinsic problem. An exceptional friendship is being forged. One is acting as generously as a guardian angel. That can arouse suspicion in a client [so] you, as the guardian angel, have to be ready to dissolve the client's distrust. It is reasonable to assume that the client, in some part of himself, knows what you are up to, but is amenable to your game. Now is the time to talk him into taking the first step [but] keep the transition modest. . . Reduce the drama. Request

something minor. . . . Warm the soup slowly. . . . Now, ask for a bit more. Can your friend let you have a look at X report? You happen to know that this X report is sitting on his desk." . . .

Oswald, of course, was not being developed as an agent. It was much too early for anything like that. The immediate objective was to determine whether the KGB had turned him into their agent, and, if not, to debrief him skillfully of his knowledge of Minsk and learn enough about his character to decide whether he could be of use in any manner.

On March 29, 1977, Edward Epstein had just finished a morning interview with George De Mohrenschildt in Palm Beach. With Readers' Digest funds, he was paying \$4000 for four days of interviews with De Mohrenschildt and was preparing to return after lunch to the house where George was staying for the afternoon interview, when word arrived via the FBI that his subject, after discovering in the interval between interviews that the House Select Committee on Assassinations was dispatching "one of its investigators to subpoena him,"

had killed himself with a shotgun. For Epstein's literary purposes, the suicide was a catastrophe. He had already learned a great deal and was anticipating he would hear a good deal more. Back in Washington, among Committee members, there was "havoc." To assassination buffs who had believed for a long time that elements in the CIA had been responsible for Kennedy's death, De Mohrenschildt's abrupt termination was assumed to be a murder.

In his book Legend, Epstein recounts what the dead man had already told him:

De Mohrenschildt claimed that morning that he had been dealing with the CIA since the early 1950s. Although he had never been a paid employee of the CIA, he said that he had "on occasion done favors" for government officials who were connected to it. In turn, those same officials had helped him in his business contacts overseas. For example, he pointed to a contract awarded him in 1957 for a survey of the Yugoslav coast. He assumed his "connections" had arranged it for him, and he provided them with reports on the Yugoslav officials in whom they had expressed interest. Such connections were, as he put it, "at the crux" of oil exploration in underdeveloped countries.

In late 1961--De Mohrenschildt could not pinpoint the

date--he had a lunchtime meeting in downtown Dallas with one of those connections, J. Walton Moore [who] purposefully steered the discussion in a new direction, the city of Minsk, where, as Moore seemed to know even before he told him, De Mohrenschildt had spent his childhood. Moore then told him about an ex-Marine who had worked in an electronics factory in Minsk for the past year in whom there was "interest," since he was returning to the Dallas area. Although no specific requests were made by Moore, De Mohrenschildt gathered he would be appreciative to learn more about this unusual ex-Marine's activities in Minsk.

In the summer of 1962, De Mohrenschildt heard more about this defector: one of Moore associates handed him the address of Lee Harvey Oswald in nearby Fort Worth and then suggested that De Mohrenschildt might like to meet him. He added, as if it was an inducement, that this ex-Marine had returned from Minsk with a pretty Soviet wife.

Before finding some pretext to visit this couple, De Mohrenschildt called Moore again. . . Some help from the U.S. Embassy in Haiti would be greatly appreciated by him, he suggested to Moore. Although he recognized that there was no quid pro quo, he hoped that he might receive the same sort of tacit assistance he had previously received in Yugoslavia. "I would never have contacted Oswald in a million years if Moore had not sanctioned it," he explained to me. "Too much was at stake." (n.10)

Chapter 14--Evenings in Dallas

The progress of De Mohrenschildt's debriefing of Lee Harvey Oswald is, unfortunately, blurred--willfully and inadvertently blurred. George will speak of seeing him as often as a dozen times from September to March, but the testimony of his daughter, Alexandra, and her husband Gary Taylor suggests a higher frequency. Of course, Alexandra's memory for dates is lamentable, as is Gary's, as is Jeanne and George De Mohrenschildt's; and Marguerite's, and George Bouhe's, and just about all of the emigres. Marina's recollection of a date, given the set of shocks she was to pass through, could often be out by a month or more. Yet in the study of espionage and crime, of violence and murder, accurate chronology is paramount for it is our best guide to motive--a criminal receiving money before the act has been committed is hardly to be comprehended in the same light as when the sum is received afterward. In the first case, one can assume his services were hired; in the second, it is his silence that is probably being purchased. *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*

The Warren Commission left much to regret in the style of their inquiry, yet without much careful accumulation of every

species of record on such matters as Oswald's wages and places of employment, there might have been no reliable chronology at all--by dint of FBI and Warren Commission research, we can know at least where Oswald lived, when he moved, and who some of his associates proved to be.

For the changes in his inner life, however, there is almost no certifiable chronology. If not for public library records of withdrawal and return of books in New Orleans--no such files exist for Dallas or Fort Worth--we would not even have an idea of what he read or when.

Much the same can be said of De Mohrenschildt's growing intimacy with Oswald. If George dropped in on the couple over numerous occasions, and helped them to move during various marital or economic crises, or arranged for others to do so, still the progress of the relationship is static as recounted in the Baron's memoirs and testimony. For example, he relates to us the following:

. . .I told Lee that I had known Jacqueline Kennedy as a young girl, as well as her mother, father and all her relatives and how charming the whole family was. I especially liked "Black Jack" Bouvier, Jacquie's father, a delightful Casanova of the Wall Street.

Lee was not jealous of the Kennedy's and Bouvier's wealth and did not envy their social positions, of that I was sure. To him wealth and society were big jokes, but he did not resent them. (n.1)

Our source, of course, is the positive manuscript rather than the negative testimony, but if we employ the rough rule of thumb that the manuscript recaptures for us the tone De Mohrenschildt employed when visiting with Lee--gracious, cosmopolitan, enthusiastic, elucidative, and always ready to compliment his target for qualities of mind and character, whereas the testimony represents George's unspoken feelings. Annoyance, boredom, and resentment well up in his testimony. How many hours had to be spent developing a friendship with so unlikely a companion? It is interesting that our Baron would soon know enough about Lee to touch his secret snobbery: Oswald would believe that he was born to be in touch with people who knew the leaders of the world and their beautiful ladies. De Mohrenschildt must have offered the item as a lagniappe to their relationship. The pity, however, is that we cannot place this remark in chronological context for it might underline the moment when Oswald began to trust De Mohrenschildt more than a little.

In any event, we can assume that after a month, more or less, of rapidly accelerating friendship, the Baron has, by October 7, begun to take over Oswald's working career as well as sweeping up his loyalty and affection.

Gary Taylor, being George's son-in-law, may have had a jaundiced eye, but, whatever the case, he puts it in this fashion:

Mr. Jenner. Do you have any opinion as to whether George De Mohrenschildt exercised any influence over Oswald?

Mr. Taylor. Yes; there seemed to be a great deal of influence there. It would be my guess that De Mohrenschildt encouraged him to move to Dallas, as he suggested a number of things to Lee--such as where to look for jobs. And it seems like whatever his suggestions were, Lee grabbed them and took them whether it was what time to go to bed or where to stay or to let Marina stay with us while he stayed at the YMCA. (n.2)

De Mohrenschildt was not close to his daughter Alexandra. She had grown up with an aunt, Nancy Tilton (in whose

Manalapan home south of Palm Beach the Baron would later commit suicide) but Alexandra was now living in Dallas with Gary whose family were residents. Alexandra had been sixteen years old when they wed, and Gary twenty. Now, two years later, he was a young filmmaker working as a taxicab driver, and the couple had a baby boy who was June Oswald's age. Alexandra was approached then by her father with the fine idea to bring his daughter and son-in-law together with Lee and Marina. On October 7, a Sunday when George was travelling with Jeanne the thirty miles from Dallas to Fort Worth to hear a Van Cliburn competition for Soviet pianists, it was arranged that they would all meet later that afternoon at Oswald's house.

We can guess at the state of Alexandra's feelings--it is not routine to dismiss a rare invitation from a handsome and charming father who is mythic rather than habitual to one's daily concerns--but, in fact, when she arrived at the Oswald's apartment on Mercedes Street about four in the afternoon, a gathering (without refreshments) was in progress, with George Bouhe, Elena Hall and her husband, Jeanne and George De Mohrenschildt, and, not least--Marguerite Oswald.

One says not least automatically when referring to Marguerite, but in this case it does not necessarily apply:

Mr. Jenner. She was just there for about 5 minutes?

Mr. Taylor. Less than 45 minutes, I would say.

Mr. Jenner. Did you have an opportunity to form an impression of her. . .?

Mr. Taylor. I just have a vague recollection of a somewhat plump woman who seemed to be--uh--out of place in the present crowd that was there that afternoon. And she didn't seem to be particularly interested in anything that went on--and I think that's what prompted her to leave.

Mr. Jenner. Did you have an opportunity to observe and form an opinion from those observations as to the attitude between Lee Oswald and Marguerite?

Mr. Taylor. I would say that it was one of estrangement between; that they had very little communication between them; that they were almost strangers--and possibly didn't even like each other. Particularly on Lee's part, I should think.

(n.3)

It is sad to relate that this is the last time Marguerite will see Lee alive.

Marguerite Oswald. That was on a Sunday. I went there [two days later] on a Tuesday and the children had gone . . . So then I went to Robert's house, and Robert was at work. I was all upset. They didn't tell me they were leaving.

I said to Vada, "Marina and Lee are no longer there. The house is vacant. . ."

She said, "Robert helped them to move, and they gave us the food in the refrigerator."

I said it came up all of a sudden . . . (n.4)

We can picture the scene after Marguerite departed on that Sunday afternoon. It was "a comparatively bare room," testified Gary Taylor, "uncarpeted. The furniture was badly worn. It was, however, clean--particularly considering the number of people that were there." (n.5)

Mr. Jenner. All right. What else was discussed?

Mr. Taylor. . . .there was a discussion about Lee's job--which I believe he had just left the Friday before. He was--he terminated his employment. I don't know if he was

fired or how he became severed from it--and he wanted to move to Dallas. And there was some discussion about the move and it taking place, and so on, and . . . Marina came to stay in my home. . . .

Mr. Jenner. Why?

Mr. Taylor. . . . Just to give her a place to live until he was able to find a job here in Dallas. . . . Lee stayed in Fort Worth that night and . . . next day, moved their bigger belongings--more bulky ones other than clothing--to Mrs. Hall's garage and stored them there. And then he came to Dallas and--uh--took up residence at the YMCA here.

(n.6)

Oswald had given the impression that he was laid off his job, but in fact he had quit.

Mr. Jenner. What were the circumstances respecting the termination of his employment?

Mr. Bargas. Well, what happened is--he went home one day, . . . right after the regular working hours. . . . and he didn't give any indication . . . he was going to leave or

anything like that.

Mr. Jenner, You expected him back the next day?

Mr. Bargas. . . . he didn't show up . . . he didn't call in and he didn't have a phone . . . so I never tried to get in contact with him or anything like that . . . (n.7) as much as I can remember of the short time he was there-- he was a good employee. I imagine if he pursued that trade, he might have come out to be a pretty good sheet metal man--I don't know. (n.8)

The assumption has to be there that De Mohrenschildt had not only assured Lee that there would be a job for him in Dallas--but a serious end had been achieved. Separated from his wife, the relationship between the Baron and the defector could be accelerated.

Mystery commences again. Lee and Marina will be staying in separate places for the rest of October and the first few days of November, four weeks in all. She will camp out for a few days with Gary and Alexandra Taylor in their small apartment in Dallas, and then with Elena Hall in Fort Worth,

and Lee will visit June and Marina several times a week, then ostensibly go back to his room at the YMCA in Dallas where everyone, including Marina, thought he was staying.

The difficulty, however, is that Lee was only registered at the Y from October 15 through October 19. The week before or the two weeks afterward no one knows (or admits) where he lived, and this despite the best efforts of the FBI and the Warren Commission to determine that question.

The source of his money is another enigma. He had not picked up his last check at Leslie Welding and indeed, dropped them a note to say where his wages should be forwarded. He had, according to Robert, already paid back the two hundred dollars he owed, and this had been accomplished on a salary of fifty a week over a period when he worked a maximum of twelve weeks while paying a rent of \$59.50 a month. If no more than \$20 a week was spent on food and all other necessities, small treats, and miscellaneous for the nine weeks they lived on Mercedes Street, the feat of paying back two hundred dollars to Robert is accountable, but there would be no other money on hand.

Alexandra Taylor has an erratic flash of memory on this matter:

Mrs. Gibson (n.9). . . . I think my father lent them money, didn't he? I don't know. Somebody must have given them money. It was Bouhe, that is who it was who lent them money.

Mr. Jenner. It was only 4 days, Mrs. Gibson [before he received his wages from his next job.]

Mrs. Gibson. No; but he had to have money to get started. he had to have money to stay at the YMCA. He had to have money to get started, and I know who gave him money, George Bouhe did. (n.10)

Mr. Jenner. Did Lee express any views with respect to others in that milieu, that company, the Halls, the Mellers, the Clarks, Bouhe, the Voshinins, the Russian emigre colony?

Mrs. Gibson. Well, he liked Mr. Bouhe very much and he expected a lot of him. I think he thought that Mr. Bouhe might be his key to getting a good job. . . .I'd say George Bouhe was the one that stuck by him the most, more than my father, more than any of them. . . . (n.11)

It may soon be worth returning to this point. Either Bouhe or De Mohrenschildt or both may have been supporting him

for a period. It is certainly true that De Mohrenschildt by way of Anna Meller's husband Teofil in turn who had a friend at the Texas Employment Commission, managed to stimulate some attention for Lee, and after three active days of interviews that the Commission provided for him, at which Lee showed himself to be cleanly-dressed, polite, and attentive (by their report), he got a job he liked at a place called Jagger-Chiles-Stovall which had a considerable variety of photographic equipment and "an enormous inventory" of type faces and scripts and sans serif faces that enabled them to carry the development of an advertisement all the way through from receiving the design to mailing the finished mats to the designated newspapers.

Mr. Graef. . . .I asked him where his last position was and he said, "The Marines," . . . I said, "Honorably discharged, of course," as a joke, and he said, "Oh, yes," and we went on with other facts of the interview. (n.12)

Oswald would be more interested and attracted to this job than any other he had had before or would later find, and for

a period he learned quickly and enjoyed the collateral advantages of the job, for as we shall see, he was able with Jaggar-Chiles-Stovall's panoply of equipment to forge various identity cards for himself. Besides, with overtime, his pay came to as much as \$70 a week.

All that would take place over the next few months. The question still arises: what was Oswald doing in the evening through October and where in Dallas was he living? During the four days that Marina and June stayed with the Taylors, Lee visited once or twice, but according to Gary, "there was no personal communication between them."

Mr. Taylor. . . . you would think that a man and a woman married would want some time alone together. . . . within one door of us was a big park where they could have taken walks and been alone together and talked--but this never happened. . . . It was just like two friends meeting.

Mr. Jenner. [No] conduct between them that would lead you to believe there were evidences of love and affection?

Mr. Taylor. That's right.

Mr. Jenner. It was more platonic--a friendship relationship?

Mr. Taylor. Uh-huh. (n.13)

Back on Mercedes Street in Fort Worth, Marina had been complaining to the emigres that Oswald was showing no sexual interest in her.

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. We told her she should not annoy him--poor guy, he is doing his best. . . . She openly said that he didn't see her physically--right in front of him. She said, "He sleeps with me just once a month, and I never get any satisfaction out of it." A rather crude and completely straightforward thing to say in front of relative strangers, as we were.

Mr. Jenner. Yes.

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. I don't blame Lee for giving her a good whack on the eye. (n.14)

To which De Mohrenschildt adds: "I think he was an asexual person." (n.15)

Marina had said as much to Elena Hall and had shocked Jeanne by making comments when they were driving together in the De Mohrenschildt convertible about how attractive and muscular were the black men that she saw on the street. Jeanne, despite her not-ordinary career as a ballet dancer in China and her flamboyance with a bikini still was shocked and thought it highly improper for a married woman to speak in that fashion.

Marriages can trudge through weeks and months that are like sustained expeditions in the desert on the hump of a spavined and odorous camel. Oswald had obviously withdrawn from Marina and the question that arose again as it did when he was in the Marines and in that curious first year he spent in Minsk when he never had a woman and was content to date platonically with Ella Germann is not whether he was asexual for long periods, so much as homosexual, and that it was indeed the closet drama of his life. To be homosexual in the early '60s was still a badge of shame and hardly presented its contemporary status where a majority of Americans might even accept the idea, if grudgingly, that gay life is a form of alternative living. If Oswald was bisexual, then, he kept it to himself and to the few people with whom he shared such a life.

It is not at all impossible, however, to outline a

scenario where Oswald lived for a week with some older man, had a spat, moved to the Y for a week, had a reconciliation and went back to the man for a fortnight, all the while acquiring some money. At this point, no more is being offered than a speculative narrative with no proof, but then, some explanation has to be found for those mysterious and missing three weeks, some hypothesis to serve as a focusing lens, and it is very hard to believe that Oswald left Mercedes Street on Monday, October 8, to move to Dallas with no place to stay.

Since such a hypothesis is anchored on very little that is tangible, let us levitate even higher and enjoy the assumption, if only for a page, that George Bouhe is the secret lover:

Mr. Liebeler. Did you learn that Oswald subsequently did obtain a job in Dallas?

Mr. Bouhe. Yes, I did. And as a person who at that time suspected nothing except that I had a desire, if I could, to put him on his feet economically so he could support his wife and child--I said, now those were my words, "Lee, you've now got a job, a lithographic job at \$1.45 an hour as an apprentice. If you apply yourself"--those were my

very words--"in a couple of years you'll have a skill that can be saleable any place."

And he said, "You think so." And he didn't even say thank you.

Then I added, "Well, I would like to hear how you get along," which is a standard statement I would ask anybody.

And for 2 or 3--or possible 5 days thereafter, he would call me at 6 o'clock, I guess when he finished his work and say "I am doing fine. Bye." (n.16)

Bouhe, like De Mohrenschildt, could have been covering his tracks and pretending to a detestation of Lee that he certainly did not feel, not at that time. The description of George Bouhe, however, by others as a "fussy opinionated old bachelor" was the euphemism-in-place those days for a late middle-aged homosexual who had led a reasonable, happy, and useful life, and had earned enough in the course of things to pay for a few pleasures. Someone as ungracious as Oswald could have been deemed equal to rough trade for a man as physically timid as Bouhe. And indeed, Lee did use Bouhe's name as a reference, "going so far as to list Bouhe at a false address." As Bouhe would remark later, "He always got what he wanted." (n.17)

That is one speculation for the missing three weeks (and

indeed it hardly had to be Bouhe.) In the weeks after the assassination, there were journalists who heard rumors that Oswald was receiving money from an antique dealer in Dallas, but no one succeeded in grounding that detail.

There is an alternative scenario. It is that matters had advanced between Oswald and De Mohrenschildt; it was now accepted that Oswald was in no way working for the KGB, and serious undertakings which would employ Oswald as a provocateur against the Soviet were being examined. To force the imaginative possibilities, Oswald may even have been holed up in a safe house and only went to the Y for the week of October 15 to 19 in order to underline his cover story that he was indeed staying there.

That, however, does seem to take place too quickly to be a viable hypothesis. Someone who fit so few acceptable categories as Oswald would be examined by any intelligence group for longer than that. It is easier at this point to place him as trade for the closet rather than as a paid novice in spookdom.

Chapter 15--Oswald's Kampf

To be fair, one ought to list another alternative. Perhaps it is the most viable. Oswald had been under scrutiny for years in the Marine Corps, the Soviet Union, and lately with the FBI and the emigre community, not to mention living under the acerbic criticisms of Marina--he may have wanted no more than to have a secret address, a secret name, and a place where no one could find him or observe him and he could be alone until he chose to go out and visit others.

If it is uncomfortable to try to comprehend a man who might have been traveling on any one of three tracks, let us recognize that this is likely to be our situation from now on, and chronology will continue to devil us.

Lee himself was reading a good deal, Hitler's Mein Kampf, and William Schirer's Rise and Fall of the Third Reich. He also reread. . .1984 and Animal Farm . . . loaned to him by George De Mohrenschildt. (n.1)

Priscilla Johnson McMillan gives no attribution for Mein Kampf, but does place the reading of it in this period, and one would hope the time is accurate, for one can think of no moment in Oswald's life when he would have been more ready to read Mein Kampf and feel some identity with Hitler than in these weeks alone in Dallas working at a low-paying job while feeling within himself every presentiment that he was a man destined for greatness against all odds. It is worth looking at a few of Hitler's personal remarks:

I soon learned that there was always some kind of work to be had, but equally soon I found out how easy it was to lose it.

The uncertainty of earning my daily bread soon seemed to me one of the darkest sides of my new life. (n.2)

I studied more or less all of the books I was able to obtain . . . and for the rest immersed myself in my own thoughts.

I believe that those who knew me in those days took me for an eccentric. (n.3)

Five years in which I was forced to earn a living, first as a day laborer, then as a small painter, a truly meager living which never sufficed to appease even my daily hunger. . . .I had but one pleasure, my books.

At that time I read enormously and thoroughly. All the free time my work left me was employed in my studies. In this way I forged in a few years' time the foundations from a knowledge from which I still draw nourishment today.

And even more than this:

In this period there took shape within me a world picture and a philosophy which became the granite foundation of all my acts. In addition to what I then created, I have had to learn little; and I have had to alter nothing. (n.4)

It must never be forgotten that nothing that is really great in this world has ever been achieved by coalitions, but that it has always been the success of a single victor. . . . Great, truly world-shaking revolutions of a spiritual nature are not even conceivable and realizable except as the titanic struggles of individual formations. . . . [Hitler's italics] (n.5)

"Individual formations" are, of course, to be understood as a synonym for one man.

It is possible that de Mohrenschildt, intrigued by the extreme contrast between Oswald's anarchism and authoritarianism, could have put him on to Mein Kampf.

Mr. Voshinin. . . . I was invited by George to go to the Bohemian Club. He will give a historical lecture. . .

I was present on that occasion.

And George discussed the question, you know, about the Vlassov army. That was an army composed of Russian--Soviet Russian prisoners . . . who wanted to fight the Communists. And . . . in between, he injected a lot of praise for such people as Himmler . . . He said, "After all, I came to the conclusion that Himmler wasn't a bad boy after all."

You know, that's typically George.

Mr. Jenner. Do you think that this was sincere or do you think that he was just attempting to provoke shock?

Mr. Voshinin. I think he was attempting to provoke shock. Especially there were, at least, three Jewish people there present--Sam Ballen and Lev Aronson [and myself]. I saw that Lev Aronson became red, terribly red in his face. I was afraid that the poor guy, you know, would have a stroke, you know. And George was looking into the face of Aronson and, you know, continued praising the Nazis and look what effect it has on Lev, who is a close friend of George. Of course, Lev was terribly bitter--and I understand, after that, Lev and him went to drink vodka the whole night. So, well--that's the type of person you have. . . (n.6)

De Mohrenschildt with an all-out eclecticism that delighted in presenting himself as right-wing, left-wing, a moralist, an immoralist, an aristocrat, a lover of tradition, a snob, an atheist, a Republican, a Kennedy-lover, a desegregationalist, and an intimate of oil tycoons, a bohemian and a socialite, plus a quondam Nazi apologist once a year, could not have failed to see the profound war between Oswald's ideology and character: absolute freedom for all in his political vision, yet he treated Marina as if he were a Nazi corporal.

Alex Kleinlerer is not our most unbiased witness, but this moment does offer its image:

. . .Oswald observed that the zipper on Marina's skirt was not completely closed. He called to her in a very angry and commanding tone of voice. . . His exact words were, "Come here!" in the Russian language, and he uttered them the way you would call a dog with which you were displeased in order to inflict punishment on him. . . . When she reached the doorway he rudely reprimanded her in a flat imperious voice about being careless in her dress and slapped her hard in the face twice. Marina still had the baby in her arms. Her face was red and tears came to her eyes. All this took place in my presence. I was very much embarrassed and angry but I had long been afraid of Oswald and I did not say anything.

(n.7)

This event did not occur until November 3 when Lee and Marina would finally move into their own apartment on Elsbeth Street in Dallas, but if Oswald had been reading Mein Kampf in the weeks before, his lively imagination about the roles he could play on a great historical stage could have influenced this ugly scene.

It is best, however, not to carry any analogy to Hitler

too far. Oswald would have identified with Hitler's early struggles and would have been heartened by the fact that a plain ordinary-looking man with nothing better than a high school education had succeeded for a time in dominating half the world, and he could certainly have identified with Hitler's way of reading and absorbing knowledge, he would have given assent to Hitler's belief in great individuals rather than government-by-establishment, and he would have applauded the following from Mein Kampf:

. . . anyone who wants to cure this era, which is invariably sick and rotten, must first of all summon up the courage to make clear the causes of this disease [then organize] those forces capable of becoming the vanguard fighters for a new philosophy of life. (n.8)

Oswald, however, would have found Hitler's most fundamental concept deplorable.

. . . For only those who . . . learn to know the cultural, economic, but above all, the political greatness of their own fatherland can and will achieve the inner pride in the privilege of being a member of such a people. [Hitler's italics] (n.9)

Oswald was a Marxist. To relax his grip on Marxism would have been equal to intellectual decomposition for himself. Concepts of fatherland were odious to him; for proof, can one conceive of his "feeling inner pride in the privilege" of being an American? He would hate concepts of race and historically destined folk, but Hitler's career was another matter--it probably lit a candle in the dungeon of Oswald's immense hopes for himself.

Sometime in the fall of 1962--the date is wholly unclear--De Mohrenschildt brought Oswald to meet Samuel Ballen with the possibility that Ballen would employ him in his corporation or send him to some promising place. The three men were together for two hours:

Mr. Ballen. . . .during the entire course of the two hours [there were] general observations, general smirks, general slurs that were significant to me that he was equally a critic of the United States and of the USSR and that he was standing in his own mind as somewhat of a detached student and critical of both operations, and that he was not going to be snowed under by either of the two operations. . . .

. . .the one thing that greatly started to rub me the wrong way is, as I started to seriously think through possible industrial openings or possible people I could refer him to, and he could see I was really making an effort in this respect, he kept saying, and then he repeated himself a little too often on this, he said to me, "Now, don't you worry about me, I will get along. Don't you worry yourself about me." He said that often enough that gradually it became annoying and I just felt this is a hot potato that I don't think will fit in with any organization that I could refer him to. (n.10)

It is not corporate to suggest "don't worry about me." The corporation is built on the premise that it not only takes care of all its people, but worries about them because, it is, after all, the largest factor in their lives. Not unlike the Soviet Union, one is tempted to say.

Chapter 16--"I Refused to tell a Lie"

It is more than time to ask: how is Marina? We left her on October 7 at the Taylors' house with her baby, and by the next day, Jeanne De Mohrenschildt has arranged for Marina to receive some dental work. We can pick up an idea of how much Marina's teeth annoyed Jeanne by the following:

Mr. Jenner. You immediately noticed that she was ignorant, let me say?

Mrs. De Mohrenschildt. In bringing up the child?
 . . . Absolutely.

Mr. Jenner. That she fed her. . .milk and sugar and was inattentive as to cleanliness with the child?

Mrs. De Mohrenschildt. The child was more or less clean [except for] the pacifier thing.

Mr. Jenner. The pacifier would fall on the floor, she would pick it up and stick it in the baby's mouth?

Mrs. De Mohrenschildt. No; first she put it in her infected mouth and then in the baby's mouth. . . Pick it

up off the floor. The floor was less germs than her infected teeth, but she was not aware of it. That is what didn't make. . .sense at all. After all, a pharmacist...

(n.1)

Jeanne might be Russian by birth but no longer by temperament. Jeanne had developed American notions of sanitation. Marina had other assumptions: she loved June so much that she would take it for granted that the adoration in her heart would imbue her saliva with cleansing powers. Perhaps she was right. Love plus infection might be more than equal to disinfectant that comes in a big company's bottles.

Together, the De Mohrenschildts and George Bouhe took steps to fix Marina's teeth. With the aid of Elena Hall who lived and worked in Fort Worth as a dental assistant and made arrangements for them at Baylor University's dental clinic, Marina had six teeth extracted and six new ones put in over a Monday and a Wednesday, October 8 and 10. Bouhe paid the \$70 fee, and Jeanne was in charge of driving Marina to the appointments in Fort Worth and bringing her back to the Taylors' in Dallas, a harrowing few days for Marina it is safe to assume.

Alexandra Taylor, being deputized on each occasion to

take care of June, offers her sidelight on the baby:

Mr. Jenner. How did you get along. . . ?

Mrs. Gibson. Not very well.

Mr. Jenner. Tell us about that. . . .

Mrs. Gibson. Well, the minute Marina left, the child would start to cry. She whimpered all the time. I couldn't feed her. Every time I got near her she'd scream. She never slept. She's a very difficult child to get along with. She was not at all affectionate to anybody but her own parents.

Mr. Jenner. Do you think she found it strange to have anyone speak to her in English as distinguished from Russian?

Mrs. Gibson. I don't know if it was the English. I don't

believe she had ever been with anybody but her parents and I think that might have had a lot to do with it, plus she was very spoiled, very catered to by her mother and her father. (n.2)

After the dental work, it was agreed that Marina would stay with Elena Hall who though married to an American was an emigre and spoke Russian. Her apartment was larger and Elena was separated at this time from her husband. The immediate result was that Lee in Dallas and Marina in Fort Worth were now thirty miles apart and he could see her less frequently, but Kleinlerer, standing in for him as resident critic, has this to contribute:

I noticed that Marina did nothing to help Mrs. Hall in the house. Mrs. Hall often complained that Marina was lazy, that she slept until noon or thereabouts, and would not do anything around the house to help. (n.3)

On October 17 and 18, two curious events occur.

In the evening of October 17, Elena Hall and Marina and June knocked on Alexandra's door in a state of some excitement. They had had June baptized but an hour ago at a Russian Orthodox church, and Elena Hall was the godmother. Since Marina was certain that Lee would object strenuously, she had done it "on the sly" and asked Alexandra not to tell him. (n.4)

Since Lee's twenty-third birthday was tomorrow, October 18, and Marina would not be seeing him, she was leaving a small box of new clothes with Alexandra. (In those days, he dropped by frequently at the Taylors'.) Later, back in Fort Worth, Marina must have had a change of heart. When Lee called her at Elena Hall's home that night, she told him about the baptism, and so when he came by the Taylors' apartment to pick up his gift next day, he knew all about it. As Alexandra recounts his reaction, he was cool: ". . .just said he didn't like the idea, but that was all." (n.5)

The night, however, of October 18, Elena Hall got into an automobile accident that would put her in the hospital for eight days. As Alexandra Taylor said, "It was very shocking when I heard."

We can assume the emigres were also disturbed, particularly when they learned of the baptism. by the unspoken logic of emotion, curses carry large weight. The accident had to intensify everyone's fear of Oswald: Marina, with her deep if unfocussed intuitions about magical matters, could hardly be free, consciously or unconsciously, of the guilty assumption that she had helped to injure Elena Hall.

The immediate result was that Marina now lived alone in Elena's apartment in Fort Worth. Indeed she would dwell there for more than two weeks, since Elena Hall went off to New York so soon as she was discharged from the hospital to be reunited with her husband. Alex Kleinlerer, left to look after the condition in which Marina was keeping the apartment, gave his usual generous evaluation:

On a good many of the occasions that I dropped by the Hall residence during my lunch hour, I found that Marina had not yet awakened. I would have to arouse her by ringing the doorball and banging on the front door. I would find the household unkept, unwashed dishes in the sink or on the eating table, and hers and the baby's clothing strewn around the room. Marina would come to the door in a wrap-around, her hair dishevelled and her eyes heavy with the effect of many hours of sleep. She would