

him that I was the only one, he didn't believe it, and he advised me--and I quote, "We could infiltrate your organization and find out what you are doing here." My answer to him was, "Well, you will have to infiltrate myself, because I am the only one." . . .

After that, after my conversation with deBrueys, I was always waiting that maybe someone will come to infiltrate my organization from the FBI [so] when Oswald came to me on August 5, [1963] I had inside myself the feeling, well, maybe this is from the FBI, or maybe this is a Communist, [but] I only had that [as a] feeling on August 5 because 4 days later I was convinced that Oswald was not an FBI agent but that he was a pro-Castro agent.

. . . Now that day, on August 5, I was talking in the store with one young American--the name of him is Philip Geraci--and 5 minutes later Mr. Oswald came inside the store. . . . I was explaining to Geraci that our fight is fight of Cubans and that he was too young, that if he want to distribute literature against Castro, I would give him the literature but not admit him to the fight.

At that moment also . . . Oswald start to agree with my point of view and he show real interest in the fight against Castro. He told me that he was against Castro and that he was against communism [and] he asked me first for some English literature against Castro . . .

After that, Oswald told me that he had been in the Marine Corps and that he had been training in guerrilla warfare and that he was willing to train Cubans to fight against Castro. Even more, he told me that he was willing to go himself. . . . That was on August 5.

I turned down his offer. I told him that. . . my only duties here in New Orleans are propaganda and

information and not military activities. That was my answer to him [but] before he left the store, he put his hand in the pocket and he offered me money.

Mr. Lliebeler. Oswald did?

Mr. Bringuier. Yes.

Mr. Liebeler. How much did he offer you?

Mr. Bringuier. Well, I don't know. As soon as he put the hand in the pocket and he told me, "Well, at least let me contribute to your group with some money," at that moment I didn't have the permit from the city hall here in New Orleans to collect money in the city, and I told him that I could not accept. . . he could send the money directly to the headquarters . . . and I gave him the number of the post office box . . . in Miami. (n.5)

The youth, Philip Geraci, whom Bringuier had decided was too young to join the active fight, offers in his testimony a closer account of the conversation with Oswald:

Mr. Geraci. . . . he came in and said, "Excuse me," and you know, he acted a little nervous and things like that.

He asked, "Is this the Cuban headquarters, Cuban exile headquarters?" . . . And Carlos said yes; and then Oswald said something like, "It is kind of exciting meeting. . . somebody who is a real Cuban exile, you know, someone who is really trying to do something to help free Cuba and all that. . . . Carlos just answered real simply [and] didn't go into any big speeches, [then Carlos had to go] and that left Oswald, me, and Vance [my friend] by ourselves.

Then, well, we asked--you know, we were a little interested in guerrilla warfare . . . and he said, well, he was an ex-Marine. . . He said he learned a little bit about that stuff, and he said a few things. . . I remember, like he said the way to derail a train was to wrap chain around the ties of the track and then lock it with a padlock and the train would derail. He said the thing he liked best of all was learning how to blow up the Huey P. Long Bridge. He said you put explosive at each end on the banks and blow it up, and that leaves the one column standing. And he said how to make a homemade gun and how to make gunpowder, homemade gunpowder. . . .He didn't really go into detail or anything. We didn't ask him. And by this time, Carlos came back . . . and he was listening, and, well, that is about all.

Oh, there was one important thing. Oswald said something like that he had a military manual from when he was in the Marines, and he said he would give it to me, and I said, "That is all right. You don't have to. You can give it to Carlos." He said, "Well, OK, he will give it to Carlos next time he comes."

(n.6)

Four days later, this scene would take on considerable significance for Carlos Bringuier:

Mr. Bringuier. . . . Next day, on August 6, Oswald came back to the store. . . and he left with my brother-in-law a Guidebook for Marines for me with the name "L.H. Oswald" in the top of the first page. When I came back to the store. . . . I found interest in it and I keep it, and later. . . on August 9 I was coming back to the store at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and one friend of mine with the name of Celso Hernandez came in to me and told me that in Canal Street there was a young man carrying a sign telling "Viva Fidel" in Spanish, and some other thing about Cuba At that moment was in the store another Cuban with the name of Miguel Cruz, and we went all three. . .to Canal Street to find the guy.

We were walking all Canal Street to Rampart Street, but we could not find him . . . I went back to the store, but just 3 or 4 minutes later. . . Miguel Cruz came running back and told me that the guy was another time in Canal Street and that Celso was watching him over there.

I went over [again] and I was surprised when I recognized that the guy . . . was Lee Harvey Oswald [and when] he recognized me, he was also surprised, but just for a few seconds. Immediately he smiled to me and he

offered the hand to shake hands with me. I became more angry and I start to tell him that he don't have any face to do that, with what face he was doing that, because he had just come to me 4 days ago offering me his service and that he was a Castro agent, and I start to blame him in the street.

That was a Friday around 3 o'clock at this moment, and many people start to gather around us to see what was going on over there. I start to explain to the people what Oswald did to me, because I wanted to move the American people against him, not to take the fight for myself as a Cuban but to move the American people to fight him, and I told them that he was a Castro agent, that he was a pro-Communist, and that he was trying to do to them exactly what he did to us in Cuba, kill them and send their children to the execution wall. Those were my phrases at the moment.

The people in the street became angry and started to shout to him, "Traitor! Communist! Go to Cuba! Kill him!" and some other phrases that I do not know if I could tell in the record.

Mr. Liebeler. You mean they cursed at him, they swore at him?

Mr. Bringuier. That is right, some bad phrases, bad words. (n.7)

At that moment, a policeman arrived and told Bringuier to keep walking:

Mr. Bringuier. [The policeman said] to let Oswald distribute his literature that he was handing out--yellow leaflets of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, New Orleans Chapter--and I told to the policeman that I was a Cuban, I explained to him what Oswald did to me, and I told him that I don't know if it was against the law, but that I will not leave that place until Oswald left and that I will make some trouble.

The policeman left, I believe going to some place to call the headquarters, and at that moment my friend Celso took the literature from Oswald, the yellow sheets, and broke it and threw it on the air. There were a lot of yellow sheets flying. And I was more angry, and . . . I took my glasses off and I went near to him to hit him, but when he sensed my intention, he put his arm down as an X, like this here (demonstrating).

Mr. Liebel. He crossed his arms in front of him?

Mr. Bringuier. That is right, put his face and told me, "OK, Carlos, if you want to hit me, hit me."

At that moment, that made me to reaction that he was trying to appear as a martyr if I will hit him, and I decide not to hit him, and just a few seconds later arrive two police cars, and . . . they put Oswald and my two

friends in one of the police cars, and I went . . . in the other police car to the First District of Police here in New Orleans. . . . we were in the same room, one small room over there, and some of the policemen start to question Oswald if he was a communist, what he was doing that, and all those things, and Oswald at that moment--that was in front of myself--was really cold blood. He was answering the questions that he would like to answer, and he was not nervous, he was not out of control, he was confident in himself at that moment over there. (n.8)

Mr. Liebeler. Now it doesn't seem likely, does it, that Oswald would go around handing out literature in the streets like he did if he was actually attempting to infiltrate the anti-Castro movement?

Mr. Bringuier. Remember that that was after I turned down his offer and after I told him that I don't have nothing to do with military activities and here there is nothing, and that I turned down completely him. . . . he went openly to do that after he was turned down. . . . (n.9)

Oswald had landed in jail late on Friday afternoon--not the easiest time to get out. Dutz Murret was away on a three-day religious retreat; Lillian Murret was in the hospital for an eye operation, and the only person available to spring him was Joyce Murret O'Brien, one of Lillian's daughters. She

certainly did not get him out on Friday night but was at the jail long enough to tell the authorities that her cousin, Lee Harvey Oswald, had been in Russia.

Mrs. Murret. . . . Joyce was to come up and get me on Saturday around 11 o'clock, [but] Lee called. . . and he told Joyce that he was over at the Parish jail. . .the one on Rampart over there, and he told her he wanted her to bring some money and get him out, and she said . . . she had been there twice with the money in her hand, and each time she came back out again. I said, "Well, Joyce, I don't know what he's in there for; do you know?" and she told me she had talked to this officer there, and she asked him, "What's that kid in there for, before I bail him out?" She was going to give the money to this officer to get Lee out, but the man told her not to be foolish and give her money up like that, because she might not get it back. . . . He said, "Have somebody parole him." So Joyce didn't know what to do. She had been out of New Orleans a long time. . . . This officer showed her the sign they said Lee was carrying . . . "Viva El Castro," so when Joyce saw that. . . "Oh, my God," she said, "I am not about to get him out of here if he's like that," so she didn't . . . give up her money. She said, "Here he was supposed to be out looking for a job, and he was doing things like that, walking up and down Canal Street all day long with signs and everything." (n.10)

Next morning, Oswald was the center of attention which is equal to saying that he was calm and cool. The officer questioning him was Lieutenant Francis Martello of the Intelligence Division of the New Orleans police force, and he did a report of their meeting.

. . . I asked him if he was a communist and he said he was not, I asked him if he was a socialist and he said 'guilty.' We then spoke at length concerning the philosophies of communism, socialism, and America. He said he was in full accord with the book Das Kapital, which book was written by KARL MARX. I know that this book condemns the American way of government in entirety. I asked him if he thought that the communist way of life was better than the American way of life and he replied there was not true communism in Russia. He said that MARX was a socialist and although communism is attributed to MARX, that MARX was not a communist but a socialist. He stated this was the reason he did not consider himself to be a communist. I asked him what was his opinion of the form of communism in Russia since he had lived there for two years and he replied, 'It stunk.' He said they have 'fat stinking politicians over there just like we have over here,' . . . I asked him what he thought about

President JOHN F. KENNEDY and NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV. He said he thought they got along very well together. I then asked him if he had to place allegiance or make a decision between Russia or America, which he would choose and he said, 'I would place my allegiance at the foot of democracy.'

(n.11)

Mr. Liebeler. Now, your memorandum indicates that you asked Oswald what he thought about President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev. . .

Mr. Martello. . . . He gave me the impression that he seemed to favor President Kennedy more than he did Khrushchev in his statement. This is unusual, and I couldn't quite understand his reason for this reaction as all of his thoughts seemed to go in the direction of the Socialist or Russian way of life, but he showed in his manner of speaking that he liked the President, the impression I got, or if he didn't like him, of the two he disliked the President the least. He is a very peculiar type of an individual, which is typical of quite a few of the many demonstrators that I have handled during the period of 2 years while in the Intelligence Division. They seemed to be trying to find themselves or something. I am not expert in the field or anything, not trying to go out of my bounds, but quite a few of them, after lengthy interviews you find that they have some peculiarities about their thinking that does not follow logically with their movements or their action.

(n.12)

Mr. Liebeler. Did he indicate which [country] in his opinion, was the lesser of the two evils?

Mr. Martello. From the way he spoke, the impression I received, it appeared to me that he felt Russia was the lesser of the two evils.

Mr. Liebeler. Did he express this idea with great forcefulness, or just sort of a "pox on both your houses" fashion, that really it was just too ridiculous, and that sort of thing?

Mr. Martello. With a nonchalant attitude. He was a very cool speaker. . . . no aggressiveness or emotional outbursts in any way, shape, or form. It was just a very calm conversation we had, and there was no emotion involved whatsoever.

Mr. Liebeler. Did he show any hesitancy about expressing these ideas to you as a member of the police department?

Mr. Martello. None whatsoever, sir. (n.13)

Picture Oswald as thirsty for conversation. He will speak to anyone. He wishes to establish himself as a unique figure in the political and social theater of New Orleans. Since we have yet to take up the question of whether he was

doing all this entirely for himself or was receiving a stipend from some undefined group, a few sinister possibilities have to be kept in mind, but not unduly so. We have not grasped anything of Oswald if we assume that being paid to perform left-wing activities is obliged to change our idea of him drastically. He can work for the FBI, let us say, but to assume he was loyal to them distorts all comprehension of his makeup. His only loyalty would be to himself and his own ideas. Any actions he took for others--if indeed he did--were to be adapted to his own personal projects. If his private agenda was to get to Cuba and be properly recognized there, then creating attention for FPCC in New Orleans would serve both his purposes and the aims of his employer.

Speculation as to his primary and secondary motives are as protean as his ability to tell lies in a dozen different ways, but the core that keeps him from eluding us altogether is that he is on a collision course with all the palisades of establishment. He must be recognized. The alternative--a life of mediocrity--is too awful.

Stimulated to the hilt, therefore, by police interest in him, he now informs Lieutenant Martello that he wishes to be interviewed by somebody from the FBI. Is he hoping to test his wits further? He has obviously enjoyed talking to Martello, and is doubtless in a state of high adrenalin,

feeling a fear so high that it is close to exaltation. He is ready for ultimates--so why not a face-to-face with an FBI man? If this sounds too literary as a motive, it is fair to assume he also was afraid--given the virulence of anti-Castro sentiments in New Orleans--of getting roughed up or raped in that jail. Given the divagations of Cousin Joyce, he might have to spend another night in the can. Calling for an FBI man would give prison security and prison population serious pause at the thought of taking him on.

Special Agent Quigley's testimony on their meeting is a model demonstration of how the FBI can find what is common in an uncommon situation.

Mr. Quigley. . . . At one point of the interview he told me that he had held one of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee meetings at his home. I asked him, "Well, how did you get in touch with the other people?" "Well, I don't care to discuss that." "Who were the persons at the meeting?" "I don't know." "Did you know any names at all?" "Yes. They were introduced to me by first names only." "What were their first names?" "I cannot remember." So it was apparent to me that he was certainly not going to furnish anything. . . . for example, I asked him about A.J. Hidell . . . "Well, Mr. Hidell had a

telephone." "What was Mr. Hidell's telephone number?"
 "Mr. Hidell's telephone has been disconnected." "What was
 the number?" "I can't remember." (n.14)

Mr. Stern. Would it be usual, or had it occurred before
 that someone would ask for an interview and then refuse to
 respond to your questions? Didn't that seem strange?

Mr. Quigley. Not necessarily; not necessarily.
 Frequently people will have a problem and want to talk to
 an FBI agent and they want to tell them what their problem
 is, but then when you start probing into it then they
 don't want to talk to you. I think that is just human
 nature. If you are probing too deep it gets a little
 touchy. (n.15)

After Joyce had come back without Lee, Lillian Murret
 called a friend of the family, Emile Bruneau, a high stakes
 gambler who was an associate of Nofio Pecora, a lieutenant to
 Carlos Marcello--only four degrees of separation!--and Bruneau
 made a call to a friend placed well enough poitically to get
 Oswald out on parole until his trial, Monday, August 12th.
 Lee came home from jail late that Saturday morning, August
 10th.

On Friday night, Marina had not fallen asleep until three
 in the morning, but she had not felt anything like the dread

she had known on the night of April 10th in Dallas. Here, on Magazine Street, his rifle was in the closet and so she assumed, and correctly, that he had been arrested for distributing his pamphlets.

Lee arrived home in scapegrace good spirits, dirty, rumpled, unshaven, with a glint of humor in his eye and an air of gaiety about him. "I've been to the police station."

"I thought so," said Marina. "So that's the way it turned out."

She wanted to know where he had slept. He explained that the beds had no mattresses, so he had taken off all his clothes and made a mattress of them.

"You slept without any pants on?"

"It was hot. And it was just men, anyway. If they didn't like it, they could have let me out sooner." (n.16)

Bravado for Marina! Oswald was taking his pants off, and to hell with what every wolf thought of his ass.

That evening, Dutz Murret, home from the retreat, went immediately to the Oswalds'. He noticed with horror Castro's photograph pinned to the wall, and asked Lee straight out if he was part of any "Commie" group. Lee answered that he was not. Dutz told him in no uncertain terms to show up in court the next day and, after that, go out, get a job, and support his family. (n.17)

Mr. Bringuier. On August 12, we appear in the second municipal court in New Orleans. I came first with my friends, and there were some other Cubans there, and I saw when Oswald came inside. . . See, here in the court you have two sides, one for the white people and one for the colored people, and he walked directly inside of the colored people, and he sat directly among them in the middle, and that made me angry too, because I saw that he was trying to win the colored people for his side. When he will appear in the court, he will defend Fidel Castro, he will defend the Fair Play for Cuba, and the colored people will feel good for him, and that is a tremendous work of propaganda for his cause. This is one of the things that made me to think that he was really a smart guy and not a nut. (n.18)

He pled guilty to "disturbing the peace," paid a \$10 fine

and left. His coup of sitting among the blacks may have balanced his annoyance at having to accept the fine. With it all, his feelings for blacks could have been genuine. They were out of it. He was out of it. He may also have wanted to make a name for himself in black circles. However, it was hardly an easy gesture. Medgar Evers had been gunned down two months before in Mississippi.

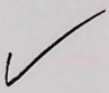
If a bookmaker had helped to parole him from jail, that was fit. Oswald had been gambling all his life for the largest stakes. Like all gamblers, he had runs of luck, and he would run with his luck, and bet double on his winnings.

Since the lecture at the Jesuit House of Studies had gone well, and he had just established his credentials to speak for Castro's Cuba with his arrest, now he would search out the media.

On Friday, August 16. . . Lee waited with unaccustomed patience for Marina to iron his favorite shirt. He had already called the local TV stations to tell them that there would be a Fair Play for Cuba demonstration that day in front of the Trade Mart building in downtown New Orleans.

Lee hired two recruits. . . to help him hand out

not
sure
if the
adaptation
works



leaflets. The fifteen or twenty-minute demonstration went off without trouble, and pictures of Lee were shown on the televised news that night. (n.19)

Chapter 11--Fair Play

The media arrived next day at 8:00 A.M. in the form of a thin bearded man named William Kirk Stuckey who had a radio program on WDSU called Latin Listening Post.

Mr. Stuckey. It is a Saturday. I knocked on the door, and this young fellow came out, without a shirt. He had a pair of Marine Corps fatigue trousers on. I asked him, "Are you Lee Oswald?" And he said, "Yes."

I introduced myself and I told him I would like to have him on my program that night. He he asked me in on the porch. This was a screened porch and I had a very hot chair. He said he would ask me in for some coffee but that his wife and baby were sleeping so we had better talk on the porch. (n.1)

Oswald showed me a pamphlet of a speech by Fidel Castro translated into English--"The Revolution Must Be a School of Unfettered Thought"--and another by Castro, "Ideology and Revolution."

Chapter 32--Fair Play

Mr. Stuckey. . . . I went early because I wanted to get him before he left.

Mr. Jenner. This was a Saturday?

Mr. Stuckey. It is a Saturday. I knocked on the door, and this young fellow came out, without a shirt. He had a pair of Marine Corps fatigue trousers on. I asked him, "Are you Lee Oswald?" And he said, "Yes."

I introduced myself and I told him I would like to have him on my program that night. So he asked me in on the porch. This was a screened porch and I had a very brief chat. He said he would ask me in for some coffee but that his wife and baby were sleeping so we had better talk on the porch. (n.1)

Oswald showed him a pamphlet of a speech by Fidel Castro translated into English--"The Revolution Must Be a School of Unfettered Thought"--and another by Sartre, "Ideology and Revolution."

Mr. Stuckey. . . . I asked him about the membership of this organization, and he said there were quite a few members. The figure 12 or 13 sticks in my head, I don't really recall why now. (n.2)

Oswald and twelve apostles. An ideologue ready for action, he takes it for granted that he can identify with everyone from Christ to Hitler.

Mr. Jenner. Just give your best recollection of what he said on that occasion.

Mr. Stuckey. . . . he was very vehement, insisting he was not the president, but was the secretary, and that was the occasion in which he pulled out his card showing that . . . this other gentleman, Hidell, was the president. . . . He appeared to be a very logical, intelligent fellow, and the only strange thing about him was his organization. [It seemed incongruous] that he should associate with a group of this type . . . he did not seem the type at all. . . I was arrested by his cleancuttness. . . . I expected a folk-singer type. . . somebody with a beard and sandals and. . instead I found a fellow who was neat and clean, [and] seemed to be very concious about all of his words,

all of his movements, sort of very deliberate. . . . He was the type of person you would say would inspire confidence. This was the incongruity that struck me, the fact that this type of person should be with this organization....

I asked him to meet me at the radio station that afternoon about 5 o'clock for the interview and he agreed. . . . this was to be a recorded interview prior to the broadcast.

Mr. Jenner. Why would you do that?

Mr. Stuckey. To avoid the possibility of errors. It is a risky business going on live. You know, you never know when you are going to slip up and, particularly, with somebody as controversial as a representative of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee you want to know what you have in hand before you put it on. (n.3)

The excerpt that follows is taken from the full thirty-seven minute interview. This passage, and the debate Oswald will have with anti-Castro spokesmen a few days later are two of the best examples of his style of speaking and his skill in argument. If he had not been dyslexic, it is more than likely that he would have been able to write at least as well as he

spoke and that would have been not unimpressive for a twenty-three year old polemicist.

STUCKEY: Tonight we have with us a representative of probably the most controversial organization connected with Cuba in this country. The organization is the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. The person, Lee Oswald, secretary of the New Orleans Chapter for the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. This organization has long been on the Justice Department's black list and is a group generally considered to be the leading pro-Castro body in the nation. As a reporter of Latin American affairs in this city for several years now, your columnist has kept a lookout for representatives of this pro-Castro group. None appeared in public view until this week when young Lee Oswald was arrested and convicted for disturbing the peace. He was arrested passing out pro-Castro literature to a crowd which included several violently anti-Castro Cuban refugees. When we finally tracked Mr. Oswald down today and asked him to participate in Latin Listening Post, he told us frankly that he would because it may help his organization to attract more members in this area. And knowing that Mr. Oswald must have had to demonstrate a great skill in dialectics before he was entrusted with his present post, we now proceed on the course of random questioning of Mr. Oswald. (n.4)

With such an introduction, how could Oswald not be near to heaven? Of course, he is not in the world of manners but of media. His host moves quickly to the attack:

STUCKEY: Mr. Oswald, there are many commentators in the journalistic field in this country that equate the Fair Play for Cuba Committee with the American Communist Party. What is your feeling about this and are you a member of the American Communist Party?

OSWALD: Well, the Fair Play for Cuba Committee with its headquarters at 799 Broadway in New York has been investigated by the Senate sub-committees who are occupied with this sort of thing. They have investigated our organization from the viewpoint of taxes, subversion, allegiance and in general, where and how and why we exist. They have found absolutely nothing to connect us with the Communist Party of the United States. In regards to your question as to whether I myself am a Communist, as I said, I do not belong to any other organization. . . .

STUCKEY: Does your group believe that the Castro regime is not actually a front for a Soviet colony in the Western Hemisphere?

OSWALD: Very definitely. Castro is an independent leader of an independent country. He has ties with the Soviet Union . . . That does not mean, however, that he is dependent on Russia. He receives trade from many countries, including Great Britain to a certain extent, France, certain other powers in the Western Hemisphere. He is even trading with several of the more independent African states, so that you cannot point at Castro and say that he is a Russian puppet. . . . I believe that was pointed out very well during the October crisis when Castro definitely said that although Premier Khrushchev had urged him to have on-site inspection of his rocket bases in Cuba, that Fidel Castro refused.

STUCKEY: Do you feel that the Fair Play for Cuba Committee would maintain its present line as far as supporting Premier Castro if the Soviet Union broke relations with the Castro regime in Cuba?

OSWALD: We do not support the man. We do not support the individual. We support the idea of an independent revolution in the Western Hemisphere, free from American intervention. . . . If the Cuban people destroy Castro, or if he is otherwise proven to have betrayed his own revolution, that will not have any bearing upon this committee. . . .

STUCKEY: Do you believe that the Castro regime is a Communist regime?

OSWALD: They have said. . . that they are a Marxist country. On the other hand, so is Ghana, so is several

other countries in Africa. Every country which emerges from a sort of feudal state, as Cuba did, experiments, usually, in socialism, in Marxism. For that matter, Great Britain has socialized medicine. You cannot say that Castro is a Communist at this time, because he has not developed his country, his system, this far. He has not had the chance to become a Communist. He is an experimenter, a person who is trying to find the best way for his country. If he chooses a socialist or a Marxist or a Communist way of life, that is something upon which only the Cuban people can pass. We do not have the right to pass on that. . . .

STUCKEY: Mr Oswald, does it make any difference to you if any of the activities of the local branch of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee benefit the Communist Party or the goals of international Communism?

OSWALD: Well, that is what I believe you would term a loaded question. However, I will attempt to answer it. It is inconsistent with my ideals to support Communism, my personal ideals. It is inconsistent with the ideals of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee to support ideals of international Communism. We are not occupied with that problem. We are occupied with the problem of Cuba. We do not believe under any circumstances that in supporting our ideals about Cuba, our pro-Castro ideals, we do not believe that is inconsistent with believing in democracy. Quite the contrary. . . . (n.5)

They began to speak of other countries in Latin America. Oswald remarked: "Who will be able to find any official or any person who knows about Latin America who will say that Nicaragua does not have a dictatorship?" They had come to the crux of the discussion. Stuckey may have thought that Oswald was now in trouble:

STUCKEY: Very interesting. [We] have heard about these dictatorships for many, many years, but it is curious to me why no Nicaraguans fled to the United States last year, whereas we had possibly 50,000 to 60,000 Cubans fleeing from Cuba to the United States. What is the Fair Play for Cuba Committee's official reply to this?

OSWALD: Well, a good question. Nicaragua's situation is considerably different from Castro's Cuba. People are inclined not to flee their countries unless some new system, new factor, enters into their lives. I must say that very surely no new factors have entered into Nicaragua for about 300 years, in fact, the people live exactly as they have always lived in Nicaragua. I am referring to the overwhelming majority of the people in Nicaragua, which is a feudal dictatorship with 90 per cent of the people engaged in agriculture. These peasants are uneducated. They have one of the lowest living standards

in all of the Western Hemisphere [so] no new factor, no liberating factor has entered into their lives, they remain in Nicaragua. Now the people who have fled Cuba, that is the interesting situation. Needless to say, there are classes of criminals; there are classes of people who are wanted in Cuba for crimes against humanity and most of those people are the same people who are in New Orleans and have set themselves up in stores with blood money and who engage in day to day trade with New Orleanians. Those are the people who would certainly not want to go back to Cuba and who would certainly want to flee Cuba. There are other classes. There are peasants who do not like the collectivization in Cuban agriculture. There are others who have one reason or another . . . for fleeing Cuba. Most of these people . . . are allowed to leave after requesting the Cuban government for exit visas. Some of these people for some reason or another do not like to apply for these visas or they feel they cannot get them; they flee, they flee Cuba in boats, they flee any way they can go, and I think that the opinion and the attitude of the Cuban government to this is good riddance.

STUCKEY: Mr. Oswald, this is very interesting because as a reporter in the field for some time I have been interviewing refugees now for about three years and I'd say that the last Batista man, officially, that I talked to left Cuba about two and a half years ago and the rest of them that I've talked to have been taxicab drivers, laborers, cane cutters, and that sort of thing. I thought this revolution was supposed to benefit these people...

OSWALD: . . . You know, it's very funny about

revolutions. Revolutions require work, revolutions require sacrifice, revolutions, our own included, require a certain amount of rationing, a certain amount of calluses, a certain amount of sacrifice. Sacrificing one's own personal ideas about countries, citizenship, work, indicates people who have fled Cuba have not been able to adapt themselves to the new factors which have entered these peoples' lives. These people are the uneducated. These people are the people who do not remain in Cuba to be educated by young people, who are afraid of the alphabet, who are afraid of these new things which are occurring, who are afraid that they would lose something by collectivization. They are afraid that they would lose something by seeing their sugar crops taken away and in place of sugar crops, some other vegetable, some other product, planted, because Cuba has always been a one-product country, more or less. These are the people who have not been able to adapt.

STUCKEY: Mr. Oswald, you say their sugar crops. Most of the Cubans I have talked to that have had anything to do with agriculture in the last year and a half have not owned one single acre of ground, they were cane cutters.

(n.6)

If Stuckey has made a telling point, it will hardly stop Oswald. Potentially, he has debater's reflexes worthy of Richard Nixon--he treads water for the duration of three

sentences, gathers his reply and proceeds to give it:

OSWALD: That is correct and they are the ones who are fleeing the Castro regime. That is correct, sir. That is very, very true and I am very glad you brought that point up. You know, it used to be that these people worked for the United Fruit Company or American companies engaged in sugar refining, oil refining in Cuba. They worked a few months every year during the cane cutting or sugar refining season. They never owned anything, and they feel now that . . . the right to work for five months a year, has been taken away from them. They feel that now they have to work all year round to plant new crops, to make a new economy, and so they feel that they have been robbed, . . . of the right to do as they please. . . What they do not realize is that they have been robbed of the right to be exploited, robbed of the right to be cheated, robbed of the right of New Orleanian companies to take away what was rightfully theirs. Of course, they have to share now. Everybody gets an equal portion. This is collectivization and this is very hard on some people, on people preferring the dog-eat-dog economy. (n.7)

Mr. Jenner. . . . you supplied the FBI with [that] transcript?

Mr. Stuckey. No, as a matter of fact I gave the tape to the FBI the Monday following the interview, which would have been August 20, 1963. I told them I thought it was very interesting, and if they would like to have a transcript they could copy it, which they did. They made a copy and then they gave me a copy of their transcript and returned the tape to me. . . .

Mr. Jenner. . . .would you tell us about that broadcast?

Mr. Stuckey. Yes.

As I said, this was a 37-minute rambling interview between Oswald and myself and following the interview, first we played it back to hear it. He was satisfied. . . I think he thought he had scored quite a coup.

Then I went back over it in his presence and with an engineer's help excerpted a couple of the remarks by Oswald in this. . . we had a couple of his comments in which he said Castro was a free and independent leader of a free and independent state, and the rest of it, as I recall, was largely my summarizing of the other principal points of the 37-minute interview, and it was broadcast on schedule that night.

Mr. Jenner. You had watered it down in length to how many minutes?

Mr. Stuckey. Five minutes.

Mr. Jenner. Five minutes?

Mr. Stuckey. Actually 4 and a half.

Mr. Jenner. . . . Was that your last contact with Oswald?

Mr. Stuckey. No, it was not. . . . I told him that I was going to talk to the news director to see if [he] was interested in running the entire 37-minute tape later, and I told . . . Oswald to get in touch with me Monday and I would let him know . . . I called the news director and asked him if he had heard the tape, and he said no. I told him I thought it was pretty interesting and he said, [that] there would be more public interest if we did not run this tape at all but instead arranged a second program, a debate panel show, with some local anti-Communists on there to refute some of his arguments. . . .

I was in charge of arranging the panel so I picked Mr. Edward S. Butler [who] is the Executive Director of the Information Council of the Americas in New Orleans. . . . an anti-Communist propaganda organization. Their principal activity is to take tape-recorded interviews with Cuban refugees or refugees from Iron Curtain countries, and distribute those tapes which are, naturally, it goes without saying, those tapes are very strongly anti-Communist, and they distribute these tapes to radio stations throughout Latin America. As I recall, they came to have over 100 stations using these tapes regularly.

Well, Mr. Butler is a friend of mine. I knew him as a columnist, and it just seemed like--

Mr. Jenner. He was an articulate and knowledgeable man in this area to which he directs his attention?

Mr. Stuckey. Yes; so I asked him to be one of the

panelists on the show, which he accepted, and incidentally, I let him hear the 37-minute tape in advance; and for the other panelist, I asked Mr. Bringuier, Mr. Carlos Bringuier, that we mentioned earlier, as being the man who led me to Oswald--I asked him to appear on the show to give it a little Cuban flavor.

And then Oswald called me . . . and I told him we were going to arrange the show and would he be interested, and he said, yes, indeed, and then he said, "How many of you am I going to have to fight?" That was his version of saying how many are on the panel.

Mr. Jenner. He said this to you?

Mr. Stuckey. Yes; in a jocular way. . . . He said he thought that would be interesting. (n.8)

Lee is ready to believe that he may just be as good as he has been telling himself he is ever since he started dominating political discussions in the Marine Corps.

Of course, his sensitivity to the power of the machine he opposes is not nearly so keen as his estimate of his own capacities when he is at his best .

While he was talking to an FBI source over the telephone that day, Stuckey, as he remembers it, was put through to the chief or deputy chief of the New Orleans bureau, and this man read aloud to him over the phone portions of Oswald's FBI file, including the facts that he had been to Russia, tried to renounce his U.S. citizenship, stayed there nearly three years, and married a Russian woman. Stuckey went to the FBI office and was permitted to examine the file, as well as newspaper clippings from Moscow at the time of Oswald's defection. . . (n.9)

Mr. Jenner. And was he unaware when he came in at 5:30 on the afternoon of Wednesday that you had done this, and received this information and had done some research?

Mr. Stuckey. He was unaware of that fact. During the day . . . after I had already been tipped off about [Oswald's] Russian residence, Mr. Butler called and said he too had found out the same thing. . . his source apparently was the House Un-American Activities Committee. . .

At any rate, we thought this was very interesting and we agreed together to produce this information on the program that night.

Mr. Jenner. . . . You thought it might be a bombshell and be unaware to him?

Mr. Stuckey. Exactly.

Mr. Jenner. All right.

Mr. Stuckey. . . . So at 5:30 that afternoon I arrived at the studio alone. Oswald appeared, and in a very heavy gray flannel suit, and this is August in New Orleans, it is extremely hot, that he appears in [this] very bulky, badly cut suit, and looking very hot and uncomfortable. He had a blue shirt on and a dark tie, and a black looseleaf notebook. . .

Mr. Jenner. Were the others present?

Mr. Stuckey. No, they arrived a little bit later. Oswald was there first, as usual, on time, and then Mr. Butler came in with Mr. Bringuier. Both looked as if they had pounds and pounds of literature with them, and statistics.

Mr. Jenner. Did Bringuier and Oswald recognize each other?

Mr. Stuckey. Oh, yes. . . .

Mr. Jenner. Had Oswald met Mr. Butler before?

Mr. Stuckey. . . . I think he knew who he was. Oswald asked me something about the organization, and I told him, I said, "Well, it is just like your organization; it is a

propaganda outfit, just on the other side of the fence," and that satisfied his curiosity.

I think he immediately kissed it off as a hopeless rightist organization, "You can't reason with those people," that approach. (n.10)

Carlos Bringuier and Oswald had a conversation before the show began:

Mr. Bringuier. . . . I was . . . trying to be as friendly to him as I could. I really believe that the best thing I could do is get one Communist out of the Communist Party and put him to work against communism, because [then] he know what communism mean, and I told to Oswald that I don't have nothing against him in the personal way, just the ideologic way. I told him that for me it was impossible to see one American being a communist, because communism is trying to destroy the United States, and that if any moment . . . he will start to think that he can do something good for his country, for his family, and for himself, he could come to me, because I will receive him, because I repeat to him that I didn't have nothing against him in the personal way. He smiled to me. He told me--he answered me that he was in the right side, the correct side, and that I was in the

wrong side, and that he was doing his best. That were his words at that moment.

Before we went inside the room of the debate, he saw my guidebook for Marines that I was carrying with me, because I did not know what will happen in the debate and I will have to have that weapon with me to destroy him personally as a traitor if he is doing something wrong in the debate. When he saw the guidebook for Marines, he smiled to me, and he told me, "Well, listen, Carlos, don't try to do an invasion with that guidebook for Marines, because that is an old one and that will be a failure." That was his joke in that moment.

After that we went to the debate, and I think you have the whole history of the debate, you have the transcription and everything (n.11)

They began--Oswald against Bringuier and Butler. . . and Stuckey . . . and a moderator named Slatter. After the introductions, no time was wasted:

BILL STUCKEY: . . . Mr. Butler brought some newspaper clippings to my attention and I also found some too through an independent source, Washington Newspaper clippings, to the effect that Mr. Oswald had attempted to renounce his American citizenship in 1959 and become a

Soviet citizen. There was another clipping dated 1962 saying that Mr. Oswald had returned from the Soviet Union with his wife and child after having lived there three years. Mr. Oswald, are these correct?

OSWALD: That is correct. Correct, yeah.

BILL STUCKEY: You did live in Russia for three years?

OSWALD: That is correct, and I think that the fact that I did live for a time in the Soviet Union gives me excellent qualifications to repudiate charges that Cuba and the Fair Play for Cuba Committee is communist controlled.

SLATTER: Mr. Oswald [is it correct] that you at one time asked to renounce your America citizenship and become a Soviet citizen. . . ?

OSWALD: Well, I don't think that has particular import to this discussion. We are discussing Cuban-American relations.

SLATTER: Well, I think it has a bearing to this extent, Mr. Oswald: you say apparently that Cuba is not dominated by Russia and yet you apparently, by your own past actions, have shown that you have an affinity for Russia and perhaps communism, although I don't know that you admit that you either are a communist or have been, could you straighten out that part? Are you or have you been a communist?

OSWALD: Well, I answered that prior to this program, on

another radio program.

STUCKEY: Are you a Marxist?

OSWALD: Yes, I am a Marxist.

BUTLER: What's the difference?

OSWALD: The difference is primarily the difference between a country like Guinea, Ghana, Yugoslavia, China or Russia. Very, very great differences. Differences which we appreciate by giving aid, let's say, to Yugoslavia in the sum of a hundred million or so dollars a year.

BUTLER: That's extraneous. What's the difference?

OSWALD: The difference is, as I have said, a very great difference. Many parties, many countries, are based on Marxism. Many countries such as Great Britain display very socialistic aspects or characteristics. I might point to the socialized medicine of Britain.

BUTLER: I was speaking of--

SLATTER: Gentlemen, I'll have to interrupt and we'll be back in a moment to continue this kind of lively discussion after this message.

COMMERCIAL

STUCKEY: Mr. Oswald, I believe you said in a reply to a question of Mr. Butler's that any questions about your

background were extraneous to the discussion tonight. I disagree because of the fact that you're refusing to reveal any of the other members of your organization, so you are the face of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in New Orleans. Therefore, anybody who might be interested in this organization ought to know more about you. For this reason, I'm curious to know just how you supported yourself during the three years that you lived in the Soviet Union. Did you have a government subsidy?

OSWALD: Well, as I, er, well--I will answer that question directly then, as you will not rest until you get your answer. I worked in Russia. . . . At no time, as I say, did I renounce my citizenship or attempt to renounce my citizenship, and at no time was I out of contact with the American Embassy.

BUTLER: Excuse me, may I interrupt just one second. Either one of these two statements is wrong. The Washington Evening Star of October 31, 1959, page 1, reported that Lee Harvey Oswald, a former Marine, 4936 Connally Street, Ft. Worth, Texas, had turned in his passport at the American Embassy in Moscow on that same date and it says that he had applied for Soviet citizenship. Now it seems to me that you've renounced your citizenship if you've turned in your passport.

OSWALD: Well, the obvious answer to that is that I am back in the United States. A person who renounces his citizenship becomes legally disqualified for return to the U.S.

BUTLER: Right. And--"Soviet authorities"--this is from the Washington Post and Times Herald of November 16, 1959--"Soviet authorities have refused to grant it although they informed him he could live in Russia as a resident alien." What did you do in the two weeks from October 31 to November 16, 1959?

OSWALD: As I have already stated, of course, this whole conversation, and we don't have too much time left, is getting away from Cuban-American problems. However, I am quite willing to discuss myself for the remainder of the program . . .

SLATTER: Excuse me. Let me interrupt here. I think Mr. Oswald is right to this extent. We shouldn't get to lose sight of the organization of which he is the head in New Orleans, the Fair Play for Cuba.

OSWALD: The Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

SLATTER: As a practical matter, knowing as I'm sure you do, the sentiment in America against Cuba, we, of course, severed diplomatic relations some time ago. I would say Castro is about as unpopular as anybody in the world in this country. As a practical matter, what do you hope to gain for your work? How do you hope to bring about what you call "Fair Play for Cuba," knowing the sentiment?

OSWALD: The principles of thought of the Fair Play for Cuba consist of restoration of diplomatic, trade and tourist relations with Cuba. That is one of our main points. We are for that. I disagree that this situation

regarding American-Cuban relations is very unpopular. We are in the minority, surely [but] we are striving to get the United States to adopt measures which would be more friendly toward the Cuban people and the new Cuban regime in that country. We are not at all communist controlled regardless of the fact that I had the experience of living in Russia, regardless of the fact that we have been investigated, regardless of any of those facts, the Fair Play for Cuba Committee is an independent organization not affiliated with any other organization. Our aims and our ideals are very clear and in the best keeping with American traditions of democracy.

BRINGUIER: Do you agree with Fidel Castro when in his last speech of July 16th of this year he qualified President John F. Kennedy of the United States as a ruffian and a thief? Do you agree with Mr. Castro?

OSWALD: I would not agree with that particular wording. However, I and the Fair Play for Cuba Committee do think that the United States government, through certain agencies, mainly the State Department and the CIA, has made monumental mistakes in its relations with Cuba. Mistakes which are pushing Cuba into the sphere of activity of, let's say, a very dogmatic communist country such as China is . . .

BUTLER: You've never been to Cuba, of course, but why are the people of Cuba starving today?

OSWALD: Well, any country emerging from a semi-colonial state and embarking upon reforms which require a

diversification of agriculture, you are going to have shortages. After all, 80% of imports into the United States from Cuba were two products, tobacco and sugar. Nowadays, while Cuba is reducing its production as far as sugar cane goes, it is striving to grow unlimited, and unheard of for Cuba, quantities of certain vegetables such as sweet potatoes, lima beans, cotton, and so forth, so that they can become agriculturally independent. . .

(n.12)

The show ended an exchange or two later.

Mr. Jenner. Give me your impression of his demeanor.

Mr. Stuckey. Confident. . . . Self-assured, logical.

Mr. Jenner. Able to handle questions?

Mr. Stuckey. Very well qualified to handle questions, articulate. There was a little bit of woodenness in his voice at times, and a little stiff. This was another impression of mine about Oswald, his academic manner. . . . of course, this is all hindsight, but it occurred to me he would be the type of man who would not use the word, say, "murder," when he could use something a

little more formal like "act of violence,"

Mr. Jenner. Did this discussion become heated?

Mr. Stuckey. Yes, it did. . . .I think that we finished him on that program. I think that after that program, the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, if there ever was one in New Orleans, had no future there, because we had publicly linked the Fair Play for Cuba Committee with a fellow who had lived in Russia for 3 years and who was an admitted Marxist.

The interesting thing, or rather the danger involved, was the fact that Oswald seemed like such a nice, bright boy and was extremely believable before this. We thought the fellow could probably get quite a few members if he was really indeed serious about getting members. We figured after this broadcast of August 21, why, that was no longer possible. . . .

Mr. Jenner. And after the broadcast broke up, was that the last of your contacts with Oswald?

Mr. Stuckey. No; the others left, and Oswald looked a little dejected, and I said, "Well, let's go out and have a beer," and he says, "All right." So we left the studio and went to a bar called Comeaux's Bar. It is about a half-block from the studio and this was the first time that his manner kind of changed from the quasi-legal position, and he relaxed a little bit. This was the first time I ever saw him relaxed and off his guard. We had about an hour's conversation, . . . and by the way. . . he told me afterward [this] suit was purchased in Russia,

and they didn't know much about making clothes over there. . .

I asked him at that time how he became interested in Marxism and [whether] his family was an influence on him in any way. He says "No," and he kind of looked a little amused. He said, "No," he says, "They are pretty typical New Orleans types," and that was about all he said. . . .

We discussed other subjects. He made another observation about life in Russia. He said things were extremely bland, homogenized.

Mr. Jenner. . . . was it an aspect of Russian society that disappointed him?

Mr. Stuckey. I don't know. . . . His tone was slightly acid as if he did not like it, but again this is my impression. He did say this, which was interesting, he said they wouldn't allow any Fair Play for Cuba Committees in Russia.

Mr. Jenner. He did?

Mr. Stuckey. Yes; he said . . . it is the type of organization that Russian society would just suppress. . .

Mr. Jenner. Was he comfortable in the sense--was he eager, was he pleased--

Mr. Stuckey. He was relaxed, he was friendly. He seemed to be relieved it was all over. My impression was he was relieved that he did not have to hide the bit over the Russian residence any more, and that it had been a strain



doing so, because his manner was completely different. There wasn't the stiffness or the guarded words and guarded replies. He seemed fairly open, and I have no reason to believe that everything he told me that night was not true. I think it was true. . .

Mr. Jenner. Following that tete-a-tete in Comeaux's Bar for about an hour, did you ever see Oswald after that?

Mr. Stuckey. That was the last time I ever saw him. . . .

Mr. Jenner. Was there a videotape?

Mr. Stuckey. Yes. Following the debate show of August 21, Bill Slatter, the radio announcer, decided that some news had been made that night on the show, so he took Oswald back to the studio to repeat some of the statements he had made that night . . . on the radio show for video tape. And they interviewed Oswald for quite a while, I would say for 5 minutes. But I understand that that night they only ran a brief excerpt of that tape, and the rest of it they threw away. (n.13)

Stuckey's reactions to Oswald are not untypical of a media-man. On the one hand, Oswald is the opponent of the day, and therefore, all small means are fair to use against him--stack the debate (four against one), shift the ground of

the debate--and do it all without a backward glance. Yet media people have to be endlessly curious (if only for so long as it takes to satisfy their curiosity) and they are without rancor--should they screw you, they are nice enough not to have hard feelings afterward, just curiosity and a detached kind of sympathy--one more interesting specimen under the glass.

Stuckey sums it up for Jenner:

Mr. Stuckey. . . . He seemed like somebody who took very good care of himself, very prudent, temperate, that sort of person. It was my impression Oswald regarded himself as living in a world of intellectual inferiors.

Mr. Jenner. Please elaborate on that.

Mr. Stuckey. . . . I had paid some attention to Oswald, nobody else had particularly, and he seemed to enjoy talking with somebody he didn't regard as a stupid person, and it was my impression he thought that everybody else he had come in contact with was rather cloddish. . . I don't mean to say that there was any arrogance in his manner. There was just--well, you can spot intelligence, or at least I can, I think, and this was a man who was intelligent. . . and who would like to have an

opportunity to express his intelligence--that was my impression.

Mr. Jenner. What impression did you obtain of this man with respect to his volatility, that is, did you get any impression that he was quick to anger?

Mr. Stuckey. No; very well-disciplined, as a matter of fact. After all, he had been provoked on several occasions by Bringuier and Butler on the show. . . . Oswald just took it. . . whereas other people might have gotten a little mad. After all, you have to recognize that Oswald--they were ganging up on him. There were a bunch of us around there. . . and he was only one man, and the fact that he kept his composure with this type of environment indicates discipline. (n.14)

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By the end of August, most of his reading consisted of a lighter diet of spy novels and science fiction. Marina had no idea what he was reading, but from indoors she could see that sometimes Lee was not reading at all. He was just sitting on the porch looking out on the street. "He's been inside all day and wants to see the people out walking," she said to herself.

One evening during the last week of August, she and June went for a stroll. Arriving home about twilight, they found Lee on the porch perched on one knee, pointing

his rifle toward the street. It was the first time she had seen him with his rifle in months--and she was horrified.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"Get the heck out of here," he said. "Don't talk to me. Get on about your own affairs."

A few evenings later, she again found him on the porch with his rifle.

"Playing with your gun again, are you," she said sarcastically.

"Fidel Castro needs defenders," Lee said. "I'm going to join his army of volunteers. I'm going to be a revolutionary."

After that, busy indoors, Marina frequently heard a clicking sound out on the porch while Lee was sitting there at dusk. She heard it three times a week, maybe more often, until the middle of September. (n.15)

Chapter 33--Picking Up the Pieces

August 24, 1963

Dear Marina,

Thank you very much for your letter which I received a week ago. I was very sorry to learn that Lee is not working. It is hard for him and for you in the meanwhile. I hope that he will begin (working) again soon. Perhaps, he has already begun. . . . I expect to be in Paoli [Pennsylvania] until September 10, and then go to Ohio and Indiana, where our relatives and friends live, and to arrive in New Orleans on the 20th, in daytime if I can make it, otherwise, in the evening. . . .

Please write to me here [in Paoli] one more time. I shall be glad to hear news from you and will be particularly glad to see you, Lee and June in September.

All of the best,

Sincerely,

Ruth

(n.1)

Central Committee
CP, USA

Lee H. Oswald
PO Box 30061
New Orleans, La.

August 28, 1963

Comrades:

Please advise me upon a problem of personal tactics. . . .

I had, in 1959, in Moscow, tried to legally dissolve my United States citizenship in favor of Soviet citizenship, however, I did not complete the legal formalities for this.

Having come back to the U.S. in 1962 and thrown myself into the struggle for progress and freedom in the United States, I would like to know whether, in your opinion, I can continue to fight handicapped as it were, by my past record, can I still, under these circumstances, compete with anti-progressive forces, above ground, or whether in your opinion, I should always remain in the background, i.e., underground.

Our opponents could use my background of residence in the U.S.S.R. against any cause which I join, they could say the organization of which I am a member is Russian controlled etc. I am sure you see my point.

I could of course openly proclaim, (if pressed on the subject) that I wanted to dissolve my American citizenship as a personal protest against the policy of the U.S. government in supporting dictatorship etc. But what do you think I should do? which is the best tactic in general?

Should I dissociate myself from all progressive activities?

Here in New Orleans, I am secretary of the local branch of the "Fair Play for Cuba Committee," a position which, frankly, I have used to foster communist ideals. On a local radio show, I was attacked by Cuban exile organization representatives for my residence etc., in the Soviet Union.

I feel I may have compromised the FPCC, so you see that I need the advice of trusted, long time fighters for progress. Please advise.

With Fraternal Greeting

Sincerely,

Lee H. Oswald

(n.2)

August 31

Dear Mr. Bert,

. . .I am sure you realize that to a progressive person with a knowledge of photography and printing, the greatest desire imaginable is to work directly for the "Worker." However, I understand that there might be many loyal comrades who want the same thing, i.e., to work for the "Worker." So if you say there are no openings, I shall continue to hope for the chance of employment directly under the "Worker."

My family and I shall, in a few weeks, be relocating in your area. . . .

(n.3)

Having been ganged-up on in the debate, he is ready to consider joining the Party.

Johnson's reply came more than three weeks later, and by then Oswald was ready to leave New Orleans. Of course, Oswald could come to as many serious and contrary decisions in three weeks as other people manage over three years.

September 19, 1963

Dear Mr. Oswald:

Your letter of August 28th to Elizabeth G. Flynn was turned over to me for reply. Since I received your letter of September 1st indicating that you are moving to Baltimore, I suggest that when you do move you get in touch with us here and we will find some way of getting in touch with you in that city.

While the point you make about your residence in the Soviet Union may be utilized by some people, I think you have to recognize that as an American citizen who is now in this country, you have a right to participate in such organizations as you want, including possibly Fair Play, which are of a very broad character, and often it is advisable for some people to remain in the background, not underground. I assume this is pretty much of an academic

question now, and we can discuss it later.

Sincerely yours,

Arnold Johnson (n.4)

Lee spent most of the day and the early evening, until the light began to fade, reading on the screened-in side porch of his apartment. As summer lengthened and dusk came on earlier, he carried a lamp onto the porch so he could read a little later. But the seriousness and even the quantity of his reading had fallen off. During the first part of the summer, he had read political books, biographies, and books about Russia and communism, from one of which he confronted Marina one night with the surmise that she must be illegitimate. She blushed deeply and denied it. (n.5)

After all this time! Only now does he realize her secret. It gives us, if we need it, an even better idea of the ongoing pain of her illegitimacy: yes, she was a bastard, and such women deserve to be punished physically by the husband. It is the logic of the soul if you are a good Russian soul--the children are not to be forgiven the sins of the fathers.

After the radio debate of August 21, he was ready to face the situation. He had passed out nearly a thousand handbills and membership applications, had engaged in public demonstrations, and had spoken twice over the radio. And he had not yet attracted a single follower. Nor had he had a single word of encouragement from the FPCC. He had to face the fact that for him, in New Orleans, the FPCC was a lost cause. (n.6)

He is coming in contact with the great gap between publicity and its tangible results. Oswald, too, had bought the American dream of bonanza--get publicity and become rich and/or famous and/or powerful. The dirty little secret which is not passed on to good Americans questing for the bonanza, is that publicity makes one neither rich, famous nor powerful --just Queen for a Day.

In the gap between his concerted efforts and their empty outcome, only one course of bold action remained--go to Cuba. He could be of great use to Castro. Who would be able to provide Fidel with a better objective view of the Soviet Union?

The obstacles were formidable. Lee had saved a little money, but possibly not enough to get to Cuba. Moreover, the State Department had banned travel to Cuba by American citizens, and all that summer The Militant, had been filled with stories about Americans who faced imprisonment and fines on their return. That was only a minor deterrent, however, for Lee did not intend to return. He hoped to stay in Cuba. Or, if he did not like it there, he would go to China, or else seek readmission to Russia where he would rejoin Marina. But the problem was how to get to Cuba in the first place. (n.7)

He has already been thinking in bold terms. His offer to join any group of Carlos Bringier's that was ready to invade Cuba would have been one extreme means of getting there. Presumably, Oswald planned on arrival, to cut out himself from the exile group and offer whatever information he had acquired about them to the pro-Castro cadres he would meet soon enough on the soil of Cuba.

What dangerous means he was contemplating! As a scenario it is so fraught with peril that it bears the same relation to

reasonable danger as kinky sex to the more compassionate varieties.

Marina recalls one hot night when they were sitting in their living room and it was so hot and they were so poor, no air conditioner. It was New Orleans in summer, both sweating. All of a sudden, he said, "What do you think if we hijack a plane?" She said, "What do you mean, we?"

"You and me," he told her.

"You are joking?"

"No," he said.

"In Russia," she said, "it wasn't good, now America's no good--so it's Cuba."

He said, "I am serious."

She said, "All right, I will have to listen to you and your stupid idea."

He said, "You don't have to kill anybody."

She repeated that as a question: "Kill anybody?"

"You will need a gun," he said, "and I will have a gun, but you will not have to kill anybody. Just be there to threaten them."

She said, "Yes, everybody will be scared of me--a

pregnant woman. She is holding a gun who doesn't know how to hold it."

He kept saying, "Repeat after me--" That's when he tried to get her to say in English: "Stick 'em up." She couldn't even repeat those words. She began laughing. He tried to persuade her. "Repeat after me. . ." but it was fiasco, just fiasco.

She was pregnant with Rachel and Lee was trying to teach her what she was supposed to say to passengers in English. She couldn't even pronounce those words: "Stick 'em up." Everybody was going to drop laughing. She said, "You really are kook. My God, you and I have nothing to eat and you are cooking up dumb things." It wasn't that she was a bitchy wife and always after him to make money. She didn't want him to make a lot of money, she wanted him to be glad for what he had.

She was telling the story thirty years later and the interviewer said: "You don't have a criminal mind. In those years, it was one way to hijack a plane. With a pregnant woman. He had it all figured out. You would hide the gun beneath your belly. You were indispensable to him."

Marina: I said, I'm sorry, I refuse.

Interviewer: At that point he probably said to himself, I'm married to the wrong woman.

Marina: He probably said that from day one.

She wished to shrug this conversation away:

Marina: It was so long ago. I'm 52 years old. Put it behind me. I don't have to report what I did when I was 12 years old, 13 or 20. I'm going to heaven. I already made my reservation.

Interviewer: Wherever you go, they are going to sit you down and they will say, "Tell us about Lee Harvey Oswald."

Marina: Where, in heaven?

Interviewer: They'll say, "We were waiting, Marina, for you to tell us."

Marina: Isn't the wife last to know?

Her interviewers laughed. They found her witty.

They did not know. Such humor, she was thinking, was like one drop of radium in a mountain of uranium.

Sometimes what hurt her feelings was that Lee didn't love her but truly loved children. Then how could he betray them, his two daughters he loved so much, by involving them in assassination? That hurt even more.

"Since 1963, I have to apologize for my existence, even," said Marina.

Perhaps it was her Russian background, she would admit. Such a guilt was in her by the time she was three years old. "Born with it," she would add, "embedded in every pore of my existence."

We can, however, take note of Oswald's frustration. To be wed to a woman who has no appreciation of the beauty of a brilliant criminal idea. He had had it all figured out--the gun under her belly--who would notice?

Right around that time back then, a mirror broke, just fell off the wall and broke, and she was unhappy because that was certainly an omen. One morning, she took one look at the amber heart she kept in a locket, and it was cracked--she thought somebody was going to die.

. . . he would have to hijack a plane with enough gas to get them to Cuba. He said it would be better to hijack a plane that was going inward from the coastal region of the United States because it would be less suspicious than boarding a plane on an international flight. OSWALD's plans were to take a plane leaving New Orleans for another point in the United States and thereafter transfer to another plane which would be the one he would hijack...

He told MARINA that he, OSWALD, would sit at the front of the airplane with the pistol which he owned and MARINA would sit at the back of the plane with a pistol which he would buy for her. They would have their daughter, JUNE, with them. They would force the crew to fly the plane to Cuba. OSWALD told MARINA that she was to stand up at the back of the airplane at the appointed time and yell out "Hands up" in English. She told OSWALD she could not say that in English. He replied for her to say it in Russian and stick the gun out and everybody would know what she meant.

MARINA said she told OSWALD that "only a crazy man would think this up." She refused from the inception of the plan to have anything whatsoever to do with it. OSWALD said he would buy MARINA a light-weight pistol for her to use in the hijack scheme. She recalls on one occasion OSWALD told her he had seen some light weight pistols but she had told him not to buy one because she would not participate in the scheme. OSWALD had said he had wanted her to at least learn how to hold a pistol but she refused. . . .

She said OSWALD tried to talk her into participating in the hijack scheme on at least four occasions. . . .

During the time he was planning to hijack the plane, OSWALD began taking physical exercises at home for the purpose of increasing his physical strength. (n.8)

Lee kept up his exercises for a couple of weeks, causing much merriment in the household. Afterward he rubbed himself all over with a strong-smelling liniment, took a cold shower, and came out of the bathroom as red as a lobster.

Meanwhile, he had brought home airline schedules and a large map of the world which he tacked up inside the porch. He started measuring distances on the map with a ruler, and Marina heard him mention "Key West." Next, he told her that the problem was to find a plane with fuel enough to fly as far as Cuba. A Miami-bound flight would not do; they would have to find something bigger, a plane headed for Philadelphia or New York that had plenty of fuel. (n.9)

To commemorate so apocalyptic an action, and to ensure good reception in the days to come, he was trying, doubtless, to figure out how to tell her that the new child--it could only be a boy--ought to be called Fidel.

Marina had been trying to . . . do nothing to jangle his nerves. But this was too much. To think that politics, the cause of all her woes. . . was to be insinuated into her family, into her very belly, was more than Marina could abide.

She reasserted herself in all her old magnificent asperity. "There is no Fidel and there will be no Fidel in our family." (n.10)

He began to put together a resume of his life on looseleaf paper. Should he decide to go east, after all, he would show it in Baltimore, Washington and New York to officers in the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party. If he went to Cuba, he could present it as a dossier.

A part of him had to feel as shattered as if a grenade had gone off in his guts. The radio debate had destroyed so much; now there was the prodigious anxiety of finding a way to get to Cuba, and the wholly separate anxiety--quite the size of a dilemma--of whether he should 1) go east, and 2) join the Communist Party.

It spews over into his dyslexia. If we may speak of

dyslexia as a species of spiritual acne, this is the worst case he exhibits in all the samples of his writing in all the eleven volumes of Warren Commission Exhibits.

Marxist

I first read the communist manifesto and 1st volume of capital in 1954 when I was 15 I have study 18th century plosipers works by Lein after 1959 and attened numerouse marxist reading circle and groups at the factory where I worked some of which were compulsory and other which were not. also in Russia through newspapers, radio and T.V. I leared much of Marx Engels and Lenins works. such articles are given very good coverage daliy in the USSR.

After my stay in the Soviet Union upon my return to the USA I continued to recive by subsicbtion from "Komkrin Inc," Soviet ideological and infromative literature; "agitator" newspaper Soviet "Belowsi" "krockill" satirical political magazine and the CPUSA newspaper "Worker" aslo I recive the well known Soviet Journal "Ogonxok." I have also recived literature from the Soviet Embassy, Washington D.C.

(n.11)

What a contrast to the Stuckey interview Oswald offers at his worst. How huge is his anxiety: His ambition is always

Speaking as the father of a dyslexic son, I'd argue for a less demeaning metaphor!

leading him to unknown worlds where his experience is small-- he does not even speak Spanish--and this anxiety wells up in every misspelled syllable.

On May 29 1963 I requested permission from the FPCC headquarters at 799 Brodway New York 3, N.Y. to try to form a local branch in New Orleans. I rcived a cautionet but enthusiastic go-ahead from V.T. Lee National Director of FPCC. I than make layouts and had printed public literature for the setting up of a local FPCC. I hired persons to distrube literature. I then organized persons who display receptive attitudes toward Cuba to distrube pamphlets. I sough responise from latin american consuls of which their are many here in New Orleans, I infiltraled the Cuban Student directorite and than harressed them with information I gained inclouding having the N.O. city attorny general call then in an put a restraining order pernding a hearing on some so-called bonds for invasion they were selling in the New Orleans area. I caused the formation of a small, active FPCC organization of members and sympathizers. where before there was none.

(n.12)

He goes on to describe his abilities as a "Street Agitaor," "Radio Specker and Lecturer" and his visit to the Jesuit House of Studies.

On September 20, true to her promise, Ruth arrived in New Orleans and was greeted warmly by Lee. He was in a very good mood, Ruth would say afterward, the best mood she had ever seen him in. If his bouts of anxiety were as deep as immersions in a pit, he could, given the amplitude of his swings of mood, pass all the way over to blue sky, high noon. He had made up his mind. He was going to Cuba. A large dilemma had been resolved and with it, all the problems of what to do with Marina and her oncoming delivery of their second child, perhaps a month away--Ruth would make the arrangements for that at Parkland Hospital and he would have to pay very little since he had worked for six months at Jagger-Chiles-Stovall and so could show a Texas residency. Now, as far as Ruth knew, he was on his way to Houston to look for work. He would come for his wife and children once he was reestablished.

Marina took Ruth to see the sights in the French Quarter. They would peek through the swinging doors of the striptease

bars, one tall woman and one tiny woman holding the hands of three children. Meanwhile, Lee was at home packing. In the course of it, he wrapped and tied his gun in a blanket that he would stow in the car before the two women departed on Monday.

No sooner had they said their goodbyes and driven off than Ruth noticed a rumbling in one of her tires. She pulled up at a gas station one block from the apartment to have it changed. Lee, in his sandals, followed them there. Marina took him to one side and they parted all over again. She was tender to him, telling him to be careful and eat properly.

"Stop," he said. "I can't stand it. Do you want me to cry in front of Ruth?"

For him, too, the hardest thing was to conceal from Ruth that the parting might be forever. And so, while the two of them fought back their tears, Lee held Junie in front of the Coke machines to help them regain their composure. "Come on, Junie," he said. "Show me with your fingers what you want."

. . . when he had a grip on himself, he warned Marina that, above all, she was not to tell Ruth he was going to Cuba.

(n.13)

That opens questions we are obliged to answer. Why was it so important for Ruth not to know that he was going to try to get to Cuba?

He stayed in the apartment for another night or two. Just when he left New Orleans may be in doubt, but he managed to depart without paying the landlady, Mrs. Garner, the last two weeks of rent. She had seen him packing Ruth's car on Sunday night, but he had told her that Marina was going to Texas to have the baby and he would stay on. Then he decamped. Mrs. Garner gives no tender response concerning his removal to other places:

Mrs. Garner. . . . They left the place filthy, too.

Mr. Liebeler. The place was dirty when they left?

Mrs. Garner. Was it? The icebox was broken, the freezer door was broken off, the stove was broken, the mattress was ruined.

Mr. Liebeler. What was wrong with the mattress?

Mrs. Garner. I guess the baby. (n.14)

Chapter 34--Protagonists, Patsies, and Provocateurs

Oswald is ready to leave New Orleans, yet we do not know if he has had a secret life or not. Now and again, there have been intimations, and a prodigious amount has been written by conspiratorialists examining many a possibility of intelligence activity by and around him. Yet, after all this time, there is no overruling evidence that he had association with the FBI, the CIA, Army or Naval Intelligence, or any Cuban groups. It is still possible to believe that Oswald was an over-ambitious, brutal, and yet much henpecked husband with an unbalanced psyche, and that was the sad sum of it.

Given their separate points of view, such an interpretation has been given by Priscilla Johnson McMillan in Marina and Lee, by Jean Davison in Oswald's Game, and in the last year by Gerald Posner in Case Closed, a work which provided great joy to every element of the media who had been antipathetic to Oliver Stone's JFK and were generally offended by conspiratorialists.

While this book commenced without a fixed conclusion in either direction, indeed, with a prejudice in favor of the conspiratorialists, one's plan for the work was to take Oswald

what
about
DeLillo's
Libra?

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on his own terms as long as that was possible, that is, until
 his deeds could not seem comprehensible unless they were being
 directed from outside himself by forces in intelligence. As
 one studied his life in this manner, an hypothesis developed;
 Oswald was a protagonist, a prime mover, a man who made things
 happen. If, like a hermit crab, he conducted his raids on the
 status quo out of a skewed shell not large enough to suit him,
 still, he was a larger protagonist than others would credit
 him for being. Indeed, this point of view has taken hold to
 the point where the writer would not like to relinquish it for
 too little. [Hypotheses commence as our servant--they enable
 us to order facts as we attempt to learn more about a partially
 obscured subject.] Should the profits of such a method
 accumulate, however, then one is obliged (like a man who has
 just grown rich) to be scrupulously on guard against one's own
 low motives. Otherwise, the hitherto useful hypothesis will
 take over the integrity of the project.

One can feel such a tendency stirring. The hypothesis
 may have become closer to the author by now than trying to
 discover the truth. For if Oswald remains intact as an
 important if dark protagonist, one has served a purpose: the
 burden of a prodigious American obsession has been lessened;
 the air has been cleared of an historic scourge--the smog of
 absurdity. So long as Oswald is a petty figure, a lone

but a hermit
 crab always
 has a large shell
 under

not
 crystal
 clear

huh?

✓

twisted pathetic killer who happened to be in a position to kill a potentially great president, then America is cursed with an absurdity. There was no logic to the event and no sense of balance in the universe. Historical absurdity (like the war in Viet Nam) breeds social disease.

We have, of course, the alternative posed by the movie, JFK. There, our president was killed by the architects of a vast plot embracing the most powerful officers of our armed forces, ^{and/or} our intelligence, ^{or} and our Mafia, a massive array of establishment evil that is thrilling to our need to live imaginatively with great stakes in great wars, but it also leaves us with horror: we are small, and the forces of evil are huge.

Of course, the odds against a huge conspiracy being able to succeed and keep silence are also very large. Oswald, moreover, would have been the last man that a leader of such a vast conspiracy would have selected to do the shooting. While JFK satisfies our growing and gloomy sense that nine-tenths of our freedom has been preempted by forces vastly larger than ourselves, (and that gives great power to the film) it does not come near to solving the immediate question: did Lee Harvey Oswald kill JFK and if he did, was it the act of a lone gunman or as a participant in a conspiracy?

Given the elephantine proportions of conspiracy, it can

hardly be difficult for the reader to understand why it is more agreeable to keep to one's developing concept of Oswald as a protagonist, a man to whom, grudgingly, we must give a bit of stature when we take into account the modesty of his origins. That, at least, can provide us with a sense of the tragic rather than of the absurd. If a great protagonist like Kennedy is cheated abruptly of his life, it feels, somehow, inexplicably better if his killer is also not without size. Then, to some degree, we can mourn the loss of possibility in the man who did the deed. If tragedy is vastly preferable to absurdity, two cruel deaths treat us better than one.

Such is the vested interest that adheres to perceiving Oswald as a tragic and infuriating hero (or, if you will, anti-hero) rather than as a snarling little demon, or a patsy (even as we gain from recognizing that Marina was a young woman of enough personal substance to allow us to feel the savage losses in her life, rather than the conventional portrayal of her--with the notable exception of Priscilla Johnson McMillan--as a victim, a liar or a shrew.)

If the tendency does exist then to keep this book protected against interesting leads that go nowhere, still, one is aware of the danger of by-passing too much. What has been gained can diminish. If mysteries are analogous to mammoth caves, it is corrupting to feel pride for what has

wrong
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7
it's not
merely possible

been reconnoitered without maintaining an open sense of the size of the labyrinth that remains. It is the reaches of the unknown that provide resonance for the little that we have gained.

Before we quit New Orleans then, let us take some measure of events that do not fit any picture we have so far obtained of Oswald through these heat-filled months of May, June, July, August and the greater part of September down in the Big Easy.

Norm - the foregoing pages sound very defensive, off-balance and over-elaborated. Methinks thou protesteth too much.

We can commence with a diversion. There is a minor testimony by a young Cuban bartender named Evaristo Rodriguez who worked at the Habana Bar, on 117 Decatur Street in the French Quarter and his remarks have the virtue of reminding us that the prose of Ernest Hemingway, as he was the first to admit, had a lifelong engagement with Spanish notions of syntax and sequence:

Mr. Rodriguez. . . . these men came into the bar. . . the one who spoke Spanish ordered the tequila, so I told him the price . . . was 50 cents. I brought him the tequila

and a little water. The man protested at the price . . . and he made some statement to the effect that . . . the owner of the bar must be a capitalist, and we had a little debate about the price, but that passed over. Then the man who I later learned was Oswald ordered a lemonade. Now I didn't know what to give him because we don't have lemonades in the bar. So I asked Orest Pena how I should fix a lemonade. Orest told me to take a little of this lemon flavoring, squirt in some water, and charge him 25 cents. . . .

Mr. Liebeler. What time of day did this happen?

Mr. Rodriguez. This happened . . . between 2:30 and 3 in the morning. I am not certain of the exact hour but that's the best of my recollection.

Mr. Liebeler. Were either of these men drunk?

Mr. Rodriguez. The man I later learned to be Oswald had his arm around the Latin-appearing man and Oswald appeared to be somewhat drunk. . . .

Mr. Liebeler. Are you able to say the nationality of the man who was with Oswald?

Mr. Rodriguez. . . . He could have been a Mexican; he could have been a Cuban, but at this point, I don't recall.

Mr. Liebeler. What did this [other] man look like? . . .

Mr. Rodriguez. . . . about 28 years old, very hairy arms, dark hair on his arms . . . He was a stocky man with broad shoulders, about 5 feet, 8 inches. . . . He probably hit around 155. . . .

Mr. Liebeler. Now how tall would you estimate Oswald was?

Mr. Rodriguez. I didn't get a good look . . . because Oswald was drunk and he was more or less in a sagging position most of the time . . .

Mr. Liebeler. Did Oswald become sick?

Mr. Rodriguez. He became sick on the table and on the floor.

Mr. Liebeler. Then did he go in the street and continue being sick?

Mr. Rodriguez. The Latin-appearing man helped him to the street where he continued to be sick.

Mr. Liebeler. What was Oswald wearing?

Mr. Rodriguez. Oswald, as I recall, had on a dark pair of pants and a short-sleeved white shirt.

Mr. Liebeler. Did he have a tie on?

Mr. Rodriguez. Oswald had what appeared to be a small bow tie.

Mr. Liebeler. Are you sure?

Mr. Rodriguez. . . .Oswald's collar was open and this thing was hanging from one side of it.

Mr. Liebeler. It was a clip-on bow tie?

Mr. Rodriguez. It was a clip-on thing . . .

Mr. Liebeler. When did this happen? What month?

Mr. Rodriguez. I can't remember exactly, but I know it was just about 1 year ago, and I presume it was in August.

(n.1)

Could he have mistaken May for August? New Orleans can be as hot in May as in mid-summer, and the man with Oswald may have been the same Mexican or Cuban who went with Lee to see Dean Adams Andrews.

On the other hand, if it was August, then the bartender could be referring to the same Mexican or Cuban who will go up to Dallas in September with Leopoldo whom we are going to meet in the next chapter.

Evaristo Rodriguez has given us the record of a very small event, yet it does not fit our framework. To the best of Marina's recollection, Lee was home every night they spent together in New Orleans with the exception of the night he was arrested. Either her memory is betraying her, or the event took place in early May to the discredit of Rodriguez' recollection. Or--the man was not Oswald.

Yet, the story rings true. Oswald, that late at night, not accustomed to being drunk, and with his arm around another man, would be bound to throw up.

The episode also introduces us to Orest Pena, the boss of the bar. Pena is macho to a reasonable degree. That is, he is prudently macho, but then, how can you be a Cuban presiding over a Cuban establishment with the proud name of Habana Bar without settling for oxymoronic faculties--prudent and macho?

Mr. Liebeler. Did Oswald ask for the tequila or did his friend?

Mr. Pena. I don't know exactly. . . .I didn't pay any attention. They got mad about the 25 cents for the lemonade and 50 cents for the tequila, so they asked my

bartender, Evaristo, why I charge so much for the drinks and I was a capitalist charging too much for the drinks. He went and came to me and told me about it. I said, "Don't worry about it. They pay you already?" "Yes." "Don't worry about it." If you are going to worry about all the customers, you are going to go crazy. Then I don't know whether he left or something, but he vomited after that; Oswald did. I don't know anything but they walked away; that's all. (n.2)

Soon, Orest Pena is talking about the FBI and his relation to them:

Mr. Pena. . . .when I joined the organization against Castro in New Orleans, one of the agents of the FBI, de Brueys, started going to my place very, very often asking me about many different people, Spanish people, what I knew, what I thought. I told him what I knew; that some people was for Castro and some people was against. I told him what I saw. I never did ask him what he found out about those people.

Mr. Liebeler. Sometimes you would call the FBI and give them information too; is that correct?

Mr. Pena. Yes.

Mr. Liebeler. Information that you picked up from conversations that took place at your bar and listening to those seamen?

Mr. Pena. Yes. . . . Then de Brueys came to the organization. Maybe--I don't know if sent by the Government or how, but he went to the organization.

Mr. Liebeler. He joined it?

Mr. Pena. No, he didn't join it, but he was sticking with the organization very, very close.

Mr. Liebeler. They knew he was an FBI agent?

Mr. Pena. Yes, we knew he was an FBI agent. So from time to time he called me at my place. He went to my place and was asking me about this guy and that guy, different people here in New Orleans. So I told him what I thought . . . about people that I am for sure they are for Castro here in New Orleans. So one way or the other, he was interfering with me somehow, Mr. de Brueys, so--

Mr. Liebeler. De Brueys was interfering with you?

Mr. Pena. Yes. Somehow. So one day I went to the FBI. They called me to the FBI. I don't remember exactly for what they called me. So I told. . . de Brueys' boss... that I don't talk to de Brueys. I don't trust him as an American.

Mr. Liebeler. Did you tell them the reasons why you didn't?

Mr. Pena. Because he was interfering very close with the organization against Castro. . . . So 2 days later he went to my place of business. He said to me at the table, "I want to talk to you." I said, "Okay, let's go." He said not to talk about him any more because what he could do is get me in big trouble. He said, "I am an FBI man. I can get you in big trouble." (n.3)

The HSCA gives its assessment of this matter:

[De Brueys] acknowledged that he did use Pena informally as an occasional source of information because of his position as a bar owner in New Orleans, but he declined to characterize Pena as an informant because of the absence of any systematic reporting relationship. He also denied having threatened Pena prior to his Warren Commission testimony. (n.4)

The HSCA does not mention whether Orest Pena would

state again as he did in 1964 that he wanted a lie detector test.

Mr. Pena. . . . ask de Brueys if that's true or not true he went to my place and tried to intimidate me. If he say no, I take a lie detector test and he take a lie detector test and maybe you will find one Communist in the FBI.

(n.5)

The HSCA wanders over into semantics:

. . . there is no Bureau record of Pena ever having served as an informant. This, too, supported deBrueys testimony that Pena was never used on any systematic basis as a source of information. . . .

(n.6)

All the same, we do know that Pena was, at the least, a

minor informant, a source of information. Since deBrueys did not keep a file on him, it is reasonable to assume that any FBI man who was using Oswald as a similar source would also eschew a file.

Adrian Alba testified before the [HSCA] committee that. . . one day an FBI agent entered the garage and requested to use one of the Secret Service cars garaged there. The FBI agent showed his credentials, and Alba allowed him to take a Secret Service car, a dark green Studebaker. Later that day or the next day, Alba observed the FBI agent in the car handing a white envelope to Oswald in front of the Reily Coffee Company. There was no exchange of words. Oswald, in a bent position, turned away from the car window and held the envelope close to his chest as he walked toward the Reily Coffee Co. Alba believed that he had observed a similar transaction a day or so later as he was returning from lunch, but on this occasion he failed to see what was handed to Oswald. . . .

Alba did not relate his account of the transactions between Oswald and the FBI agent when he testified before the Warren Commission. He told the committee in 1978 that he first remembered these incidents in 1970, when his memory was triggered by a television commercial showing a merchant running to and from a taxi to assist a customer.

The committee examined Alba's records for possible corroboration. These records indicated that in 1963

several Secret Service agents had signed out two Studebakers, a Ford and a Chevrolet at various times, but the records did not indicate that any FBI agents had signed out any of these cars. (n.7)

Precisely. Alba could hardly show a Secret Service auditor that someone in his garage had charged out a car to an FBI man. Such a transaction could, however, have been easily taken care of by a cash payment to the garage employee who rented out the car. That would not have shown on the books.

The HSCA was then being asked to choose between a man whose memory was jogged six years after his Warren Commission Testimony by a TV commercial, and the testimony of a number of FBI men. Short of the Select Committee being willing to take on the FBI, their agents would have to be seen as too responsible to engage in cover-ups. Of course, in 1964, these FBI men had been working for a leader whose private existence partook of a life-time cover-up.

Given Hoover's conclusion in the first twenty-four hours after JFK's assassination that Oswald did it all by himself, the word passed down the line quickly: FBI men knew that they would prosper best by arriving at pre-ordained results. They certainly knew how to report in a circumscribed style. The

process was guaranteed to produce flattening of evidence, destruction of evidence, and, if it came to it, creation of evidence. Again, in the next chapter, we shall have an example of this with Loran Hall.

Hoover's one-day solution of the murder was probably reflexive--there was enough awful stuff under enough official rugs to dictate the avoidance of anything resembling an all-out investigation. The next best thing, therefore, was accomplished--the appearance of a thorough investigation. The FBI went to great lengths, for example, to obtain basic information on every bus passenger who travelled with Oswald from Laredo to Mexico City, an inquiry that had to consume hundreds of man-hours in order to come up with two dozen names of people who had no more relation to one another than that they were all on the same vehicle. A full inquiry, however, into the pro and anti-Castro anti-Kennedy movements in New Orleans was never attempted. Wide inquiry without search in depth was the unspoken directive behind FBI labors on the Oswald case. So, the cardinal suspects in any small-scale conspiracy, the pro and anti-Castro Cubans who were on the scene in Miami, New Orleans, Houston and Dallas were never explored in 1964 when the leads to them were warm and alive and electric. Yet, in that secret world of putative terrorists, secret agents, and provocateurs, what was more to

be expected than a pro-Castro conspiracy manipulated secretly by anti-Castro Cubans, or exactly the reverse? It was a given that any assassination of Kennedy or even the attempt to do so, would be catastrophic for whichever group did it and happened to be uncovered after the event. To their eternal shame, the FBI did not choose to explore such possibilities. Or is it to the eternal shame of the CIA that the FBI by way of Hoover knew that they were not to cross certain lines or they would bring to disclosure such criminal figures as Sam Giancana and John Rosselli, and their relations with a few of the highest officers in the CIA?

Besides, the FBI had their own acres of bare buttocks to cover. A decade later, more or less, some activities of COINTELPRO (short for Counter-Intelligence Program), the FBI's own undercover group, would be revealed: COINTELPRO had its signature--the most violent, irrational, embarrassing and/or crazy member of a left wing, student, or Black Panther group was likely to be an FBI provocateur inciting other members to go further and further into ill-conceived revolution. Under the inspiration of COINTELPRO agents, students at Berkeley would hear such ultra-left adjurations as "Let's burn a dog in public to show the American public what it's really like in Vietnam."

No evidence has surfaced that COINTELPRO, as such, had

relations with Oswald in the early sixties, but some of his activity bears the mark. For a man in his early twenties, Oswald was relatively sophisticated about left-wing activities. He would almost certainly have known that Stalin in the late 1930's gave the order to murder Leon Trotsky (Leon Harvey Oswald Trotsky!) and that act, committed successfully by the blow of a mountain axe into Trotsky's brain, had reverberated in Left Wing movements through all of the Forties and the Fifties. The IRA and the Irish Protestants are less far apart than were the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party until at least the middle of the Sixties.

. . . In one [letter] dated August 31, and addressed to Mr. E. Bert, managing editor of The Worker in New York City, he applied for a job as a photographer and announced that he and his family "would be relocating" into the area "in a few weeks." The letter was accompanied by a sample of Lee's work . . .

Also on August 31, Lee wrote a letter to the Socialist Workers' Party in New York, announcing that he and his family were moving to the Baltimore-Washington area in October and asking how to get in touch with Party representatives there. And on September 1, he wrote a letter to the Communist Party asking how to "contact the

Party in the Baltimore-Washington area, to which I shall relocate in October." (n.8)

If Oswald was receiving a stipend from COINTELPRO or some kind of COINTELPRO-like organization, there is no need to assume there were specific goals and a master plan. Sabotage of American left-wing organizations, since they are small, does not depend upon precise activities so much as creating trouble and waste. To become a member of both the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party would guarantee disruption further down the line, particularly should such a member be exposed as belonging to both.

Since the CP and the SWP had suffered a history of outside provocations, it was not routine for them to take strangers into their ranks. But Oswald certainly tried, and all the while he was attempting to build an FPCC chapter in New Orleans, he was in touch with the CP and the SWP. There were unsuspected ironies, however:

. . . On May 16, 1963, a source advised that during the first two years of the FPCC's existence, there was a struggle between Communist Party (CP) and Socialist Workers Party (SWP) elements to exert their power within the FPCC and thereby influence FPCC policy. However, during the past year, this source observed there has been a successful effort by FPCC leadership to minimize the roles of these and other organizations in the FPCC so that today their influence is negligible. (n.9)

All the while, agents in the FBI and their informants are observing him:

A confidential source advised our New York Office on June 26, 1963, that one Lee Oswald, Post Office Box 30061, New Orleans, Louisiana, had directed a letter to "The Worker," New York City. Our New Orleans office checked this post office box and determined it was rented to L.H. Oswald on June 3, 1963, residence 657 French Street, New Orleans. This was an incorrect address and further inquiries showed Oswald was residing at 4905 Magazine Street, New Orleans. Oswald's residence in New Orleans was verified on August 5, 1963, by Mrs. Jessie James Garner, 4909 Magazine Street, New Orleans. On the same date his employment at the William B. Reilly Coffee

Company, 640 Magazine Street, New Orleans, was determined.
(n.10)

We can recall that when John Fain asked Oswald if he were in American intelligence, he had answered "Don't you know?"

Of course Fain did not know. COINTELPRO was a special arm of the FBI and so its provocateurs were unknown as such to FBI informants in the Communist Party and were therefore monitored by regular FBI methods. It is in the nature of intelligence organizations to maintain secret echelons in strata below routine intelligence activities. Often the echelons proceed at cross-purposes with more standard activities. The provocateur seeks to promote disorder; normal security attempts to prevent it. So a provocateur can hardly do his work as well if an informant covering the activities of his group is aware that he is a provocateur. He would be handled differently from the others and it might be evident.

Of course, the potentiality for games within games is not small. Oswald, if he were on a secret FBI stipend, might have been breaking the rules when he asked to see an FBI man in the New Orleans jail, or he might not have been aware that the man who came would not be witting of his case.

In fact, we are wandering in the dark. Quigley might have known that Oswald was special, or Oswald might have told him so. As a professional, Quigley was hardly about to pass such information on to the Warren Commission. Besides, they never asked.

Still, the thought of Oswald working for the FBI hardly fits our sense of him. He did love "I Led Three Lives for the FBI" when he was a boy, but is that enough? How to account for the reduction in his large view of himself and his mission if he was working for both sides at once?

One night in New Orleans, John Murret happens to drive Lee and Marina past the large and apparently lavish home in which John's fiancée lived:

Lee did not say anything, but Marina could tell that his fists were clenched in anger. Lee, she says, did not hate the owners of these homes, but he did hate the system that made it possible for anyone to be so wealthy . . . Like virtually everyone who knew him, Marina, too, believed that her husband could not have been "bought." What she sensed in him that night--an impression so strong that it was almost palpable--was his hatred of American capitalism.

(n.11)

No, he could not have been bought, not easily, but he could have entertained a relationship with the FBI the better to match his wits against theirs while climbing the rungs. His need to be part of the social machine that he would overthrow was as large as his abhorrence of that same machine. If he a complex piece of work, well, let us recognize none of us are simple. He would have loved a role where he could pretend to serve the forces he would yet manage to overthrow.

In September [1963], the FBI intercepted a letter from Oswald to The Worker in New York. He stated that he and his family would be "relocating in your area. . . in a few weeks." He sent a similar message to the Militant, which was also under close FBI surveillance. By writing these letters, Oswald had effectively ghosted a false trail for himself.

Actually, Oswald was headed in the opposite direction--Mexico. There he intended to brief the Cuban Embassy on his political activities and obtain the necessary documentation to get to Cuba. (n.12)

Ghosting a false trail for his FBI handlers could have been a part of his motive. He would fool them--he would not go to the northeast but to Cuba. On the other hand, if he was on some covert FBI payroll, that does not mean he was always working, by his private measure, for himself. He could have had a few stray ambitions for getting along in their organization as well. He was young and he never ceased to be a near-inchoate collision of emotions. So he might well have entertained the idea that instead of hijacking a plane, he would lead a family life as a radical in Baltimore and Philadelphia, and decide later how far he would play with COINTELPRO. It could be that after his impressive performance under pressure on Stuckey's two radio shows, his COINTELPRO handlers had decided he could be employed on more serious ventures.

It is even more likely that if Oswald was engaged in a double game, the people who were taking care of his stipend were not officially associated with the FBI.

We have to remind ourselves constantly of the underground atmosphere of the time. After the October missile crisis of 1962, the detestation of Communism in right-wing Americans was at its most intense and Kennedy was hated virulently by the most passionate cohorts of the right. In the course of resolving the confrontation with Khrushchev, he had given a

left-handed acceptance of the existence of Castro's Cuba. Right-wingers carried their bleeding wounds through the labyrinths of sleep but they could not always sleep. A Red outpost was ninety miles from our shore and it had nuclear missiles. They did not say to themselves that we had kept nuclear missiles for years on Turkish bases, ninety miles from the Soviet Union, but then, right-wingers did not have John F. Kennedy's wit.

When we take into account that the FBI and the CIA, not to mention Army and Naval Intelligence, also had their share of extreme right-wing zealots, it is more than likely, it is, indeed, all but impossible that such patriots in official organizations did not join with individuals outside their ranks who had access to criminal money and oil money in order to fund all kinds of semi-legal and illegal groups that could engage in military adventures or COINTELPRO-like actions of sabotage of left-wing organizations.

Two of the most prominent of such men in New Orleans were W. Guy Banister and David Ferrie. In his book, Conspiracy, Anthony Summers gives a concise and nicely-written summary of these stalwarts:

Guy Banister was an old-fashioned American hero who refused to go gracefully. He had been a star agent for the FBI, a tough guy whose long career had covered some of the Bureau's most famous cases, including the capture and killing of "Public Enemy Number One," murderer and bank robber John Dillinger. He was commended by FBI Director Hoover and rose to become Special Agent-in-Charge in a key city, Chicago. In World War II--according to his family--he distinguished himself with Naval Intelligence, a connection he reportedly maintained all his life. Bannister came to New Orleans in the Fifties, at the request of the mayor, to become Deputy Chief of Police. This was the high point of a flawed career. In 1957, at the age of 58, Banister was pushed into retirement after an incident in New Orleans' Old Absinthe House, when he allegedly threatened a waiter with a pistol. By all accounts Banister was a choleric man and a heavy drinker. He did not take kindly to humiliation but stayed on in New Orleans to start Guy Banister Associates, nominally a detective agency. In fact, Banister's intelligence background, coupled with a vision of himself as a super-patriot, led him into a personal crusade against Communism. He was a member of the fervently right-wing John Birch Society, of Louisiana's "Committee on Un-American Activities," of the paramilitary Minutemen, and he published a racist publication called the Louisiana Intelligence Digest. He abhorred the United Nations and believed plans for racial integration were part of a Communist plot against the United States. . . . As late as 1963, say former members of Banister's staff, the offices of the "detective agency" were littered with guns

of every distinction. It was no coincidence that the exiles' government in exile, the Cuban Revolutionary Council, made its New Orleans base in the same building as Guy Banister. For Banister and his Cuban proteges the building was well located--close to the local offices of both the CIA and the FBI. American intelligence may have found Banister--with his intelligence background and independent status--a convenient buffer. When the agencies could not openly associate with certain operations, Banister was available as a circuit breaker. Even if his political passions and alcoholism made a dangerously inflammable mix, Banister had his uses. His office had another distinction. It was just around the corner from the William Reily Coffee Company, where Oswald worked in the summer of 1963. (n.13)

544 Camp Street was, of course, the address that Oswald had stamped on all the FPCC pamphlets that he was passing out on Canal Street when he got into his altercation with Bringuier.

Since then, long chapters in many a volume on the assassination have been devoted to a possible relationship between Oswald and Banister, but the evidence is never firm. Oswald would claim he rented office space in 544 Camp Street and was asked to leave after three days. The landlord, Sam Newman, says the building had three empty offices all summer

and Oswald never rented. In any event, there are certainly no receipts.

Summers found witnesses, mainly Delphine Roberts, Bannister's former secretary, to state that she saw Oswald in the building with Bannister, but Posner is at his most effective in discounting Roberts as a witness.

Of course, if Oswald was being paid a stipend by Banister to do one or another kind of undercover work, it could hardly have made sense for them to be seen together, or to have established any paper trail. On the other hand, given the kind of work Banister was doing, he would hardly have failed to be aware of Oswald and his potentialities.

Moreover, we do well not to lose sight of the missing contact reports in the CIA files during the preceding April when Oswald tried to kill Walker. The assumption made then, we can recall, is that those reports were missing because the routing symbols written on them would have revealed that the papers describing Oswald's act had been transmitted to the kind of CIA officer who would have had contact with people like Banister.

If there is no hard evidence connecting Banister to Oswald, a cloud of potentiality hangs over the man like the spirit of the time. That there is no evidence does not prove that they had no relations with each other. Rather, it

suggests that if they did, the relations were serious enough to take pains to conceal the evidence.

Hardly the same can be said for David Ferrie. Here is Anthony Summers' description of him:

After the assassination there was perfunctory inquiry into Oswald's membership as a youth of sixteen, in the Civil Air Patrol. Oswald was then living with his mother in New Orleans and joined the Patrol as a cadet in 1955. David Ferrie, an airman of skill and renown, was at that time a leading light of the local Patrol unit [but Ferrie] claimed he could remember nothing about Oswald. He denied ever having any sort of relationship with Oswald. Since he also denied knowing that the Cuban Revolutionary Council and its representative Arcacha ever operated from Camp Street, a fact he certainly did know about, Ferrie's denials should have raised suspicions. The FBI, however, conducted a mockery of an inquiry into Oswald's membership in the Civil Air Patrol and the matter was dropped. . . . Nobody, at this date, can recall any special relationship between the bizarre instructor and the cadet who would one day become infamous. The Assassinations Committee noted, however, that Ferrie's "appeal to several young men may have been related to his taking an extraordinary interest in them . . . He often gave parties at his residence where liquor flowed freely. . . .

Ferrie's homosexuality, and his weakness for young

boys in particular, is a matter of record. . . .
Similarly, in the mid-Fifties, Ferrie's misconduct with youths in the Air Patrol led to scandal. There were reports of drunken orgies, of boys capering about in the nude, and in the end it was this that ended Ferrie's tenure with the New Orleans unit. There is not yet any evidence that Oswald was involved in such goings-on but--at the age of sixteen and at the threshold of adult sexual life--he was certainly vulnerable to the likes of Ferrie. The Assassinations Committee noted that--homosexuality aside--Ferrie exerted "tremendous influence" through his close associations with his pupils in the Patrol. A Committee analysis adds that he "urged several boys to join the armed forces." (n.14)

Posner adds these interesting details:

Ferrie was a self-ordained ultra-orthodox Catholic bishop and an amateur hypnotist and cancer researcher. This self-proclaimed fighter pilot and soldier of fortune was eccentric but brilliant. He suffered from alopecia totalis, a rare disease that left him totally hairless. He wore a badly-fitted red wig and sometimes glued on tufts of synthetic fabric for eyebrows. (n.15)

Ferrie and Banister were associated with one another. Since Ferrie was Carlos Marcello's private pilot, and Banister did a good deal of investigative work for G. Wray Gill who was Carlos Marcello's attorney, all those who believe in guilt by association had a rich time with the possibility that Banister and Ferrie could be the link between the CIA, the FBI, and the Mafia. Oswald is then linked in some relation to all of them. There is, unfortunately, no sighting of any sort between Ferrie and Oswald in New Orleans during the summer of 1963.

There is, however, the famous morning in early September when a big black limousine drove into town and parked ostentatiously near the registrar's office in Clinton, Louisiana, ninety miles north of New Orleans. On that morning, a long line of blacks were waiting to be registered as voters, an action organized by the Congress of Racial Equality. A young man came out of the limousine, leaving the driver and other passenger behind, and joined the black people on line. The young man was later identified as Lee Harvey Oswald, the passenger as David Ferrie, and Jim Garrison had the driver pegged as Clay Shaw, although, subsequently, after Garrison was discredited, some conspiratorialists would decide that the driver, generally described as a good-looking middle-aged man with gray hair, was Guy Banister.

Summers decided that the story never did make a great

deal of sense with Shaw as a principal, and indeed, why would one of the wealthiest and most powerful men in New Orleans drive 90 miles out of the city to sit in a car all day watching blacks register? Banister made more sense. He saw CORE as a left-wing organization ready to befoul and disrupt everything in the South, and indeed, the CORE organizer who was in Clinton that day, assumed that the car was there to offer an FBI presence. CORE had suffered considerable intimidation that summer.

The young white man who stepped out of the car that day got a haircut, and, after a wait of three hours on line, reached the registrar of voters, Henry Palmer, and "pulled out a U.S. Navy I.D. and . . . the name on it was Lee H. Oswald with a New Orleans address." (n.16)

According to Palmer, Oswald's story was that he wanted a job at the nearby East Louisiana State Hospital; he believed he had more chance of getting it if he registered as a member of the Clinton electorate. To Palmer it was an odd request, out of context with the black registration drive. He finally told Oswald he had not been in the area long enough to qualify for registration. Oswald thanked him and departed.

(n.17)

This Clinton episode tying Oswald to David Ferrie, who was clearly identified as one of the three men, had to be disproved by Posner if he was to seal up his case, since, from his point of view, it was a most unattractive loose end. Posner, indeed, is at his best in pointing out the weaknesses in the HSCA's conclusion after interviewing six witnesses who were in Clinton that day in 1963, that their testimony was "credible and significant."

Posner, however, managed to obtain access to the files of Edward Wagmann, one of Clay Shaw's defense lawyers, a feat in itself, since lawyers in the South are not in a hurry to give such privileged material to investigators from the North unless they are very well recommended. In any event, Posner now had the Clinton witnesses' original reactions to the event. These were the materials submitted in the beginning to Jim Garrison, that is, the various memoranda, affidavits, and first written accounts, and Posner sets out to demolish the possibility that Oswald, Ferrie and Banister were in that car and made that visit to Clinton, Louisiana:

The first problem arises over the time of the purported visit. Summers says the episode took place "in early September." It is imperative that the alleged visit not have taken place later because Oswald permanently left New Orleans and Louisiana on September 24. But Edward McGehee, the Jackson town barber who claimed to have cut Oswald's hair and advised him about a job at the local mental hospital, said it was "kind of cool" on the day he saw Oswald. He remembered the air conditioner was not on in his shop. Reeves Morgan, the state representative for the parish, said Oswald visited him at his home to inquire about obtaining the hospital job. There was a chill in the air, and Morgan recalled lighting the fireplace. Review of U.S. Weather bureau records for the period through September 24 show daily temperatures above 90 degrees, with only a few days dipping into the eighties, with high humidity. There was certainly no day that was "cool" or required a burning fireplace. The registrar of voters, Henry Palmer, felt very strongly that the visit was the "first week of October, possibly around the 6th or 7th." Oswald was in Dallas then. (n.18)

Posner goes on from there to demonstrate how very much the original statements diverge from the later ones until the

specific perceptions merge into a cacaphony of contradictions. One witness saw only a woman and a man in the car and they had a baby in a bassinet in the rear. Other witnesses saw four men, or two men, or one man. Posner succeeds in deconstructing the three-men-in-a-limousine presentation that Garrison had wrangled into shape from the witnesses' original material.

Only one loose end remained: Oswald's interview with the registrar of voters, Henry Palmer. Mr. Palmer had not only identified Oswald but had seen his I.D. card. So, Posner's strongest remaining card (although he did not appear to see that it could eventually prove his weakest) was that the event could not have taken place in September because it was not cool enough. (Of course, if the visit had taken place in October, then the young man who presented an I.D. card for Oswald was not Oswald. In which case, Oswald had a double out putting his name around with false credentials gotten together for the occasion.)

Let us not give up on September too easily, however. Posner speaks of daily temperatures above 90 degrees "with only a few days dipping into the eighties. . . ." Of course, such temperatures are given for the high point of the day. If it is 84 degrees at 1:00 P.M., it might be 60 or 65 degrees at dawn, and for older people used to living in 90 degree

temperatures, the early morning might offer the kind of chill one does light a fire for. Even if one came by at ten, there might be enough of the early morning cold left in the old house and the old bones to keep a few coals alive.

It is this refusal to search for the fact that may be lying just under the fact that makes it dangerous to follow Posner uncritically. He is too journalistic to be taken seriously all the way. It would be a great relief to close the case on the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, but one has to be certain that in sewing up a wound, nothing is left behind. For example, Posner is so certain that Oswald and Ferrie never met at all:

. . . Ferrie was interviewed by the FBI on November 27, 1963, and denied ever knowing Oswald in the Civil Air Patrol. CAP records show he told the truth. Although he was a member through 1954, Ferrie was disciplined because he gave unauthorized political lectures to the cadets. When he submitted his 1955 renewal, he was rejected. Ferrie was not reinstated until December 1958. He was not even in the Civil Air Patrol when Oswald was a member in 1955. (n.19)

In November, 1993, however, FrontLine, on TV, showed a group photograph taken in 1955 of about 16 men and boys on a picnic. Since Ferrie and Oswald are visible at opposite ends of the photograph, the most that Posner can now claim is that Ferrie may have believed he was telling the truth when he said that they never met.

In fact, the odds are great that, at the least, they were introduced to each other on that outing. Moreover, Ferrie was having many sexual relations with teenagers in that period. Just as a heterosexual who makes love to a great number of women will often have difficulty recalling each woman, so with Ferrie. He could have slept with Oswald, and whether he remembers or not, would have denied it. Posner is in a rush to close everything down, however, so he says, "He told the truth."

This tendency in Posner to chop off the nuances from his facts, as if nuances were naught but vestigial toes, can be seen at its most dramatic in his treatment of Sylvia Odio whom we will encounter in the next chapter.

Chapter 35--An Inexplicable Visit

He did stay in New Orleans for two more days, but his movements were so furtive that neighbors could not agree on when they saw him actually leave the apartment. Two of them reported later that they saw Lee racing to catch a bus on the corner, carrying a piece of luggage in each hand, at five or six in the evening. But one of them thought it was Monday, the other that it was Tuesday evening. On Wednesday, Jesse Garner entered the Oswalds' apartment and found it empty. Lee was gone. (n.1)

Whether he remained in his empty apartment Monday and Tuesday night, or was elsewhere, is not known. On Wednesday morning he may have gone to his Post Office box for his \$33 unemployment compensation check and cashed it at the Winn-Dixie store on Magazine Street sometime before noon, but then again, some unknown could have done it for him since the FBI could not authenticate his signature. And no one saw Oswald on any bus that left New Orleans for Houston.

At best, we can be half-certain that by 2:35 A.M. on Thursday he got on Continental Trailways Bus No. 5133 that

departed from Houston for Nuevo Laredo and by 10:00 A.M. on Friday, September 27, he was in Mexico City, a bus trip, Houston-Mexico City, of thirty-one and a half hours.

One question is present: did he travel on Wednesday from New Orleans to Houston, or did he leave early Wednesday morning with one or two unknown friends from New Orleans and drive with them all the way to Dallas in order to be one of the three men who, about 9 P.M., had an encounter with a young Cuban lady named Sylvia Odio (who, as a point of collateral interest, was considered by the Warren Commission staff who interviewed her to be the prettiest witness they encountered in the months of the proceedings.) (n.2)

There are a multitude of problems generated by the testimony of Sylvia Odio, so let us begin with her account.

At close to 9:00 P.M. on a night late in September, three men came to her apartment in Dallas. Highly suspicious of them, she kept her door at first on the latch. Her father, once the trucking tycoon of Cuba, was now in jail on the Isle of Pines, imprisoned as a conspirator in a plot to kill Fidel Castro. Sylvia Odio had suffered the trauma of his arrest, a subsequent divorce from her husband in Puerto Rico, and she was now under the care of a psychiatrist. Small surprise if her travails had left her naturally distrustful of strangers at the door. The spokesman for these three men told her,

however, that they were members of JURE (Junta Revolucionaria), a liberal anti-Castro group formed originally by Manolo Ray and in part by her father.

The stranger who did most of the talking was tall and thin and called himself Leopoldo. The second man was squat and "greasy"--and, by her description, both were "kind of low Cubans," although the short one could have been Mexican. The third man was an American who "said just a few little words in Spanish, trying to be cute, but very few, like 'Hola,' like that in Spanish." (n.3)

Mr. Liebeler. Was the chain fastened?

Mrs. Odio. No; I unfastened it after a little while when they told me they were members of JURE, and . . . one of them said, "We are very good friends of your father." This struck me, because I didn't think my father would have such kind of friends unless he knew them from anti-Castro activities. He [Leopoldo] gave me so many details about where he saw my father and what kind of activities he was in. I mean, they gave me almost incredible details about things that [only] somebody . . . informed well knows. . . . And he said, "We wanted you to meet this American. His name is Leon Oswald." He repeated it twice. Then my sister Annie by that time was standing

near the door. She had come [back] to see what was going on. And they introduced him as an American who was very much interested in the Cuban cause. . . . And [Leopoldo] said, we have just come from New Orleans and we have been trying to get this movement organized down there, and . . . we think we could do some kind of work." This was all talked very fast, not slow as I am saying it now. You know how fast Cubans talk. . . . And then I think I asked something to the American, trying to be nice, "Have you ever been to Cuba?" And he said, "No, I have never been to Cuba."

And I said "Are you interested in our movement?" And he said, "Yes."

. . . I said, "If you will excuse me, I have to leave," and I repeated, "I am going to write to my father and tell him you have come to visit me." . . . And I think that was the extent of the conversation. They left, and I saw them through the window leaving in a car. I don't recall the car. I have been trying to.

Mr. Liebeler. Do you know which one of the men was driving?

Mrs. Odio. The tall one, Leopoldo.

Mr. liebeler. Leopoldo?

Mrs. Odio. Yes; oh, excuse me, I forgot something very important. They kept mentioning that they had to come to visit me at such a time of night, it was almost 9 o'clock, because they were leaving on a trip. And two or three times they said the same thing. . . . The next day