

Leopoldo called me. I had gotten home from work, so I imagine it might have been Friday. And they had come on Thursday. I have been trying to establish that. He was trying to get fresh with me that [second time]. He was trying to be too nice, telling me that I was pretty, . . . That is the way he started the conversation. Then he said, "What do you think of the American?" And I said, "I didn't think anything."

And he said, "You know, our idea is to introduce him to the underground in Cuba because he is great, he is kind of nuts." . . . [Leon] told us [that we] don't have any guts, because President Kennedy should have been assassinated after the Bay of Pigs, and . . . I started getting a little upset with the conversation.

And [Leopoldo] said, "It is so easy to do it." He has told us. . . . And [Leopoldo] repeated again that they were leaving for a trip and they would very much like to see me on their return to Dallas. Then he mentioned something more about Oswald. They called him Leon. He never mentioned the name Oswald [during] the telephone conversation [but] referred to him as Leon or an American. [Leopoldo] said he had been a Marine and he was so interested in helping the Cubans, and he was terrific. That is the words [Leopoldo] more or less used in Spanish, that he was terrific. . . . 3 days later I wrote to my father after they came, and mentioned the fact that two men had called themselves friends of his. And later in December, because the letter takes a long time to get here, he writes me back, "I do not know any of these men. Do not get involved with any of them. . . . Please tell me again who it is that calls himself my friend. Be careful. I do not have any friends that have been near me lately,

not even in Dallas. So do not establish any friendships until you give me their full names again." . . . He says. "You are very alone with no man to protect you, and you can be easily fooled." (n.4)

At the end of the interview, Sylvia Odio is asked:

Mr. Liebeler. Well, do you have any doubts in your mind after looking at these pictures that the man that was in your apartment was the same man as Lee Harvey Oswald?

Mrs. Odio. I don't have any doubts. (n.5)

Now, to look at the difficulties. Sylvia Odio thinks the visit of those three men could have come no earlier than 9:00 P.M. Thursday September 26, but by that hour Oswald was on a bus going from Nuevo Laredo to Mexico City, and had already been on it more than six hours. There are any number of witnesses to testify to that. So, Sylvia Odio either mistook a visit that took place on Wednesday night for Thursday, or,

once again, the American, whoever he was, was not Oswald. Indeed, he could have been Oswald only if he had been driven all the way (possibly by Leopoldo) from New Orleans on Wednesday to the Odio apartment in Dallas (which is at least a ten-hour drive), and from there someone took him in the car south to catch a bus leaving Houston in the early morning, 2:35 A.M. Thursday, September 26. That bus from Houston would arrive in Laredo, Texas, in time for an early afternoon departure for Mexico City twenty hours further down the road.

We have the testimony of Mr. and Mrs. McFarland of Liverpool to verify his presence on the bus from Houston to Laredo:

Great Britain and Northern Ireland
County of Lancaster, City of Liverpool
Consulate of the United States of America, ss:

Before me, Wilfred V. Duke, Consul of the United States of America, duly commissioned and qualified, came John Bryan McFarland and Meryl McFarland of 7a Riversdale Road, Liverpool, 19, England, who being duly sworn depose and say that:

Q: When and where did you board the bus for Mexico City?

A: We boarded the Continental Trailways bus at Jackson, Mississippi, and traveled via connecting buses to Mexico City where we arrived September 27, 1963.

Q: When and where did you first see the man identified as Lee Harvey Oswald?

A: We changed buses at Houston, Texas at 2:00 A.M. September 26th and it was probably about 6:00 A.M. after it became light that we first saw him . . .

Q: Did Oswald check any luggage with the bus company so it would have been carried underneath the bus in the luggage compartment?

A: We never actually saw him check any luggage in with the bus company, but in the bus station at Mexico City the last we saw of him was waiting at the luggage check-out place obviously to collect some luggage. . .

Q: When did it first occur to you that Lee Harvey Oswald was the man you had met on the bus?

A: When we saw his pictures in the newspapers.

(n.5)

If Sylvia Odio was mistaken in her dates, then Oswald could have been at her door on Wednesday night at 9:00 P.M. And if had been Thursday or Friday night, and her testimony proved valid, then the American who was ready to fire at Castro or at Kennedy was not Lee but an impostor familiar with the name after Oswald's radio and TV appearance in New Orleans

in August. Of course, if it was an impostor, then why was Sylvia Odio insisting the man was Oswald unless the resemblance was so close that there was the possibility of a double and a conspiracy. Oswald might indeed be some kind of patsy.

Odio was first interviewed on December 18, 1963, by FBI men James P. Hosty and Bardwell D. Odum, and they hardly had to have it underlined for them that her testimony, if verified, would seriously injure the unspoken Warren-Hoover-Dulles concordat that Oswald had done the job by himself. Energies would have to be directed toward exploring who Oswald's associates might have been: that was equal to investigating the pro-Castro and anti-Castro underground in Miami, New Orleans, Houston and Dallas; the unspoken anxiety of the elders was that by the end of such an exploration, there would be sheer hell to pay for all the attendant discoveries.

By dint of adroit juggling that we will have an opportunity to observe, the FBI was able to resolve the double bind of Oswald-at-the-door or Oswald-impostor-at-the-door.

. . . On August 23rd, 1964, with the first drafts of

the Warren Commission report being written, Chief Counsel J. Lee Rankin wrote to J. Edgar Hoover: "It is a matter of some importance to the Commission that Mrs. Odio's allegations either be proved or disproved."

One month later, with the report already in galleys, the Odio incident was still critical for staffers. In a memo to his boss, Staff Counsel Wesley Liebeler wrote: "There are problems. Odio may well be right. The Commission will look bad if it turns out she is. There is no need to look foolish by grasping at straws to avoid admitting there is a problem." (n.7)

Fifteen years later in its final report the House Select Committee on Assassinations would contradict that judgement--or, since such conclusions are written in bureaucratese--would virtually contradict the Warren Commission by declaring that Odio's "testimony is essentially credible . . . there is a strong probability that one of the men was or appeared to be Lee Harvey Oswald."

Further than that, the HSCA was not prepared to go despite the conclusion of their investigator, Gaeton Fonzi, who, having been assigned to interview Odio found her sister Annie and herself "highly credible witnesses." (n.8) The HSCA's report was going to declare that the assassination had probably been a conspiracy brought off by the Mafia. Odio

was, therefore, in the way. Her testimony pointed toward Cubans and Cuban handlers--CIA.

So, the matter rested until Case Closed was published in 1993. Posner's book is so concerted a validation of FBI work that it could hardly have been more suited to the Bureau's needs if a committee of skilled FBI men had written it themselves. Indeed, it is awesome how much material Posner collects to bulwark the case for the FBI. No ordinary researcher could have done the job in a decade.

The key, however, to closing the case on Oswald is to discredit Odio. Posner sets out to accomplish this by eroding her objective credentials as a witness:

. . . Sylvia Odio herself has to be briefly examined. By the time of her Oswald story, she had a history of emotional problems. In Puerto Rico, where she had lived before moving to Dallas in March, 1963, she had seen a psychiatrist over a fractious marriage. According to FBI reports, he decided she was unstable and unable, mentally or physically, to care for her children. (41) A doctor who was called to treat her once for an "attack of nerves" discovered she had made it up to get the attention of her neighbors. He described her as a very mixed-up young lady, and was told by others that she had also been under

psychiatric care while living in Miami, when she moved to the States in 1961. (42)

In her divorce proceedings of 1963, she lost custody of her four children because of charges of neglect and abandonment. (43) (n.9)

The three footnotes, 41, 42, 43, all refer to FBI memoranda about her condition before coming to Dallas. They are worth about as much as adversarial notes in a lawsuit. It would have taken a stupid FBI man not to have understood back in 1964 that Odio was to be discredited. As one example of the distortion in the items cited, Odio was hardly neglecting, abandoning, or without custody of her children when she spoke to the three visitors. Indeed, all four of her children were living with her in a small apartment. Posner could have detected as much from a couple of references in her Warren Commission testimony: "my sister Annie. . .had come over. . .to babysit for me." (n.10) Or, one page earlier (n.11), "I told them at the time I was very busy with my four children." But then, Posner would have had to have been paying as much attention to her testimony as to FBI memoranda. A little later, in another section attributed to FBI sources, Posner writes that Silvia Herrera, her mother-in-law "went so far as

to say that Odio was an excellent actress who could intelligently fabricate such an episode if she wished. (51)" (n.12) Posner is not even counting on a mother-in-law to make his case, but an ex-mother-in-law!

Or, again, "By the time of the assassination, she had been seeing [her psychiatrist] for more than seven months, at least weekly, sometimes more frequently." (n.13)

Once a week, or as Posner adds hopefully, "sometimes more frequently," suggests a woman who is looking for some mental and emotional support; Posner's psychiatric ploy to be effective needs a patient who is closeted with her doctor five times a week.

But Posner uses what is available. The FBI memoranda never stop piling it on for the team:

. . . A confidential FBI informant, who was an Odio friend, told the Bureau "that one of her main difficulties [is] that she cannot rationalize herself to the fact that she is no longer the daughter of a wealthy individual who will grant her every request, and she will perform various actions in an attempt to become the center of attractions." (51) The informant advised the FBI that Odio's family is "split in their opinion . . . some being of the opinion that she is almost crazy, and others

offering their condolences at her troubles and offering her assistance." (53) Another friend confirmed to the FBI that Odio was extremely lonesome in Dallas, sought to gain attention from others, and had an excellent imagination and a tendency toward exhibitionism. (54) (n.14)

In an interview that Posner conducted with Carlos Bringuier, (Oswald's old foe), a telling accusation against Odio is brought in. "I believe it is possible," says Bringuier,

. . . "that she was visited by someone--there were a lot of people with different organizations out there. But after the assassination, I believe her immediate reaction would have been the same as mine, to have jumped up and called the FBI and say, 'Hey, that guy visited me!' Instead, [after being released from the hospital] she casually told a neighbor, and that neighbor told the FBI, and that's the only reason it came out. That makes me suspicious of her story. It doesn't sound right, and I know from my own personal experience on what I did and how I felt when I realized I had some contact with the man who killed the President of the United States. I heard the name Lee Harvey Oswald and I jumped from my seat. I didn't

finish my lunch--I called the FBI immediately. Maybe with all the news after the assassination she became confused and put Oswald's face and name onto the person she actually met. I have seen this as a lawyer in criminal cases. There is an accident with four witnesses and they give four different versions and they all believe they are telling the truth, and could even pass a lie detector. She thinks she is telling the truth. I hate to say she is lying, but she is mistaken."(56) (n.15)

What Bringuier leaves out of his otherwise convincing analysis is that he felt full of virtue and vindication as he leapt out of his chair to call the FBI, whereas Odio was terrified. She didn't know who the men were, and she didn't know whether the other two would be coming back to find her. More than twelve years later, when Fonzi located her in Miami, she was still afraid.

Posner is, however, unrelenting. More and more, Odio is the key witness to be disproved. Once again, he goes to the FBI rather than quoting from Warren Commission testimony:

Odio insists that she told at least two people, before the

assassination, that three men, including Oswald, had visited her apartment. One of the people she told was Lucille Connell. But when the FBI questioned her in 1964, Connell said that Odio only told her about Oswald after the assassination, and then said she not only knew about Oswald, but he had given talks to groups of Cuban refugees in Dallas. (n.16)

That last sentence, if true, is wholly damaging to Odio. but she never said that--let Sylvia Odio speak for herself. She told Wesley Liebeler that she and Mrs. Connell "became very, very close friends, extremely close." (n.17)

Mrs. Odio. . . .she got me a psychiatrist which was Dr. Einspruch. I was here 4 months before I went to get my children. We were close, like I said.

Mr. Liebeler. What makes you think she called the FBI about [the three men]?

Mrs. Odio. I am not certin of this, but I did discuss it with her after it happened, because I trusted her completely. I discussed it and told her that I was frightened, I didn't know what to do. I did not know if

it was anything of importance that I should tell the FBI. And I was the only person--she was the only person I told.

Mr. Liebel. Did you tell Dr. Einspruch about it?

Mrs. Odio. Yes; but the things you talk with a doctor in an office, he will tell you before he is going to say it. He would have told me, "I am going to tell the FBI." You have to trust a doctor, especially a psychiatrist. I know they talked to him later, but I don't think it was him that called the FBI.

Mr. Liebel. Did you tell Mrs. Connell that you had seen Oswald at some anti-Castro meetings, and that he had made some talks to these groups of refugees, and that he was very brilliant and clever and captivated the people to whom he had spoken?

Mrs. Odio. No.

Mr. Liebel. You are sure you never told her that?

Mrs. Odio. No.

Mr. Liebel. Have you ever seen Oswald at any meetings?

Mrs. Odio. Never. This is something when you talk to somebody, she probably was referring--we did have some meetings, yes. John Martino spoke, who was an American, who was very clever and brilliant. I am not saying that she is lying at all. When you are excited, you might get all your facts mixed up, and Martino was one of the men

who was in Isle of Pines for 3 years. And he mentioned the fact that he knew Mr. Odio, that Mr. Odio's daughters were in Dallas, and [Mrs. Connell] did go to that meeting. I did not go, because they kept it quiet from me so I would not get upset about it . . . Martino is one that has written a book called "I was a Prisoner in Castro's Cuba," and he was on the Isle of Pines for 3 years. He came to Dallas and gave a talk to the Cubans about conditions in Cuba, and she was one of the ones that went to the meeting.

Mr. Liebeler. Mrs. Connell?

Mrs. Odio. Yes. And my sister Annie went too. . . .

Mr. Liebeler. Are you still seeing Dr. Einspruch?

Mrs. Odio. No; I am through with therapy. He left.

Mr. Liebeler. He is no longer in Dallas?

Mrs. Odio. No; he left for Philadelphia, for the U.S. Naval Hospital.

Mr. Liebeler. Did you tell Dr. Einspruch that you had seen Oswald in more than one anti-Castro Cuban meeting?

Mrs. Odio. No, I don't think so, because I have never seen him before except the day he came to the door.

Mr. Liebeler. You have never seen him since?

Mrs. Odio. No.

Mr. Liebeler. You told us that you had a fainting spell after you heard about the assassination. Would you tell us about that, please?

Mrs. Odio. Well, I had been having fainting spells all the past year. I would pass out for hours, and this was part of my emotional problems. I was doing quite well, except that I had come back from lunch, and I cannot deny that the news was a great shock to me, and I did pass out. I was taken in an ambulance to a hospital in Irving.

Mr. Liebeler. Did you pass out as soon as you heard the President had been shot?

Mrs. Odio. No; when I started thinking about it. (n.18)

According to Gaetan Fonzi who did an interview with Annie Odio in 1975, her first reaction when she saw Oswald on television was:

. . . "My God, I know this guy and I don't know from where." I kept thinking, 'Where have I seen this guy?'

[Then] my sister Sarita called and told me that Silvia had fainted at work and that she was sending her boyfriend to take me to the hospital. The first thing I remember when I walked into the room was that Silvia started crying and crying. I think I told her, 'You know that guy on TV who shot President Kennedy? I think I know him.' And she said, 'You don't remember where you know him from?' I said, 'No, I cannot recall, but I know I've seen him before.' And then she told me, 'Do you remember those three guys who came to the house?'" That's when, Annie said, she suddenly knew where she had seen Lee Harvey Oswald before.

(n.19)

Fonzi, working at the time for Senator Schweicker's investigation of the assassination (which had come into being as an off-shoot of the Church Committee's Senate investigation of intelligence activities), was "absolutely convinced" that Sylvia and Annie Odio "were telling the truth." One major factor in their favor was that Sylvia Odio had written to her father in prison and "told him of the visit of the three strangers." (n.20)

That letter was lost, but "the Warren Commission obtained a copy of his reply warning her to be careful because he did not know [the three men]. "I also spoke to Amador Odio himself about it," Fonzi writes, and "he told me that he did

receive the letter from Silvia and confirmed his reply."

(n.21)

We can continue with Fonzi's account:

Both Silvia and Annie had discussed it that day in the hospital room and decided not to say anything to anyone about it. "We were so frightened, we were absolutely terrified," Silvia remembered. "We were both very young and yet we had so much responsibility, with so many brothers and sisters and our mother and father in prison, we were so afraid and not knowing what was happening. We made a vow to each other not to tell anyone." But Lucille Connell. . .told a trusted friend and soon the FBI was knocking on Silvia Odio's door. She said it was the last thing in the world she wanted but when they came she felt she had a responsibility to tell the truth.

(n.22)

Gaeton Fonzi's interviews for the Schweicker Committee and later the HSCA took place from 1975 to 1979, but back in 1964, the FBI, working full time for the Warren Commission, found a way to discredit Odio's testimony. The timing was so useful to their purposes that it hard not to believe that J.

double negative →

Edgar Hoover's skills were not adding a few grace notes to the project.

Let Posner introduce the matter:

. . . The FBI thought it had solved the Odio mystery when it found three men who might have visited her apartment near the end of September. Loran Hall, a prominent anti-Castroite, bore a marked resemblance to the man Odio described as the leader, Leopoldo. Hall told the FBI on September 16, 1964, that he was in Dallas soliciting funds during September 1963 and had been to the Odio apartment. He named his two companions as Lawrence Howard and William Seymour. (n.23)

Let us now receive the rest of the account from Fonzi:

. . . Hall claimed he had been. . . trying to raise anti-Castro funds with his two companions, one of whom might have looked like Oswald. The Warren Commission grasped at that straw and detailed that interview in its

final report, giving the impression that Hall and his companions were Odio's visitors. . . .

The Warren Commission did not mention that Loran Eugene Hall was one of the anti-Castro guerrillas arrested at the No Name Key raid at the time of the Kennedy's Cuban-exile crackdown; or that he was part of the International Anti-Communist Brigade whose members, led by Frank Sturgis and Gerry Patrick Hemming, were notorious for disseminating misinformation. Neither did the Warren Commission note in its final report--even though it knew--that the subsequent FBI interviews revealed that Hall's two companions denied being in Dallas; that neither looked at all like Oswald; that Silvia Odio, shown their photographs, did not recognize them; and that Loran Eugene Hall, when questioned again by the FBI, admitted he had fabricated the story. (Still later, when questioned by the Assassinations Committee, Hall denied he had ever told the FBI he had been to Odio's apartment.) (n.24)

The timing, however, had been immaculate. Loran Hall had had his visit with the FBI on September 16, 1964, and the Warren Report came out eight days later on September 24. Apprised of Hall's contributions, they rushed to get the interview into the Final Report, and it gave them their definitive conclusion: "Lee Harvey Oswald was not at Mrs. Odio's apartment in September of 1963." (n.25)

If metaphorically, the Warren Commission had now stopped the presses once, they were not about to stop them again when, four days later, on September 20, Hall recanted his story, and the rest of the tale fell apart. Nor, as Fonzi pointed out, did the Warren Commission call attention to their error. "If the Commission could leave such business unfinished," wrote Sylvia Meagher in Accessories After the Fact, "we are entitled to ask whether its members were ever determined to uncover the truth." (n.26) No, we can reply, they were not.

There is a maneuver in rock climbing that only the best can employ. It consists of climbing very quickly up several grips in a row. No one of them will support your hands or your feet for more than a moment, but in that interval you can gain a crucial foot, and reach the next half-grip, and then the next, until your momentum has carried you up to a place where you can stop and rest. Let us give credit to a master. J. Edgar Hoover had the mind of such a rock climber.

On to Mexico. We may never learn how much or how little Lee Harvey Oswald was doing on September 25, but there is new material available on what happened to him in Mexico and it comes from a book written by a KGB man.

Chapter 36--Mexico

Oswald was now ready to apply for his Cuban visa. He had established in a few short months an impressive record for himself as one of the leading supporters of Castro in the southeastern part of the country. He had appeared on four radio and television programs on behalf of Cuba--and that could be verified. He had been arrested and jailed for his activities--and had a record to prove it. He had formed the only Fair Play for Cuba Committee in Louisiana--and that was documented in letters he had from V.T. Lee and the Communist Party officials to whom he had given honorary memberships. He had spent his own money on propaganda material--and had a file of receipts. (n.1)

The bus on which Oswald was travelling from Laredo to Mexico City arrived, we can remind the reader, at 10:00 A.M. on Friday, September 27, 1963, and Oswald, carrying his duffle bag and a small hand bag with all his valuable papers, looked into the rates at a number of hotels before settling on the Hotel del Comercio, which cost, room with bath, \$1.28 a day.

Then he went over to the Cuban Embassy. There is some doubt whether he went first to the Cuban Embassy or the

Russian, but since the eventual result would not have been altered, given the guidelines at both places, and since the internal evidence suggests the Cuban Embassy came first, let us make that assumption.

Silvia Duran, the secretary of the Cuban consul, spoke English, and she listened to Oswald talk for a full fifteen minutes. Posner gives a good description based on the testimony of Eusebio Azcue before the HSCA:

. . . he proceeded to tell her he was going to the USSR but that on the way he wanted a transit visa to stop in Cuba, for at least two weeks. He then began placing documents on her desk, each accompanied with a short explanation. . . . He told her he expected to be promptly issued a visa since he "was a friend of the Cuban revolution," and that he wanted to leave by September 30, only three days later. His Russian-born wife was waiting to hear from him in New York, he claimed. Duran, an admitted Marxist, took a liking to Oswald. While his way of making a visa request was unusual, he seemed sincere. Procedurally, Oswald should have begun filling out a lengthy application, but instead Duran called on Eusebio Azcue [the consul] to see if he might expedite the process for the young American.

Azcue recalled: . . .I answered negatively. . . .I at that time tell him. . .I must request authorization from

the Cuban government. And at that point he agrees to proceed to fill the application out in order to process the visa. . . . Duran helped him fill out the application, and told him he needed to return with passport-size photographs [from] a nearby shop recommended by Duran.

When he returned to the Cuba consulate, Duran helped him complete the remainder of the application and stapled photographs to the original and five carbon copies. At that point, she informed him the fastest way to get a visa to visit Cuba would be to obtain Soviet permission first to visit the USSR. (n.2)

Oswald was openly upset at the hurdles now looming before him and began to protest. As a friend of Cuba, he told that that he ought to be able to obtain a visa immediately. Azcue replied that he could be given a fifteen-day permission for visiting Cuba, but first he needed a Soviet visa. Or he could go through the normal procedure. That would take several weeks here in Mexico. Oswald informed him that he did not have several weeks. Their dispute grew so loud that another official, Alfredo Mirabel Diaz, came out of his office to witness it.

Oswald took off for the Soviet Embassy which was no more than a couple of blocks away. For years, his visits to those two embassies have been a source of confusion or obfuscation

since the CIA had a camera in a building across from the entry gate to the Soviet compound yet their files produced no picture of Oswald entering or leaving. Arguments raged for decades that an Oswald impostor was the man in Mexico City. The unadmitted likelihood is that surveillance photos of Oswald entering the Russian Embassy were lifted from the Agency file and this was to be expected if we assume that he did attract special attention after the Walker affair.

In any event, we can now be all but certain that it was Oswald who did visit the Russian Embassy, and spoke there to three KGB agents who were doubling as consular officials. One of them, Oleg Nechiporenko, has written a book, Passport to Assassination, which tells of the two meetings in considerable detail.

Oswald arrived at the Soviet Embassy gate at 12:30 that afternoon, and after passing the sentry, he waited in the reception area until one of the consulate employees, Valery Vladimirovitch Kostikov, came out, listened to his request for a visa, glanced at his papers, and heard him say "that he was under constant surveillance by the FBI and. . .wanted to return to the USSR." (n.3)

Kostikov had a meeting to take care of, and this man was full of novel facets. He was obviously going to take some time. So, Kostikov called his colleague, Oleg Maximovitch

Nechiporenko, to the phone.

"Listen, some gringo is here," Kostikov said. . .
"He's asking for a visa to the Soviet Union. Supposedly he already lived there, married one of our girls. They live in the States, but the FBI is harassing them. Come over here and get to the bottom of this. It seems to be more in your line of work. I'm in a hurry." (n.4)

Nechiporenko then adds:

. . . whenever we had any dealings with a foreign visitor, and especially with an American that involved a consular matter, we would view the individual through that specific lens of our intelligence interests and decide how to proceed in our further relations with him. As a rule, we would help each other out and "transfer" our visitor to the one among us who might have the most interest in him.

On the way over to the embassy, my wife, who was taking our children for a walk in the garden, joined me, figuring that I was heading home on my lunch break.

"Wait for me at the entrance," I told her. "We have

a visitor, and I might be delayed."

As I approached the small building that housed the consular division, I saw a stranger, apparently twenty-five to twenty-seven years old standing on the steps and leaning against the doorpost. He appeared to be European or American. He was of medium height, with a longish face, a narrow chin, and a high forehead that clearly tended toward baldness. . . .

The first impression I had of this stranger was his aloofness. He seemed to be looking beyond me, absorbed in his thoughts, and did not even react as I approached him. He was clad in a light jacket, a sport shirt with an unbuttoned collar, and either gray or brown slacks that were wrinkled. I greeted the stranger with a nod. He responded in kind. (n.5)

Kostikov, who shared an office with Nechiporenko, made the introductions and left. Oswald and Oleg were now in the same room:

The visitor, who appeared to be in a state of physical and mental exhaustion, accepted my offer to sit down. But suddenly he became more focused as he explained to me the reason for his visit. He repeated everything he had already told Valery. Over the course of our

conversation, the visitor's mood changed from discomfort to a state of great agitation, creating the impression of a high-strung, neurotic individual. (n.6)

Once again, Oswald took out his papers, complained about the FBI, and spoke of coming to Mexico so that he could obtain visas to both countries--Cuba to visit, and then a permanent return to the USSR.

Nechiporenko was not impressed:

I silently cursed Valery for "transferring" him to me and decided it was time to bring this meeting to a close. I had more important items in my agenda. I explained to Oswald that, in accordance with our rules, all matters dealing with travel to the USSR were handled by our embassies or consulates in the country in which a person lived. As far as his case was concerned, we could make an exception and give him the necessary papers to fill out, which we would then send on to Moscow, but the answer would still be sent to his permanent residence, and it would take, at the very least, four months.

Oswald listened intently to my explanation, but it was clear from his gestures and the expression on his face that he was disappointed and growing increasingly annoyed.

When I had finished speaking, he slowly leaned forward and, barely able to restrain himself, practically shouted in my face, "This won't do for me! This is not my case! For me, it's all going to end in tragedy!"

I shrugged my shoulders and stood up, signaling the end of our meeting. Oswald's hands shook as he put the documents back into his jacket. I led Oswald through the reception area and showed him the way out of the compound. He departed, obviously dissatisfied with the results of our talk. He appeared to be extremely agitated. This was how Oswald's first visit to our embassy in Mexico ended.

(n.7)

Later that day, as Nechiporenko drove along a "specially chosen route" to make certain no one was following him while he was en route to his contact, he began to think about the American who had come by that morning.

What guided us most of all--and I do not think I am mistaken in assuming it was the same for all intelligence services--in working with foreigners was the principle of "fifty-fifty." This meant that the probability of obtaining a source of good, possibly even valuable, information was equal to the probability that the source

was a "plant," that is, a trap set by the enemy with unpredictable consequences.

As I thought about that day's visitor and weighed the criteria of one "fifty" against another, I came to the conclusion that he fit neither category, meaning that he did not have any interest for us, and certainly not for my own subdivision of counterintelligence, which included the United States, Canada, and Latin America. It was perfectly clear that our internal counterintelligence back home had already studied him. Now that he was under FBI surveillance, let him be their headache, I thought.

(n.8)

In the evening, relaxing with Kostikov at a Mexican cantina, Kostikov told him of a call from Silvia Duran at the Cuban consulate. Oswald had gone back to see them and told the Cubans that the Soviets had promised him a visa, so she was checking. He had corrected her impression on that, and for a little while, over mugs of beer, they discussed Oswald. They were young and in fine shape physically, and so they debated whether he was schizoid or merely neurotic.

It is probably fair to say that the physical appearance of Kostikov and Nechiporenko was Mexican. They had been serving in Mexico City long enough to have grown mustaches, and Nechiporenko and Kostikov were dark. Perhaps they had

cultivated such an appearance. It is rarely a mistake for an intelligence officer to look like a native, and to some degree they may have even begun to think like Mexicans. To anticipate, that may have its bearing on an extraordinary consular episode that will take place on the following morning, Saturday, when Oswald comes back to the Soviet Embassy.

Yatskov, Kostikov, and Nechiporenko were stars of the Soviet diplomats' volleyball team and a "serious match" was scheduled on Saturday morning against a team composed of military attaches in combination with the Soviet trade mission. "Essentially it was a matter between two rezidenturas; ours--the KGB--and GRU, military intelligence, since both teams were comprised almost entirely of officers from both services." (n.9)

It is one of the ironies surrounding his trip to Mexico that on this most important day in his life when Oswald is attempting to convince these Soviet officials that he should be given a visa, their minds are distracted. They are wondering how late they will be for the game. Soon, they will have to tell the others to play without them.

Yatskov, who was first to arrive at his office that Saturday morning, was relieved when Kostikov joined him inasmuch as the stranger who had come in for an interview was speaking in English which Yatskov barely understood. Kostikov

would later describe the scene to Nechiporenko. It is worth following at some length:

"I flung open the door to the first office, and there I saw Pavel sitting at his desk, and at the attached desk to his right, his back to the window, was the American who visited us the previous day. He was disheveled, rumped, and unshaven. He had the look of someone who was hounded and he was much more anxious than the day before. I greeted him, and he nodded in response. Pavel also seemed tense. He turned to me and said, 'Listen, help me out. I don't fully understand what it is he wants.' . . . I explained to Pavel that the visitor had been here the previous day. I had spoken with him. He requested a visa for an immediate trip to the Soviet Union. . . . U.S. authorities were victimizing him. . .

"At this point, Oswald, on his own initiative. . . reported that he had. . . traveled to the Soviet Union as a tourist, remained for political reasons, and had lived in Belorussia, where he married a Russian and returned to the United States. He even dropped some hints that he had supposedly carried out a secret mission. He announced that he was a Communist and a member of an organization that defended Cuba. Pavel interrupted this monologue and said, since he had been in the Soviet Union, lived and worked there, that he could probably explain himself in Russian and looked at him disapprovingly. Without answering, he switched over to broken Russian, in which

the rest of the conversation was conducted. . .

"While telling his story, Oswald again, as he had the day before, tried to support it by showing various documents [and] repeated his desire to quickly obtain a visa to the USSR . . . He said he was motivated by the fact that it was very difficult for him to live in the United States, that he was constantly under surveillance, even persecuted, and that his personal life was being invaded and his wife and neighbors interrogated. He lost his job because the FBI had been around his place of employment asking questions. In recounting all this, he continually expressed concern for his life.

"In his words, he dreamed of returning to his former job in the Soviet Union and living quietly there with his family. He spoke with noticeable warmth about his wife and child.

"Throughout his story, Oswald was extremely agitated and clearly nervous, especially whenever he mentioned the FBI, but he suddenly became hysterical, began to sob, and through his tears cried, 'I am afraid. . .they'll kill me. Let me in!' Repeating over and over that he was being persecuted and that he was being followed even here in Mexico, he stuck his right hand into the left pocket of his jacket and pulled out a revolver saying, 'See? This is what I must now carry to protect my life,' and placed the revolver on the desk where we were sitting opposite one another.

"I was dumbfounded, and looked at Pavel, who had turned slightly pale but then quickly said to me, 'Here, give me that piece.' I took the revolver from the table and handed it to Pavel. Oswald, sobbing, wiped away the tears. He did not respond to my movements. Pavel, who

had grabbed the revolver, opened the chamber, shook the bullets into his hand, and put them in a desk drawer. He then handed the revolver to me, and I put it back on the desk. Oswald continued to sob, then pulled himself together and seemed indifferent to what we had done with his weapon. Pavel poured Oswald a glass of water and handed it to him. Oswald took a sip and placed the glass in front of him. (n.10)

At this point of high drama, Oleg Nechiporenko, suited up in shorts for volleyball, came into the room to gather up the others. They were already late for the game.

But now, of course, there was no question of a game. Not with the revolver on the table. Yatskov, recalling the moment, would later tell Nechiporenko:

"When I unloaded the revolver, it had a short barrel, but it was of impressive size, with a wooden handle. I think it was a Smith and Wesson, though I don't recall now if the chamber had five or six bullets. Oswald began to droop. Most likely the peak of his tension had passed, but his eyes were wet with tears and his hands shook. I poured him a glass of water and offered it to him. Oswald, without thanking me, took a few swallows and

placed it down in front of him. I began to console him, saying that it might seem terrible to him, since the reasons for his being victimized were not immediately evident. Valery repeated a few of my sentences in English. Regarding his visa to the Soviet Union, we explained our rules once again, but in view of his condition, I offered him the necessary forms to be filled out. If he thought this was acceptable, we would send them on to Moscow, but it was absolutely out of the question that we would issue a visa to him at that very moment.

"In response to his persistent requests that we recommend that the Cubans give him a visa, as an alternative to obtaining our visa, we told him that Cuba was a sovereign nation and decided visa questions for itself. Oswald had explained his desire to travel to Cuba earlier in the conversation saying he wanted to help the Cubans 'build a new life.' . . .

"Oswald gradually calmed down, evidently after having understood and reconciled himself to the fact that he was not about to get a quick visa. He did not take the forms we offered him. His state of extreme agitation had now been replaced by depression. He looked disappointed and extremely frustrated. Valery and I exchanged glances and let it be known that the subject of this conversation had been exhausted and that it was time to break it up. I rose from the table. Oswald got up from his chair, and simultaneously grabbed the revolver and stuck it somewhere under his jacket, either in a pocket or in his belt. Turning to Valery, he once again said something about being followed. I bent down to get the bullets from the desk drawer. I then handed them to Oswald, who dropped

them into a pocket of his jacket. We said good-bye with a nod of our heads. Valery also stood, calmly opened the door leading into the reception area, and after letting him go first, followed right behind him." (n.11)

Here, Oleg picks up his own account:

"I opened the door a bit wider and observed that [Yatskov], who was standing, took something out of the drawer. Oswald had also stood up. Valery was standing off to the right. At that moment I distinctly heard Oswald say that he was afraid to return to the United States--where he would be killed. 'But if they don't leave me alone, I'm going to defend myself.' Valery confirms these were Oswald's words.

"It was said without mentioning anyone in particular. At the time this phrase meant nothing to us. What happened to him in his own country was his problem. We recalled these words only on that fateful November twenty-second. When I led Oswald out of the reception area into the courtyard and showed him the way to the gate, he pulled his head down, and raised the collar of his jacket to conceal his face and thus attempt to avoid being clearly photographed." (n.12)

Recently, when Nechiporenko was asked how it was possible that a responsible KGB man like Yatskov would give back not only a gun but its bullets to someone as disturbed in appearance as Oswald, Nechiporenko shrugged. It had happened, he said. He could not speak for why. Yatskov had done it, but it did not seem exceptional at the time.

"If this same episode had taken place in London, would any of you have returned the bullets?"

"Never," said Nechiporenko.

That gave some purchase on believing the story. They had all been in Mexico long enough to feel that it was wrong to deprive a man of his gun. A man who had his pistol taken away from him was emasculated, and in Mexico no act and no crime could be considered worse than to emasculate a man.

"All right," one said, "one can conceive of giving back the gun. But the bullets! What if Oswald had reloaded his gun on the way out and shot the Soviet sentry at the gate? Or the first person he encountered on the street? And then he said, 'The Russians gave me the bullets.'?"

Nechiporenko shook his head. It had all happened the way it happened, he indicated, and perhaps you had to be there to believe it. They just had not been afraid that this man

Oswald would go out in the street and cause trouble with his gun.

They would never admit it, but perhaps they did think that he might need a weapon to defend himself against the FBI. After all, how many FBI men in the same situation would not believe that a Russian defector would need his bullets returned in order to defend himself against the KGB?

Or, if we are to speculate on Yatskov's motive, why not contemplate the opposite possibility: He did not wish to create a situation where Oswald could go to the American Embassy in Mexico City and claim the Soviets were holding some of his property. Fifty-fifty. The fellow might be a skilled provocateur.

In any event, the KGB lost the volleyball game that day to the GRU. Yatskov, Kostikov, and Nechoporenko were all too busy filing a coded cable to Moscow Center which described the meeting with Oswald. "For us," wrote Nechiporenko, "this telegram subsequently became a 'life preserver' which we had thrown to ourselves. After November 22, all three of us... could have become the same kind of patsies that many still consider Oswald to be in this drama. . . . [But on that Saturday in September] we felt a sense of guilt at the defeat of our volleyball team." (n.13)

On that wholly frustrating Saturday morning, Oswald went from the Soviet compound down the street to the Cubans and ran into another quarrel with the consul:

"We never had any individual that was so insistent or persistent," recalled Azcue. "He always had a face which reflected unhappiness. He was never friendly. . . he was not pleasant." Oswald again demanded that he be issued a visa because of his political credentials, but the consul repeated it was impossible without a Russian visa. Both Azcue and Oswald knew by this time that the Russians were not going to issue him a visa, so Azcue's reasoning was merely a polite way of rejecting him. "He [Oswald] became highly agitated and angry," said Duran. "I hear him make statements that are directed against us," recalled Azcue, "and he accuses us of being bureaucrats, and in a very discourteous manner. At that point, I also become upset, and I tell him to leave the consulate, maybe somewhat violently or emotionally." He told Oswald "that a person like him, instead of aiding the Cuban revolution, was doing it harm." Azcue moved toward Oswald, prepared to force him physically out of the embassy. "Then he leaves the consulate," recalled Azcue, "and he seems to be

mumbling to himself, and slams the door, also in a very discourteous mood. That was the last time we saw him around." (n.14)

It is painful to think of him walking down the street with his documents in his ditty bag. There is such an inner journey from the initiative he had generated in order to earn such documents and the bleak fact that the Russian and Cuban officials refused to be stirred into action by his deeds.

On Sunday, he went to a bullfight and on Monday he called Nechiporenko one more time. Had there been any affirmative word from Moscow on his application for a visa? None, replied Nechiporenko.

Oswald went to the bus terminal and bought a ticket home. If once in 1959 and again in 1962, he had made his way through the giant bureaucracies of the Soviet Union and the United States, he could no longer maintain that achievement as an emblem for his ego.

On Wednesday, he departed from Mexico City at 8:30 in the morning. In something like thirty hours, he was back in

Dallas. He did not call Marina at Ruth Paine's house in Irving, but instead took a room at the Y and, presumably, he slept alone with the ash-heap of his dreams.

Chapter 37--The Road to Domesticity

On the bus returning from Mexico, there is a revealing moment. As they cross the border into Laredo, Texas, he is eating a banana, and having read the injunctions not to bring food into the U.S., he is gobbling it down as they come into the Customs shed. Or, so the official remembers it. That's all right, he is told, take your time, you can finish your banana (even though you are now in the United States.) (n.1)

It is a small episode but it speaks of changes in him after the ravages of Mexico. He is going to be law-abiding for a time. If the conflict in his life has been fame and family, the trip south has turned the balance. He left in the belief that he might never see Marina again but on his return, he is prepared to be loving.

First, however, having arrived in Dallas in mid-day, he spends the afternoon at the Texas Employment Commission where he files his claim for the last of his series of unemployment compensation checks, and registers for work. Then he puts up at the Y that night and in the morning applies for a job as a typesetter. It is equal to Buster Keaton becoming a banker. Dyslexic Oswald will set type! Or, does he see it as a major

effort to domicile his misspellings at last?

He certainly does well on the interview: "Oswald was well-dressed and neat. He made a favorable impression on the foreman of the department to whom I introduced Oswald. Since Oswald had worked in a trade plant, I was interested in him as a possible employee. . . ." (n.2)

Unfortunately, Lee had listed Jagger-Chiles-Stovall as a place of previous employment, and so, on the back of his application, Theodore F. Gangl, the Plant Superintendent who interviewed him, added: "Bob Stovall does not recommend this man. He was released because of his record as a troublemaker--Has communistic tendencies." (n.3)

Feeling confident that he would get the job, Oswald called Marina and hitch-hiked up to Irving where she was staying with Ruth.

. . . He followed her like a puppydog around the house, kissed her again and again, and kept saying, "I've missed you so."

Lee spent the weekend at the Paines'. Ruth left them alone as much as she could, and even tried to keep June out of their way. Carefree as children, they sat on swings in the back yard. . .

All weekend he showed the greatest solicitude toward her, trying to get her to eat more, especially bananas and apples, to drink juices and milk, things that would strengthen her before the baby came. But Marina saw that he was distracted--worried about finding a job. As Ruth drove him to the bus station at noon on Monday, Lee asked if Marina could stay until he found work. Ruth answered that Marina was welcome to stay as long as she liked.

(n.4)

Back in Dallas, he rented a room from a lady named Mary Bledsoe, and it is worth looking at a page of her testimony if for no better reason than that she is so classic a landlady that one can almost visualize the pucker of her not-so-generous lips.

Mr. Ball. Did you talk to him about the use of the refrigerator?

Mrs. Bledsoe. Well, he said he was going to put something in there, and I said--I didn't have anything to say, and I hemmed-and-hawed, I said, "Well, no; I don't have a very big refrigerator."

Well, he said, "I won't use it after this time." He was very, very congenial.

Mr. Ball. Did he go down to the grocery store?

Mrs. Bledsoe. He bought some peanut butter and some sardines, and some bananas and put it all in his room, except the milk, and he ate there, ate in his room. I didn't like that either. . . . Then he talked to somebody on the phone and he talked in a foreign language. . . . I was in my room, and the telephone is over there [indicating], and I didn't like that, and I told my girlfriend, I said, "I don't like anybody talking in a foreign language." (n.5)

Oswald is a prodigious snob, but given some of the people he meets, who would not be?

He was paying seven dollars a week, and on Friday, ready to go back to Irving again, he spoke to Mrs. Bledsoe about a few housekeeping details:

Mrs. Bledsoe. . . . he said, "And I want my room cleaned and clean sheets put on the bed."

And I said, "Well, I will after you move because you are going to move."

He said, "Why?"

I says, "Because I am not going to rent to you any more." He said, "Give me back my money." Now, \$2.

I said, "Well, I don't have it."

So, he left Saturday morning. (n.6)

Without the two dollars. It was just after his first week back. On his return to Irving, having lost a room and a job he thought he had, Oswald could have come to the conclusion that the FBI was alerting people to his presence. At the next rooming house he found, Oswald gave his name, therefore, as O.H. Lee. It was this alias that may have determined the end of the drama that was his life.

It could be said that his relations with the new landlady were marginally better:

Mr. Ball. Did you ever talk to him about anything?

Mrs. Roberts. No; because he wouldn't talk.

Mr. Ball. Did he say hello?

Mrs. Roberts. No.

Mr. Ball. Or goodbye?

Mrs. Roberts. No.

Mr. Ball. Or anything?

Mrs. Roberts. He wouldn't say nothing.

Mr. Ball. Did you ever speak to him?

Mrs. Roberts. Well, yes--I would say, "Good afternoon," and he would maybe just look at me--give me a dirty look and keep walking and go on to his room. (n.7)

He will see a great deal of Ruth Paine and her estranged husband Michael on weekends over the next forty days. Ruth, as indicated earlier, is an apostle of reason and decency, as archetypical a liberal as Mrs. Bledsoe is a landlady.

While she has no great comprehension of Lee, it may not be fair to ask her to divine the secret thoughts of a young man who draws sustenance from authoritarians and anarchists in equal measure.

Ruth Paine became, nonetheless, one of the favorites of the Warren Commission inasmuch as the FBI started with great

distrust of her--was she a KGB agent hooked into Marina? Moreover, her husband, Michael, happened to be the son of Lyman Paine, an American radical who had gone to Norway in the thirties to visit Trotsky in exile.

On questioning, the FBI and then the Warren Commission discovered that Ruth had written numerous letters about Marina and Lee to her mother (all seized by the police when they came to the house in Irving on November 22), and so in the course of having her letters read into her testimony, in addition to her outsize gifts at fine-tuning her shifting reactions to Lee and Marina--a not illiberal activity--she ends up with the greatest number of pages of testimony, more than De Mohrenschildt, or Marina, or Marguerite, or Robert Oswald or Captain Fritz of the Dallas police, a feat marred only by the fact that we don't really learn a great deal more than we knew before. It is no great surprise to us that Oswald is, already by half, a most domesticated husband:

Mrs. Paine. I disliked him actively in the spring when I thought he just wanted to get rid of his wife and wasn't caring about her. . . I then found him much nicer, I thought, when I saw him next in New Orleans in late September, and this would be a perfectly good time to

admit the rest of the pertinent part of this letter to my mother written October 14, because it shows something that I think should be part of the public record, and I am one of the few people who can give it, that presents Lee Oswald as a human person, a person really rather ordinary, not an ogre that was out to leave his wife and be harsh and hostile to all that he knew.

But in this brief period during the times he came out on weekends, I saw him as a person who cared for his wife and child, tried to make himself helpful in my home, tried to make himself welcome although he really preferred to stay to himself.

He wasn't much to take up a conversation. This [letter] says, "Dear Mom--He arrived a week and a half ago and has been looking for work since. It is a very depressing business for him, I am sure. He spent last weekend and the one before with us here and was a happy addition to our expanded family. He played with Chris"--my 3-year-old, then 2--"watched football on the TV, planed down the doors that wouldn't fit. . .And generally added a needed masculine flavor. From a poor first impression I have come to like him." . . . (n.8)

The next excerpt may give a glimpse of Michael Paine who was not without concern for the shadings of moral nicety:

Mr. Liebeler. When did you have this discussion with your wife concerning whether or not you should let Marina live with you? Was that before they came back from New Orleans?

Mr. Paine. Yes, it was.

Mr. Liebeler. And you concluded at the time there was no reason why Marina should not come here; is that right?

Mr. Paine. That is right. Of course, Ruth went in and sounded them out rather cautiously and reported to me also [Oswald's] facial expressions and what-not when she was suggesting this, and he seemed to be glad of that rather than worried.

Mr. Liebeler. Now, after Marina came and lived at your house, Oswald was there during parts of the months October and November. . . . was [your opinion] reinforced on the basis of his activities and your observation of him during that period?

Mr. Paine. It was reinforced.

Mr. Liebeler. You did not think him to be a violent person or one who would be likely to commit an act such as assassinating the President?

Mr. Paine. I didn't--I saw he was a bitter person, [with] quite a lot of negative views of people in the world around him, very little charity in his view toward anybody, but I thought he was harmless.

Representative Ford. Was this a different reaction from the one you had had at your first meeting or first acquaintance?

Mr. Paine. When we first became acquainted I was somewhat shocked, especially that he would speak so harshly to his wife in front of a complete stranger, and it was at that point. . . that I was persuaded I would like to free Marina from her bondage and servitude to this man [so] I became interested in helping her escape from him. Of course, I was not going to try to force that. I didn't want to be separating a family that could get along.

Mr. Liebeler. This bitterness you detected following his return from Mexico, was that a new reaction?

Mr. Paine. No. That bitterness had existed all along [but] when Marina came to our house, she gained in health and weight. She started to look better and it looked to me as if the strain was off the family relationship. They were not quarreling. They bickered and cooed. She sat on his lap and he said sweet things in her ear. (n.9)

Back in Dallas after the weekend in Irving, Lee would

call every night, and each night he had the same sad story to recount: no job yet.

Later, many conspiratorialists would find his employment at the Texas School Book Depository to be suspicious in the extreme, but on the face of it, he got the job through one of Ruth Paine's neighbors who remarked that "her brother worked in the School Book Depository and there was apparently an opening there." (n.10) That Ruth would be instrumental in getting him hired was one of the elements in the FBI's early suspicion of her.

Mr. Truly. I received a phone call from a lady in Irving who said her name was Mrs. Paine.

Mr. Belin. All right.

What did Mrs. Paine say and what did you say?

Mr. Truly. She said, "Mr. Truly"--words to this effect, you understand--"Mr. Truly, you don't know who I am but I have a neighbor whose brother works for you [and] he tells his sister that you are very busy. And I am just wondering if you can use another man. . . .I have a fine young man living here with his wife and baby, and his wife is expecting a baby--another baby--in a few days and he needs work desperately."

Now, this is . . . as near as I can remember the conversation over the telephone.

And I told Mrs. Paine that--to send him down, and I would talk to him--that I didn't have anything in mind for him of a permanent nature, but if he was suited we could possibly use him for a brief time. . .

So he came in, introduced himself to me, and I took him in my office and interviewed him. He seemed to be quiet and well mannered.

I gave him an application to fill out, which he did.

Mr. Belin. Did he fill it out in front of you, or not?

Mr. Truly. Yes, he did. And he told me--I asked him about experience that he had had, or where he had worked, and he said he had just served his term in the Marine Corps and had an honorable discharge. . . (n.11)

It is worth noting that Oswald, given his antennae, senses that it is counter-productive to give Jagers-Chiles-Stovall as a reference.

Mr. Truly. . . . I asked him if he had ever had any trouble with the police, and he said no. So thinking that he was just out of the Marines, I didn't check any further

back. I didn't have anything of a permanent nature in mind for him. He looked like a nice young fellow to me-- he was quiet and well mannered. He used the word "sir," you know--which a lot of them don't do at this time.

So I told him if he would come in to work on the morning of the 16th, it was the beginning of a new pay period. . . .

Mr. Belin. Well, could you describe how his work progressed as he was working for you?

Mr. Truly. . . . I would say for the nature of the work and the time he was there, the work that he did was a bit above average. . . . He just kept moving. And he did a good day's work.

Mr. Belin. What was his pay?

Mr. Truly. \$1.25 an hour. . . .he worked by himself. His job was something that he needed no help with, other than to ask occasionally for stock. It wasn't a teamwork job at all.

Consequently, he didn't have much occasion to talk with the other boys.

I thought it was a pretty good trait at the time, because occasionally you have to spread your boys out and say, "Quit talking so much, let's get to work."

And it seemed to me like he paid attention to his job.

(n.12)

That Friday, the 18th of October, was his twenty-fourth birthday, and they celebrated in Irving. He had a new job three days old, Marina's pregnancy was close to term, and there was a surprise birthday party with decorations on the table. As Marina told Priscilla Johnson McMillan, Lee "could not hold back the tears." (n.13) It is a touching moment until we realize it is one more thundering contradiction between the two halves of his nature--the stoic and the man who has wept for us at least twenty-four times already. Soon enough, after the birth of the baby, we will see how tender he can be, but then he is thoughtful of Marina's condition before the birth--he massages her ankles and props her back with pillows. Yet, he is still Marguerite's son, a perfectionist:

He brought his dirty laundry to the house each weekend for Marina to wash and iron, and he often refused to wear a shirt she had just ironed on the grounds that she had failed to do it exactly right. No sooner would they sit down at the dinner table than he would snap at Marina: "Why don't you fix me iced tea? You knew I was coming out." Or he would put on a baby face and complain in baby talk that he couldn't eat because Marina had forgotten to give him a fork and a spoon. He never once got up to fetch for himself or help a wife in the final

stages of pregnancy, nor when she had just had a child and was nursing it. (n.14)

Still, he also weeps on his birthday and cradles her head while they watch television that night of October 18. How symbolic to him must be the events of his birthday. He is a Marxist, an iron rationalist who sees belief in any kind of deity as part of the great swindle, and yet there must be a warlock among the board of governors in his unconscious, and that warlock can hardly be indifferent to the two films he watches on the tube.

One is Suddenly, starring Frank Sinatra as nothing less than an unbalanced ex-soldier who takes over a house in a small town at gunpoint. The place is isolated and with a good view of the local railroad station where the President of the United States is due to arrive that day. Sinatra sets up a perch at a window, lines up his possible targets in the cross-hairs of his rifle and waits, but for some reason, the train does not stop, the President does not get off, and Sinatra is balked. The stuff of dreams has just been offered to Oswald. It is such a comfortable feeling looking down on distant targets from a firm base.

The second film was We Were Strangers and its theme was also about political assassination: ". . .a tiny band of cohorts plot to blow up the whole cabinet, including the president, at a single stroke. The plot fails and Garfield dies, but the people rise up in small groups all over Cuba and overthrow the dictatorship." (n.15)

By the end of the weekend, October 20, Marina did go into labor. Lee, however, not able to drive, had to let Ruth take her to Parkland Hospital in Dallas while he stayed back in Irving baby-sitting Ruth's two children and June.

Marina gave birth after no more than two hours of labor, a girl to be named Rachel, and Lee, who had gone to sleep, only found out on Monday morning before he went off to work.

He returned to Irving that afternoon with Wesley Frazier, but for some reason seemed reluctant to visit the hospital. Puzzled, Ruth guessed he was afraid to go lest someone at the hospital find out he had a job and charge him with the expenses of the birth. And so Ruth told him that the hospital already knew he had a job; she had been asked the night before at the admissions office and had told the truth. But it did not make any difference. The delivery and maternity care were still free. After learning that, Lee agreed to go.

Marina never knew of his reluctance. "Oh, mama, you're wonderful," he said, as he sat down on her bed. "Only two hours. You have them so easily." He had tears in his eyes. (n.16)

Marina's version does not conflict with Ruth's:

Monday evening Lee visited me in the hospital. He was very happy at the birth of another daughter and even wept a little. He said that two daughters were better for each other--two sisters. . . . In his happiness he said a lot of silly things and was very tender with me, and I was very happy to see that Lee had improved a little, i.e., that he was thinking more about his family. (n.17)

On the following weekend in Irving, he was the archetype of a loving father:

He held the baby to his shoulder and stroked her

head. "She's the prettiest, strongest baby in the world," he boasted. "Only a week old and already she can hold up her head. We're strong because Mama gives us milk and not a bottle that's either too hot or too cold. Mama gives us only the very best." He studied her fingers, her "tender little mouth," and her yawn. He was delighted with them all and pronounced that his baby was getting prettier every day. "She looks just like her mama," he said.

(n.18)

The full name is Audrey Marina Rachel Oswald.

Fatherhood brings out the conservative in Lee. Marina now tries to enlarge his understanding of Ruth's situation:

When the Paines were married, Marina said, Michael had not wanted children right away and had left home shortly after their second child was born. Ruth still loved Michael deeply. She did not know whether to give up or keep trying.

Up to now, Lee had liked Michael well enough in spite of his being "religious." But now he grew angry at him. Lee thought it was a man's obligation once married to want his wife and want children. He was indignant at Michael for having married without wanting children. And he condemned Michael for coming home, eating supper, and

seeing his children just like a married man, and then leaving. . .

Lee was not ordinarily interested in other people's private affairs. But now he regularly asked Marina, over the telephone and on his arrival for the weekend, how Ruth and Michael were getting along. For the first time, he seemed aware of the Paines as human beings. He even gave signs of awareness that he and his family might be in the way in the modest one-story ranch house, and that Ruth and Michael might need privacy in which to work out their problems. (n.19)

Now a couple of letters from the Soviet Union arrive in Irving. One is from Pavel and the other from Marina's younger sister Galina, nicknamed Galka. Their contents give us the last taste we are going to have of any intimations of happiness for Lee and Marina. It is worth reading them with the thought that one or both letters have already been perused by Soviet and/or American mail-intercept programs:

Minsk

September 19, 1963

Hello, Lee, Marina and June!

I think that this letter will arrive ahead of the new member of the family. I congratulate both of you and especially you, Marina. I, too, wish that this would be a son because if it would be a girl, you would become a whole primary organization within the family and would always be able to "crush" Lee by majority vote. I am joking.

About ten days ago I sent you a letter to New Orleans. In this letter I am sending you small photos. Yesterday, I passed my last examination and now I am a 3rd year student and the school starts on October 1.

Before I could not believe somehow that it is so difficult to find work in your country. I believe they will not deny Lee's request to return to the Soviet Union when he applies to the Embassy, although, they will probably remind him that one should not change continents too often. If you get permission, come to Minsk--first, you both know it; and, second, it is one of the best cities in the Union. Marina, do not worry; everything will be all right. As the saying goes, "the world is not lacking in kind people." Try to encourage Lee. . . .Come, everything will be all right. Write when you will be going and I will meet you.

Pavel (n.20)

September 29, 1963

Leningrad

Hello, dear Marinochka!

. . .today is Sunday and I am taking a little time off in order to write you about everything in detail.

Well, how is my life going on?

I work quietly at the pharmacy and already I am used to everybody. I bought an in-between seasons overcoat--a rather nice one; I get 80 rubles--at time and one half rate. I have not been working long yet, but after I work a year, I will get something better. I might say that I have not been anywhere yet, unless I count dances at the Mramorny (Marble) and at the First Five-Year Plan Club. I met a young man whom I like.

I will let you know what develops later. I met him only twice, so it is too early to judge what he is like. I like life very much in Leningrad. It is very gay here, generally. I would like very much to have a nice young man so as to go around everywhere together. But everything is still in the future; at first, I have to get some clothes. Marina, for some reason, I dream very often about mother; it is even unpleasant, somehow, for, after all, she is dead. And when I wake up, I feel rather frightened. . . .

Marinochka, how nice it would be if you could come here to the Homeland; you could find a job for yourself and your husband would have work and the children could be sent to a public nursery, and everything would be all right. But would they allow you to return again? If you adopted American citizenship, they may not permit it, and generally, it seems to me, that it would be very difficult for you to leave. But, honestly speaking, I would like it

better if you would live here. The unemployment is the most vicious scourge in life. We do not have it here; we do not even know what unemployment is. You know it yourself. There is a crying need for pharmacists in Leningrad. Come, I am always waiting for you. If things get hard--we will help you.

Come, Marina. We will walk together, you and I, and recollect our youth. It was nice then, and even then you, too, could have gotten married and we would have been together in Leningrad. But we were fools.

Marinotchka, my dear, write to me about everything in detail. I, too, am always glad to receive your letters...

Good bye. Kiss June for me and give my best regards to Alek. Hold your head high, Marina. After all, you will soon have another baby. You will need the strength.

I kiss you once more. Yours, always,

Galka (n.21)

Chapter 38--The Shadow of the FBI

On Friday afternoon, while Marina was setting her hair in preparation for Lee's arrival, an FBI man came to Ruth's house in Irving. A dark, strong, pleasant-looking man with a dark mustache, his name was James P. Hosty and, as he would later tell the Warren Commission, he usually had a revolving load of forty cases to cover in Dallas and environs. Lee Harvey Oswald was one of his cases. Back in April, he had located Oswald on Neely Street, but before he could interview him, Oswald had moved. Now--it is not clear how, unless it was by way of the recent letters from the Soviet--he had picked up Oswald's address again, and with the added information that Oswald had been in Mexico City at the Cuban Embassy and the Soviet Embassy. Since the FBI had a source in the Soviet Embassy, they now knew that Oswald had seen Valery Kostikov who was suspected by FBI and CIA to be a functioning officer in the Thirteenth Department of KGB, the department taking care of such activities as sabotage and "wet jobs"--a far cry, we can recognize, from Oleg Nechiporenko's portrayal of Kostikov as a star volleyball player.

Ruth was doing jobs around the house when [Hosty] appeared. . . . She greeted him cordially, asked him in, and the two sat in the living room talking pleasantries. Hosty said that, unlike the House Un-American Activities Committee, the FBI was not a witch-hunting organization.

Gradually, Hosty switched the conversation to Lee. Was he living at Ruth's house? Ruth answered that he was not. Did she know where he was living? Once again the answer was a surprising "No." Ruth did not know where Lee was living, but it was in Dallas somewhere and she thought it might be Oak Cliff. Did Ruth know where he was working. She explained that Lee thought he had been having job trouble because of the FBI. Hosty assured her that it was not the FBI's way to approach an employer directly. At this Ruth softened, told him where Lee was working, and together they looked up the address of the book depository in the telephone book. Lee worked at 411 Elm Street.

(n.1)

At that point, Marina came into the room:

Before Hosty left, Marina begged him not to interfere with Lee at work. She explained that he had had trouble keeping his jobs and thought he lost them "because the FBI is interested in him." . . .

"I don't think he has lost any of his jobs on account of the FBI," Hosty said softly.

Ruth and Marina urged the visitor to stay. If he wanted to see Lee, they said, he would be there at 5:30. But Hosty had to get back to the office; and . . . he asked Ruth to find out where he was living. Ruth thought that would be no problem; she would simply ask Lee. (n.2)

Mrs. Paine. I said to Agent Hosty that if in the future Marina and Lee are living together, and I know, or I have correspondence with them, I would give him his address if he wished it. Then it was the next day or the evening or sometime shortly thereafter Marina said to me while we were doing dishes that she felt their address was their business. . . . This surprised me. She had never spoken in this way to me before, and I didn't see that it made any difference. (n.3)

We can only speculate on the kind of contained wrath Oswald would feel at Ruth Paine's obeisance to authority in

the name of being aboveboard, forthright, and keeping her word.

Lee had been in a fine mood on arrival, but the moment he heard of this visit, it was obvious that he was upset. "He was sad and subdued throughout supper and he scarcely spoke a word all evening long. For the first time since his return from Mexico, there was no sex at all between them that weekend, not even the limited sex that had been possible since Rachel's birth." (n.4)

He went through the motions all weekend, hung up the diapers on the clothesline in the back yard, played with the children under the tree in the same yard, watched football which was his greatest diversion each Saturday and Sunday afternoon, but his mind was on the FBI. He gave Marina specific instructions: The next time they came, "she was to study the car with care, note what color it was, what model, and write down the license number." (n.5) He seemed knowledgeable, and told her that if the car was not in front of Ruth's house, it would still be visible on the street, next door probably, yes, he was in one of those moods she had come to know all too well on Neely Street.

Still, on Sunday, he watched football all afternoon:

Michael was at home and had occasion to step over Lee while he was lying stretched out on the floor. Michael felt a pang of self-reproach. He thought he was being rude, stepping over Lee that way without even trying to make small talk. . . . He did not resent Lee lying on his floor, watching his television, and crowding his house a bit. But he did feel that for a man who professed to be a revolutionary, Lee had an awful lot of time on his hands. . . . To lie around watching television all day, Michael said to himself, "is one hell of a way for a revolutionary to be spending his time."

Late in the afternoon Ruth gave Lee his third driving lesson--backing, parking, and a right-angle turn. She thought Lee really got the feel of parking that day.

(n.6)

Two days later on November 5, a Tuesday, Hosty came again and his second visit with Ruth was even friendlier than the first. She now trusted him implicitly:

Mr. Jenner. . . . Have you now exhausted your recollection on the subject?

Mrs. Paine. I think one other thing. Agent Hosty asked me, and I am not certain which time, but more likely the second, since so far as I can recall, Marina wasn't present, if I thought this was a mental problem, his words referring to Lee Oswald, and I said I didn't understand the mental processes of anyone who could espouse the Marxist philosophy, but that this was far different from saying he was mentally unstable or unable to conduct himself in normal society.

I did tell Lee that this question had been asked. He gave no reply, but more a scoffing laugh, barely voiced.

(n.7)

There is some question whether Marina spoke to Hosty that second time or not. The FBI man has no recollection of that, but Marina insists she did and "remembers this visit as being the longer and more charming of her conversations with Hosty about her 'rights.'" (n.8)

Since Marina, like Lee, was not incapable of going in

opposite directions at once, she had also managed to slip outside, and memorize the color, shape and license plate on Hosty's car, which she proceeded to write on a paper as soon as she got back to her bedroom.

Later she and Ruth discussed whether to tell Lee about the visit. Ruth thought it might be better to wait until the weekend and Marina agreed. Each time he called that week (he called twice a day, during his lunch break and at 5:30 in the afternoon) he started by asking "Has the FBI been there?" Each time Marina said No.

No sooner had he arrived on Friday than Lee went outside where Marina was hanging diapers and asked: "Have they been here again?"

Marina said Yes.

"Why didn't you tell me before?"

"I had a lot on my mind. I forgot. Besides, it wasn't that important to me."

"How on earth could you forget?"

"Well, it upset you last time and I didn't want to upset you again."

"It upsets me worse if you keep it from me. Why must you hide things all the time? I never can count on you."

(n.9)

"I never can count on you!" It is the barbaric yawp of every husband and wife who have half of a good marriage and can't begin to gain a foothold on the wall that leads to the second half.

"He's such a nice man, Lee. Don't be frightened. All he did was explain my rights and promise to protect them."

"You fool," said Lee. . . . "He doesn't care about your rights. He comes because it's his job. You have no idea how to talk to the FBI. As usual, you were probably too polite. You can't afford to let them see your weaknesses. What did he say next?"

Again, Marina told him to ask Ruth. By now she was angry at Lee for ruining her good spirits and by refusing to believe the favorable things she had to say about Hosty. . . .

It is Marina's recollection that Lee then went straight to the kitchen and quizzed Ruth, who was fixing dinner. After that, he found Marina in the bedroom and started pumping her all over again. He treated her as if she were untrustworthy and had no understanding of how important the whole matter was. "You fool," he said again, "you frivolous, simple-minded fool, I trust you didn't give your consent to having him defend your

'rights'?"

"Of course not," said Marina, "but I agreed with him."

"Fool," he said again. "As a result of these 'rights,' they'll ask you ten times as many questions as before. If the Soviet Embassy gets wind of it, and you agreed to let this man protect your 'rights,' then you'll really be in for it . . ."

(n.10)

The only item that ameliorated his mood was that she had taken down the license plate number. He was, however, withdrawn from both women for the rest of the evening, and first thing Saturday morning, he asked to borrow Ruth's typewriter, and with a highly covert posture, covering up a page of handwriting that he was now copying, he worked away on something of obvious importance to him--it was nothing less than a letter to the Soviet Embassy in Washington:

Dear Sirs:

This is to inform you of events since my interview with Comrade Kostine in the Embassy of the Soviet Union, Mexico City, Mexico.

I was unable to remain in Mexico City indefinitely

because of my Mexican visa restrictions which was for 15 days only. I could not take a chance on applying for an extension unless I used my real name so I returned to the U.S.

I and Marina Nicholeyeva are now living in Dallas, Texas.

The FBI is not now interested in my activities in the progressive organization FPCC of which I was secretary in New Orleans, Louisiana, since I no longer live in that state.

The FBI has visited us here in Texas. On Nov. 1st agent of the FBI James P. Hosty warned me that if I attempt to engage in FPCC activities in Texas the FBI will again take an "interest" in me. This agent also "suggested" that my wife could "remain in the U.S. under FBI protection," that is, she could defect from the Soviet Union.

Of course I and my wife strongly protested these tactics by the notorious FBI.

I had not planned to contact the Mexico City Embassy at all so, of course, they were unprepared for me. Had I been able to reach Havana as planned, the Soviet Embassy there would have had time to assist me. But of course the stupid Cuban Consul was at fault here. I am glad he has since been replaced by another. (n.11)

It was a bizarre letter and could serve no purpose with the Soviets in Washington. They would have to be wholly

mistrustful. Oswald was either out of his practical, calculating, manipulative powers of mind--such as they were!--or the letter was written on the assumption that it would be read by the FBI and cause havoc between its formal and covert echelons--a species of COINTELPRO action improvised by Oswald.

If all this sounds as bad as James Bond, let us remind ourselves that it was not Ian Fleming but the FBI that chose the name COINTELPRO .

It is not possible to keep seeing Oswald in a clear light. Some of his actions become comprehensible only in the violet aura of twilight. The question we have to ask once more, as has had to be asked again and again, is whether he was working with, or was in the grasp of a group, official or unofficial, that had led him to believe they were FBI. To say as much, however, is to allow the questions to proliferate: Was Oswald trying to escape from such a group, or, by sending this letter, was he looking to embarrass them? Or, was it simply that he had begun to go mad from the pressure of trying to live a life like other people?

In any case, we cannot dismiss such questions. His extreme reaction to Hosty may reflect the bullying he might have undergone from any group that was giving him a stipend. If he has felt free for a little while of their presence, Hosty's arrival, even if it is in the relatively innocent if

professional line of duty, could kick off Oswald's somewhat justifiable paranoia. He would, after all, not know who was communicating with whom in the FBI. We certainly don't know unless we are willing to take their word for everything.

There is the small possibility of a rational explanation for why he is so upset. It is that in his deal with them, it was promised that there would be no FBI visits. Now the rules of the game have changed.

In any event, two days later, on November 12, during his mid-day break, he went up to the main FBI office on Commerce Street, not far from the book depository, and with "a wild look in his eye," as described by the receptionist (n.12), left a note in an unsealed envelope for Hosty. The FBI man was out to lunch.

Since the note was destroyed some two weeks later, and we have no more than Hosty's recollection of it, which is not certified, to be trustworthy, especially since Hosty was told to destroy the note by the orders of his superior, Gordon Shanklin, we can present Hosty's version as no more than a provisional description: It had two paragraphs, recalled Hosty, and the first told him not to visit or bother his wife, and the second paragraph suggested that if Hosty did not desist, he, Oswald, was ready to take action against the FBI. Whether that action would be legal, by way of the media, or

was a personal threat had not been stated.

According to Hosty, he received such notes without a signature all the time, so he did not even know whether this had come from Oswald or someone else. He just filed it in his workbox. Such indifference does not square very well with Hosty's knowledge that Oswald had been in Mexico City and had visited the Russian Embassy twice.

In the meantime, Ruth has been having her own paranoid fling. On Sunday, November 10, when he was typing his letter to the Russian Embassy, Lee left his handwritten copy on Ruth's desk when he was done; she, inflamed with curiosity she could not quite admit, finally read the first couple of lines and was so agitated by them--"Comrade Kostine" indeed!--that:

Mrs. Paine. I then proceeded to read the whole note, wondering, knowing this to be false, wondering why he was saying it. I was irritated to have him writing a falsehood on my typewriter, I may say, too. I felt I had some cause to look at it.

(n.13)

Her buried sense of property is coming out. This is one of the very few, if not the only remark Ruth Paine makes in hundreds of pages of testimony that suggests there may be other forces at work in the universe besides reason, sweet reason.

Mr. Jenner. Now I would like to ask you a few questions about your reaction to that. You had read that [letter] in the quiet of your living room on Sunday morning, the 10th of November.

Mrs. Paine. That is correct. . . .

Mr. Jenner. . . . Were there things in there that alarmed you?

Mrs. Paine. Yes, I would say so. . . . I read it and decided to make a copy. . . . to give to an FBI agent coming again. . . I was undecided what to do. Meantime I made a copy.

Mr. Jenner. But you did have the instinct to report this to the FBI?

Mrs. Paine. Yes. . . .I am not used to subterfuge in any way, but then I put it back where it had been and it lay the rest of the Sunday on my desk top, and of course, I observed this too.

Mr. Jenner. That is, that Lee didn't put it away, just left it out in the room?

Mrs. Paine. That he didn't put it away or didn't seem to care or notice or didn't recall that he had a rough draft lying around. . . .

Mr. Jenner. Did you ever have any conversation with him about it?

Mrs. Paine. No. I came close to it. I was disturbed about it. I didn't go to sleep right away. He was sitting up watching a late spy story, if you will, on the TV, and I got up and sat there on the sofa with him saying "I can't sleep," wanting to confront him with this and say, "What is this?" But on the other hand, I was somewhat fearful, and I didn't know what to do.

Representative Ford. Fearful in what way?

Mrs. Paine. Well, if he was an agent, I would rather just give it to the FBI, not to say, "Look, I am watching you" by saying "What is this that I find on my desk?"

Mr. Jenner. Were you fearful of any physical harm?

Mrs. Paine. No, I was not. . . .though I don't think I

defined my fears. I sat down and said I couldn't sleep and he said, "I guess you are real upset about going to the lawyer tomorrow."

He knew I had an appointment with my lawyer to discuss the possibility of divorce the next day, and that didn't happen to be what was keeping me up that night, but I was indeed upset about the idea, and it was thoughtful for him to think of it. But I let it rest there, and we watched the story which he was interested in watching. And then I excused myself and went to bed. (n.14)

On the following weekend, Friday the 15th, when Lee called midday to talk about coming out to Irving, Marina suggested that Ruth and Michael might need a little time alone. The sub-text: Marina might also need more time away from him. His intense reaction to Hosty's second visit had left her exhausted, and that hardly was good for her milk. She did not say that much, but then, there was not the need. He agreed readily to her suggestion and said he had things to do over the weekend in Dallas.

No one knows what indeed he did do in Dallas in the period between Monday November 11 and Wednesday November 20. On the 21st, a Thursday, he would go out to Irving early with Wesley Frazier, who also worked at the Book Depository and

lived next door to Ruth in Irving, but the gap of those ten days, marked only by his unsuccessful visit to FBI headquarters on November 12th to see Hosty, remains just that --an unfilled gap.

Gerald Posner made a large point of quoting Earlene Roberts that she never saw him go out at night, but omits her following remark to the Warren Commission: "If he did, it was after I went to bed, and I never knew it." (n.15)

According to the rooming house's owner:

Mrs. Johnson. . . I told him I had other accommodations that are larger and he said, "I find this room to be light and comfortable." It was four windows on the outside wall; it was all light. He said, "I find it to be light and comfortable and worth the money, if you don't mind, I will remain in this room," so he didn't even look at the other rooms. He just remained in that room, what I call my library. (n.16)

It was also on the ground floor. He could slip in and out of any one of those four windows whenever he wished. So, again, there is a space in our knowledge of his activities.

This is not to insist that he did keep late hours but to point out--one can never do it too often--that some of the hard facts cited with authority by Posner are as hard and as longstanding as an eggshell (which, for that matter, does feel firm until you crack it.)

Certainly, by Sunday night, November 17, Marina was feeling uneasy:

. . . when she saw Junie playing with the telephone dial, saying, "Papa, Papa," she decided impulsively, "Let's call Papa."

Marina was helpless with a telephone dial, so it was Ruth who made the call. . . .and a man answered.

"Is Lee Oswald there?" Ruth asked.

"There is no Lee Oswald living here." . . .

The next day, Monday, November 18, Lee called as usual at lunchtime. "We phoned you last evening," Marina said. "Where were you?" . . .

There was a long silence on the other end. "Oh, damn. I don't live there under my real name."

Why not? Marina asked. . . .

"You don't understand a thing," Lee said. "I don't

want the FBI to know where I live." He ordered her not to tell Ruth . . .

Marina was frightened and shocked. "Starting your old foolishness again," she scolded. "All these comedies. First one, then another. And now this fictitious name. Where will it all end?"

Lee had to get back to work. He would call later, he said. (n.17)

Marina had no small rage that he was using a false name. With her intuition, she sensed that he would never give up his larger ideas (which, with considerable justice from her point of view, she saw as poison to their marriage.) His larger ideas were equal to his need to lie--his lies were the hot blood of megalomania.

She refused to forgive him for O.H. Lee. She kept refusing. It ruined their last night together. In principle, she may well have been correct, but as a general in the war of marriage, her timing, as is true of most mates in marriages that work by half, is, at the least, askew.

Then he made the mistake of calling her later that

evening and getting into a fight. He commanded her to take his telephone number out of Ruth Paine's telephone book before the FBI got ahold of it, and Marina told him she could not and would not touch Ruth's property.

"I order you to cross it out," said Lee. His voice was so ugly that she said, "I won't," and hung up on him.

He did not call her on Tuesday and Wednesday. On Thursday, at work, he approached Wesley Frazier:

Mr. Frazier. . . . I was standing there getting the orders in and he said, "Could I ride home with you this afternoon?"

And I said, "Sure. You know, like I told you, you can go home with me any time you want to, like I say, anytime you want to go see your wife that is all right with me." [Then] I come to think it wasn't Friday and I said, "Why are you going home today?"

And he says, "I am going home to get some curtain rods." He said, "You know, put in an apartment."

. . . I said, "Very well." And I never thought more about it. . . . (n.18)

Marina Oswald. Tex.

Mr. Martin. And the assassination was on the 4th.

He has come, at the least, to a serious decision. It is

still preliminary to the final one, but he has now decided to bring his gun back to the School Book Depository on Friday. All week, talk in Dallas has been concerned with President Kennedy's visit. The route has been published in the newspapers. His motorcade will pass by the Texas School Book Depository on Elm Street. Our man who had spent half of his life reading books, and now works in a place that ships out textbooks to the children and youth of America, is preparing to commit an act that ninety-nine per cent of the people who read books devotedly would have been ready to condemn.

Marina Oswald. . . . On Monday he called several times, but after I hung up on him and didn't want to talk to him he did not call again. He then arrived on Thursday.

Mr. Rankin. Did he tell you he was coming Thursday?

Marina Oswald. No. . . .

Mr. Rankin. Thursday was the 21st. Do you recall that?

Marina Oswald. Yes.

Mr. Rankin. And the assassination was on the 22nd.

Marina Oswald. This is very hard to forget.

Mr. Rankin. Did your husband give any reason for coming home on Thursday?

Marina Oswald. He said that he was lonely because he hadn't come the preceding weekend and he wanted to make his peace with me. . . . I would not answer him and he was very upset.

Mr. Rankin. Were you upset with him?

Marina Oswald. I was angry, of course. He was not angry, he was upset. I was angry. He tried very hard to please me. He spent quite a bit of time putting away diapers and playing with the children on the street.

Mr. Rankin. How did you indicate you were angry with him?

Marina Oswald. By not talking to him.

Mr. Rankin. And how did he show he was upset?

Marina Oswald. He was upset over the fact that I would not answer him. He tried to start a conversation with me several times, but I would not answer and he said that he didn't want me to be angry with him because this upsets him.

On that day [Thursday, November 21], he suggested that we rent an apartment in Dallas. He said that he was tired of living alone and that perhaps the reason for my being so angry was the fact that we were not living

together, that if I want to, he would rent an apartment in Dallas tomorrow, that he didn't want me to remain with Ruth any longer, but wanted me to live with him in Dallas. He repeated this not once, but several times, but I refused. And he said that once again I was preferring my friends to him and I didn't need him.

Mr. Rankin. What did you say to that?

Marina Oswald. I said it would be better if I remained with Ruth until the holidays. . . because while he was living alone and I stayed with Ruth, we were spending less money, and I told him to buy me a washing machine, because with two children it became too difficult to wash by hand.

Mr. Rankin. What did he say to that?

Marina Oswald. He said he would buy me a washing machine.

Mr. Rankin. What did you say to that?

Marina Oswald. Thank you, that it would be better if he bought something for himself, that I would manage . . .

Mr. Rankin. Did this seem to make him more upset when you suggested that he wait about getting an apartment for you to live in?

Marina Oswald. Yes. He then stopped talking and sat down and watched television and then went to bed. I went to bed later. It was about 9 o'clock when he went to sleep. I went to sleep at about 11:30, but it seemed to me that

he was not really asleep, but I didn't talk to him.

(n.19)

He has gone from his demoralization in Mexico to a subtler arena of defeat. Marina, living with Ruth, is now relatively liberated from him. She no longer needs him to survive. We can deduce from the petty tyrannies he has exercised upon her since their marriage just how deep and equal to his megalomania is his negative conviction that anyone who did not need him would never have anything to do with him. His need to love (as opposed to his ability to love) was profound. It was his safeguard against physically attacking the human species itself. If Kennedy was at the moment the finest specimen of the American species available, his anxiety over Marina's love or lack of love for him was paramount on this night. No pit was so deep for him as the gulf of unrequited love.

That evening as the twilight deepened, it was still warm enough in Texas in November to fool around outside:

dangling
participles

Lee went out to the front lawn and played with the children until dark--the Paine children, the neighbors' children, and June. He hoisted June to his shoulders and the two of them reached out to catch a butterfly in the air. Then Lee tried to catch falling oak wings for June.

(n.20)

One can have a sense of final moments--the last time we catch oak wings together, my child.

The evening was a peaceful one. Lee told Ruth, as he had Marina, that he had been to FBI headquarters, tried to see the agents, and left a note telling them in no uncertain terms what he thought about their visits. Marina did not believe him. She thought he was "a brave rabbit" and this was just another instance of his bravado. After that, the conversation at supper was so ordinary that no one remembers it; but Ruth had the impression that relations between the young Oswalds were "cordial," "friendly," "warm"--"like a couple making up after a small spat."

(n.21)

Ruth is right on the nose of total error once again. Oswald has reached that zone of serenity that some men attain before combat--one's anxiety is deep enough to feel like quiet exaltation: one is finally going into an action that will be equal in dimension to the importance of one's life.

Marina was still at the sink when Lee turned off the television set, poked his head in the kitchen, and asked if he could help. Marina thought he looked sad.

"I'm going to bed," he said. "I probably won't be out this weekend."

"Why not?"

"It's too often. I was here today."

Okay," Marina said.

(n.22)

Mr. Jenner. What did you do that evening? Did you have occasion to note what he did?

Mrs. Paine. We had dinner as usual, and then I sort of bathed my children, putting them to bed and reading them a story, which put me in one part of the house. When that was done I realized he had already gone to bed, this being now about 9 o'clock. I went out to the garage to paint some children's blocks and worked in the garage for half

an hour or so. I noticed when I went out that the light was on. . . . in the garage.

Mr. Jenner. Was this unusual?

Mrs. Paine. Oh, it was unusual. . . I realized that [Lee] had gone out to the garage. . . They were getting things out from time to time, warmer things for the cold weather, so it was not at all remarkable . . . but I thought it careless of him to have left the light on. I finished my work and then turned off the light and left the garage.

(n.23)

Possibly he had gone out there to break down his gun and put the stock and barrel in the long paper bag he had glued and taped together at the Book Depository, and had brought back to Irving this evening.

Marina was as usual the last to bed. She sat in the tub for an hour, "warming her bones," and thinking about nothing in particular, not even Lee's request that she move to Dallas. Lee was lying on his stomach with his eyes closed when she crept into bed. Marina still had pregnancy privileges; that is, she was allowed to sleep

with her feet on whatever part of his anatomy they came to rest. About three in the morning, she thinks, she put a foot on his leg. Lee was not asleep and suddenly, with a sort of wordless vehemence, he lifted his leg, shoved her foot hard, then pulled his leg away.

"My, he's in a mean mood," Marina thought. She realized that he was sleepless, tense, and she believed that he was so angry with her for refusing to move to Dallas right away that it was no use trying to talk to him. She thinks that he fell asleep about five o'clock in the morning. (n.24)

The domestic warmth of her foot must have been suffocating at that instant--a soporific opposed to all kinds of heroic action.

Lee usually woke up before the alarm rang and shut it off so as not to disturb the children. On the morning of Friday, November 22, the alarm rang and he did not wake up.

Marina was awake and after ten minutes she said, "Time to get up, Alka."

"Okay."

(n.25)

He did not kiss her when he left. He merely told her that he had left some money on the bureau.

When she did get up, she discovered that the sum was nothing less than \$170. If we know with hindsight that it left him with only a few dollars for a get-away, it was also his manner of alerting her that she could still call him at work and stop him. But she was not about to. Her warning system was on no alert. She did not even discover that he had left his wedding ring in a cup on the dresser, and that was something he had never done before.

Mrs. SAMUEL stated that at the time she saw GERALD walking across the street, he was carrying a long package wrapped in brown paper (which) appeared to contain something heavy. She stated it was long but did not touch the ground as he walked across the street. (p. 1)

That FBI report is followed by one with her brother's

Chapter 39--Pigeons Flew Up from the Roof

On the morning of November 22, 1963, at approximately 7:10 A.M., LINNIE MAE RANDLE was standing at her sink in the kitchen looking out the window when she saw LEE HARVEY OSWALD walking diagonally across Westbrook Street toward the back yard of her house. . . and he came across the street toward the carport which adjoins the kitchen. She opened the back door a slight bit to see what he was doing and saw him go to the far side of her brother's car [where] OSWALD opened the right rear door of the car. . . after hearing the car door shut [she] then looked up out the window and saw him looking in the window at her. . . . She was startled and somewhat irritated and called to her brother, BUELL WESLEY FRAZIER, that OSWALD was waiting to ride to work with him.

Mrs. RANDLE stated that at the time she saw OSWALD walking across the street, he was carrying a long package wrapped in brown paper [which] appeared to contain something heavy. She stated it was long but did not touch the ground as he walked across the street. (n.1)

That FBI report is followed by one with her brother:

FRAZIER went to his car, entered the left front door while OSWALD entered the right front door, both getting into the front seat. As he started to drive out of the yard, FRAZIER glanced back and noticed a long package, light brown in color, lying on the back of the rear seat He stated that he only glanced at this package at the time. . . and OSWALD explained that it was curtain rods. FRAZIER then remarked to OSWALD, "Oh, yes, you said you were going to get some curtain rods yesterday." . . .

FRAZIER stated that he and OSWALD drove to work and he parked the car about two blocks north of the [Texas School Book Depository] building. OSWALD got out of the car first and FRAZIER. . . observed that OSWALD had the one end of the package being under his armpit and the other end apparently held with his right fingers. OSWALD then walked toward the building with his back to FRAZIER and continued in front of FRAZIER for the entire distance, possibly 200 or 300 yards. . . . By the time OSWALD reached the Texas School Book Depository building, he was at least 50 feet ahead of FRAZIER, and when FRAZIER entered the building, he did not see OSWALD and does not know where he went. He did not subsequently see him with the package again. (n.2)

Ruth Paine is awakening about this time:

Mrs. Paine. . . . I felt the house was extremely quiet and the thought occurred to me that Lee might have overslept [but] I looked about and found a plastic coffee cup in the sink that had clearly been used and judged he had had a cup of coffee and left. . . .

Mr. Jenner. A plastic cup with some remains in it of coffee?

Mrs. Paine. Instant coffee; yes. (n.3)

When Roy Truly, superintendent of the School Book Depository arrived at 8:00 P.M., he could see that Lee was already working, clipboard in hand, and that was not unsatisfying. After all, Roy Truly had given him the job.

Knowing Marina's fascination with the President and Mrs. Kennedy, Ruth had left the television on when she went out. Marina did not bother to get dressed. She

tended to Rachel, gave cookies and milk to little June, and settled down on the sofa to watch. . . a rerun of a breakfast Mr. Kennedy had attended in Fort Worth. Somebody gave him a ten-gallon hat and he seemed to enjoy it. (n.4)

After the breakfast, Jack Kennedy had gone back to his hotel room for a few minutes of relaxation before he and his entourage would get into Air Force One for the brief flight from Fort Worth to Love Field in Dallas. In this passage out of William Manchester's book, Death of a President, the First Lady is speaking:

"Isn't this sweet, Jack," she said. . . "They've just stripped their museum of all their treasures to brighten up this dingy hotel suite." He knew it had been for her, and taking the catalogue he said, "Let's see who did it." There were several names at the end. The first was Mrs. J. Lee Johnson III. "Why don't we call her?" he suggested. "She must be in the phone book." Thus Ruth Carter Johnson, the wife of the Fort Worth newspaper executive, became the surprised recipient of John Kennedy's last phone call. She was home nursing a sick

daughter. She had watched the ballroom breakfast on WBAP-TV, and when she heard the President's voice [on the telephone] she was speechless. (n.5)

Mrs. J. Lee Johnson III! One has to observe that her married name bears the first initial of J. Edgar Hoover, has Lee in the middle, and ends with the last name of the president who will succeed Jack Kennedy. (As a bonus, her maiden name is Carter.) Who can know for a certainty that the cosmos is not laughing at us for our ignorance of how the cosmos loves to swirl coincidences around the rim of the funnel into which large events are converging?

Jack Kennedy apologized for not phoning earlier, explaining that they hadn't reached the hotel until midnight. Then Mrs. Kennedy came on. To Mrs. Johnson she sounded thrilled and vivacious. "They're going to have a dreadful time getting me out of here with all these wonderful works of art," she said. "We're both touched--thank you so much."

O'Donnell had a far less agreeable surprise for the President. . . . (n.6)

The Dallas Morning News contained a full page ad on page 14 with a prominent and funereal black border. "Welcome Mr. Kennedy," said the ad in booming black letters, and the text of the message "accused the President of being a Communist tool. It was signed by 'The American Fact-Finding Committee.'" (n.7)

Kennedy was not amused by what he read. His face was grim as he passed the Dallas Morning News over to Jackie:

Her vivacity disappeared; she felt sick. The President shook his head. In a low voice he asked Ken, "Can you imagine a paper doing a thing like that?" Then, slowly, he said to her. . . "You know, last night would have been a hell of a night to assassinate a President." . . . He said it casually, and she took it lightly; it was his way of shaking off the ad. He had what she called "a Walter Mitty streak." Like a little boy he would watch a passing jet from the fantail of the Honey Fitz, wondering aloud if he could fly it, picturing himself wrestling with the controls. "I mean it," he said now, building the

daydream. "There was the rain and the night and we were all getting jostled. Suppose a man had a pistol in a briefcase." He gestured vividly, pointing his rigid index finger at the wall and jerking his thumb twice to show the action of the hammer. "Then he could have dropped the gun and briefcase--" in pantomime he dropped them and whirled in a tense crouch--"and melted away in the crowd."

(n.8)

Vice President Johnson, having landed a few minutes earlier, was waiting at Love Field to head up the welcoming ceremony . . .

. . . before the Kennedys boarded the presidential limousine for the drive through Dallas. The limousine was a specially designed Lincoln convertible equipped with a bubble top. But the weather was clear and the President had asked to have the bubble removed. He sat in the right rear seat with Mrs. Kennedy at his left. Governor and Mrs. Connally rode in jump seats in front of the Kennedys. The presidential party was due at the Trade Mart for lunch at 12:30.

(n.9)

On the sixth floor of the Book Depository, a large part of the floor had been ripped up, and five men were laying plywood all morning. Lee had been up and down and around the sixth floor from time to time but they had paid no particular attention to him since he had been busy at the other end of the floor some fifty or sixty feet away and there were palisades of stacked book cartons from floor almost to ceiling all over that open warehouse space on the sixth floor.

At 11:45 or 11:50, the five men who were laying the floor broke for lunch. [They] got on the freight elevators, and raced each other to the ground floor. On the way down, they saw Lee standing by the fifth-floor gate.

Once he was on the ground floor, [one of them], Givens, realized that he had left his jacket, with his cigarettes in it, on the sixth floor. He rode back up and once again saw Lee. He was on the sixth floor now, not the fifth. . . . (n.10)

Another one of the men, Bonnie Ray Williams, had been planning with the others to watch the President drive by.

From the sixth floor they could watch his motorcade come down toward the building from Houston Street and then take a left on Elm Street to pass right beneath them. The left from Houston to Elm was even sharper than a right angle turn so the motorcade would have to slow down. They would all get a boss view of Kennedy as the cars crawled by. So, Bonnie Ray Williams did not go down in the freight elevator with the others, but ate his lunch on the sixth floor. However, none of the others came back up, so he ate his food alone and then went down to look for them.

If Oswald was ensconced alone at the other end of the sixth floor, he may have been in a state at all these comings and goings. How could he know whether he would be alone when the time came, or whether there would be a crowd of workers hooting and hollering on the other side of those walls of book cartons?

On Dealey Plaza people had collected all over the grassy knoll and the two triangular islands of grass formed by Elm Street, Main Street in the middle, and Commerce Street as they all bent toward one another to pass in separate but adjacent routes through the triple-underpass. Hundreds of people had

gathered, most of them on both sides of Elm Street, and the atmosphere had that air of lazy existence that comes on a sunny day at a county fair. A big event is coming and it can be compared to a man shot out of a cannon. It will be all over by the time you hear the boom. Although, not quite. Even on Elm Street people can feel the excitement of the crowds lining the sidewalk a few blocks away on Main Street as the motorcade comes toward Dealey Plaza like a tide rolling in. All the same, there is that carnival atmosphere. Time is finally there to burn. It is just like a little money you will never see again. Not every day does the President come to Texas, not even to Dallas, insurance capital of the world.

Forrest Sorrels, the Secret Service man in charge of the Dallas office, was in the lead car of the motorcade perhaps thirty feet in front of the presidential limousine:

Mr. Stern. Do you recall remarking on anything you observed in the windows as you drove along Main Street?

Mr. Sorrels. Yes, I do; there was a tremendous crowd on Main Street. The street was full of people. I made the remark, "My God, look at the people. They are even hanging out the windows." Because I had observed many