

down fifteen or twenty reporters," Bob said.

The Lutheran minister who had promised to be there at four had not appeared, and the Secret Service received word he would not be coming out. The Reverend Louis Saunders, of the Fort Worth Council of Churches, had driven out to Rose Hill by himself just to see if he could be of any help to Marina and the family. When he was told that the other minister would not be there, Reverend Mr. Saunders spoke the simple words of the burial service. . . . (n.18)

I motioned to Mike Howard, and when he came over I told him that I planned to have the coffin opened and would like to have all reporters and spectators moved back some distance from the grave site. He nodded, and almost immediately six or eight plainclothesmen from the Fort Worth police department formed a kind of protective semi-circle between us and the crowd, insuring a certain amount of privacy.

Mother, Marina, the children and I then got up and walked toward the open coffin. After I had taken a last, long look at my brother's face, I turned to go back to the place where we had been sitting. I then noticed the semi-circle of plainclothesmen standing guard, solemn and stony-faced. . . .

Some time later I learned that several reporters who had been assigned to cover the story of Lee's burial had volunteered to serve as pallbearers and had carried Lee's body from the chapel to the grave site.

Because of my preoccupation with other details, I had forgotten to ask any of my friends to serve as pallbearers. (n.19)

So would end Robert's account of the funeral, but there is still one detail to clarify--a matter of grievance and exculpation:

I had not had time on Saturday or Sunday to follow the news reports and this led to another oversight. I didn't realize that I had accidentally set Lee's funeral for the same day President Kennedy was being buried in Washington and Patrolman Tippit in Dallas. If I had known, I think I would have asked that Lee's burial be delayed until Tuesday. But that week I resented deeply the criticism I heard of the timing of that stark, private burial service, with my brother being carried to his grave by strangers as the curious stared down from the cemetery fence.

(n.20)

Chapter 46--The Amateur Hit Man

Oswald is buried. There he rests under a grave bought in the name of William Bobo, a moniker to inspire a funereal dirge:

That bloody shame is our sad woe
We see your face, Billy Bobo;
Died so young, one shot to the gut
from a ruffian named Ruby Slut.

The mystery of Oswald subsumes the enigma of Jack Ruby, but even as the mystery has divided the American establishment between fears of implication and the Warren Commission theory of one lone killer, so does Jack Ruby bugger reasonable comprehension, let alone consensus. A minor league hood from the streets of Chicago with a certifiably insane mother, he has Mob connections. While they are no more impressive than those cherished by a hundred thousand other petty hoodlums in fifty American cities, which is to say, connections so tenuous and yet so familial that one can make a whole case or no case

out of the same material, he has grown up among the Mob, and is on a first-name basis with Mob celebrities of the middle and picayune ranks. He is of the Mob in the specific values of his code, and yet never a formal member in any way, too whacky, too eager, too obsessed with himself, too Jewish even for the Jewish Mob--but he is pure Mafia in one part of his spirit--he wants to be known as a patriot in love with his country and his people. He is loyal. Select him and you will not make a mistake.

We all know the famous story. He was grief-stricken by the death of JFK, so bereaved that he shut down his strip joints for the weekend, and was so appalled at the possibility that Jacqueline Kennedy might have to come to Dallas to testify in Oswald's trial that he decided to shoot accused--"the creep," as he would call him. But only at the last moment did he so decide. No premeditation. At 11:17 on Sunday morning after waiting on line to send \$25 to one of his strippers who was desperately in need of the money, he crossed the street, went down the ramp into police headquarters, ran smack into Oswald who was being filmed by TV cameras on his way to a car that would take him to the county jail, and there before the unforgettable expressions of the victim and his guards, Ruby killed Oswald. Never before in history was a death witnessed by so many people fixed to their television

sets. Not by seven or eight orders of magnitude. Much of the world now believed that Ruby was a Mafia hit man, and the logic of that inference suggested a conspiracy including Oswald. If it had been that necessary to kill the alleged gunman, it could only be because he knew too much.

The concept, clear as everyone's concept of a good movie scenario, ran into one confusion that has never been resolved. What was Ruby doing in Western Union, standing on line, waiting his turn to send \$25 to a stripper in temporary need, while time kept fleeting and Oswald might be moved at any moment? The question could not be answered. How many police and confederates would Ruby have had to have to calibrate such a move? No one who is part of a careful schedule that will reach its climax as the target is being transferred will be found dawdling around a Western Union station with a few minutes to go. It would take hours for a stage director to begin to choreograph such a scene for an opera.

Ruby himself would say in his last interview before he died that there was no way he could have been part of any calculation to bring him there at just the instant Oswald passed unless "it was the most perfect conspiracy in the history of the world. . . the difference in meeting this fate was thirty seconds one way or the other."

So, the death of Oswald is filled with groans of thwarted

logic. Yet never on the face of it has a crime looked to belong more to the Mafia.

In his brilliant book, "The Yankee and Cowboy War," Carl Oglesby was the first to advance the notion that Ruby was trying to tell Earl Warren that the Mafia certainly did order him to commit the deed, and if Warren would just bring him, Jack Ruby, back to Washington that same day, he, Jack Ruby, would furnish Warren with all the truth, and, to prove it, would take a lie detector test immediately afterward.

As one reads these declarations in Jack Ruby's testimony, it is difficult not to believe that Oglesby is right. In the course of a half hour, Ruby repeats his request five times.

Mr. Ruby. Is there any way to get me to Washington?

Chief Justice Warren. I beg your pardon?

Mr. Ruby. Is there any way of you getting me to Washington?

Chief Justice Warren. I don't know of any. I will be glad to talk to your counsel about what the situation is, Mr. Ruby, when we get an opportunity to talk.

Mr. Ruby. I don't think I will get a fair representation with my counsel, Joe Tonahill. I don't think so. . . .

(n.1)

He disavows his counsel. He is all but saying that he cannot know who his counsel is really working for.

In another minute, he repeats himself:

Mr. Ruby. . . . Gentlemen, unless you get me to Washington, you can't get a fair shake out of me.

If you understand my way of talking, you have got to bring me to Washington to get the tests.

Do I sound dramatic? Off the beam?

Chief Justice Warren. No; you are speaking very rationally, and I am really surprised that you can remember as much as you have remembered up to the present time.

You have given it to us in detail.

Mr. Ruby. Unless you can get me to Washington, and I am not a crackpot, I have all my senses--I don't want to evade any crime I am guilty of.

(n.2)

Five minutes go by. They speak of other matters.

Then, Ruby pushes his request again, even takes it another step:

Mr. Ruby. . . . Gentlemen, if you want to hear any further testimony, you will have to get me to Washington soon, because it has something to do with you, Chief Warren.

Do I sound sober enough to tell you this?

Chief Justice Warren. Yes; go right ahead.

Mr. Ruby. I want to tell the truth, and I can't tell it here. I can't tell it here. Does that make sense to you?

Chief Justice Warren. Well, let's not talk about sense. But I really can't see why you can't tell this Commission.

(n.3)

Well, he can't. Not in Dallas. Ruby all but

shrieks at them: You dummies!--can't you see that I can't tell it here? You people don't run this town. You can't protect me in Dallas. I'll get knifed in my cell and the guards will be looking the other way.

Mr. Ruby. . . . My reluctance to talk--you haven't had any witness in telling the story, in finding so many problems?

Chief Justice Warren. You have a greater problem than any witness we ever had.

Mr. Ruby. I have a lot of reasons for having those problems. . . . If you request me to go back to Washington with you right now, that couldn't be done, could it?

Chief Justice Warren. No; it could not be done. It could not be done. There are a good many things involved in that, Mr. Ruby.

Mr. Ruby. What are they?

Chief Justice Warren. Well, the public attention that it would attract, and the people who would be around. We have no place there for you to be safe when we take you out, and there are not law enforcement officers, and it

isn't our responsibility to go into anything of that kind. . . . (n.4)

Ruby tries to explain it to them in the simplest terms. "Gentlemen, my life is in danger." Then he adds, "Not with my guilty plea of execution." (He has been sentenced to death by a jury in Dallas.) No, he is trying to tell them--I will be killed a lot sooner than that.

Mr. Ruby. . . . Do I sound sober enough to you as I say this?

Chief Justice Warren. You do. You sound entirely sober.

Mr. Ruby. From the moment I started my testimony, have I sounded as though, with the exception of becoming emotional, have I sounded as though I made sense, what I was speaking about?

Chief Justice Warren. You have indeed. I understood everything you have said. If I haven't, it is my fault.

Mr. Ruby. Then I follow this up. I may not live tomorrow to give any further testimony. . . . the only thing I want

to get out to the public, and I can't say it here, is with authenticity, with sincerity of the truth of everything and why my act was committed, but it can't be said here. . . .

Chairman Warren, if you felt that your life was in danger at the moment, how would you feel? Wouldn't you be reluctant to go on speaking, even though you request me to do so?

Chief Justice Warren. I think I might have some reluctance if I was in your position, yes; I should think I would. I think I would figure it out very carefully as to whether it would endanger me or not.

If you think that anything that I am doing or anything that I am asking you is endangering you in any way, shape, or form, I want you to feel absolutely free to say that when the interview is over.

Mr. Ruby. What happens then? I didn't accomplish anything.

Chief Justice Warren. No; nothing has been accomplished.

Mr. Ruby. Well, then you won't follow up with anything further?

Chief Justice Warren. There wouldn't be anything to follow up if you hadn't completed your statement.

Mr. Ruby. You said you have the power to do what you want to do, is that correct?

Chief Justice Warren. Exactly.

Mr. Ruby. Without any limitations?

Chief Justice Warren. . . . We have the right to take testimony of anyone we want in this whole situation, and we have the right. . . to verify that statement in any way that we wish to do it.

Mr. Ruby. But you don't have a right to take a prisoner back with you when you want to?

Chief Justice Warren. No; we have the power to subpoena witnesses to Washington if we want to do it, but we have taken the testimony of 200 or 300 people, I would imagine, here in Dallas without going to Washington.

Mr. Ruby. Yes; but those people aren't Jack Ruby.

Chief Justice Warren. No; they weren't.

Mr. Ruby. They weren't.

(n.5)

In the pause, Ruby tries to inform them of the depth of the peril he feels:

Mr. Ruby. I tell you, gentlemen, my whole family is in jeopardy. My sisters, as to their lives.

Chief Justice Warren. Yes?

Mr. Ruby. Naturally, I am a foregone conclusion. My sisters Eva, Eileen, and Mary. . .

My brothers Sam, Earl, Hyman, and myself naturally--my in-laws, Harold Kaminsky, Marge Ruby, the wife of Earl, and Phyllis, the wife of Sam Ruby, they are in jeopardy of loss of their lives. . . . just because they are blood related to myself--does that sound serious enough for you, Chief Justice Warren?

Chief Justic Warren. Nothing could be more serious, if that is the fact. . . (n.6)

At this point, Ruby begins to despair of reaching Warren with his message. He cannot know how great the odds are that Lyndon Johnson has already reached Earl Warren more than half a year earlier with an even more secret message--lone gunman, no conspiracy, the calm and well-being of our country depends on nothing less. So Ruby, in all the lacerated but still functioning wounds of his sensibility, is beginning to

recognize that his own agenda is hopeless. If he keeps talking this way and Warren does not listen to him, then the record of this testimony could open himself and his family to Mafia reprisal. So he returns--he reverts--to the sound of his own music, his operatic cover story: he invokes the name of Jackie Kennedy.

Mr. Ruby. . . . At the time when you first got the letter and I was begging Joe Tonahill and the other lawyers to know the truth about me, certain things that are happening now wouldn't be happening at this particular time.

Chief Justice Warren. Yes?

Mr. Ruby. Because then they would have known the truth about Jack Ruby and his emotional breakdown.

Chief Justice Warren. Yes?

Mr. Ruby. Of why that Sunday morning--that thought never entered my mind prior to that Sunday morning when I took it upon myself to try to be a martyr or some screwball, you might say.

But I felt very emotional and very carried away from Mrs. Kennedy, that with all the strife she had gone through--I had been following it pretty well--that someone

owed it to our beloved President that she shouldn't be expected to come back to face trial of this heinous crime.

And I have never had the chance to tell that, to back it up, to prove it. (n.7)

Since he has spoken of threats to his life and to his brothers and sisters, he now has to remove the putative onus that suggests these dangers originate in the Mafia domain. So he brings in the John Birch Society, but vaguely. . . vaguely. . .

Mr. Ruby. . . there is a John Birch Society right now in activity, and Edwin Walker is one of the top men of this organization--take it for what it is worth, Chief Justice Warren.

Unfortunately for me, for me giving the people the opportunity to get in power, because of the act I committed, has put a lot of people in jeopardy with their lives.

Don't register with you, does it?

Chief Justice Warren. No; I don't understand that.

(n.8)

Back goes Ruby to Jackie Kennedy. It may not be very convincing but at least it is a story that cannot be disproven. What with the way he has learned to talk, back and forth, in and out, about and around, nobody is going to get into his head and refute his tale.

Mr. Ruby. Yes. . . a small comment in the newspaper that . . . Mrs. Kennedy may have to come back for the trial of Lee Harvey Oswald.

That caused me to go like I did; that caused me to go like I did.

I don't know, Chief Justice, but I got so carried away. And I remember prior to that thought, there has never been another thought in my mind; I was never malicious toward this person. No one else requested me to do anything. (n.9)

"No one . . . requested me to do anything."

If a copy of this transcript gets out--and there are lawyers and lawyers' clerks abounding in the halls of Ruby's

paranoia ready to rush to the wrong people with a such a text --he can always point to this line. Let them give him one chance to speak and he can point it out to them: "No one else requested me to do anything."

It is so serious and so godawful to him. Jack Ruby--a good and generous man who fought his way up from the streets into a decent existence--a semi-decent existence, anyway--is going to be executed by the government, or killed by some Mafia minion--prison guard or convict, equally--in a jail he knows is not safe because of a crime he did not wish to commit in the first place but was impelled to carry out by orders from outside.

It is monstrously unfair to Ruby, thinks Ruby, and more unfair to his family. The people outside who will punish him if he rats on them are evil. And evil has no bounds, as Hitler proved. So the vengeance enacted on him, Jack Ruby, for trying to explain to the Warren Commission that he was only an agent in the death of Oswald, a pawn for the Mafia leaders who passed the order down the line to the man who gave him the order to shoot Oswald, will be Mafia leaders rabid with rage because he tried to rat on them with Warren. In retaliation they will yet kill all the Jews.

Let us try to assimilate the reasoning. It is not that Ruby is insane. He is, however, all but insane, for he has an

even larger sense of the importance of his own life than Oswald. If they kill Ruby, feels Ruby, then all of his immediate family and his larger family, world Jewry, is in peril.

So he tries to rally for one more attempt:

Mr. Ruby. The only thing is this. If I cannot get these tests you give, it is pretty haphazard to tell you the things I should tell you. . . . I am in a tough spot and I do not know what the solution can be to save me. . . I want to say this to you. . . The Jewish people are being exterminated at this moment. Consequently, a whole new form of government is going to take over our country, and I know I won't live to see you another time.

Do I sound sort of screwy in telling you these things?

Chief Justice Warren. No; I think that is what you believe, or you wouldn't tell it under your oath.

Mr. Ruby. But it is a very serious situation. I guess it is too late to stop it, isn't it? (n.10)

Mr. Ruby. . . . Because when you leave here, I am finished. My family is finished.

Representative Ford. Isn't it true, Mr. Chief Justice,

If he cannot save himself, then he cannot save humanity.

He is, unknowingly, a spiritual brother to Oswald. The fate of mankind, so they reasoned separately, rested on each of their shoulders. Separately.

He makes his very last attempt. How much does he have to spell it out? Can't they comprehend why he must get to Washington for these lie detector tests?

Mr. Ruby. I have been used for a purpose, and there will be a certain tragic occurrence happening if you don't take my testimony and somehow vindicate me so my people won't suffer because of what I have done. (n.11)

Yes, if I am killed, my people will be killed.

Mr. Ruby. . . . Because when you leave here, I am finished. My family is finished.

Representative Ford. Isn't it true, Mr. Chief Justice, that the same maximum protection and security Mr. Ruby has

been given in the past will be continued?

Mr. Ruby. But now that I have divulged certain information . . . (n.12)

He has spoken too much on this day, he is trying to tell Gerry Ford. His securiyy will be affected. "I want to take a polygraph test," he tells them, but

Mr. Ruby. . . . maybe certain people don't want to know the truth that may come out of me. Is that plausible? (n.13)

By this testimony, it would seem that Ruby acted as a hit man with an injunction to kill Oswald. Yet there is still the odd wait on line in the Western Union Office. How to explain that?

✓

We are ready to look at the background. Indeed, we are obliged to.

For months there had been low sounds coming down from the summits of the Mafia. "Who will remove this stone from my shoe?" said Carlos Marcello of Jack Kennedy, and Santos Trafficante had said worse. Jimmy Hoffa was speechless on the subject of the Kennedys. There have not only been rumors for the lkast half year that Trafficante, Marcello and Hoffa were ready to give the order to kill Jack Kennedy, but indeed the House Select Committee on Assassinations so far as it came to a conclusion decided in 1979 that the Mafia probably had done it (although certainly no smoking gun was found.)

Recently a book, Mob Lawyer, by Frank Ragano, Trafficante's legal counselor, was even more specific. Marcello and Trafficante indeed had done it--Ragano does not say how--and later the two men would inform Jimmy Hoffa of their act, and would indicate to him that a proper repayment for such a coup might be to use some three and a half million dollars in the Teamster's pension fund for investment in their cover firms and cover corporations in the New Orleans area. This, in summary, is Ragano's disclosure, which, of course--it is never otherwise--has no witness to such conversations but Ragano.

Nonetheless, it stimulates one's own imagination toward

two hypotheses, each of which point for our purposes in the same direction. An hypothesis, no matter now uncomfortable, bizarre, or special on first presentation, will thrive or wither on its ability to explain the facts available, and these two hypotheses are able to live and nourish themselves among the numerous details Gerald Posner amassed from various sources in his long and careful delineation of Jack Ruby's movements during the three days, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, of Oswald's incarceration. Indeed, Posner's chapter on Ruby may be the most careful and well-written section in his book.

Posner amasses these details to prove that Ruby was not acting under orders, but was indeed mentally unbalanced and killed Oswald for the reasons he stated, and Posner gives us more than thirty pages of Ruby's behavior after the President's death to prove the point.

What we are going to attempt here is to use Posner's details to make the opposite point--that Ruby actually killed Oswald under the pressure of an order from above.

Let us take the two hypotheses. The first and larger one is that Marcello/Trafficante did give an order some time in September, October or November to assassinate Jack Kennedy, but, given the solemnity of such a deed and the dangers surrounding such an attempt, the precautions employed to

wall them off from the act were so thoroughgoing that the order was passed down through a number of cut-outs. Each cut-out, at worst, could only identify the man who had given him the order. Be it said that the executive details of the assassination were left to the people at the end of the line who would do the deed. So great was the separation, indeed, that neither Marcello nor Trafficante would know the killer or killers, the date nor the place. It could happen anyplace--Miami, Texas, Washington, New York--it would not matter. They would be wholly removed from the details.

When the assassination of Kennedy occurred, they, therefore, assumed that it was their job. So, when they learned in the first hour that Oswald was calling himself a patsy, his fate was sealed. A patsy talks--he had to be removed. That he was the nephew of Dutz Murret and so could be connected, no matter how indirectly, to Marcello, doubled the need to get rid of him. That he had not been one of their killers, and had nothing to do with them, might never have occurred to Marcello or Trafficante. They were hardly going to be in conference with their cut-outs. So a quick order was sent out. Oswald was to be removed. This time they were in a rush. There could not be as many cut-outs, although there may have been more than one putative hit man in Dallas, either in the way of locals or quickly dispatched there on Friday

afternoon. Ruby--would go this hypothesis--was one of these putative hit men. He was an amateur, a flake, and possibly lacking in the level of testosterone--an FBI euphemism for balls!--to pull off the job. But Ruby did present two positive factors: He was, when all was said, a part of their culture--he would be afraid to talk--and he had the huge single advantage of availability. For every soldier they made, the Mafia knew the characters and habits of a thousand men. So they also knew that Ruby had access: Ruby was an intimate of a hundred Dallas cops, Ruby could get to Oswald. He was not the best man for the job but he was certainly the one who would have the best chance of doing it in the shortest possible time.

The word, therefore, was passed to him. Not by phone, but by one of the people he saw on Friday afternoon. It would be rank speculation to fix on Ralph Paul, Ruby's oldest friend, a man then in his sixties, for Paul was gentle and had no more known relations to the Mafia than that he ran a restaurant in Dallas, but it can be said that restaurant owners are never without liaisons to the Mob, and Paul was one of Ruby's closest friends and was owed tens of thousands of dollars by Ruby--which the Mob would also have known--and so Ralph Paul could have delivered a message. "Kill Oswald and they will take care of you."

If the question was how could he get away with it, the answer was that with the right lawyer, Ruby would only get a few years, or with a defense on ground of insanity, might get way with no time at all. He would certainly be taken care of financially. His deep debts would be rearranged--the money he owed to the IRS could be taken care of. And for his motive--Ruby was furnished with a beautiful and crazy reason, or, as is more likely, he came up with the reason itself because it existed already as a kind of minor motive within him, a small infatuation: he was the kind of exceedingly sentimental man who would indeed have detested the pain it would cause Jackie Kennedy to testify in Dallas. An actor can play a killer, or a lover, or a policeman, or a thief if even five per cent of such a possibility exists within him. Ruby was an actor manque: he had the first requirement for good stage performance--his emotions were quickly available, so available indeed that they kept intruding on his syntax which is why his speeches are sometimes so hard to follow.

The above is the first hypothesis. The second is simpler. Marcello and Trafficante had made noises back and forth with Hoffa about getting a hit on the President, but they had issued no orders. They had merely fumed and been afraid to make such a move. Yet, when the President was killed, they had an opportunity to make some huge profits with

Teamster funds, so they took pains to let Hoffa know that they had been the masterminds behind the deed. Now he owed them a return on their favor. They had solved his problem with Bobby Kennedy. He could show his appreciation now by diverting those pension monies into their selected arenas for investment. The only problem was Oswald. He might have his own story to tell and it might be convincing enough to let Hoffa see that his friends had had nothing to do after all with the death in Dealey Plaza. If they were to obtain access to those pension funds, Oswald had to be marked for extinction.

Hypothesis One and Hypothesis Two may be different, even opposed, but they come to the same conclusion--given the need to move quickly--Jack Ruby is chosen to be the hit man.

That he did not see it as an honor is evident in his behavior. The order is equal to the total disruption of his life and all he had worked for. Ralph Paul, if he was the last cut-out to Ruby, would have issued no personal threats, but then, he would not have had to. To disobey that kind of order--even if one was not expressly suited to carry out such an order--was more painful to contemplate than the cost of doing the deed. Ruby could only guess who might have initiated such a project, but whoever he was, the man would not be sitting far from the devil's right hand.

hard
to
accept

Now, we have only to see if the details Posner has collected will conflict with the point of these now joined hypotheses:

The first question to pose is when Ruby might have been given such an order, and the earliest time that one can suggest reasonably is when he talked to Ralph Paul about 2:45 that afternoon. It was only an hour and a quarter after the announcement of the death, but then, the move from above was obliged to be quick. The longer Oswald had, the more he might talk.

why?
Oswald
hasn't
said he
was a patsy yet

The Carousel's records show a call to the Bullpen, [Paul's] restaurant at 2:42 for less than a minute. When Ruby discovered Paul was not at his restaurant but instead at home, he telephoned him there. The phone record shows he called Paul at 2:43. (n.14)

Mr. Paul. . . . when I got home Jack called me and he

said, "Did you hear what happened?" I said, "Yes; I heard it on the air." He says, "Isn't that a terrible thing?" I said, "Yes; Jack." He said, "I made up my mind. I'm going to close it down." . . .

Mr. Hubert. Did he discuss with you whether he should close down?

Mr. Paul. No; he didn't discuss it. He told me he was going to close down. (n.15)

Unless it was Paul who told him to. Paul, as the message bearer, could well have said: "Jack, you've got to close down for the next couple of days. You are going to need all your free time to find a way to bring this off."

There is evidence Posner presents counter to such an assumption. Ruby is very emotional in the office of the Dallas Morning News when he first hears of the attack, speaks already of how awful it is for Jackie Kennedy and her children, and is crying when he leaves the place. This, however, is only by Ruby's own account, "I left the building

and I went down and got my car, and I couldn't stop crying . . ." (n.16), but he may have been lying when he testified as a way of covering the real source of his behavior.

In any event, by the time he visits his sister a second time that afternoon, he must certainly have been given the word on what was expected of him. She was ill in bed, having just returned to her home a few days before from an abdominal operation, and he had gone out to shop for her.

Ruby was back at Eva's by 5:30 and stayed for two hours.

Eva said he returned with "enough groceries for 20 people. . . but he didn't know what he was doing then." He told her that he wanted to close the clubs. "And he said, 'Listen, we are broke anyway, so I will be a broken millionaire. I am going to close for three days.'" In dire financial straits, and barely breaking even with both clubs open seven days a week, his decision to close was an important gesture. . .

But his sister Eva witnessed the real depth of his anguish, and unwittingly contributed to it. "He was sitting on this chair and crying. . . He was sick to his stomach. . . and went into the bathroom. . . . He looked terrible." (n.17)

As she says to the Warren Commission:

Mrs. Grant. . . . he just wasn't himself, and truthfully, so help me, I remember even my mother's funeral--it just killed him. He said this, "Somebody tore my heart out," and he says, "I didn't even feel so bad when pops died because poppa was an old man." (n.18)

This, she indicates, is the worst state she has ever seen him in. That he has brought more food than anyone can eat is natural. Food is life, and his life may soon be over. It is all very well to take a shot at Oswald but what if he, Jack Ruby, is mowed down in the process?

Once he left his sister's house, he went over to police headquarters. He never had had trouble getting in before and now, given the exceptional influx of newsmen, there was no difficulty at all. He was there from six p.m. on that evening, expecting, but now knowing, whether he would have an

opportunity to get near enough to Oswald to do the job.

. . . John Rutledge, the night police reporter for the Dallas Morning News, knew Ruby. He saw him step off the elevator, hunched between two out-of-state reporters with press identifications on their coats. "The three of them just walked past policemen, around the corner, past those cameras and lights, and on down the hall," recalled Rutledge. The next time Rutledge saw him, he was standing outside room 317, where Oswald was being interrogated, and "he was explaining to members of the out-of-state press who everybody was that came in and out of the door. . . . There would be a thousand questions shot to him at once, and Jack would straighten them all out. . . ." Soon several detectives walked by, and one recognized him. "Hey, Jack, what are you doing here?" "I am helping all these fellows," Ruby said, pointing to the pack of reporters. . . .

Victor Robertson, a WFAA Radio reporter, also knew Ruby. He saw him approach the door to the office where Oswald was being interrogated and start to open it. "He had the door open a few inches," recalled Robertson, "and began to step into the room, and the two officers stopped him. . . . One of them said, 'You can't go in there, Jack.'"

Ruby probably left police headquarters shortly after 8:30. (n.19)

He had failed in his first attempt. Now, he made a quick trip home to his apartment, where George Senator, his roommate, later stated in an affidavit that it happened to be the "first time I ever saw tears in his eyes." (n.20)

He cried openly at the Synagogue. "They didn't believe a guy like Jack would ever cry," said his brother Hyman. "Jack never cried in his life. He is not that kind of guy to cry." (n.21)

The question to ask is whether he is more likely to cry for the first time in his life because he has been given an assignment that is equal to destroying his life, or because he simply cannot bear the thought of that beautiful gentile woman, the former First Lady, Jacqueline Kennedy, being obliged to return to Dallas and testify. You pay your money and you take your choice, but as a betting proposition--with all due respect to Jacqueline Kennedy--it must be 18-5 that Ruby is thinking of himself. And if it were anyone but

Jacqueline Kennedy, the odds might be 99 to 1 that he is brooding about no one but himself. All he has is his life and the continuation of it is being taken away from him. A precious gem, a ruby, is being thrown down the crapper.

After the synagogue, he went right back to police headquarters and once again joined the mob (as in little "m"--the media.)

When he arrived at the third floor of the station, he encountered a uniformed officer who did not recognize him. Ruby saw several detectives he knew, shouted to them, and they helped him get inside. Once there, he said he was, "carried away with the excitement of history." Detective A.J. Eberhardt, who knew Ruby and had been at his club, was in the burglary-and-theft section when Jack "stuck his head in our door and hollered at us. . . He came in and said hello to me, shook hands with me. I asked him what he was doing. He told me he was a translator for the newspapers. . . He said, 'I am here as a reporter' and he took the notebook and hit it." (n.22)

He has taken cognizance of the situation. He has not been a vendor in ball parks and burlesque houses and a street hustler for too little: He is laying the groundwork to be indispensable to any number of reporters. He never knows when the right door will open and the opportunity will be there. This is the field of operations and he may have a chance to try again before midnight.

In less than half an hour, Oswald was brought out of room 317 on the way to the basement assembly room for the midnight press conference. Ruby recalled that as Oswald walked past, "I was standing about two or three feet away." (n.23)

The challenge is equivalent to jumping for the first time into a quarry pool from a height of thirty or forty feet. And Ruby cannot take the step. All he has to do is pull out his gun and finish Oswald off, but he cannot make the move. It is, after all, a vertiginous leap.

He is sick at his own cowardice, even as all of us are when we fail to take that "one large step for mankind" that some higher instinct, or a bully, or a parent, or a brother, is commanding us to take.

In his first statement to the FBI, Ruby admitted he had his .38 caliber revolver with him on Friday night (Commission Document 1252.9). Later, when he realized that carrying his pistol might be construed as evidence of premeditation, he said he did not have his gun on Friday. However, a photo of the rear of Ruby, taken in the third-floor corridor that night, shows a lump under the right rear of his jacket. If he was a mob-hired killer with a contract on Oswald, he would have shot him at the first opportunity. Certainly, any contract to kill Oswald would not have been one Ruby could fulfill at his leisure. Yet when he had the perfect opportunity, with Oswald only a couple of feet away, Oswald did not shoot him. (n.24)

Posner may lack empathy here. Just because you are told to kill Oswald doesn't mean you can do it. Indeed, Ruby may still be looking for some way to do it where he can get out scot-free. That is a fantasy, but then, he is not a

professional killer. What he cannot stomach is that there seems no way he will be able to follow orders without paying a prohibitive price.

In the meantime, to cut the losses to his ego, he continues networking. He introduces media men to Henry Wade, District Attorney of Dallas, who is, at the moment, number one celebrity on the floor.

Ruby took Knight to the basement and pointed out Wade, and introduced them. "Ruby was insistent that I ask Wade if Oswald were insane," said Knight. Wade said Oswald was not insane and that the President's murder was premeditated. (n.25)

Ruby may well have been reasoning that if Oswald is insane, then any testimony Oswald might give against the Mob is worthless. Ruby may be hoping that he can pass a message back: District Attorney Henry Wade believes Oswald is insane. So, fellows, give me a break--this is one job that doesn't need to be done.

Of course, district attorneys have a tendency to decide

that even the craziest killers are curiously sane, if it will improve their rate of conviction. The Mafia, for quite other reasons, shares that point of view. History is filled with examples of crazy people whose testimony was accepted.

Mr. Pappas. It was at this point that I ran into Ruby-- the first time that I recall. He came up to me as I was waiting for Wade and he said,. . . "Are you a reporter?" I said, "Yes." . . . And he reached into his pocket, and he pulled out a card. It said the Carousel Club on it. And I was amazed. I didn't know who he was or what he was. My immediate impression of him was that he was a detective. He was well dressed, nattily dressed, I imagine. [A little later] I was still in this frustrated-- this look on my face. He said, "What's the matter?" I said, "I am trying to get Henry Wade over to the telephone." He said, "Do you want me to get him?" . . . I said, "Yes, I would like to have him over here." And he went around the desk, over to Henry Wade on the telephone. . . . (n.26)

Ruby is investing himself further and further into a role that enables him to hang around the third floor, waiting to

pick up a better opportunity. It helps that he also loves the new role. So long as he can live within it, he is, like an actor, impressive; he can feel vital and alive; he can keep the dread of his mission away from himself.

Once he leaves police headquarters, however, he has to pass through his own form of Walpurgisnacht. He wanders back and forth to newspaper offices ⁶brings sandwiches to the people working at KLIF. In between, he spends an hour in a car talking to a couple, Kathy Kay, a former stripper at the Carousel, who is with Harry Carlson, a policeman, and all three talk in Carlson's car about how terrible it must be for Jackie Kennedy. The stripper cries and the men join her with a few tears, and in the meld of such mutual compassion for Jackie Kennedy, all three feel respect for each other, deep respect, and express it so.

Finally, after a little more wandering through the night of Dallas, Ruby goes back to his apartment and wakes up his roommate George Senator.

Mr. Senator. Yes; it was different. It was different; the way he looked at you. . . .

Mr. Hubert. Had you seen him in that condition before?

Mr. Senator. . . . I have seen him hollering, things like I told you in the past, but this here, he had sort of a stare look in his eye. . . .

Mr. Griffin. I didn't catch that. What kind of a look?

Mr. Senator. A stare look; I don't know. . . . I don't know how to put it into words.

Mr. Hubert. But it was different from anything you had ever seen on Jack Ruby before?

Mr. Senator. Yes.

Mr. Hubert. And it was noticeably so?

Mr. Senator. Oh yes. (n.27)

He then calls up his handyman, Larry Crafard, at the Carousel, wakes him up and drives the youth and George Senator out to a billboard on the road that says: "Impeach Earl Warren." Ruby had been very upset earlier that day when he saw the Weissman ad alluding to Jack Kennedy as a Communist supporter. He is now convinced that the John Birch Society invented the name Weissman in order to blame the Jews.

He, Jack Ruby, will soon be one of the Jews being blamed for the death of Kennedy, even if he will only be blamed in the indirect sense that they have selected him to be the one to kill Oswald. So, Jack Ruby, a Jew, will pay the second heaviest price. He is a scapegoat, just like the Jews in the Holocaust, and just like all Jews who will soon be blamed for the Weissman ad.

In his distraught state, he takes photographs of the billboard--Impeach Earl Warren--as if this is not only evidential material of some sort but will be sacramental in his position. If he is acting a little loopy, well, very few hit men on a mission are feeling that calm.

It is daybreak on Saturday before he drops Larry Crafard off at the Carousel where the handyman sleeps on the sofa in Ruby's office.

Crafard has his revenge by telephoning Ruby at 8:30 in the morning. There is no food for the dogs at the Carousel, he tells him. Ruby flies into a rage for having his sleep interrupted and proceeds to talk to Crafard as he never has before. Indeed, he is so bad that Crafard packs his stuff, and takes off hitch-hiking to go back home to Michigan.

Somewhat later that morning:

are
you
leaving
too heavily
on a
supposition
here?
an
hypothesis?

. . . Ruby turned on the television and saw a memorial service broadcast from New York. "I watched Rabbi Seligman," he recalled, "He eulogized that here is a man [JFK] that fought in every battle, went to every country, and had to come back to his own country to be shot in the back. That created a tremendous emotional feeling for me, the way he said that." (n.28)

It is likely that Ruby is trying to find larger reasons for his intended act. He is too big a man to do such a job just because the Mob has ordered it, no, he is an honorable Jewish potential patriot who wishes to redress a wrong in the universe. We have to recognize that Ruby, now that he has been given his assignment, does not have to justify it with Mob motivations, or by Mob professionalism--"I'm there to hit the guy, that's it,"--no, Ruby, being an amateur, would look to ennoble his act.

That afternoon, he moves seemingly without large purpose between a restaurant, his garage, and Dealey Plaza until mid-afternoon. As he sees all the wreaths for Jack Kennedy laid

out in the Plaza, he weeps in his car, or so he testifies.

When he left Dealey Plaza, it appears Ruby once more went to the third floor of police headquarters, expecting an Oswald transfer that never took place. He later denied being there Saturday because, again he probably feared it might be interpreted as evidence of premeditation. The Warren Commission said it "reached no firm conclusion as to whether or not Ruby visited the Dallas Police Department on Saturday." Yet credible eyewitness testimony shows he was there. (n.29)

He is still looking and he is still weeping. Ruby must have wept and/or had tears in his eyes ten to twenty times, from Friday to Sunday. But we can remind ourselves once more, he is crying for himself. His life as he knows it is now over. It better satisfies his idea of himself, however, that he is weeping for Jack, Jackie, and the children.

Soon enough, he begins to prow1 again:

. . . Later in the afternoon they saw him on their monitors wandering the third floor police headquarters and approaching Wade's office, from which regular reporters were barred. Only the next day, after Oswald was shot, did the van's reporters learn "the creep" was Ruby.

(n.30)

He is awfully hyperactive, however, to be a creep.

Thayer Waldo, a reporter with the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, watched Ruby giving out Carousel cards to reporters between 4:00 and 5:00 PM. He was aggressive in getting the reporters' attention, pulling the sleeves of some and slapping others on the back or arms. . . . Ruby said, "Here's my card with both my clubs on it. Everybody around here knows me. . . . As soon as you get the chance, I want all of you boys to come over to my place. . . and have a drink on me. . . ."

(n.31)

Half of the time he is even behaving as he would if his

life were to go on just as it used to. He seems to have forgotten that he has closed his clubs. He is living in two states of being. He is in his own skin and he is also playing the lead in a film full of significance and future heartbreak.

Ruby left the headquarters just before 6:00 PM, the same time Chief Curry told the press they expected to transfer Oswald at 10:00 AM the next day. Not long after that, he arrived at the Carousel, and Andrew Armstrong, the club's bartender, thought he was still "more worried than ever," remarking that he was "in a sad and sorrowful mood. . .and disturbed. . . over the assassination." Armstrong had received calls from patrons who wanted to book reservations for that night's show, and from most of the strippers, trying to find out if the club was going to open. Ruby said no, it would stay closed until Monday.

(n.32)

That Saturday night, with Oswald done for a time with the third floor interrogations and now locked in his jail cell on an inaccessible floor, it is the beginning of another long dark night, perhaps one of the worst that Ruby has experienced. He has failed to produce and it is a reasonable

assumption that they will soon be letting him know about it.

By 9:30 Ruby had returned to his apartment. There, he received a call from one of his strippers, Karen Bennett Carlin, whose stage name was Little Lynn. She had driven into Dallas from Fort Worth with her husband and wondered if the Carousel was going to open over the weekend, because she needed money. "He got very angry and short with me," Carlin recalled. "He said, 'Don't you have any respect for the President? Don't you know the President is dead? . . . I don't know when I will open. I don't know if I will ever open back up.'" (n.33)

He knows it is unlikely he will ever be able to open. If he does not kill Oswald, the Mob, after they finish breaking his nose, his chin, and his knee-caps, will proceed to take his club away. On the other hand, if he does succeed, the government will take the Carousel. At ten o'clock, he telephones his sister, Eva, to complain:

. . . about his deteriorating mood. "He was very depressed," she recalled. "He was so low." She encouraged him to visit some of his friends, but he was not certain he wanted to leave his apartment. (n.34)

An hour goes by, and then he calls Ralph Paul. Is he furnishing a report of no progress, but promising possibilities for tomorrow?

. . . Ruby telephoned [Paul's] restaurant again at 11:18 and discovered Paul had gone home. He then telephoned Paul three times at home, at 11:19 for three minutes, at 11:36 for two minutes, and at 11:47 for one minute. Paul said he did not feel well, and told Ruby, "I was sick and I was going to bed and not to call me." (n.35)

That night, the Dallas jail received anonymous phone threats on Oswald's life. On later reflection, Captain Fritz

thought it might have come from Ruby. Perhaps it did. Ruby would have been looking for excuses--I had it all set up for Sunday morning but they moved Oswald on Saturday night.

Now, he calls an old friend, Lawrence Meyers, who is in Dallas for a couple of days:

Mr. Meyers. . . . he was obviously very upset. He was-- let me say it this way--in all of my conversations with him through the years that I have known him. . . he would almost get incoherent because he was so anxious to get his point over. I am sure you have talked to people who will do this. This night he seemed far more incoherent than I have ever listened to him. The guy sounded absolutely like he had flipped his lid, I guess.

I said, "Jack, where are you. . . He said come have a drink with me or a cup of coffee with me. . . . I said, Jack, that is silly. I am undressed. I have bathed. I am in bed. I want to go to sleep but, I said, if you want a cup of coffee you come on over here and come on up to my room and I will have some coffee or food sent up to my room and we can sit here and talk. He said, no, no, he had things to do. He couldn't come over. . . .This went on for a little while and the last thing I said, Jack, why don't you go ahead and get a good night's sleep and forget this thing. And you call me about 6 o'clock tomorrow night. . . and we will have dinner together and he said okay. . . .

Mr. Griffin. . . . the FBI has quoted you as saying that one of the things that Ruby told you in the conversation was, "I have got to do something about this." Do you remember that?

Mr. Meyers. Definitely. (n.36)

We can interpret that remark in two ways. I, on my own, have to do something about this, or--I have been told to do something about this.

He slept in one or another fashion that night and awoke in a terrible mood:

Mr. Senator. . . . He made himself a couple of scrambled eggs and coffee for himself, and he still had this look which didn't look good.

Mr. Hubert. . . . can you give us a comparison between the look that he had that morning. . . as opposed to what it was on other occasions. . . ?

Mr. Senator. . . . he looks worse, how can I express it? The look in his eyes? . . .

Mr. Hubert. The way he talked or what he said?

Mr. Senator. The way he talked. He was even mumbling, which I didn't understand. And right after breakfast he got dressed. Then after he got dressed he was pacing the floor from the living room to the bedroom, from the bedroom to the living room, and his lips were going. What he was jabbering I didn't know. But he was really pacing. What he was thinking about-- (n.37)

In the telephone conversation the night before, Meyers, referring to Jackie Kennedy, had said: "Life goes on. She will make a new life for herself. . . " (n.38)

It was the worst thing Meyers could have said. By now, Jack Ruby and Jackie Kennedy are one--two suffering souls who have merged. Ruby does not want to make a new life for himself--he wants his old one back.

It is so painful. Ruby cannot ask directly for sympathy, but his self-love is pouring out of him. He is bleeding for Jackie Kennedy as if she is that beautiful element in his soul that no one else knows about, and soon it will be all lost.

By ten A.M. on Sunday, he is distraught in still another fashion--he had known when he woke up on Sunday morning that Oswald was scheduled to be transferred at 10:00 A.M.

Ruby, however, had decided not to be there. During the night, he had made up his mind. He would take whatever consequences came from the Mob.

Then, events intervened. Little events--small as Kismet or Karma.

At 10:19, while he was still lounging around the apartment in his underwear, he received a telephone call from his dancer Karen Carlin (her phone record revealed the exact time). Although she sensed he "still seemed upset," she told him, "I have called, Jack, to try to get some money, because the rent is due and I need some money for groceries and you told me to call." Ruby asked how much she needed, and she said \$25. He offered to go downtown and send it to her by Western Union, but told her it would "take a little while to get dressed. . ." (n.39)

According to Senator. . . "Jack was never a fast dresser or never a fast washer. . . . He sure had a moody and very faraway look to me. It was a look that I had never seen before on him. . ." Ruby left the apartment a few minutes before 11:00 A.M. His route downtown took his past Dealey Plaza, where he saw many new

wreaths left overnight in memory of the President. Again,
he cried. (n.40)

He wasn't going to do it. Let Mafia wreck his club, his life, and the effort he had put into becoming a mensch in the community.

Of course, if you had been debating with yourself for close to forty-eight hours whether you were going to, or you weren't, and either way lay death or ruin, you might cry at every reminder of where you are, and where you ought to be.

Oswald, however, is still in the same place. He has not yet been transferred. Fritz has decided to let the press have one more look at him. A picture opportunity!

Mr. Ruby. . . . I took it for granted he had already been moved.

I drove down Main Street--there was a little incident I left out, that I started to go down a driveway, but I wanted to go by the wreaths, and I saw them and started to cry again.

Then I drove, parked the car across from the Western Union. . . (n.41)

At Western Union, he filled out the money order forms for a twenty-five dollar delivery.

. . . Then he patiently waited in line while another customer completed her business. According to the clerk, Ruby was in no hurry. It was impossible for him to know that Oswald had not been transferred, since there was no television or radio at the Western Union office. There was a public telephone, but Ruby did not use it. When he got to the counter, the cost for sending the moneygram totaled \$26.87. He handed over \$30 and waited for his change while the clerk finished filling out the forms. . . Ruby's receipt was stamped 11:17. When he left Western Union, he was less than two hundred steps from the entrance to police headquarters. (n.42)

Mr. Ruby. I walked the distance from the Western Union to the ramp. I didn't sneak in. I didn't linger in there.

I didn't crouch or hide behind anyone, unless the television camera can make it seem that way. . . (n.43)

On the third floor of the headquarters, police had informed Oswald shortly after 11:00 A.M. that they would immediately take him downstairs. . . He asked if he could change his clothes. Captain Fritz sent for some sweaters, and when they were brought to him, he put on a beige one, and then changed his mind and switched to a black sweater. Then he announced he was ready to leave. If Oswald had not decided at the last moment to get a sweater, he would have left the jail almost five minutes earlier, while Ruby was still inside the Western Union office. (n.44)

Mr. Ruby. I walked down those few steps, and there was a person that--I wouldn't say I saw red--it was a feeling I had for our beloved President and Mrs. Kennedy, . . . And when I walked down the ramp--I would say there was an 8-foot clearance--not that I wanted to be a hero. . .

I did not mingle with the crowd. There was no one near me when I walked down that ramp. . .

I think the actual act was committed--I take that back--was it 11 o'clock? You should know this.

Mr. Moore. 11:21.

Mr. Ruby. No; when Oswald was shot.

Mr. Moore. I understood it to be 11:22.

Mr. Ruby. The clock stopped and said 11:21. I was watching on that thing; yes. Then it must have been 11:17, closer to 18. That is the timing when I left the Western Union to the time of the bottom of the ramp.

You wouldn't have time enough to have any conspiracy, to be self-saving, to mingle with the crowd, as it was told about me. (n.45)

It is worth receiving the account of a plainclothesman named Archer, a detective on the Dallas force:

Mr. Archer. . . . I could see the detectives on each side of Oswald leading him towards the ramp. . . I did have some bright lights shining into my eyes, and [it was hard] for me to recognize someone on the opposite side of the ramp [but] I caught a figure of a man. . . . I had been watching Oswald and the detectives . . . and my first thought was, as I started moving--well, my first thought was that somebody jumped out of the crowd, maybe to take a sock at him. Someone got emotionally upset and and jumped out to take a sock at him, [but] as I moved forward, I saw

the man reach Oswald, raise up, and then the shot was
fired. (n.46)

Mr. Ruby. . . .I realize it is a terrible thing I have
done, and it was a stupid thing, but I just was carried
away emotionally. Do you follow that?

Chief Justice Warren. Yes; I do indeed, every word.

Mr. Ruby. I had the gun in my right hip pocket, and
impulsively, if that is the correct word here, I saw him,
and that is all I can say. And I didn't care what
happened to me. (n.47)

The irony is that he was indeed impulsive. He has
meditated upon the act since Friday, he has had his
opportunities and not taken them. Yet, here was Oswald! It
was as if God had put the man there. He was supposed to do it
after all. So he fulfilled his contract. Let us say that he
fulfilled two contracts. He did his job for the Mob, but
since he had been talking about it so much that he had come to
believe it, he did it as well for Jack, Jackie, the children

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now become certainly
not a rabbit

and the Jewish people. He fused himself into his story, his cover story.

For the Warren Commission, he describes this sector of his feelings with considerable style. Nothing is more difficult to bring off than a touch of elegance melded into piety, but Jack has had seven months to prepare this speech for Earl Warren:

. . . I wanted to show my love for our faith, being of the Jewish faith, and I never used the term and I don't want to go into that--suddenly the feeling, the emotional feeling came within me that someone owed this debt to our beloved President to save her the ordeal of coming back. I don't know why that came through my mind. (n.48)

He had been somewhat less inspiring immediately after his gun was seized on that terminal Sunday, but his dialogue had been more pithy:

Mr. Archer. . . . we took him on into the jail office and I assisted in keeping his left arm behind him and someone got his right. I couldn't say who it was that had his other arm. Laid him down on the floor, his head and face were away from me at that particular time. But that is when I said, "Who is he?" [He answered] "You all know me. I'm Jack Ruby." . . . And he said at that particular point, "I hope I killed the son of a bitch." . . . I said to Ruby at that time, "Jack, I think you killed him," and he just looked at me right straight in the eye and said, "Well, I intended to shoot him three times." (n. 49)

When they got to the third floor, Ruby, who was excited from the shooting, talked to anybody who came by. "If I had planned this I couldn't have had my timing better," he bragged. "It was one chance in a million. . . . I guess I just had to show the world that a Jew has guts." . . . (n.50)

He must have been castigating himself for forty and more

hours awake and asleep, "You Jew, you do not have the guts to be a hit-man. Only Italians are that good." So he wanted to give the Mafia a real signature--his own--three shots, wanted to show the world as well that a Mob-style execution was not out of reach for him, a Jew.

The Parkland surgeons were not able to save Oswald:

. . . "It's pretty hard to imagine one bullet doing more damage than that," says Dr. John Lattimer. "It perforated the chest cavity, went through the diaphragm, spleen, and stomach. It cut off the main intestinal artery, and the aorta, and the body's main vein, as well as breaking up the right kidney. That wound was definitely fatal." (n.51)

There is always more to Jack Ruby. He would wear brass knuckles when he got into a fight in his nightclub, he would brag to his handyman, Larry Crafard, that he had been with every girl in his club, and yet. . .and yet. . . Like Oswald, there is always more to Ruby.

Mr. Carlin. That was from his mouth. He was always asking the question, "Do you think I am a queer? Do you think I look like a queer? Or have you ever known a queer to look like me?" Everytime I saw him he would ask it.

Mr. Jackson. Do you mean he would bring up the subject himself?

Mr. Carlin. Yes; he would say, "Do you think I look like one or act like one?" (n.52)

He was a man of many sides, and he loved his animals:

His favorite dog, Sheba, was left in the car. "People that didn't know Jack will never understand this," Bill Alexander told the author, "but Ruby would never have taken that dog with him and left it in the car if he knew he was going to shoot Oswald and end up in jail. He would have made sure that dog was at home with Senator and was well taken care of." (n.53)

Yes, Posner must be absolutely right that Ruby was not intending to kill Oswald on Sunday at 11:00 A.M. But that does not take care of why Ruby finally did it, and what was at stake and considerably closer to his heart than the pain and turmoil awaiting Jacqueline Kennedy if she had to come back to Dallas.

The MECA reported that Shacklin, in 1963, denied that he had any knowledge of the note. Until 1975, the Dallas FBI office maintained its silence, and kept secret the destruction of the note. (A-2)

Chapter 47--The Punishment of Hosty and the Death of the
Handler

Between two and four hours after Oswald's [demise] on November 24, Shanklin summoned Hosty. Hosty recalls that Shanklin was standing in front of his desk and took out both the memorandum and Oswald's note. "Oswald is dead now. There can be no trial. Here, get rid of this." Hosty started to tear up the documents in Shanklin's presence. "No," Shanklin shouted. "Get it out of here. I don't even want it in this office. Get rid of it." Hosty then took the note and memorandum out of Shanklin's office, tore them up, and flushed them down a toilet at the FBI. A few days later, Shanklin asked Hosty whether he had destroyed Oswald's note and the memorandum and Hosty assured him that he had. (n.1)

The HSCA reported that Shanklin, in 1963, denied that he had any knowledge of the note. Until 1975, the Dallas FBI office maintained its silence, and kept secret the destruction of the note. (n.2)

Hosty's . . . answers on an internal FBI questionnaire were subsequently falsified either by Shanklin or by someone in FBI headquarters in Washington to admit "poor investigative work" in the Oswald case. Hosty received letters of censure from J. Edgar Hoover, was placed on probation. . . and demoted to Kansas City. Years later, a promotion that was recommended for him was blocked by Clyde Tolson, chief deputy of J. Edgar Hoover. Except for Shanklin and two others, every FBI agent who had anything to do with the Oswald case in 1962 or 1963 was censured, transferred, demoted, or barred from promotion, while Shanklin received several letters of commendation from Hoover. (n.3)

It is very hard to believe that the note was as simple and direct in its contents as Hosty says it was. If so, how explain the punitive response of J. Edgar Hoover? It may be legitimate to surmise that the FBI, in ways that have still not come to light, was as involved--by way of intermediaries--with Oswald, as was the CIA, by way of De Mohrenschildt. The irony is that Hosty may have had as little to do with it all as he claims, but became J. Edgar Hoover's own patsy--that

✓
epilogue/punishment

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luk? good man J. Edgar Hoover who may have more than a little to
sludge to nudge under the rug. *too much*
?

Let us take a last look at de Mohrenschildt. In the following piece of his testimony, recounting how he heard the news in Haiti that someone had killed Kennedy, he is still taken with his own acumen:

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. Now I do not consider myself...a genius. But the very first thought after we heard some character was mixed up in the assassination of the President, when we were listening to the radio in the house of an employee of the American Embassy in Port au Prince, and he mentioned that the name of the presumable assassin is something Lee, Lee, Lee--and I said, "Could it be Lee Oswald?"

And he said, "I guess that is the name."

Mr. Jenner. That occurred to you?

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. That occurred to me.

Mr. Jenner. As soon as you heard the name Lee?

Mr. De Mohrenschildt. As soon as I heard the name Lee. Now, why it occurred to me--because he was a crazy lunatic. (n.4)

The Haitian government must have gone through quite a few shifts over the next weeks in their approach toward De Mohrenschildt. We obtain more than a clue in George's manuscript "I'm a Patsy."

. . . We learned that a letter was sent by someone influential in Washington to the officials of the Haitian government to drop me from the payroll and to exile me as fast as possible. Fortunately I had good friends and the latter did not happen. And later, little by little, we were ostracized by the United States Ambassador Timmons, then by the American businessmen and government employees with whom we had been on very good terms, and, finally, came the news of the investigation of all our friends and even acquaintances in the United States.

. . . At last, after a good long time, we were officially invited to come to Washington and help the Warren Commission in their investigation. Although we could contribute very little, we still accepted to go to

Washington to testify. Although our depositions were supposed to remain confidential, all three hundred pages of irrelevant conversation were printed and promiscuously distributed. (n.5)

Toward the end of the same manuscript, he gives a somewhat more candid explanation of the same process:

As the atmosphere of Port-au-Prince became oppressive for us and my work was suffering from it, we were considering abandoning my survey, disbanding my small personnel and returning to the States. But President Duvalier found himself a solution to this situation. He asked Dr. Herve Boyer, Minister of Finance, Secretary of Treasury, and a good friend of mine who had helped me get the survey contract, to invite me to his office and to have a chat with me. [Boyer] said decisively: "You are in the hot water. Everyone is talking about you and your wife. Do not abandon your survey but go back to the States and clear your name somehow. If you cannot, come back, wind up your work and leave the country."

It so happened that on the same day our Embassy received a letter, addressed to me and my wife, from Mr. J. Lee Rankin, General Counsel of the Warren Commission. Mr. Rankin invited us to come to Washington, D.C., if we

wished, and to testify. This letter also stated that if we accepted to testify, the Warren Commission would pay all our expenses to Washington and back to Haiti. Of course, we were most anxious to cooperate as much as we could to solve this crime. But Jeanne refused to travel without our two dogs--Manchester terriers--and, after the exchange of wires, Mr. Rankin accepted this additional "dog expense." . . .

I was the first to testify. The man who took my deposition was Albert Jenner, a lawyer from Chicago, who much later became well known in connection with the Watergate case. . . . I have to admit that either he was much cleverer than I or that I was impressed by the whole setting and situation as it unfolded in Washington at the time. Anyway, Jenner played with me as if I were a baby.

(n.6)

Poor George!

In fact, it was a trial of nerves. He had to protect the CIA and he had to protect himself, and as we can recall, the way to protect himself was to remind the Agency that he could certainly pull them in with him if they should be so rash as to disown him completely and destroy his now-unstable sinecure in Haiti.

At the conclusion of his stay in Washington, he may have looked to better his situation at a small dinner party in

Washington; of course, his account gives only a small inkling of such an option:

Very tired by our testimonies, we were invited after our ordeal to the luxurious house of Jacqueline Kennedy's mother and her stepfather, Mr. Hugh Auchincloss. This luxurious house was located in Georgetown and Auchincloss' money originated of some association of Hugh's family with John D. Rockefeller, Sr., of the oil fame. . . . (n.7)

Almost in passing, De Mohrenschildt mentions that Allan Dulles is also there. Is it fair to suspect that Dulles asked the Auchinclosses to arrange the dinner? Dulles, having been all but forcibly retired from the CIA after the Bay of Pigs, would still have been in contact with many a CIA loop; Dulles was bound to have questions concerning Agency connections with De Mohrenschildt. Even an active director of the CIA will have a good deal of sensitive information concealed from him, and, in this situation, relegated to the sidelines for more than two years, Dulles must have had his own share of suspicion about how closely CIA was involved with Oswald.

Naturally, if he and George had any private conversation that night, there will be no record of it. De Mohrenschildt contents himself with remarking that Allen Dulles "asked me a few questions about Lee."

One of them was, I remember, did Lee have a reason of hating President Kennedy? However, when I answered that he was rather an admirer of the dead President, everyone took my answer with a grain of salt. Again, the overwhelming opinion was that Lee was the sole assassin.

(n.8)

De Mohrenschildt is, as ever, ready to divert us from the point:

I was still thinking of poor Lee, comparing his life with the life of these multi-millionaires. I tried to reason--to no avail. It seemed to me that I was facing a conspiracy, a conspiracy of stubbornness and silence. Finally, both Jeanne and Janet (Mrs. Auchincloss) got very

emotional, embraced each other, and cried together, one over the loss of her son-in-law, the other over the loss of a great president she admired so much.

"Janet," I said before leaving, "you were Jack Kennedy's mother-in-law, and I am a complete stranger. I would spend my own money and lots of my time to find out who were the real assassins and the conspirators. Don't you want any further investigation? You have infinite resources."

"Jack is dead and nothing will bring him back," replied she decisively. (n.9)

As usual, there is very little emotional sequence to De Mohrenschildt's account. One thing happens, and then another, and they seem to have almost nothing to do with each other. The best way to prevent the development of a scenario is to keep your events episodic:

But we were still in the Auchincloss' luxurious mansion, about ready to leave. "Incidentally," said Mrs. Auchincloss coldly, "my daughter Jacqueline never wants to see you again because you were close to her husband's assassin."

"It's her privilege," I answered.

Hugh, who was a very silent man, asked me suddenly:
"And how is Marina fixed financially?"

"I do not know. I just read that she received quite a lot of money from the charitable American people--maybe eighty thousand dollars."

"That won't last her long," he said thoughtfully and, almost without transition, pointed out to an extraordinary chess set: "This is early Persian valued at sixty thousand dollars."

We said goodbyes amicably to the Auchinclosses and drove off back to our hotel. "That son of a gun Hugh has an income running into millions," I told Jeanne thoughtfully.

"Such figures are beyond my comprehension," she said sadly. (n.10)

For his testimony before the Warren Commission, De Mohrenschildt was reimbursed with job security. Or, to be precise, he was, and he was not. Forces were in play with counter-forces.

Fortunately, the Haitian Ambassador in Washington was reassured by the Warren Commission that we were decent people. The Ambassador transmitted this message to

President Duvalier and we could return safely to Haiti. But my contract became hopelessly harmed by the intervening publicity and by the peculiar attitude taken by the American Embassy toward us. And President Duvalier, the astute Papa Doc, knew through his informants, that our Embassy would not protect my rights any more. And the old fox was absolutely right; the payments for my survey began drying up and in later years I never received any cooperation from anyone in our Embassy or in the State Department in trying to recover the large balance of my contract still due to me. (n.11)

Still, he is able to hang on in Haiti until 1966, after which he and Jeanne came back to Dallas.

. . . his life had changed once again for the worse. He had failed to pull off the big coup in sisal or oil tha he had counted on. His book on his Central American adventures had been refused by several publishers. And, as always, George was feeling financial pressure. Having spent his life among tycoons, he had never been able to earn as much as he felt he needed. His relations with Jeanne became bitter. They divorced, but then went on living together, estranged from everyone they knew. Jeanne had a job, while George taught French at a small

black college in Dallas . . . A decade or so after the assassination, his spirits sank into depression,. . .

(n.12)

Posner, picking up on this deterioration in De Mohrenschildt, does his best to render him permanently incompetent:

. . . De Morenschildt was quite mad by the time he gave his final interview. For nearly a year before his death, he was paranoid, fearful that the "FBI and the Jewish Mafia" were out to kill him. He twice tried to kill himself with drug overdoses, and another time cut his wrists and submerged himself in a bathtub. After he began waking in the middle of every night, screaming and beating himself, his wife finally committed him to Parkland Hospital psychiatric unit, where he was diagnosed as psychotic and given two months of intensive shock therapy. After his treatment, he said he had been with Oswald on the day of the assassination, though he was actually with dozens of guests at the Bulgarian Embassy in Haiti the day JFK was killed. Despite De Morenschildt's imbalance, Epstein and others still quote the final interview as though it were an uncontested fact.

(n.13)

De Morenschildt not "quite mad" when he gave his final interview. Once again, Posner is avoiding those sources that would tilt the game-plan for his case. De Mohrenschildt in the last month of his life was depressed but not delusional.

Sam Ballen, who saw him in Dallas only one month before he died, found George "beating himself pretty hard." He berated himself for friendships he had lost and opportunities he had tossed aside and said that his life had been a failure. He had been an "idiot," he said, to act in a joking and cavalier fashion in his appearance before the Warren Commission. And he was worried about the people he had injured, especially Lee Oswald. . . . He had allowed Lee to make a hero and a father of him. He had known it, had basked in it, had tolerated it for a while. But now he thought it "frivolous" and "irresponsible" to have done so. . . . George was "gripped by remorse."

Ballen, who had not seen De Mohrenschildt in years, came away from their meeting feeling sad. For all his faults, of which the greatest was his "utter irresponsibility," George was, Ballen believed, "one of the world's great people." He tried to reassure George.

He invited him to come to Santa Fe and offered him the kind of rough, outdoor work that seemed likely to help George the most. Afterwards, Ballen looked back with the feeling that he had been dining with "Hemingway before the suicide." (n.14)

Yes, De Mohrenschildt was in the grip of that grim appraisal of self that can weigh so heavily upon older men who no longer have the energy to improve their personal facts, but it seems fair to estimate that De Mohrenschildt was not out of his mind when he spoke to Edward Epstein about his CIA connections.

We can take leave of George with this passage from Gaeton Fonzi's book, "The Last Investigation."

The house was hidden behind a barrier of high hedges and I hadn't noticed any numbers, so I wasn't sure I had the right place when I pulled into the narrow driveway. It was a strangely grim house for that narrow, monied stretch of Florida coastline, where the mansions are usually chic pastel modern or classy traditional white. . . .

As I got out of the car, a young woman emerged

unexpectedly from behind the building. She was strikingly beautiful, tall and dark with a smooth sculpted face, long raven hair and deep brown eyes. She wore a tight black leotard and moved with the supple, sensuous ease of a dancer. Her tan body glowed with a sheen of perspiration; she had obviously been exercising. She wiped her brow and arms with a small towel.

"Excuse me," I said as I approached her. "Is this the Tilton home?"

"Yes, it is," she said. Her expression was cool.

"I'm looking for George De Mohrenschildt."

She hesitated a moment, her eyes cautious, probing.

"He's not in at the moment. I'm his daughter, Alexandra. May I help you?"

I told her my name and why I was there. There was no indication that she was surprised. She said her father was in Palm Beach and, no, she didn't know when he would return or how to get in touch with him. She added, however, that he was certain to be home in the evening and that I could reach him if I called about eight o'clock. She gave me the telephone number, which I already had.

"I'd appreciate it," I said, "if you would tell him that I'll be calling and would like to see him." We hadn't yet been issued official identification so my only credentials were old business cards which identified me as a staff investigator for U.S. Senator Richard Schweiker. I crossed out Schweiker's name on one and wrote above it "House Select Committee on Assassinations." She took it and said she would tell her father to expect my call. . .

About 6:30 that evening I received a call from Bill O'Reilly, a friend who was then a television reporter in Dallas . . . "De Mohrenschildt's attorney, a guy named Pat

Russell, he calls and says De Mohrenschildt committed suicide this afternoon. Is that true?"

Less than a minute after I was hit by that report, my telephone rang again. It was Palm Beach State Attorney Dave Bludworth calling. He said my card had been found in de Mohrenschildt's shirt pocket. About four hours after I had been there, De Mohrenschildt had returned to Nancy Tilton's house. His daughter told him of my visit and gave him my card. He put the card in his pocket and, according to Alexandra, did not seem upset, but shortly afterwards said he was going upstairs to rest. What De Mohrenschildt then apparently did was take a .20-gauge shotgun that Mrs. Tilton kept beside her bed for protection, sat down in a soft chair, put the stock of the shotgun on the floor and the end of the barrel in his mouth, leaned forward and pulled the trigger. (n.15)

Chapter 48--In the Rubble of the Aftermath

So long as Lee was alive, for allof those forty-plus hours in which Marguerite could anticipate a long drawn-out trial, the problem came to how she and Marina would live. She knew she could cash in her insurance policy for \$836, and that could provide a base. She had looked immediately, she could assure the members of the Commission, into the value of her policy:

Marguerite Oswald. . . .I am not interested in material things, gentlemen. . . . I thought, as a family, Marina and I should stick together and face our future together. . . . I could see no reason, no advantage of Marina living with strangers. I said that before. I thought it would be better, the original idea Marina and I had made, to live in my apartment and do the best we can. And I even said--we have \$836 to start with, and then if we don't make it. "What about you helping us?"

"But give us a chance as a family. Don't put the girl in a strange home, a Russian girl, a foreign girl, taken away from her mama."

Marina has no mother and father--she has a

stepfather. But I was her Mama up to this time. And I could not see Marina in a strange home. (n.1)

Those remarks suggest an interregnum for Marina. Before Lee's death, Marina was already feeling that it was impolitic to keep living with Ruth Paine, and so she must seriously have been contemplating a life together with Marguerite where they could work together some kind of defense of Lee. Once he was no longer alive, however, every force in the scheme of things began to separate them. She did not, after all, like her mother-in-law all that much; the Secret Service on whom she was depending more and more detested Marguerite, and the business manager Marina soon took on had to see a money-cow in the offing--good Americans give a tithe to their sentimental responses, and the lonely Soviet widow of the President's assassin had struck enough of a responsive note already for small contributions to come to Marina with every mail. Marguerite, whether she was first or last to sense it, was on the way out.

Marguerite Oswald. . . . One of the other Secret Service men had gone to talk to Robert's boss, because Robert was worried about his job. . . . And he came in and in front of me he patted Robert on the shoulder and said, "Now, Robert, I have talked to your boss and you are all right. I assured him you are not involved in this in any way."

So, gentlemen, Marina is taken care of; Robert is taken care of--I am not feeling sorry for myself, believe me, because I can take care of myself. But here is a mother who has come to the rescue, lost her job, offered her good love and insurance money and nobody has wondered what is going to become of me.

Mr. Rankin. Well, did you think it was improper that the Secret Service man would go to Robert's boss and tell him he was not involved, and there was nothing improper?

Marguerite Oswald. No, sir, I do not. I think it was a fine gesture. And that is the point I am trying to make out. Why are these fine gestures to see that Marina is going to have a home and be taken care of, and Robert's job is secure--but I am nothing. I was not included in the plans. And what is going to become of me? I have no income. I have no job. I lost my job. And nobody thought about me. . . .

I don't mean to imply I'm sorry for myself. I am trying to bring out a point that through all of this, that I have not been considered, even as much as to testify. I want to know why. I don't understand why.

It is very strange.

(n.2)

The embitterment is on the way to becoming colossal.

Marguerite Oswald. This is the 28th. So [I told] the agent that was taking me home . . . that I wanted to tell Marina . . . that I was going. So he knocked on the door. The Russian interpreter from the State Department, Mr. Gopadze, came to the door and the agent said, "Mrs. Oswald is going home and wants to tell Marina and the children goodbye."

He said, "Well, we are interviewing her and she is on tape. She will get in touch with you."

So I never saw Marina after that time. (n.3)

Well, she would see her once, but from a distance.

Marguerite Oswald. . . . It has been questioned why Marina would be under strict seclusion. . . with not a soul seeing Marin. I say not a soul [until] it came over

the news in Fort Worth that Marina's brother-in-law, Lee's brother, would be with her at Christmas time. . .

Gentlemen, I stayed home crying, hoping against hope that the Secret Service would come and let me be with my family for Christmas time, waiting there patiently. I was available for news. I had blasted this in the paper over and over. I waited for them to come get me. But there again, I am excluded.

Do you know the answers to all these exclusions? I do not.

The first time Marina ever made any statement or public appearance was approximately two weeks ago, or maybe not that long. She was on an exclusive television program, Channel 4 in Fort Worth, Texas, when she stated publicly that in her mind she thought that Lee shot President Kennedy. What an awful thing for this 22-year-old foreign girl to think. She thinks in her mind. She doesn't know. But she thinks, gentlemen. . . . "In my mind I think Lee shot President Kennedy."

She doesn't know our American way of life. Lee Harvey Oswald will be the accused assassin of President Kennedy when this information is over with, believe me.

She is a Russian girl, and maybe they do this in Russia. But what I am going to say is that Marina Oswald was brainwashed by the Secret Service, who have kept her in seclusion for eight weeks--eight weeks, gentlemen, with no one talking to Marina.

Marina does not know English. Marina knows none of the facts from newspaper accounts. The only way Marina can get facts is through what the FBI and the Secret service are probably telling her, or some of the facts that Marina has manufactured since.

I am sorry, gentlemen, but this is a true story.

Mr. Rankin. What do you base your claim on, that Marina was brainwashed?

Marguerite Oswald. Because for eight weeks no one has been allowed to see Marina. I do not believe in my mind that that is the American way of life. I question the fact that it is even legal, that they can keep her in strict seclusion with no one seeing her for eight weeks, gentlemen. . . . Now, Mr. Rankin, I am not saying, even implying that the Secret Service should not protect my daughter-in-law. I am grateful for that, and I have expressed it. I am most grateful she has protection. But would there have been any harm for me to talk to Marina with the Secret Service around and let Marina tell me that she does not want to see me? (n.4)

Marina considered living with Marguerite. But Robert once more was against it. It will go all right for a week, he said, but after that . . .

Marina took his advice. By default she moved first into the home of [the director of the Inn of the Six Flags] Jim Martin and his wife and children, and he became for a time her business manager. Marina needed help of this kind for she received film, magazine and book contract offers from all over Europe and America, and, in addition, money in the mail. . .

(n.5)

By the end of the winter of 1964, she would break relations with her business manager, Jim Martin--she grew suspicious of everyone who had commercial relations with her--and she bought a home of her own in Richardson, Texas. It would take her testimony before the Warren Commission and the better part of a year before Marina lost her fear of prison and of deportation, and by then Marguerite was an irritant--as her knowledge of English increased, she could pick out items in the newspapers concerning her former mother-in-law's latest conclusions about just how Lee had been framed.

Mr. Rankin. Will you describe to us your relationship with your mother-in-law now?

Marina Oswald. . . . I understood her motherly concern. But in view of the fact of everything that happened later, her appearances in the radio, in the press, I do not think that she is a very sound-thinking woman, and I think that part of the guilt is hers. I do not accuse her, but I think that part of the guilt in connection with what

happened with Lee lies with her because he did not perhaps receive the education he should have during his childhood, and he did not have any correct leadership on her part, guidance. If she were in contact with my children now, I do not want her to cripple them.

Mr. Rankin. Has she tried to see you since the assassination?

Marina Oswald. Yes, all the time.

Mr. Rankin. And have you seen her since that time?

Maria Oswald. Accidentally we met at the cemetery on a Sunday when I visited there, but I didn't want to meet with her, and I left. She didn't understand that I didn't want to meet with her and she accused the Secret Service personnel of preventing her from seeing me.

Mr. Rankin. Except for the time at the jail and at the cemetery, have you seen her since the assassination?

Marina Oswald. No.

(n.6)

A little later in the day, Rankin had to steer close to a touchy matter. Marguerite had been making public claims that Marina had been brain-washed and so it was necessary to reconnoiter the subject:

Mr. Rankin. After the assassination, did the police and the FBI and the Secret Service ask you many questions?

Marina Oswald. In the police station there was a regular routine questioning. And then after I was with the agents of the Secret Service and the FBI, they asked me many questions of course--many questions. Sometimes the FBI agents asked me questions which had no bearing or relationship, and if I didn't want to answer, they told me that if I wanted to live in this country, I would have to help in this matter, even though they were often irrelevant. That is the FBI. . . . I have a very good opinion about the Secret Service, and the people in the police department treated me very well. But the FBI agents were somehow polite and gruff. Sometimes they would mask a gruff question in a polite form.

Mr. Rankin. Did you see anyone from the Immigration Service during this time?

Marina Oswald. Yes . . . I was told that he had especially come from New York, it seems to me.

Mr. Rankin. What did he say to you?

Marina Oswald. That if I was not guilty of anything, if I had not committed any crime against this Government, then

I had every right to live in this country. This was a type of introduction before the questioning by the FBI. He even said that it would be better for me if I would help them. . . .

Mr. Rankin. Did you understand that you were being threatened with deportation if you didn't answer those questions?

Marina Oswald. No, I did not understand it that way.

You see, it was presented in such a delicate form, but there was a clear implication that it would be better if I were to help. (n.7)

The Secret Service had had suspicions of Michael and Ruth Paine. Michael was active in the ACLU and that a radical activity to the authorities in Texas. Then, the Dallas police had come up with the letter that Lee had written to Marina in Russian back on the night in April on Neely Street when, we presume, he took a shot at Walker. Marina had hidden that letter in a Russian language cookbook, and Ruth, having been instructed by the Dallas police to bring in anything of interest that she came across, did just that. She gave them the cookbook, the police had the letter translated; at first they even assumed it had been written by Ruth. More suspicion

on the Paines; the suspicion would stick after the facts didn't. And Marina, who was doing her best to defend his name, was now confronted not only with the letter, but with the fear that she could conceivably be imprisoned or deported if she persisted in withholding information about Lee.

It is hardly unsafe to say that somewhere around this time, Marina began to cooperate with the authorities. As a corollary, her friendship with Ruth was over. Both women and their grievances. Ruth did not find it trustworthy that Marina had not told her about the rifle, nor about General Walker, nor about Lee's trip to Mexico; Marina, in turn, felt that Ruth had been careless in handing over the cookbook to the police, and so had pushed her into a position where she was obliged to defend herself at the expense of no longer protecting Lee. June and Rachel would be known as the children of an assassin.

These are hard equations! It is probably not possible to end a friendship for practical motives alone. One looks to find some determinative breach of taste in the former friend.

Mr. Rankin. You said that you didn't want to see Ruth Paine because you thought she wanted to see you for her

own interests. Will you tell us what you meant by that?

Marina Oswald. I think she wants to see me for her own selfish interests. She likes to be well known, popular, and I think that anything I should write her, for example, would wind up in the press.

The reason that I think so is that the first time that we were in jail to see Lee, she was with me and with her children, and she was trying to get in front of the cameras, and to push her children, and instructed her children to look this way and look that way. And the first photographs that appeared were of me and her children. (n.8)

Marina is as responsive to this brief crack in the Quaker-like goodness of Ruth Paine as any heroine might be in the work of Henry James. A small flaw that cannot be forgiven is, by the measure of Jamesian percipience, equal in size to an outrageous and explosive act.

In any event, Ruth Paine is out, and Marguerite is out. Marina has two children she wishes to raise, and for that she must survive. She must wall herself away from the past. Marina, given her powerful sense of roots and her substantial funds of guilt and the numberless tendrils that grow in the interstices between one's roots and one's guilt, can hardly be

unaware of the cost of cauterizing her past a second time--once for Russia and now again for her life with Lee.

She could not do it successfully. By Russian lights, she was his wife and so she was responsible for his acts. It was not always certain to her that she held no blame for the deaths of the President and the policemen, Tippit, and especially for the burden their children, now fatherless, would suffer in common with the burden of her own two children. She might cry out in conversation that if Lee came back to earth and she could talk to him, "I'd give him such a scolding that he would die all over again," (n.9) but that was merely a sentiment--cauterization of the past was her real goal.

Marina became a little wild, taking only fitful care of her children, and spending as many waking hours as she could on escapades with boyfriends and neighbors, on all-night bowling sprees and on well-publicized sorties to a Dallas nightclub called the Music Box where she was soon a favorite. Aware of her self-destructiveness, Marina called 1964 "her second Leningrad period." (n.10)

By 1965, after rejecting numerous proposals (with the suspicion that she might be loved less for the complex composition of herself than for her new-found money--when it came to receiving compliments she had as many upraised quills as a porcupine) she decided to marry a man for whom she could feel some trust, a tall, gentlemanly Texan with fine, laid-back manners.

Today she lives outside Dallas on a seventeen-acre farm, with cattle on it, with Kenneth Porter whom she married in 1965. They were divorced in 1974 but they continue to live together as man and wife. Kenneth loves life on the farm and he is an expert mechanic, "one of the best," says Marina. He is a handsome man, and a devoted stepfather, a fact which Marina, after her own difficult childhood, values greatly. (n.11)

There was talk of interviewing June and Rachel and Mark, her son with Kenneth Porter, children now just over thirty-

one, twenty-nine, and twenty-seven in 1993--but Marina would have none of that, and who could argue with the legitimacy of such her refusal?

The thought that there would be one more book about Lee and herself was painful in the extreme. The horror that seeped through the floor in the vistas of her mind was like the high-colored vapors of a horror film. She did not want to talk about the past. Yet none of her obsessions could die. She could hardly remember what her old testimony had come to because now she believes that Lee was innocent, or if not innocent, then part of a conspiracy, but never the central figure. And then, since evidence is but a blur to her, she cannot be certain what she believes. If only she knew whether he did it or not. What a great weight would be lifted from June and Rachel if he did not.

She no longer knows what it is she knows. Her sense of chronology presents by now a landscape of rubble. She has passed already over the thirty years and more than a thousand hours of interview and the questions never cease. She may be the last living smoker to consume several packs a day, and how can it be otherwise? The past is full of guilt--the future is imbued with dread. Only her sense of the present is clear; she is always filled with intimations of the motive of new people to whom she speaks. How innocent can their motive in

approaching her ever be? These days she feels that the walls are coming closer. If she starts thinking about what has happened to her, not with pity, she will say, or sorrow for herself, but just hoping to lessen her stress, she feels she is choking. She still thinks of the night Lee sat in the dark on their porch in New Orleans, and he was weeping. It was such a heavy burden for him. Something, and she did not know what it was, but maybe--she cannot say--it was equal to the weight of the walls coming closer to her. She sits in a chair, a tiny woman in her early fifties, her thin shoulders hunched forward in such pain of spirit under such a mass of guilt that one would comfort her as one would hug a child. What remains of what was once her beauty are her extraordinary eyes, blue as diamonds, and they blaze with light as if in recompense for all past horror, she has been granted a spark from the hour of an apocalypse others have not seen. Perhaps it is the light offered to victims who have suffered like the gods.

We can hardly depart, however, from the wife of Lee Harvey Oswald without returning to the mother. She, too, has known the suffering of the gods:

Marguerite Oswald. I don't believe this letter belongs with the letters. May I see it, please? Is that a letter from Russia? I don't think so from what I can see from here.

Mr. Rankin. It purports to be, Mrs. Oswald. I hand it to you. Is it Exhibit 198 you are speaking of?

Marguerite Oswald. Yes. I'm sorry. There was another very important letter of this size that I thought maybe had become confused with the Russian letters. You will have to forgive me, Chief Justice Warren, but this is quite a big undertaking. (n.12)

All day long, throughout her testimony, she has been fumbling through her file of letters, bringing forth "documents, gentlemen," that prove nothing but that she has had months of lonely nights filled with intolerable scenarios of suspicion. Her letters prove of little value in the evaluative air of the Warren Commission. She is consuming their time with trivia, and all the while her possession of these letters remains as important to her as tombstones. Who is moving the tombstones in Lee's graveyard?

The interlocutors grow testy:

Representative Boggs. Why did your son defect to Russia?

Marguerite Oswald. I cannot answer that yes or no sir. I am going to go through the whole story or it is no good. And that is what I have been doing for this Commission all day long--giving a story.

Representative Boggs. Suppose you just make it very brief.

Marguerite Oswald. I cannot make it brief. I will say I am unable to make it brief. This is my life and my son's life going down in history. (n.13)

Marguerite has taken enough blame, scorn and ridicule from enough people (including the barely concealed animus of the Warren Commission) that we hardly need to depict her in one more unfavorable light--it seems certain at the least that every malformation, or just about, of Lee Harvey Oswald's character has its roots in her. That much granted, it is also difficult not to feel some guarded sympathy for Marguerite

Claverie Oswald. Like Lee, the internal workings of her psyche were always condemned to hard labor, and so much of what she tried, and with the best intentions, would fail--especially her obvious desire to receive some love from her sons, enough love at least to match her harsh pride--which kept everyone at a remove. It is not agreeable to see her life through her eyes--her boys are always leaving her as quickly as they can, and their willful wives--willful as she sees them--will not respect her desire to be a decent mother-in-law. Her sacrifices are many and real--no love comes back. Merely banishment from her children and icy silence. And then her favorite is accused of killing the president. In her heart of hearts she has to wonder whether indeed he did it--she knows how bold he can be.

Denigrators of Marguerite Oswald will remark on how much she loves the limelight after he is gone, and it is true: his love of attention is equalled by hers--she spoke to large audiences for the first time in her life and it was a great step forward from that sales job in New York where she was fired because of excessive body odor.

Yet, for all her latter-day notoriety, appearing as featured speaker week after week at rallies and in front of paying audiences, we have to recall that she still died alone and full of a literal cancer to follow upon the bottomless

cancer of those endless wounds within personal wounds--no, she had her life, and one would not want it, but somewhere in the bureaucratic corridors of Karmic Reassignment, she is probably arguing now with one of the monitors, dissatisfied with the low station, by her lights, of her next placement. "I gave birth to, and raised, one of the most famous and important Americans who ever lived!" she will tell the clerk-angel who is recording her story.

Chapter 49--A Denial of Scopes, Ballistics, Evidence, and
Conspiracy

If Ruby has been termed an enigma and Oswald a mystery, let us recognize that an hypothesis can be tried in a polemical court for its incisiveness against an enigma--it will bring us closer to a solution, or it will not. A mystery, however, will not be tried. It can only be apprehended.

We know a great deal about Oswald by now. We can even venture convincing reasons for many of his actions. Yet before us still lies a double question, a cloud surrounded by a vapor; yet the answer to the first mystery could dispense with the second. For if Oswald did not kill Kennedy and was not part of a conspiracy to murder him, then the second question--Why did he do it?--is ready to disappear.

Of course, with all we know and all we have learned (assuming that the facts chosen have been salient rather than misleading--a sizable assumption when one is dealing with the welter of events, rumors, gossip, and plethora of odd matters revolving around Oswald), it is very difficult to believe that

our protagonist is innocent of any serious connection to the assassination. It even violates our understanding of him that he would allow his Mannlicher-Carcano to be used by another man on the sixth floor while he lingers in the lunchroom four landings below. To what end? What purpose could that serve for Oswald? If he has allowed his rifle to be used, then he is implicated in a conspiracy where he is no more than a responsible cog in the machine and that could never be enough for him, no more than a movie star can accept a small part with few colors to offer. If one misperceives him on this point, then one has misunderstood him entirely and all of one's comprehension has been misapplied.

There is, indeed, a jungle of evidence and counter-evidence as to whether he could fire the shots in time, was a good enough marksman, was the only gunman in Dealey Plaza that morning, and on we can go exploring into every last reach of remote possibility, but evidence, by itself, can never dissolve a mystery since it is in the nature of evidence to produce, sooner or later, the opposite of itself through the form of contending experts in a court of law. The resolution of a mystery such as this can be found only in the spirit of Oswald: if he did, indeed, kill Kennedy, then why did he do it? Every account of his expressed sentiments by every

witness who recalls his remarks is congruent--that rarest of phenomena for evidence! All agree that he saw Kennedy as relatively a good President and liked him, or so he professed. Given Oswald's reflexive impulse to lie at the drop of a hat, one could make the judgement that he was paying lip service to Kennedy because he had had the project of assassination in his mind for many months. However, given the lack of any opportunity in Dallas or New Orleans to be near enough to commit such an act, not, at least, until those last couple of weeks in November when Oswald knew that he would certainly be near enough, the more reasonable assumption is that he did like Kennedy as much as he could approve of a conventional politician, and that finally it had very little to do with his act. He was not shooting at Kennedy because he liked him or disliked him--that was irrelevant to the depth of his deed.

But we are advancing too quickly. It may be better to contend first with the larger questions of evidence even if one does not respect such matters with the religious intensity that others seem to bring to facts, hard facts--often, as we have observed, about as hard as the shell of an egg.

Mr. Specter. With respect to rapid-fire shooting, how does the telescopic sight on a four-power sight work out?

Sergeant Zahm: Four-power being a reasonably low-power scope. . . it covers a reasonable amount of area out at about 100 yards. . . it just takes a minor move in aiming to bring the crosshairs to bear, and then it is a quick squeeze. . . .

Mr. Specter. Would the use of a four-power scope be a real advantage . . . ?

Sergeant Zahm. . . . particularly at the range of 100 yards. . . It allows you to see your target clearly, and it is still of a minimum amount of power that it doesn't exaggerate your own body movements. . . .you only have the one element, the crosshair, in relation to the target as opposed to iron sights [which requires] aligning the sights and then aligning them on the target. It is a real aid.

Mr. Specter. Now, assuming that the president was struck under those circumstances at a distance of from 176.9 feet to 190.8 feet, using a 6.5 mm Mannlicher-Carcano rifle with a four-power scope, would a man with Oswald's marksmanship capabilities be able to complete such a shot and strike the target on the white mark there?

Sergeant Zahm. Very definitely.

Mr. Specter. How would you characterize that, as a difficult, not too difficult, easy, or how would you characterize that shot?

Sergeant Zahm. With the equipment he had and with his ability, I consider it a very easy shot.

Mr. Specter. . . . would a marksman of Mr. Oswald's capabilities using such a rifle with a 4-power scope be able to strike the President in the back of the head? . . .

Sergeant Zahm. Yes; I think that aiming at the mass of what portion of the President is visible at that distance and with his equipment, he would very easily have attained a hit, not necessarily aiming and hitting in the head. This would have been a little more difficult and probably be to the top of his ability, aiming and striking the President in the head. But assuming that he aimed at the mass of the center portion of the President's body, he would have hit him very definitely someplace. . .

Mr. Specter. How would the fact that the street had a 3-degree decline affect the difficulty of the shot?

Sergeant Zahm. It would make it easier because Oswald was in an elevated position, and therefore if the car was traveling on a level terrain--he would have to keep adjusting by holding up a little bit as the car travelled.

But by going downgrade this just straightened out his line of sight that much better. (n.1)

One can envision the scene in court if Oswald had lived. The defense would have brought in an expert to testify to the opposite of Sergeant Zahm's opinion, and much would have been made of the possible inaccuracy in the setting of the scope on the Mannlicher-Carcano since the first riflemen who did tests with that gun for the government had to correct the alignment before their shots were able to hit even an unmoving target. On the other hand, the same testimony could be used to argue that Oswald, firing with a misaligned scope, had been served with the good luck that his own errors were fortuitously corrected by the very error in the scope.

Mr. Frazier. . . . I think I must say here that this mount was loose on this rifle when we received it. And apparently the scope had even been taken off of the rifle, in searching for fingerprints on the rifle. So that actually the way it was sighted-in when we got it does not necessarily mean it was sighted-in that way when it was abandoned. (n.2)