

LEE HARVEY OSWALD - ANOTHER LOOK
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On November 22, 1963, Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated President John F. Kennedy. The facts are indisputable, are supported by eyewitness testimony, and have been reconfirmed by the latest developments in forensic science. Yet many people refuse to accept that a pathetic loner with a mail order rifle destroyed Camelot.¹

For over thirty years, a cottage industry has spawned conspiracy theories ranging from the barely plausible to the absurd. Thousands of books and articles have been written and scores of possible assassins have been identified by name. The culmination of this conspiratorial view was Oliver Stone's cinematic paranoid vision, *JFK*, which idealized New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison's megalomaniac prosecutorial misconduct.

Lost in all these theories is the assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald. Essentially dismissed as inconsequential, Lee Harvey Oswald has been reduced to a stupid patsy, ironically probably one of the images he feared most. Oswald has been deprived of the place in history for which he so violently lunged that November day.

Contributing to the doubts about Lee Harvey Oswald's guilt was the Warren Commission's decision to refrain from speculating about the assassin's provocation or purpose. The country was given a murderer without motives. Although the Warren Commission considered many possible reasons for Oswald's act—his presumed commitment to Marxism, personal grievance, a desire to change the structure of society, or simply to go down in history—none satisfactorily explained it.² For the Warren Commission, the most outstanding conclusions were that Oswald was profoundly alienated from the world, and his life was characterized by isolation, frustration, and failure. They noted his few close relationships and his grandiosity, but they refrained from ascribing to him any single motive or group of motives. Murder without motive is illogical; it is perhaps no wonder that the Commission's report has been so often questioned.

The Commission gave prominence to Oswald's presumed commitment to Marxism without seeing that his rigid and contradictory politics were a manifestation of his disturbed identity.³ Their view of his Marxism and the Cold War atmosphere of those times may have distracted them from using the rest of the considerable evidence they had accumulated about his personality to speculate about his motives. Since much has been learned about severe character disorders since the early 1960's, the lack of such knowledge at the time may also account for the little help psychiatrists gave to the Commission.⁴ This article will re-examine the case of Lee Harvey Oswald in light of recent discoveries about serious character pathology, knowledge that allows a more informed speculation about Oswald's personality structure and motives.⁵

Lee Harvey Oswald was born October 18, 1939, the third child and third son of Marguerite Claverie Oswald. Oswald's mother was the next to last of six children of a New Orleans street car conductor. Marguerite's mother died when she was an infant, and she was

raised by her father and older siblings. She left school in the ninth grade, forged documents, and secured a job.

A brief marriage to Edward John Pic, Jr. produced her first child, a son. John Edward Pic was born in January of 1932 after his father had already left Marguerite. Although John grew up knowing who his father was, Marguerite didn't bother to reveal the financial support Pic provided, and for a long time John never knew about it.

In 1933, Marguerite married a divorced man, Robert Edward Lee Oswald, known as Lee, who was a collector of insurance premiums. Sadly, almost nothing is recorded about the character of Robert E. Lee Oswald.

Their first child, Robert, was born in 1934. Early 1939 found Marguerite pregnant with her third child, whom she hoped would be a girl. One day in August 1939, Robert E. Lee Oswald dropped dead of a heart attack while mowing his lawn. Marguerite had him buried that day, an act of presumed coldness for which his family never forgave her. For the second time in her young life, Marguerite had been abandoned by a husband while pregnant with his child.

The monies from a life insurance policy were supporting the young widow when she gave birth to her third and final child, a boy, she named Lee after his father and Harvey after the boy's paternal grandmother. Thus, Lee Harvey Oswald, a fatherless child, came into the world a "living linking object."⁶

In January of 1940 Marguerite placed her two older children, John Edward and Robert, in a Catholic orphanage. Neither was an orphan, and one of them had a father who was still alive. Lee lived with Marguerite, but was often cared for by his maternal aunt, Lillian Murret, who already had five children, and who could devote little attention to him. Such beginnings hardly helped the boy develop any secure attachments.

Marguerite Oswald is consistently described as a self-centered woman who felt that her virtues went unrecognized. She was jealous of others, resented what they had, and constantly complained about how unfair her life was.⁷

Robert Oswald remembered his mother as vivacious, but "I had become keenly aware that Mother felt the world owed her a living. It wasn't laziness—she always had plenty of energy—it was just the responsibility for all of us that was too much for her. She felt that her life was harder than the lives of most people. All of us could feel that she wanted to be free of the responsibility—wanted to let someone else face it. Even when we were small, I don't think she ever considered putting us up for adoption, but she wanted to give away as much of the responsibility for us as she could."⁸ Robert later observed at his military boarding school that other parents seemed to enjoy their children. "I just know that we learned, very early, that we were a burden to her."⁹

Marguerite's egocentric and irrational character is best illustrated in her own words. After she had achieved some notoriety from the Kennedy assassination, she would deny that her son was the assassin and insist that she could prove it. But then she would acknowledge that perhaps he was involved, yet still respond "does that make him a louse, killing doesn't mean badness. You find killing in some fine homes for one reason or another. And as we all know President Kennedy was a dying man. So I say it is possible that my son was chosen to shoot him in a mercy killing for the security of the country. And if this is true, it was a fine thing to do and my son is a hero."10 "I am in twenty-six volumes of the Warren Report, which is all over the world, so I must defend myself and my son, Lee."11 She claimed "a very unusual E.S.P., so doesn't it stand to reason that if my boy shot the President, I would have *known* at the time it happened?"12

Marguerite even petitioned to have her son buried at Arlington National Cemetery. She went so far as to say, "Lee Harvey Oswald, even after his death, had done more for his country than any other living human being."13 Her grandiosity, grievance, and self-pity are breathtaking in their illogic. "I do my bit. But nobody knows, and it's a shame they don't. I am not unhappy. But I am a mother in history, I am all over the world. There's two Presidents in my life, and *my* son's the one accused. You know, here is Mrs. Kennedy, a very wealthy woman, Mrs. Tippet [widow of the police officer Oswald killed] a very wealthy woman, Marina [Lee Harvey Oswald's widow] very wealthy, but *I* am wondering where my next meal is coming from. It's almost unbelievable, it's sometimes like a spiritual... Here we are, we four women in history, and yet *I* am the mother. But has anyone come forward to reimburse my emotional stability?"14 "If you research the life of Jesus Christ, you find that you never did hear anything more about the mother of Jesus, Mary, after He was crucified. And really nobody has worried about my welfare."15

Lee Harvey Oswald's developmental years can be characterized by separation from his brothers, isolation with his mother, and a relationship with her that was simultaneously controlling and neglectful. There was little stability. Lee moved twenty-one times in the first seventeen years of his life and attended twelve schools before dropping out in the tenth grade.

In January of 1942, when Lee Harvey Oswald was two years and three months of age, his brothers were moved from the Catholic orphanage to the Bethlehem Lutheran Home in New Orleans. Marguerite had also applied for Lee to reside there, but he was too young to be admitted, and she was turned down. In the spring of 1942, a couple, the Roaches, lived with the Oswalds, and Mrs. Roach cared for Lee while Marguerite worked. Mrs. Roach was discovered to be beating the two-year-old Lee and the couple was fired.

Later that year, Marguerite renewed her efforts to place Lee in the orphanage and succeeded. The day after Christmas, 1942, Lee went into the Bethlehem Lutheran Home. There were about one hundred children in residence, the oldest being thirteen. Lee's brother, Robert, has positive memories of the place, particularly as compared to the earlier Catholic orphanage. According to Robert, Lee never said he missed his mother. The boys saw her on Wednesdays and weekends.

In January of 1944, after thirteen months in the orphanage, Lee went with his mother to Dallas, Texas to be with her and the new man in her life. Lee's twelve-year-old half-brother, John, and ten-year-old brother, Robert, remained in the orphanage until June of 1944.

Marguerite had met Edwin Ekdahl, an engineer from Boston, whose job entailed much traveling. Edwin Ekdahl paid attention to Lee and genuinely seemed to care for him. John Pic, in his testimony before the Warren Commission, said of Ekdahl: "I think Lee found in him the father he never had (16). He had treated us real good, and I am sure Lee felt the same way." Marguerite was also easier to please when her husband was around, though evidence suggests that she married him more for money than and security than love. Ekdahl was already suffering from the coronary disease which would later kill him. Lee and Marguerite often accompanied Ekdahl on his business trips, and it has been suggested that Marguerite used Lee as a shield between herself and Ekdahl's wishes for greater intimacy.

Lee's older brothers rejoined the family in Texas, but were quickly sent to a military school in Port Gibson, Mississippi for three years. According to Robert Oswald, they found in the headmaster, a former Marine, the father they had never had.

Marguerite and Ekdahl were married in May of 1945, but the marriage quickly deteriorated. There were frequent arguments and separations. Young Lee was observed to be most worried about the separations and to hope desperately for reconciliation. Lee's entry into elementary school was delayed and disrupted because of the marital turmoil. Attempts at reconciliation failed. After Marguerite used one of her older sons to discover an affair on Ekdahl's part, he sued for divorce. Lee was scheduled to testify, but when he said he would not know the difference between true and false, he was excused. Given Marguerite's difficult character, it is not altogether surprising that the jury found in Ekdahl's favor, despite his adultery. Edwin Ekdahl died soon thereafter, and if Lee openly reacted to his death, it went unrecorded.

After the divorce, Lee's brothers were removed from the military school, although they could have remained there, and returned to Texas to live with Lee and their mother in Fort Worth. The family's living standard declined. The older boys slept on a porch, and Lee shared a bed with his mother. Robert remembered Lee during this time as loving the radio show, "Let's Pretend," and living in a world of fantasy.¹⁷ With the advent of television, Lee's favorite program became "I Led Three Lives," about an FBI informant posing as a communist spy. Robert thought Lee's "imagination and love of intrigue were a lot like Mother's. She always had a wild imagination and I think it influenced Lee's view of the world." Marguerite also had a touch of paranoia, seeing "a spy behind every door and tree."¹⁸

Robert remembered his mother turning the boys' trivial mistakes into crimes and telling them how wrong they were, withdrawing and threatening to call the police. "She didn't know us."¹⁹ With the advantage of having mastered independence in the orphanages and military school, the older boys learned to shrug off their mother, but Lee would be upset by her, go off by himself, never talk back, and brood for hours.

Marguerite would tell Lee what to do, but would always protect him from any criticism for misbehavior, even when it was clearly warranted.²⁰ A startled neighbor once saw Lee chase John with a butcher knife, and throw the knife at him, only to have Marguerite dismiss it as one of their usual little scuffles.²¹

Lee entered the third grade in September of 1948, in what was already his fourth elementary school. Marguerite wanted the two older boys to work to support her, and John, the oldest, had to defy her wishes in order to attend school. Marguerite failed to encourage Lee's school work, instead telling him he was smarter and better than other children, and letting him have his way about almost everything. Lee's intelligence was above average, but it is now apparent in his writings, and was indicated by psychiatric testimony before the Warren Commission, that he was profoundly dyslexic.

Marguerite insisted that Lee return straight home after school. A teacher, Mrs. Clyde Livingston, remembered, "Lee left an empty house in the morning, went home to an empty house for lunch, and returned to an empty house at night."²² She recalled Lee because he gave her a puppy as a gift. He would come by her home to check on the dog, but she was well aware that he was lonely, friendless, and there to see her. Lee's maternal aunt, Lillian Murret, remembered his visiting New Orleans and absolutely refusing to play with other children his own age.

A neighbor of the Oswalds during the four years after Ekdahl's brief tenure in their lives, 1948-1952, when Lee was 9-13 years old, revealed another side to the lonely boy. Hiram Conway remembered Mrs. Oswald dressing the three boys shabbily, and Lee as markedly different from his brothers. Lee "was quick to anger and he was, I would say, a vile nature—he was mean when he was angry, just ornery—he was vicious almost..." The boy roamed the street "looking for children to throw stones at...He was a bad kid...the children didn't fight with him much, they got out of his way. They would hide or move on and it would be pretty hard to catch him in a fight because it would be pretty hard for him to have caught one of them."²³ Anger over his isolation, frustration caused by his dyslexia, envy of other children, the loss of Ekdahl, the changed fortunes of the family, separation from his brothers, or sharing his mother's bed—what fueled his rage? Perhaps all did.

Marguerite's deference to his wishes and her insistence that he always come directly home from school and remain home alone add weight to the speculation that he may have been asked to do more than just sleep in his mother's bed on those nights in Fort Worth. No matter how seemingly guiltless an incestuous parent may be, steps to guard the secret are taken. Familiarity with Marguerite's character makes it easy to imagine her justifying taking liberties with her son. One can almost hear her saying something like "I am poor, alone, abandoned, and burdened with three children. Am I not deserving of affection like any other woman?"

In January 1950, when Lee was just over ten years old, his oldest brother left for the Coast Guard. Lee happily moved to John's bed and finally shared a room with Robert, away from his mother. Lee followed Robert around more than ever when the older brother was at home,

wanting to go where he went, do what he did, and read what he read.²³ Lee continued to attend school while Robert and his mother worked.

In July of 1952, Robert enlisted in the Marines. The twelve-year-old Lee bought his own copy of the Marine Corps Manual, saying he would learn everything Robert was learning and would one day follow him into the Corps. Lee's desperate longing for closeness with his brother radiates from the pages of Robert Oswald's memoir. After Robert left home to join the Marines, Marguerite moved with Lee to New York City, where John lived. She had not seen her oldest son in the two years since his departure for the Coast Guard. In that interval John Pic had married and now had a son of his own.

When Marguerite and Lee joined them in New York, John noticed a change in his youngest brother. Lee was the boss, arguing with and even slapping his mother. She continued to downplay his obvious difficulties. Once when John's wife asked him to turn down the television, Lee pulled a knife on her. When his mother came into the room and told him to put the knife away, he hit her. Marguerite tried to minimize the incident, claiming that he was just whittling. When John tried to talk with him, Lee seemed to feel as if everyone were against him, and he withdrew.

It was soon apparent that Marguerite had no intention of financially supporting her stay with John, and she was asked to leave. She and Lee moved into a basement apartment—one big room. Lee hated this. Were there fears of more unwanted intimacy? Marguerite and Lee soon moved again, to a larger apartment, and for the first time in his life Lee had a room to himself.²⁴ The struggling mother and son lived in the Bronx, and Lee was enrolled in school. Lee claimed that he was teased for his western clothes and Texas accent. He became a truant, missing forty-seven of sixty-four days of school in the Fall of 1952. Apparently he spent his time alone in the apartment or wandering the city.

Lee's truancy brought him to the attention of New York's judicial system. The probation officer found him to be a small likable boy who thought school was a waste of time.²⁵ Lee claimed to like horseback riding, though there was no evidence that he had ever done it. He reported watching television all day, spending most of his time at home alone with no friends. Lee did not appear to miss having friends and had no sense of it being unusual or abnormal to live his life in that way. Residential placement was recommended. His mother was found to be detached and uninvolved, denying any problems and remaining uncomprehending of why others were concerned.

Ultimately, Lee was placed in Youth House, a juvenile psychiatric facility, from April 16 to May 7, 1953 for an assessment. The evaluation of Lee Harvey Oswald and his mother by the social worker, Evelyn Siegel, remains one of the most remarkable documents for anyone investigating Kennedy's assassin.²⁶ Frozen in time, it provides a clear, vivid and detailed psychological profile of the young Lee Harvey Oswald and his mother, ten years before they became famous.

Siegel found Lee seriously detached and withdrawn. Some ability to relate persisted, which in view of his solitary existence surprised her. Still apparent was a pleasant, appealing quality which grew on her despite his emotionally starved and affectionless state. Lee reported that he believed his mother “never gave a damn” and viewed him as a burden which she had to tolerate. He also felt rejected by his brothers.

Lee claimed he knew nothing about his father, had no curiosity about him, never missed having a father, and never thought to ask about Robert E. Lee Oswald. Neither Lee nor his mother mentioned Edwin Ekdahl. That chapter of their lives was conspicuous by its omission, and Siegel had no other sources of information. Lee told Siegel he had to act as his own father.

Lee described his feeling state as one where it was as if there were a veil between him and others through which they could not reach him. He preferred the veil to remain intact. He told her that tearing away the veil to talk with her was not as painful as he had anticipated. Although he said he was not comfortable talking with her, he was not as disturbed in talking about feelings as he had anticipated. 27

He also admitted fantasies of being all powerful and sometimes hurting and killing people. Lee claimed that none of the fantasies involved his mother. Lee refused to elaborate on his fantasies, claiming they were his own business. Acknowledging violent dreams at night, Lee said they were usually pleasant and were fulfillments of his day dreams.

Psychological testing indicated an IQ of 118, and the projective human figure drawing suggested emotional impoverishment and anxiety with women. On the ward he detached himself completely and repelled any offer of friendship. Self-conscious about his body, he was uncomfortable showering with the other boys in the residence. He was diagnosed as having a personality pattern disturbance, schizoid features and passive aggressive tendencies. Therapy was strongly recommended.

Siegel found Lee’s mother to be a smartly-dressed, self-possessed woman who was superficially affable but defensive, rigid, self-involved, and snobbish. Marguerite’s most immediate concern was whether a physical exam had been conducted, particularly an exam of Lee’s genitals. She “confided he was getting big down there, too big for her to look at.” Her excessive interest supposedly arose from a hydrocele Robert suffered, and she reported bathing all her boys until they were eleven or twelve. When Siegel told her that their physical exam of Lee had revealed nothing unusual, Mrs. Oswald “looked at once relieved and disappointed.”²⁸ Siegel concluded that Lee’s mother was utterly devoid of any understanding of her son’s behavior or the protective shell he had drawn around him. The boy’s mother failed to see him as a person, and viewed him merely as an extension of herself. When Marguerite visited Lee, mother and son sat in silence.

He was released from Youth House on May 7, 1953. Six years later, when a reporter in Moscow asked how he had become a Marxist, Oswald said, “I became interested about the age of 15... An old lady handed me a pamphlet about saving the Rosenbergs... I looked at that paper and

I still remember it for some reason, I don't know why." Oswald remembered it because it holds the solution to the riddle of his Marxism.²⁹

In 1951 Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were convicted of espionage for transmitting atomic secrets to the Russians, and were sentenced to death. During the months preceding their June 19, 1953 execution, a "Save the Rosenbergs" campaign was mounted, focusing on their alleged innocence and their two young sons being left orphaned. Three days after Lee's release from Youth House, on May 10, 1953, also Mother's Day, leaflets in support of the Rosenbergs were distributed on New York City street corners. The Rosenberg case provided Lee with an immediate identification. He too was an "innocent victim" of a New York Court, and orphaned and alone.

In what was probably an unconscious reworking of the facts, Oswald later said the pamphlet started his reading of socialist literature. He noted that descriptions of capitalist society fit his own observations of workers being exploited in New York. To another reporter he said, "At 15 I was looking for something that would give me the key to my environment. My mother has been a worker all her life. All her life she had to produce profit for the capitalists. She is a good example of what happens to workers in the United States." In their brief stay in New York, Marguerite lost at least three different jobs.

Marxism permitted Oswald's rage at his mother, clearly documented by Siegel, to be transformed into something more acceptable. . At one level in Lee's mind, Marguerite could be recast from the uncaring author of his loneliness and misery to a "good example" of a capitalist victim. Conscious fury at his unloving and detached mother slid away from Marguerite and onto an alleged uncaring society.

After Lee returned home and to school, Marguerite continued to resist implementing recommendations for treatment, and she delayed court appearances. Lee attended school, but disrupted class. Although Marguerite knew that Lee remained under the jurisdiction of the court, and that he was not free to leave New York without its consent, she moved them to New Orleans in January of 1954.

In New Orleans they lived with her sister Lillian Murret and then in an apartment managed by Marguerite's old friend Myrtle Evans. Oswald stayed to himself, read, and showed no disciplinary problems at school. Rudeness and demandingness towards his mother remained. Puzzled by gifts of clothes and other expressions of love from his aunt, he refused to thank her, and said he didn't need anything from anybody. Lee wanted to be exempted from school because he felt he knew everything they could teach him. When he failed to become a star baseball player, he quickly quit the team.

Lee tried to interest his one friend from that time, Edward Voebel, in a copycat crime of stealing a pistol from a local store. He later claimed to a reporter that during this time his serious reading of Marxism began in the New Orleans library.

In the fall of 1955 he entered the tenth grade, but quickly dropped out after his sixteenth birthday. Oswald forged a letter from his mother to the school authorities notifying them of his need to leave school because of the family's impending move to San Diego. The only truth to this was his intent to join the Marines in San Diego, and Marguerite later signed a false affidavit attesting to his being seventeen. The deceit failed, but Oswald remained away from school, and worked for a shipping company as an errand boy. It was his first full-time job.

The contact with foreign trade at the shipping firm made him briefly feel important, but that soon faded. His next job was as a delivery boy for a dental laboratory. His coworker there, Palmer McBride, remembered Lee as ardent about Communism, proud of his library copies of *Das Kapital* and *The Communist Manifesto*, and not joking when he said he would like to kill President Eisenhower because he was exploiting the working class.

When Robert visited Lee and his mother in 1955, he spent a lot of time with Lee, who apparently kept secret his preoccupation with Marxism and continued to express interest in following in his brother's footsteps by joining the Marines.

In July of 1956, Lee and his mother moved for the twenty-first time in his short life. The wandering pair returned to Fort Worth, Texas, where Robert, now discharged from the Marines, lived and worked. Anticipating Lee's imminent departure for the military, Marguerite moved in hopes of being supported by Robert. That fall Lee entered tenth grade for the second time, at his twelfth school. He attended class sporadically; bought his first real gun, a 22-caliber rifle; refused to run laps and was cut from the football team; read library books on Communism; and dropped out in late September. On October 3, 1956 Lee wrote the Socialist Party of America in New York inquiring about a branch of their Youth League in his area. Three weeks later, unable to wait for Robert's November wedding, perhaps because he was distressed at losing Robert to marriage, Lee left to join the United States Marines.

What motivated him to join the Marines, hardly a home for an avowed Marxist? Lee Harvey Oswald was seeking an escape and an identity. Both his brothers later testified that their younger brother had observed them successfully escape the yoke of Marguerite. The military meant freedom. Robert recognized that Lee idolized him, but probably underestimated how desperately Lee wanted Robert to save him from his mother's poisonous orbit. The search for an identity led Lee to Marxism, which allowed a brittle psychological solution to the dilemma of hating the only consistent person in his life. But Marxism provided only a fragile explanation of why he was so neglected, and it supplied no identity for him as a viable man, psychologically separate from Marguerite. Lee had long worn Robert's Marine ring, and had memorized the Marine manual. The Marines would magically make him like Robert, a man in his own right.

It's unlikely that either brother knew how much more destructive Marguerite had been to Lee than to them. John had been seven and Robert five when Robert E. Lee Oswald died. Subsequent to that loss the two older boys grew into young manhood away from their domineering and negligent mother. Neither seems to have been exploited as much by her as Lee

was. Neither was as isolated with her, and both had successfully found fathers elsewhere. Neither shared a bed with their mother as young boys.

Lee Harvey Oswald's three year career in the Marines began and ended badly. From the outset he was seen as an eccentric, a loner, shy and meek, and an easy target for ridicule. Certain of his talent, Lee chafed at his lack of recognition, and viewed his officers as incompetent to command him. Several Marines thought him gay because of some feminine characteristics and an apparent familiarity with gay bars.³⁰ When he was posted to Japan in the fall of 1957, Lee's life improved briefly. Trying to end his isolation, he socialized, drank for the first time, and had his first sexual experiences with bar girls. Later he claimed to his wife that he had eight sexual relationships during his tour in Japan, but described in detail only three. Fellow Marines saw him with a beautiful Japanese woman and a Eurasian woman.³¹

But Lee was never fully accepted. To avoid an assignment in the Philippines, he shot himself in the arm. Sent there anyway, his punishment was kitchen duty. On his return to Japan he was court-martialed for possession of an unauthorized weapon, the gun with which he had shot himself. He was found guilty and demoted, with a suspended sentence of hard labor. Lee's frustrations mounted, and he became more aggressive, arrogant, and insolent, using his knowledge of current affairs to inflate himself and to be contemptuous of officers.

When he assaulted the sergeant he blamed for his Philippine kitchen duty, Lee was court-martialed a second time, convicted, and sentenced to the brig with his previous suspended sentence added. Plus, as part of his sentence, his request for extended overseas duty was denied. A Marine brig humiliates the strongest of men, and Lee Harvey Oswald emerged from his incarceration an embittered man. Several months later, while on guard duty in Taiwan, Oswald either had a breakdown or made a manipulative attempt to be exempted from his duty. He began firing his M-1 at shadows in the woods and was found shaking, crying, and slumped against a tree. Returned to Japan for convalescence, he was reassigned to general duty. Soon thereafter his fourteen month overseas tour ended.

Assigned to a base in El Toro, California, Lee openly studied Russian, subscribed to Russian language newspapers, played Russian records, liked being called "Oswaldkovitch," greeted friends with "Hello Comrade," and probably started planning his defection. A Marine acquaintance, Nelson Delgado, shared Oswald's admiration for Fidel Castro, who was then on the verge of victory in Cuba. They talked of going to Cuba to join Castro's army. Castro's exposure as a communist disillusioned Delgado, but Oswald started actually making plans. He hastened his discharge from the Marines by successfully applying for a dependency discharge. Marguerite claimed she had been totally disabled when a candy jar fell from a shelf and injured her nose. She was attempting to gain monetary compensation when Oswald learned of it, and he used her to secure an early out.

On September 14, 1959 Lee arrived in Fort Worth and stayed with his mother for a few days, during which time he visited with his brother Robert and his young family. He then told his mother he was leaving for New Orleans and the import-export business. A week after he left,

Marguerite received a letter in which he announced he had booked passage on a ship bound for Europe, exactly where Lee failed to say.

Just remember above all else that my values are very different from Robert's or yours. It is difficult to tell you how I feel. Just remember this is what I must do. I did not tell you about my plans because you could hardly be expected to understand them.³²

Nothing further was heard until Halloween, when a reporter tracked down Robert at his job and asked him to comment on a wire story of Lee visiting the U.S. Embassy in Moscow and attempting to renounce his citizenship.

Not quite twenty years old, Lee Harvey Oswald had made his way from New Orleans to Helsinki where he had secured a tourist visa, and now he waited in Moscow for a response to his request for Soviet citizenship. He probably fantasized that as a former U. S. Marine, he would be a welcomed and honored defector, finally given the status and recognition he deserved. When told that even his tourist visa would not be renewed and he must leave the country, he returned to his hotel and slit his left wrist. The evidence available, including his melodramatic suicide notes, offers no absolute conclusion about the seriousness of the attempt. If his intent was merely manipulative, he ultimately succeeded.

He was taken to a nearby hospital where transfusions stabilized him and his wound was sutured. Upon regaining consciousness, he was asked why he had done it, to which he answered, "I am not leaving here."³³ Despite a KGB-ordered psychiatric examination which found him "mentally unstable" and suggested that offering him citizenship should be avoided, the politics of the time decreed otherwise. The negative publicity which could result from forcing Oswald out of the country, or a successful suicide which might be seen as the Soviets murdering an American tourist, prompted concern in Moscow. Shortly before, President Eisenhower had met with Premier Khrushchev and relations between the two superpowers were improving. Deliberation on Oswald's case reached all the way to senior Politburo member Anastas Mikoyan, who supported consideration of Oswald's request.

Lee cooled his heels in Moscow, studying Russian in his hotel room, and refusing phone calls from his mother and brother. On November 16, 1959 he wrote a remarkable letter to his brother Robert. Extolling the virtues of socialism and the Russian people, Lee then dictated the new terms of his relationship with his family.

You say you have not renounced me. Good, I am glad, but I will tell you on what terms I want this arrangement.

I want you to understand what I say now, I do not say lightly or unknowingly, since I have been in the military as you know, and I know what war is like.

1. In the event of war I would kill any American who puts a uniform on in defense of the American government-any American.

2. That in my own mind I have no attachments of any kind in the U.S.

3. *That I want to, and I shall, live a normal, happy and peaceful life here in the Soviet Union for the rest of my life.*
4. *That my mother and you are (in spite of what the newspapers said) not objects of affection, but only examples of workers in the U.S.*
You should not try to remember me in any way I used to be since I am only now showing you how I am. I am not all bitterness or hate, I came here only to find freedom...

Lee now showed them who he was. His defection arose from an intolerable hatred and bitterness towards his mother and brother, feelings documented as early as the spring of 1953 in Youth House. Despite the boast, Lee had not known literal war. Both brothers had served in uniform and were now being put on notice. Flight to the Soviet Union and renunciation of his past attachment to them held out the promise of final peace and freedom from those painful emotions. A radical new identity might undo inadmissible hatred and envy and obscure his humiliation and failure in the Marines and as a young man.

In January of 1960 Oswald was granted an identity document as a stateless person and relocated to Minsk. The twenty-year-old American resided in Minsk from January of 1960 until June of 1962. At first he received a great deal of attention, which he loved. Nicknamed Alik because Lee sounded Chinese, he lived a more outwardly normal social existence and actually had genuine friendships for the first time in his adult life. Unlike most Russian citizens, Lee had a relatively nice apartment all to himself.

In June of 1960 he met Ella German, a beautiful Jewish co-worker, and fell in love. After six months of courting her, Lee proposed on New Year's Eve. To his shock, Ella rejected his offer. This brought to a head his underlying dissatisfactions. The menial nature of his job as a sheet metal worker at a large radio factory ultimately disappointed his grand notions that high office awaited this former American Marine and political defector. Lee's chronic dislike of authority asserted itself. His work performance declined and his old attitudes of injured entitlement resurfaced. The blinders fell, and the early glow of Soviet life faded.

Lee declined citizenship and requested only an extension of his temporary status. A month after Ella's rejection, Lee contacted the U.S. Embassy expressing his wish to return to the United States. Only a year after he had angrily denounced the U.S. to the same embassy staff, he was now demanding that all measures be taken to assist an "American citizen." Here was a dramatic reversal, a massive contradiction, to which Lee seemed oblivious. Similarly, he resumed correspondence with his brother in May of 1961 without apology and as if the 1959 letters had never been written.

In March of 1961 he met Marina Prusakova, a beautiful nineteen-year-old pharmacy student. The illegitimate child of a mother who had died when her daughter was fifteen, Marina had fled Leningrad and an abusive stepfather to live with her grandmother, aunt, and uncle in Minsk. As a child Marina had fantasized that her father might be a foreigner, and America had always held great attraction to her. Shortly after they met, Oswald proposed and they married on April 30, 1961.

Some evidence suggests that Lee married Marina more out of a desire to get back at Ella German than because of love. And, in his mind, a Russian wife would be insurance against arrest upon his return to the U.S. There were probably additional reasons. Marina was part of a family that welcomed Lee, particularly Marina's aunt, who might have reminded Lee of his maternal aunt in New Orleans. Lillian Murret had been an unthreatening mother figure for Lee, and he cared for her. In Russia he was sufficiently distant from his mother, physically and psychologically, that he could take the step of marriage. Lee was ashamed of his dependency needs, yet in Russia, with Marina's family and many acquaintances, those needs could be fulfilled without his awareness.³⁴

Marina married Lee at least in part because he had an apartment all to himself. Her illegitimacy made her feel an outsider, and marrying Lee fit with this sense of herself. She thought he was an orphan like herself, and both had rejected their early pasts. Also she had "incestuous" attractions to her first cousin and her harsh stepfather, leading her to marry as far "out" as possible, to a native of her country's feared and admired enemy.³⁵

From the beginning the marriage was not a happy one. They fought constantly; Marina did not think Lee loved her, and he brought home little money. Not until June did he tell her of his request to return to the United States. Despite Lee's difficulties with premature ejaculation, Marina quickly became pregnant. In July of 1961 when Lee went to Moscow to the U.S. Embassy, the pregnant Marina was unfaithful with an old boyfriend, Leonid Gelfant.

Lee insisted that Marina wear no makeup and stay boyishly thin. He told her of sleeping with a peasant girl, "But there was so much of her in all directions it made me sick. I felt as if I'd overeaten." When he saw a woman and remarked, "Oh, she's so thin," it meant she was attractive. Of another woman he knew who was tall, flat-chested, and bony, he said, "She'd suit me fine. I could feel all her bones."³⁶ After meeting Marguerite, Marina concluded that Lee's aversion to plump women had something to do with his mother. This may have been an echo of his nights in bed with Marguerite who was plump, vivacious and always made-up.

Lee and Marina's request for permission to leave the Soviet Union and for the appropriate visas dragged on through the remainder of 1961. Their first child, a daughter they named June, was born in February 1962. After June's birth, when Marina ran a fever and her breasts became engorged, Lee convinced her that it was quite natural for him to nurse. To her further surprise, he did not spit out her milk, but swallowed it.³⁷

Although approval of their exit visas was granted in December of 1961, the couple did not leave the Soviet Union until the following June. They made their way to Rotterdam and sailed from there to the United States. On the voyage, Lee treated Marina poorly, seemed indifferent to her and would not allow her on deck. His grandiosity led him to expect that upon arrival in the U.S. he would be met by reporters and possibly arrested by the FBI. He wrote up his own imagined press conference. To his surprise and disappointment, only someone from the Traveler's Aid Society met them at the dock.

The couple initially settled in Fort Worth, Texas with Marguerite. A routine debriefing by the FBI found Lee “arrogant.” Life with Marguerite was difficult and the couple moved from Fort Worth to Dallas. Oswald’s need to control Marina extended to not permitting her to learn English.

Lee was marginally employed and never mixed with fellow workers. Marina, as a recent immigrant from the Soviet Union, was of interest to those in the local Russian exile community, who took her under their wing. Probably because Lee experienced their care for Marina as a rebuke of his manhood and ability to provide, he abused her physically. She ridiculed him about sex, there were separations, and Marina even made one suicide attempt.

This situation deteriorated to the point where Marina’s Russian friends insisted that she leave Lee or they would no longer support her. When she would not leave Lee, they abandoned her. On New Year’s Eve 1962, feeling alone and unloved, Marina wrote a letter to Anatoly Shpanko, a medical student whose proposals of marriage she had refused. She wrote of her misery with Lee and her regret at not marrying Anatoly. She mailed the letter with insufficient postage, it returned, and Lee discovered it. He was furious. In January of 1963 Marina confessed to Lee that she had slept with Leonid Gelfant when Lee was in Moscow, and told Lee that Gelfant had been impotent. On the surface Lee refused to believe her. The letter was a ruse and the infidelity a lie, and Marina was just attempting to make him jealous.³⁸ But, the issue of sexual jealousy was now alive and important to the subsequent events.

Lee may not have admitted to believing her, but his actions suggested otherwise. Despite or perhaps even because he knew that Marina was now pregnant, Lee’s beatings of her in February 1963 were the worst yet. He may have imagined that the child she carried was not his, and would be a confirmation of sexual betrayal; he may even have been symbolically trying to kill his sexual rival by causing Marina to miscarry. Abuse had always plagued their marriage, but now he went from striking her once across the face with a flat hand to hitting her multiple times with closed fists.³⁹ Marina attempted suicide, trying to hang herself in the bathroom with a clothesline. Lee found her with the cord, struck her in the face and told her to go to bed.⁴⁰

Fortunately for Marina, she came under the care of Ruth Paine, a young separated woman with two children who lived in Irvington, Texas. Ruth was a Quaker, a graduate of Antioch College with a life-long social conscience and an interest in learning Russian. On a more personal level, her marriage to Michael Paine, a soul mate on political and social issues, had foundered, and the couple had separated in September of 1962. Ruth hoped to reconcile, and the painful place caused by Michael’s leaving was briefly filled by sheltering Marina and her children.⁴¹

During that winter of 1962-63, Lee Harvey Oswald was living increasingly in a fantasy world. He loved the notion of being a spy, and would daydream about it. His reading matter included the book *How to be a Spy* and the Ian Fleming James Bond novels.

Baron George DeMohrenschildt was the only one who paid any attention to Lee, and Lee seemed to find in him a substitute father figure. DeMohrenschildt was an eccentric geologist,

sportsman, and adventurer who, though part of the Russian exile community, was somewhat of an outsider. His only son had died of cystic fibrosis not long before Lee came into his life.

In January of 1963, Lee Harvey Oswald ordered the rifle that he would eventually use to kill President Kennedy. He insisted that Marina take a picture of him with it in their backyard. Showing Oswald dressed in black, this is the famous picture in which he is holding the rifle, a pistol at his hip, and copies of Communist newspapers in his hand. After developing the picture, he inscribed it, “For Junie from Papa.”

Oswald held many conversations with De Mohrenschildt about General Edwin A. Walker, a U.S. Army general who had been relieved of command for his right-wing, political agitation. Upon retiring from the army, he settled in Dallas, became active in the John Birch Society, and a nationally prominent and controversial figure. Oswald began stalking Walker’s house. He drew up elaborate maps and plans. On April 6, 1963, he lost his job at the photo lab. On April 10, 1963, he tried to shoot General Walker. Fortunately, the bullet hit the wooden part of the window and was deflected so that it struck the wall next to General Walker’s head. Walker was uninjured, and Lee was never arrested for the attempt.

In her study of Oswald, Priscilla Johnson McMillan concluded that Lee attempted to kill Walker to please George de Mohrenschildt. It was only George who correctly guessed that Lee had fired at the general. George was the only friend Lee had; indeed, he was the only one who would listen to him. Lee sent George a copy of the now famous picture of him, dressed in black with the copy of *The Worker* in one hand and a rifle in the other. Aside from friendship, sending the picture may also have conveyed other feelings toward George, including hate and envy--such contradictory behavior was hardly new to Lee. George was leaving Dallas, yet another father to abandon Lee. George had originally called Lee “puny.” There may have been some resentment and sexual jealousy around George’s earlier attempts to intervene on Marina’s behalf. Lee probably envied George’s physical appearance, background, and abilities. By shooting at General Walker and by sending the picture, Lee was telling George that he too was a powerful man who could act as well as talk politics. The feelings Lee had for George may parallel those he later had for John F. Kennedy. Both men were handsome, well-born, and had fathers who loved their sons.⁴²

Although this assassination attempt failed, Oswald had planned it carefully enough that he was not caught, and the police had no suspects. McMillan notes that Lee was astonished at how easily he got off and at the ineptness of the police. When Marina discovered it, she was appalled but refrained from turning him in; Lee confided to her that you could do anything and get away with it, as long as it was well thought out. Several weeks later, Lee decided to leave for New Orleans. Marina moved in with Ruth Paine.

Lee Harvey Oswald arrived in New Orleans on April 25, 1963. He asked his Aunt Lillian Murret about his father. He visited the cemetery where his father was buried. After a search, he found the widow of one of his father’s brothers and talked with her at length. She gave him a

photo of his father, and he promised to return it. He never did, and the photo was never found among his effects. In May, Marina and June joined Lee.

Over the summer of 1963, Fidel Castro became more and more Lee's hero and the embodiment of his ideology. Perhaps because she was pregnant and there was no sexual rival at that time, Lee ceased beating Marina, but continued to neglect her. He was gloomy when Marina was interested in sex. He would say, "Don't touch me, I am in paradise." His grandiosity flared even more, and he told Marina that he would go to China, Cuba, and Russia.

His request to have his dishonorable discharge from the Marines reviewed was rejected. He wrote to John Connally, whom he thought was still the Secretary of the Navy, and compared his defection to Hemingway's living in Paris. Oswald also applied to return to Russia. He read books, including John F. Kennedy's *Profiles In Courage* and William Manchester's biographical profile of the president. Lee was known to have said that Kennedy was a good leader and that he admired his stance for civil rights.

When Lee was asked to pay for Marina's prenatal care at the New Orleans Charity Hospital, he was embarrassed. It was the first time that Marina saw in him anger mixed with tears. "His (JFK's) papa bought him presidency. Money paves the way for everything here."⁴³ One day Marina found Lee sobbing uncontrollably. He seemed increasingly disconnected. He claimed, for example, that he was going to become Prime Minister of America in 20 years. He had formed a "Fair Play for Cuba Committee" and was handing out pamphlets on street corners in New Orleans. The committee was essentially a figment of Oswald's imagination and an attempt to gain recognition. He made a clumsy attempt to infiltrate an anti-Castro group. After an altercation with someone from this group, he was arrested, detained, and interviewed by an FBI agent.

Oswald obtained some notoriety during this period and was invited to participate in a television debate against some Castro opponents. The journalist preparing the debate found out about his time in the Soviet Union and ambushed him on camera. Oswald was humiliated. He retreated more into himself, practicing on the porch with his rifle and talking of hijacking a plane and joining Castro. If their second child was a boy, Lee wanted to name him Fidel.

Prominent coverage was given to a rare interview of Fidel Castro in which he warned U.S. leaders against aiding any plans to eliminate Cuban leaders, saying "they will not be safe." Castro believed the attempts on his life were orchestrated by the CIA and was issuing fair warning. This threat to U.S. leaders may have ultimately played into Oswald's idea that he would win the Cuban leader's favor by assassinating President Kennedy.

Oswald was pressuring Marina to return to the Soviet Union. Instead she and June returned to Texas to live with Ruth Paine. Oswald then traveled to Mexico City in the hopes of gaining entrance to Cuba. He wanted to return to the Soviet Union via Cuba. He went to the Cuban Embassy and demanded a visa and showed them notebooks with clippings about his "Fair Play for Cuba Committee" and exaggerated his activities. Faced with resistance from the Cubans,

he went to the Russian Embassy where he claimed he had important information. After checking with Moscow, the Russian Embassy refused him any assistance. It was a devastating setback. Lee Harvey Oswald returned to Dallas on October 3, 1963, so humiliated that initially he did not even contact Marina.

Eventually, through a neighbor of Ruth Paine, he secured a job at the Texas Schoolbook Depository in Dallas. Lee had never learned to drive a car and Marina and June now lived with Ruth Paine outside Dallas in Irvington. Lee rented a room at a boarding house in the city and commuted to the Paine household on weekends, riding with a fellow worker who lived near Irvington.

Unbeknownst to Marina, Lee registered at the boarding house under an assumed name, O.H.Lee--a reversal of his own name, but also a usage that would seem to confirm his New Orleans attempts to learn about and identify with the father he never knew. Though Oswald's father's first names were Robert Edward, both men were known as "Lee." Oswald had also once told a fellow Marine that he was named after Robert E. Lee, whom he characterized as the greatest man in history. At this point, Lee Harvey Oswald may have been fortifying himself with fantasies about a strong father and identification with a famous soldier.

On October 18, Marina and Ruth gave him a surprise birthday party. He was stunned and tearful. On Saturday evening, October 19, Lee watched two movies, both about assassinations. *Suddenly* (1954), stars Frank Sinatra as a mentally disturbed ex-serviceman who is hired to kill the president of the United States, fails, and is killed. The second movie, *We Were Strangers*, stars John Garfield as an American who comes to help Cubans overthrow their dictator. In the film, based on an actual overthrow of the Machado regime in 1933, Garfield's character fails and dies, but the people rise up and ultimately succeed.

Later that evening, while lying in bed, Marina told Lee about dreaming about Anatoly, and their kissing so passionately that it made her dizzy, and how no one ever kissed her like that. Without a trace of his usual jealousy, he asked her not to tell him about her lovers. They made love for the last time. The next evening Marina felt labor pains, and she went to the hospital with Ruth. The Oswalds' second child was born and named Audrey Rachel Marina Oswald.⁴⁴

Oswald began stalking General Walker again and possibly planned to assassinate him. On November 1 Agent James Hosty of the FBI came to the Paine household to interview Lee. The FBI was aware of Lee's visit to the Soviet Embassy in Mexico. Lee was not yet at home, and Agent Hosty talked with Marina and Ruth. When Lee found out about the FBI's visit he was distressed. Marina may have described Hosty's visit in a teasing and provocative way, threatening Lee's sense of sexual hold over her.⁴⁵ Several days later Lee visited the FBI's office. Hosty was not there, but Oswald left him an unsigned note with no return address. The note said Hosty had been interviewing the wife of the author of the note without his permission, the author did not like it, and that if Hosty continued, the author would take action against the FBI.

On Friday, November 15, 1963, Marina told Lee not to return that weekend because Mr. Paine would be at home, and there was a birthday party for one of the Paine children. Excluded

from something pleasurable in favor of others--including another man-- Oswald spent the weekend alone in the rooming house, except for one short excursion to what he later told Marina was the Department of Motor Vehicles. On Sunday, November 17, Ruth phoned the boarding house on Marina's behalf, and was told that no "Lee Oswald" lived there. When Lee phoned Marina the following day, he explained that he had chosen a fictitious name because of his fear of the FBI. She thought he had given up such foolishness, it frightened her, and they had a terrible quarrel over the telephone.

On Tuesday, November 19, President Kennedy's motorcade route was announced. On Thursday, Oswald asked Wesley, the co-worker with whom he usually rode on his weekend visits to Irvington, to take him to the Paines' that evening to pick up some curtain rods. When he arrived unexpectedly at the Paine household, Marina assumed that he was there to make up after their Monday argument.

He told her he was lonely because he had not seen her the previous weekend, and he wanted to make his peace with her. She remained intransigent, and he was upset. Between bouts of arguing and pleading, he first played with his daughter June and the obviously-loved Paine children, and later went into the garage, where the gun that would be used to kill Kennedy was hidden. He begged Marina to move to the city with him, saying he was lonely, and that he would "get us an apartment and we'll all live peacefully at home." Still angry and wanting to make him uncomfortable, she refused; he pleaded further, offering to buy her a washing machine. Marina literally turned her back on him, and refused him for the third time. "I was like a stubborn little mule," she said, "I was maintaining my inaccessibility...." She recalled that after that third refusal, by which time Ruth Paine had returned home, Lee was mostly quiet.

Later, hoping to lighten the atmosphere at dinner, Marina mentioned the president's visit; she specifically asked her husband if he knew any details about it, saying that she would like to go to Dallas to see the president. Given his usual interest in anything political, he surprised her by his reticence to discuss the visit and by claiming no knowledge of any of its details. At this point, Lee may well have unconsciously perceived in Marina an old pattern—that of his mother's emotional inaccessibility and inconsistency, which he had always responded to by acting out, calling attention to himself. Beyond that, Marina might have unwittingly fanned his resentment of Kennedy: She was unwilling to go to Dallas with her husband, but would go there to see another man, a man whose picture adorned her wall and to whom she was devoted—the president.

It seems clear that by the time he came to Irvington that Thursday evening, Lee Harvey Oswald had made plans to kill President Kennedy, but the certainty of his resolve at that time will forever remain a mystery. It is conceivable that had Oswald received the attention he literally begged for that Thursday, he might not have sought it by carrying out his assassination plans.⁴⁶ But why would Oswald want to kill Kennedy, a man he had said he admired?

A formulation of Oswald's mind starts best with his own assessment of himself. He had once written: "Lee Harvey Oswald was born in Oct. 1939 in New Orleans, La. the son of an Insuraen Salesman whose early death left a far mean streak of indepenence brought on by

neglect.(sic)” John F. Kennedy came from a large, supportive family, with a strong father. Unloved from birth, fatherless, emotionally neglected, and perhaps even sexually exploited by his mother, Lee Harvey Oswald was deprived of any opportunity for decent human relationships.⁴⁷ The absence of a father and a secure and consistent emotional attachment in his early years left him with no ability to connect with other people. As is typical with men in such circumstances, he developed no capacity to see others beyond his own needs.

To cope with his increasingly lonely early world, Oswald retreated into further isolation and protected himself by creating a fantasy realm of specialness and revenge.⁴⁸ The attempt to escape his mother and secure an identity as a man by following Robert into the Marines ended in humiliating failure; Kennedy, by contrast, was a war hero. Oswald’s next escape, to the Soviet Union, where in his own mind he should have been hailed as a hero, nearly failed entirely, and then succeeded only briefly and without glory. He returned to the United States only to have his life deteriorate further.

By November of 1963, Oswald found himself defeated in all his endeavors, the quintessential failure. He was living in a boarding house during the week, separated from those who should have loved him unconditionally. He worked at yet another menial job. His wife and children were being cared for and supported by others. As if to punctuate his other failures with sexual failure, his wife had told him that year of past infidelity and of her continuing love for another man. Marina usually avoided mentioning her old love Anatoly, but she had put up a picture of someone who reminded her of him, John F. Kennedy. Though she had never told Lee how much she believed Kennedy resembled her former lover, Lee had met Anatoly before the couple had left Russia, and might have drawn the same conclusion. Marina had searched out photographs of Kennedy in English-language magazines, and Lee was known to translate articles about him to her. She would also later say that she was “in love” with JFK and imagined ways she might make him happy. ⁴⁹

Oswald’s attempt at defection to Cuba with the grandiose aim of offering his services to Fidel Castro had been met with unbearable rejection by both the Cubans and the Russians. He had failed as a Marine, a revolutionary, a husband, a provider, and a lover. Now he was suddenly presented with the chance of a lifetime. He had hoped to kill General Walker to gain a place in history.⁵⁰ Now he would have the chance to kill the President of the United States and be welcomed to Cuba as a hero by Fidel Castro. He would undo the humiliating rebuff in Mexico City and still any of their doubts about him.

He had never been punished for defecting to Russia and he had succeeded in eluding discovery of his attempt on Walker’s life, even though the police had substantial evidence. He probably thought he could evade capture now too. In his mind, Oswald, in one bold stroke, would undo all his past humiliations and failures. He would kill the sexual rival for Marina’s affection. He would take his revenge on the society he blamed for his mothers’ failures. He would destroy the man who held the position he felt his skills entitled him to hold.

Kennedy was a symbol of all Oswald envied, a successful son whose father had given him a life, and who had brothers eager to serve him. Perhaps Lee would be killing symbolically the brother who had the success for which Lee longed. At the deepest level, he might also be killing the father who had abandoned him and the mother who exploited him.

Oswald stayed at Irvington that November 21 night, going to bed at 9:00, unusually early. Marina went to bed some two hours later, and recalled that Lee didn't seem to be really asleep. She also said that she had placed her foot against his leg in the night, but that he had ferociously shoved it away.

On November 22, 1963, Lee Harvey Oswald awoke, and went to the garage where he put his rifle into the paper bag he had fashioned to conceal it. He placed \$170, his life savings, on the dresser keeping only \$13—enough for a bus ticket to Mexico. He took his wedding ring off and placed it less conspicuously in an heirloom cup, while his wife remained asleep. He quickly walked down the street to Wesley Fraiser, his ride into Dallas, and into history.

¹ Posner, Gerald, *Case Closed* (New York, Random House) 1993 pp. ix-xi. History has been done a great service by Gerald Posner. Mr. Posner meticulously examines all the evidence, including some new findings, and painstakingly dismantles all of the conspiracy theories no matter how absurd. Posner's work, particularly his account of Lee Harvey Oswald's life, was indispensable to our analysis of Oswald.

² *Report of the Warren Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy*, (New York, McGraw-Hill) 1964. pp. 42, 399.

³ Ford, Gerald R. and John R. Stiles, *Portrait of An Assassin*, (New York, Simon and Schuster) 1965, p. 497.

⁴ Three psychiatrists, Herald Rome, Dale Norman, and David Rothstein, testified before the Warren Commission on July 9, 1964. That testimony was not included in the Warren Commission Report or in the twenty-six volumes of supporting documents. Only one of these psychiatrists, David Rothstein, subsequently wrote on Oswald. His article "Presidential Assassination syndrome. II. Application to Lee Harvey Oswald" (*Archives of General Psychiatry* 15:260-266, 1966), which speculates about pre-Oedipal factors, but reaches no clear formulation, well illustrates the limits of knowledge at that time.

⁵ The biographical material used for this article comes from The Warren Report, Jean Davison's *Oswald's Game* (W. W. Norton and Co., 1983), Norman Mailer's *Oswald's Tale* (New York, Random House, 1995), Priscilla Johnson McMillan's *Marina and Lee* (New York, Harper and Row, 1977), Robert Oswald's *Lee: A Portrait of Lee Harvey Oswald* (New York, Coward-McCann, Inc., 1967), and Gerald Posner's *Case Closed*.

⁶ Vamik Volkan. *Linking Objects and Linking Phenomena: A Study of the Forms, Symptoms, Metapsychology, and Therapy of Complicated Mourning* (New York, International Universities Press) 1981, pp. 318-21.

⁷ Her son, Robert, sadly observed that "she had received the news of Lee's arrest without any emotional strain at all. Within those few minutes, it seemed to me that Mother felt that now at last she was about to get the kind of attention she had sought all her life." Oswald, *Lee*, pp. 22-23.

⁸ Oswald, *Lee*, p. 42.

⁹ Oswald, *Lee*, p. 39.

¹⁰ Stafford, Jean. *A Mother in History* (New York, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1965), p. 12.

¹¹ Stafford, *A Mother in History*, p. 25.

¹² Stafford, *A Mother in History*, p. 36.

¹³ Stafford, *A Mother in History*, p. 38.

¹⁴ Stafford, *A Mother in History*, p. 54.

¹⁵ Stafford, *A Mother In History*, p. 93.

¹⁶ *Warren Commission*, Volume 11, p. 27

¹⁷ Oswald, *Lee* p. 46.

¹⁸ Oswald, *Lee* p. 47.

¹⁹ Oswald, *Lee*, p. 44.

²⁰ Oswald, *Lee*, p. 45.

²¹ Posner, *Case Closed*, p 10.

²² Jackson, Donald. "Evolution of Assassin," *Life*, Vol. 56: 68A-80, February, 1964.

²³ Testimony of Hiram Conway. *Warren Commission*, Volume VIII, p. 86.

²⁴ Oswald, *Lee*, pp. 53-54.

²⁵ Jackson, *Life*.

²⁶ *Warren Commission* Volume 21, p. 485. This document gives a portrait of Lee and his mother that remains untainted by their later fame. In contrast, the remote memories of even the most conscientious witnesses testifying before the Warren Commission could easily have been biased by the Oswalds' notoriety after the assassination.

²⁷ This suggests the early manifestation of a "cocoon" or "glass bubble fantasy," found in individuals with narcissistic personality disorder. See Volkan, V., "The glass bubble of a narcissistic patient." In *Advances in Psychotherapy of the Borderline Patient*, ed., J. LeBoit and A. Capponi, pp. 405-431. New York: Jason Aronson.

²⁸ *Warren Commission*, Volume 21, p. 491.

²⁹ Jean Davison discovered the formulation of the psychological roots of Oswald's Marxism, and what follows is a summary of her excellent insight. *Oswald's Game* pp. 54-57.

³⁰ Posner, *Case Closed*, p. 21. No one ever has come forward with any clear evidence of homosexuality. That he had a troubled search for an identity as a capable man is now indisputable.

³¹ Posner, *Case Closed*, p. 25.

³² Oswald, *Lee*, p. 97.

³³ Posner, *Case Closed*, p. 51.

³4 McMillan, pp. 86-87.

³5 McMillan, p 84.

³6 McMillan, *Marina and Lee*, p. 129.

³7 Posner, p. 71.

³8 McMillan, p. 251.

³9 McMillan, p. 256.

⁴0 Posner, p 102.

⁴1 McMillan, pp. 314-315.

⁴2 McMillan, pp. 291-293.

⁴3 Posner, p. 132.

⁴4. . McMillan, pp 380-381.

⁴5 McMillan, p. 405. “The visits to Ruth and Marina by an obscure agent of the FBI appear to have been linked in Lee’s mind with the forthcoming visit by president Kennedy .an emmissaryof the government (Hosty’s) arrival was like a herald, a precursor of president Kennedy’s” They may have thus acted as parts of the cataclystic events that led to the assassination.

⁴6 Our description of the events of the evening of November 21, 1963 are taken from Marina Oswald’s testimony before the Warren Commission (WC, Vol I, pp. 65-66); Posner pp. 221-223, and McMillan pp. 415-419.

⁴7 Today Oswald would be diagnosed as having an anti-social personality disorder. In the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, (DSM IV) the criteria for sociopathy are necessarily broad, and discrimination has been sacrificed for overall accuracy. A more helpful framework for the diagnosis of anti-social problems is the scheme proposed by Otto Kernberg, which focuses on personality structure instead of anti-social behaviors. Lee Harvey Oswald’s character structure and history point to what Kernberg calls the anti-social personality disorder proper. People who have a true anti-social personality disorder present a narcissistic personality with the typical symptoms of pathological self-love: excessive self-centeredness; grandiosity with its derived characteristics of exhibitionism, an attitude of superiority, recklessness, and over ambitiousness; over dependency on adoration; emotional shallowness, and bouts of excessive insecurity alternating with grandiosity. Their relationships with other people are pathological, predominated by envy, both conscious and unconscious; devaluation as a defense against the envy, exploitiveness manifested by greed, a sense of entitlement, and an incapacity for mutual relationships, empathy, or committment. The basic ego state is characterized by a chronic sense of emptiness and isolation. There is severe super-ego pathology manifest by a marked inability to experience self-reflected sadness, mood swings, a predominance of shame over guilt as a regulator of social behavior, and the absense of any capacity for non-exploitive relations. (See Kernberg, O. (1992). *Aggression in Personality Disorders and Perversions*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p. 73.)

⁴8 “Delusional and Somatoform Disorders as Possible Examples of Intraspecific Mimicry in Humans,” Edward Hagen, Department of Anthropology, University of California at Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, Ca. Paper presented before the Human Behavior and Evolution Society manuscript, Santa Barbara, CA, 1995. Oswald’s extreme social isolation, during his childhood and then in his last adult years contributed towards his non-psychotic grandiosity and persecutory fears support Edward Hagen’s theory.

⁴9 McMillan, pp. 331-332

⁵0 The meticulous plan for that attempt is in contrast with his planning for Kennedy’s killing, suggesting that this decision was impulsive.