

happen, and it never had happened before nor after. But they even offered her money. She was smart enough to run and get away.

Mr. LIEBELER. Have you seen any other indication that anybody has been following you or that anybody is watching you or anything like that?

Mr. REYNOLDS. Someone unscrewed my light globe one night on the front porch of my house, and someone definitely did it.

Whether it was a jokester or kid, but I have a lamp over the light. They had to take three screws loose to get to my light globe. They took those off and unscrewed my light, and that is for sure. Now, that was around the 20th of February, too.

Mr. LIEBELER. That was after you had gotten out of the hospital?

Mr. REYNOLDS. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. Is there anything else that would lead you to think anybody has been looking for you or looking after you?

Mr. REYNOLDS. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. Thank you very much, Mr. Reynolds.

TESTIMONY OF PRISCILLA MARY POST JOHNSON

The testimony of Priscilla Mary Post Johnson, was taken at 10:25 a.m., on July 25, 1964, at 200 Maryland Avenue NE., Washington, D.C., by Messrs. W. David Slawson and Richard M. Mosk, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mr. SLAWSON. I will swear you in if you will rise? Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Miss JOHNSON. I do.

Mr. SLAWSON. Miss Johnson, would you please state your full name and address?

Miss JOHNSON. My full name is Priscilla Mary Post Johnson, 48 Brattle Street, Cambridge, Mass.

Mr. SLAWSON. And would you state for the record your occupation or activities now and also what they were in 1959 when you saw Lee Harvey Oswald?

Miss JOHNSON. In 1959 I was a Moscow correspondent for the North American Newspaper Alliance, and now I am a freelance writer on Soviet affairs.

Mr. SLAWSON. Have you been given a copy of the Executive order and the joint resolution authorizing the creation of this Commission?

Miss JOHNSON. I have.

Mr. SLAWSON. And an opportunity to read them?

Miss JOHNSON. I have.

Mr. SLAWSON. Miss Johnson has been asked to testify this morning because she in the course of her duties as a newspaper correspondent in 1959 interviewed Lee Harvey Oswald on at least one occasion while he was in Moscow, just after he had announced to the American Embassy that he wanted to renounce his American citizenship and become a Soviet citizen. She is going to describe to the best of her recollection, with the help of her notes taken at the time, what went on during that interview. Miss Johnson, first I think we will put in as exhibits the various notes you have taken and articles you have written since that time, about your interview with Mr. Oswald. I present you a copy, marked Johnson Exhibit No. 1, of the notes you have said were taken at that time, and I wonder if you would acknowledge that that is a true copy.

Miss JOHNSON. Yes; it is.

(Priscilla Mary Post Johnson Exhibit No. 1 was marked for identification.)

Mr. SLAWSON. I present this as Exhibit No. 1, introduce it in evidence as Exhibit No. 1.

(Priscilla Mary Post Johnson Exhibit No. 1 was received in evidence.)

Mr. SLAWSON. Miss Johnson, I have marked this as Exhibit No. 2.

(Priscilla Mary Post Johnson Exhibit No. 2 was marked for identification.)

Mr. SLAWSON. It purports to be a true copy of the article you wrote of your interview with Mr. Oswald, and submitted on November 18, 1959.

Miss JOHNSON. That is right. I submitted it to the Soviet censor on November 18.

Mr. SLAWSON. I submit this in evidence and mark it as Exhibit No. 2.

(Priscilla Mary Post Johnson Exhibit No. 2 was received in evidence.)

Mr. MOSK. Miss Johnson, was anything censored?

Miss JOHNSON. No. It would show on that. Nothing was censored.

Mr. SLAWSON. I now show you a document marked Exhibit No. 3 which purports to be a true copy of an article you wrote for the Boston Globe.

Miss JOHNSON. I wrote it for the North American Newspaper Alliance. That just happens to be one place that it appeared. It probably appeared in other places too.

(Priscilla Mary Post Johnson Exhibit No. 3 was marked for identification.)

Mr. SLAWSON. Then I will say your article—

Miss JOHNSON. For the North American Newspaper Alliance.

Mr. SLAWSON. As it appeared in the—

Miss JOHNSON. As it appeared in the Boston Globe.

Mr. SLAWSON. I believe that was on November 24, 1963?

Miss JOHNSON. Sunday, November 24. It was filed on November 22.

Mr. SLAWSON. Except for possible deletions of your complete article as it was submitted, is that a true copy of your article?

Miss JOHNSON. A true copy of my article.

Mr. SLAWSON. I present this in evidence as Exhibit No. 3.

(Priscilla Mary Post Johnson Exhibit No. 3 was received in evidence.)

Mr. SLAWSON. I now have a document marked Exhibit No. 4 which is an article from the—a copy of an article from the Christian Science Monitor of November 25, 1963.

(Priscilla Mary Post Johnson Exhibit No. 4 was marked for identification.)

Miss JOHNSON. The interview was given November 23, and that is a true copy of the interview as published in the Monitor.

Mr. SLAWSON. For the record, Miss Johnson, that is an interview of you by a correspondent working for the Christian Science Monitor; is that correct?

Miss JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. SLAWSON. I then introduce it in evidence as Exhibit No. 4.

(Priscilla Mary Post Johnson Exhibit No. 4 was received in evidence.)

Mr. SLAWSON. Miss Johnson, I have here what purports to be a true copy of a statement you gave to a representative of the U.S. Department of State on December 5, 1963, and it has been marked Priscilla Johnson Exhibit No. 5.

(Priscilla Mary Post Johnson Exhibit No. 5 was marked for identification.)

Miss JOHNSON. Yes; that is okay. That is a copy.

Mr. SLAWSON. I then introduce in evidence this Exhibit No. 5.

(Priscilla Mary Post Johnson Exhibit No. 5 was received in evidence.)

Mr. SLAWSON. Finally, I have here a document marked Priscilla Johnson Exhibit No. 6, which purports to be a true copy of an article written by you as published in Harper's magazine.

Miss JOHNSON. April 1964.

Mr. SLAWSON. Right; in the April 1964 issue.

(Priscilla Mary Post Johnson Exhibit No. 6 was marked for identification.)

Miss JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. SLAWSON. That is a true copy?

Miss JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. SLAWSON. I introduce as evidence, present this as Exhibit No. 6.

(Priscilla Mary Post Johnson Exhibit No. 6 was received in evidence.)

Mr. SLAWSON. Miss Johnson, to begin the deposition, I would like you to state, with the help of your notes or articles at any time you want to refer to them, exactly when and where and how many times you saw Lee Harvey Oswald.

Miss JOHNSON. May I have the calendar. I saw him, Lee Harvey Oswald, on two occasions. First of all I had been at the American Embassy in Moscow, and Mr. McVickar, the consul, had told me that a would-be defector was staying at my hotel, that he had shown a reluctance to talk with officials of the Em-

bassy or with other correspondents, but knowing my interest in kind of human interest stories, he thought that I might want to see this man. This was on an afternoon in November, and I think it must have been Monday, November 16, 1959, that Mr. McVickar advised me to see Mr. Oswald. So I stopped by Mr. Oswald's room, which was the floor below my own room in the Metropole Hotel. He lived on the second floor. I asked him for an interview, and he agreed to come to my room in the hotel that evening at an hour he named. I forgot what hour it was—8 or 9. So the second occasion on which I saw him was when he actually came that evening, and he stayed until the early hours of the morning, although I don't remember what hour. So far as I know, those were the only two occasions on which I saw him.

Mr. SLAWSON. He was in the same hotel you were staying in?

Miss JOHNSON. Yes. Could I interpolate a question here?

Mr. SLAWSON. Certainly.

Miss JOHNSON. Maybe it is out of line, but do you know whether he did stay at that hotel the rest of the time or did he go and leave? You see when I went back they had said he left. Had he actually gone to another hotel or did he remain in that hotel all the time?

Mr. SLAWSON. I believe that he was staying in the Hotel Metropole at the time you saw him, and I think he stayed there—

Miss JOHNSON. The rest of the time?

Mr. SLAWSON. The rest of the time. He had previously been in, I think, the Hotel Berlin, but he had moved to the Metropole before you saw him.

Miss JOHNSON. And they did move him out of the Berlin?

Mr. SLAWSON. That is right.

Miss JOHNSON. He stayed in the Metropole?

Mr. SLAWSON. Stayed in the Metropole.

Miss JOHNSON. So I was informed incorrectly when I was told he had gone by the people at the hotel?

Mr. SLAWSON. Do you remember when you were informed that he had gone?

Miss JOHNSON. Yes. I think that it was Thursday, the 19th.

Mr. SLAWSON. Could you state some of the details of that, how that came about that you were so informed?

Miss JOHNSON. Sure. Well, I wrote the story about him. I must have filed it on the 18th, but I don't think it was in connection with the story but with rather the fact that I had been told by him that he thought he would leave the hotel at the end of the week. So as soon as I had written the story and wasn't too busy in other ways, I went to the hotel. The woman who sat on his floor, the second floor, and I think it was the 19th, a Thursday, I asked if Mr. Oswald was there, because I wanted to catch him before he left. I expected he would leave the 20th. And because I kind of wanted to keep in contact with him, for his sake. And the woman who was sitting on the second floor—I don't know what you call her—who gave the keys out, just threw up her hands and said, "He is gone." So I asked her when he had gone, and she said she didn't know. So I assumed I had been informed correctly, and didn't try to get in touch with him again. And he had told me that he would let me know before he left for good, and he didn't either.

Mr. SLAWSON. Let us call a recess for a minute here, so that I can look for some records on Oswald's stay at the Hotel Metropole.

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. SLAWSON. Miss Johnson, in connection with your statement that you had returned to see Oswald and were told by a woman employee of the hotel on the second floor that he had left at a time which she did not know, I have here a copy of a letter Oswald wrote his brother Robert Oswald dated November 26, 1959 (Commission Exhibit No. 295). At the bottom of the letter he gives his address as "Hotel Metropole, Room 201, Moscow," with the marking, "(New Room)."

Miss JOHNSON. His room when I saw him was, I think it was room 225. It was down a corridor to the right. My room was 319, on the next floor. You turned just a little to the left to get to it. His was about 225 or something like that. So he had probably been moved to a cheaper room. My room would probably have had the same rent as his—\$3 a day—but later his was maybe a little bit less.

Mr. SLAWSON. I see. And would the woman employee of the hotel who told you that Mr. Oswald had gone have had charge only of the old corridor and not the corridor with room 201 in it?

Miss JOHNSON. No; I think she would have had charge of his new room too, but he would have entered it possibly from the other side of the landing. I rather forget where the 01 was, but he might have entered it rather than from her desk turning right and then going down a corridor and then turning left. He might have taken his key from her and gone off to the left from her desk and from the elevator. She would have had charge of his room, but she might have been on duty for the first time since he moved, and only been aware that he had left—she might not have been trying to mislead me. It might have been her first day on duty since he switched his room, and she might have seen he wasn't in 225 and not realized that he was on the same floor but in another room.

I think the key thing is they probably gave him a very inexpensive room, since they were paying or since he was very poor. They perhaps accommodated him in allowing him to switch rooms.

Mr. SLAWSON. You mentioned a minute ago that he might have taken his key from her. You mean by that that ordinarily—or rather, frequently—a hotel guest would leave his key with the woman on his floor, but that it was possible to carry the key with you so that you would not have to pick it up from her?

Miss JOHNSON. No; customarily you pick it up from her when you go to your room and you leave it with her when you leave your room. It is simply that she would have had a book in which she had written down the room number of every guest, and I think each morning changes would be recorded there. My guess is that she rather than consciously misleading me—although she could have been told to say he was out, was gone—that there is a very good chance that she simply had not taken in that he was still there and in another room.

He would have left his key though, and customarily she would have always asked him for the key when he left.

Mr. SLAWSON. Did Oswald say something to you which would have led you to believe that he was interested in getting a less expensive room at the hotel?

Miss JOHNSON. He struck me as notably reticent about his finances, about his financial situation. He told me, truthfully or otherwise; that he had been there for 10 days on Intourist. He said he was paying the standard room and food rate, and said "I want to make it clear they are not sponsoring me." I must have asked him about his financial situation in some detail, because I thought it would give a clue as to how they were handling him. If they had allowed him to go from the \$30 a day rate, that is the rate if you come Intourist which he said he was on, if they allowed him to go from \$30 to a lesser sum, since mine was \$3, that would indicate that they had an interest in him and they were seeking to help him, whether he knew it or not.

And he was defensive. He bristled on the point, and I assume that there was more of an exchange of words than I took notes of, and that there was something there. I just didn't know what it was, and I couldn't get it out of him.

But when you say he switched from 225 to 201, 225 was an outside room, the kind that foreigners have, and it would probably be bugged, and it would be for foreign guests coming in on Intourist. I don't remember room 201, but the chances are it was an inside room. It might have been very small. It might or might not have had a bath attached to it, and the rate for it could have been as low as \$1.50 a day. And they could have been either accommodating him because of their interest in him, or because they were simply responding to his financial situation while pending a decision on his request to stay.

Mr. SLAWSON. While we are on this subject—how much he was paying for his hotel room and his finances generally—I am not clear whether you were able to get some kind of indication out of him whether he was paying the \$30 a day or simply the lower, something like \$3 a day.

Miss JOHNSON. You see he said he had been there since 10 days—perhaps what he said was since being there for 10 days on Intourist at \$30 a day "I have been paying the standard room and food rate." That is probably how I should read my own notes.

"I want to make it clear they are not sponsoring me." Your question is?

Mr. SLAWSON. I am trying to establish what your impression was at the time of how much he was paying for that hotel room.

Miss JOHNSON. At the time I was very unclear what he was paying. I think now he must have been paying \$30 for the 10 days after his arrival in October, and \$3 a day after that until he left room 225. What he was paying when he moved into room 201 I don't know.

Mr. MOSK. That was \$30 a day the first 10 days?

Miss JOHNSON. Yes, \$300 for the first 10 days. Probably after that \$3 a day, and after that I don't know.

Mr. SLAWSON. Are meals included in that \$30 a day?

Miss JOHNSON. Meals are included, but they wouldn't have been included once he went off it.

Mr. SLAWSON. I realize you can only do this very approximately but if one were eating fairly inexpensively as Oswald probably did——

Miss JOHNSON. And as I did.

Mr. SLAWSON. But on the other hand he probably did not know much about the city of Moscow, and so could not hunt out places that might be inexpensive. But how much per day do you think he could get along on for meals?

Miss JOHNSON. Perhaps I could just tell you from my own experience. I had a one-burner stove and I bought some food at the Embassy commissary, some from the hotel, and some in the stores around, and my total living expenses probably didn't exceed \$50 a week, and my room would have been \$21, and taxis would have been a little bit. So probably I could have done it on \$15, and he without the stove and without the use of the commissary, but having probably modest tastes, he could have done it for somewhere between \$10 and \$25 a week foodwise.

He did tell me that he had only been on one expedition by himself to this children's store where he got some food at the buffet, and if that is an indication that he was taking all his meals at the Metropole, then it would have cost him \$25 to \$30 a week for food at least.

Mr. MOSK. He generally didn't eat breakfast, or he generally ate very little for breakfast. Would this make a difference?

Miss JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. MOSK. It might reduce it?

Miss JOHNSON. Because breakfast, coffee alone was very cheap. We had old rubles then, and I think it was—the figure in my mind is 2½ old rubles, which is 25 cents, for coffee in the room, and they didn't charge you anything for room service. That would have been cheap, and soup was very nourishing and that was cheap. I think he knew his Intourist guide pretty well, and she may have taken him home and given him food, or shown him cheap places to eat, so that when he said his only expedition himself, that could mean that he took literally himself but it could be he went other places with her, inexpensively. So he could have done pretty well. He could have kept it pretty low.

Mr. SLAWSON. Miss Johnson, I don't think that we established clearly before when, or rather what day it was, when you spoke to John McVickar and later spoke to Lee Harvey Oswald and had your interview with him.

Miss JOHNSON. I believe I spoke to John McVickar either on Friday, November 13, or Monday, November 16. My recollection is that it was Monday, the 16th, and that on coming home from the Embassy, coming to the Metropole, I went straight to Oswald's room, and therefore that would have placed my original conversation with McVickar on the 16th, my interview with Oswald probably on the 16th, my writing of the story and my second conversation with McVickar on the 17th, and my filing of the story on the 18th. But I could have seen Oswald as late as the 17th; Tuesday, the 17th. I could have seen Oswald as late as Tuesday, the 17th. My interview was the 16th or the 17th.

Mr. SLAWSON. Fine. Miss Johnson, I have here a copy of Commission Exhibit No. 911, which is a memorandum for the files dated November 17, 1959, written by Mr. John A. McVickar of the American Embassy in Moscow. This is the same John McVickar which you and I have been discussing and to whom you spoke about Lee Harvey Oswald some time just before you saw Mr. Oswald.

I hand you a copy of Exhibit No. 911 and would like you to take some time to read it and comment on your opinion of its accuracy, and make any cor-

reactions you like. It purports to record a discussion that you had with Mr. McVickar about Lee Harvey Oswald.

Miss JOHNSON. Yes; firstly he says that I told him that I had seen Oswald Sunday, May 15. He would have meant here Sunday, November 15. My recollection is that it was a Monday night that I spoke with Oswald, and it would therefore be Monday, November 16, not May.

Mr. Mosk. 1959?

Miss JOHNSON. 1959. Yes; I was struck by Oswald's reserve, and that comes out in the memo. I had forgotten, but I recollect, and it is not in my notes but I recollect, that it is true that he said he had never talked so long about himself to anybody, that about his use of words struck me very much in conversation, that he sometimes pronounced a particular word correctly and later pronounced it incorrectly, and that simple words he sometimes mispronounced and hard ones he got right.

Mr. Mosk. He was speaking in English?

Miss JOHNSON. Oh, yes; his emphasis on legality, I had the impression that unconsciously he wasn't 100-percent behind what he was doing, that he wanted to get out of it and he left a loophole and that the scapegoat was the Embassy.

Mr. SLAWSON. I would like to ask a question on that. You think then that he may have at least unconsciously had reservations right at that time that he was not doing the right thing?

Miss JOHNSON. Yes; and I think this is implicit in the interview and it corresponds with my recollection. It says here, "it was her opinion that he might consciously or not have been trying to leave a loophole for himself."

I felt that in making such a scapegoat of the Embassy and of Mr. Snyder, he was leaving himself a reason not to go back to the Embassy, and hence not to really renounce his citizenship, and that impressed me even then, and I think that didn't come out in my story and it doesn't come out in my notes, but it does correspond with my recollection.

I felt he was using his annoyance at the Embassy for other reasons. It was a pretext, although I didn't think it was conscious. And I did bore in on whether the Embassy had given him two versions, that is, whether they had said they were too busy, or whether there was legal grounds that they couldn't allow him to renounce citizenship until he had assurance of Soviet citizenship.

I was just interested in resolving the discrepancies, because I wanted to clarify the nature of the loophole he was leaving himself, rather really than to put the Embassy on the spot. And also I wanted to get the Embassy's role straight because I didn't know how fully in my story to put his annoyance at Snyder, the consul. I wanted to be clear on what he was doing, before writing about his annoyance with Snyder.

Mr. Mosk. Do you think, Miss Johnson, that he had any knowledge of the law of expatriation?

Miss JOHNSON. My recollection of him was that he was very legally minded. He showed me his letters from the Embassy, his exchange of letters from the Embassy, and that is in the notes, that he claimed they were acting illegally. He showed me the text of these letters and asked me what I thought of them. He said that he had been told on Saturday, October 31, that is a Saturday, that they needed time to get the papers together.

Mr. Mosk. But do you think that he had ever read a book of statutes or did he give you that impression, that somebody had told him about the law or that he had read the law?

Miss JOHNSON. He claimed that they were acting illegally, and I am not at all sure that he didn't also indicate that he had a right, that he knew he had a right. I am not sure that he didn't say that they had told him at the Embassy that they wanted some assurance that he had Soviet citizenship, but actually I believe that this was more what I gathered from talking to Mr. Snyder and Mr. McVickar, that they actually wanted to give him time to think.

Somewhere I got the idea that he had also been told that they wanted assurance that he had Soviet citizenship, before letting him renounce American citizenship. Where I got the impression, I think it was from him, but I am not sure. Yes; my guess about him is that he would feel that he knew the law. Whether he would have seen it or been told it by somebody that he thought

knew the law, he would have informed himself or thought he was informed about his legal rights. He seemed very stuck on the importance of legality, legalism.

Mr. SLAWSON. Miss Johnson, I am going to now back up a bit and ask you some questions about the general atmosphere in Moscow, quite apart from Lee Harvey Oswald. I make reference here to Exhibit No. 5, which we introduced just a minute ago. On the first page of that exhibit, which is your statement to the Department of State, you mention that most of the defectors who came to Moscow while you were a correspondent there came because of personal troubles they were having at home, rather than reasons of ideology.

You also bring up the fact that, rather your belief that, the Russians had wanted one or two defectors from the U.S. exhibition of 1959 to counter the negative propaganda they had been suffering from the frequent defections of East bloc persons to the West. I wonder if you would comment about both those points? First, if you could give us a description of approximately how many American defectors you either knew or had knowledge of at that time?

Miss JOHNSON. Well, I heard about most of those who came through, though I didn't necessarily interview them. There had been one called Webster—Richard Webster, I think—from the fair, and he had had a job in Ohio. He worked at the fair. I don't know what he did. At the end of the fair he asked to stay. That was, say, September or so of 1959. We had defectors on the brain right then in Moscow, all of us, because there had been a great deal of travel. The result was that a lot of tourists were there; there were an unusually large number. That is to say there had been three defectors. And Webster, now, when you did go into it, it developed that he wasn't too happy with his wife and he was interested in a waitress at the Hotel Ukraine. There had been another one named Petrulli—Nicholas Petrulli. I have forgotten the circumstances, but again they were personal, and I think he changed his mind. I think my colleague, Mr. Korengold, supported him, really, while he was thinking it over and deciding not to do it.

That is as far as I can remember. Those were better known cases that I didn't bother with because I couldn't compete with the agencies. And the Oswald case I did see because Mr. McVickar said he was refusing to talk to journalists. So I thought that it might be an exclusive, for one thing, and he was right in my hotel, for another. But then, once I got talking to him, I realized right away that he was different. At least I found him interesting at the time. Afterward I thought he was very interesting.

I don't remember the Petrulli case; it was probably after the Oswald case, and then there were a couple named Block—Morris Block and Mrs. Block. I one day encountered Mrs. Block on the third floor of my hotel, sitting talking with the woman who gave out the keys. She was quite a forthcoming lady who talked far more about herself than she should have, since they couldn't have wanted any publicity right then about themselves. So I knew about the Blocks, too.

Mr. Mosk. They also came back?

Miss JOHNSON. They did come back this year, lately. But I didn't know too much about the Blocks. There was something else about the Blocks. Maybe they had some connection with the Soviet Union. Maybe he had been there before. There was some reason about the Blocks. Anyway, I couldn't get to interview them. That was the crux of the matter. So that Oswald was the only—and there was something that made me think the Blocks were not pure ideological, that they had some connections with Russia as such, although I may be quite mistaken.

Mr. SLAWSON. You mean possibly some business or personal connection that would give them a tie?

Miss JOHNSON. Right.

Mr. SLAWSON. That would be different, quite apart from the ideology of Communist Russia?

Miss JOHNSON. I had the feeling that perhaps Mr. Block had been in the Soviet Union before, perhaps in the service during war or that they were of Russian ancestry, something of that kind, which took away from any ideological features.

Here Oswald was of an age that made him different right away. He was only 20, and I had never heard of anybody of that age in the first place, or that generation, taking an ideological interest to the point where he would defect. His age made him extraordinary.

Somebody of his generation reminded me right away of the 1930's, and I lived in the hotel where I heard stories about the kind of defectors who came in the 1930's; that is, they had been ideological. They had come for reasons of race or sex; women desirous of emancipation, the American women; Negroes desirous of thinking that here is a country where Negroes were treated equally; people of leftist views; and among the press corps I was aware that most of the Western press corps or much of it were fellow traveling or Communist, and I read quite a bit about them.

Mr. MosK. This is during the thirties?

Mr. SLAWSON. During the 1930's?

Miss JOHNSON. Yes. Malcolm Muggeridge, Eugene Lyons, Louis Fischer. And I would gather these tales, because I was interested in them.

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. SLAWSON. Do you want to add something to what you have previously said?

Miss JOHNSON. The ones we have are Malcolm Muggeridge, Eugene Lyons, Louis Fischer, Walter Duranty. These were famous cases of people who had a great interest in communism, and the Soviet Union in some ways was the promised land to them. Mr. Lyons later titled a book "Assignment in Utopia." Our press corps was not at all like that. We were mostly there because Moscow was a great place to make a name and a career, and we ranged from very interested, like me, to downright disenchanted, you know. We were all pretty anti and skeptical, and we were there because it was good for our careers rather than because we were interested in communism or because we thought it was the promised land, and that was always striking to me, because I often heard stories about the thirties, and I really thought it sounded very exciting then. And he was the one person who seemed to have nineteen-thirtyish reasons, unemployment in the United States, economic difficulty, racial inequalities, interest in communism. So I thought sometime I would like to write an article about how the kind of newspaper people and the kind of defectors who really came now reflected what happened to the Soviet Union compared to the thirties, going back to Muggeridge's memoirs, Lyons, Fischer's memoirs, Duranty's memoirs, and what other people had said about Duranty to show what happened to the Soviet Union itself. It didn't attract people now for ideological reasons.

It was a bourgeois country like any other, and if it attracted people from the West it was because they wanted to make it their career; it had become a career for foreigners; or because they were personal malcontents.

They weren't getting along with their wives. It was the strangest kind of reason. Oswald was the exception that proved the rule. And I had made notes about him in the interim, when I thought of him, because of this. He was the exception who proved the rule because he purported to be acting for ideological reasons.

Whenever I thought about him I thought: What is behind these professed reasons? They are really emotional reasons in his case, too, and I don't understand, although it is not obvious like a wife he is leaving, they are still emotional reasons, and I don't know what is behind his professed ideological reasons. And I can't guess. So he was the pin really for the piece, and I couldn't guess them. If I had known he was back in the States—I had thought about him, it seems to me, as recently as 3 weeks before the assassination, and wondered, and the way that the thought used to come to me was, "I wonder what ever happened to that little Lee Oswald?" And had I known he was back—I thought he would have been disenchanted, trapped in Russia, unable to get out—if I had known he was back I probably would have tried to see him, write him, go to see him. And if I had been able to figure out his reasons and what happened to him, maybe I could have written that piece.

Mr. MosK. You had no indication that people could not leave the Soviet Union?

Miss JOHNSON. Oh, yes; I did. I had plenty of indication that they couldn't leave, and I didn't assume for a second that he had ever left or gotten out, and I wanted, if I could, to help him, warn him subtly that he was going to be

trapped. That is why I spent so long talking to him. But I assumed that my room was wired, and I couldn't be obvious about it, and I tried to do it by talking to him about economics.

Mr. SLAWSON. Before we get into the actual interview you had with Mr. Oswald, Miss Johnson, the other comment on the first page of Exhibit No. 5 which you made was, and I quote: "The Russians had wanted one or two defectors from the U.S. exhibition of 1959 to counter the negative propaganda they had been suffering from the more or less frequent defections of East-bloc persons to the West." Could you first identify the exhibition you are referring to, and then give the basis for your statement of what the Russians wanted?

Miss JOHNSON. Right. I am speaking of the U.S. exhibition at Sokolniki Park in Moscow that had been opened by Vice President Nixon in July of 1959, which ran for 6 weeks, which brought a great many Americans to Moscow for periods, fairly long periods of time, in the capacity of employees of the fair, setting up pavilions, setting up exhibits, some guides. And I didn't know this, but I had the impression that they had encouraged Webster to defect.

I may be quite mistaken about that. Webster was an employee of the fair, and I thought perhaps they wanted one. That was just an assumption. Oswald, however, I again bored in quite a bit in my talk with him as to whether they were encouraging him, and he said they were neither encouraging or discouraging. He was very anxious as to whether they were going to let him stay, and this did strike me as a little unusual. I thought they would encourage it. And I didn't know whether he was just a very anxious person, hence anxious, or whether they were keeping him on tenterhooks, not for tactical reasons at all but because of genuine doubts about having him. My only conclusion could be—it was at the time—that Nikita Khrushchev just had been to see Eisenhower; that they were not encouraging defections because of the political atmosphere. I didn't realize that it might be anything personal about Oswald. I assumed that it was the atmosphere.

Mr. SLAWSON. When you first approached Oswald to ask him for an interview—could you describe that?

Miss JOHNSON. I knocked on his door, expecting to be let in. But I wasn't let in. He came out. He came to the door and I stayed in the hall. He stayed in the doorway as I recall it, and I asked him if he would let me talk to him; expected he would say no, from what Mr. McVickar had told me. But he said quite quickly yes, he would come, and he said he would come to my room. He didn't invite me to his, and he named an hour for that evening when he would come, and he did come that evening just at the time he said, and he stayed.

Mr. SLAWSON. Could you see into his room to see whether he was alone at that time?

Miss JOHNSON. No; I had the impression he was alone, but I didn't see that anyone was there. Had somebody been sitting in his room, I think I could have seen them. My guess is that his bed would have been out of sight, but that the chairs in which anybody would have been sitting with him might have been visible. But he may have had the door open sufficiently little or at such an angle that I couldn't have seen had he been alone.

Mr. SLAWSON. Did you know at the time that Miss Aline Mosby, a newspaper reporter, I believe, for the Associated Press at that time—

Miss JOHNSON. For the United Press International.

Mr. SLAWSON. United Press—had spoken to Oswald several days earlier?

Miss JOHNSON. No; I had been told he wasn't talking to people, and I hoped that he hadn't talked to anyone else.

Mr. SLAWSON. Did you ever learn from Oswald that he had spoken to Miss Mosby earlier?

Miss JOHNSON. No; I never heard from anyone until after November the 22d, 1963, although Mr. McVickar had said that I could ask Mr. Korengold about him. That was a tip that perhaps he had talked to somebody at UPI, but I didn't want to tip the UPI that I was on to it because I thought that would reinvigorate their efforts. So I never did speak to anybody except Mr. McVickar.

Mr. SLAWSON. While we are back on Mr. McVickar, I don't think we established for the record absolutely clearly whether there was anything in Exhibit No. 911 besides the date and the day which you felt should be corrected?

Miss JOHNSON. No; not at all. There is a postscript at the bottom which is dated November 19. So far as I recall, this doesn't reflect another conversation. It simply reflects an afterthought on the part of Mr. McVickar, or conceivably a second conversation between me and Mr. McVickar. He may have asked me more questions, and this may reflect a little additional.

Mr. SLAWSON. But it does not reflect a second conversation between you and Lee Harvey Oswald; is that correct?

Miss JOHNSON. No.

Mr. SLAWSON. I asked you if that was correct?

Miss JOHNSON. It is correct. It does not reflect a second conversation with Mr. Lee Harvey Oswald.

Mr. SLAWSON. Now then, we can get back to your interview with Lee Harvey Oswald that evening. I have some questions here, but I want you to feel free to interject any comments of your own at any time. Of course we have as exhibits many of your previous statements and articles reflecting your thinking about this before coming here today, so we can both, I think, confine ourselves to elaborations or possible corrections or discussions around the points that you have already set down in the exhibits. The first thing I would like to bring up is a point you touched upon briefly already in the exhibits, that Oswald seemed to be greatly concerned with economics, and that you weren't, and that consequently a great deal of the time in the interview was taken up you might say with noncommunicative thought, or speech rather. I wonder if you would define what you mean by economics, and elaborate on that a little bit?

Miss JOHNSON. Well, since I liked Mr. Oswald, and since Mr. McVickar had pointed out to me that there was a narrow line between my duty as a correspondent and duty as an American, I hoped to establish some kind of communication with him, although I was really trying to write a story about him. I went outside my duty in the sense that I did try to establish some kind of communication. I rather quickly perceived that the best way to do this was to follow his lead and discuss economics. That is what interested him more than anything. He wasn't interested in talking about politics. He hadn't seen enough of Soviet society to discuss it very concretely, nor was I in a position to point out to him too much about its shortcomings, because I was a correspondent there, because my room wasn't a really private place for conversation, and so I tried really to point out its shortcomings in economic terms which seemed to be the surest way of reaching him, and it was the subject on which he had the most interest.

My notes therefore don't really reflect a great deal of that part of the conversation, because it meant nothing to me storywise at the time.

It wasn't what I was going to write about. And I wasn't too interested in it really. I was just trying to talk with him. And so when I talked to him, what I said wasn't recorded in the notes, and the gist of his reply was—of his replies were—that is about the exploitation of the worker. I tried to point out to him that in the stage of primary accumulation any society has to take more from the workers. They have to be paid less than they really create. So there is poverty and injustice everywhere. It was by way of trying to say to him that things were not so good in the Soviet Union if he just would look, because I wanted him to think before he did it. I assumed his act was irrevocable and I was very sorry for him. So all this was couched in economic language, which takes up time, and in which I wasn't really too interested. I did feel that when he left that if I only understood economics more—had only taken more interest in it when I studied it, I had only studied it a bit more—that I could have answered him, talked with him in terms that he could really respect, and that it might have caused him to think more about his action and might even have caused him to hesitate, and might have built up his respect for me sufficiently that I could become someone whom he would have come back to talk to and could have been some help to him.

And I felt that I had failed him in the sense that I could not talk to him in the one language that he really wanted to talk in and was interested in. I did as much as I could along those lines, but I felt that it had been inadequate in the situation in my own desire to help him.

Mr. SLAWSON. You used the term "economics." Do you mean by that, eco-

nomics in the sense of a Marxist versus Capitalist discussion, terms like you used, "primary accumulation," "exploitation," and so on?

Miss JOHNSON. Yes, a little better than exploitation, more in primary accumulation, and comparing the two systems. If I had been good at comparing the two systems and using economic verbiage—I guess that what I am saying is that if I had had long words about economics, been able to throw them around with some authority, he would have respected me. He did respect words, long words, language, and if I had seemed to have a key to some occult science that he didn't know about but was interested in, that this would have compelled his respect and might have brought him back. But I had taken a course in Soviet economics at Harvard where they had waived the requirement that you had studied the American economic system, and I had done all right in the course, but that really was where my economic training began and ended, and I just barely sustained my interest through the course.

I regreted very much after that conversation not having ever really studied economics formally, at least not knowing the terms.

I am so uninterested in it that if somebody tells me the words I forget them. It was that bad with me. This was the only real occasion where I was very sorry.

Mr. SLAWSON. In Commission Exhibit No. 911, which is John McVickar's memorandum to files about his conversation with you, he quotes you as saying, "Miss Johnson remarked that although he used long words and seemed in some ways well-read, he often used words incorrectly as though he had learned them from a dictionary."

Was that in reference to these economic discussions you had with Oswald?

Miss JOHNSON. Yes. I think really he didn't use long words too much about economics. I felt if I could have, I could have made an impression. Words were important to him. And he was not qualified, mind you, for a technical discussion of economics.

It wasn't that he was qualified for it. If I had been, I felt I would have had a value to him.

Mr. SLAWSON. I wish you would elaborate on this: What kind of knowledge you felt Lee Oswald had on economics, and his general ability to engage in abstract argument and discussion.

Miss JOHNSON. He liked to create the pretense, the impression that he was attracted to abstract discussion and was capable of engaging in it, and was drawn to it. But it was like pricking a balloon. I had the feeling that if you really did engage him on this ground, you very quickly would discover that he didn't have the capacity for a logical sustained argument about an abstract point on economics or on noneconomic, political matters or any matter, philosophical. Actually the conversation kept coming back to him, and this was not only my desire for an interview. It was the way he led it. He really talked about himself the whole time.

Whatever he was talking about was really Lee Oswald. He seemed to me to have really zero capacity for a sustained abstract discussion on economics or any other subject, and I didn't think he knew anything about economics.

In fact, if I had been a little smarter I would have just used the economic words that I could have remembered, compelled his respect and he wouldn't have known that I didn't know anything.

Mr. SLAWSON. You said that you did not get into much political discussion with him.

Miss JOHNSON. No, we didn't. Partly I couldn't engage him directly on the Soviet Union because I had a poor status there as a correspondent. I worked for the weakest of the American agencies. I was always in danger of being expelled with my visa expiring. Even then I was only on a 1 month visa, and at that only because of the spirit of Camp David. I had just barely gotten back in the country.

I was just there on sufferance, and I really couldn't show my hand politically, tell him anything I thought politically. He also didn't seem interested in a pointed political discussion about either society. He seemed to be able or willing to discuss in generalizations rather than in direct terms, a comparison of the two societies or anything like this. The point where I felt I could engage him was

on economics, and here we did go in for some comparisons of the two societies. That was all. But politics we hardly discussed, except when he brought it up. And he didn't bring it up in terms of people at all.

(Short recess.)

Mr. SLAWSON. Miss Johnson, I wonder if you would search your memory with the help of your notes and make any comments you could on what contacts Lee Oswald had had with Soviet officials before you saw him, any remarks he made or things you could read between the lines, and so on.

Miss JOHNSON. I was looking for contact between him and the secret police, and I wanted to find out if there had been such contact, and if so, how much and was he aware of it. And I came away impressed only with the fact that he was secretive, and not at all certain what his contacts had been, but assuming that there had been some, whether or not he was aware of it.

He was very reticent as to who he had seen, what agencies they represented. I asked him whether he had told Intourist of his intention, and his answer, which is on the record somewhere, I asked him if they were encouraging him, and he said they treat it like a legal formality. They don't encourage and don't discourage you.

"They do of course warn you that it is not easy to be accepted as a citizen of the Soviet Union." They were investigating the possibility of his studying.

I assumed that the police had told him he wasn't to see any of us, and that they would tell him when he left the hotel at the end of the week not to tell any one before he left. I asked him if Intourist knew about his intentions and he refused to answer.

He said he had had an interview with an official of the Soviet Government a few days later. I assume that means after his arrival. But "official of the Soviet Government" meant nothing and I didn't know what agency that official represented.

Also I had the impression, in fact he said, he hoped that his experience as a radar operator would make him more desirable to them. That was the only thing that really showed any lack of integrity in a way about him, a negative thing. That is, he felt he had something he could give them, something that would hurt his country in a way, or could, and that was the one thing that was quite negative, that he was holding out some kind of bait. That also indicated his extreme naivete, because they have plenty of radar operators, and I doubted that anything in that realm would be of use to them, although perhaps he knew codes and things.

I didn't know anything about that.

Mr. SLAWSON. Could you elaborate a little bit on that radar point. Had you been informed by the American Embassy at the time that he had told Richard Snyder that he had already volunteered to the Soviet officials that he had been a radar operator in the Marine Corps, and would give the Russian Government any secrets he had possessed?

Miss JOHNSON. I had no idea that he had told Snyder that, but he did tell me—I got the impression, I am not sure that it is in the notes or not, I certainly got the impression that he was using his radar training as a come-on to them, hoped that that would make him of some value to them, and I—

Mr. SLAWSON. This was something then that he must have volunteered to you, because you would not have known to ask about it?

Miss JOHNSON. Well, again I am not very military minded, and I couldn't have cared less, you know. But somehow along the line, if it is not in my notes then it is a memory, then it is one of the things I didn't write—well, one thing is you know I tend to write what I thought I might use in the story. But I wasn't going to write a particularly negative story about him. I wasn't going to write that he was using it as a come-on so I might not have transcribed it just simply for that reason, that it wasn't a part of my story.

But it definitely was an impression that he—and it was from him, certainly not from the Embassy, that he was using that as a come-on, and I sure didn't like that. But it didn't occur to me he might have military secrets. I just felt, well hell, he didn't have much as a radar operator that they need, although even there I didn't know.

Maybe there was some little twist in our radar technique that he might know.

It showed a lack of integrity in his personality, and that I remembered. What he might or might not have to offer them I didn't know.

About the other point, police interest, I assumed the police would be the first people to be interested, and that whether he knew it or not, he had talked to somebody from the police, that he was getting a favorable room rate because of this interest. That is what I was after the whole time. But I was struck only by his secretiveness in answer to this, and I couldn't make out whether he had something to hide, whether he didn't know really what the situation was, or whether he was simply a very secretive person.

Mr. SLAWSON. Did he tell you that he had this information which he was, you might say, holding out as bait to the Soviets, or that he had already given to the Soviet Government whatever expertise or information he might have had as a radar operator?

Miss JOHNSON. I think he told me—could you repeat your question?

Mr. SLAWSON. Well, I will put it in a different way. I wonder whether your memory is that Oswald was telling you that he had this information which he had not yet given to the Soviet Government, and hoped to use it as a means of convincing them to take him, or whether he had already given it to them?

Miss JOHNSON. No; he didn't tell me that he had any specific information, that he offered it, that he had told them, or that he would tell them. It was not that explicit. It was something like if his experience as a radar operator would be of any use to them, perhaps they would let him work as a radar operator. It was a little more pointed than that, because I realized that he was going to make available his radar experience, and that he did want to use it as a come-on.

It was a tiny bit, a little bit more pointed than that, but it was more in that category. If anything he learned as a radar operator in the Marines would be useful to them, he would give it to them, and he hoped to continue his training, something like that.

But it is not in my notes. It is memory, and it is the most negative recollection of him I had.

Mr. SLAWSON. Did he make any comments to you about having been interviewed by any Soviet newspaper reporters or radio reporters or anything of that type?

Miss JOHNSON. Well, of course that is an obvious question I ought to have asked him, since a visiting foreigner very quickly does get that kind of attention, but I didn't ask him.

Mr. SLAWSON. You did, I think, according to the statements you have made in these exhibits, ask him whether he had had any contacts with American Communists or other Communists before he came to the Soviet Union?

Miss JOHNSON. I wasn't as suspicious about this as I had been on the Soviet police angle, but he awakened my suspicions by his reticence. He seemed to have something to hide, and once again I didn't know whether he had something to hide or whether he was just very secretive, because I asked him what books he had read, and he wouldn't say. Yet he was certainly trying to give me the impression that he was a book-learned boy, and this comes about page 11 of my notes. We were talking about books, and we were talking about his contact with American Socialists or Communists about the same time.

So perhaps the way that the conversation led from one to the other gave me the impression that he wasn't naming books because he didn't want to hurt authors by suggesting that they had had anything to do—he was taking full responsibility—that they had had anything to do with his defection. But you would think he would have mentioned books because he was giving the impression that he was a boy who paid a lot of attention and he really read books.

Then Socialists and Communists, I wasn't too suspicious although I should have been. How did he get there? It wasn't easy at all for him to do. I was more impressed, awed by it, than I was inquisitive about where he might have been coached.

But he awakened me to the point that I should be inquisitive because of the very fact that he eluded, naming names, specified that he had no contacts with American Communists, going out of his way to stress it. I am sure that this part of our conversation was quite a bit longer than came out in my notes. Again you know I had no idea that he was going to ever be at all important.

But it was he who put the emphasis on lack of contacts with American Communists. He said American Socialists were to be shunned by anybody with an interest in progressive ideology. I probably brought them up rather than the Communists first, just as his interest in Socialist literature.

He answered, "Well, they were to be shunned." This was an emphatic reply to what was probably a very vague, general, unemphatic question. And he called them "a dormant flag-waving organization."

So that woke me up and I asked him what about American Communists, and he said—he was very emphatic here and again probably at more length than was in the notes—that only through reading literature and observing, but he wouldn't name what literature, American Communists "(I never saw an American Communist)" he said, and I put that in parentheses because I was that uninterested, really. I didn't make it anything but a parenthetical observation, but only through reading did he conclude it was best. In other words it was he who had tried to emphasize that there had not been people involved.

Retrospectively I see that this was important, that there may have been people involved.

Mr. SLAWSON. You say retrospectively you see that it was important. Do you mean by that that you see now it was very important to him that he establish to you that he had come only on his own?

Miss JOHNSON. Well, I saw then that it was important to him to establish this to me. My story reflects whatever importance I gave it at the time. But if I knew about him then a tenth of what I know now, I would have tried to pin him down even more on it, that he might have had coaching.

It is also the sort of thing that comes out more clearly when you look at your notes and you think about a person afterwards, just-how-did-he-get-here kind of a thing.

How does a boy like this who doesn't know his way around Moscow find his way here? But at the time I was talking to him, I had less interest really than in any help he may have had on the Soviet side.

Mr. SLAWSON. Trying to divorce what you now know from what you knew then, did he go into any detail at all about his life before he came to Russia, his life in the Marine Corps particularly?

Miss JOHNSON. The only details there were about his experience abroad. He said literally nothing about his experience in the Marine Corps in the United States except that he was studying Russian then. He did speak about his experience in the Marine Corps abroad in Japan, in the Philippines, and he indicated that he hated to be part of it, you know, "oppressing power." He said he had been part of an invasion of Indonesia in March 1958, that there was a Communist-inspired social turnover, that they had to sit off the coast in ships with enough ammunition to intervene. He was told that they might have had to go in in Suez in 1956.

He had been in Japan and the Philippines, and he hated to participate in what he viewed as *American imperialism*, but details of his life in the Marine Corps he didn't go into at all.

Mr. SLAWSON. At that time did you yourself speak a fair amount of Russian?

Miss JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. SLAWSON. Were you able to judge his facility in that language?

Miss JOHNSON. No; because our conversation was totally in English. It was he who volunteered about his linguistic competence, and I think that he said that while the Berlitz method had helped him learn to read and write, and I queried "write" because writing is even harder than speaking, it hadn't taught him to speak. And he indicated considerable helplessness in the language. There are a number of things not in the notes, such as perhaps this, about the language, there was more than is in the notes.

His helplessness about the city, the fact that he had only been on one walk by himself is not in my notes, but it is in my story. There are a few things like that that weren't in the notes, but that came across very clearly. I had the feeling that he felt quite helpless in Russian, not that he hadn't studied it but he simply didn't find the study was useful in his day-to-day getting around the city.

Mr. SLAWSON. Your article quotes Oswald as saying that he used Berlitz

methods in learning the language. Does your memory have anything to add to that as to what exactly he might have meant?

Miss JOHNSON. Yes. This was another point where he struck me as really rather elusive about an innocent enough subject. I see on page 3, he said, "I started learning Russian a year ago along with my other preparations."

Well, his saying "along with my other preparations" took my interest at the time. What were they? Whether I tried to find out more about what they were and failed and therefore that is not in the notes, but he threw it out and he then didn't really deliver as far as detailing them. He said, "I was able to teach myself to read and write from Berlitz. I still have trouble speaking."

So I said, "Well, how did you teach yourself to read and write from Berlitz? Did you just get a textbook or did you go into some city nearby for lessons at a school?" And he wouldn't answer, and that struck me as one hell of a—I mean a strange thing to be elusive about. Why, learning a language is just something you can tell somebody, so I thought.

So I said, "Practice or a teacher? Did you have a teacher or did you just do it from practice?" And he wouldn't say. And then that got me sufficiently curious that I asked him on what money he had come to the Soviet Union. That was my next question. He did have a way of a little bit piquing your curiosity and then failing to deliver.

He liked to play cat and mouse with your curiosity.

Mr. SLAWSON. Can you go into and describe what kind of assurances Oswald said he had been given at that time about his ability to stay indefinitely in the Soviet Union, or lack of assurances?

Miss JOHNSON. This was a point on which his anxiety was patent, and he said almost at the beginning of the interview, "They have confirmed the fact that I will not have to leave the Soviet Union, be forced to leave even if the Supreme Soviet refuses my request for Soviet citizenship."

This came up repeatedly in the conversation, that he was anxious, that he had been very anxious that he would be forced to go—what was your question exactly again?

Mr. SLAWSON. I think you are already addressing yourself to it. I am interested in what Oswald told you about how sure he was at that time that he would be permitted to stay in the Soviet Union.

Miss JOHNSON. Well, he had by that time been told that he wouldn't have to leave, and as it had obviously been very recently that he had been told. It was obviously also an enormous relief to him but he hadn't quite recovered from the anxiety he had felt before the assurance, because it kept coming up again and again. In fact, he even—

Mr. SLAWSON. Could you state for the record what kept coming up again and again? I mean, what did he tell you he had been told?

Miss JOHNSON. The fact that he could stay in the Soviet Union as a resident alien even if he did not receive Soviet citizenship, that he wouldn't have to leave the country. It came up almost as a leit motif of this conversation, his anxiety about staying, and his recent reassurance by them that he could remain as a resident alien had not altogether quelled the anxiety which was still alive, even though the assurance was there.

He was holding on to it and repeating it, you know, reiterating it as though it gave him something to hold on to. In fact, he did give this as a reason for his talking to me, that he no longer was afraid that by talking to a foreigner he would be compromising his ability to stay. In other words, all the time I was also curious really as to just what he was. Was he a publicity seeker? Was he doing it for that reason? And so he said he wouldn't have talked, that he would have given no statement to the press, which was a rather pretentious way I guess of describing his utterances up to that time, if the Embassy hadn't already released it, and he wouldn't have said anything to anyone if they hadn't released it.

This was another reason for his being mad at the Embassy. Then he went on to say as another reason for talking—he was already inconsistent there—he would like to give his side of the story and give the people of the United States something to think about.

And then on top of that, that having been assured "I would not have to return

to the United States I assumed it would be safe for me to give my side of the story," and at the time I underlined the word "safe." Why did he think it would be unsafe, and "my side of the story"? He is assuming that the Embassy is giving out a negative story about him. He was paranoid. I mean he assumed that they were saying nasty things about him and he wanted to set the record straight. This told me something about him already at the beginning of the interview, that he really was a little bit paranoid.

Mr. SLAWSON. I have intentionally asked you of your impressions on this point, without giving you some other information that we have, and I now want to give that information to you and see whether in the light of this, what is your interpretation of Oswald's attitude at that time.

His historic diary, which is Commission Exhibit No. 24, has an entry that on November 15 he interviewed Aline Mosby. That is incorrect, probably a day late. It was probably the 14th or the 13th. On November 16, which he places as the day after he interviewed her, he has the following entry:

"A Russian official comes to my room, asks how I am, notifies me I can remain in U.S.S.R. 'til some solution is found with what to do with me. It is comforting news for me."

Miss JOHNSON. That was the 16th.

Mr. SLAWSON. But I say, do not take the dates correctly except that one date comes after another, because he also placed the interview with Mosby the 15th, which we know must have been at least as early as the 14th, and possibly as early as the 13th.

Miss JOHNSON. In other words—yes; but that might help account for the fullness. Either he is lying; i.e., really he is misled, or not lying but confused about his reason for talking to me, and I think he was.

Mr. SLAWSON. But I think that the significance of the entry is that the promise that he could stay was very distinctly qualified.

Miss JOHNSON. "Until some solution——"

Mr. SLAWSON. "Is found what to do with me."

Miss JOHNSON. That is interesting: "until some solution." The way he put it to me was, and he put it more than once, it is in the notes, "even if they refuse that, I won't have to leave."

I imagine that his talking to me for so long, however, could be partly because he did feel the heat was off him in some way. That might be one reason. Another thing is that leads me to date my own interview the 17th, because for some reason I have the feeling that that information has been conveyed to him on the day before I talked to him.

Mr. SLAWSON. I don't think this is a basis for your dating your interview on the 17th, because I think he has everything moved up a day here. He puts the Mosby interview on the 15th which we know was on the 14th, so he probably puts the Russian officials coming to his room on the 16th when it probably occurred on the 15th.

Miss JOHNSON. That would be a Sunday. But Soviet officials do do things on Sundays. They definitely do. But even so, it is more likely that that happened on the 14th, Mosby on the 13th. That is possible, too.

Mr. SLAWSON. Yes.

Miss JOHNSON. So they had just simply said until—in other words, he is inexact for all his legalism. Either he is confused and inexact, or he was misleading purposely. He may have misunderstood the official, thought the official was promising more than he was.

Mr. SLAWSON. It could be, except that this of course is his diary entry, so he must have known what he was writing there, unless he wrote it down much later. In other words, it is possible that he made the entry in the diary at a much later time when he then realized that the promise had been qualified, and was under the impression when he spoke to you that he had received an unconditional promise. But the reason I brought this up was whether with the insight that he may have known when he spoke to you, that he had not quite received the unconditional promise he purported to have received, does this give you any further insight on him? I don't want you to just speculate here.

Miss JOHNSON. Well, whether he viewed publicity as actually perhaps helping his case, or whether enjoying the sense of importance that publicity gave him,

he was rationalizing it by thinking that he was manipulating the situation to his advantage by having a little more publicity.

This is the only thing I wonder. Or possibly it was simply relief. He did use the word "safe," that he felt it would be safe.

Mr. SLAWSON. I think we have about got out all on that point we can. Could you elaborate a little more on Oswald's attitude toward the Embassy's reluctance to permit him to renounce his citizenship, on what he felt the Embassy was doing here, and what your impression was what the Embassy was doing?

Miss JOHNSON. My impression from talking to John McVickar was that the Embassy had tried to give him a cooling off period, to be sure he knew what he was doing, but that it had also written him, informed him in writing that he could renounce his citizenship and he had a perfect right to come in and do so. The Embassy's behavior had been correct, and on the side it was trying to be humane, giving him time to think out what he was doing.

Mr. SLAWSON. Did he show you the letter the Embassy had written him?

Miss JOHNSON. He showed me two letters, and I think he asked me something about them. I was very amused, because the Embassy was his scapegoat, and he did keep bringing it up. But this contrasted with really the correctness of the letters that he showed me from them, and it contrasted with the rather kindly attitude that Mr. McVickar had. And then on top of that he kept saying he shouldn't be too mad at them, but he indicated that he was very very mad at them indeed.

He said November 1 he had written a letter of protest to the Ambassador protesting the way Snyder had carried out his duties, and had received a letter back, and he then gave me, showed me the letter. But my impression is that he showed me two letters.

Mr. SLAWSON. Perhaps I can refresh your recollection a little. I am now on page 6 of your exhibit No. 5, in which you quote from a letter from the State Department which he showed you.

Miss JOHNSON. This is Mr. Thompson's letter. He did show it to me. I remember now that he showed me the letter.

Mr. SLAWSON. A letter from Mr. Thompson?

Miss JOHNSON. From Ambassador Thompson. Well, I am not sure. He said he wrote a letter of protest to the U.S. Ambassador, and he received this letter back. But it may have been that the letter was signed by Mr. Snyder.

Mr. SLAWSON. Yes. Do you think that your recollection of two letters may be that one he wrote and the other he received, or do you distinctly remember that he received two which he showed you?

Miss JOHNSON. I thought he showed me two things, but the only one I wrote anything about was the Embassy's reply, and either my memory has mis-carried and he only showed me one letter, or I simply don't recollect what the other one was.

Mr. SLAWSON. Is it correct that the Embassy reply you are referring to is the one that is quoted on page 6?

Miss JOHNSON. Right.

Mr. SLAWSON. Of your exhibit No. 5?

Miss JOHNSON. Right.

Mr. SLAWSON. Did he show you any communications he had received from his family or anybody else?

Miss JOHNSON. No. He told me that—again there is a little more here than is in the notes but it is partly a matter of impression. He was avoiding hearing from them, and they called him, and he said it was to ask him to come back, and he wouldn't answer. How did he know they were asking him to come back if he didn't answer? He was full of those kinds of contradictions, but that he was avoiding them. As far as I recollect he didn't show me anything from his family.

Mr. SLAWSON. Did he tell you why he was avoiding communications with his family?

Miss JOHNSON. No.

Mr. SLAWSON. Did he—

Miss JOHNSON. Well, maybe he felt his resolve was shaky. I felt his re-

solve was shaky, and maybe he felt so too, and he was afraid if he talked to them they would talk him out of it.

Mr. SLAWSON. In one of your exhibits you comment on his reply to one of your questions, that if he was so adamant on wanting to renounce his American citizenship, he could do so by going back to the Embassy, and that he had been so informed in the letter. His reply to that, according to your exhibits, was that they would simply give him the same runaround again. Do you have anything to add to that?

Miss JOHNSON. Well, it has come up. It is in the notes several times here, and I may not catch it each time. But I think I have already spoken for the record my impression that he was really not consistent about the Embassy, or I might say just putting it a little more strongly and editorially, he was not quite honest, because he claimed he was so mad he wouldn't go back, yet he was so firm in his resolve as a great big man, that he was going to give up his citizenship, you know.

But I pointed out to him that this seemed to me to be pique, boyish pique. Whether I actually said it, you know, I probably didn't quite, but that is what I thought. He was indulging himself. If he was really so resolved to give up his citizenship, then why let a little thing like annoyance over his October the 31st interview stand in the way of doing this, which he felt was an important principle and act? And I did point out to him the discrepancies in a gentler way than I honestly thought. The answers in my notes reflect his response to this, not the way that I put it to him, that he wouldn't go back because of this and that.

He did show me the letter, but my impression is that he wanted to know whether I thought that the letter was proper treatment. Showing it to me was to me an indication of his very legal approach, legalistic approach to things, and it seemed to me of course nothing exceptional about the letter. You see there he knew what he could do, and he was in light of that refusing to go to the Embassy. That seemed to me very immature, and from the standpoint of his stated principles, very inconsistent.

Mr. SLAWSON. I just have one final question here. I would like to bring together—

Miss JOHNSON. Excuse me, could I add something there?

Mr. SLAWSON. Yes.

Miss JOHNSON. And that really was one more thing that led me to think that he was less than certain about his attempt to defect. Well, leaving himself this loophole was it seemed to me important, it seemed important at the time, and he knew he was doing it, because I pointed it out to him. He knew he was doing it, and he got out of it by whatever it was he said to me. I can't isolate all the comments in the notes, but they are all there. He got out of it, but he knew he was doing it.

Mr. SLAWSON. But you felt that all these comments then were more or less excuses made up in his own mind, either consciously or unconsciously, that he was—excuses for not going back to the Embassy to make this final step of dissolving his citizenship?

Miss JOHNSON. And that behind what appeared to me to be boyish pique lay something else. He was leaving himself a way out, and I was fully aware of it at the time.

Mr. SLAWSON. We previously have discussed how much he probably was paying for his hotel room at various times, and for his meals. I bring to your attention one of your statements in the exhibits, that he said he had been living on Intourist vouchers for 10 days, and we have already gone into what 10 days probably meant. Did he make any other comments that would relate to how much money his attempt to defect was costing him?

Miss JOHNSON. Finance was certainly something I talked to him about, and it was something he was notably elusive about, and again he said he was paying the standard rate. "I want to make it clear they are not sponsoring me." Naturally I wanted to know on what money he got there, and it was in response to this that he told me the itinerary by which he came, by which he said he came, that is from New Orleans to Le Havre, to Helsinki. He gave me his route.

Whether it was the true route I don't know, but he gave me what he said was

the route, and the method of transport. He said he left from New Orleans September 19. I wasn't absolutely sure that was the date he gave me, on a Friday by ship. Actually the 19th was a Saturday. And he might have left on the 18th. That it took him 12 days to get to Le Havre, that he booked a flight to Helsinki but you couldn't fly to Helsinki from Le Havre. You would have to fly from Paris.

Mr. SLAWSON. Actually he flew from London. He went from Le Havre to London and then Helsinki.

Miss JOHNSON. By the same ship?

Mr. SLAWSON. No; by airplane I believe. Anyway he disembarked on the ship at Le Havre, as he told you, then went from there to London I believe by airplane, although I am not certain. But then he went by airplane from London to Helsinki.

Miss JOHNSON. Yes; actually he got his visa in London probably.

Mr. SLAWSON. Well, I do know some of these facts, but I would like you to go on the best of your recollection.

Miss JOHNSON. He said nothing about London at all. I never was sure how the hell he got to Helsinki, but he said he went by train from Helsinki to Moscow, and he repeated that for 10 days he had been on those vouchers.

Mr. SLAWSON. Did he indicate to you anything about how he got his visa?

Miss JOHNSON. No; not at all. I may well have asked him too. A question and a nonreply, though, are not recorded in my notes, but I may well have asked him. On the other hand I think I would have remembered if he had said anything. If he just evaded the way he evaded a lot, I might not have put it down, because evasion was really quite characteristic of him. But of course I was curious where he got it, and how. And I do have \$30 written down here as the rate. You know there was a businessman's rate of \$12 a day at that time, and also the \$30 rate I am telling you is as of that time because it is now \$35. But I do have \$30 written down, so I assumed that he specified that he was there at the \$30 rate those 10 days, not the \$12. No; he said nothing about a visa, and of course I was curious.

Mr. SLAWSON. I have no more specific questions, Miss Johnson. If you have anything at all to add, or any further comments you want to make, please go ahead and do so.

Miss JOHNSON. No; I don't.

Mr. SLAWSON. Thank you very much for coming here.

Miss JOHNSON. Thank you.

TESTIMONY OF ERIC ROGERS

The testimony of Eric Rogers was taken on July 21, 1964, at the Old Civil Courts Building, Royal and Conti Streets, New Orleans, La., by Mr. Wesley J. Liebler, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Eric Rogers, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

Mr. LIEBELER. Mr. Rogers, I am an attorney on the staff of the President's Commission. I think I met you one day.

Mr. ROGERS. I remember you; yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. I wanted to ask you a few questions about Oswald. I am questioning you under authority granted to me by the Commission under Executive Order No. 11130, dated November 29, 1963, and joint resolution of Congress, No. 137.

You are entitled to have an attorney if you want to and you don't have to answer any questions if you feel that they are incriminating.

Mr. ROGERS. Well, I can't answer what I don't know. I will tell you just what I told them, you see. That's all I saw.

Mr. LIEBELER. Mr. Rogers, am I correct in understanding that you lived at 4907 Magazine Street during the period last summer when——