

Mr. JENNER. A marine by the name of Erwin Donald Lewis?  
Mr. POWERS. No, sir.  
Mr. JENNER. I think I asked about Murray, David Christie Murray. Murphy's name was Paul, Paul Edward Murphy.  
Mr. POWERS. Yes, yes.  
Mr. JENNER. You remember him in the Far East?  
Mr. POWERS. Yes, he was in the same crew that I was in.  
Mr. JENNER. Osborne's first name was Mac, M-a-c.  
Well, that completes my examination. And any further reflections which I will ask you to do as you sit there now, can you think of anything that you think might be pertinent here to the Commission in its overall investigation, calling on your experiences during the period that you had contact with Oswald?  
Mr. POWERS. No; I don't think there is really anything that I can add. I think that the problem is that there are hundreds of kids running around like him today that can be easily influenced.  
Mr. JENNER. All right. Now, in the taking of these depositions, and you find in most regulations and rules that we adopted, you have the right to read your deposition over and make any corrections in it if you wish, and to sign it. You may waive that, if you wish also.  
Mr. POWERS. I waive it; there is no reason why——  
Mr. JENNER. As far as you're concerned——  
Mr. POWERS. As far as I'm concerned.  
Mr. JENNER. You rely on the accuracy of the reporter?  
Mr. POWERS. Yes, sir.  
Mr. JENNER. Thank you.

---

#### TESTIMONY OF JOHN E. DONOVAN

The testimony of John E. Donovan was taken at 10:30 a.m., on May 5, 1964, at 200 Maryland Avenue NE., Washington, D.C., by Mr. John Hart Ely, member of the staff of the President's Commission. Richard M. Mosk, also a member of the staff, was present.

Mr. ELY. Would you stand, please?

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. DONOVAN. I do.

Mr. ELY. Please be seated. My name is John Ely.

The gentleman directly to my right is Richard Mosk. We are both members of the staff of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, which was appointed by President Johnson to investigate all the facts and circumstances surrounding the death of President Kennedy.

The rules of the Commission require that I give to you a copy of the Executive Order No. 11130, which is the President's order creating this Commission, a copy of the Joint Resolution of Congress, and a copy of the Commission's rules which relate to the questioning of witnesses.

Is it correct to say that I have given you a copy of each of these documents?

Mr. DONOVAN. You gave them to me, and I gave them a cursory reading.

Mr. ELY. Would you state your full name, please?

Mr. DONOVAN. John E. Donovan.

Mr. ELY. And where do you live?

Mr. DONOVAN. 2009 Belmont Road, NW., Washington, D.C.

Mr. ELY. What is your occupation?

Mr. DONOVAN. I teach school at Ascension Academy, Alexandria, Va.

Mr. ELY. And prior to teaching at Ascension Academy, what did you do?

Mr. DONOVAN. I attended medical school last year at Georgetown University.

Mr. ELY. You did not, however, get a medical degree?

Mr. DONOVAN. That is correct.

Mr. ELY. Previous to attending medical school, what did you do?

Mr. DONOVAN. I attended the University of Dayton; Dayton, Ohio.

Mr. ELY. This is after you got out of the Marine Corps?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes. Eight months prior to that, I worked for a bank in Boston, Mass. Prior to that, I was employed by the U.S. Marine Corps.

Mr. ELY. For how long?

Mr. DONOVAN. Three years and 3 months, I think.

Mr. ELY. And what was the rank at which you were discharged?

Mr. DONOVAN. First lieutenant.

Mr. ELY. You had had higher education before you entered the Marine Corps?

Mr. DONOVAN. Prior to the Marine Corps I completed Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in 1956.

Mr. ELY. And you received a bachelor of arts degree?

Mr. DONOVAN. A bachelor of science, foreign service.

Mr. ELY. As you undoubtedly know, Mr. Donovan, we have called you here because we think that you might be able to tell us something about the background of Lee Harvey Oswald, whom I believe you knew when you were both members of the Marine Corps.

Why don't you, in your own words, outline your contact with Oswald, and I will interrupt with questions.

Mr. DONOVAN. In the spring of 1959, I returned from a tour in Japan. I was assigned to Marine Air Control Squadron 9 in Santa Ana, Calif.

Mr. ELY. Excuse me. There is something in these service records that confuses me. Is the installation at Santa Ana separate from the one at El Toro?

Mr. DONOVAN. It comes under the command of El Toro, but it is, I believe, 5 miles removed.

El Toro is a jet type base. Santa Ana is still known by the title of "LTA" which stands for lighter than air, which stems from the fact that in World War II it was a blimp base. It is now a helicopter base and a radar base.

In that spring, I was the assistant operations officer and the training officer at Marine Air Control Squadron 9, and it is there that I came into contact with Oswald.

Mr. ELY. What was your rank at this time?

Mr. DONOVAN. First lieutenant.

Our function at that base was to surveil for aircraft, but basically to train both enlisted and officers for later assignment overseas. Some of my fellow officers there had served with Oswald in Japan, and as all ranks, from generals to privates probably do, they discussed their contemporaries and how to get along with them.

I was informed that Oswald was very competent, but a little bit nuts on foreign affairs.

Mr. ELY. Who told you this?

Mr. DONOVAN. Bill Trail—William Kenneth Trail is his name—had served with him in Japan, and was around when Oswald underwent some court-martial proceedings, but I don't recall what they were. I don't know if my memory has been refreshed by the newspaper or if I actually knew then. I don't believe I recall. At any rate, Oswald served on my crew there, served on a lot of crews, but basically mine.

Mr. ELY. Let me interrupt a moment to define a little more closely the relationship between you and Oswald.

Would it be a fair characterization to say that you were his commanding officer?

Mr. DONOVAN. No; that is not correct. The commanding officer was a lieutenant colonel. Oswald served on a crew, a radar crew, and on that crew I was the officer in command.

Mr. ELY. I understand. How many men were on the crew?

Mr. DONOVAN. I believe that there were always about three officers and about seven enlisted men. It varied from time to time. We were supposed to have 12 enlisted men, but we were seldom up to strength.

Mr. ELY. So Oswald would have been one of the six or seven enlisted men with whom you were in closest contact?

Mr. DONOVAN. Correct. I served with him on a 4-hour watch once a day, usually five days a week—sometimes that was the morning watch, sometimes the afternoon, and sometimes it was a rather extensive night watch.

During night watch, you had to stay up until all aircraft were in. Often

this was quite boring. And this is when I had the most occasion to talk to him.

Mr. ELY. It amazed me how much you remembered about Oswald in view of the fact that you were an officer and he was an enlisted man.

Do you think your memory of him is atypical, or would you remember all the enlisted men in that crew approximately the same?

Mr. DONOVAN. I would remember, I believe, all of them equally well. Most of them I had served with in Japan.

Mr. ELY. You had not known Oswald in Japan?

Mr. DONOVAN. If I knew him in Japan, I don't remember. They played football on a team that I coached overseas, which to a degree gives you a common bond.

Number two, these are not typical marine enlisted. They have a much higher than average IQ. And they speak well on a given subject they are interested in—usually women and sports. But it was quite normal in working with them to talk with them about all subjects.

You were constantly in communication with the center concerning aircraft, if something was going on you talked to them on the intercommunication system. And it was quite ordinary to talk to them, standing at the back of the radar room in off hours.

I think I can remember all the men on that crew pretty well.

Mr. ELY. All right. I derailed you there for a moment. You had mentioned what Lieutenant Trail had told you. And I don't think there is any point in going into that any further.

Well, let me chase down one thing you mentioned. You said that you thought the enlisted men on this crew were above average in terms of ability for Marine Corps enlisted men. Would you say that Oswald specifically was more intelligent than the average enlisted man, or would you just infer this from the fact that he was chosen for this job?

Mr. DONOVAN. Both. I think he had a given IQ or GCT, General Classification Test score, that would place him in a position of being there. I also found him competent in any job I saw him try in the center. Sometimes he surveilled for unidentified aircraft. Sometimes he surveilled for aircraft in distress. Sometimes he made plots on the board. Sometimes he relayed information to other radar sites in the Air Force or Navy. And sometimes he swept the floor when we were cleaning up getting ready to go home. I found him competent in all functions.

Sometimes he was a little moody. But I never heard him wise off to a sergeant or any officer. And in working with most people, as long as they do their job, if they are moody, that is their business.

He was always neat. He was neat. Sometimes his lack of enthusiasm got people in dutch, which the other members of the crew did not always appreciate.

Mr. ELY. When you say he was neat, was your only contact with him in regard to this crew? In other words, it was not your job to inspect his quarters or his rifle or his uniform?

Mr. DONOVAN. His quarters were not exceptionally neat, and I did have occasion to inspect them.

But he always cleaned up sufficiently so that he passed inspection. I don't think he was that way by nature. But I think he had figured out that the Marine Corps demanded this of him. And he at least complied in that respect.

Mr. ELY. Do you remember an occasion on which he was transferred out of a quonset hut because of a refusal to clean up?

Mr. DONOVAN. I recall that there was some difficulty. Two or three inspections had gone badly. And that the other members of his quonset hut said he was at fault. It is difficult for a sergeant ever to say who is at fault. But after the complaints came in long enough, I believe he was transferred to another hut.

Mr. ELY. But your general impression is that he was not especially—

Mr. DONOVAN. Sloppy—no; he was not sloppy.

Mr. ELY. I wonder, Mr. Donovan, if you could return to your description of the way Oswald performed his job, perhaps with particular reference to how he reacted to stress situations.

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes. I have been on watch with him when an emergency

arose, and in turning around and reporting it to the crew chief and to myself—and to me, simultaneously, he would tell you what the status of the emergency was, if anyone could tell, and what he thought the obvious action we should take. And he was right. There was usually an obvious solution. Then he waited for you to tell him what to do, and he did it, no matter what you told him.

Mr. ELY. Did he remain calm at all times; or was he excitable with regard to his job?

Mr. DONOVAN. I don't recall him being particularly excitable.

Mr. ELY. Would you characterize him as "very cool," or do you think that might be overstating the case in the other direction?

Mr. DONOVAN. I just think in that respect he was normal.

Mr. ELY. Did you have occasion to observe the relation between Oswald and his fellow enlisted men?

Mr. DONOVAN. At times; yes.

Mr. ELY. Did it seem that he was normal to you with regard to mixing with his peers?

Mr. DONOVAN. No; he did not share a common interest with them. For better or for worse, the average young American male in that age is interested in saving enough money to go buy another beer and get another date. This I don't believe would characterize him at all. He read a great deal.

Mr. ELY. Excuse me. Do you remember anything that he read specifically?

Mr. DONOVAN. No; I know that the men always told me that he subscribed to a Russian newspaper.

Mr. ELY. When you say Russian newspaper, do you recall whether that was one printed in the Russian language?

Mr. DONOVAN. No; I do not.

Mr. ELY. You never saw that newspaper?

Mr. DONOVAN. I never saw the newspaper.

Mr. ELY. Did you ever question Oswald about his reading of it?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes; I did. And he did not apparently take this stuff as gospel—although—

Mr. ELY. When you say that, are you implying that it not only was a Russian newspaper, but it was also a Communist newspaper?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes; I implied that. And I felt that he thought this presented a very different and perhaps equally just side of the international affairs in comparison with the United States newspapers.

Mr. ELY. Was the paper printed in Russia, do you know?

Mr. DONOVAN. I do not know.

Mr. ELY. And, of course, you don't know the name of the paper?

Mr. DONOVAN. That is correct.

Mr. ELY. Did he tell you at that time why he subscribed to the paper?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes; he said he was interested in learning Russian. And he took great pride in the fact that he could speak it. He couldn't prove it by me, because I don't speak Russian. But he said he could, and his contemporaries believed he could. As far as I know, he could.

Mr. ELY. But you also got the idea that he enjoyed this paper for its ideological content?

Mr. DONOVAN. To a degree. I think he enjoyed international affairs in all respects. He enjoyed studying them. He thought there were many great—there were many grave injustices concerning the affairs in the international situation.

I know that he constantly brought up the idea that our Government must be run by many incompetent people. And, as I stated, and you have probably read in your reports or the newspapers, that he was very well versed, at least on the superficial facts of a given foreign situation.

His bond with me was that I was a recent graduate of the Foreign Service School, at least fairly well acquainted with situations throughout the world. And he would take great pride in his ability to mention not only the leader of a country, but five or six subordinates in that country who held positions of prominence. He took great pride in talking to a passing officer coming in or out of the radar center, and in a most interested manner, ask him what he thought

of a given situation, listen to that officer's explanation, and say, "Thank you very much."

As soon as we were alone again, he would say, "Do you agree with that?"

In many cases it was obvious that the officer had no more idea about that than he did about the polo races—or polo matches in Australia.

And Oswald would then say, "Now, if men like that are leading us, there is something wrong—when I obviously have more intelligence and more knowledge than that man."

And I think his grave misunderstanding that I tried to help him with is that these men were Marine officers and supposed to be schooled in the field of warfare as the Marine Corps knows it, and not as international political analysts. And in some respects he was probably better informed than most people in the Marine Corps, namely, on international affairs.

Mr. ELY. Do you remember any specific international events or situations which he questioned officers about?

Mr. DONOVAN. No; not particularly.

I know that Cuba interested him more than most other situations. He was fairly well informed about Mr. Batista. He referred to atrocities in general, not in particular. I think that we all know that there were injustices committed under the Batista administration. And he was against that. And he was against this sort of dictatorship.

But I never heard him in any way, shape or form confess that he was a Communist, or that he ever thought about being a Communist.

Mr. ELY. Did you hear him express sympathy for Castro specifically?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes—but, on the other hand, so did Time Magazine at that time. Harvard accepted him de facto, at face value—which is one of our better schools, I suppose. At any rate, what he said about Castro was not an unpopular belief at that time.

Mr. ELY. What did he say?

Mr. DONOVAN. I don't recall any particulars, except that it was a godsend that somebody had overthrown Batista.

Mr. ELY. Did he ever express to you any desire that he personally would take part in clearing up injustices, either in Cuba or anywhere else?

Mr. DONOVAN. He not only never said it to me, I never heard of him saying it to anyone else.

Mr. ELY. Based on your observation of men throughout your military career, would you say that Oswald constituted a typical case of someone whose interests were different from the rest of the enlisted men? Do you think that his loneliness, his desire to be alone, exceeded that, or would you say it was a more or less normal thing for somebody interested in other things?

Mr. DONOVAN. Most young men in the Marine Corps, I suppose in all services, have the common bond that they want to get out. He certainly shared that common bond with them. I think that was his only common bond. I don't believe he shared an equal interest in sports. I don't think he shared an equal intense interest in girls. And although I believe he drank, sometimes to excess, I don't believe that he shared even that companionship with them consistently.

Mr. ELY. You mentioned that the sort of unit with which you were associated was one that drew enlisted men of a higher intellectual caliber. For this reason, were there men in the unit who shared Oswald's interests, or even given this he was still the only one interested in serious reading?

Mr. DONOVAN. Not that I know of. But as I have told both the FBI and the Secret Service, he had living in his barracks a boy whose name I am sorry I cannot remember, whose nickname was Beezer—

Mr. ELY. Would the man's name be Roussel?

Mr. DONOVAN. That is it. He was from Louisiana, I believe. And this boy fixed me up with his sister who was an airline stewardess. I took her out on one occasion, I believe that this boy was at least interested enough in Oswald that he fixed Oswald up with her once. And she related to me that he could speak Russian, which I had heard before. And she referred to him as kind of an oddball. You probably have her name and can talk to her.

Mr. ELY. Was her name Rosaleen Quinn?

Would that ring a bell? You don't remember?

Mr. DONOVAN. No, I am sorry, it doesn't ring a bell.

Mr. ELY. But you feel that if we could locate this woman, she could tell us something that would be of interest in reconstructing his personality?

Mr. DONOVAN. She went out with him once, maybe twice. Maybe more than that, I don't know about. I don't know if she could or not.

Mr. ELY. Do you remember any fields other than foreign affairs which Oswald did extensive reading in?

Mr. DONOVAN. No, I do not.

Mr. ELY. Have you ever stated that Oswald prided himself on knowing the names of the great philosophers, or would this statement, if attributed to you, have been a mistake?

Mr. DONOVAN. No, that is a correct statement. He knew the names of some philosophers.

Mr. ELY. Is it your feeling that he read philosophy?

Mr. DONOVAN. Manuscripts are available to all of us which mention these gentlemen's names in support of some idea. Quite often, if you read the philosopher you see that it is taken out of context.

I only had 2 years of philosophy and 2 years of theology at Georgetown. But even with that limited amount, it was obvious that he often knew the name, and that was it.

Mr. ELY. Do you remember any of the philosophers that he did mention?

Mr. DONOVAN. Hegel, which would be appropriate concerning his later action.

Mr. ELY. Hegel.

Did he mention Marx?

Mr. DONOVAN. No, I don't recall him—oh, he must have mentioned Marx, but I don't ever recall him using Marxist philosophy to support anything in particular.

Mr. ELY. Is it your general impression that the philosophers who interested him were ones that were somehow tied in with political philosophy?

Mr. DONOVAN. Social revolutions.

Mr. ELY. Do you know whether Oswald had any knowledge of languages other than Russian and English?

Mr. DONOVAN. No, I do not. I recall that we had occasion to speak Spanish on the radio, because ham operators from Mexico were forever cutting in. He may have known a few words. But he did not—I don't believe he had a command of Spanish.

Mr. ELY. You have no recollection of his speaking or understanding German at all?

Mr. DONOVAN. I have no recollection.

Mr. ELY. Did he ever speak to you about his plans for after he got out of the Marine Corps?

Mr. DONOVAN. No, I cannot say that he did.

Mr. ELY. Did he ever express to you an interest in attending school anywhere?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes, now that you mention it; I think he did mention that he intended to pursue school. And, in fact, it was standard for all officers to encourage any enlisted man to attend school. He certainly had the ability, if he had wanted to do it.

There was another boy named Sergeant Park, from Washington, who, I believe, lived in his same quonset hut, who definitely intended to attend school. I have given this gentleman's name to both the FBI and the Secret Service.

Mr. ELY. Did Oswald ever mention to you that he would like to attend school in any foreign country?

Mr. DONOVAN. Never. It came as a complete surprise to me that he had turned up in Moscow.

Mr. ELY. In fact, he never mentioned thoughts of traveling at all anywhere outside the country.

Mr. DONOVAN. He never mentioned it to me.

Mr. ELY. Did you ever hear of his mentioning it to anybody else?

Mr. DONOVAN. I never heard of it being mentioned to anyone. Evidently that was a rather well kept secret, that he intended to depart so suddenly.

Mr. ELY. You mentioned that Oswald spoke of injustices which took place

during the Batista regime. Do you remember his referring to any other country specifically with regard to injustices?

Mr. DONOVAN. No, I don't, except for Asia in general. I think in talking with the FBI and the Secret Service I mentioned Guatemala or something, and I tried to tell them that was only an example, that I never heard him specifically refer to Guatemala, or Venezuela, or wherever I was talking with them about.

But he had served in the Orient, and he had seen poverty in the extreme, as anyone who goes to the Orient does, and he had mentioned that that was unjust.

Mr. ELY. Did you notice any specific interest in Latin America?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes. I would say that he was particularly interested in Latin America. He, for instance, was relatively familiar with the Betancourt family, which is a prominent North, South American and Central American family, and their regime as a family.

Mr. ELY. Did he ever mention the Dominican Republic by name?

Mr. DONOVAN. If he did, I don't recall it.

Mr. ELY. Did he ever have any specific suggestions as to what should be done about problems in Asia or Latin America?

Mr. DONOVAN. No. His only solution that I could see was that authority, particularly the Marine Corps, ought to be able to recognize talent such as his own, without a given magic college degree, and put them in positions of prominence. His talent was obviously unrecognized by the Marine Corps for commission or staff NCO ability, if it existed.

Mr. ELY. This is his opinion?

Mr. DONOVAN. This is his opinion.

Mr. ELY. You mentioned that Oswald did not, in your view, have an inordinate interest in competitive sports.

Do you remember any excursions into the field of competitive sports?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes; he went out for the squadron football team, and I believe he played end. As I stated before, he often tried to make calls in the huddle—for better or for worse, again, I should say, a quarterback is in charge of the team and should make the calls. A quarterback did. And I don't know if he quit or I kicked him off. But, at any rate, he stopped playing.

Mr. ELY. Let me make a comment with regard to something you said.

Undoubtedly there are many things you covered with the FBI and the Secret Service. We now have to bring them out under oath, so we can introduce them into the record of the Commission. So we know we are being repetitive. We will just ask you to bear with us on this.

Were you the captain of this team?

Mr. DONOVAN. No; I was the coach of the team. The captain was a gentleman named Tibbet Czik, and Captain Czik is still on active duty in the Marine Corps. Last summer he was stationed at New River, N.C. And Captain Czik would not remember this fellow very well, because at that time he was recently reinstated in the Marine Corps after having been out for a few years. He knew at that time very little about radar and was in a more or less student status. I don't believe he would remember him.

Mr. ELY. Was Czik the quarterback?

Mr. DONOVAN. Czik was the quarterback. Czik was the quarterback all through college of some college in New Jersey, and had a lot of talent.

Mr. ELY. Was Oswald a proficient football player?

Mr. DONOVAN. No; he had his share of ability. But he was too light. I think the boy only weighed about 125, 130 pounds, as I remember. He had a slender build.

Mr. ELY. Would you say, however, that he was normal in terms of speed and agility?

Mr. DONOVAN. Oh, yes; he was fast enough.

Mr. ELY. So would you characterize him as athletic, but too light to be a really good football player?

Mr. DONOVAN. I don't think that he would ever make first string high school in a good high school.

Mr. ELY. On any kind of team, or are you just speaking about football?

Mr. DONOVAN. Football. I never saw him play basketball that I recall, al-

though he might have been talented in that field. He was coordinated to a normal degree.

Mr. ELY. Did you notice any special lack of team spirit on his part?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes; like the other experiences I had with him, he thought he should be boss, and when he was not immediately accepted as such, there was discontent on his part, which, of course, is lack of team spirit.

Mr. ELY. You mentioned earlier that you at times inspected Oswald's quarters. Did you have occasion to inspect his rifle?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes; I did. And I don't recall anything out of order.

Mr. ELY. Are you saying that you don't recall the results of this inspection, or that you do recall the results of the inspection and that you don't remember that his rifle was extraordinarily sloppy?

Mr. DONOVAN. I don't recall that his rifle was extraordinarily sloppy. I do recall, after having talked with you about it, the barracks incident, in which there was some discontent on the part of his contemporaries that the hut was being punished for his lack of order.

Mr. ELY. But your impression is that he kept his rifle as neat as anybody else?

Mr. DONOVAN. I don't recall to the contrary.

Mr. ELY. Would you have any reason to have an impression as to Oswald's proficiency in firing the rifle?

Mr. DONOVAN. No; I would not. I saw his record book, and I believe at that time he was qualified as a sharpshooter—or maybe a marksman. If he had not been qualified as a marksman, which is the minimum standard, I am sure I would have been aware of it, because I was training officer, and that is one of the things that you must try to train men in.

Mr. ELY. But you never had occasion to be with him when he fired a rifle?

Mr. DONOVAN. That is correct.

Mr. ELY. The marksmanship scores which are recorded in the Marine Corps—are they reliable, or is there an opportunity to falsify a score?

Mr. DONOVAN. I would say that in a vast majority of the cases they are reliable. Some people have what is called an M-1 pencil—namely, you can punch holes in the target the size of an M-1 shell to improve the score. This is a court-martial offense. I am sure it does happen.

I don't personally know of it ever having happened, but it might. If he had a score of 210, which would make him sharpshooter, I would assume that from the standing position he could hit a 10-inch bullseye 8 times out of 10.

Mr. ELY. Do you know how the score was recorded? Did the firer of the weapon ever go down personally to inspect the target?

Mr. DONOVAN. Never. That is one of the things that makes this quite difficult. The men are on a firing range, a minimum of 200 yards distance, a maximum of 500 yards distance. When you are put into what is called the butts, or the target area, you do not know whose target you are pulling, because they switch you around every day. A staff NCO or an officer comes around and verifies each given shot. And it is not impossible to cheat, but it would be most difficult to. And I have no reason to suspect that he did.

Mr. ELY. In order that a friend could cheat for you, he would have to know ahead of time, which point you were firing on, get to that point, and punch the target before the NCO got there?

Mr. DONOVAN. That is correct. You fired from a given position every day.

For instance, if you fired on target 17 during the week or two of qualification, you always fired on target 17. However, in the target area, where you pulled the targets up and down to repair them, you were switched from spot to spot every day, and it was not a matter of choice. The sergeant just said, "You men take target 1", "target 2," and so on. So it would be most unusual.

But I suppose it does happen.

Mr. ELY. Earlier in your deposition you stated, I believe, that you never heard Oswald wise off to any NCO. When speaking to the FBI, did you characterize him as a wise guy, or is that the agent's characterization?

Mr. DONOVAN. He was a wise guy in the sense that he could be disrespectful in a way that you would accept. He would in a very respectful manner argue with someone and in most cases it was obvious to people listening that he knew



more than the person he was arguing with. We had one fellow on our crew, a S. Sgt. Cornelius Brown, and Sergeant Brown is the most competent sergeant in the field of radar that I have ever encountered. Sergeant Brown could barely write. He could read, but again barely read. He could read a newspaper.

But most people like to think they are well informed on all subjects. And it was characteristic of Oswald to bait people, particularly on foreign affairs. He would listen interestedly, ask questions in an interested manner, and then if the person were not too high in rank, could point out a dozen places they didn't know what they were talking about.

Mr. ELY. Do you feel that he ever asked questions about foreign affairs because he truly wanted to know the person's opinion?

Mr. DONOVAN. No; I think his mind was made up. I think he wanted to ask questions to later expose to his comrades that he knew far more than a person in a position of authority. I think he tried to make it evident to his contemporaries that in many cases he was more gifted and more intelligent than people who were in charge of him. And this in itself was ridiculous—according to his way of thinking. I don't think that he ever asked information of anyone on foreign affairs, including me, whose opinion he particularly respected. He had his mind made up and was willing to discuss that point of view with anyone.

Mr. ELY. How did Oswald's fellow enlisted men react to his baiting of NCOs and officers?

Mr. DONOVAN. Well, sometimes, if he tried to humiliate the sergeant in the presence of others, the sergeant has many ways of getting even, and he can make a cleanup detail much more detailed, he can make barracks inspections much more frequently, and I don't think this particularly made his fellow marines enthusiastic about his attitude.

Mr. ELY. Do you think his fellow marines accepted his view that he was brighter than the officers he was talking to?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes; I think that they accepted the view that he was brighter than most people, and was particularly capable in the field of world affairs. In respect to them, I think he knew more than they did, at least in facts.

I think they admired his ability to pursue Russian on his own and learn it. And I think anyone must admit that this reflects a degree of intelligence.

Mr. ELY. While you and Oswald were in the same unit, was he ever in any trouble of a nature which would require administrative action?

Mr. DONOVAN. Not that I recall.

Mr. ELY. Returning to this date that you had with this airline stewardess, did she tell you anything about Oswald?

Mr. DONOVAN. As I recall, the only thing she said was that he was rather strange. And I do recall that either she or her brother at that time mentioned that he does speak Russian and reads Russian newspapers.

Mr. ELY. Did she say in what way he was strange?

Mr. DONOVAN. I don't recall in what way she said he was strange.

Mr. ELY. Did you get the feeling that she hadn't enjoyed herself when she was with him?

Mr. DONOVAN. I got that impression. But I think that they didn't share any common interest. I think he was truly interested in international affairs, and that is not typical of her or other stewardesses I have known.

Mr. ELY. Do you recall the circumstances under which Oswald left the Marine Corps?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes; I do.

Mr. ELY. Could you relate them to us, please?

Mr. DONOVAN. I recall that he got a hardship discharge. We offered to get him a flight—that is a hop from El Toro to some place in Texas, his home. He refused. We considered that normal in that if you take a hop you sacrifice your transportation pay. We offered to take him to a bus or train station. He refused. But that is not particularly unusual, either.

I recall that he was gone for some period of time, and shortly before I got out of the Marine Corps, which was mid-December 1959, we received word that he had showed up in Moscow. This necessitated a lot of change of aircraft call signs, codes, radio frequencies, radar frequencies.

He had the access to the location of all bases in the west coast area, all radio frequencies for all squadrons, all tactical call signs, and the relative strength of all squadrons, number and type of aircraft in a squadron, who was the commanding officer, the authentication code of entering and exiting the ADIZ, which stands for Air Defense Identification Zone. He knew the range of our radar. He knew the range of our radio. And he knew the range of the surrounding units' radio and radar.

If you had asked me a month after I left that area, I could not have told you any but our own. Had I wanted to record them, I certainly could have secretly, and taken them with me. Unless he intentionally with malice aforethought wrote them down, I doubt if he would have been able to recall them a month later, either.

Mr. ELY. You recall that various codes were changed. Now, at what level were these changed? Was this an action of your specific unit, or a fairly widespread action?

Mr. DONOVAN. Well, I did not witness the changing in any other squadrons, but it would have to be, because the code is obviously between two or more units. Therefore, the other units had to change it. These codes are a grid, and two lines correspond.

And he gives the grid that you want, and he reads back "AB," or whatever the reply is supposed to be, the authentication is supposed to be.

Mr. ELY. Are authentication codes changed from time to time as a matter of course?

Mr. DONOVAN. They are changed from time to time, that is right.

Mr. ELY. Are they changed even if there is no specific incident which elicits the change?

Mr. DONOVAN. They are methodically changed anyway. There are some things which he knew on which he received instruction that there is no way of changing, such as the MPS 16 height-finder radar gear. That had recently been integrated into the Marine Corps system. It had a height-finding range far in excess of our previous equipment, and it has certain limitations. He had been schooled on those limitations.

It cannot operate above a given altitude in setting—in other words, you cannot place the thing above a given terrain height.

He had also been schooled on a piece of machinery called a TPX-1, which is used to transfer radio—radar and radio signals over a great distance. Radar is very susceptible to homing missiles, and this piece of equipment is used to put your radar antenna several miles away, and relay the information back to your site which you hope is relatively safe. He had been schooled on this.

And that kind of stuff you cannot change.

Mr. ELY. Did Oswald have any kind of clearance?

Mr. DONOVAN. He must have had secret clearance to work in the radar center, because that was a minimum requirement for all of us.

Mr. ELY. Was the spot at which he worked such that in order to gain admittance one would have to show some sort of credentials?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes; they checked your card data. Within the center, which is called a counter-air operations center, he rotated through all positions of an enlisted man. At times, as I told you, he served as plotter, sometimes surveillance, sometimes even as crew chief.

Mr. ELY. Were you the one who picked the crew chief?

Mr. DONOVAN. I was in a rather favorable position, since I was the training officer and assistant operations officer, that I had first choice of crew chiefs. I always picked one of two men—either Sgt. Cornelius Brown or Sgt. Eugene Holmburg. I have already told you where Sergeant Brown is.

Sergeant Holmburg is now a commissioned warrant officer and still on active duty in the Marine Corps.

Mr. ELY. Did you ever pick Oswald to act as crew chief?

Mr. DONOVAN. There was occasion when Oswald acted as crew chief. If one of these sergeants had another duty somewhere else, and Oswald was senior man present, he was crew chief. And I had no complaint about his work.

Mr. ELY. Did he show any special ability in this direction?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes; I think he was competent, very competent. And I think

he did his job well. I don't recall anything coming up that he could not handle.

Mr. ELY. In acting as crew chief, do you think he demonstrated leadership qualities?

Mr. DONOVAN. I don't think he was a leader.

Mr. ELY. However, is it fair to say that any reservations you have about his ability as a leader were not sufficient to make you decide never to use him as a crew chief again?

Mr. DONOVAN. I would not hesitate to use him as a crew chief.

Mr. ELY. When the other men in the unit found out that Oswald was in the process of getting a hardship discharge, did they make any offers to help, other than the ones you have mentioned concerning transportation?

Mr. DONOVAN. I recall that I offered to help him any way I could, including financially. And you can talk to Sergeant Brown, but I believe that Sergeant Brown helped him, or offered to help him.

Mr. ELY. Did he accept these offers?

Mr. DONOVAN. He did not from me, and to the best of my knowledge he did not from anyone.

Mr. ELY. Did he give a reason for refusing them?

Mr. DONOVAN. He didn't need the help.

Mr. ELY. Did you find out about his attempt to get a hardship discharge through observation of his papers, or did he mention it to you?

Mr. DONOVAN. I have no idea. I don't recall seeing any papers. Just word around the squadron.

Mr. ELY. Would you have any idea of how long in advance of his actual discharge you or others heard about the fact that he was trying to get a discharge?

Mr. DONOVAN. I do not recall.

Mr. ELY. Did he ever discuss with you the reasons for the discharge?

Mr. DONOVAN. I don't recall if he ever discussed them or not. I did know that his mother needed help. And, at that time, I recall that I believed he was a sole surviving son. Since that date I have read that he has a brother. At that time, as I recall, I believed him to be an only son, and his mother needed help.

Mr. ELY. Did you observe on the part of Oswald anything that could be termed mental instability?

Mr. DONOVAN. No; except that he had an extreme passion for this field of foreign affairs—or at least in his discussions with me—and they might have been limited to me, I don't know. But it is unusual when anyone is solely interested in one given thing.

Mr. ELY. During discussions of foreign affairs, did he get visibly angry, did he raise his voice?

Mr. DONOVAN. No; he never raised his voice, but he could become passionate in the defense of a point, and become quite enthusiastic in trying to get you to see what he saw.

Mr. ELY. But he always retained physical control of himself, in terms of pounding the table, screaming?

Mr. DONOVAN. Oh, yes; I don't believe he became any more physically worked up than people we talk with every day.

Mr. ELY. Did you observe Oswald to complain about the Marine Corps any more than the average Marine complains about the Marine Corps?

Mr. DONOVAN. No; he stuck in my mind in that respect only because he was particularly opposed to the recognition promotion program. Most guys complain about having to stand so many inspections, having to clean up the barracks so many times, having to go on KP so many times, et cetera.

I don't recall those complaints from him. They may have come. The complaint he had was that the Marine Corps did not recognize his ability to be in a position of command. I recall that on several instances I encouraged him to pursue this, and put in for NCO leadership school, if he felt he had the qualities, or to go out, get a commission, and come back in, and try to do his best in that way.

Mr. ELY. Do you know whether he ever took an OCS qualification exam?

Mr. DONOVAN. I do not recall that he did.

Mr. ELY. Do you recall any interest on Oswald's part in music?

Mr. DONOVAN. No; I do not.

Mr. ELY. Fine. I am going to run down a list of short questions like that, and the answer to many of them may be simply that you don't remember. These are things that have been suggested to us.

Do you recall whether or not he played chess?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes; I do recall. I have played chess with him some nights. And, as a matter of fact, he was a pretty good chess player. I won the base championship that year in chess. I know that on occasion he beat me. That was not a very big base. But he and I were comparable players. I think I beat him more times than I lost to him.

Mr. ELY. Did he ever have occasion to discuss with you his religious beliefs?

Mr. DONOVAN. I don't recall that he ever expressed any belief in God.

Mr. ELY. Do you recall that he—

Mr. DONOVAN. I don't recall that he ever expressed any denial of God.

Mr. ELY. Never mentioned the subject at all?

Mr. DONOVAN. If he did, I don't recall it.

Mr. ELY. Do you recall his getting into any fights while he and you were at Santa Ana?

Mr. DONOVAN. I do not recall his getting into any fights.

Mr. ELY. I believe you mentioned earlier that he did not seem to you particularly interested in girls.

Was this just because he was interested in other things, or do you have any reason to believe that there was anything abnormal about his desires?

Mr. DONOVAN. I have no reason to suspect that he was homosexual, and in that squadron at that time one fellow was discharged from the service for being homosexual. He was in no way tied in with it that I know of. His lack of interest in girls may be only my belief, because as an officer I cannot have occasion to know him socially, but in our conversations he never was particularly interested in talking about them.

Mr. ELY. Do you know whether he smoked?

Mr. DONOVAN. I don't recall.

Mr. ELY. Would you say that he had a good sense of humor?

Mr. DONOVAN. If my sense of humor is good, he did not.

Mr. ELY. Did he attempt to be funny?

Mr. DONOVAN. He attempted it at times.

Mr. ELY. And, in your opinion, failed?

Mr. DONOVAN. And in my opinion he was a failure in that respect.

Mr. ELY. You have mentioned that he read a Russian newspaper. Do you remember any other possessions or habits or affectations which would suggest an interest in the Soviet Union?

Mr. DONOVAN. No, I do not.

However, I do recall that in college we had some monumentally boring textbooks to read concerning GATT, et cetera—at least at the time they were monumentally boring. And on occasion he would bring up one of these books—I don't recall which one—but say, "Are you familiar with this?" And it was my good fortune to have studied it. And he would ask about something. And in some respects he would ask you about a term he did not know. But he never would ask you about a concept, except in an effort to get you to discuss it or argue it. But he would ask you what some word meant in economics. He was interested in international economics.

Mr. ELY. Could you state for the record what GATT stands for?

Mr. DONOVAN. General Agreement on Trade and Tariff.

Mr. ELY. Do you recall his having any nicknames?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes.

Mr. ELY. What were they?

Mr. DONOVAN. Ozzie.

Mr. ELY. Anything else?

Mr. DONOVAN. Not that I recall.

Mr. ELY. Did most people call him Ozzie?

Mr. DONOVAN. Or Oz.

Mr. ELY. Did you ever know or hear of his being in contact with the Cuban consulate, either in person or by mail?

Mr. DONOVAN. I never heard of that.

Mr. ELY. Do you remember whether—

Mr. DONOVAN. Are you talking about then, or now?

Mr. ELY. I am talking about then, right.

Do you recall whether he made any trips, when he had time off?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes; I think he took a couple of trips down to Tijuana, but I don't think those were for reasons of studying international economics, although they might well have been.

Mr. ELY. Did he ever tell you what he did in Tijuana?

Mr. DONOVAN. Never, and I never inquired.

Mr. ELY. Do you know whether he took any trips to Los Angeles?

Mr. DONOVAN. I don't know it, but I am sure he did, because it was common for all those boys to go in and out of Los Angeles or Hollywood, or up to Disneyland—whether they wanted to go up for a beer or a date or something.

Mr. ELY. Did you notice that he either took more trips than the average marine, or that he took fewer trips?

Mr. DONOVAN. I did not recognize his itinerary as being anything out of the ordinary in that respect.

Mr. ELY. Do you remember his receiving any visitors while he was at Santa Ana?

Mr. DONOVAN. I do not recall his receiving any visitors.

Mr. ELY. Does the name Lieutenant Cupenak mean anything to you?

Mr. DONOVAN. Means absolutely nothing to me.

Mr. ELY. Cupenak does not even sound like any name that means anything to you?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes, I knew a Lieutenant John Cuaka. C-u-a-k-a. That spelling is strictly phonetic.

Mr. ELY. Was he at Santa Ana at that time?

Mr. DONOVAN. I do not believe he was. I knew him in the Philippines and in Japan. He was a radar maintenance officer that generally served with a GCA, standing for Ground Control Approach unit. But Cupenak doesn't ring a bell at all.

Mr. ELY. Finally, Mr. Donovan, I would like to get your opinion on which of the men who were at Santa Ana at the time that both you and Oswald were there would be most helpful to us in reconstructing the personality of Oswald. I will mention the names that I have to you, and see whether you think—

Mr. DONOVAN. You mean which in the plural or singular? You want me to say which would be most—

Mr. ELY. I will read the names to you, and you can comment on them individually.

Do you remember a man named Thornley?

Mr. DONOVAN. I don't recall the name at all.

Mr. ELY. All right.

How about a man named Lewis?

Mr. DONOVAN. Don't recall the name at all.

Mr. ELY. Botelho?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes, Botelho was a man in our squadron. I cannot recall his face. But I do recall the man being in our squadron. And he went by the nickname, normally enough, of Bo.

Mr. ELY. Do you remember whether or not he knew Oswald well?

Mr. DONOVAN. No, I do not.

Mr. ELY. Do you remember a man named Call?

Mr. DONOVAN. I certainly do. He is from Allentown, Pa. I tried to look him up after my discharge. I was passing through his town. He was a corporal, later sergeant, I believe, buck sergeant.

Mr. ELY. Do you recall whether he knew Oswald?

Mr. DONOVAN. He must have. Call was another boy I played chess with.

Mr. ELY. Would you characterize Call as an intellectual?

Mr. DONOVAN. I would characterize Call as being modestly intelligent—

modestly not referring to his degree of intelligence, but in reference to his character concerning his intelligence.

Mr. ELY. Do you remember a man named Delgado?

Mr. DONOVAN. I certainly do—quite well. Delgado was on my crew. He was one of the boys that used to speak with the Mexican ham operators to ask them to leave the air when we were talking to aircraft. And Delgado had a command of Mexican more than Spanish. Delgado was a very dependable boy.

Mr. ELY. Do you think he would be able to help us concerning Oswald?

Mr. DONOVAN. He could tell you much more about Oswald's personal life than I can, because he lived in the same barracks area with him; Delgado played on the football team. He many times served on the same crew with Oswald.

Mr. ELY. Do you remember a man named Murray?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes, Murray was a clerk. He had a radar specialization number, but we used him as a clerk. And, as I recall, he wanted to go back to medical school. I think he was from the South somewhere, I believe. Very efficient, very intelligent, very competent, capable man.

Mr. ELY. Do you recall whether he knew Oswald well, or would it be fair to say that all the men on the crew would know him?

Mr. DONOVAN. Well, Murray I don't think you would say was on the crew so much. Murray, because of his administrative ability, worked more in the office. Murray was married. And that puts him in a little different light, too. I think he was very happily married. At the end of the day he went home—whereas Oswald stayed in the barracks area.

Mr. ELY. Do you remember a man named Powers?

Mr. DONOVAN. The name rings a bell, but I don't really remember him.

Mr. ELY. Osborne?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes.

Mr. ELY. Do you recall whether Osborne was an acquaintance of Oswald's?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes. Osborne I knew quite well. He played football with us for some time. He must have known him. I don't know if he actually lived in the same barracks. He knew him. I don't know how well he knew him.

Mr. ELY. Now, you have mentioned Captain Trail to us, and also Sergeant Brown.

Mr. DONOVAN. Captain Trail was Lieutenant Trail when I knew him. I think he is now Captain Trail.

Mr. ELY. Yes. Can you think of any other names that neither you nor I have already mentioned?

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes; another fellow that I am sure knew him was a fellow named Elmer Ellsworth Randolph. And he is now a salesman for Brock Candy Co., somewhere in the Chicago area.

Another fellow that probably knows him is now on active duty—Fred Walker. He is a captain. I believe Walker knew him.

Captain Block, Robert Block, was the operations officer at that time. I don't know if he would remember Oswald or not.

Mr. ELY. Do you recall whether Oswald ever went to night clubs? Bars?

Mr. DONOVAN. I think he used to go down to the enlisted men's club to drink beer. I recall going down there one night to talk to some boys on a disturbance and I vaguely remember him being there, but I would not swear to that.

Mr. ELY. Would you have any personal knowledge of whether he attended offpost bars or night clubs?

Mr. DONOVAN. No, I would not.

Mr. ELY. Did he drink more than the average marine, the same amount, less?

Mr. DONOVAN. I believed not. However, after the assassination of President Kennedy, I talked to Lieutenant Trail on the phone and Trail told me that he had been mixed up in some drinking bouts in Japan.

Mr. ELY. But from your own—

Mr. DONOVAN. From my own personal knowledge, I do not know that he drank to excess.

Mr. ELY. But he did drink some?

Mr. DONOVAN. I don't ever recall seeing him drink. But as I recall the conversation, I believe he did. But I don't know that for a fact.

Mr. ELY. Well, in that case, Mr. Donovan, I think that is all the questions I have for you.

Do you think of anything else that might be helpful to us in trying to figure out what sort of a man Oswald was?

Mr. DONOVAN. There is one name that you did not mention that I know that lived in the same barracks he did. Cpl. Sherman Cooley. He also served on that crew. I served with Cooley overseas, and in Santa Ana. Cooley is another fellow that was intelligent, but very modest about it.

The reason I remember his first name, it always struck me as strange that someone named Sherman would live in Louisiana.

Another boy's name is Dejanovich. That is phonetic. Dejanovich lived in Chicago, and after I was discharged from the service I called him on the phone a couple of times, passing through there.

Another guy that would know him is a boy named Jurarado, I believe. I don't know how much these boys knew about him. They are just people that were there at the same time.

Mr. ELY. Your mention of Dejanovich reminds me of a question I intended to ask you.

Do you recall any of Oswald's former marines calling him Oswaldovich, or anything that sounded like that?

Mr. DONOVAN. No.

Mr. ELY. Do you recall fellow marines referring to him as "Comrade"?

Mr. DONOVAN. No.

Mr. ELY. Well, if you have nothing more to add, Mr. Donovan, on behalf of the Commission, I would like to thank you for giving us your time and testimony. It has been very helpful.

---

### TESTIMONY OF ALLISON G. FOLSOM, LT. COL., USMC

The testimony of Allison G. Folsom, Lt. Col., USMC, was taken at 1:15 p.m., on May 1, 1964, at 200 Maryland Avenue NE., Washington, D.C., by Mr. John Hart Ely, member of the staff of the President's Commission.

Mr. ELY. Colonel, would you please stand up and be sworn?

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Colonel FOLSOM. I do.

Mr. ELY. My name is John Ely. I am a member of the legal staff of the President's Commission investigating the assassination of President Kennedy.

Staff members have been authorized to take the testimony of witnesses by the Commission pursuant to authority granted to the Commission by Executive Order No. 11130, dated November 29, 1963, and Joint Resolution of Congress No. 137.

Under the Commission rules for the taking of testimony, each witness is to be provided with a copy of the Executive order and of the joint resolution and a copy of the rules that the Commission has adopted governing the taking of testimony from witnesses. I have provided you with these documents, is that correct?

Colonel FOLSOM. This is true.

Mr. ELY. Under the Commission's rules for the taking of testimony, each witness is entitled to 3 days' notice before he is required to come in and give testimony.

You did not have 3 days' notice. However, each witness can waive that notice requirement if he wishes, and I assume that your presence here indicates you are willing to waive that notice requirement.

Colonel FOLSOM. It is waived.

Mr. ELY. Would you state your full name, please?

Colonel FOLSOM. Lt. Col. Allison G. Folsom, Jr., U.S. Marine Corps.

Mr. ELY. What is your job in the Marine Corps, sir?