have any occasion to hear from any others that had a similar story like the Oswalds where they had found it that easy to go and come or go out of Russia?

Mr. Ray. No, no; see, most of these people are, the way I get it, were Russian descent or else they were like—they had married a Russian over there or something of that nature, you see. I mean it wasn't everybody there wasn't Russian but there was some Russian connection with most of them.

Mr. Liebeler. But you heard of no other examples where people had come out of Russia as easily as Oswald had; is that correct?

Mr. Ray. No.

Mr. Liebeler. You know or did you hear of it?

Mr. Ray. I did not hear.

Mr. Davis. Has your wife or you or have you all heard of anyone since the time he came out where it has been easier for people to come and go? I believe your wife mentioned she thought it would be easier to contact her niece if conditions were easing up to that degree. Has this proved to be?

Mr. Ray. I don't know; 2 or 3 years ago she tried to call her niece on the telephone and tried 2 or 3 days and finally made the connection and the niece said, "Hello," and the line was out like that and she finally gave up.

Mr. Davis. In other words, to your knowledge you have seen no evidence it has been made easier to communicate back and forth?

Mr. Ray. No; fact of the business, my wife's mother had been dead a couple years before we even knew it.

Mr. Davis. How long has this been you received that information?

Mr. Ray. I think she died in 1953; I know it was a couple years gone by when my wife found out about it.

Mr. Liebeler. Was your wife's mother living in Stalingrad when she died, do you know?

Mr. Ray. I don't know. She was, I believe, in Arzamas; I am not sure that's where she died but that's near Stalingrad, some place near Stalingrad and that's where at least part of my wife's upbringing, you know, took place, in Arzamas.

Mr. Liebeler. Do you think now that you have told us about all you know or all you remember about your contact with Oswald and the discussion that you had about him? If there is anything you want to add at this point, go right ahead.

Mr. Ray. I think we pretty well covered it. I hope you have.

Mr. Liebeler. We want to thank you very much, Mr. Ray, for coming down here and I think you have been helpful and I appreciate it very much.

Mr. Ray. Well, like I said before, I went to the FBI voluntarily with what information that I had. Frankly, I didn't know anything about the guy except what I have told you but I did have the names and addresses of some of these people that knew him and that's why I went to the FBI, because of that. They might contact these people and find out more about it.

Mr. Liebeler. I think they have talked to most of them.

Mr. Ray. I am sure they have.

Mr. Liebeler. Thank you very much.

TESTIMONY OF SAMUEL B. BALLEN

The testimony of Samuel B. Ballen was taken at 2 :20 p.m., on March 24, 1964, in the office of the U.S. attorney, 301 Post Office Building, Bryan and Ervay Streets, Dallas, Tex., by Mr. Wesley J. Liebeler, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mr. Liebeler. Would you raise your right hand to be sworn, Mr. Ballen? Do you solemnly swear that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, in the testimony you are about to give?

Mr. Ballen. I do.

Mr. Liebeler. My name is Wesley J. Liebeler. I believe Mr. Rankin mentioned
in the letter he sent to you last week that I would contact you this week to take
your testimony.

The Commission has authorized me to take your testimony pursuant to author-
ity granted by Executive Order 11130, dated November 29, 1963, and Joint
Resolution of Congress 137.

Copies of those documents have been sent to you as well as a copy of the
Commission's rules of procedure in the taking of testimony. You did receive
those, did you not?

Mr. BALLEN. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBERER. We want to ask you about your somewhat limited contacts with
Lee Harvey Oswald, and also inquire to some extent about your association with
George DeMohrenschildt.

Will you state your full name?

Mr. BALLEN. Samuel B. Ballen.

Mr. LIEBERER. What is your address?

Mr. BALLEN. 8715 Midway Road.

Mr. LIEBERER. In Dallas?

Mr. BALLEN. Dallas 9.

Mr. LIEBERER. What is your employment, sir?

Mr. BALLEN. I am a financial consultant, self-employed, and I am senior
officer in several corporations.

Mr. LIEBERER. Included among those corporations is the High Plains Natural
Gas Co. and Electrical Log Services, Inc.?

Mr. BALLEN. That's correct.

Mr. LIEBERER. You are an American citizen, sir?

Mr. BALLEN. Yes.

Mr. LIEBERER. Were you born here in the United States?

Mr. BALLEN. Yes.

Mr. LIEBERER. In Dallas?

Mr. BALLEN. In New York City.

Mr. LIEBERER. When did you move to Dallas?

Mr. BALLEN. November 1930.

Mr. LIEBERER. What is your age, sir?

Mr. BALLEN. Forty-two.

Mr. LIEBERER. Would you tell us briefly your educational background?

Mr. BALLEN. I went to public schools in New York. Attended Townsend Harris
High; attended C.C.N.Y.; received a BBA degree from C.C.N.Y., and then have
also taken extension courses at Columbia University, Manhattan College, NYU
Graduate School of Banking, Oklahoma University, and Texas A&M.

Mr. LIEBERER. What were the graduate courses in, generally?

Mr. BALLEN. Three fields. Money and banking; geology; and petroleum engi-
neering.

Mr. LIEBERER. Did there come a time when you made the acquaintance of Lee
Harvey Oswald?

Mr. BALLEN. Yes.

Mr. LIEBERER. Will you tell us the circumstances surrounding that?

Mr. BALLEN. In some respects, my memory is still a little bit hazy.

My best recollection though is that in the fall of 1962, George DeMohren-
schildt, a close friend of mine, told me that he and his wife had met an extremely
interesting couple who had worked their way from Russia here to Dallas and
Fort Worth, and that among other problems, that this fellow was in pretty
desperate financial straits and needed a job, and would I be willing to see him
and try to find employment for him.

I said, "Yes." And he came down to my office and I spent approximately
2 hours with him.

He came down, and I left my office in the Southland Center with him to go
to a meeting at the Republic National Bank, and walked down with him, and
he then left and I believe stated that he was going over to the YMCA where
he was residing.

Mr. LIEBERER. Can you fix the date of this meeting with any precision?

Mr. BALLEN. I can't. I think it was either the latter part of 1962 or the very
early part of 1963.
I know the particular day was pleasant, because I recall walking down the street not wearing any topcoat, just wearing a regular coat, and that was also true of Oswald.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did Oswald have a job at the time he came to talk to you; do you know?

Mr. BALLENN. He indicated to me that he was not employed.

Mr. LIEBELER. He told you he was living at the YMCA in Dallas, is that correct?

Mr. BALLENN. That's correct. He told me that his—l knew he had a wife and child, and he indicated that his wife was staying with some friends, and his child, but he at that time was working out of the YMCA.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he tell you where his wife was staying?

Mr. BALLENN. No. I would have had some vague idea about that from the De Mohrenschildts.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you have an idea from De Mohrenschildt?

Mr. BALLENN. I had the idea that they were either moving into or just coming out of some apartment, and I would have an idea, which is very vague and not too accurate, that this may have been somewhere in the Oak Cliff region.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did Oswald tell you anything about his previous employment?

Mr. BALLENN. Just during the course of my trying to be helpful to him and of trying to see what skills he had so that I could try to develop some employment for him.

He did say that he had some training in the U.S.S.R., in some area in the field of photography—no, some area in the field of reproduction, but the thing that I was impressed about in talking with him was his lack of any usable training.

Mr. LIEBELER. What is the state of your recollection that Oswald told you he had received training in photography when he was in Russia?

Mr. BALLENN. Pretty vague, but I had the feeling that he may have worked in some capacity, either in a house organ—or a newspaper in the U.S.S.R., and that he did have some training and knew how to use commercial camera equipment and general reproduction equipment.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you take any steps to help Oswald get a job as a result of your interview with him?

Mr. BALLENN. No. During the course of my meeting with him, I started out being attracted somewhat toward him, and I started out having a fairly good impression of the individual, and I also started out feeling very sorry for the chap, knowing some hard times that he had been through, and of wanting to help him. But as this meeting wore on, I just gradually came to the feeling that he was too much of a rugged individualist for me, and that he was too much of a hardheaded individual, and that I probably would ultimately regret having him down at my organization. I was, during the course of this meeting, trying to analyze his training to find a place for him at Electrical Log Services, where we have a large camera and commercial reproduction equipment, but the more I talked to him, while I had a certain area of admiration for him, it still remained that I gradually came to the conclusion, and did not relay this to him in any way, that he was too much of a rugged individualist and probably wouldn't fit in with the team we had down there. So I never did really try to help Oswald. I think I told George De Mohrenschildt I would search around and see what I could do.

Mr. LIEBELER. But in point of fact, you never took any steps after this to try to help him find a job?

Mr. BALLENN. My memory was a bit hazy in one respect. I knew I reached my conclusion. I didn't know whether I had called up our general manager down at the Log Services to see what openings, if any, could be generated, but in checking with the individual, he does not have any memory of my calling him in that regard.

Mr. LIEBELER. The other individual being the man in charge of operations at Log Services?

Mr. BALLENN. That's correct.

Mr. LIEBELER. What did Oswald say to you that led you to this conclusion that you have just expressed?

Let me ask you a broader question. Let me ask you, if you will now, to your
best recollection, give the substance of the conversation that you and Oswald had that day?

Mr. BALLEN. We commenced speaking in pleasantries, and I had known from De Mohrenschildt that he had gone to Russia, that he had married, and come back. I did not know of any unpleasant association with the Marine Corps, nor did I know of any attempt on his part to be a defector.

I asked him why he had left and gone to Russia, and he said that this Russian movement was an intriguing thing and he wanted to find out for himself and didn't want to depend upon what the newspapers or visitors had said, and that he had gone there and spent some time there. He gave me the impression somehow that this was in the southern portion of Russia. And he said that the place was just boring, that there was hardly anything of any real curiosity or interest there.

I had gotten the feeling, and I don't know how specific I can make this, but all of his comments to me about Russia were somewhat along a negative vein. He said nothing to me that would indicate that he still had any romantic feeling about Russia. His comments to me seemed to be fairly realistic.

Some time as we talked on, he displayed somewhat the same type of detached objective criticism towards the United States and our own institutions.

Mr. LIEBELER. Can you remember anything specifically that he said along that line?

Mr. BALLEN. I don't believe I ran recall anything specific, but there were just during the entire course of this 2 hours, general observations, general smirks, general slurs that were significant to me that he was equally a critic of the United States and of the U.S.S.R., and that he was standing in his own mind as somewhat of a detached student and critic of both operations, and that he was not going to be snowed under by either of the two operations, whether it be the press or official spokesmen.

He would have displayed pretty much to me a plague-on-both-your-houses type of viewpoint, but the one thing that greatly started to rub me the wrong way is, as I started to seriously think through possible industrial openings or possible people I could refer him to, and he could see I was really making an effort in this respect, he kept saying, and then he repeated himself a little too often on this, he said to me, "Now, don't worry about me, I will get along. Don't you worry yourself about me." He said that often enough that gradually it became annoying and I just felt this is a hot potato that I don't think will fit in with any organization that I could refer him to.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he ever demonstrate or indicate to you any particular hostility toward any official of the U.S. Government?

Mr. BALLEN. None whatsoever; none whatsoever. My own subjective reaction is, that the sum total of these 2 hours that I spent with him, I just can't see his having any venom towards President Kennedy.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did President Kennedy come up in any way during the course of your discussion?

Mr. BALLEN. No; it did not. The sum total of his reaction, limited as it was that I got from this individual, is that this man would have—this is subjective, I can put no concrete support in there, but I would have thought that this is an individual who felt warmly towards President Kennedy.

Mr. LIEBELER. You drew that inference simply as a general impression based on the 2 hours that you spent conversing with him?

Mr. BALLEN. That's correct.

Mr. LIEBELER. Could you—and you can't pinpoint anything specifically that led you to that conclusion?

Mr. BALLEN. No, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you have any discussion, or was the name of Governor Connally mentioned?

Mr. BALLEN. No; it was not.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did Oswald manifest any hostilities toward any particular institution of the United States?

Mr. BALLEN. Yes. I think he had referred sarcastically to some of our religious institutions, or all religious institutions, and I think he referred with some venom and sarcasm to some race prejudices in the United States. I can-
not document that with any specific items which were discussed, but it is pretty strongly a general feeling that this had come out during that discussion.

Mr. LIEBELE. Was it discussed in terms of the Negro race problem?

Mr. BALLLEN. Negro and all forms of human hatred. In other words, the meeting that I had with this individual, which was very limited. I had a certain element of attraction towards the man because I felt that this man did express, at least in an intellectual vein, feeling of compassion for mankind generally.

Mr. LIEBELE. Did he indicate that he was not in accord with policies which had as their end racial prejudice?

Mr. BALLLEN. Yes. In his general categoric manner, he would have felt that this was a form of stupidity as well as a form of injustice.

Mr. LIEBELE. Was there any specific discussion, as you can recall, of any extremists groups or so-called "hate" groups?

Mr. BALLLEN. No.

Mr. LIEBELE. Did you form any impression of the man that would enable you to make a judgment as to the extent to which he would be influenced by racist or hate propaganda?

Mr. BALLLEN. You will have to make your question more specific.

Mr. LIEBELE. Do you think that Oswald was the kind of person who would be influenced, by propaganda or by people who were associated with, say racist or extremist groups, to engage in any particular kind of activity? You mentioned before, for example, that Oswald took the position or expressed the attitude that as far as the Soviet Union and the United States generally were concerned, it was a sort of plague-on-both-the-houses, he was not going to let anyone substitute their judgment for what he regarded as the basic reality of the situation. Did you gain any impression about Oswald's attitude toward hate groups? Do you think he could have been moved or motivated by them?

Mr. BALLLEN. I think I understand your question, and there would have been no expression advanced by Oswald of contempt for a particular organization.

Mr. LIEBELE. Did he indicate that he had experienced certain difficulties in securing or holding employment because of his trip to the Soviet Union?

Mr. BALLLEN. Yes; he said he ran into difficulty, and that he was not ashamed of his background and wasn't going to conceal it, and that in this particular geographic area that he was just finding it hard as heck to gain employment.

I could understand that, and I said, "Well, let's see what kind of training you have, if you get employment."

And I was struck with almost a total lack of any meaningful training other than what he had mentioned which I have already covered.

Mr. LIEBELE. Did he tell you any specific details of the kind of work he did in the Soviet Union?

Mr. BALLLEN. I have the impression that these were menial jobs. I am sure I discussed it with him. I am sure I would have asked him, and I have the impression that he had menial jobs, and that he would have worked in some kind of publication function, and he had learned about camera and reproduction equipment.

Mr. LIEBELE. Did he tell you how much he was paid?

Mr. BALLLEN. He did say that the economics there were awfully tight.

Mr. LIEBELE. Do you recall specifically his mentioning any figure as to what his income was?

Mr. BALLLEN. No.

Mr. LIEBELE. Did he indicate in any way that he had received income while he was in the Soviet Union from sources other than this—his job?

Mr. BALLLEN. No; he didn't indicate anything like that. I did express a little puzzlement as to how he was able to get out with his wife.

Mr. LIEBELE. What did he say about that?

Mr. BALLLEN. He shrugged that off and said, "Well, it's just a matter of sticking with it with the necessary bureaucrats, both Russian and the United States, of staying with the necessary bureaucrats to get out; and I got out."

I would add this. Jeanne De Mohrenschildt was making a serious effort to help out socially and economically the Oswalds, and she was reporting to us
that on given evenings the De Mohrenschildts were visiting with the Oswalds, and that their whole life was pretty miserable. They were just sitting alone in the apartment and looking at each other and fighting with each other, and that it was necessary to bring these two people out into the fresh air and have them meet people and mingle and otherwise.

George asked me and also asked my wife to invite the Oswalds to our house for dinner and help these people out. This was a type of thing that we have done quite frequently, but there must have been something in my report to my wife about my meeting with this chap that my wife didn’t pick up this suggestion, and never did extend that invitation to the Oswalds. In other words, my wife has never met either one of them, but based upon this meeting and the final impressions that I had of this chap is that we just didn’t want to be involved with him. He was too independent a thinker. I am not talking on politics now. And my wife never did extend that invitation to them, which she otherwise would have done, as we have done to many, many people who recently moved into Dallas from afar.

Mr. Liebeler. Can you remember with any great specificity the things that Oswald said or did that led you to the conclusion that he was such an independent fellow?

Mr. Ballen. It was his overall mannerism, and he would have, did have, a habit of closing off discussion on a given subject by a shrug of the shoulders; and it was just an overall impression that I ended up with.

Mr. Liebeler. Did Oswald indicate to you that he had traveled within the Soviet Union in any way?

Mr. Ballen. I had the impression that he had done considerable traveling there.

Mr. Liebeler. Do you remember whether he told you that, or how did you get that information or impression?

Mr. Ballen. I think he told me that he had traveled in the Soviet Union and finally ended up in a southwestern town and life was just incredibly boring and dismal.

Mr. Liebeler. Did you go into any details as to how the life was boring or dismal in the Soviet Union?

Mr. Ballen. No. This was my first visit with him and I knew he came down to see me in order to talk about a job, and I didn’t want to impose on him.

Mr. Liebeler. Did you question him—did you have questions in your own mind as to where he obtained the funds to do this traveling?

Mr. Ballen. I had the impression that this was the kind of guy who could travel from one end of the continent to the other with very little money. He was dressed very modestly, and I, at least to me, he did, engender a certain amount of sympathy.

In other words, the type of fellow that you would feel sorry for, and if he were hitchhiking, you might buy him a meal or something like that. I just had the feeling that this was a fellow who could get around and make his way and find his way and not require any sum of money to do it.

Mr. Liebeler. Is there any other thing that led you to that conclusion?

Mr. Ballen. No; I am sorry. I don’t know more specifically.

Mr. Liebeler. Did you ever lend Oswald any money?

Mr. Ballen. No; I didn’t. If at the time he had asked me to loan him money, I would have. But I would say that this would, that the thing that he kept impressing on me to the point where it just rubbed me the wrong way is, that he kept insisting, raising his voice a little bit: “Don’t you worry about me, I will take care of myself, and I will get myself work, don’t you worry about me.” Telling that too many times to a prospective employer isn’t quite the best technique.

Mr. Liebeler. You have testified that Oswald told you that he had received some training in the use of photographic equipment when he was in the Soviet Union. Did he mention any other training that he received in the Soviet Union?

Mr. Ballen. No; I think I discussed a little detail with him about photography, continuous cameras and things like that, and he stated that he could operate most of the machinery we had down at Ross Avenue.
Mr. LIEBELER. Did he indicate to you a general comprehension and understanding of that type of machinery?

Mr. BAlLEN. I am not that familiar technically with the equipment myself to have gone into any explicit detail, but I mentioned different types of machinery, the M-4, blueprint machines, Repco continuous cameras, and he said yes, he could operate all those machines.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you have any discussion concerning his wife, Marina?

Mr. BALLEN. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you ever meet Marina?

Mr. BALLEN. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you speak Russian?

Mr. BALLEN. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did Oswald ever tell you that he had been in the hospital when he was in the Soviet Union?

Mr. BALLEN. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. Other than the fact that he stated that life in the Soviet Union was very boring, did he indicate to you any reason for his return to the United States?

Mr. BALLEN. Yes; he said that he had gone there to find out what this thing was like. He wanted to find it out for himself. He found out, and now was the time to come back, and that coming back he was running into all the prejudices of the people here who were washing him off because he had taken this plunge and gone on his own initially to the U.S.S.R.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you know at that time that he had attempted to renounce his citizenship?

Mr. BALLEN. I did not know it, and he did not say anything that would have suggested that. You must bear in mind, he came to me to look for a job.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he mention the name of the city in which he was employed and lived in the Soviet Union?

Mr. BALLEN. He probably did, and I can't really recall it. I read so much in the newspaper, I don't know on that what is my own memory and what I have read in the newspaper.

Mr. LIEBELER. You have read in the newspaper that he lived and was employed in the city of Minsk?

Mr. BALLEN. That is correct. I would have thought that he would have—my memory is this. He told me he was in a community outside of Minsk. That is my best memory, but it is not too good.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he tell you what kind of living quarters he had while in the Soviet Union?

Mr. BALLEN. No; I didn't ask him.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he tell you anything about meeting and marrying his wife when he was in the Soviet Union?

Mr. BALLEN. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. As far as his return to the United States is concerned, you previously testified that you asked Oswald how he managed to leave Russia, and he said it was just a matter of sticking with the bureaucrats. Did he specify hostility towards the bureaucrats or any resentment?

Mr. BALLEN. Yes; just in the sense that these were fellows who made life uncomfortable and detracted from the personal freedom of the human being.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he have that attitude toward both the American and Russian authorities? Do you remember any specific conversation relating to possible resentment of the United States?

Mr. BALLEN. No; I do not.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you remember that he did indicate to you that the Americans were just as much responsible for delaying his return as Russia?

Mr. BALLEN. No; I wouldn't have gotten that feeling; no.

Mr. LIEBELER. You got the feeling that it was primarily the Russians who had delayed his return, is that correct?

Mr. BALLEN. Well, it was a matter of working then through these bureaucrats and the American bureaucrats. This would be his reaction.

Mr. LIEBELER. Would you say he expressed more resentment of the American bureaucracy or the Russian bureaucracy, or were they about the same?
Mr. BALLEN. I would say about equal.
Mr. LIEBELER. Did you have any discussion with Oswald concerning politics?
Mr. BALLEN. Not in addition to what I have already alluded to, parenthetically.
Mr. LIEBELER. Did Oswald tell you anything about his educational background?
Mr. BALLEN. I am sure I questioned him on that, and the ultimate conclusion I came to was that he lacked educational training.
Mr. LIEBELER. Did he tell you that he had been employed by a newspaper in New Orleans?
Mr. BALLEN. I think he told me that his knowledge of reproduction facilities had been refreshed by recent employment in New Orleans, and the—in the photographic field, but this employment, I thought in New Orleans, would have been in a printing shop rather than a newspaper.
Mr. LIEBELER. Can you remember any of the details of what he told you about his activities in New Orleans?
Mr. BALLEN. That would have been the only reference to New Orleans, and he said nothing whatsoever about any involvement with any Cuban committees or anything like that. I would have the feeling that this was a man who was at that stage a political, had no involvement with any Communist group, that he washed his hands pretty much of anyone or any part of the political spectrum.
Mr. LIEBELER. Did he tell you that he had been employed by a newspaper in New Orleans?
Mr. BALLEN. I think he told me that his knowledge of reproduction facilities had been refreshed by recent employment in New Orleans, and the—in the photographic field, but this employment, I thought in New Orleans, would have been in a printing shop rather than a newspaper.
Mr. LIEBELER. You did not know that he was a professed Marxist?
Mr. BALLEN. He may have—I think I had the feeling that he, to the extent that he could define it, that he was a student of Marxism and was a critic of societies along Marxist lines.
Mr. LIEBELER. Were you led to that belief partly by his remarks about religion?
Mr. BALLEN. No; I learned that from George De Mohrenschildt, and I think Oswald would have, somewhere along the line during my interview with him, made statements to reenforce that.
Mr. LIEBELER. Do you remember what De Mohrenschildt told you about Oswald before you actually met Oswald?
Mr. BALLEN. Yes; he said that this was a very unusual situation, sir. Here is a chap who suddenly appears in the Dallas area, and that he had been to Russia, went to Russia, came back, and has no hatred either for Russia or for the United States, and is just a man with no hatred, and by gosh here he appears in the United States, having gotten out of Russia with a wife, and that this was an independent and truth seeking young man and very interesting, and George was talking to him at length in Russian, and someone just totally unlike anyone else who came back who was either very much pro and very much anti, and this is a fellow with no hatred.
Mr. LIEBELER. Did De Mohrenschildt indicate to you that Oswald had no hatred of anything?
Mr. BALLEN. That is what—De Mohrenschildt had emphasized it to me that his view of this man was that the chap wasn't getting involved with hatred and was outside the cold war on either side and his emotions connected with it.
Mr. LIEBELER. Was De Mohrenschildt's opinion borne out in your mind when you met and talked to Oswald?
Mr. BALLEN. Based on that 2-hour visit with him, to a certain extent; yes. But I would express it rather than Oswald not having hatred, that he would have had a little disdain for both sides.
Mr. LIEBELER. You did not get the impression, however, that he was emotionally involved in any significant extent with either of the two sides? Would that be a fair statement?
Mr. BALLEN. Definitely.
Mr. LIEBELER. Did you also have the impression that Oswald would not be influenced against the Soviet Union by anti-Soviet Union propaganda that might be disseminated in the country?
Mr. BALLEN. Definitely he would make the decisions for himself and would consider himself much more of an expert than anyone in the United States, including our Government.
Mr. LIEBELER. You would say that Oswald would not likely be influenced by propaganda of this sort?
Mr. BALLEN. He forms his own conclusion in his own way, and he didn't
appear to me, either by his use of language or any other reference, to be particularly informed, particularly learned, but he did impress me as a man who was going to make up his own mind in this own way, and these tendencies were so pronounced that I felt I didn't want to involve him in my firm, which means a team operation.

Mr. LIEBLEIL. Did Oswald appear to be a particularly intelligent person or did you form an opinion as to his intelligence?

Mr. BALLEN. I thought he was of above average intelligence, and the unusual thing that struck me as being particularly unusual was the degree to which he would go for self-education and self-improvement. It was this quality—these qualities which attracted him somewhat to me.

Mr. LIEBLEL. Did he appear to be in any way mentally unstable?

Mr. BALLEN. Appeared to be just a little too much a hard head.

Mr. LIEBLEL. What makes you say that, Mr. Ballen?

Mr. BALLEN. Too much a hard head?

Mr. LIEBLEL. Yes, sir; what do you mean by that?

Mr. BALLEN. I—just his general conduct, his general responses, general bearing. He just seemed to be a little too aloof from society, and just seemed to know all things and everything a little too affirmatively, a little too dogmatically, but as far as feeling that he was mentally ill, I didn't come away with that feeling.

Mr. LIEBLEL. Do you remember any specific example of his efforts at self-improvement or self-education that you could give us?

Mr. BALLEN. Well, he just indicated a wide range of readership, literature, and the fact that, my impression was one of a little curiosity, a chap out of Fort Worth who would go to the point of reading and becoming familiar with Marxian literature just struck me as someone who was displaying more than the normal amount of initiative.

Mr. LIEBLEL. Did you know at that time that he had received Marxian literature?

Mr. BALLEN. Yes; I think I knew even in his offhanded reference to comments on those that he was using Marxian terminology.

Mr. LIEBLEL. You think he had Marxian leanings to the extent he understood them to be Marxian leanings?

Mr. BALLEN. I think he considered himself a Marxist, and what exactly his understanding of that philosophy was, I didn't have an opportunity to go into that with him.

Mr. LIEBLEL. Do you remember being interviewed by the FBI about December 10, 1963, in connection with your acquaintance with Oswald?

Mr. BALLEN. Was that the FBI or the Secret Service?

Mr. LIEBLEL. The Federal Bureau of Investigation, agents Kesler and Mitchell.

Mr. BALLEN. Yes; I recall being interviewed, yes.

Mr. LIEBLEL. Do you remember that he questioned you whether you were familiar or knew of Oswald's Marxian leanings?

Mr. BALLEN. I had a conversation with them pretty much the same as I have been having with you, and I suppose that question came up.

Mr. LIEBLEL. Do you remember what your answer was?

Mr. BALLEN. No, sir; I don't remember what my answer was.

Mr. LIEBLEL. Do you recall that you told the two agents that you were unaware that Oswald had Marxian leanings, and that in a great deal of the conversation Oswald was critical of Russia?

Mr. BALLEN. The difficulty in this thing is in trying to be objective on a conversation which occurred quite some time ago. In reading the newspapers—all I can say in answer to that is, that I am giving the best answer now to my memory and I gave the best answer then, to my memory? I have greater faith in my response today than in December.

Mr. LIEBLEL. You are not conscious of any difference in those two answers?

Mr. BALLEN. Oh, yes; I can see that my answer on that day is not the same as my answer here today.

Mr. LIEBLEL. Assuming that was your answer that day?
Mr. BALLEN. If that was my answer that day, that would have been my best memory and best recollection at that time.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you know anything about the relationship between Oswald and De Mohrenschildt?

Mr. BALLEN. I knew that George had met this fellow. In the events after November 22d, the question came up in my own mind how did George meet this fellow. Prior to November, I didn't know how George met this fellow. George meets all kinds of individuals. He is a magnet for individuals who are not run-of-the-mill. I knew that George and his wife were making an effort to help out the Oswalds, and I think that this effort continued pretty near up until the time when they were leaving for Haiti.

George and his wife were visiting my home two or three or four times a week, and we played tennis two or three or four times a week. Sometimes more than that. And I know that quite frequently they came to our house at 9:00 or so in the evening and they would have just come from the Oswalds, trying to cheer them up, “And those poor souls are looking at the wall and fighting each other.”

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you remember that on or about April of 1963, there was an attempt made on the life of General Walker?

Mr. BALLEN. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you ever discuss that with George De Mohrenschildt?

Mr. BALLEN. Not in any detail. We may have. George and I would discuss either in a joking way or serious way pretty near everything that occurred. I'm sure we would have discussed that also and made some pleasantry about it, but I don't recall and doubt if I ever discussed it with him in any great—

Mr. LIEBELER. Did De Mohrenschildt ever mention Oswald's name to you in connection with the attempt on Walker's life?

Mr. BALLEN. None whatsoever. I don't think he ever mentioned it to me.

Mr. LIEBELER. You have no recollection that he did?

Mr. BALLEN. I do not.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did De Mohrenschildt ever mention to you that Oswald owned a rifle?

Mr. BALLEN. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did Oswald mention in his conversation with you the fact that he was a member of a hunting club while he was in the Soviet Union?

Mr. BALLEN. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was there any mention of any kind of firearms of any kind in that conversation?

Mr. BALLEN. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was the time that Oswald came to your office the first time that you met him, or had you met him previous to that?

Mr. BALLEN. If I had met him previously, it would have been on a Sunday morning in the De Mohrenschildt's household for a period of time of about 40 minutes, but I am about satisfied, in talking to other people, that the individual I met on that Sunday morning was not Oswald, but some other stray dog.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you remember who this other stray dog was?

Mr. BALLEN. I don't know his name. This was someone who had worked his way here either from Hungary or Bulgaria.

Mr. LIEBELER. And subsequently disappeared from the scene?

Mr. BALLEN. I don't know his name. This was one of the individuals De Mohrenschildt had latched on to for a period of 4 or 5 or 6 weeks.

Mr. LIEBELER. Were you surprised when you learned that Oswald had been arrested in connection with the assassination of President Kennedy?

Mr. BALLEN. When I first heard of Oswald's arrest, I didn't realize that this was the chap I had met. It only dawned upon me about 2 or 3 hours later that this was the chap I met.

I told my wife that evening that there must have been some mistake, that I didn't believe that chap was capable of this kind of thing, and she said, what do you mean? She said they picked him up and got the gun. I said Oswald wasn't that sort of guy. I told my wife that if you lined up 50 individuals, the one
person who would stand out as being suspicious or strange would be Lee Harvey Oswald, but I was very surprised when Oswald was arrested.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you have any further conversations along that line with your wife?

Mr. BALLEN. Well, as this story developed day by day, we would naturally discuss it.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you still have the same view that you expressed to your wife when you first learned of the assassination?

Mr. BALLEN. I want to read the report that I assume the Warren Commission will ultimately publish. The circumstantial evidence as reported in the press is overwhelming, to say the least, but there remains a shadow of skepticism in my mind, and I am looking forward to seeing the published report.

Mr. LIEBELER. It would certainly be fair to say, however, would it not, Mr. Ballen, that you at no time prior to the assassination had any reason to believe that Oswald was capable or would be inclined to commit an act of this sort, is that correct?

Mr. BALLEN. That is correct.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you know of any contact between Oswald and Jack Ruby?

Mr. BALLEN. None whatsoever.

Mr. LIEBELER. When did you first meet George De Mohrenschildt?

Mr. BALLEN. Approximately 1955, maybe 1954.

Mr. LIEBELER. Have you had any conversation with De Mohrenschildt since this assassination?

Mr. BALLEN. Only through the mails.

Mr. LIEBELER. You have corresponded with him since the assassination?

Mr. BALLEN. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you write about the assassination?

Mr. BALLEN. Only in a very guarded way, because I understood that mails in Haiti are subject to scrutiny, and I didn’t know what his environment was down there, so I only corresponded with him in a very guarded way.

Mr. LIEBELER. Can you tell me in general what you wrote to him?

Mr. BALLEN. I made no reference to the assassination directly. I said in one letter that I wanted to hear from him. I was—I wanted to know that he was okay. I didn’t use those words in the letter, but he understood what I was asking him.

And I said it was a shame that he had to leave Dallas, that if he and Jeanne had remained here, that possibly this never would have happened, because they were the only people who were trying to bring this closed mind out into the open air.

And I received one reply back from George’s wife, and she thanked me for what she thought were kind sentiments.

Subsequently he chided me a little bit, and I again wrote to him and let him know I wondered how he was getting along.

And he wrote back and said, “I am fearful about you, all kinds of race riots and assassinations in Dallas, but how are you getting along. Let us hear from you.”

Subsequently, as you know, his wife’s daughter and son-in-law were guests in my house for 2 weeks, and so I learned from them about George and his wife, and I am about due another letter in the next week or so.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you keep copies of the letters you wrote to him?

Mr. BALLEN. No, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you still have the letters he wrote to you?

Mr. BALLEN. No; I first started to save his letters when he and his wife walked through Central America, and this was a collection of letters, but I am not a letter saver. But I did save them, saved them until he returned from his trip and gave them all to him, and those are the only letters that I have ever saved.

Mr. LIEBELER. You mentioned De Mohrenschildt’s daughter-in-law?

Mr. BALLEN. Well, his wife’s daughter.

Mr. LIEBELER. His wife’s daughter?

Mr. BALLEN. That’s right.

Mr. LIEBELER. What are their names?
Mr. BALLEN. Rags and Chris Bogoiavlensky-Kearton. And the De Mohren-
schildts call them Buggers.

Mr. LIEBELER. You say that Rags and Chris stayed at your house for a period of time?
Mr. BALLEN. Yes.
Mr. LIEBELER. How long, approximately?
Mr. BALLEN. About 2 weeks.
Mr. LIEBELER. They originally resided in Anchorage, Alaska, is that correct?
Mr. BALLEN. Well, that is where they formerly resided; yes.
Mr. LIEBELER. Have they permanently moved from Anchorage?
Mr. BALLEN. Your guess is as good as mine is. I received a letter from him this morning. They are in Philadelphia on their way to New York.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you know whether or not these two people, Rags and Chris, ever knew Lee Harvey Oswald or Marina Oswald?
Mr. BALLEN. They say they had not, and in thinking through the chronology of events, I am satisfied that they did not. There was some confusion in my mind in my interview with the FBI about the individual who Rags and Chris did know, and whom they went out of their way to try to help.

They drove him to east Texas once and to a timber farm.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was this the other person whom you described a little while back as another stray dog?
Mr. BALLEN. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. While Rags and Chris stayed at your house, did you have any discussions with them as to what the De Mohrenschildts had said about the assassination?
Mr. BALLEN. They were very upset that George and Jeanne were publicly stating in Port-au-Prince that the FBI had assassinated Kennedy, and that Oswald was a patsy, and we were very upset because they apparently had no basis for such a statement, and it wasn't very wise for them to be banding about.

Mr. LIEBELER. Am I correct in understanding you to say that Rags and Chris reported to you that De Mohrenschildt and his wife were saying publicly in Port-au-Prince that the FBI was responsible for the assassination of Kennedy and Oswald was a patsy?
Mr. BALLEN. They told me that they stated that at a reception for members of the Foreign Diplomatic Corps in Port-au-Prince.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he tell you when that reception was?
Mr. BALLEN. It would have been while Chris and Rags were in Haiti.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did Rags and Chris tell you they heard De Mohrenschildt make this remark?
Mr. BALLEN. That was the impression I had, but I couldn't answer your question directly.

Mr. LIEBELER. Will you fix for me more specifically, if you can, the dates that Rags and Chris were in Port-au-Prince?
Mr. BALLEN. This is March. I believe that Rags and Chris came through my house possibly the first week of December 1963. They stayed at my house one night. We had quite a bit of snow that night. They had come through in a mad rush from Alaska. They left Florida for Haiti, and they left Haiti about a week prior to showing up at my house.

Mr. LIEBELER. When did they show up at your house again for the second time?
Mr. BALLEN. They left my house 2 Sundays ago, and they would have been at my house a total of 2 weeks. They would have arrived at my house at about March 2, something like that. They would have arrived at my house March 1, and left March 15, more or less.

Mr. LIEBELER. Will you state for us, as best you can recall, the conversations that you had with Rags and Chris concerning these remarks allegedly made by De Mohrenschildt while they stayed at your house.

Mr. BALLEN. This information was brought to me by Rags and Chris that they were very much upset about it. And I told Rags that probably all of George's mail was being intercepted in and out, and that I felt that sooner or later he would be called before the Warren Commission.
The FBI had already interviewed me, I told Rags, and that distressed him a little bit that the FBI was probably intercepting his mail and probably had a tail on him.

He thought I was kidding, and I said, no; that this was a pretty serious item and that probably he was under surveillance, and so he then took the initiative to call the FBI and said if they wanted to see him, he was out there, and he would be leaving for parts unknown, and so they came out to my house and interviewed him.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you know whether Rags told the FBI about the remarks that De Mohrenschildt was alleged to have made?

Mr. BALLEN. I do not. I was out of the house when the FBI agent was there, but I kept myself elsewhere in that building, not in the room where they were.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you know the name of the agent who came out?

Mr. BALLEN. He was one of the agents who interviewed me from California. Had a very nice tan, but I don’t know his name.

Mr. LIEBELER. One of the two agents that interviewed you when?

Mr. BALLEN. About March 6th or 7th.

Mr. LIEBELER. The interview that you have just referred to concerns your acquaintance with De Mohrenschildt?

Mr. BALLEN. That’s correct.

Mr. LIEBELER. Would it refresh your recollection if I advised you that the names of the agent that interviewed you were W. James Wood and Raymond P. Yelchek?

Mr. BALLEN. The gentleman who came out to my house was Mr. Wood.

Mr. LIEBELER. It was Mr. Wood that interviewed Rags, is that correct?

Mr. BALLEN. That’s correct.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did Rags discuss with you the interview after the agent had left?

Mr. BALLEN. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did Rags tell you anything about his conversations with De Mohrenschildt after De Mohrenschildt had allegedly made this remark that the FBI was responsible for the assassination of the President?

Mr. BALLEN. Just to the extent that he or Chris had protested vigorously on politics generally with George, and as I had already known before Rags came to my house, the visit in Haiti had deteriorated into quite a personality clash.

I had gotten a letter from George which showed that he was very critical on personal grounds of Rags.

Mr. LIEBELER. Why was De Mohrenschildt critical of Rags, do you remember?

Mr. BALLEN. These are personal matters, and I am just asking a question now. Is it within the realm of your interest? These are really personal matters between one individual and a somewhat removed son-in-law, a son-in-law of his wife, and, so, I wrote back to George and said that his anger was only natural, that the Navajos had a taboo against sons seeing their mother-in-law in pains of having their eyes removed, and maybe the Navajos know what they are talking about.

But to answer your question, the discussion in that matter was on a personal matter, and I really do not think it has anything—any bearing here. If you want me to discuss it, I will.

Mr. LIEBELER. No; if you represent to me that the differences were of a purely personal matter, that is sufficient for me.

Mr. BALLEN. With only one exception, and that is that George, by his overall nature, is leaning to left center, and Rags, by his overall nature, leans to the right of center, and just among other things this was one of the sources of some conflict.

Mr. LIEBELER. They had political differences, in other words, also?

Mr. BALLEN. In their overall perspective: yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. Have you told us everything that you can remember about your conversations with Rags concerning these statements by De Mohrenschildt that the FBI was responsible for the assassination? Tell us everything about that that you can remember, either about your conversation with Rags, or what Rags told you about his conversation with De Mohrenschildt, and the reactions of other people to De Mohrenschildt’s statements.
Mr. Ballen. He or Chris said that the American Embassy down there was very disturbed that George, at a cocktail party possibly run by, well, I think by someone in the Foreign Corps there, whether it be the French, that George or Jeanne had made this statement, and it was a foolish thing for him to say and a distressing thing, and I think also at that party there was a Negro emissary from one of the newly free republics in Africa who told the Haitians that if Haiti is the result of 300 years of freedom, he would like to go back to French rule.

Mr. Liebeler. Did Rags specifically mention the names of anybody else who was at this party, that you can remember?

Mr. Ballen. No; I don’t think so. And if he had, it wouldn’t rest with me. This was one of numerous cocktail parties down there.

I had the impression, from what Rags said, that this was George’s statement and was known to the American Embassy down there.

Mr. Liebeler. Do you remember what Rags said about that?

Mr. Ballen. That it was distressing to the American Embassy, and that George and Jeanne were kind of a thorn in the side of the American Embassy.

Mr. Liebeler. Did Rags indicate whether or not De Mohrenschildt had been interviewed by the FBI while he was living in Port-au-Prince?

Mr. Ballen. Yes; George had said to me in one of his letters that he had had a previous visit with the FBI, and then subsequently Mr. Wood—was that his name?

Mr. Liebeler. Mr. Wood was the gentleman who interviewed Rags.

Mr. Ballen. He subsequently; yes, subsequently I believe Mr. Wood indicated that he had gone down there and also had met George.

Mr. Liebeler. Mr. Wood indicated that to you at some point in his interview of you, is that correct?

Mr. Ballen. No; after his interview with me he indicated to Chris and Rags that he had just the day before or 2 days before seen George and Jeanne previously at the American Embassy at Port-au-Prince and they were looking fine.

But prior to that, much prior to that, I had written to George and told him that I had received a visit from the FBI inquiring about him. And he wrote back to me and said that he also had a previous visit from the gray flannel suit boys.

Mr. Liebeler. He didn’t tell you any details of his conversation with the FBI?

Mr. Ballen. No.

Mr. Liebeler. Based on your knowledge of De Mohrenschildt and your knowledge of De Mohrenschildt’s relations with Oswald, do you have any reason whatsoever to believe that De Mohrenschildt could have been involved in the assassination in any way?

Mr. Ballen. None whatsoever.

Mr. Liebeler. Have you discussed this matter with anybody?

Mr. Ballen. Would you make your question a little more specific?

Mr. Liebeler. Have you discussed with anybody the possibility of De Mohrenschildt’s possible involvement in any way in the assassination?

Mr. Ballen. Only to the extent that on November 23, when I realized that I had known Oswald and I realized how I had met him, my wife and I then said, how in heck did George meet him and that George had better have a good answer to that one.

And during the ensuing months I have made inquiries of the Russian colony here and kind of came to the understanding that George had met him through George Bouhe.

Mr. Liebeler. Did you speak to Mr. Bouhe about that?

Mr. Ballen. No; I haven’t seen George Bouhe.

Mr. Liebeler. Do you remember who told you that De Mohrenschildt and Oswald had met through Bouhe?

Mr. Ballen. It would have either been Declan Ford or Natasha Voshinin.

Mr. Liebeler. Did you discuss with any of these people the possibility that De Mohrenschildt might have had something to do with the assassination?

Mr. Ballen. No.

Mr. Liebeler. Have you heard anybody else discuss that question?
Mr. BALLE. No; it is question that to us would be so absurd; that is, the first time I have heard that question raised is today.

Mr. LIEBELER. Yet you did say to your wife, as you have just testified, when you heard that, when you recalled that Oswald was the man that De Mohrenschildt had introduced you to, you said to your wife De Mohrenschildt had better have a good answer as to how he met Oswald; is that correct?

Mr. BALLE. That is correct.

Mr. LIEBELER. In your letters with De Mohrenschildt or through the contact that you had with De Mohrenschildt through Rags and Chris, did you learn what the last contact was that De Mohrenschildt had with Oswald prior to the assassination?

Mr. BALLE. No; this was not discussed with any of them. I have the feeling that the contacts would have been fairly continuous up to their leaving Dallas for Haiti 9 months ago.

Mr. LIEBELER. You don't know that Oswald and De Mohrenschildt corresponded after De Mohrenschildt left for Haiti?

Mr. BALLE. I do not.

Mr. LIEBELER. Can you think of any other matter about which you might have knowledge, or anything else that you can think of that you think should be brought to the attention of the Commission in connection with this matter?

Mr. BALLE. I would only add that in my opinion, George is an extremely discerning person, and while right now his emotions are kind of tensed up, not because of politics, but because of his personal life and finances and things concerning prior marriages and his children, and consequently his behavior and conduct right now might not be the best, but despite that, he is an extremely intelligent and fine person and I would think that he should be in a position to contribute as much as anyone on the type of person that Lee Harvey Oswald was.

George was speaking the language. There was a rapport. They were both familiar with the same geography, and George and his wife were befriending him. I would think George could give a pretty good personality sketch and political sketch on Lee Harvey Oswald.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you have any reason to believe that there is any truth in the remark that De Mohrenschildt was alleged to have made concerning the FBI's involvement in the assassination and Oswald's being a patsy.

Mr. BALLE. Do I have any reason to believe that?

Mr. LIEBELER. Yes.

Mr. BALLE. No, sir: I have no reason to believe that. I would only add that if there is one faint line of skepticism still in my mind about Lee Harvey Oswald, and if I were to draw up alternative possibilities using my wildest imagination and draw up a list of 10,000 other possibilities, I suppose included in that 10,000 might be some unofficial cabal of the FBI, but the answer to your question is "No."

Mr. LIEBELER. Did Rags or Chris indicate to you whether or not either of the De Mohrenschildts had stated any reason for their belief that the FBI was involved?

Let me ask you preliminarily, did Rags or Chris indicate that De Mohrenschildt really believed that fact that he was alleged to have uttered?

Mr. BALLE. They indicated that in De Mohrenschildt's emotional state, that apparently this was a sentiment they arrived at.

Mr. LIEBELER. Now let's go back to the preceding question. Were there any reasons expressed by De Mohrenschildt for this belief?

Mr. BALLE. No; because Rags and Chris said this is a madness. That there are no reasons, and this is a madness.

Mr. LIEBELER. Had De Mohrenschildt expressed any reason as to why he believed this?

Mr. BALLE. None were expressed to me; no, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. Can you think of anything else that you want to add?

Mr. BALLE. No; I don't believe so.

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