

## IV. OSWALD'S EARLY LIFE: NEW ORLEANS AND ORGANIZED CRIME \*

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#### RESIDENCE IN THE FRENCH QUARTER: 126 EXCHANGE ALLEY

(428) During his early childhood and adolescence in New Orleans, Lee Oswald lived with his divorced mother at a number of different locations, usually in small rented houses or apartments in a moderate-to-lower-income section of the city. (1) While the record of residences is not complete, one address was 126 Exchange Alley. (2) During her testimony before the Warren Commission, Mrs. Marguerite Oswald indicated that she and her son lived there when Oswald was about 15 to 16 years old, roughly the years 1955-56. (3) They were "living at 126 Exchange Place, which is the Vieux Carré section of the French Quarter of New Orleans." (4) During her testimony, Mrs. Oswald noted that "the papers said we lived over a saloon at that particular address \* \* \* that is just the French part of town. It looks like the devil. Of course I didn't have a fabulous apartment. But very wealthy people and very fine citizens live in that part of town. \* \* \*" (5) While Mrs. Oswald correctly noted that "wealthy" citizens resided in some sections of the French Quarter, Exchange Alley was well known as the location of other elements; it was an area notorious for illicit activities. As the managing director of the Metropolitan Crime Commission of New Orleans, Aaron Kohn recalled, "Exchange Alley, specifically that little block that Oswald lived on, was literally the hub of some of the most notorious underworld joints in the city." (6) He noted further that Exchange Alley was the location of various gambling operations affiliated with the Marcello organization. (7) Noting the openness with which such activities were conducted there, (8) Kohn said, "you couldn't walk down the block without literally being exposed to two or three separate forms of illicit activities and underworld operations." (9)

(429) As early as November 26, 1963, the crime commission had noted Lee Oswald's exposure at Exchange Alley, when it published a

\* Oswald's later life, particularly his activities in 1963, is covered in detail in other staff reports and in the commentary.

booklet that included a reference to the New Orleans background of the man accused of assassinating President Kennedy 4 days earlier :

Lee Harvey Oswald during 1954 and 1955 attended Beauregard Junior High School in New Orleans, where other students frequently were in conflict with police. He then resided with his mother in a dingy apartment at 126 Exchange Alley, a narrow street extending one block from the main business thoroughfare of Canal Street, to the Iberville Street boundary at the French Quarter.

Their substandard living quarters were above a pool hall, where Oswald is reported to have taken his one close schoolmate, a hangout for gamblers. The bleak street which he called home was occupied also by sordidly operated bars, including some in which aggressive homosexuals and prostitutes were frequenters and others the scene of operations for illegal bookies.(10)

(430) While Oswald's earlier years included a record of truancy that finally resulted in court proceedings against him and his mother,(11) there was less information available about the period in which he lived in Exchange Alley. In her testimony before the Warren Commission, Lee Oswald's cousin, Marilyn Murret, a New Orleans native, stated that "certainly on Exchange Alley he had a lot of opportunity to deviate from the right path," although she believed he generally kept to himself.(12) Oswald's aunt, Mrs. Charles Murret, told the Warren Commission that while Lee and his mother lived in "a pretty rough section \* \* \* with all those poolrooms and everything down below" their second floor apartment, she did not think "that Lee ever went into those places, because he never was a boy that got into any trouble."(13) Mrs. Murret further stated that, "The average teenager who was going to school at Beauregard would have probably been in there shooting pool and things like that, but he didn't do that."(14) She further recalled that "they did have a very bad bunch of boys going to Beauregard" and that Lee "got in several scrapes" with boys who "were always having fights."(15) Aaron Kohn noted that Beauregard High School did have a bad reputation; it was regarded by some as "the alma mater, so to speak, of kids who frequently graduated to various criminal and underworld careers."(16) While relatively little was known of Lee Oswald's activities in and out of school during that period, and while he was not involved in any known illegal acts, a Beauregard classmate of his, Edward Voebel, recalled that Oswald once considered such actions at the time.(17) Voebel, believed to have been Oswald's closest friend during that period, told the Warren Commission that Oswald had once planned to steal a gun by burglarizing a neighborhood gunshop.(18) Voebel testified that he finally dissuaded Oswald from committing the burglary by pointing out the electronic alarm system in the store.(19) In recalling her sister Marguerite Oswald's various difficulties in raising Lee during that period in New Orleans, Mrs. Charles Murret stated, "She's a woman with a lot of character and good morals, and I'm sure that what she was doing for her boys, she thought was the best at the time. Now, whether it was or not is something else, I guess."(20)

## CHARLES "DUTZ" MURRET AND THE NEW ORLEANS UNDERWORLD

(431) During the various periods in which Lee Harvey Oswald lived in New Orleans, he kept in close touch with his aunt and uncle, Lillian and Charles "Dutz" Murret, long-time residents of the city. (21) Lillian Murret was the older sister of Lee Oswald's mother, Marguerite. (22) At the age of about 3, Lee Oswald lived with the Murrets for a period of 1 to 2 years while his mother worked as a saleswoman at various places in the New Orleans area. (23) Having developed a close relationship with his Aunt Lillian in particular, Oswald stayed at the Murret home during other periods of his childhood and adolescence (24) while his mother was either traveling or unable to house him elsewhere. (25) During the period in which he and his mother lived at Exchange Alley, the teenaged Oswald regularly visited his aunt, and uncle eating dinner with them on Friday evenings and spending his Saturdays there. (26) His uncle Charles Murret was a father figure of sorts. The Murrets served as the closest thing to a real family that Oswald had been exposed to up to that point in his life. In subsequent years, while serving in the Marine Corps in Biloxi, Miss., Oswald visited his aunt and uncle at their New Orleans home. (27) He also wrote to them during the period in which he lived in the Soviet Union. (28) Following his return to the United States and his move back to New Orleans, Oswald again stayed with the Murrets while looking for a job and an apartment. (29) After Oswald's wife, Marina, joined him there, his uncle Charles loaned them money and helped move them into an apartment. (30) In subsequent months in 1963, Lee and Marina regularly visited the Murrets, having dinner at their home and spending time with them on weekends. (31) In July 1963, Charles Murret drove Oswald and his wife and other members of the Murret family to Mobile, Ala., for an overnight visit to see Gene Murret, Charles and Lillian's son. (32) Following Lee's arrest in August 1963 for a fistfight growing out of his attempt to hand out "Fair Play For Cuba" literature in New Orleans, Oswald was released from jail when a friend of Charles Murret's intervened on his behalf. (33)

(432) While the Warren Commission and the FBI were not fully aware of it in 1963, Oswald's uncle, Charles Murret (commonly known as "Dutz") had for some time been involved in the New Orleans gambling circles. The committee established that he was associated with organized crime figures there, having worked for years in an underworld gambling syndicate affiliated with the Carlos Marcello crime family. Although the committee first received information relating to Charles Murret's underworld involvement from a former prosecution witness against Teamster leader James R. Hoffa, as well as from a southwestern businessman and his wife acquainted with Marguerite Oswald, the committee was not able to confirm the specifics until late 1978. The only indication of such background, however vague, that the committee had been able to find amid the documentation on Oswald and his family from 1963 and 1964 was contained in an FBI interview with John Pic, Oswald's half-brother from an earlier marriage of his mother, Marguerite. (34) In the Bureau report of that interview, it was stated that, "Pic advised that his mother \* \* \* was quite close

to her sister, Mrs. Charles Murret \* \* \* He said that from something said to him when he was quite young, it is his impression Charles Murret was a gambler and bookmaker.”(35) No other reference to Murret’s activities and background were located among the Warren Commission and FBI documents relating to the assassination investigation. Nor was there any indication that Pic’s brief information about Murret attracted any interest at the time.

(433) Similarly, when Marguerite Oswald noted that she had spoken briefly of her brother-in-law’s gambling activities in an interview for a book in 1965, it attracted little attention.(36) In an interview with the committee on October 30, 1978, Mrs. Oswald declined to respond to various questions, but did state that “Dutz” Murret had been a bookmaker “for many, many, years” and that she had spoken of his background in an interview with author Jean Stafford years earlier.(37) In her biography of Mrs. Oswald, *A Mother in History*, Stafford had quoted Mrs. Oswald as saying that she was displeased over her sister Lillian Murret’s Warren Commission testimony. Mrs. Murret had stated that her son, Gene, saved more money as a youth than Marguerite’s son, Lee did,(38) and then noted that “Her [Mrs. Murret’s] boy had a father who was in the bookmaking business and had a very large income—they own their own home.”(39) During his testimony before the Warren Commission on April 7, 1964, Charles Murret was not asked about his employment and personnel background,(40) although he indicated that he had worked in the prize-fight business as well as on the New Orleans docks.(41) In their own testimony before the Commission, Murret’s wife Lillian and daughter Marilyn stated that he had worked on the wharf, although they seemed unclear as to what exactly he did. Mrs. Murret testified that “He’s a clerk for, well, he works for different companies \* \* \* he works at different wharves, in other words.”(42) When Marilyn Murret was asked what her father’s occupation was, she answered, “Well, steamship clerk—I don’t know whether it comes under the jurisdiction of, whether it is under the Mississippi Shipping, or how they operate, actually \* \* \* I just don’t know how that works.”(43)

(434) In November 1978, corroborating other testimony and documentation developed by the committee, various members of Charles Murret’s family confirmed his past involvement in New Orleans gambling activities. Mrs. Murret testified that her husband had been “in the gambling business” with a man named Sam Saia for a number of years.(44) While stating she was not clear on the specific details of their relationship, she testified that her husband “Dutz” had “been in business for [Sam Saia] or with him. I don’t know.”(45) Charles Murret’s son, Gene, a State official in Louisiana in 1979, testified that his father’s principal occupation had been in the gambling trade, describing him as “a self-employed bookie.”(46) He further stated that his late father (Charles Murret died October 12, 1964) “certainly has had associations with Sam Saia.”(47) Marilyn Murret testified that she did not “know when he knew Saia,” but stated that she did recall her father’s association with “the Saias.”(48) In an interview with the Committee in October 1978, Lee Oswald’s mother Marguerite stated, “I knew Saia. I knew him and Mr. Murret worked with him. They knew each other for years.”(49)

(435) Sam Saia, who died in October 1965, was identified by various Federal and State authorities as an organized crime leader in New Orleans for over 15 years.(50) Aaron Kohn testified that Saia "had the reputation of being very close to Carlos Marcello"(51) and had been "the biggest and most powerful operator of illegal handbooks and other forms of illegal gambling in the city of New Orleans."(52) An FBI report of November 3, 1965, summarized Saia's underworld career, noted that he had "made his money by dope peddling in the early years" and had gone on to become "one of the largest bookmakers" in New Orleans.(53) The report noted that Saia was reported to be "the financial backer of numerous [underworld] clubs throughout the New Orleans area,"(54) employing "numerous runners or agents who accepted bets for him."(55) An FBI report of May 28, 1962, noted that the IRS had identified Saia as one of the most powerful gambling figures in the Louisiana area.(56) In 1955, the New Orleans Crime Commission had prepared a lengthy report on Saia's close friendship with a top-ranking official of the New Orleans police department, noting that "Saia has been the principal member of a large gambling organization." (57) The report detailed Saia's arrest "on at least 22 separate charges" and the continuing investigation of him by various authorities.(58) The crime commission later noted that Saia's position in the New Orleans underworld had been strengthened by his close ties to various influential political figures, as indicated when he and the mayor of New Orleans and the city's former chief of police all served as pallbearers at the funeral of a key Saia organized crime associate who had been involved in gambling and prostitution.(59)

(436) Lee Harvey Oswald's aunt, Mrs. Lillian Murret, testified that her husband Charles had worked for Saia at a gambling house called the Lomalinda, as well as at other locations.(60) She noted that "Gambling at that time was wide open here."(61) Gene Murret recalled that the Lomalinda "was a club on Royal and Iberville," a location in the French Quarter of the city.(62) Mrs. Murret further testified that she was not sure what years her husband had worked with Saia, but believed their association had been during "the thirties or forties"(63) and "maybe" during the 1950's and 1960's.(64) Mrs. Murret further stated that her husband had not been working for Saia at the time of Murret's death in late 1964; rather her husband had been "working on the riverfront" for some time prior to his death.(65)

(437) While the committee's examination of FBI documents from the investigation of President Kennedy's assassination did not reveal any reference to it, the FBI had received a report years earlier that described Charles "Dutz" Murret's involvement in the New Orleans underworld.(66) The committee found no indication that the Bureau report was transmitted to the Warren Commission or that it was made known to the Bureau agents handling the investigation of Lee Oswald's family. The report, dated May 6, 1944, and titled "Re Crime Survey," had been prepared by the New Orleans FBI office's special agent in charge (SAC).(67) It had been written in response to a letter from Bureau headquarters of March 9, 1944, "requesting a survey of vice and corruption" in the "major cities of [the] New Orleans Field Division."(68) In the report, the New Orleans office had responded by

providing a brief summary of a number of underworld establishments and operations, listing the names of the operators and their locations. (69) Under the heading "D. & A. Clubs" was the following brief information on Charles Murret: "These clubs, which are handbooks only, are operated by Dutz Murret at 128 Chartres Street and 837 Iberville Street." (70) The reference to handbooks in the two Murret clubs was of course a reference to illegal bookmaking activities. (71) The club referred to on Iberville Street was in close proximity to the Lomalinda, the other gambling establishment where Murret worked with Saia. (72)

(438) Charles Murret had also been involved in promoting several prizefighters in New Orleans, after having briefly been a boxer himself when he was younger. (73) In his brief testimony before the Warren Commission in 1964, Murret had noted that "Dutz" was a nickname "that my uncle gave me years ago and it caught on, with me being in the fight game and all, and it just stuck with me." (74) Mrs. Lillian Murret told the committee that "Dutz" had been "a promoter of fights" years earlier. (75) Files and records on the prizefight business in Louisiana maintained by the New Orleans Crime Commission, as well as the newspaper obituary on Murret in 1964, noted that he had served as the manager of a boxer named Tony Sciambra years earlier. (76) Murret had managed Sciambra in professional fights in the New Orleans area. (77) The committee established that "Dutz" Murret's boxer, Tony Sciambra, was an associate of Saia's family who went on to become a lieutenant of Saia himself. (78) A report on Saia prepared by the New Orleans Crime Commission in August 1955 listed Sciambra as one of Saia's principal deputies, (79) noting that Sciambra had been the subject of "numerous arrests" and had been convicted of illegal handbook gambling along with Anthony and Salvatore Saia. (80)

(439) In his committee testimony, Charles Murret's son Gene stated that his father had worked with various other people in the gambling business in addition to Saia. (81) His father had had a partner named Larry Rue at one time and had worked "with one or two other people as time went along." (82) He testified further that his father's gambling

operation was solely and exclusively to support his family and that is about what it made, and his associations were with individuals in that kind of an operation who pretty much did the same, except Sam Saia was a little better off in terms of his individual wealth. (83)

(440) Aaron Kohn had commented on Saia's reputation of being "very close to Carlos Marcello." (84) Saia's gambling activities were very closely connected to the Marcello interests. (85) The betting operations run by Saia and his associates such as "Dutz" Murret were actually operated through the gambling wire service controlled by Marcello. (86) Such gambling operators made regular payments to Marcello for use of the wire service, thus transmitting a share of their profits to him. (87)

(441) The committee was not able to determine whether Charles "Dutz" Murret was personally acquainted with Carlos Marcello, al-

though their mutual associations in the underworld of New Orleans are evident. Another former gambling associate of Murret's testified that Murret was probably acquainted in some way with two other key organized crime lieutenants of Marcello. (88) (442) While the committee established that Charles Murret's nephew, Lee Harvey Oswald, was aware of his uncle's underworld gambling activity and discussed it with his wife Marina in 1963, (89) the extent of Oswald's knowledge of his uncle's associations was not completely clear. In her authorized biography of Marina Oswald in 1977, compiled through lengthy taped interviews with Oswald's widow, Priscilla McMillan wrote that Marina had been told of "Dutz" Murret's activities by Lee sometime during the spring of 1963:

\* \* \* Lee had confided to Marina that he suspected the Murrets lived beyond what his uncle's earnings would support \* \* \* Charles Ferdinand, or "Dutz," Murret, as he had been known since his prizefight days, was a steamship clerk, and Lee thought that his uncle might be engaged in some other activity on the side, like bookmaking. There is no evidence that this was so. \* \* \* He thought they did not want to do anything that might bring attention to them. (90)

In a committee interview on December 4, 1978, Marina Oswald Porter stated, "I don't remember why Lee thought those things" about his uncle. (91) She went on to state, "I know he was suspicious about his uncle and his work and what not, and was interested in it all. But I don't know much about it." (92) Further, "I didn't know what gambling really was then in this country, or what those mob people were. I still don't know what it is all about." (93) She also said, "All I remember about that is what I told Priscilla [McMillan]. Whatever is in the book is what I knew." (94)

(443) In an interview with the committee on October 30, 1978, Marguerite Oswald declined to discuss her family and its activities at any length. (95) She stated that the committee was "trying to make something about Marcello." (96) She said only that "just because Mr. Murret worked for those people, and may have known Marcello, that doesn't mean anything about Lee." (97) She would not state whether she knew if Marcello and Murret were in fact acquainted. (98) In another brief interview with the committee on November 30, 1978, Mrs. Oswald again spoke of her brother-in-law, although declining to answer specific questions about him. (99) While saying that she had no specific information regarding such a relationship, (100) Mrs. Oswald stated, "He [Murret] may have come across Marcello in his business. He probably did come across him at some point." (101)

#### MARGUERITE OSWALD AND CLEM SEHRT

(444) During her years in New Orleans, Lee Harvey Oswald's mother, Marguerite, developed a friendship with Clem Sehrt, a lawyer in that city. (102) In her testimony before the Warren Commission, Mrs. Oswald stated that she had known Sehrt and his family "since early childhood," (103) but had not seen the lawyer for years until she sought him out for legal advice about her son Lee's desire to join the Marines in late 1956. (104) Lee had been pressuring her strongly

to allow him to "falsify his birth certificate" so that he could enlist in the Marine Corps before he reached the minimum age.(105) They were then living at Exchange Alley, with Oswald attending Beauregard High School.(106) Mrs. Oswald told the Warren Commission that, "I have a very good friend, Mr. Clem Sehrt, who is an attorney in New Orleans \* \* \* I called him and told him I had a personal problem."(107) Mrs. Oswald further recalled that Sehrt had at first declined to offer her any legal advice on Lee's desire to alter his birth certificate, stating, "Marguerite, I cannot advise you. It would be unethical. But a lot of boys join the service" before they reach the required age.(108)

(445) Sehrt, according to the New Orleans Crime Commission, was an associate, lawyer, and financial adviser to a Louisiana banker associated with Carlos Marcello and his various holdings.(109) Sehrt's law partner had also served as an attorney for Marcello.(110) Sehrt, himself a former State banking official, had come to prominence in the State through his close relationship with Louis J. Rousell, a New Orleans banking executive. Aaron Kohn stated that Sehrt and Rousell "were long involved in a number of highly questionable undertakings, both business and political."(111) Kohn added that Sehrt was long known as Rousell's key intermediary in various professional dealings and activities and was closely identified with him in the public's eye.(112)

(446) The New Orleans Crime Commission noted that Rousell had admitted to an old and close relationship with Marcello. He personally emphasized that friendship when he testified during a Security and Exchange Commission investigation of stolen securities in Miami during the early 1970's.(113) The crime commission further noted that Rousell's bank had attempted to intercede on Marcello's behalf in 1966 by joining with other parties in an effort to seek clemency following the Mafia leader's conviction for assaulting a New Orleans FBI agent.(114)

(447) During the 1950's, when Sehrt rose to prominence through his close association with Rousell, Rousell had come to be involved in a political scandal in which, it was reported, two Louisiana Supreme Court Justices were receiving regular sums of income from an unreported corporate payroll of Louis Rousell.(115) One judge was subsequently charged with not having filed the required income tax returns.(116) The investigation further disclosed that Rousell and his associates had reportedly supplied the Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court with a new Cadillac each year, during an earlier period.(117) In recent years, according to the crime commission, Rousell and his banking associates had been under continuing investigation for alleged improper banking procedures, extortion, and illegal loans.(118) An insurance business directed by Rousell had also been under investigation in Alabama.(119) Further, the crime commission received reports in 1978 that Louis Rousell had recently been telling associates he was working through a powerful political figure to have the Special Agent in Charge of the New Orleans FBI office transferred to another assignment.(120) While Sehrt's close personal and business relationship with Louis Rousell lasted for many years prior to Sehrt's death, Kohn recalled that the relationship was perhaps closest during the 1950's.(121)

(448) During her testimony before the Warren Commission, Marguerite Oswald described Sehart as "a family friend" and stated that she finally took Lee to see him to discuss his plan of falsifying his birth certificate. (122) While it is not entirely clear from her testimony, Mrs. Oswald apparently succeeded in getting Sehart to assist her in securing for Lee a false birth certificate. (123) Subsequently, she indicated, Sehart apparently agreed with her that the falsified birth certificate "would not stand up" and that she should allow Lee to enter the Marines, but would at least mollify or humor him in his misguided intentions. (124) Mrs. Oswald testified that, "I went to [Sehart] and paid \$5 and said that I lost Lee's birth certificate, and kind of motioned to [him.] I knew it would not stand up." (125) Mrs. Oswald further stated that the Marines apparently discovered the erroneous birth certificate when Lee tried to enlist and that Lee returned home. (126) (He did successfully enlist following his next birthday.) (127)

(449) On December 7, 1978, the New Orleans Crime Commission informed the committee of some information it had recently learned from a former associate of Sehart's, a source it regarded as highly reliable. (128) This associate had stated that Sehart told him prior to his death that some party had contacted him soon after the assassination to request that he go to Dallas to represent the accused assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald. (129) Sehart did not tell his associate who requested this legal representation, nor did Sehart agree to represent Oswald. (130) Sehart's associate could not recall any further information. (131)

#### OSWALD'S EMPLOYMENT WITH TUJAGUE'S

(450) In their testimony before the Warren Commission in 1964, Mrs. Marguerite Oswald and her sister, Mrs. Charles Murret, recalled that Lee Oswald had worked for a business in New Orleans called Tujague's, or Tujague and Co., when he was about 16. (132) Oswald and his mother were then living at 126 Exchange Alley. (133) Mrs. Murret testified that her nephew Lee "had worked as a runner when he was here for a while for Tujague's." (134) At a later point in her testimony, she explained that "he had a job as a runner, going from building to building, delivering messages and things like that." (135) Still later in her testimony, when asked if she knew anything further regarding Lee's work for Tujague's, Mrs. Murret stated, "No. I didn't know anything other than he was working there, and he was a runner, and that sort of thing, for them." (136) Marguerite Oswald recalled that "His first job was Tujague and Son, who was steamship people, and he was a messenger." (137) She further recalled that Lee had opened his first checking account while working for Tujague's. (138)

(451) The committee looked into Oswald's employment by Tujague's. While both his mother and aunt had briefly noted that Oswald had worked for a business called Tujague's, the Commission had not cleared up the apparent confusion as to the exact name of the company, (139) and there were at least two businesses operated by an individual or family named Tujague in New Orleans. One, Tujague's Restaurant, on the edge of the French Quarter, was located within a few blocks of the Oswald residence at Exchange Alley. (140) Kohn stated that the restaurant had been one of the better ones in the area during the

1950s, but also had a reputation as a gathering place for underworld figures. (141) Kohn noted that Tujague's was frequented by various well-known gambling figures, as well as officials of the State Athletic Commission. (142) With this information in mind, as well as the knowledge that various gambling operations have traditionally used young boys as "runners," the committee sought to determine whether Oswald had worked at Tujague's Restaurant as a "runner" and, if not, whether it was connected in any way to the Tujague's that did. The evidence indicates he did not work there.

(452) In an interview on November 16, 1978, Frank DiBenedetto of Gerard F. Tujague's, Inc. Forwarding Co. stated that his company had employed Lee Oswald during that period. (143) DiBenedetto, who took over the business following Gerard Tujague's death, stated that he had been Oswald's supervisor and that Oswald had been employed as a messenger. (144) He stated further that Oswald's work consisted largely of delivering company papers and messages to various steamship lines on the docks (145) and that Tujague's messengers had never been used for any gambling purposes to his knowledge. (146) According to DiBenedetto, Oswald had worked with him at Tujague's for a year to a year and a half. An FBI teletype located by the committee, however, quoted Gerard Tujague as saying that his payroll records indicated Oswald's employment had lasted only 2 months. (147) In his interview with the committee, DiBenedetto stated that Gerard Tujague had once told him that his family was in no way related to the Tujague's who owned the restaurant by that name. (148)

#### MARGUERITE OSWALD AND RAOUL SERE

(453) At the time of her first marriage to Edward Pic of New Orleans, Marguerite Oswald (then Marguerite Claverie) was working as a secretary for a lawyer in that city, Raoul Sere. Marguerite's sister, Mrs. Charles Murret, told the Warren Commission of her sister's employment by Sere and noted that Marguerite had left her job after her marriage. (149) Mrs. Murret further testified that after Marguerite's first marriage failed, Sere rehired her (150) and helped her pay some debts she had acquired for furniture and other items. (151)

(454) Politically active as an attorney, Sere went on to become an assistant district attorney for the city of New Orleans. (152) Aaron Kohn recalled that "Sere played a key role in running the D.A.'s office during the period in which that office was later proven to be highly corrupt." (153) "The D.A.'s office was then under the corrupt influence of the gambling syndicate—Carlos Marcello and various others—to a very significant degree." (154) Kohn further stated that "Raoul Sere was an important part of the New Orleans parish political establishment during its worst period" (155) at a time in which "the enforcement of the law decidedly took a backseat to racketeer payoffs throughout the city government." (156) Kohn noted that Sere was widely alleged to have been associated with a small political circle known as "the Combine" (157) a handful of New Orleans figures who reportedly obstructed a number of criminal cases, including an important probe of police corruption. (158)

(455) While the files of the New Orleans Crime Commission contain references to Sere's activities as assistant district attorney, including allegations that bribery payoffs were channeled through him by criminal interests in the city, (159) Sere was never the subject of any criminal investigation. (160)

(456) While Marguerite Oswald "worked for Raoul Sere for quite a while," according to her sister, the exact duration of that employment is unknown. (161) In an interview with the committee on November 30, 1978, Mrs. Oswald declined to discuss her past activities at any length, refusing to respond to various questions. (162) Mrs. Oswald did state, however, that she had worked for Sere a number of years, recalling "we were friends for many years. I was also very friendly with his wife." (163) Mrs. Oswald further stated that Raoul Sere had taken her out to dinner sometime in about 1960. (164) Mrs. Oswald stated that she had had dinner with Sere for the purpose of discussing various legal aspects of her son Lee's recent defection to the Soviet Union and her efforts to secure his return to the United States. (165)

#### OSWALD, DAVID FERRIE AND THE CIVIL AIR PATROL

(457) While he lived in New Orleans, Oswald became a member of the Civil Air Patrol there. (166) He had joined the student aviation organization at the age of 15 and attended CAP meetings for an unknown period of time, generally believed to have been relatively brief. (167) In her testimony before the Warren Commission, Marguerite Oswald stated that her son Lee "joined the Civil Air Patrol" at "age 15½ or so" and attended CAP meetings with a high school classmate, Edward Voebel. (168) The Warren Commission Report touched only briefly on Oswald's CAP involvement, noting in appendix XIII that, "He was briefly a member of the Civil Air Patrol, and considered joining an organization of high school students interested in astronomy." (169)

(458) Oswald's involvement with the CAP in New Orleans became the subject of intense controversy, speculation and investigation within several days of President Kennedy's assassination and has continued to attract attention since then. The central question has been whether Oswald may have met and known David W. Ferrie during that period. Ferrie was a private investigator and pilot in New Orleans who has been widely regarded as one of the more "mysterious" persons to figure in the investigation of President Kennedy's death. Ferrie was briefly the subject of investigation by the FBI, New Orleans District Attorney's Office, and Secret Service during the week following the President's murder. (170) Later Ferrie also became subject of the controversial investigation by New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison during 1967-69 that led to an abortive prosecution. This in turn led to serious charges against Garrison for the questionable and careless nature of his investigation. (171) The brief FBI and Secret Service investigations of Ferrie had not focused to any significant degree on Ferrie's background and working associations, while the subsequent Garrison investigation focused exclusively on Ferrie's personal associations with Cuban exiles and purported links to the CIA. They left largely untouched important aspects of Ferrie's background,

in particular his activities and associations during 1963, at which time he was employed by Carlos Marcello's attorney, G. Wray Gill. Ferrie's investigative work for Marcello had brought him into close personal association with the organized crime leader. (172)

(459) The allegation that Oswald had been associated with Ferrie—and that Ferrie may somehow have been involved with Oswald in the President's murder—was first set forth by a colleague of Ferrie's in New Orleans. (173) Jack S. Martin, a sometime private investigator and friend of Ferrie's, notified various investigators during the days immediately following the assassination that he suspected Ferrie may have aided Oswald in the crime. (174) Martin had known Ferrie for over 2 years and had visited him occasionally at the office of Carlos Marcello's attorney, where Ferrie worked as an investigator. (175) On November 24, 1963, Martin contacted New Orleans District Attorney Herman Kohlman to advise that he suspected Ferrie may have known Oswald for some time and that Ferrie, years earlier, may have been Oswald's instructor in the Civil Air Patrol. (176)

(460) On November 25, Martin was interviewed by FBI Agent Regis Kennedy in New Orleans and provided further information. (177) He stated that he had informed several people in the news media of his information about Ferrie and Oswald (178) and that he thought he had once seen a photograph of Oswald and other CAP members when he once visited Ferrie's home. (179) Martin stated that he had heard on television that Oswald had in fact belonged to the New Orleans CAP and thus began to think that Ferrie had probably known him. (180) According to the FBI reports of his interview, Martin went on to voice other suspicions about Ferrie:

Martin stated that he observed in Ferrie's home a number of foreign made firearms and it is his opinion that Ferrie could have taught Oswald how to purchase a foreign made firearm or possibly have purchased the gun that was shown on television. He advised that he saw similar type weapons at Ferrie's home when he visited there 2 years ago. (181)

Martin further informed the FBI that he believed Ferrie was an "amateur hypnotist" who may have been capable of hypnotizing Oswald. (182) Further, Ferrie had once told him about a young friend who had witnessed an alleged "crime against nature" that Ferrie had committed, a young man who had left New Orleans "and subsequently joined the U.S. Marine Corps." (183) Martin stated that when he heard on television that Oswald had been a Marine, he began to suspect that he was the young man Ferrie had referred to. (184) Martin cautioned, however, that this might have only been a coincidence. (185) Martin further told the FBI of Ferrie's past history of homosexual arrests, (186) stating that "Ferrie is a completely disreputable person, a notorious sex deviate with a brilliant mind." (187) Further, Martin "suspected him of being capable of committing any type of crime." (188) Martin had concluded by stating:

\* \* \* that he felt that Ferrie's possible association with Lee Oswald should be the subject of close examination as he personally believed that he could be implicated in the killing of President John F. Kennedy. (189)

(461) The introduction of David Ferrie as a "suspect" or target of investigation in the Kennedy assassination case was to result in the development of a number of areas of information, allegations and evidence. The FBI undertook a brief investigation into the question of whether Lee Oswald had known Ferrie in the Civil Air Patrol, interviewing several former CAP members, but did not make any final determination. In an interview with FBI agents in New Orleans on November 25, 1963, Ferrie denied he had ever had contact with Oswald in the CAP. (190) He said he had served as a commandant of the CAP from 1953 to 1955 and that his unit had met at New Orleans Lakefront Airport. (191) While his CAP cadets were instructed in the use of rifles, he had not participated in that training. (192) According to the FBI report of his interview, Ferrie "stated that he does not know Lee Harvey Oswald and to the best of his knowledge Oswald was never a member of the CAP Squadron in New Orleans during the period he was with the group." (193) The FBI report continued:

Ferrie said that to the best of his knowledge he does not know any individual named Lee Harvey Oswald nor has he ever known the individual represented by photograph presented to him as that of Lee Harvey Oswald in the CAP, in any business connection or in any social capacity \* \* \*

\* \* \* Ferrie upon viewing the photograph stated that the profile view of the photograph of Lee Harvey Oswald has a very vague familiarity to him but the full face and full length photographs of Oswald are not familiar to him. (194)

Ferrie went on to state that he was in fact acquainted with Martin, who first made the allegations about Ferrie and Oswald. (195) He had known Martin as a private investigator for over 2 years, and that Martin had "attempted to insert himself" into Ferrie's "personal affairs." (196) Ferrie further stated that Martin had once been diagnosed as a "paranoid" in the psychiatric ward of a local hospital. (197) He had thrown Martin out of the office of Marcello's attorney earlier that year, and Martin resented him for that act. (198) The FBI report stated:

[Ferrie] stated that Martin began visiting him at the office of Attorney G. Wray Gill and that Mr. Gill did not want Martin hanging around his office. Ferrie claimed that in June of 1963 he put Martin out of Mr. Gill's office in an undiplomatic manner and that since that time Martin has bedeviled him in every manner possible. (199)

(462) The FBI and Secret Service investigation into the possibility that Oswald and Ferrie had been associated in the Civil Air Patrol came to an end a few days after the allegations were first reported. A Secret Service report concluded that "information furnished by Jack S. Martin to the effect that David William Ferrie associated with Lee Harvey Oswald at New Orleans and trained Oswald in the use of a rifle" was "without foundation." (200) It stated further that "Jack S. Martin, who has the appearance of being an alcoholic, has the reputation of furnishing incorrect information to law enforcement officers,

attorneys, etc.”(201) It also said that on November 26, 1963, the FBI had informed the Service that Martin had “admitted to FBI agents” that his alleged information about Ferrie and Oswald was “a figment of his imagination and that he had made up the story after reading the newspapers and watching television.”(202) Actually, the FBI had overstated the content of its interview with Martin on November 26, when they reported it to the Secret Service.(203) As noted earlier, Martin himself had cautioned the FBI that he had no evidence to support his suspicions and noted that his information was just that: suspicions that he thought merited investigation.(204) (463) The Secret Service report also stated that Martin, during an interview with Secret Service agents, had acknowledged he did not have any specific details to back up his suspicions.(205) Martin had admitted to being a heavy drinker and stated that he may have exaggerated his information and “told his story as though it was based on facts.”(206) The Secret Service report concluded by stating, “In view of the above, this phase of the investigation involving William David Ferrie will be considered closed.”(207) (464) On November 28, 1963, in a teletype to the Director and the Dallas office, the New Orleans FBI office reported that the investigation of Martin’s allegations was being concluded and noted that “all allegations against Ferrie stem from Jack S. Martin who was previously confined to the psychiatric ward of Charity Hospital, New Orleans, for a character disorder. Martin is well known to New Orleans office and is considered thoroughly unreliable.”(208) The November 28, 1963, FBI teletype also set forth additional information obtained during a second interview with Ferrie from earlier that day.(209) In it, Ferrie had again denied that he had ever had any contact with Oswald.(210) The FBI report of the interview noted, however:

David William Ferrie reinterviewed today and advised at time of Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba he was very much embarrassed and concerned over lack of air cover provided and severely criticized President Kennedy both in public and private. Ferrie stated he has never made any statement that President Kennedy should be killed with any intention to do so and has never at any time outlined any plan or made any statement as to how this could be done or who should do it. Ferrie said he is very outspoken and may have used an off-hand or colloquial expression, “He ought to be shot,” in expressing his feelings concerning Cuban situation \* \* \* Ferrie said he has also been critical of any President riding in open car and has stated anyone could hide in the bushes and shoot a President.(211)

(465) Two weeks later, Ferrie furnished an additional statement to FBI agent Regis Kennedy of the New Orleans office.(212) He disclosed that he had conducted CAP sessions at New Orleans Moisant Airport in addition to Lakefront Airport, as he had stated earlier: (213)

In 1955, or thereabouts, I assisted, for a time, the Moisant Squadron of Civil Air Patrol, at Moisant Airport, New Orleans, La., though I cannot establish through personal records or recollection the exact dates of this connection. I have no

records, or recollection, to my knowledge, to show that Lee Harvey Oswald was, or was not, a member of this particular unit of the Civil Air Patrol. To my best knowledge and belief I do not know Lee Harvey Oswald, and have no personal recollection of ever having met him. If I did ever meet him it was very casual and to my best recollection have definitely not seen him in recent years. (214)

(466) The committee undertook an extensive examination of Lee Harvey Oswald's involvement in the Civil Air Patrol and sought to determine whether Oswald did in fact have any contact with Ferrie during that period. The committee believed that the possibility that Oswald and Ferrie may have been in contact during that period presented significant questions that needed to be resolved. A number of areas of information regarding possible associations between Oswald and Ferrie in 1963 had been developed by the committee, information that the committee believed to be of important evidentiary value. For example, the committee developed new information about Ferrie's various activities on behalf of Carlos Marcello in 1963, and his personal contact with the Mafia leader during the fall of that year. (215)

(467) During the brief investigation in 1963 conducted by the FBI, Secret Service, and New Orleans district attorney's office of allegations that Oswald might have been associated with Ferrie, another witness had provided information similar to that of Martin. (216) Edward Voebel was a former classmate of Oswald's (217) who had attended the CAP meetings with Oswald. (218) Voebel, whom the Warren Commission had established as Oswald's closest friend during his teenage years in New Orleans, (219) had attended Beauregard High School with Oswald and had actually been the friend who first accompanied Oswald to the CAP meetings. (220) The Warren Commission itself used Voebel's Commission testimony as a primary source of information on Oswald's adolescent years. (221)

(468) Speaking of Voebel, Mrs. Marguerite Oswald told the Warren Commission, "This young man and Lee were very friendly \* \* \* he and Lee joined the Civil Air Patrol together \* \* \*. And he often came to the house." (222) Oswald's cousin, Marilyn Murret, further told the Commission that Voebel was "the only one" of Oswald's classmates whom he was close to and that Voebel "got him to join the Civil Air Patrol, in which he was very interested." (223)

(469) On November 25, 1963, at the same time that Martin's allegations about Ferrie and Oswald were being investigated, Voebel was interviewed by the FBI. (224) He stated that he had become a close friend of Oswald during the period 1954-55, and that they used to play pool together after school at a poolroom next to Oswald's home in Exchange Alley. (225) Oswald seemed to be a typical teenage boy during the period of their friendship. Voebel said that reports that Oswald was already "studying Communism" were a "lot of baloney" (226)—Oswald commonly read "paperback trash." (227)

During this first interview with FBI agents, Voebel spoke of his involvement in the CAP with Oswald:

Voebel stated that he and Oswald were members of the Civil Air Patrol in New Orleans with Capt. Dave Ferrie during the time they were in school. (228)

Voebel at this time seemed to indicate clearly that there had probably been contact between Ferrie and Oswald in the CAP. He became uncertain about such contact during the course of a second interview with FBI agents later that same day, November 25, 1963. (229) Then he stated that he had persuaded Oswald to attend the meetings of his CAP unit at Moisant Airport in 1955. (230) Oswald had "attended two or three drills and possibly four drills at the most." (231) Voebel further stated that it was difficult to recall how often Oswald was at the CAP meetings because "Oswald had a knack for being there and not being noticed." (232) The CAP unit met once or twice a week and included 20 to 25 members, some of whom were girls. (233) According to the FBI report of this second interview:

Voebel stated that he could not recall if Capt. Dave Ferrie was commander of the unit at the time Oswald attended meetings or whether Oswald attended meetings prior to Captain Ferrie taking command. (234)

(470) Voebel stated that Ferrie was commander of his CAP unit during part of 1955, but that he could not recall precisely when or if it was during the same period that Oswald attended the meetings. (235) Voebel recalled that Captain Ferrie was "very intelligent," reportedly held several degrees, and was then a pilot for Eastern Airlines. (236) He said that Oswald quit attending the Moisant Airport CAP meetings sometime after being enrolled as a member because another CAP unit (at New Orleans Lakefront Airport) would be closer to home. (237) Voebel further told the FBI that Ferrie had once taken his CAP unit on an overnight "bivouac" in which Ferrie had instructed the cadets to bring along rifles for shooting practice. (238) Voebel did not believe Oswald had participated in this outing. The FBI report noted that Voebel received "a crank-type telephone call" during the course of the interview, and had mentioned that he "had also been frightened" by a person who came to his home earlier claiming to be a news reporter. This man disturbed him and had "acted very suspicious."

(471) An FBI teletype from the New Orleans office to Director J. Edgar Hoover on November 26, 1963, summarized that "Voebel was unable to recall if Oswald attended meetings under command of Ferrie or with previous commander." (239)

(472) On November 27, 1963, 5 days after President Kennedy's murder, Voebel was also interviewed by New Orleans Police Department officers. (240) In a report of this interview, prepared for Maj. P. J. Trosclair, Jr., of the department, it was noted that Voebel believed Oswald had attended the Moisant CAP meetings for "only \* \* \* about 1 month." (241) During the course of this police interview, however, Voebel also stated that while he could not be sure, he thought that Oswald may once have attended a party given by Ferrie during their involvement with the CAP. (242) According to the report:

Voebel stated that he believed Oswald attended a party (not sure) at the home of David Ferrie (captain) right after the members of the CAP received their stripes. (243)

Voebel did not elaborate on this event. (244) Two days later, on November 29, 1963, in an internal FBI memorandum from Assistant

Director Alex Rosen to Associate Director Alan Belmont, Voebel's account of his CAP involvement was again summarized :

Edward Voebel, on interview, said he had been a member of the CAP, New Orleans, for approximately 1 year, 1955-56. David William Ferrie took over as commander of the CAP unit during this time. Voebel took Oswald to one of the meetings and stated Oswald attended several meetings, possibly four meetings at the most. (245)

(473) On April 7, 1964, the testimony of Edward Voebel was taken by Warren Commission senior counsel Albert Jenner in New Orleans. (246) While the Warren Commission had not actively investigated the possibility of an association between Oswald and Ferrie, Ferrie's name came up briefly when Voebel was questioned about Oswald's activities with the CAP. (247) Voebel recalled that he had first become a friend of Oswald's when he witnessed him being beaten up one day after high school. (248) Two brothers who had earlier gotten into a fistfight with Oswald had sent a friend of theirs to beat him up. (249) Voebel noted that their school "seemed to draw a lot of bad characters" and that "it was almost impossible to go to school without brushing against somebody or getting involved in a fight." (250) In his testimony, Voebel stated that Oswald had attended "two or three meetings" of the CAP and "bought a uniform and everything, and \* \* \* seemed to be very interested at the outset." (251)

(456) Toward the end of his testimony, Voebel was asked if he could recall who had headed their CAP unit at that time :

Mr. JENNER. Who was the majordomo of the CAP unit that you attended ?

Mr. VOEBEL. I think it was Captain Ferrie. I think he was there when Lee attended one of these meetings, but I'm not sure of that. Now that I think of it, I don't think Captain Ferrie was there at that time, but he might have been. That isn't too clear to me. (252)

(474) The committee sought to locate Edward Voebel to take his testimony, but learned from his father, Sidney Voebel of New Orleans, that his son had died in 1971. (253) Sidney Voebel could not recall what his son had told him regarding his past contacts with Oswald and Ferrie. (254) While stating that he doesn't "have any proof," Voebel said he believed that the circumstances surrounding his son's death were "mysterious." (255) He had "died suddenly from a blood clot" at the age of 31 when he suffered an attack of pneumonia. (256) (475) The committee found that the incomplete and disorderly state of the registration and membership records of the New Orleans Civil Air Patrol did not permit a clear determination of Oswald and Ferrie's respective periods of involvement with the organization. In an interview with the FBI on November 25, 1963, Alvin Meister, a commander of the New Orleans CAP, stated that the CAP cadet files were kept for only 1 year after a cadet terminated his service. (257) In an FBI interview that same day, a former executive officer of the CAP noted another difficulty in trying to reconstruct the membership records from the period of time in which Oswald had been involved. (258) Harold Toole, then of the St. Bernard Parish Sheriff's Office, informed the

FBI that "most of the records of the squadron were stolen in late 1960." (259)

(476) In an FBI interview on November 27, 1963, another CAP executive was able to supply partial information regarding Oswald's involvement. (260) Joseph Ehrlicker told FBI agents that while he was unable to find a CAP application by Oswald, he was able to locate a record indicating that "Oswald was enrolled as a CAP cadet on July 27, 1955, at which time he was given Serial No. 084965." (261) Oswald was then enrolled in the cadet squadron at Moisant Airport. The records did not indicate when Oswald left the CAP unit. (262) Also with regard to David Ferrie:

Ehrlicker was able to determine that Ferrie's first period as Squadron Commander was terminated December 31, 1954. He was working at Moisant Airport at this time. It was later found out that Ferrie subsequent to this date was working with the squadron at Moisant without official connection with the CAP. As of late 1955 he was no longer with the squadron. (263)

(477) As can be seen from the fragmented CAP membership documentation provided by Ehrlicker, Ferrie was involved with the Moisant CAP unit (in an apparently unofficial capacity) for an uncertain period of time between December 31, 1954, and "late 1955." (264) The same CAP documentation indicated that Oswald had been involved in the same CAP unit in the summer of 1955, having officially enrolled on July 27, 1955. (265) Thus, while the CAP documentation available in 1963 did not permit a conclusive determination, the records themselves lent substantial credence to the possibility that Oswald and Ferrie had been involved in the same CAP unit during the same period of time.

(478) While Ferrie stated during his November 25, 1963, FBI interview, that he had been a commander of the Lakefront Airport CAP unit (266) it was not until December 10, 1963, when he provided another statement to the Bureau, that he said he had also worked with the Moisant Airport CAP. (267)

(479) During the course of its investigation of Oswald's involvement with the CAP and his possible contact with Ferrie, the committee interviewed O'Sullivan, a former high school classmate and friend of Oswald who had also been involved with Oswald and Voebel in the CAP. (268) Fred O'Sullivan had originally suggested to Oswald and Voebel that they might enjoy attending CAP meetings and asked them to participate in his squadron. (269) O'Sullivan's past involvement with Oswald in the CAP unit first came to the attention of the FBI on November 25, 1963, when New Orleans Assistant District Attorney Herman Kohlman informed FBI Agent Regis Kennedy that "An unknown police officer had told the Intelligence Division of the New Orleans Police Department that he was in the Civil Air Patrol with Lee Harvey Oswald and that Ferrie knew Oswald." (270) Later that day, the FBI was able to identify Fred O'Sullivan of the New Orleans Police Department Vice Squad as the classmate. (271) In an interview with Bureau agents that day, O'Sullivan stated that he had persuaded his classmates, Lee Oswald and Ed Voebel, to attend his CAP squadron meetings at the New Orleans Lakefront Airport. (272) Oswald

and Voebel had come "to one or two meetings, but did not join." (273) O'Sullivan stated that Oswald thought the Lakefront CAP location was too far away and decided to attend the Moisant Airport CAP squadron instead. (274) O'Sullivan told the FBI that Ferrie "was Squadron Commander" at the "approximate time" that Oswald came to the Lakefront CAP meetings. (275) He added, however, that he "could not say for certain that Oswald ever met Ferrie" at the time. (276) He further stated that Ferrie himself also subsequently began working with the other CAP unit at Moisant Airport. (277)

(480) In a second FBI interview, on November 26, 1963, O'Sullivan further advised that Ferrie might have had contact with Oswald at the Moisant Airport CAP. (278) According to the FBI report of this interview, "Ferrie \* \* \* transferred and assumed command of the CAP at Moisant Airport at about the same time O'Sullivan thought Oswald might have joined." (279) O'Sullivan further informed the Bureau that he had only recently learned of Ferrie's homosexual background. (280) He also noted that Ferrie "had acquired a reputation for being able to hypnotize people," and that he had once hypnotized a man following one of the CAP meetings. (281)

(481) In an interview with the committee on October 17, 1978, O'Sullivan repeated the account of his contacts with Oswald and Ferrie that he had provided the FBI in 1963. (282) Now a security director for Hilton Hotels, he stated that he could not say with certainty that he ever saw Oswald and Ferrie together, although he believed they probably did in fact attend the CAP meetings during the same period. (283) In an interview on December 15, 1978, O'Sullivan again told the committee that while "Ferrie ran the unit then, and Oswald came a couple, or a few times," he could not recall any more specific information about the matter. (284)

(482) In another interview with the committee on December 9, 1978, another former CAP member recalled Oswald's participation in the New Orleans unit. Collin Hamer, now an official of the New Orleans Public Library, stated that he had attended "about ten or twelve meetings" of the CAP unit during which Oswald was also present. (285) Hamer knew both Oswald and Voebel and said that Oswald had begun attending the CAP meetings sometime around the summer of 1955. (286) He stated that the 10 or 12 meetings that Oswald attended were held at the Eastern Airlines hangar at Moisant Airport. (287) He further stated that Oswald had attended the meetings for roughly 2 months, (288) during which the unit usually met twice a week, on Friday nights and Sunday afternoons. Hamer commented that he had never been interviewed by the FBI following the assassination of President Kennedy. (289) According to Hamer, David Ferrie had been present during the CAP meetings that Oswald attended: "Ferrie was at all the meetings during the time Lee and I were involved in CAP. He didn't always do the teaching, but he was always there." (290) Hamer told the committee that Oswald "was a real quiet kid" and that Ferrie "treated Oswald just like the rest of us. He was just the teacher so to speak." (291) Hamer further stated, "I don't know anything about whether or not Ferrie and Oswald had any contact outside of the CAP. All I know is that Oswald was in our unit for about 2 months, and

Ferrie ran it during that time.”(292) Hamer further recalled that Ferrie was “a tough commander” who became irritated if the cadets “goofed around at all.”(293) Hamer also recalled calling Oswald’s home on one occasion to make sure that Oswald was going to attend a CAP meeting.(294) Hamer did not know why Oswald left the CAP unit.(295) Hamer also told the committee that he was aware that some CAP cadets had “hung around” at Ferrie’s house and engaged in outside activities with him.(296) He did not know if Oswald ever had such contact with Ferrie.(297) Finally, Hammer said that he, himself, had become an adjutant of the CAP unit several years later and “weeded out a lot of the old files then,” but did not recall handling any files on Oswald.(298)

(483) The committee also interviewed a former commander of the Moisant Airport CAP squadron, Mrs. Gladys Durr.(299) Mrs. Durr had been interviewed by the FBI on November 25, 1963.(300) In that interview, she advised that she had assumed command of the CAP unit in October or December 1955,(301) which would have been several months after the CAP records indicated Oswald left.(302) Mrs. Durr stated that she did not recall knowing Lee Oswald, but that David Ferrie had been “expelled” from the CAP squadron “at about the time” she joined it.(303) While Mrs. Durr became commander of the squadron subsequent to the time when Oswald was a member, her recollection that Ferrie was still active in the unit until late 1955 would indicate that he probably was in fact with the unit during the period that Lee Oswald was in it. The available records indicate that Oswald was enrolled as a cadet on July 27, 1955,(304) and his CAP colleagues generally recalled him being active in the unit for a couple of months. Thus, with Ferrie’s lengthy involvement in the CAP ending (temporarily) in late 1955, according to Commander Durr, the likelihood of Ferrie’s service with the CAP unit during Oswald’s membership in the summer of 1955 seems logical.

(484) In her committee interview, Mrs. Durr stated that while she did not know Oswald, she could recall other cadets remembering that he attended the meetings.(305) She further recalled that Ferrie had originally conducted CAP classes at New Orleans Lakefront Airport, but had then begun teaching at Moisant Airport where she was commander.(306) She said Ferrie was a magnetic and intelligent man who had a strong following among the cadets.(307) He also had a reputation for having bad moral character, and on one occasion some CAP cadets had become drunk at his home and engaged in various activities in the nude.(308) Mrs. Durr stated that such incidents were what led to Ferrie being expelled from that particular CAP unit.(309)

(485) The committee interviewed another former commander of the New Orleans CAP, John Irion, active with the group from 1955 to 1959.(310) Irion, a management and public relations consultant, worked closely with Ferrie during their years with the CAP.(311) The two were personal friends for over 10 years, and Irion once testified on Ferrie’s behalf during a legal proceeding against him.(312) Irion, Ferrie, and the mayor of New Orleans were once photographed together, a CAP photograph later published by the New Orleans Times Picayune.(313) Irion recalled that Ferrie was a “dynamic” leader known for his intelligence.(314) He recalled being introduced

by Ferrie to Carlos Marcello's attorney, G. Wray Gill, on more than one occasion.(315) Irion told the committee that he recalled Lee Oswald going through "basic training" with the CAP during the period in which he and Ferrie were with the New Orleans squadron, but he could not recall any specific personal contact between Oswald and Ferrie.(316) He believed that contact was highly probable during that period.(317) Irion stated that he did not recall Oswald continuing with the CAP for a significant length of time following his participation in the unit's "basic training."(318) Irion said he was never questioned by the FBI during the investigation of President Kennedy's death.(319)

(486) The committee was able to locate and interview Anthony Atzenhoffer, who had served as the platoon sergeant for the Moisant Airport CAP squadron in late 1954 and 1955.(320) Atzenhoffer recalled helping coordinate the small CAP unit at Moisant and noted that his duties had included calling the roll at meetings and handling registration matters.(321) He told the committee that Ferrie was an instructor at the Moisant CAP meetings during this period.(322) Ferrie had taken him on his first airplane flight and kept his small private plane in a hangar at the Moisant Airport.(323) Atzenhoffer recalled attending a party with Ferrie and other CAP cadets during that period; the party may have been at Ferrie's house.(324) He also recalled that Ferrie once tried to recruit his CAP cadets in the squadron to participate in some kind of medical experiment.(325) Additionally, Atzenhoffer told the committee that Oswald was active in the CAP unit during the period.(326) He recalled Oswald's membership in the squadron and described him as being a quiet young man.(327) He could not, however, remember any specific details regarding Oswald's participation in the unit or specific contact between Oswald and Ferrie, although he believed both were involved in the CAP unit at the same time.(328) Atzenhoffer stated: "I can't recall seeing the two of them together. I don't have that detailed of a memory. But I'm sure they were there together at the same time."(329) Atzenhoffer said that he could not recall any more specific information and added: "I can't say that I know anything about Ferrie and Oswald being together anywhere else, except at the CAP meetings."(330)

(487) The committee also interviewed George Boesch, another former CAP member in New Orleans who worked with Ferrie during that period.(331) Boesch, now a member of the New Orleans Fire Department, had worked with Ferrie in the New Orleans Lakefront Airport squadron of the CAP.(332) He once accompanied Ferrie to a national competition match of the CAP and had traveled with him elsewhere.(333) He, too, recalled Ferrie as highly intelligent and of good moral character, a man devoted to teaching flying to young men.(334) Boesch told the committee that he accompanied Ferrie when Ferrie left the Lakefront squadron and began teaching the CAP squadron at Moisant Airport.(335) He and Ferrie helped reorganize the Moisant CAP program, which by then also included female cadets.(336) Boesch also remembered Lee Oswald attending the CAP meetings at Moisant during the period when he and Ferrie were there.(337) He could recall Oswald being there for 2 to 3 months while Ferrie was the instructor.(338) Boesch stated that there were usually

not more than 15 cadets at these CAP meetings and that Oswald was relatively quiet. (339) Boesch did not recall anything in particular about the relationship between Oswald and Ferrie, anything unusual; he did not know of any other contact between them. (340) Boesch stated that he was not familiar with Ferrie's personal life and was unaware of his activities outside the CAP. (341)

(488) The committee also interviewed Jerry Paradis, the former recruit instructor of the New Orleans Lakefront CAP unit. (342) In confirming that Oswald had attended the Lakefront squadron meetings (in addition to the Moisant CAP meetings), Paradis corroborated the accounts of other Oswald colleagues in the CAP. (343) Paradis, now a corporate attorney, told the committee that Oswald attended the Lakefront CAP meetings for several weeks or several months. (344) During the period that he had served as recruit instructor, Paradis could recall that Oswald came to "at least 10 or 15 meetings," attending the CAP sessions "quite a few times." (345) Oswald was a quiet person and rarely discussed anything with him other than CAP business and instructions. (346)

(489) Interestingly, when Ferrie was interviewed by FBI agents on November 25, 1963, in the aftermath of President Kennedy's murder, he recommended Paradis as a CAP member who would be able to verify whether Oswald had ever been involved in the CAP unit headed by Ferrie. (347) Ferrie told the FBI agents that he had never known Oswald and that other witnesses could confirm that Oswald had never attended CAP meetings during the period that Ferrie was active with the group. (348) According to the report of his FBI interview, Ferrie stated that "during the period he was commander of the squadron, Jerry C. Paradis was the recruit instructor and took all the squadron recruits through their training." (349) Ferrie supplied the Bureau with the home and business addresses of Paradis, so as to aid the agents in interviewing him. (350)

(490) In his interview with the committee on December 15, 1978, Paradis stated that he had never been contacted or interviewed by the FBI about his past involvement in the CAP with Oswald and Ferrie. (351) He also stated that no other investigators had ever interviewed him. (352) Paradis told the committee that Oswald had attended numerous CAP meetings at which Ferrie had been the instructor. (353) Ferrie "was always there" during the period in which Oswald attended the Lakefront squadron. Paradis repeated that he believed there were "at least 10 or 15 meetings" during which Oswald and Ferrie were present. (354) He told the committee, "Oswald and Ferrie were in the unit together. I know they were there because I was there." (355) Further, "I specifically remember Oswald. I can remember him clearly, and Ferrie was heading the unit then. I'm not saying that they may have been there together, I'm saying it is a certainty." (356) Paradis noted that he and Ferrie were good friends and he had always respected Ferrie, even though Ferrie was somewhat "unusual." (357) Paradis stated that he had no knowledge of any relationship between Oswald and Ferrie outside of the CAP meetings and did not recall anything unusual about their contact at the meetings. (358) He recalled that Ferrie was a "fairly stern, but generally likable" instructor. (359) Paradis also stated that Ferrie and

others from the Lakefront CAP unit sometimes participated in the Moisant CAP squadron meetings and that Ferrie later left the Lakefront unit to instruct at Moisant full-time.(360) Paradis recalled that he had been surprised that he was not interviewed by the FBI following the President's assassination, stating, "I sure could have told them when Oswald and Ferrie were in the CAP. I could have given them what they wanted."(361) Paradis further told the committee that he did not believe the personal contact between Ferrie and Oswald "mean[t] anything really," and that he never believed that Ferrie "was a bad guy or anything like that."(362)

#### MARGUERITE OSWALD AND SAM TERMINE

(491) In examining the background of Oswald and members of his family, the committee received an account of Marguerite Oswald's relationship with another New Orleans figure who may have been connected to Carlos Marcello. The committee first learned of the information in late January 1977, but did not confirm the main elements until late 1978. In January, the committee had been informed that a businessman in the southwestern part of the country reportedly had some information pertaining to a friendship between Marguerite Oswald and Sam Termine, a Louisiana crime figure who had served as a "bodyguard" and chauffeur for Carlos Marcello.(363) The businessman and his wife had attended a social gathering during a recent year at which Mrs. Oswald and Termine had openly discussed their long-time friendship, New Orleans background, and mutual friends.(364)

(492) In August 1978, the committee learned additional details from an interview with the businessman and his wife, who stated that they did not wish their names to be used and that they believed their story could be confirmed through other sources.(365) They informed the committee that they had been personal friends of Mrs. Oswald's for some time and that she had stayed at their home in the past.(366) They had introduced her to various friends of theirs in an effort to "let her know that people cared about her, regardless of what happened in 1963."(367) It was during this same period, sometime in 1969 or 1970, according to their account, that the businessman had become acquainted with Sam Termine in Waco, Tex., where the businessman occasionally traveled on business.(368) He stated that Termine (sometimes spelled Termini or Turmani) and he had become fairly close friends during that period and had discussed various business matters.(369) The businessman stated that Sam Termine was then operating the Executive Club in Waco and was generally well known as a former New Orleans underworld figure associated with Carlos Marcello.(370) Termine had spoken of serving as a Marcello chauffeur and bodyguard while he was actually on the State payroll, in the Louisiana State Police, an official position in which Termine had received a gold star award for long-time service.(371)

(493) The businessman and his wife told the committee that at some point, they believe late 1969 or early 1970, they attended a Saturday social gathering in Waco, Tex., at Sam Termine's Executive Club.(372) They had invited their houseguest, Marguerite Oswald, to go with them, which she did.(373) She went with them incognito, using

a different last name so as to avoid discomfiting attention.(374) Upon arriving at the Executive Club the businessman and his wife and Mrs. Oswald went to a small table where they ordered drinks and talked for a few minutes.(375) At that point Sam Termine walked up to the table to greet them, spotted Marguerite Oswald and said to her in a friendly manner. "I know you," to which Mrs. Oswald replied, "And I know you, too." (376) The businessman and his wife told the committee that it immediately became evident Sam Termine and Marguerite Oswald were friends, having known each other in New Orleans for many years.(377) After Termine joined them at their table, the businessman and his wife recalled that Mrs. Oswald and Termine related numerous stories about their past association and mutual friends.(378)

(494) The businessman and his wife stated that they were quite surprised that Termine had known Mrs. Oswald because of his well-known reputation as a crime figure.(379) During the course of the evening, the businessman and his wife recalled that Termine spoke extensively of his friendship with Marguerite Oswald's late brother-in-law, Charles "Dutz" Murret, of Murret's role in the underworld gambling activities in New Orleans, his close association with racketeer Sam Saia, and the various locations from which he had operated.(380) While the businessman and his wife did not recall that Termine and Mrs. Oswald spoke of her son Lee during the evening, they did remember Termine speaking of "Dutz" Murret's children and other family members.(381) They also recalled that he mentioned that Carlos Marcello had a number of other associates in Waco, Tex., in addition to himself. (382) Termine also told them he believed that "Carlos is legit now. He's not involved in much anymore. He's been out of narcotics for years." (383) Finally the businessman and his wife told the committee that they did not know if Mrs. Oswald and Termine met on any subsequent occasion, though the two had indicated he would keep in touch.(384) Termine died in March of 1976, at the age of 62. (385) According to the businessman, prior to his death Termine had personally introduced him to Carlos Marcello when the businessman was in New Orleans on business.(386) Termine's close relationship with the Mafia leader "was very apparent" from their conversation at the time.(387)

(495) It was in large part from this information that the committee was subsequently able to confirm and document "Dutz" Murret's little known involvement in underworld gambling in New Orleans. Additionally, the businessman and his wife provided other significant and reliable information to the committee on other occasions.

(496) The New Orleans Crime Commission reported that Termine engaged in a number of illicit activities during his association with the Marcello organization.(388) He had been involved in various syndicate gambling and prostitution activities, as well as in the operation of a motel used for underworld activities that was finally shut down by State authorities.(389) During his years in New Orleans and in Waco, Tex., Termine was closely associated with a number of the members of the Marcello Mafia family.(390)

(497) In a committee interview on October 30, 1978, Marguerite Oswald declined to discuss Termine.(391) When asked if she knew

him, she mentioned the name of the southwestern businessman's wife and asked, "Did [she] tell you about that?" (392) Mrs. Oswald thereupon stated that she would not discuss Termine or anyone else, saying she believed the committee was engaged in a "cover-up." (393) In a brief interview on November 30, 1978, Mrs. Oswald was again asked about Termine. (394) She stated that she may have known him, but had no specific information about him. (395) She again declined to discuss further her background or any other aspects of the case. (396)

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- (394) See ref. 36.
- (395) Ibid.
- (396) Ibid.