

'He looked like he was just lost'

OSWALD CONTINUED

assassination, but the substance of it is as follows:

It was apparent that Oswald was an emotionally disturbed, mentally constricted youngster who tended to isolate himself from contacts with others, was suspicious and defiant in his attitude toward authority, and overly sensitive and vengeful in his relationships with his peers. He saw himself as being singled out for rejection and frustration. Dr. Hartogs said, but did not seem to have developed the courage to act upon his hostility in an aggressive or destructive fashion. He also appeared to be preoccupied about his sexual identity and his future role as a male.

He was guarded, secluded and suspicious in his dealings with the psychiatrist. He had to be reassured that information he gave would not be used against him, but to help him. He could not become verbally productive and talk freely about himself and his feelings. About his mother he would state only that she was "O.K." He had ambivalent feelings about his mother—a strong need for maternal warmth but also an awareness that only a limited amount of affection was available. He protected himself against disappointment by not reaching out to others.

Dr. Hartogs concluded that here was definitely a child who had given up hope of making himself understood by anyone about his needs and expectations. In an environment where affection was withheld, he was unable to relate with anyone because he had not learned the techniques and skills which would have permitted it. A diagnosis of incipient schizophrenia was made, based on the boy's detachment from the world and pathological changes in his value systems. His outlook on life had become paranoid overtones. The immediate and long-range consequence of these features, in addition to his inability to verbalize hostility, led to an additional diagnosis, "potential dangerousness."

Dr. Hartogs' report was sent to Children's Court with the recommendation that the child be committed to an institution for his own protection and that of the community at large. He felt that treatment might have led to improvement, and that ultimately the boy would have been rehabilitated. His recommendation was not followed.

(The psychiatrist said he was not surprised when Lee Oswald was arrested for the assassination of President Kennedy. "Psychologically," he said, "he had all the qualifications of being a potential assassin. Such a criminal is usually a person with paranoid ideas of grandiosity who can get satisfactory self-justification only by shocking the entire world and not just a few people. He had to show the world he was not unknown, that he was someone with whom the world had to reckon. When he was 13 he reacted negatively, by withdrawing. It took him a while lifetime to develop his courage, and then all the accumulated hate and resentment came out. A person like Oswald resents a lifetime of being pushed to the sidelines. He culminates his career of injustice-collecting by committing a supreme, catastrophic act of violence and power.")

In 1954, Lee and his mother were back in New Orleans, and Lee entered the eighth grade at Beauregard Junior High School. Shortly before he graduated from Beauregard in 1955, Lee was asked to fill out a personal history sheet. On the form, he said he had two brothers but did not name them. He identified his religious affiliation as Lutheran but did not list a church. His hobbies were reading and outdoor sports, especially football. He wrote that after school he wanted either to join the military service or become a draftsman. Of his school subjects he liked civics the best, art the least.

When asked to list two personal friends, Oswald wrote two names, then erased them. They are not legible on the sheet.

His grades at Beauregard were generally below average, but his attendance was good. His record cards show he missed only seven days of school during the 1954-55 academic year.

But Lee was having more trouble getting along with his classmates. "He fought with a lot of guys," recalled one. "I don't remember him friends with anyone."

Edward Voebel is one Beauregard schoolmate who remembers Oswald, sympathetically, as a "loner"—a word used increasingly by persons who knew him from

the age of 13 on. "One day he showed me a toy pistol," Voebel said, "and he asked me if it looked real. I told him it didn't. Then some time later, he said he knew where he could get a real pistol, but would have to steal it from a pawn shop. I talked him out of it."

Lee did well on the achievement tests he took when entering Warren Easton High School in the fall of 1955, when he was almost 16. He scored an 88 in reading and an 85 in vocabulary; 55 was regarded as average. In English, mathematics and science his scores were lower.

He stayed in high school less than a month. On Oct. 7, 1955, his mother wrote a letter to the school, saying that her son would have to withdraw because they were moving to San Diego. This was a means to allow Lee to try to enlist in the Marine Corps. Actually, they stayed in New Orleans until late in the summer of 1956.

Lee remained out of school during this time, and apparently began to read avidly at New Orleans libraries. His mother said, "He was bored and restless in school. He used to come home and say, 'I already know all the stuff they're teaching. Why bother with that? Then he'd go off to the library.'"

Immediately after his 16th birthday, in October, he tried to enlist in the Marines, but was rejected because of his age. He managed to get several jobs—one as a messenger on the Mississippi River docks, another as a runner for a dental laboratory in New Orleans. In between jobs he read.

"He brought home books on Marxism and socialism," said his mother. "But I didn't worry. You can't protect children from everything, just try to help them see things in the right way. Besides, if those books are so bad, why are they there where any child can get hold of them?"

In August of 1956, Lee and his mother moved back to Fort Worth, and he entered Acclinton Heights High School. The pattern of disaffection and separation from the other students, which had its beginning in New York, continued.

There was a poignant reunion with a grammar school acquaintance, Richard Garrett. "He walked up to me in the hall at school," said Garrett. "I remember I had to look down to talk to him, and it seemed strange, because he had been the tallest, the dominant member of our group in grammar school. He looked like he was just lost. He was very different from the way I remembered him. He seemed to have no personality at all. He couldn't express himself well. He just hadn't turned into somebody. He hadn't turned into anybody, I've read where people say he was a loner. Well, he wasn't in the sixth grade but he sure was in high school."

Lee turned out for the "B" football team, which was composed of boys not good enough for the varsity. After practice the team members were supposed to run a short distance at top speed. Nick Ruggieri, the coach, recalled that one of his assistants told him Lee Oswald had refused to sprint with the other boys. Oswald had said that this was a free country and he didn't have to run if he didn't want to.

"I told the boy myself that if he wanted to play he had to finish practice with the sprint, just like the others," says Ruggieri. "He gave me the same answer. I told him to hand in his cleats."

On Oct. 18, 1956, Lee turned 17, old enough to enter the service. He told his mother that he was going to drop out of school and enlist in the Marine Corps. "I just want to do something different," he said. She did not try to talk him out of it. On Oct. 24 he went to Dallas and signed up for three years in the Marines.

He went to San Diego for boot camp and then to Camp Pendleton where he took advanced infantry training. Allen Felde, also 17 at the time, who shared boot camp and advanced training experience with Oswald, said, "He was pretty hard to understand. I remember him as quiet, serious and trying to find himself. The rest of us used to wrestle and horse around, but he would have his bunk in the corner

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POSING AT 17, A Fort Worth photographer picked Oswald and Janet Bevel just by chance for a yearbook picture. The picture was used though Oswald was at school only a month.

