

TESTIMONY OF JEANNE DE MOHRENSCHILDT

The testimony of Jeanne De Mohrenschildt was taken at 4:45 p.m., on April 23, 1964, at 200 Maryland Avenue NE., Washington, D.C., by Mr. Albert E. Jenner, Jr., assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mr. JENNER. Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, and nothing but the truth, in the course of your deposition which I am about to take?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. You are Mrs. George S. De Mohrenschildt?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Why "S"? The "S" doesn't belong there at all.

Mr. JENNER. Well, he acknowledged that it does.

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. S?

Mr. JENNER. Yes. Sergei.

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. I have a brother by the same name Sergei, and he had a son by the name Sergei. Maybe he wants to add the letter to our name.

Mr. JENNER. No. It shows in the records for many, many years.

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. I never knew that. Sergei is his father's name—that is what it is.

Mr. JENNER. You have a brother whose name is Sergei, do you not?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. Sergei Michail Fomenko.

Give me your full maiden name. Your name as you were born and given to you by your parents.

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. The first name will be Eugenia.

Mr. JENNER. And—

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. I have no middle name. Just Fomenko.

Mr. JENNER. Now, your mother's name was Tatiana?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Tatiana. My father, Michail.

Mr. JENNER. And your father was Michail L.?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes. That is for—his father was Lev.

Mr. JENNER. You were born in China?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. Our information is it was at Harbin.

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. That is right.

Mr. JENNER. What is the nearest town?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Nearest town to what?

Mr. JENNER. Harbin.

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. I would not—I cannot say.

Mr. JENNER. What part of China?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. It is Manchuria. The northern part of China, close to the Siberian border.

Mr. JENNER. You mean the Russian-Chinese border?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. Do you have a sister?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. From what I recall, we had a—we had three portraits in the house, of children—my portrait, my brother's portrait, and there was a portrait of a little girl. And the portrait—she was about 3 or 4 years old. I don't know how, where did they get that idea, or was I actually told—but she is supposed to be my half-sister—Alexandra her name was supposed to be. And I think my father was married before he married my mother, but, you know, they don't tell much to children, and we never asked anything. We have never had any curiosity about it.

Mr. JENNER. You are a naturalized citizen of this Nation, are you not?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. Were you naturalized on April 6, 1936?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. No—couldn't. I came here in 1938. How could you possibly get that?

Mr. JENNER. All right. I am misadvised. I was looking at the wrong thing. You were naturalized when?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. I believe it was 1945, but I cannot be absolutely sure. I have my papers in the hotel. 1944 or 1945, maybe it is 1944. If you want

the exact date, I can easily get it for you. Do you actually have information, naturalized in 1936?

Mr. JENNER. No, I don't. I have your immigration record here. I will find it in a moment. You became a U.S. citizen in proceedings in the U.S. district court, in New York City, February 28, 1945.

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. 1945.

Mr. JENNER. Were you born on May 5, 1914?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Right.

Mr. JENNER. Your parents, were they Russian citizens?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. My father took a Chinese passport, and I cannot tell you whether he already had it when I was born, or whether he took one later. But I believe he took one later. He took probably one later, when they sold the railroad to the Reds, you know. That is when he took the Chinese passport.

Mr. JENNER. He was born in Russia?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. And your mother was born in Russia?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. To my knowledge, yes. They were living a few years in China before I was born.

Mr. JENNER. Now, in what business or occupation or government service was your father engaged?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. My father was in charge of the Far Eastern railroad.

Mr. JENNER. For what country?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. For China. He was working directly with the Chinese Government and with Chinese officials, with Chinese people. And then in 1925, when the Chinese sold the railroad—

Mr. JENNER. When what?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. In 1925, the Chinese people sold the railroad to the Russians, and they changed the tracks, connected with the Trans-Siberian Railroad. My father resigned. And he received quite a lot of money from that. He had been in the service for quite a few years.

Mr. JENNER. You were 11 years old then?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. 1925; yes.

Mr. JENNER. And you were personally aware of this event?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Oh, yes; I knew about that. I cannot tell you—that is recollections of the past. And he started to build another railroad on his own called HoHi Railroad.

Mr. JENNER. Excuse me.

You came to this country on August 4, 1938.

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Right; San Francisco.

Mr. JENNER. All right. Now, your father, as you said, was director of a Chinese Eastern railroad.

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. That is right.

Mr. JENNER. I was looking for some papers here. The Chinese sold the railroad to Russia?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. That was in 1925?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. That is how I understood it.

Mr. JENNER. In any event, your father ceased at that time to be director of the Chinese Eastern Railroad.

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. That is right. He resigned, and in fact we were planning to come to the United States, the whole family. We wanted to come to the United States.

Mr. JENNER. Why?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Just because it is not our country to live there forever. We were brought up with white people, you know.

Mr. JENNER. Why did your father resign when the railroad was sold to the Russians?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Because from what I know they wanted him to take a Communist passport, and he refused.

Mr. JENNER. Was he anti-Communist?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. That is from what I know he is supposed to have Chinese passport.

Mr. JENNER. Was he anti-Communist?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Oh, absolutely, absolutely. He was—not the chief, but the elderly friend for the Scouts. We had a wonderful Scout organization, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. He was very, very active in that. He was sort of like a patron for it. We have a marvelous organization in China. In fact, I didn't see anywhere in the world yet—how well it was conducted.

Mr. JENNER. Now, what happened to your father eventually?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. We never could, since 1941, right after Pearl Harbor—

Mr. JENNER. What?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. After Pearl Harbor, we didn't have any communications at all, neither myself nor my brother. We tried to check through the Red Cross and find out. Nothing could be done. We just couldn't find out. Whenever I saw some people that returned from China, came over, and whenever I asked them what happened to my parents, did you see them, how are they, they never said a word, said they didn't know, they just disappeared. Then in 1957, when I saw my brother, he told me that he didn't want to tell me, but he found out in 1945 and he knew then they were both dead for quite a while already. Father was killed by the Communists.

Mr. JENNER. Which Communists?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Well, I don't know which ones—the Chinese or Reds or Japanese—I don't know who. And he was taken on the railroad—that is, usual procedure, they take you on a car somewhere and shoot you. And my brother told me he died in 1941. I don't know how he found out. I assume and I think that the American government helped him, because he is in rather secret work. He could not possibly do it, having parents—

Mr. JENNER. This is your brother who lives out in California?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. Now, you eventually—before you came to the United States, were you married?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes; I was married to my first husband.

Mr. JENNER. Did you marry in China?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. And what was the name of your first husband?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. He had a few first names, and to tell you the truth I don't know which one is the right one. I cannot say. Because half of the friends called him by one name, half of the friends called him by the other name.

Mr. JENNER. Well—

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. The first name was Valentin, and the second one was Bob—they called him Bob. So which one is right, I don't know. But I liked Bob better.

Mr. JENNER. What was his last name?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. His last name was Bogoiavlensky.

Mr. JENNER. And you were married when?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. I believe we were married in 1932, in the fall.

Mr. JENNER. In what business or profession was your husband engaged when you were married?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Well, at the time when we were married, he was—we were both working, making designs and constructions—making plans and building houses together.

Mr. JENNER. Were you associated in business?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. It wasn't exactly business. I don't know—it is not done like it is done in the United States. We just knew how to build houses, we knew all the measurements and everything, and we had the project—somebody wanted a house of such and such dimensions, we would design it, make all the blueprints, and then we had worked with contractors and had the building constructed. And then I believe he was also working in the—the Japanese were building their airport.

Mr. JENNER. Where?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. In Harbin. And he was helping and surveying the grounds or something. This I don't know, because I wasn't present—something on this order. And that is what really actually made us leave north in a hurry and go south, because the Japanese started to grab all the people that knew anything at all close to those plants. They wanted to keep everything very, very secret. So quite a few of our friends just disappeared overnight.

And then in a couple of weeks they may appear again half dead already, completely beaten to a pulp and so on. Quite a few things started to go on. And then somebody mentioned that they didn't like the idea that we knew too much about the plants or something of the airport and said we better leave, and we just left with very, very few things. We took a train and went south, and went to Shanghai, and lived in Shanghai, until we were ready to come to the United States.

Mr. JENNER. While you were in China, were you and your husband—did you engage as a dancing team?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes; I was dancing quite well.

You see, when you travel like that you cannot just get another job somewhere. So he was helping me. He helped me as a partner. And I danced a solo.

We did that in Tientsin. And then Shanghai.

Mr. JENNER. And in order to support yourselves—

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. We were a dancing team.

You see, it was a temporary period, but if things go well, we were doing very well really. Fate does strange things to you—throws you from one profession to another. You think it is the greatest tragedy—I will tell you later what happened to me—and it is the best, actually.

So it was working out very well. We were quite successful. And then something happened later.

Mr. JENNER. Now, did you change your name at this period of your life?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. We changed the name when we started dancing.

Mr. JENNER. And you changed your name to what?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. LeGon. We picked up the name out of the dancing magazine. But with this name—you see how it happens. You get so involved that you have to stick to it. You cannot just—you knew—because some people know you by this name, then you start with another name, and it sounds ridiculous. But since then already we had it. And we intended that when we came over, we are going to adopt it, because personally I don't think it is fair to our friend, and it is not fair for the country to use a name like Bogolavensky, or a name like De Mohrenschildt. If it would be up to me, I would cut the other one down.

It took me 3 months to learn to pronounce that name.

Mr. JENNER. There have been some people that because of the name LeGon—that you had some French. You are not French?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. No, I will tell you. I had to start in New York to do something, had a little girl a year old, and my husband had terrible trouble to get any kind of work. He was making \$18 a week.

Mr. JENNER. In 1938?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. No; it was 1940, 1941, when my little girl was born.

Mr. JENNER. Your daughter was born in this country?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Oh, yes.

Mr. JENNER. And your daughter's name?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. That is why I could not dance any more. I had to drop completely dancing and everything.

Mr. JENNER. Now, that you have mentioned your daughter, let's cover her.

What was her given name?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Her given name was Jeanne Elinor LeGon. Also after a dancer.

Mr. JENNER. Eleanor Powell?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes, exactly. And being unaware—you see, in Europe if you have two names, the first name is important, the second one is usually your mother's or somebody, and you have it just in case.

In the States the last name is the one that counts—the previous names don't mean much.

So when she was born, we were not citizens yet, and we didn't have a legal paper of changing our name to LeGon. So in her birth certificate I put down Jeanne Elinor LeGon and just in case, Bogoiavlensky, so just in case something happened to us she would not be an orphan thrown somewhere—I was so afraid something would go wrong and she would be put out of the country or something—she was born here, and that is her name, and I put that Bogoiavlensky on the birth certificate.

And that started the whole uproar.

And besides—I lost her birth certificate once when I needed it for a passport—I could not find it, because I was looking under “L”—I told them to look under “L”. And for months they were looking under “L” and then it dawned on me, did I put, by any chance, Bogoiavlensky.

So they filed it under “B”.

Well, it is my own fault—I asked for it. I can't get rid of that name.

It is a pretty name. In fact, it is a very novel name. But I don't think it belongs in this country. I think it is ridiculous for people to have such long names. If you are a priest's family, that would be fine. But not for us.

Mr. JENNER. When was your daughter born?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. She was born April 30, 1941.

Mr. JENNER. I might go back with your husband.

Where was your husband born, your first husband?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. From what I know, he was born in—I think in Russia—and brought out as a very, very little boy. And I never met his father. His mother was supposed to be dead when he was born. I only knew his step-mother, who was absolutely wonderful.

He had two half brothers, charming boys, and they were both lost in the war with China and Japan. We never could find them. One of them was with the British forces and another with the French forces. And I understand one was sent to Hong Kong, and the other remained in Shanghai. And we never heard from them.

So that is one of the really big tragedies. We were anxious to find them, because we were going to get them over here. They had good heads. They could grow up very fine.

Mr. JENNER. You have always regarded the United States as a haven?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Absolutely. It was the country by choice, because we could have gone to Europe. But I didn't want anything—this was from so and so. I said I wanted to have a country where everything is new and fresh, and if I break something I go to the store and buy another one.

I never have anything you can break. It was just because I was brought up with furniture with little gilded things in it, I don't want any part of it. I have been in Europe about 15 times after.

Mr. JENNER. I know you have.

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. And I enjoy being there for a few weeks. But I would never live in Europe. I would not be happy.

If I had to, I would live there, but I don't like—the whole atmosphere doesn't appeal to me.

Mr. JENNER. There have been various reports on your views with respect to Russia and communism.

What are your views?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. What I am?

Mr. JENNER. What are your views?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. My views?

Well, I tell you. I am not a Communist by all means at all. I think that revolution in Russia was inevitable. It is just horrible that it happened that way, and it was so bloody, and so many people—

Mr. JENNER. You are talking now about the revolution of the 1920's?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. 1917, I think.

Mr. JENNER. 1918, 1919.

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. 1917, 1918—that is when it started. I know in fact very little of the whole thing, because at home there was never any conversation—too many people were killed. In fact, from what I understand, all the families

of my father and mother were killed, too. So we never had any conversation about it. We just were kept away from the whole thing.

And, beside, I deliberately stayed away from all of that. I said it is none of my business, I have never been there, I don't know what it is all about, I don't want to know anything about it. I don't want to be prejudiced to anything.

But after, later on, when I grew up and the revolution was necessary, it is just too bad it happened like that.

And I do hope that the country eventually will come out and become human again, and I think it is getting to be more and more human.

But it is still a far cry from freedom, from the freedom like we have. That was the most wonderful thing. When I came here—unfortunately, I landed in New York. I didn't want to, but my brother was in New York and he said you come right away to New York.

I love California, because of the climate. I like sunshine. So I came to New York, and New York, of course, was very depressing to me, because it was dirty. And I had an idea that all the white countries and white cities must be clean, because white people are not supposed to spit on the floor, and they don't throw papers around. They are supposed to be well mannered.

And then I came in in that awful New York. And, of course, I had almost no money. I had to use subways. It was very, very bad.

But then I saw all of a sudden on the street there is a gathering of people, somebody is standing and shouting and talking and saying anything he wants to. And I said, what is going on? They said he is just saying something—I forgot what it was all about. But how people were talking freely and expressing themselves openly.

Mr. JENNER. They had a right to do that?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes; And in China—you see, we were always—we never could say anything openly, for many reasons.

First, I don't know, but I assume there was a lot of Red spies probably everywhere. So we could never say too much.

Then there were Japanese that came over. We couldn't say anything again.

So we were trained as children just to be quiet, never talk because you never know who may overhear, and then tomorrow goodbye, something will happen to you. That is the atmosphere that I was brought up in.

I wish my husband would be brought up in that atmosphere, because sometimes he says things—of course, being European, he likes to see Russia.

I said, yes, but not yet, because you would not last there for 2 days, you would be shot in 2 days. He doesn't feel that there is a place, places that you cannot be like he is. You just cannot do it. Maybe that is why he has so much trouble, because he just talks anything he wants to say, and people misinterpret it. People misinterpret it, and then they hear something, somebody repeated, already something else, and then they say he says something bad. This is really terrible. This is many, many times, you know. But he learned his lesson now. Living in Haiti we cannot talk very much, either, with Papa Doc. You know the regime there now. He is quite a dictator. He is going to be pronounced the king now, at the end of May. And, of course, there is tremendous opposition against it. It is not for our sake, but for our Haitian friends' sake, we cannot say anything.

So he learned a little bit of the atmosphere where you cannot talk.

He said—"I am so glad we went to Haiti, because I have no desire to go to Russia."

That was wonderful. It was music to my ears.

I said, "Now, you learn."

Mr. JENNER. Well—

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. But some day I hope, anyway. I would like to see it. I would like to go down south to the Crimea which I understand is beautiful, the Black Sea. I would like to see all the world.

I saw quite a lot.

But I would like to see that, too.

Mr. JENNER. Your brother, Sergei, he came over to this country, did he?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. What?

Mr. JENNER. Don't you have a brother by the name of—

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Did he what?

Mr. JENNER. He came to this country?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Oh, yes. I believe he came in 1930.

Mr. JENNER. And he is still here?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Oh, yes.

Mr. JENNER. And where is he located now?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. He is in Woodland Hills, Calif.

Mr. JENNER. Engaged in—

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. I think it is 4560 Deseret Drive.

He is with North American Aircraft Co. He just switched. He was with Ramo Wooldridge. A few years before that he was with Linnet Co. in Beverly Hills, and before that with Howard Hughes, and before that he was with Berkeley, University at Berkeley, doing some research.

Mr. JENNER. He attended the University of Chicago?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. He attended after the war. But he originally came over to study in Berkeley. He graduated from Berkeley. But then when the war broke out he volunteered—he was 2½ years in service. But he was never sent over, because he did so much important research work, that they kept him here.

And he met Professor Rasby of Chicago University. And then he went to work with him in Chicago University for very, very little money, but he had all the facilities for his work. That is where he met his second wife, a very lovely woman, and they are very happy now, I hope. Four little kids, darling home.

Mr. JENNER. And you eventually were divorced from your first husband?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. He retained the name Robert LeGon?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. He didn't change his name back to Bogoiavlensky?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. No.

By the way, do you know he is in a rest home?

Mr. JENNER. Yes; I do.

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. There was a lot of unpleasantness around in that time, because he was already going off completely.

Mr. JENNER. And you were divorced from him in the summer of 1959?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Oh, no, no; before that. It was 1957, spring of 1957. Yes; it was in the spring of 1957.

I believe it was first of May or something. I don't remember exactly. But it is pretty close.

Mr. JENNER. And you married your present husband, George De Mohrenschildt, in the summer of 1959?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. 1959, yes; in June, towards the end of June.

Mr. JENNER. And your daughter who was born to you in New York City—

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. In Manhattan Hospital.

Mr. JENNER. She was—her given name was—

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Jeanne Elinor LeGon.

Mr. JENNER. And she changed her name to Christiana?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes; her father did it. She was just a youngster.

You know what happened to him mentally. He went completely—I don't know, maybe when people go crazy, lots of things begin to bother them, maybe his conscience was bothering him because he dropped his father's name or something. But for a particular reason he didn't take it himself, but he put it—insisted that my daughter will take the name.

Mr. JENNER. What name?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Bogoiavlensky—and drop the LeGon. And she was baptized—she was brought up as Episcopalian. I never baptized her, because I wanted her to choose her own religion when she grew up. I know too many people who have too many difficulties later when they find out they want something else. By the time she was baptized she liked the name Christiana and she took that name. And he changed her name to Bogoiavlensky again. So it was very, very unpleasant and horrible, what the poor fellow didn't do.

Mr. JENNER. Did he cause you some difficulty with respect to accusing you of being a Communist?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. I don't know if you have a letter, I wish I would have a letter what he did. You see I had charge accounts throughout the country, because I was making very good money. Lord and Taylor, Saks, all the biggest restaurants everywhere. And when that happened, I actually told him that is the end, I am divorcing you, and that is it, and there will be no change back, nothing at all, he sent out letters to all of these places, to all the restaurants, all the department stores, including Niemans, and I believe Niemans showed me the letter, and there was a Golden Pheasant Restaurant—they showed me the letter—that so and so, and he expressed in a horrible way that Eugenia Fomenko Bogoiavlensky, my ex-wife, she is—almost putting that I am a spy, and God knows what in it, and that he is not responsible for my debts, for my accounts.

It was 1957, and since 1941 I was the one that made all the money in the family. I was the one making all these things, bringing up my child. So that was horrible. That is not all. He sent letters, and he signed "FBI"—make believe they are from the FBI. He sent to all my people in New York, firms that I work with, that also I am a spy or something, this and that, horrible.

And I was in Europe that summer. And a friend of mine came over and said, "What is the matter with you?" She said, "What happened to you? The FBI are looking for you."

I said, "Are you kidding me?"

She said, "No;" one of the manufacturers showed her the letter.

I said, "For God sakes, this is ridiculous, I never heard of such a thing."

So when I come back to New York I right away went to see all of them.

They said, some were laughing about it. But some I know they had a little something behind their heads.

Mr. JENNER. They were worried?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes; even a thing like that, a prank like that, already set people thinking. And do you know that I could not get a job in New York, just because of that? And, fortunately, being in Texas, I switched to designing dresses and sportswear, and I had two jobs in no time in that market.

And I was able to get—I lost my job in Texas while I was in Europe because of that.

He sent that to my employer.

I never told that—I don't know if my present husband knows it—because that would really kill him, a thing like that.

But it was eventually straightened out. But I was actually out, I couldn't get a job, my daughter had to go to the university, I had to send her money. I had nothing.

Mr. JENNER. Where was she attending a university?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. UCLA.

Mr. JENNER. When was this?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. In 1957. Fall of 1957.

Mr. JENNER. Did your daughter come to live with you right after she was—

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. She came over for summer.

Mr. JENNER. In 1957?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes; I will tell you. It is really a very tragic thing. I knew I should have dropped this when she was 6 years old, because he was a very, very wonderful person, her father. But we just had different views on life, and liked to do entirely different things. And he just could not adapt himself to the country.

I know a few people that when they lose everything they are lost. Whatever we had, it is never the same. It never was good enough. Our daughter would never have what we had in childhood.

He was from a very wealthy family, and, fortunately, I was, too.

I said, "For goodness sakes, who cares? We are alive. How many people are dead already? We are here. It is a new country. We will make what we want to make out of it."

I started from \$25 a week. And in New York I was making \$1,100 a week. That is what you can do in this country, if you put your mind to it, and you work. And if you don't have a negative attitude.

But he could not. Even when we had a nice home in California, with beautiful bay window, and the ocean, you can see Catalina Island and everything. He said, "No; at our house we had 30 people for dinner every day." It is awful. He never could get adjusted to it.

Mr. JENNER. But he wasn't earning a living, was he?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. No; he wasn't. He was always—you see, I understand from talking to doctors—he was off for quite a while, which I didn't know. I didn't know it. And it never occurred to me. We were brought up maybe 200 years set back. This was the husband, and that is the way it is, and that is the way it is going to be, so whatever it is that is how it is going to stay. So it never occurred to me there could be different ways, something wrong with him mentally. In fact, my brother many times mentioned he should go to a psychiatrist and find out why he should have such an attitude, but I laughed at my brother.

Unfortunately, maybe I should have listened to him.

Mr. JENNER. Tell us a little bit—you came to this country. Did you and your husband attempt to resort again to your ballroom dancing?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. We were supposed to. We had auditions with Moss and Hart, very successful. And we were almost ready to have a contract in the Rainbow Room. And then I became pregnant with my little girl. And that really shattered us to pieces. We are awfully happy to have a child, but that was not the time to have the child. We had to leave everything in China, because we had to cross all Japan. So that was—at the time it was just like a tragedy. And after she was born, I could never dance.

Mr. JENNER. Now, after the birth of your daughter, did you—what did you do to sustain your family?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. I stayed home for 1 year. We just lived on whatever he made. Because I wanted to bring her up—I don't believe in nurses. I like to bring my own child up, train her for everything, in whatever a little baby should be trained.

And then if he could possibly make a little better, I would not go to work.

But then I saw he is not getting any better, but he is getting more and more depressed, and is getting worse. He just didn't care. He had that attitude, "I don't care." I said if that is his attitude, if I don't do something, my daughter will have nothing altogether. So I started to think. What could I do? I spoke English, but crazy pigeon English.

I couldn't do anything architecturally, because I don't know the terminology. I can automatically make the drawings, but I would not be able to render it. It would be impossible for me to have anything.

And then actually, without knowing anything, I became a model. I had two lessons, and I pretended that I was very experienced. I fooled everybody. And I somehow got a job as a model.

And then—at one place it didn't work out, because it was very depressing and horrible atmosphere. On Seventh Avenue it is no joke.

Mr. JENNER. My daughter is a model.

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Probably with a good firm.

I have a couple of firms that are fantastic. And then I switched to Leeds Ltd. And within 1 year, from modeling, from 25, I became in charge of the showroom, I was selling, I was selecting fabrics, and became a stylist.

And then gradually my salary was increasing and increasing, and I have been with them for 7 years.

But to start with, I worked 7 days a week. I worked even Sunday, until 1 o'clock—that is how hard I worked.

And the very same firm paid me in 1957 to design a collection for them, the same clothes I did 10 years ago—\$500 for 5 days, for 4½ days. So you see what you can do if you put yourself to it. Only in the United States.

Mr. JENNER. A country of opportunity.

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. If you want to.

That is what Marina—that is why I get mad with her. I told her, "Marina, look at me."

Let's not talk about Marina now.

Mr. JENNER. I want to get to that. But I would like to cover this background first.

You continued as a designer?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes; I switched firms.

Mr. JENNER. Of Leeds Wearing Apparel?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes; then I started to travel to Europe.

Mr. JENNER. You made frequent trips to Europe?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Twice a year.

Mr. JENNER. All right. Now, eventually, you reached Texas. How did that happen?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Well, my daughter had asthma. She is a very allergic child. And her health was really terrible. In spite of all the care given to her, she just could not stand the New York climate. And our family doctor said the only way to save her—she was getting really sick from antibiotics and penicillin—is to change the climate.

So I was very anxious to change the climate—going to California, that was my aim.

But I could not reach California. Mr. Gold, of Nardis Sportswear in New York, wanted to open a suit department. And, of course, the buyers did know me all over the country—the same buyers—recommended to get in touch with me and engage me. And it was pretty good. It was \$20,000 a year, plus two trips to Europe, with expenses paid, and about \$7,000 to buy the models—you just cannot go in and look at the shows.

So I decided I am going to go and do it. And Texas is better climatewise than New York.

And, believe me, my daughter never had asthma since she left New York. It is a fantastic change.

Mr. JENNER. Now, when did you go to Texas?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. I went to Texas in 1953, I believe.

Mr. JENNER. 1953. Did your husband accompany you?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. I came in the summer, and then I had to go immediately to Europe. And he came over in the fall, when my daughter returned from camp. He came over in the fall, and then shipped all the furniture.

In the meanwhile, I stayed with the Golds. They have a very big mansion—

Mr. JENNER. Your husband left Dallas?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes; he came in the fall of 1953.

Mr. JENNER. He came in the fall from New York City?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. And he was there—how long did he stay?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. He stayed there until about February of 1954.

Mr. JENNER. And then he did what?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Then he went to California.

Mr. JENNER. Was he working?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. No; he went to visit my brother for holidays. We always tried to go to California instead of going to Miami, to be with my brother. And he liked it so much, and we wanted so much to move to California. So we thought if he goes there, maybe he can locate something while I finish my contract. My contract was expiring in the spring of 1954.

Mr. JENNER. Your contract with Nardis?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes; then I would go there, also, also in the late spring or early summer—maybe he can locate something in the meanwhile, in California.

And then I was very lucky. It was Mr. Gold's tough luck. But it was good luck for me, because he was indicted for taxes. There was a tremendous scandal. And he had two buildings—he lost one of the buildings. In other words, he could not afford even to go into the suit operation, and go ahead with it. So he was very glad that I asked for release, and he was glad to give it to me. He thought I am going to demand money and everything, because he wants to drop the contract before. And I was very glad. It worked out very nice for me. We remained good friends. And then I went to California.

Mr. JENNER. Did you work in California?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes; I worked with Style Garments, a coat and suit firm.

Mr. JENNER. Is that the name of it?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Style Garments. They are out of business now. The owners were interested in real estate. And they went into real estate. So the firm closed up.

Mr. JENNER. How long did you remain in California?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Actually living in one spot—that was 1954. I think it was 1955, spring, I received an offer from Dallas, to fly just for 2 or 3 weeks, and design a collection of suits. It was for I. Clark. That was wonderful.

Mr. JENNER. That took you back to Dallas?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. On and off. I just went for a few weeks. You see, I designed a suit collection, and I went back. And then they asked me to come over and do some more dresses. So I started to go there back and forth. And also, at the same time, going to New York to buy fabrics for the firm, and at the same time I decided, well, if I do that, I might do the same type of work in New York. If I can fly to New York to buy fabrics, I can design in a few weeks, and make a few thousand dollars.

I designed a collection for Handmacher. I designed a collection for Leeds. One week I got \$1,100. So you can see what can happen.

But that really was getting me. Because it went on until 1956 fall. I was on the plane more than off the plane. And it wasn't very good for my daughter. She was already 14, 15.

Mr. JENNER. You had custody of your daughter?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. In the divorce?

Mr. JENNER. Were you taking your daughter on these trips?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Oh, no; how could I? She was going to school all the time.

Mr. JENNER. Was she going to school in California?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes; going to high school.

Mr. JENNER. Eventually, did you take up permanent residence in Dallas?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. I took up permanent residence at the time when I told my husband I am going to divorce him, and that was early fall of 1956.

Mr. JENNER. And you went to Dallas?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. I went to Dallas.

Mr. JENNER. Did you take your daughter with you?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. No; I did not.

Mr. JENNER. She was then what age?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. She was 15. And I have a reason for doing that, because I just couldn't do it to her father. He would be completely killed. The only thing left—he doesn't have any relatives at all. He doesn't have a single soul in this world. In fact, I tell you—in the divorce case, I insisted that he will have custody, so by giving her money, he will have money to live on, too.

If I took the daughter, I could not give him money to live on—he wouldn't take it. But if he had custody of the child then she will be provided for, and he could still keep on going with that.

So that was the thing. But it worked out the other way—when he completely turned in rage. He even, when I flew to California he wouldn't let me see her. I had to get a sheriff to see her. Now, I understand.

Mr. JENNER. He is in a mental institution in California now?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes. He was, on and off, and finally he is there. He seems to be incurable.

Mr. JENNER. Now, when did you meet your present husband?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. 1956.

Mr. JENNER. When you came back to Dallas?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. To design a collection. I was working there.

Mr. JENNER. And did his daughter as well as your daughter join you?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. She did, but later on.

Mr. JENNER. When was that?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. She joined us in, I think, the spring of 1959.

Mr. JENNER. Now—

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. I had both girls for a while. You know, she eloped, his little girl.

Mr. JENNER. And married Gary Taylor?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes; and I wanted to break that marriage right away, and get her back in school, and spank her—really tough. But the parents of the boy said give the kids a chance and this and that. It was no love—it was just delinquency. She didn't know who I was. She thought I will be easy going—knowing her father, she thought I was easy going. And all of a sudden she came in. She had to study, she had to be home at a certain time, every boy she is out with I have to meet first. So she couldn't possibly—I talked to her just last year. I said, "Tell me frankly, you wanted to live with us, and you thought I would be very easy. And you certainly didn't like the way I was strict with you."

But I was strict with my daughter, also. And she was older than she was. And she would not go out until she brought the young man to introduce. And then she asked us, and she was very respectful to my present husband.

She asked, "What do you think of him?"

She was 19 already. That little kid was just 14 or 15. So I could not possibly give her more leeway than to my daughter, who was so much older.

Sometimes I think maybe if I wasn't so strict with her, maybe—you never know with children.

Mr. JENNER. Well, now, Mr. De Mohrenschildt's daughter, Alexandra, is now married.

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. She is divorced.

Can you imagine that?

Mr. JENNER. She has remarried.

Tell me about your present husband. What kind of a person is he?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Well, I tell you. He is a terrific person, absolutely terrific. He has a soul of gold. I really mean it. And sometimes he drives me so crazy, I can just smash his head, because he is so impatient. He is extremely impatient. He is always in a hurry. You have to be 10 times faster than he is in order to have everything quiet. That is about the only quality that I would not like—he is just always in a hurry. He is always rushing somewhere, and everything has to be just immediately. Never a second late.

Mr. JENNER. Is he an outspoken person?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Oh, yes; very, very, very outspoken person.

Mr. JENNER. Very handsome and an attractive man?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Well, I tell you. I like—inside—I think he is much better inside than outside. He is a good-looking man. And women find him fantastically attractive. I don't. I like his personality. I think he is wonderful. He feels—he is nice with people, he is nice with animals. I don't think he can ever hurt anybody or do deliberate harm.

He can do a lot of harm by saying something without thinking, and actually hurt a person's feelings without realizing what he says may hurt them. He may do that.

But he would never do anything deliberately to hurt anyone. So by speaking like that—for instance, he can make a joke about a person, really unintentional, and that joke might hurt a person.

Mr. JENNER. He is a little heavy in his humor?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes; sometimes it is uncalled for at all.

And, later on, when I tell him, he agrees with me. But it was already said. And especially when you hurt little people, they get awfully hurt. And he has that habit of sort of teasing people, or ribbing people, which some people appreciate and some people don't.

I personally don't appreciate teasing, and I don't appreciate—I don't think it is necessary. He thinks it is very funny. I don't think it is funny at all. That is the thing. Through that, I am sure he has a couple of people that don't like him very well. I don't think they hate him. The only one that is really not fond of him is his ex-wife, because of the children.

Mr. JENNER. Didi?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes. She was so hateful, that nothing could just soften her or break her down—nothing, nothing, nothing. No matter how he tried, no matter how I tried, nothing. It is a blank wall. Such hatred, such venom and such hatred. It is impossible.

Mr. JENNER. Well—

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. That is why it is so wonderful when he told me that she spoke nicely about him. It was a wonderful surprise. It is for the first time, really. It was a very pleasant surprise. So we have hope—maybe she is growing up. You don't have to be grown up to grow up.

Mr. JENNER. What are your husband's political views? Now, I mean political with a capital P. I don't mean Democrat or Republican politics. I mean political in the grand sense.

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. In the grand sense—I would say he is a real Democrat, for democracy. But, also, you see, both of us—we don't believe that every country should have the same government, because each country—a certain government will be good for one country, and would be completely awful for another.

For instance, we even don't believe in dictators, but certain countries may need that. They may live better, happier, until they grow up a little more to handle themselves. So we don't—I would say we are very, very flexible on this point, both of us—very flexible. It just depends what is the best for the people. If people are ready and able to have a complete democracy, that is the most wonderful government in the world. But it cannot be applied like a slide rule to every country right off, because some countries get lost—they still have to be guided.

Mr. JENNER. Do you regard him as a loyal American?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Absolutely. He doesn't have to be here. He has friends all over the world. And—we live out more than in. Why do we come back? What is the reason? Just because we like it.

Gradually we hope we are going to live in a different part of the United States. We are aiming for the San Francisco area, northern California. That is where we would love. We love swimming, the ocean. That is the reason we don't have a home of our own, and we don't want to build one, because when we want a home, we are going to do it ourselves, in the place we want to. Not just to hop around.

Mr. JENNER. Would you mind returning at 9 tomorrow morning?

TESTIMONY OF JEANNE DE MOHRENSCHILDT RESUMED

The testimony of Jeanne De Mohrenschildt was taken at 9 a.m., on April 24, 1964, at 200 Maryland Avenue NE., Washington, D.C., by Mr. Albert E. Jenner, Jr., assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mr. JENNER. You worked for Judy Bond, Inc.?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes, Judy Bond, and Nancy Greer, I believe.

Mr. JENNER. The same firm?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Yes. I worked simultaneously, held two jobs at the same time.

Mr. JENNER. When was that?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. It was in 1957; fall. That is when I returned. I couldn't get anything with my coat and suit people. I switched to dresses.

Mr. JENNER. Is the name Jack Rothenberg familiar to you?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. I don't remember the people at Judy Bond. Could be one of them, maybe. Maybe he was with Greer.

Mr. JENNER. The records reflect that you were employed there as a designer in the fall of 1957.

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. Maybe it was with Nancy Greer. There were two—Mr. Littman, and another one, was another fellow, his partner. Maybe that is him. I don't remember the names.

Mr. JENNER. Do you recall working for Handmacher Vogel in 1956?

Mrs. DE MOHRENSCHILDT. You remember when I told you I flew in and designed a collection for him? And at the same time for Leeds Limited. The same year.