

INTRODUCTION*

(1) Several critics of the Warren Commission have speculated that there were two Lee Harvey Oswalds. Two versions of this theory have been put forward. One is that the real Lee Harvey Oswald never returned from the Soviet Union; instead, an imposter was sent on a sinister mission. The second is that others, for whatever purposes, used Oswald's name.

(2) One of the first proponents of the two-Oswald theory was a philosophy professor named Richard Popkin, who in 1966 published a book entitled "The Second Oswald." (1) Popkin cited the numerous instances recounted in the Warren Commission report in which people claimed to have seen or dealt with Oswald under odd or suggestive circumstances. Examples included Oswald being seen at a rifle range, (2) driving a car, (3) and in the company of two Latin-looking men seeking financing for illegal activities from Mrs. Sylvia Odio (a Cuban refugee leader in Dallas). (4) Popkin concluded that the cases of apparent duplication could plausibly be interpreted as evidence that Oswald was involved in a conspiracy, culminating in the events of November 22, 1963. (5)

(3) Sylvia Meagher, in "Accessories After the Fact," also criticized the Commission for not seriously considering the two Oswald possibility, "* * * much less evaluate[ing] the evidence for or against such an explanation." (6)

(4) The Warren Commission discounted the incidents, principally on grounds that they had occurred when it was concluded that Oswald was elsewhere—in Mexico at the time of the rifle practice, (7) en route to Mexico at the time of the Odio meeting. (8) It dismissed other incidents because they involved activities in which Oswald apparently did not engage, such as driving. (9)

The committee's approach

(5) In an effort to resolve the two-Oswald issue, the committee decided to convene a panel of experts to examine samples of handwriting attributed to Oswald. These samples were taken from numerous documents purportedly written and signed by Oswald in the last 7 years of his life. They were organized according to five significant periods: (1) October 1959 through September 1959, when Oswald was in the Marines; (2) October 1959 through June 1962, when Oswald was in the Soviet Union; (3) July 1962 to September 1963, when Oswald lived in Dallas and then in New Orleans; (4) the final week of September 1963, when Oswald visited Mexico; and (5) from the end of September 1963 to the day of the assassination, when Oswald lived in Dallas. The panel was to determine if the handwriting on the documents was that of one person.

*Materials submitted for this report by the committee's questioned documents panel were compiled by HSCA staff members G. Robert Blakey and Whitney Watriss.

(6) The committee also decided to retain another expert to verify, independently, that one or more of Oswald's signatures was in fact his. To make such a determination, the committee sought all fingerprint cards which Oswald had signed. Three were found in the FBI records, two of which were signed: One, dated October 24, 1956, was from Oswald's induction into the Marines; the second, of August 9, 1963, was from his arrest in New Orleans; and the third, unsigned, was dated November 22, 1963, the day of his arrest after the assassination. The expert was to determine if the fingerprints were all Oswald's, which would verify the signatures as Oswald's.

(7) The committee reasoned that if these determinations could be made, the two-Oswald theory would be far less plausible. If not, it would be more authoritatively established.

(8) This approach of the committee was substantially different from that of the Warren Commission. The Commission had used the documents for evidentiary purposes, for example, to determine if Oswald had used the alias "Hidell" or to link Oswald with the purchase of the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle. It had accepted as fact that certain of the documents had actually been signed or written by Oswald and compared these with "unknown" documents to establish evidentiary links.

(9) The committee, on the other hand, did not assume that any of the documents were written by Oswald. Instead, it sought to prove that one or more signatures were positively Oswald's and that all the documents had been written by the same person.

Selection of the experts

(10) The committee asked the president of the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners for recommendations on the leading experts in the field of questioned document examination, specifically handwritten documents. The committee then asked each of the people he recommended for their suggestions. Three names appeared consistently. After ascertaining that none had had a prior connection with the FBI or the Kennedy case, the committee requested that they undertake an examination of various documents. The panel members, all of whom belong to the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners, were Joseph P. McNally, David J. Purtell, and Charles C. Scott.

(11) McNally received a B.S. and an M.P.A. in police science from the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, University of New York City in 1967 and 1975 respectively. He started in the field of questioned document identification in 1942 with the New York Police laboratory. He has been supervisor of the document identification section of the police laboratory, training officer in the police academy, commanding officer of the police laboratory, and handwriting expert in the district attorney's office of New York County. He retired from the police department with the rank of captain in 1972 and entered private practice. He serves as a consultant to New York's Human Resources Administration.

(12) McNally is a fellow of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, and a member of the International Association for Identification, and the American Society for Testing and Materials. He has lectured at the University of New York City, Rockland College, and the New York Police Academy.

(13) Purtell received a Ph.B., with a major in mathematics and chemistry, from Northwestern University in 1949. He began his career in questioned document identification in 1942 with the Chicago Police Department, where he served as document examiner in the scientific crime detection laboratory. He retired in 1974 as chief document examiner and captain of police, and entered private practice in 1973.

(14) Purtell is a fellow of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and served as chairman of the questioned document section and chairman of the program committee. He is a past vice president and president of the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners. Purtell has lectured at Northwestern University, the University of Illinois, the University of Indiana and St. Joseph's College, among other schools. He has presented and published numerous scientific papers.

(15) Scott received an A.A. degree from Kansas City Junior College in 1930 and a J. D. from the University of Missouri School of Law in 1935, whereupon he became a member of the Missouri bar. While attending law school, he founded the University of Missouri at Kansas City Law Review and was its first editor-in-chief. He began his career as a questioned document examiner with the Federal Reserve Bank in 1935 and has been in private practice since 1946. The first edition of his three-volume book, "Photographic Evidence," was published in 1942. Now in its second edition, it has become the standard textbook on the subject.

(16) Scott served on the first board of directors of the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners. He has conducted seminars on scientific document examination for more than 20 State bar associations, written numerous professional articles, and, since 1954, has been an adjunct professor of law at the University of Missouri School of Law.

(17) The expert selected for the print—finger and palm—analysis was Vincent J. Scalice, president of Forensic Control Systems, Inc., of New York City.

(18) Scalice, before entering private practice, served with the New York City Police Department from 1956 to 1977, where he attained the rank of detective first grade. He has been a lecturer and instructor on crime scene examination and latent print identification at the New York City Police Academy, a lecturer on fingerprint identification and courtroom technique at Brooklyn Law School, and he formulated and taught a course on crime scene examination for the detective division of the New York City Police Department.

Issues addressed by the experts

(19) The committee asked McNally, Purtell, and Scott to address four issues:

1. Were the signatures "Lee Harvey Oswald" and "Lee H. Oswald" on the various documents written by the same person?
2. Was the script writing on the various documents, which was purported to be Oswald's, done by the same person?
3. Was the Russian writing on the various documents, which was purported to be Oswald's, done by the same person?
4. Was the "historical diary" written in one sitting?

(20) Subsequently, the committee asked Purtell and McNally to look at whether the signature "A. J. Hidell" on the June 15, 1963, Fair Play for Cuba card was written by Marina Oswald. In addition, McNally was asked to determine whether the signature "Jack Ruby" on the undated Cuban identification card had been written by Jack Ruby.

(21) Scalice was asked to verify that the finger and palm prints which appeared on the three cards were of the same person. Subsequently, he was asked to examine some other documents.

Evidence examined

(22) *Handwriting.*—The committee gathered some 50 documents to be examined.* Following is a list and description of those items.

1. October 24, 1956. Original of U.S. Marine Corps enlistment contract and record, service No. 1653230, signed Lee Harvey Oswald. Blue ink; nib pen. Location: Department of Defense (hereinafter DOD). (JFK exhibit F-479.)**
2. October 24, 1956. Carbon of item 1, with an original signature, Lee Harvey Oswald. Blue ink; nib pen. Location: DOD (JFK exhibit F-479a.)
3. October 24, 1956. Loyalty certificate for personnel of the Armed Forces, signed Lee Harvey Oswald. Blue ink; nib pen. Location: DOD. (JFK exhibit F-481.)
4. October 24, 1956. U.S. Marine Corps examination of applicant by recruiting officer, signed Lee Harvey Oswald. Blue ink; nib pen. Location: DOD. (JFK exhibit F-480.)
5. October 24, 1956. U.S. Marine Corps record of emergency data, signed Lee Harvey Oswald. Blue ink; nib pen. Location: DOD. (JFK exhibit F-478.)
6. October 24, 1956. Armed Forces fingerprint identification card, numbered 327 925 D, signed Lee Harvey Oswald. Blue ink; ballpoint pen. Location: Federal Bureau of Investigation (hereinafter FBI). (JFK exhibit F-482.)
7. October 25, 1956. U.S. Marine Corps miscellaneous information and index form (NAVMC 118(1)-PD), signed Lee H. Oswald. Blue-black ink; nib pen. This document bears a second signature, reading Lee H. Oswald, dated October 28, 1956, blue-black ink, nib pen; and a third signature, reading Lee H. Oswald, dated May 2, 1957, black ink, nib pen. Location: DOD. (JFK exhibit F-483.)
8. May 8, 1958. Identification card, U.S. Forces, Japan, signed Lee H. Oswald. Location: National Archives (hereinafter Archives). Found in Oswald's wallet on the day of his arrest. (FBI exhibit D-225: B 1-9; JFK exhibit F-505.)
9. September 10, 1959. U.S. passport No. 1733242, signed Lee H. Oswald. Faded blue ink; ballpoint pen. Location: Archives. (Warren Commission exhibit 946, hereinafter CE 946; JFK exhibit F-486.)

*The items listed here number 63; the difference in numbers is due to examination of more than one copy of an item, that is, an original and a photo reproduction.

**Copies of most of the documents appear at the end of this report. Numbers 53 and 61 were not available, but are contained in committee files at the Archives.

10. September 10, 1959. Photograph of passport bearer of U.S. passport No. 1733242, appearing on page 4, signed Lee H. Oswald, and photograph of "Baby Lee Oswald," on page 14, signed June Lee Oswald, father. Black ink; ballpoint pen. Location: Archives. (CE 946; JFK exhibit F-486.)
11. September 11, 1959. U.S. Marine Corps notice of obligated service, signed Lee Harvey Oswald. Blue ink; ballpoint pen. Location: Archives. (JFK exhibit F-485.)
12. September 11, 1959. U.S. Marine Corps security termination statement and index, signed Lee Harvey Oswald. Blue ink; ballpoint pen. Location: DOD. (JFK exhibit F-484.)
13. September 11, 1959. Carbon copy of Armed Forces of the U.S. report of transfer or discharge, signed Lee Harvey Oswald, with a carbon copy signature. Location: DOD. (FBI exhibit D-18.)
14. September 14, 1959. Selective Service System registration card, signed Lee H. Oswald. Black ink; ballpoint pen. Location: Archives. (JFK exhibit F-487.)
15. September 14, 1959. Selective Service System registration certificate, signed Lee H. Oswald. Black ink; ballpoint pen. Location: Archives. (JFK exhibit F-505.)
16. October 16, 1959 to March 27, 1962. Historical diary, 12 handwritten pages. (Only p. 11, dated July 15, 1961 to January 4, 1962, was examined, as all other pages were badly stained with fingerprint developer and are entirely unsuitable for handwriting examination.) Location: Archives. (CE 24; JFK exhibit F-491.)
17. November 3, 1959. Declaration requesting revocation of U.S. citizenship, signed Lee Harvey Oswald. Purple ink; nib pen. Location: Archives. (CE 244; JFK exhibit F-488.)
18. November 15, 1959. Photocopy of handwritten account of interview with Miss Aline Mosby, UPI reporter. Unsigned. (The original of this document was also submitted but could not be examined because it was completely covered and stained with fingerprint developer.) Location: Archives. (CE 2717; JFK exhibit F-489.)
19. 1960. undated. Political discussion, handwritten on stationery of the Holland-American Line; 15 pages. Blue ink; nib pen. Location: Archives. (FBI exhibits 123 and 124; CE 25; JFK exhibit F-490.)
20. 1962, undated. Self-questionnaire. Location: Archives. (FBI exhibit 116; CE 100 and part of 24.)
21. 1962, undated. Photocopy of document identified as a self-questionnaire. Original was stained and unsuitable for examination. Location: Archives. (JFK exhibit F-402.)
22. January 17, 1962. Affidavit of support, addressed to the American Embassy, Moscow, U.S.S.R., signed Lee H. Oswald. Blue ink; nib pen. Location: Archives. (CE 775; JFK exhibit F-492.)
23. February 20 (1962). Russian script on lined paper, from "Alek" to "Marina" and "June." Location: Archives. (FBI exhibit 134; CE 59; JFK exhibit F-493.)
24. March 24, 1962. Entry papers of Marina Oswald, including a fingerprint identification card. (FBI exhibit D-10.)

25. June 10, 1962. Two-page handwritten letter to the "Worker," 23 West 26th Street, signed Lee H. Oswald. Blue ink; ballpoint pen. Date was appended with a different pen. Location: Archives. (Document marked "A. Johnson exhibit No. 1"; JFK exhibit F-494.)
26. July 13, 1962. Letter to Leslie Welding Co., signed Lee H. Oswald; written on part of a page from a yellow legal pad. Blue ink; ballpoint pen. Location: Archives.
27. October 9, 1962. Application for P.O. Box No. 2915, signed Lee H. Oswald. Black ink; ballpoint pen. Location: Archives. (CE 791; JFK exhibit F-496.)
28. March 8, 1963. Photocopies of a note in Russian to Ruth Paine from Marina Oswald. Location: Archives. (CE 404.)
29. March 12, 1963. U.S. postal money order No. 2,202,130,462, bearing handwritten fill-ins as follows: Klein's Sporting Goods, A. Hidell, P.O. Box 2915, Dallas, Tex. Blue ink, ballpoint pen. Location: Archives. (CE 788; JFK exhibit F-509A and 509B.)
30. March 12, 1963. Enlargement of microfilm reproduction of Klein's order form for rifle from A. Hidell, superimposed on envelop, postmarked March 12, 1963, addressed to Klein's, Dept. 358, 227 W. Washington Street, Chicago 6, Ill., with return address: A. Hidell, P.O. Box 2915, Dallas, Tex. Location: Archives. (CE 773; Cadigan's exhibit 1; JFK exhibit F-504.)
31. May 4, 1963. Photograph of man with rifle and newspapers. On the back of the photograph is a handwritten notation reading "To my friend George from Lee Oswald 5/IV/63" and, in Russian, the statement "Copyright G de M." Also in Russian is writing which translated as "Killer of Fascists—Ha-Ha-Ha!!!" Blue ink; ballpoint pen. Location: House Select Committee on Assassinations (hereinafter HSCA), which obtained it from the effects of George de Mohrenschildt after his death in 1977. (JFK exhibit F-183 and 184, F-382 and 383.)
32. May 26 (1963)* Two-page letter to Fair Play for Cuba Committee, signed Lee H. Oswald. Blue ink; ballpoint pen. Location: Archives. (Document also marked "V. T. Lee No. 2;" JFK exhibit F-497.)
33. June 15, 1963. Fair Play for Cuba Committee, New Orleans chapter, signed Lee H. Oswald, with A. J. Hidell signing as chapter president. Found in Oswald's wallet on the day of his arrest. Location: Archives. (JFK exhibit F-505.)
34. June 24, 1963. Passport application, signed Lee H. Oswald. Blue ink; ballpoint pen. Location: FBI. (CE 781; JFK exhibit F-40.)
35. June 24, 1963. Passport photograph attached to item 34, signed Lee H. Oswald. Blue ink; ballpoint pen. Location: Archives.
36. August 9, 1963. Fingerprint identification card of New Orleans Police Department, signed Lee H. Oswald. Blue ink; ballpoint pen. Location: Archives. FBI current arrest or receipt, dated August 12, 1963. Location: Archives. (JFK F-400.)
37. August 9, 1963. Photocopy of fingerprint card and attached mug shots, New Orleans Police Department, signed Lee H. Oswald. Location: FBI.

*Year was derived from content.

38. August 28, 1963. Handwritten letter to Central Committee C. P. (Communist Party), USA, signed Lee H. Oswald. Blue ink; ballpoint pen. Location: Archives. (Document also marked "A. Johnson exhibit No. 4"; JFK F-498.)
39. September 27, 1963. Photocopy of a page from a hotel register, signed, on line 18, "Lee, Harvey Oswald, U.S.A. (Texas) PHOTO. U.S. citizen." Location: Archives. (FBI exhibit D-36; JFK F-499.)
40. September 27, 1963. Photographs (one of the entire document and one of the signature) of the original of the visa application, Cuban Consulate, Mexico City, signed Lee H. Oswald. Location: Archives. (CE 2564; JFK F-407, entire document.)
41. September 27, 1963. Photograph of the carbon copy of item 40, shown to the committee staff when they met with President Fidel Castro in Havana, Cuba, with an original signature, Lee H. Oswald. Location: HSCA. (JFK F-408.)
42. October (no date), 1963. Letter to the Russian Embassy. (JFK F-500.)
43. October 15, 1963. Employment application, with face sheet signed Lee H. Oswald. Blue ink; ballpoint pen. Location: Archives. (FBI exhibit D-18; JFK F-503.)
44. October 16, 1963. Employee's W-4 withholding exemption certificate, signed Lee H. Oswald. Blue ink; ballpoint pen. Location: Archives. (FBI exhibit D-90; JFK F-501.)
45. November 1, 1963. Application for P.O. Box 6225, two cards, each signed Lee H. Oswald. Blue ink; ballpoint pen. Location: Archives. (CE 792; JFK F-495.)
46. November 1, 1963. Receipt for key to P.O. Box 6225, signed Lee H. Oswald. Blue ink; ballpoint pen. Location: Archives. (CE 792; JFK F-495.)
47. November 8, 1963. Two photographs of a facsimile copy of a handwritten letter to Mr. Hunt. One is of the entire document, the other an enlargement of the signature. These were obtained by the committee from a researcher in Dallas, Tex. Location: HSCA files. (JFK F-506.)
48. November 9, 1963. Photomechanical (halftone) reproduction of a typewritten letter to the Consular Division, Embassy, U.S.S.R., Washington, D.C., signed Lee H. Oswald. Location: Archives. (Photomechanical reproduction—CE 15; JFK F-500.)
49. July 18, 1964. Exemplar (standard) signatures and writing of Jack Ruby. Location: Archives.
50. Undated. Photograph of unsigned rough draft of item 48. Location: Archives. (JFK F-500.)
51. Undated. Handwritten speech, nine pages. Green ink; nib pen. Location: Archives. (FBI exhibit 117; CE 97; JFK F-508.)
52. Undated. Two receipts for salary from the Texas School Book Depository, signed Lee H. Oswald. (FBI exhibit 422.)
53. Undated (August?). Photograph of Cuban identification card, flight 751, signed Jack Ruby. (JFK F-583.) Location: HSCA files.
54. Undated. Exemplar writing of Marina Oswald, including seven slips of paper containing the writing "A. J. Hidell." Location: Archives, HSCA.

55. Undated. Dallas Public Library card, expiring December 7, 1965, signed Lee H. Oswald. Location: Archives. (JFK F-505, B1-10.)
56. Undated. Note in Russian, consisting of 10 lines of handwriting, signed, in Russian, "Alek." Location: Archives. (FBI exhibit 133; CE 40; JFK F-507.)
57. Undated. Note in Russian consisting of two pages of 11 hand-written instructions concerning the Walker incident, referred to as "the Walker Note." Location: Archives. (FBI exhibit D-30; CE 1; JFK F-510.)
58. Undated. Certificate of service. U.S. Marine Corps, signed Lee Harvey Oswald. Location: Archives. (FBI exhibit D-225.)
59. Undated. Social security card, 433-54-3937, Lee Harvey Oswald; unsigned. Location: Archives. (FBI exhibit D-225.)
60. Undated. Complimentary card, GA-Joen Kanko Hotel. Location: Archives.
61. Three photographs of Oswald, one with the notation on the back, "taken at Camp Pendleton Feb. 5." Location: Archives.
62. Undated. Slip of paper with the following handwriting:
 "The Worke
 23 W. 26th St.
 New York 10, N.Y.
 The Worker
 Box 28 Madison
 Sq. Station, New York 10, N.Y.
 Embassy USSR.
 1609 Decatur St. N.W.
 Washington, D.C."
 Location: Archives.
63. November 22, 1963. Photograph of fingerprint form of the Dallas Police Department. Location: FBI. (CE 627, 630.)

Procedures

(23) The panel members traveled to Washington, D.C. at various times to examine and photograph originals of documents to be examined. These were located at four places: The National Archives, the Department of Defense, the FBI, and the offices of the committee. The panel members prepared photographs of the originals for further study in their own laboratories.

(24) The panel met as a whole on July 6, 1977, to review the original documents and discuss their respective findings. Each member then prepared a final report of his findings and conclusions (these also provide further detail on the procedures followed by each member).

(25) The panel followed standard procedures and techniques in its examinations. The writings and signatures were looked at individually and in juxtaposition with each other, taking into consideration the gross characteristics of the writing process, writing skill, slant, speed, proportions of the letters, ratio of small to capital letters, height ratio, lateral spacing, and overall writing pattern. Significant differences were looked for. A stereoscopic microscope was used for minute examination and comparison of individual letters and characteristics.

(26) Scalice examined and compared the inked impressions on the three fingerprint cards on June 8, 1978, at the latent print section of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington, D.C.