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THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY
DALLAS, TEXAS

Lee Harvey
Tape recording of interview with Mrs. Marguerite Oswald, mother of Harvey Lee Oswald. Recorded on November 24, 1963. Interviewer is Special Agent J. W. Fritz and U. S. Secret Service, Dallas, Texas. This recording is being made at Six Flags Inn Motel, Arlington, Texas. This is a continuation of the same tape upon which interview of Robert Lee Oswald was recorded.

This is an interview with Mrs. Marguerite Oswald, mother of Harvey Lee Oswald, accused assassinator of President Kennedy.

Q. What is your name, please Ma'am?

A. Mrs. Marguerite Oswald.

Q. And where do you live at this time, Mrs. Oswald?

A. 2220 Thomas Place in Fort Worth, Texas.

Q. Are you the mother of Lee Oswald?

A. I am the mother of Lee Oswald.

Q. Mrs. Oswald, can you start at the beginning and give us the background of Lee and his characteristics and how he was raised, etc.?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you mind doing it?

A. Not at all. Lee had two brothers. There is five years difference between Robert and Lee, so at a certain age there isn't much companionship where one boy would be 17years old and the other boy, let's say, would be 12, which the 17 year old would be working and having friends and the other would be------so Lee, I would say, was mostly alone and naturally, being a widow and having to support the three children, I worked. I often held two jobs in order to support my children. I had responsible positions as a manager and sometimes assistant manager, which requires a lot of mental work, but very low pay. The way I raised the children, my husband left our home which was a moderate home, not paid for, of course, and he had a $5,000 insurance policy, but that is not the full amount I received because we had to borrow on the policy as the children were being born, so that the entire income I had, being left with one unborn, one five and one seven. The seven years old is from a former marriage.

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Q. What is his name?

A. John Edward Pic.

Q. And where is he at this time?

A. He is in the service, making a career of the service, and he entered the service at age 17 and he will be 32 years old in January.

Q. What branch of the service, Mrs. Oswald?

A. He is in the Air Force.

Q. Do you know where he is stationed?

A. No, I don't.

Q. How old was Lee when he moved to Fort Worth?

A. Lee was five years old, when I moved to Fort Worth.

Q. And was he raised in Fort Worth?

A. He was raised like the other boys in Fort Worth.

Q. And went to school there?

A. Went to school in Fort Worth.

Q. Can you tell us what schools that he attended; which ones?

A. He attended the Lily B. Clayton School on the southside of town as a youngster; then---no, first he attended a school in Benbrooke, Texas, which is just a mile or two from the Fort Worth city limits. And then he attended the school at Lily B. Clayton. I came to Fort Worth. I had remarried an electrical engineer with Texas Electric Service, and he was transferred to Fort Worth.

Q. What is his name?

A. His name was Edwin Echdahl. He is now deceased. We lived, Lee and I. After my husband died I supported the three children. I didn't start from the beginning of the story before. My husband died in 1939 and that was the war years, when the children were little. It was impossible to get help to take care of the children while I worked; however, I managed for approximately two years because I wanted my children with me, but it was always a change of help because in New Orleans we had

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Negro help and the Negroes were going into the factories because of war conditions and so you could hardly get help. And when I worked and the Negroes were unable to mind the children I was forced to quit my job and mind my children.

Q. Mrs. Oswald, if you can, now let's go back to living in Fort Worth and the time that Lee was in high school. Where did he go to high school?

A. Lee went to Arlington Heights High School.

Q. And did he graduate there?

A. No, he did not graduate.

Q. How far did he go in school?

A. I believe it was the 11th year.

Q. I see. He went to the 11th grade?

A. I think. I can't remember whether it was 11th or 12th.

Q. And what happened then?

A. Lee, a year before going to school, lived to join the Marines. He studied Robert's manual that Robert had brought home from the Marines, and he was waiting until he became of age to join the Marines.

Q. How old was he when he joined?

A. He was exactly 17 years old. His birthday was October 18 and he joined the Marines on October 18, 1956.

Q. 1956. OK, and when he was in the Marines did he make them a good soldier?

A. He was delighted when he was immediately sent to Japan when he was just about 18 years old, and from California he called me telling me that he was being shipped out to Japan and that he would write me as soon as he got there. Lee always wrote letters.

Q. You did hear from him from Japan?

A. Yes, and all through his stay in service Lee always wrote.

Q. I see. When did you hear from him the last time before he decided to go to Russia.

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A. To answer that question I will have to go into a story that will be necessary to the rest of my information.

Q. Yes, well go right ahead.

A. Would you repeat the question, please.

Q. What I was interested in was when did you heard from Lee the last time before he went to Russia.

A. I had had an accident at work and afterwards there was a compensation case. The doctors were X-raying sinus and there were many doctors because my face was swelling and spastic on one side and they couldn't find the trouble, they would send me to another doctor. Because the X-rays were negative, my medical and compensation was discontinued, leaving me ill and without any income. I had moderate furniture for an ordinary poor person, which I sold because of necessity to live. I also had a telephone installed, when in between my face spasms I could telephone solicit and pick up a few dollars, I had rented a room and a bath at this time.

Q. When was this?

A. This was in 1958.

Q. Where was Robert at this time?

A. Robert was in Fort Worth with a young baby. My other son was in Japan with two children, so naturally, Lee, not having any obligations, would be the one to turn to. My sons have just moderate positions. Robert at that time was delivering milk on a milk route and he was struggling to take care of his own family.

Q. Now, let me get this straight. Robert had at this time a young baby, is that right? Lee was not married at all?

A. That is correct.

Q. Thank you. The other boy had two children and was in Japan in the service?

A. That was John. I did not want to worry my son, and before worrying him I had-------- My children did not have the information that I have. Pardon me, you will have to excuse me. Brief me on what was being asked.

Q. We were asking you about your son going to Russia. You had told us that he was the only one that wasn't married and had no responsibilities.

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A. That's right. So I hesitated worrying the boy because he was in the service but I was getting more ill and progressive arthritis had set in, and I was crippled with progressive arthritis which is due to an accident and it comes upon you real fast. As I explained, since I had sold my furniture and everything and had no medical and no compensation, I thought now I would have to ask help of Lee and let him know. I wrote Lee a letter telling him of my situation.

Q. Where was he when you wrote the letter?

A. He was in Camp Pendleton, California. Immediately I received a Special Delivery letter from Lee telling me that he had showed my letter to his commandant and that I would be visited by the Red Cross and not to hesitate to tell the Red Cross that he would be my only means of support and that I am definitely unable to work and take care of myself. Prior to that, I had received a letter from Lee saying that he was going to re-enlist in the Marines. The Red Cross came out, took affidavits, investigated, which we know, of course, it has to go through channels with a lot of red tape, so I would say it was approximately six or seven weeks before we had any action from the Red Cross to send to Lee's commandant.

In the meantime, I had engaged an attorney because Texas Compensation lawyers had written me a letter that they were going to stop my compensation. The attorney let me charge my medication because a certain percentage of my salary would later be given. Not too long after Lee sent the Special Delivery, I received a check from the government from Lee's pay. Not too long after that, I was informed that Lee would get a "Dire Need" discharge because of recommendation of the Red Cross.

Q. Would you repeat that--is that a "Dire Need"?

A. A "Dire Need" - d-i-r-e need, a hardship discharge. Upon the recommendation of the Red Cross I wrote Lee and told him that since he had planned to re-enlist I didn't think that he should accept the dire need discharge because I believed that I was entitled to the allotment that the government would match along with his pay and when my case came up and I'd be entitled to this compensation, I thought I would be able to manage. I received a letter from Lee saying that he was on his way home because they decided that I needed his moral support and his help since I was alone. Lee came home. I had the one bed and the small kitchen and bath. He arrived late at night while I was sleeping. In the meantime, the landlady had offered a cot to be put in the room so my son would have a place to come to.

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Q. Do you remember what date this was, about when it was?

A. Yes, this was in 1958, around September or October. I told Lee that we needed to talk. He said, "Not now, mother, in the morning we'll talk." In the morning, I said, "Lee don't worry too much, we will make out all right. You will get a job, you're a veteran. I can babysit or help myself a little bit and we can manage until my percentage of my salary that was due me would be available." His words were, "Mother, since you are broke, if I stay here with no education and not having worked before (naturally, he was in the service), the only job I see I could get would be about a $30 a week job and then we would be both the way you are now." He said, "I have thought this out thoroughly and my mind is made up. I am going to get a job on a ship because they pay big money and I will be able to send money to help you." I told him that was a wonderful idea and I thought that he thought things out right, but I thought he should stay home awhile and let us try to manage before.

He said again, "If I stay here I don't know if I can get a job and if I do it will be minimum wage. No, my mind is made up." So I believe that everyone has a right to their own life and the way of living it. I thought of Lee as an adult because he spent three years in the service. He was just, he was not 20 years old at the time; he was going to be 20 years old in October. But, as I say, he was a grown man. He had been in the Formosa crisis, he had been to Japan, and so if that was his decision I had no right, even as a mother, to force him to stay home or even try to force him. So, in three days time Lee left.

Approximately a week later I received a letter from Lee from New Orleans, telling me that he had booked passage on a ship to Europe, and I wish at this time I had the letter because as a mother, and knowing the circumstances----I had the letter but right now I don't----but as a mother and knowing the circumstances and the conversation I interpreted the letter (family affair); were the letter made public after his defection, would not be interpreted that way, because the letter said--I won't be able to give you the exact word--but the letter said, "I have booked passage to Europe on a ship going to Europe. I am sorry, mother, to have to tell you this way. I am sure that you don't understand", which my son was telling me I don't understand why he is leaving a sick mother, "I will contact you as soon as I arrive.

Q. That is what he said in the letter?

A. That is what he said in the letter, "Please understand, mother, that my values and those of Robert are not the same." Now, because of the situation and because of the boy always help me and being considerate of

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me, I interpret the letter that he is asking my forgiveness for leaving me again because he needs to have a better life than staying in Texas.

One month later, approximately - - - Oh, in the meantime I was baby-sitting and this lady had a young boy and I was desperate financially and still ill (they still hadn't found my trouble), so since she was a widow and the boy was alone she offered me a home and paid me $5.00 a week. I was very happy to get it because even though I was ill, there was times when I could cook and manage when the face didn't spasm and bother me. So I cooked for her (I don't know her name but I have it) and got her boy off to school for $5.00 a week which paid my bus fare to the doctors. I had two doctors and I made a visit every other day so the $5.00 was used for transportation.

At this home, I went out to get the Sunday paper and when I picked up the paper the headlines said, "Fort Worth Man Defected"; the first paragraph, if I remember, "Lee H. Oswald of Fort Worth has defected." I said, "Oh, my God, that is my son." I composed myself and read the story. The story stated that he went to Russia, as we know it has been publicized, I can't remember all of that, and it appeared to be his own decision, according to the paper. So, again, respecting other peoples privileges or rights, I said, and later made this public, that if, according to the paper, he had studied Marxism and that was the life he wanted since he was not hurting anyone and it was a political, as far as I knew, I wasn't too much at the time on these things, but since it was his decision and that was what he wanted I believed it should have been his privilege as an individual to pursue the thing he wanted, and I admired my son for the statements because of racial discontent in the United States and treatment of underdog and so forth. If he felt that way, and the papers stated that was his feeling and reason for going into Russia that he had the courage not to stay in a United States, that he did not like and to leave because I do not approve of all these politicians and all of these people saying things about the United States, and yet being a part of it. In my own way, I think it takes courage to stand up for your convictions, and so I accepted the fact that that was what he wanted and that he had a right to what he wanted to do with his life. Naturally, the newspapers and all the reporters were coming around. The woman told me I would have to leave the house. I had no place to go. I had no money. I called my son, Robert, and told him that she insist that I leave the house. He said "Well, mother, come over here." I have been the type mother since I had raised my children alone and had struggled, not only financially, but was always tired and had no life of my own. In other words, as soon as I came home from work, my children wanted their food, so immediately I started working again. I sort of lived for the day when my children

would find a good woman and marry and somebody to take care of them, because it was almost impossible for me to work and to do justice to those boys.

Q. When did you first hear from Lee? Did you hear from him while he was in Russia?

A. Now we will get to the very important part of the story. I had no contact with Lee at all. Mr. Fannan (phoenetic) of the FBI, this was in February, I called him because after reading the stories again, I thought I read that the FBI was investigating the family background as in the service, but it was the State Department that they had said was investigating his background, so I called the FBI in Fort Worth and wanted to know, so Mr. Fannan (phoenetic) is the FBI Agent when I talked to.

Q. What did he tell you?

A. Mr. Fannan (phoenetic) came out to the house, and I had all of these newspaper clippings and everything. He said "Mrs. Oswald, it looks like the boy wanted to go there," and since I had no contact, he recommended that I get in touch with some senators and congressmen and people who could help me because we had extenuating circumstances in the case by now. Lee's mail was coming to the house and because I had no contact with him, I was taking charge of Lee's mail. I received a letter from the . . . . . Before I say this, I must say this, and it is just too bad that I don't have this letter; it was in Lee's sea bag. Lee wrote before I wrote him about my accident. And this I have to remember. Lee wrote me that he was thrilled to death and happy because Albert Switzer College in Switzerland had accepted him as a student. I received a letter in Lee's mail, but I had no contact with Lee from the Albert Switzer College in Switzerland about Lee's itinerary, and I forgot to tell you that Lee had told me that he had put a deposit with the Albert Switzer College and was happy that they accepted him. Lee received this letter from the Albert Switzer College hoping that his itinerary would get him there a little earlier, because the semester or later, I forget which, because the semester would be delayed or brought forward. The itinerary stated, now I am not too sure about this; however, I have this information, that he was going to Finland, Sweden, Denmark, or maybe vise versa. I don't know my history, and then to Switzerland to the Albert Switzer College. Since I had this information and it did not agree with the newspaper story that he had

defected, I immediately began to think that there was something wrong, that maybe the ship he was on, I didn't know, he could have used hypnotism or he could have been hypnotized and brought to Russia. There's many ways that a boy on a ship could have gotten to Russia, I do not say and I do not know, whether he intended to to to Russia, but the story about wanting to work on a ship, of course he knew now he couldn't go to Albert Schweitzer College, understand? Because of my needing his help, he was going to work on a ship. I called Mr. Forman, (phonetic) He came out to the house, and when I showed him this information, he said "Mrs. Oswald, things do not look right. I recommend that you get in touch with someone." Would you help me there, please? He said Representative Sam Rayburn would be one, Secretary Harder, and by the way, we had wired Secretary Harder when we heard of Lee's defection, asking for help. His brother did, and we received no answer, not even a courteous reply, no answer whatsoever, so Mr. Forman (phonetic) recommended that I write to Sam Rayburn, Secretary Harder, and Congressman Wright of Fort Worth. I wrote a letter to the three men and made copies. My reason for that was before my marriage, I worked for attorneys, and I know that where anything is important, you should have something to back it up. The letter stated the circumstances and I made this clear and underlined it. As I say, I have a copy of the letter, the same letter sent to the three representatives. I do not want my son to think that I am trying to persuade him to come home. All I want to know is that he's safe. If he has defected, that still being his privilege, I made it clear to these people that I just wanted to know where he was and if he was safe. Neither Representative Sam Rayburn or Secretary Harder, answered my request, but Congressman Wright immediately sent me a wonderful letter, expressing the seriousness of the situation.

Q. Congressman Wright did?

A. Yes, Jim Wright. And the extenuating circumstances and that he would do all that would be necessary to try and locate the boy through his prestige and the State Department, so we could have some information and get to the bottom of this. I received a letter from Congressman Wright that he had turned my letter over to the State Department and that I would hear from them soon. I received word from the State Department sometime later that they would do all in their power to try and locate my son, and that the letter had been forwarded to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow and that they were going to follow up my

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request. I have a lot of correspondence with the State Department. They have kept me informed progressively; however, they said that in each letter they were working on the case, but that they had no leads whatsoever, and did not know where my son was and would continue to do their best to locate him. I wrote the State Department for the date of Lee's passport, and where it was issued, because by now I knew that my illness and his dire-need discharge had deprived him of what he originally planned and I wanted to see for my own satisfaction if indirectly I was the cause of him going to Russia, and of course, the dates would give me that information.

Q. Did you get the dates?

A. Yes. The State Department wrote me the dates and where the passport was taken out, which was in California.

Q. And what were those dates, do you remember?

A. The dates were a little prior to his discharge. I have this information in black and white. We can have the correct dates. It was a little prior to his discharge, showing that he had thought this thing out before coming home that he was going to board the ship and not stay and work in Fort Worth. I saw his passport.

Q. Go right ahead, Mrs. Oswald.

A. His passport showed export and import. Since my son is now upset all knowledge is dead. (unintelligible conversation).

Q. O.K. now. You tell me that Lee was thinking of writing a book and he contacted a public stenographer in Fort Worth; now this was after he came back from Russia?

A. That's right.

Q. And do you feel like that he contacted an editor somewhere?

A. Yes, I feel like he contacted an editor. I don't have any proof otherwise, that he had spent these few dollars we had given him, his brother and I. He had about $10 or $15. He used that to immediately hire this public stenographer. That we know, because my daughter-in-law, Robert's wife, told me of a conversation he had about a story and the

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public stenographer called Robert's home for some additional verification of the story.

Q. Do you have any idea who this stenographer is?

A. No, I have no idea because it was my daughter-in-law who told me about him talking to a public stenographer because the public stenographer called and said to my daughter-in-law, not knowing that Lee wanted not to confide in his family, that this is the public stenographer, would you let me talk to Lee? And that is why we know when she told me on the side because Lee wasn't telling or confiding anything, and then later on when I went to Lee's house when he got a job and got a house for his wife and family, they weren't home.. I was always curious because of my previous investigations on my own since I had mine so much. I looked at this mail in the mailbox and saw just an ordinary business envelope and it was from a publishing company in New York, so between the two, I assumed that he had sent this story to a publisher.

Q. Do you have any idea who this publisher was and where he is now?

A. I have no idea. All I remember is that it was a New York Publishing House, and I do know that Lee came to Robert's house and we decided we were going to say no comment because we had such a time with reporters when of the learning of him going to Russia. That Lee said "Yes, I have the story, if you will pay me for it."

Q. Do you remember what time of the year this was?

A. Immediately upon his return from Russia, which was of June, 1962, and then he had also told me in the letter, which I have. I have all information that I am saying here in black and white of my prize story, that he intended to write a story.

Q. Here of late, we talked to you about what he did in Fort Worth and Dallas. We have some undisclosed information that Lee went to Mexico City on or about September 26; now, can you tell us what you know about that?

A. I do not know anything about Mexico City. I do know in talking to my daughter-in-law, who has been very close with me for the last three and a half days or four days approximately . . . . . .

Q. This is Marina, Lee's wife?

A. Marina, Lee's wife. Marina told me since she and Lee are having a hard time, Lee having a hard time keeping a job, and he tried and tried to find work and no can get work. I use her way of talking. They said they go to Russia where he had job and can take care of his family. She didn't want to return to Russia and Lee didn't want to return to Russia, but because Lee can't find work, all the time he works a little, and no work, he worked a little and no work, we no can get house, live together, maybe we go back to Russia. I know nothing about her and that she wrote in behalf of her husband and herself wanted a visa to go back to Russia. She wrote to her Consulate or the Soviet Consulate, I don't know.

Q. You don't know whether this was Soviet Consulate in the United States or where do you think it is?

A. I do not know; however, I can get that information because Marina told me that she first, with the permission of her husband, wrote to the Consulate, which I am assuming is Soviet, but I can't find out exactly. And then Lee tried to get a visa.

Q. Do you know where he tried to get a visa?

A. Marina said Lee tried to get a visa. I am assuming that she meant also that he wrote. Nothing was ever said about Lee going to Moscow City for a visa.

Q. Marina did not say that he went anywhere to try to get one, that he wrote somewhere?

A. No, that is my understanding.

Q. Earlier, we were talking to Marina about some Federal Agency contacting Lee and asking him a lot of things. Can you tell me what Federal Agency this was that kept contacting Lee, like here recently?

A. I asked Marina. She did not know the man's name. It sounded like Thomas or Howard, but he was a short man, full face, black hair; he came three times, not too long ago he came -- about a week or so ago, and Marina told me that FBI . . . . . Why Marina tells me those things; I was reading newspaper accounts and I said that Lee said, as stated in the paper, that FBI Agents had come to the house recently and the paper stated that this was checked and checked out thoroughly in Washington, and that no FBI Agent had come to where

they were living in Irving. Marina says "Ma'am, this not true." FBI Agent came to Irving, and I said "Do you know his name?" No, Howard, Thomas, I don't know. I asked "Marina, what did he look like?" Stout man, fat face, black hair; she said Lee tell truth. FBI Agent came to house. Mrs. Paine has name of Agent.

Q. Mrs. Paine, "Is the landlady where Marina and Lee lived?

A. No, I don't see landlady; Mrs. Paine is assumed, as far as I know, a friend befriending Marina and Marina helped Mrs. Paine to learn Russian, helped with the children and work, and Mrs. Paine lets Marina stay there. Lee lived in town in a room $8.00 a week, and comes to see his family on weekends. Lee is not residing where Marina is because of transportation back and forth to his job.

Q. He's got his job with the Book Company, hasn't he?

A. Yes, which is in Dallas, and his home is in Irving.

Q. Did you say Mrs. Paine spoke fluent Russian before?

A. That I do not know; however, Marina, I think, might know. That I do not know. The other night after I rushed to my son's aid here in Dallas, I had no place to go and Mrs. Paine said that if I would be willing to sleep on the sofa, I could come out to her house.

Q. This was after Lee was in jail, is that right ?

A. That is correct. So I had not seen my daughter-in-law; in fact, I had not known even that there was a new baby, so I went to where my daughter-in-law was living, which was in Mrs. Paine's house, so I said we need to get an attorney for Lee, and we have no money. But he must have some rights to have an attorney and I said I didn't like Marina making a statement without being represented. Mrs. Paine was her interpreter when Marina made her statement and signed the statement; I said I didn't like that, and that she should have been represented by an attorney before making any statement. Mrs. Paine says "don't worry about anything like that." I am a member of the . . . . . Now I have tried to think of the name of the organization that Mrs. Paine told me she was a member of, and I have not been able to remember entirely because I was upset and I was surprised that she was a member of an organization because to me, all of these organizations mean nothing -- The Birch Society and all; I read about them and I pass them off as nothing. So I didn't pay too much attention.

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Q. Do you have any idea what it might be?

A. Well, she said that don't worry too. Lee would be represented by counsel because she was a member and that they would see that Lee got a lawyer.

Q. You don't know what type of organization it was?

A. No, I don't, but I really believe that if I heard the name, I may know.

Q. Was it the Fair Play for Cuba?

A. No, Cuba was not mentioned; that I'm sure. American Civil Rights -- is there such a thing? It was an organization that protects people's rights. In other words, she assured me that he would have a lawyer because she was a member of this organization. I didn't like Mrs. Paine immediately upon entering her home, and then when she told me that she was a member of this organization, then I felt (unintelligible) but I didn't.

Q. Mrs. Oswald, of course, we don't want to put words in your mouth, but there are several of those organizations; if we do name it and it sounds like the one to you, then it might help us. Could this be the Committee for Peaceful Alternatives?

A. No. I don't think so.

Q. In other words, it sounds to you like it's some type of a welfare organization for people who are in trouble. We were talking sometime back about Lee or yourself or maybe some of the family writing to the Secretary of the Navy or the State Department in order that Lee's dishonorable discharge that he had received after he went to Russia being changed. Can you tell me who it was you wrote to again? We're a little bit confused about that.

A. Yes. I also have all of this information in my possession. While Lee was in Russia and I had no contact with Lee, approximately ten months later, in a brown official envelope from the Marine Department, was a letter addressed to Lee. Since I had no contact with my son, I didn't know whether he was alive or dead -- I opened his mail which had been coming to the house. I didn't feel guilty about opening his mail because I had no way of knowing if he was even living. It was a letter from the Marine Corps, stating that you are

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dishonorably discharged in the business form that I now can put into words; however, I have the letter. I got in touch with the Marine Corps in Fort Worth, Texas, where I was living, and asked to speak to someone who could give me some information about this letter I had just received. They recommended me to a captain, and I think the captain's name is jotted down on this letter. He advised me since it did not state why he was getting a dishonorable discharge, that I write St. Louis, where the Home Office is, and if I recall, and I believe that it would be jotted down, I was given the name of the person to contact. He told me the way to do it was (a) a question which I cannot remember (b) a question (c) a question -- in other words, make it businesslike and ask these questions (a b c). It may have gone a little further, I want the answers explained that you have no contact with your son and since he was a Marine and you want to know why his name dishonored, you, as his mother, would like to be given the information of this dishonorable discharge. I received a lett er from St. Louis, stating that because of his defection to Russia, they have found it necessary to give him a dishonorable discharge, and if he can, but he has a right that it would go before a Board, and he would have the privilege and a right to contest this dishonorable discharge. Well, now, I have explained I didn't know whether my son was living or dead. I had no contact since my son could not go before a Board and defer himself, could I have the privilege since I have in my possession a lot of extenuating circumstances to the case, because if I recalled the rules and regulations that were presented in this return letter said that either you or a representative could present your case before the Board of Examiners. I may not be using the words; however, I have this in my possession. (the original).

Q. Did you go before a Board or go to someone?

A. I was willing. I had no money and this has always been my problem. I'm not crying on anybody's shoulder, but when you need to do something and you don't have the money, it makes it difficult. I would have to go to, I don't know, Chicago or St. Louis, wherever the Home Office was. But I would go, I would sell anything I have -- I have a couple of rings. I have always been able to manage as I am strong willed. I would go before the Board and present my case to see if they would not do this awful thing of a dishonorable discharge, because I have grandchildren, my whole family has served in service, and Lee served the service for three years in the Marines, and I want his name cleared.

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A. I received, as I recall, a registered return answer and I have this also addressed to Mr. Lee Harvey Oswald and not to me, which would be very unusual since I had already explained I had no contact, but maybe that would be their procedure. A registered-return-addressee-only, how can Lee return a return registered letter when Lee is not available.

Q. What did you do then?

A. I went to the Post Office and I explained that my son (and it had been in all the papers and everything) was not here and that I would like to sign for the letter, and, as far as I know, I did because I have the letter, and nothing else was said about he representing Lee. They did not give me the satisfaction that I asked to represent Lee.

Q. Who did you contact? Did you contact someone in Washington? What did you do then?

A. Well, then I did nothing. I had worked and talked to people, wrote to St. Louis and Chicago, I forget which, did everything I knew to do; then I felt I could go no further. I am a woman, I know how to handle things and help; then, when I do all I can do I cannot leave my work to pursue things further because financial and maybe loss of job, so I felt like they didn't think the mother was the person to do it and so, I mean, I just felt like that was all I could do.

Q. Well, then, when Lee returned from Russia, did he contact the Navy Department in regards to this discharge?

A. When Lee returned from Russia I believe when I know definitely, and the State Department kept me informed of every move that Lee made, and when I was told that they were going to loan Lee the money to come here, and on such and such a date he would come home, which was maybe five or six weeks after the lett r, I would say, I believe (I'm not sure but I believe) that I wrote Lee preparing him that he had had a dishonorable discharge and that would it be wise to return and face these things. So, when Lee returned from Russia I showed Lee these papers and I distinctly remember giving Lee the letter but I had a copy of it and I did not give Lee all of the correspondence. I gave Lee the original letter about a dishonorable discharge and I think I have a copy of the one that I gave Lee. Lee says, "Don't worry, mother, I will take care of this because I have been a good Marine and I have a good-conduct medal which I saw with my own eyes that he had a good-conduct medal.

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Q. So did he write to the-------?

A. That I do not know because Lee never had talked to me about what he was going to do in things of that sort. I said to Lee when I first came back from Vernon, where I was working, and first saw Lee and his Russian wife and everything, I told Lee about that story,"We have a story." He says, "Mother, you don't write a story, now we're here, Marina's life would be in danger."

Q. That is his wife?

A. That is his wife. I said, "Lee, the story that I can write mostly pertains to my experiences." "Just the same, Mother, you cannot write a story." He did not know what I had. He never had asked what I had. I have mentioned to my son, Robert, that I went to Washington, that I have information. Robert has never asked what I have. No one in the family knows the things I have. The children didn't want to know. I have an original application from Albert Schweitzer College that Lee had filled out and that is where he wanted to go and had put a deposit and was accepted by Albert Schweitzer College in Switzerland. And Albert Schweitzer College wrote again to Lee and I had no contact. I opened the letter saying that they hoped his itinerary of travel would allow him to reach Switzerland either, maybe, one or two days prior to his itinerary, or later, I do not remember, but all those things I have in black and white. And, so then I contacted Albert Schweitzer College and they said Lee had not arrived there and it was peculiar that he had not arrived there since he had paid his deposit. I stress again that I have all this information for proof.

Q. Well, can you tell me, did Lee ever to you, or did you ever hear from any of the rest of the family, that Lee expressed his feelings toward the Navy Department or the Marine Corps, what he felt about having received this dishonorable discharge?

A. No; otherwise, I told his remarks "Don't worry about it, mother, I will see about it" and took the copy of the letter. He, I know, felt that he didn't deserve the dishonorable discharge. There, again, I am assuming that there again because of the circumstances of him getting to Russia. He said he had a story. They are, ah, I do not know, but there

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is something wrong about him being in Russia. All indications of my knowledge and proof, and these also to me, and Lee wanting to write the story points to that maybe there was something not right, how he got to Russia, I do not know. I do not know, but indications point a little that way.

Q. This is getting back closer to the present time--do you know this man, Jack Rubenstein?

A. No, I do not know the man, Jack Rubenstein.

Q. You never heard Lee mention him one way or the other?

A. No, Lee don't ever talk. Lee doesn't talk.

Q. I see. Then you say that he doesn't talk and you don't know whether he belonged to any organizations or had any friends that were in the same organizations or friends of Jack Rubenstein?

A. No, I know nothing of Lee's activities because Lee doesn't confide, because Lee would think, and he made the statement public when he went to New Orleans and wrote the letter, "I do not expect you to understand, mother." He feels like I am an old woman, a mother, that doesn't know about these important developments of the world that was going on.

Q. Can you tell me, do you have any idea what his feeling or opinion was of Mr. John Connally, the Governor of Texas, who was the former Secretary of the Navy?

A. No, there again I have no idea because Lee does not express anything to me. Lee gave the impression that "my mother--housekeeper and mother, you wouldn't understand these deep things." I say deep because Lee is a deep thinker. Lee reads books, history books and anything pertaining to things that would require evaluation of going into deep thought about things, and he won't think that I would take the time to bother about affairs of that sort.

Q. Now, this next that I am going to ask you -- we have talked about it, you and I have at certain times the last few days -- I want you to understand that I don't want you to think I am trying to put anything in your mouth. I want you to give me what you think.

A. I understand.

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Q. All right. Do you think that Lee had any reason, or do you think that he would have wanted to shoot Mr. Connally, the Governor?

A. I do not think that Lee would shoot Mr. Connally, if you are implying because of this dishonorable discharge or some grief he had to Mr. Connally, because Lee is a very intelligent and smart boy, knowledgeable, not as far as education but he is self-educated from reading and being in the political world, which I would think that he would be in the political of things--politics. No, I think Lee would go to a higher-up if need be. Instead of Lee going to any drastic step, Lee would know other people besides Mr. Connally because when he knew he could return back to the United States, some of his letters told me who to contact to get help. They were the right people. He always, he would know. I don't think that Lee would be foolish enough to do anything drastic for any particular reason because I believe that Lee would be capable of handling any situation. I say that because he has contacted important people.

Q. Well, again let me ask you--you may just be repeating yourself--but in regard to President John Kennedy, do you think that he might have any strange feeling enough to want to shoot Mr. Kennedy.

A. Again I say, Lee never has talked to me and again I say I think Lee was too intelligent unless he was insane, which everybody doesn't seem to think and I, personally, either. Lee studies these things and feels the world situation which was proven by his statements when he went to Russia. So, I understand how he feels about these things. Again, I say, Lee loves his wife and children. He was a good father to the wife and children. He always tried to find work when they let him off of a job because of his defection and because he was married to a Russian girl. And I know that he applied for jobs and because his wife was not a citizen he didn't get it.

I know, because the month that he stayed with me in Fort Worth and I had the car and I took Lee to apply for work. Every day we went looking for work and Lee would say, "Mother, they didn't give me the job." and I said, "Well, why?" "They told me because my wife was not an American citizen" and that I know because I took my boy.

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Q. Do you think that Lee felt pretty strongly about this fact that people would turn him down on jobs because he was married to a Russian?

A. Yes, but I don't think it would bother Lee enough to want to hurt the President or anybody else; and let's say, let's go back, that Lee has asked for a visa to Russia, which his wife has explained that neither she nor Lee wanted to go back to Russia, but they know that Lee could work there all the time, where here he wasn't able to work to support his wife and children. So then, why should he want to harm his wife and children. No, I do not believe that Lee would go to the extent of putting himself and wife in a position of anything so terrible as to kill, because he does not show that type man toward wife and children and mother.

Q. Do you think that Lee might have been influenced by someone else in this extent, someone that might have convinced him that it might solve his problem for him?

A. I do not think so, again because of what I know of my boy. He is strong minded and from all statements from Russia when he defected and everything--the papers and all, even now papers--he had a mind of his own and I believe Lee was brought up and would know better than to jeopardize his wife and himself; doing anything drastic would naturally jeopardize his wife--himself and his wife. He is smart enough to know that he can't do anything like that wrong and get by with it. He wouldn't do anything like that because he knows. That I know.

Q. In these past two or three days we talked about this rifle that Lee had in the garage over at the Paine residence and in Irving. Now, you have expressed your opinion that someone else might have got ahold of this rifle through Lee. Now, would you go into that a little bit, what you feel like did happen or could have happened?

A. Of course, this is just speculation, when Marina told me yes, Lee had a rifle. Lee liked to hunt, he always like to hunt, and the statement was made in the paper when he defected. And he had a rifle a long time. And that FBI man asked when she was picked up about the rifle and she told the FBI man, "Yes, Lee has a rifle." They showed her

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a big rifle. She says no she don't think that is the same rifle that Lee had. She says I told the FBI man because Lee has rifle, she says, but she didn't think it was the same rifle that the FBI man showed her. So, since they did not have a home of their own and they lived in this house, and Marina told me that Lee kept the rifle in the garage, anyone could have access to the rifle, so even though it would be Lee's rifle, to me doesn't necessarily mean that Lee used it since it was just in the garage.

Q. Did you personally ever see Lee's rifle?

A. No.

Q. You never did?

A. No, I have not seen my son since September of last year.

Q. In 1962, is that right?

A. That is correct and the month that he stayed with me I never had seen the rifle. He just had clothes and radios.

Q. Well, in concluding this conversation that we are having, is there anything that you want to elaborate on right here recently about any Federal agencies that contacted you or Lee or Marina, or anything else that might help us in putting together this story of Lee?

A. The last few days, you are speaking of?

Q. Yes. Or anything else that you think might be important for us in helping us in this case.

A. Yes. The night that I went to Mrs. Paine's home after I was there about ten minutes-------

Q. This was after Lee was arrested?

A. After Lee was arrested.

Q. Yes. Go ahead.

A. There was a knock on the door. Mr. Paine was there. At the time I assumed they were a happily married family. There is two children, Mr. and Mrs. Paine. I do not know these people.

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I walked out of the courthouse or jail, wherever I was where they had questioned Marina, and came with this lady and Marina to her home. I thought it was nice of her to ask me to stay with them that night. There was a knock on the door. She immediately let two men in. I found it strange that she let two men in because of the situation because I would want to know if they were strangers, what is it you want, but they were not asked what they want.

She said "Come right in; I hope you have brought some good color film with you" and these two men were from Life Magazine. I was sitting on the sofa by my daughter-in-law. The men didn't ask who I was and I was not introduced to them so, again, I am assuming that they knew who Marina was. Mrs. Paine sat on the floor and Life magazine, the men from Los Angeles, which I found afterwards, was continually rolling film. I was becoming indignant because I didn't think it was the right thing to do. The other man--I do not know the names, that is how this happened so fast; in fact, I wasn't introduced--said to Mrs. Paine, "Now if you will start with your story."

Mrs. Paine said, "Well, I will tell you what I know." I think he asked her how did she meet Marina and me. She said at a party. He said, "Did Lee live here?" She says, "Yes, he lives with his wife but he does not live here." And the Life magazine man (I wish I knew his name, I don't) said, "Are they separated?" "Oh", she says, "no, they are wonderful family. Because of circumstances, Marina stays here with me. I give her and the children a place to stay, and Lee works in Dallas so Lee rents a room in Dallas for $8.00 a week and comes to see his wife every weekend." "Well, when he comes to see his wife on weekends, do they get along? What do they do?" She said, "Like ordinary couples they sit and watch football, baseball, and things on television. They don't go any place, they have no money, no transportation; they stay home. They love the family."

I got up from the sofa. I said, "I do not like this, I am awfully sorry, Mrs. Paine. I realize I am in your home but this is my daughter and this is my son that we are talking about and I do not like you giving this personal stories out." Everybody remained quiet so I sat down. Immediately the Life magazine man questioned Mrs. Paine, ignored me. I got up again. I said, "Now, I just said I do not like this. I have gone through publicity before when Lee

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supposedly defected, and things came out in the paper were not things that we said. I would say one word and the paper would make a story out of it and I do not want any publicity." Again, everything was silent, a pacifier to the mother. Well we know I was the mother then because I said, "I am the mother of this boy." But the Paines had never introduced me as the mother of the boy. She took the initiative of talking to Life magazine, so he says, "Do you know how Lee got home from Russia; how did he have money to get him home from Russia?" She said, "Well, he saved his money to get him from Russia."

I got up. I said, "Mrs. Paine, I am getting tired of this. That is an incorrect statement because I happen to know how Lee got home from Russia and I do not appreciate you taking the initiative and making these statements." "We want fact." And I said, "Another thing, I am penniless. My daughter-in-law here is without a husband, and children. If we are going to give a story and all of this information, I feel like I want to get paid for the story." Life magazine said, "Do you have a story? I will contact my office right now and get authorization to pay you for the story." I said, "You do that. We need the money. This boy will need a lawyer and I am without work and who will hire me and I want to get paid if we are going to give this information." The damage had been already done with the information being given, so I insisted then upon payment.

He went into the kitchen and telephoned, I assume, his office and came back and said, "Mrs. Oswald, they said that they will not authorize me to pay you for a story; however, they will give us expenses for you. We can put you up in a motel and we will take care of your expenses while you are here." I said, "No, I think that Life magazine can afford to pay for this story. I think it will be news." He said, "Well, they didn't authorize me to pay for it, and I said,"well then, let's don't talk. Let's keep quiet." I was then ignored and questions directed to Mrs. Paine. She immediately answered and by that time I was indignant and confused. I cannot remember the question. Another question was thrown to her. I got up again. I said, "I have had enough of this", that "this is incorrect information, Mrs. Paine. I do not have the right to tell you not to talk to Life magazine of what you know but when you talk to Life magazine about 'I assume this was the case' and not facts, I am going to

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stop you because I happen to know this is not the case."

So, they went into the kitchen. I tried to be near as possible but because I didn't speak Russian and Mrs. Paine did, Marina talked to Mrs. Paine in Russian. I became very nervous because I didn't know what was going on. I said to Mrs. Paine, "Tell my daughter that I do not like this information being given in public about Lee and her. Ask her what she would like to do." Mrs. Paine spoke in Russian. My daughter-in-law said, "Mama, I will do what you want me to do." I said, "Marina then no talk." I put my fingers to the mouth, "No talk, nothing." I said "If we give stories, Mama like money." I am now speaking the way I speak to my daughter-in-law and she understands me. "Because we need money. You have no husband. I, Mama, may not be able to work. If we give story we get paid. No, no talk no more, Marina." "Yes, Mama, whatever you want Marina do." So I say again to pacify for few minutes quiet. However, they followed.Mrs. Paine into the kitchen and by this time I was becoming more indignant. If I'd had any money at all--I had 30¢ with me--I would have taken my daugater-in-law immediately out of the House because by now I had sensed that things were not the way I liked them to be.

During the night I thought seriously about this so I decided I would accept Life magazine's offer for hotel room and food while my stay in Dallas. So when they came at 8 o'clock in the morning, they had a Russian interpreter with them. I told them that we could go to a hotel where I would be in charge of giving the story instead of Mrs. Paine. They took us to the Adolphus Hotel, my daughter-in-law and two children to the Adolphus Hotel.

Q. That is in Dallas?

A. That is in Dallas. I immediately called the police station and talked to Captain Fritz and tried to get permission to see my son. He immediately granted that and said that about 12 o'clock would be fine. The Russian interpreter kept talking to Marina and I asked her please to tell me when she would talk to Marina and translate it to me in English because I had a right to know what she was saying to my daughter-in-law. She never did cooperate that way and she would then whisper to Life magazine. I was being left out of the picture.

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Mr. Odham, an FBI Agent, appeared at the Adolphus Hotel and wanted to take Marina to Headquarters to be questioned. I said, "Mr. Odham, my daughter-in-law is not going with you to Headquarters. We need counsel." And the Russian interpreter was going to go along with Mr. Odham, the FBI Agent, to His Headquarters to question Marina, but I would not be allowed to go. I said, "Marina will not go unless I am present and unless I know what Marina is saying in Russian." He said, "I am not talking to you." Now, Mr. Odham was very rude, being a representative of the FBI. He said, "Let your daughter-in-law make up her own mind." I said, "My daughter-in-law is not qualified to make up her own mind." "Because she does not understand our ways and she is entitled to representation, I am going to protect her." To the Russian interpreter, "You tell Mrs. Oswald that if she wants to go, ask her if she is willing to go. Not what her mother-in-law tells her to do." I said to Mr. Odham, "My daughter-in-law is not leaving here, whether she says she wants to go or not."

So that was debated two or three different times and then finally Marina talked long in Russian and the interpreter said, "Mrs. Oswald said that she has no more to say, that she has already been to the police station and told them what she knows and she is tired; she has baby, she nurse baby, she can tell him no more and she will do what Lee's Mama tell her and Lee's Mama say see a lawyer. She say she no more had nothing to say she tolu police already." Mr. Odham and Russian interpreter and Life magazine talk. I took to Marina and kept telling her, with my fingers, not to talk, not to talk to Russian interpreter, not the law, she has protection, so Marina understands. Mr. Odham was still there when Robert entered the room.

Q. That is your son, right?

A. My son, Robert. So Mr. Odham said he wanted Marina to go down to the FBI Headquarters because he wanted to question Marina, so I said, "Robert, they been here for about fifteen minutes and they are trying to push me aside and I won't let Marina go." "All right, all right, Mother," he said, "Mr. Odham, we have some rights and my sister-in-law is not going with you. We are going to try to get counsel in this case. She is willing to cooperate, we are willing to cooperate with you any way and all, but at this time my sister-in-law is not going to be questioned. I understand that she was questioned yesterday without representation and I do not like it at all." So Mr. Odham said, "That is all right, Mr. Oswald, we just thought-----", and he left.

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Upon the next day, we went to court house----the same day we went to court house and we saw Lee. Life magazine did not, and insist that we do not take children and leave the children home with Russian interpreter. My daughter-in-law say, "No, no, we take babies" and I said "We take babies, too, I want them to go." Life magazine said "They are going to push you around." I said, "That is all right, we will face it. Men are considerate of women with babies. I want, since they were taking pictures of them, to see that Lee has a family." "But, Mrs. Oswald, we want you to leave the children at home. We don't think it is good for the story for you to have the children." I said, "But I think it is good and we are taking the children with us", and Marina says, "Yes, my children go where I go."

So we left and we went to the court house and stayed there and was able to talk to my son. Upon returning to the Adolphus Hotel, which we were escorted by the policemen, wonderful protection so no reporters could get to us--the police went way out of their way to see that we were not followed. We got to the Adolphus Hotel and no one answered the door to where Life magazine, where we had our clothes and suitcases and baby diapers--no one was there. So the two policemen or detectives with us was concerned and I didn't even know if I had the right door number. Understand, I was confused. So then, from around the corner came the Life magazine man and I said, "That is him. They asked--and I, foolishly, had never asked--they asked to see his credentials, and he was a Life magazine representative, but I now realize that I could have been in anybody's hands.

So we entered the room and the detectives left us with the man after they assured that he was Life magazine representative. The Life magazine representative asked, "What are you going to do now?" And I said, "Well, I understood that you were going to put me up in the Hotel for two or three days so I can be near my son, for giving you the story." He sarcastically remarked, "You haven't given me anything but the facts that are already known", and I said, "Well, could we stay here tonight?" This was late in the afternoon; I did not know where my son, Robert, was. So then a red-headed man, with no coat, that I feel was from Life magazine --they had an office on the 11th floor, we were on the 9th floor--came into the bedroom. We had two bedrooms and when I walked in this redheaded man was talking to this Life representative. Then he left. Then the Life representative said, "Mrs. Oswald, here is some money." I didn't even look

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at the amount. "We are going to move you because reporters are on our trail and we are going to take you out, away from the heart of the city." I followed suit and started picking up clothes. I didn't ask again whether I am doing right or anything. The Life representative from Los Angeles took us downstairs and put us in the taxicab, took us out to the Executive Inn, out of town, said he would pay for lodgings for two or three nights and that we had money for taxicab in case we couldn't locate them when we needed them, to get to town in case they needed Marina or I at the police station. I had put the bill in my uniform pocket, just loosely, so after he----I got it out and it was a $50 bill. I did not hear any more from these Life magazine representatives.

Saturday, about 8:30, a knock on the door and I moved the curtain and it was Mr. Odham from the FBI. I had on robe and pajamas. He said, "Um, you are ready for bed." and I said, "We are awfully tired. Marina is taking a bath and we are trying to be just quiet and nice." He said, "Mrs. Oswald, I'd like to talk to your daughter-in-law." I said, "Mr. Odham, I have explained to you before that my daughter-in-law is not talking to anyone without legal representation and at this time we haven't been able to secure any." In the cup of his hand was a photograph that was cut and was a man's picture. He said, "Mrs. Oswald, have you ever seen this man before?" I said, "No, sir--no sir, believe me, I have never seen this man before. He said, "Can we show this picture to Marina?" I said, "Mr. Odham, please, we have been under a terrible strain; the girl nurses the baby; not tonight." And he went away.

The next---Sunday?---Monday morning when I picked up paper I immediately said to secret agent and people protecting me, "This is the man that the FBI agent came and asked me if I know, the man that killed my son, I recognize his picture."

Q. What was his name?

A. I did not know his name until I read in the paper.

Q. What was it in the paper, then?

A. Ruby Rubenstein. I was at this time very upset because I recognized the man that the FBI, and I right away say, "Since they have his picture the night before, why then was he so close to shoot my son." So I didn't pay too much attention at the time of the name in the paper.

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This was conclusion of an interview between Special Agent J. W. Howard and Mrs. Odham, the mother of Lee Harvey Odham. Not Odham--correction--that is, Oswald. Lee Harvey Oswald. This interview took place at the Inn of the Six Flags in Arlington, Texas, on November 25 and 26, 1963.

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