

TESTIMONY OF ANNA N. MELLER

The testimony of Anna N. Meller was taken at 9 a.m., on March 25, 1964, in the office of the U.S. attorney, 301 Post Office Building, Bryan and Ervay Streets, Dallas, Tex., by Mr. Wesley J. Liebeler, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mr. LIEBELER. Come in, Mr. and Mrs. Meller, and sit down. Before we start I want to make a statement for the record and for your information. Mrs. Meller, my name is Wesley J. Liebeler. I am a member of the legal staff of the President's Commission investigating the assassination of President Kennedy. Staff counsel such as myself have been authorized to take the testimony of witnesses by the Commission pursuant to authority granted to the Commission under the provisions of Executive Order 11130 dated November 29, 1963, and Joint Resolution of Congress No. 137. Last week, I believe Mr. Rankin sent to you, Mrs. Meller, a letter and told you I would be in touch with you this week and he sent with that letter copies of the Executive order and of the Resolution I just referred to as well as copies of the rules of procedure related to the taking of testimony. You did receive copies of those documents with that letter?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. We want to take your testimony this morning, Mrs. Meller, concerning your knowledge of the Oswalds that you obtained as a result of Marina Oswald living with you in your home for a period in October or November of 1962, and whatever other knowledge you may have concerning the background of the Oswalds or any facts relating to the assassination and the subsequent death of Lee Harvey Oswald.

Mrs. MELLER. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. Would you rise, Mrs. Meller, and please raise your right hand? (Witness complying.) Do you solemnly swear the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. Would you state your full name for the record, please?

Mrs. MELLER. Anna N. Meller.

Mr. LIEBELER. What is your address, Mrs. Meller?

Mrs. MELLER. 5930½ LaVista Drive, Dallas 6.

Mr. LIEBELER. Where were you born?

Mrs. MELLER. I was born in Russia in 1917.

Mr. LIEBELER. In what town in Russia were you born?

Mrs. MELLER. Belgorod, something like Fort Worth; it's not Belgrade like in Yugoslavia. It's B-e-l-g-o-r-o-d [spelling].

Mr. LIEBELER. What part of Russia is that in?

Mrs. MELLER. It's first town in Russia, town after Ukraine.

Mr. LIEBELER. That would be in southern Russia then?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes, but we will say first town going north it starts Russia after.

Mr. LIEBELER. Ukraine?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes, after Ukraine.

Mr. LIEBELER. Are you now an American citizen?

Mrs. MELLER. I am an American citizen since 1959.

Mr. LIEBELER. How did you come to the United States?

Mrs. MELLER. As a refugee.

Mr. LIEBELER. When?

Mrs. MELLER. In January 11, 1952.

Mr. LIEBELER. When did you leave Russia?

Mrs. MELLER. I left Russia around 1943.

Mr. LIEBELER. In 1943?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. You left Russia at the time the German Army retreated?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes, the corps of Germans.

Mr. LIEBELER. The Germans took you from Russia and took you back to Germany?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. After you left Russia did you go to Germany?

Mrs. MELLER. I went to Poland first then from Poland to Germany, then from Germany to United States.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was Mr. Meller with you at that time?

Mrs. MELLER. Mr. Meller I met in Germany and married in Germany short before we came to United States. Year, I just may not be exactly in the dates. I am just a little bit forgetful always but I would say we met, 1946, I met him.

Mr. LIEBELER. Off the record.

(Off record comment.)

Mr. LIEBELER. Concerning your departure from Russia, were you taken by the German Army from Russia or did you leave Russia of your own free will and go to Germany?

Mrs. MELLER. No; I was taken by the Germans from Russia.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was that prior to the retreat of the German Army or with the retreat of the German Army?

Mrs. MELLER. Part of the retreat.

Mr. LIEBELER. Why did the Germans take you from Russia; do you know?

Mrs. MELLER. They took many young people on the streets. If you walk on the streets they will make a circle around several blocks and who is inside everybody going by train. I certainly tried to prevent myself as much as I could to go out and then I talk a little bit German and all that, but I held part of luck little bit, I stay in country and worked for Germans for piece of bread so I wouldn't die of hunger because Russia was in bad shape, and then that very place hospital was retreated back. I went with or I had to stay and die of hunger. That way, I was brought piece by piece further deeper into Poland and Germany.

Mr. LIEBELER. You didn't really want to leave Russia at the time; you wanted to remain in Russia, is that correct?

Mrs. MELLER. That's quite a question. I never liked regime in Russia in politics. I don't understand those things but I never liked those regime in Russia; even at 16 I would ask father such questions it would raise his hair. I could not understand what was going around, why we could not talk freely at home and things like that, always afraid of something.

Mr. LIEBELER. Where did you learn to speak English, Mrs. Meller?

Mrs. MELLER. We took with my husband in Germany year before we came to United States, we took private lessons for about a year or little bit more than a year and when I came to United States I had pretty good vocabulary, I can speak and I could write but I was afraid to speak. I forget all my vocabulary as soon as someone ask me something.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you come directly to Dallas when you came to the United States?

Mrs. MELLER. Sir, we came to New York and from New York, several names they call and says that in past times they send too many refugees in north, we suppose to go to Milwaukee and he says those families several go to the south, he said to Texas and I am ashamed to say I heard about Texas but never heard about Dallas. I heard Houston and Austin but never heard Dallas, and we—

Mr. LIEBELER. And then you came to Dallas?

Mrs. MELLER. We came to Dallas and are in Dallas 12 or almost 13 years here and love it.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you work now, Mrs. Meller?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes, I work 11 years for Dallas Power & Light Co. as draftsman.

Mr. LIEBELER. As a draftsman?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you have training in draftsmanship work?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes; I love drafting all my life and I wanted to be architect but I finish school in dentistry and war came. I passed all examinations besides the main diploma when war started so I get my diploma—without the main diploma—without examination of—from my dentistry examination but I get my diploma.

Mr. LIEBELER. So, you were a qualified dentist in the Soviet Union before you left?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes; I got my document but without final examination of dentistry because war started. By the way, I was always good in drafting back in school and I wanted to be always a draftsman or architect but it was too many people and everybody was interested in architecture so you have to be the very best one to make it and I wasn't the best one in physics, I remember, and I couldn't possibly—and it was time when girl supposed to have higher education. It started just then in Russia. Parents said you have to take something and finish so you have some kind of job, but when I was starting dentistry there was certain difficulties in the family. I was working at night as nurse in hospital and helping my sister with drafting so I get always money on the side little bit so I could proceed my studying. When I came to United States I have pretty bad veins. I could not stay very much on my feet; I had phlebitis when I arrived short after and doctor said better I will have sitting job better than standing because modern dentist have to stay very much on his legs so I took drafting. I went for my own interest to Crozier architecture school and took course in Dallas so I could see what drafting look like in United States. Since that time I love it and my job.

Mr. LIEBELER. Does your husband work also?

Mrs. MELLER. My husband works, too, at Sangers Harris as packer for 11 years or 12. I will say 12 years.

Mr. LIEBELER. Is your husband also from Russia originally?

Mrs. MELLER. No; my husband from Poland, born in Poland, finish two universities. He's professor of philosophy and teacher of physical education.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did there come a time that you met Lee Harvey Oswald and his wife, Marina?

Mrs. MELLER. We were invited one day in August, I think end of August in 1962, we were invited to Fort Worth to Mr. Peter Gregory—I, my husband, and Mr. George Bouhe. My husband couldn't go and I want to make something—we don't have a house here. We don't have car here. We have one bedroom apartment we live for past 10 year in same place. When we were invited there, my husband couldn't go so Mr. George Bouhe picked me up and because he had a car and we went to Fort Worth. At Mr. Gregory family, we met Marina and Lee Oswald.

Mr. LIEBELER. Who else was there at the time?

Mrs. MELLER. I think it was wife from Peter Gregory, Mr. Gregory, his son—

Mr. LIEBELER. Paul Gregory?

Mrs. MELLER. Paul Gregory, myself, and George Bouhe.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was that a luncheon meeting or was it in the evening?

Mrs. MELLER. It was a dinner.

Mr. LIEBELER. In the evening?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. Would you tell us to the best of your recollection the conversation that took place and what happened at this first dinner at which you met the Oswalds?

Mrs. MELLER. We met them and Mr. Gregory said they come from Russia not long ago and we find out immediately that Marina could not speak word of English whatsoever. The baby was probably about 4 months old, baby girl was with. We talked; we didn't have something important, just were speaking about condition in United States and how Marina likes and if you had a job—Lee Harvey. By the way, the first impression of Lee Harvey is a man absolutely sick. I mean mentally sick; you could not speak with him about anything. He's against Soviet Union; he's against United States. He made impression he did not know what he likes, really. She was more quiet and certainly did not spoke much; since we met each other first time, nobody spoke too much. Really, it was easy going conversation but not much. We asked how is her baby and we find out baby didn't have a bed and she didn't have anything to wear and I even don't remember if he had a job at this time already; I don't remember exactly or he was looking for it.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you carry on the conversation in English or in Russian?

Mrs. MELLER. In Russian more.

Mr. LIEBELER. It was quite clear to you at that time that Marina was not able to speak English?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes; absolutely not a word, absolutely not a word; however, he spoke Russian pretty good to understand, amazingly.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was his Russian grammatically correct?

Mrs. MELLER. Pretty correct.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he tell you where he learned Russian?

Mrs. MELLER. I don't remember exactly. Later I heard certain somebody asked because we were wondering how he could speak and he said he took English in school and studied very much at home.

Mr. LIEBELER. Russian you mean.

Mrs. MELLER. Russian in school and studied at home very much with himself as Marina said later.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you think that his command of the Russian language was better than you would expect for the period of time that he had spent in Russia?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes; absolutely better than I would expect.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he ever indicate that he had gone to any school in Russia to learn Russian?

Mrs. MELLER. You know, he tried to not to speak much. He was not easy to come to it and speak. He will say some sentences and tried to be more quiet. He was on the quiet side but if he didn't like something, he would raise his voice and get very excited—upset.

Mr. LIEBELER. You said your first impression just was he appeared mentally sick. Can you tell us some of the specific reasons why you came to that conclusion?

Mrs. MELLER. Later on, when I saw him—I saw him two times or three in the whole period and I saw him mad about some things, about people tried to help Marina with warm clothes and baby clothes. He did not want to take anything. He always said "I don't need". He was against everything and he did not want his wife try to speak English, not a single word.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he tell you why he did not want her to learn English?

Mrs. MELLER. He said he wanted to learn better Russian. She has to speak Russian so he can speak better Russian; she don't need English.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did Oswald tell you at this first meeting why he went to Russia in the first place?

Mrs. MELLER. No; I do not recall.

Mr. LIEBELER. Let's go on and establish the other times that you saw Oswald and the circumstances and then I will ask you some questions about his experiences in Russia and you can tell me whether he ever told you about anything or when you learned about anything. When did you next see Oswald?

Mrs. MELLER. Later on, probably in the next month, we visited Marina Oswald about two or three times and during this time, couple times, probably one time we did not see him at all. He started to work somewhere and two times we met him we came close to five or probably close to six, to Fort Worth and he come straight from work, still in work clothes and we speak little bit this time. We brought—always for Marina, we brought some groceries for Marina, George Bouhe and I, some clothes to wear and for baby and I saw baby didn't have bed. Baby was sleeping on two suit cases, old suit cases. It was a made baby bed. I never talk much to Lee Oswald and he was pretty quiet most of the time. However, probably on the last time I went over their house, we stayed for hour there or maybe even less, give those things and come back home. On the third time probably, I noticed in the living room on what you will call that table that the lamp was sitting near the divan. I notice several books; it was "Kapital" book Karl Marx and literature about Communism. It caught my eye and I was real upset.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you say anything to Oswald?

Mrs. MELLER. I said to Marina "What's this book doing here", something like that. I mentioned something and she said Lee takes all those books from the library and reading them. I did not say much after but I was real upset.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was that the last time that you saw him?

Mrs. MELLER. It was maybe last time that we visited Marina in her house.

No; excuse me just a second, sir. One of these times we came to Marina house and husband was still not at home she has a terrible blue spot over her eye and I said to her "What's the matter?" Marina was shy little bit. She's shy little, a little bit in nature, I think, too. She said "I have to get up during night and quiet baby and I hit the door and hit my head here" and it was very blue.

Mr. LIEBELER. Around her eye?

Mrs. MELLER. Under her eye was and over here [indicating] and it was very noticeable I will say. I said "You have to be careful" but I felt always like girl tried to hide something, you know. She was shy and not very—didn't like to talk too much, I think. That's last time I went; it was on Mercedes Avenue in Fort Worth where they had home.

Mr. LIEBELER. You never saw Lee Oswald except for this first meeting at Peter Gregory's?

Mrs. MELLER. At Gregory's and then one time at home.

Mr. LIEBELER. At your home?

Mrs. MELLER. No; at their home where they lived, Marina and Oswald on Mercedes.

Mr. LIEBELER. In Fort Worth; and that is the only place you ever saw him?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes. I never visit him by myself and never without George Bouhe. We were always together—group.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you make a special point out of going as a group and not going one person?

Mrs. MELLER. Well, I would tell you, before we started to help Marina and Oswald somebody raise the question—I tried to remember who but I couldn't—I think our friend Mr. Clark from Fort Worth.

Mr. LIEBELER. Max Clark?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes; and George Bouhe and I said, I said "You know, George, he's check?" "He comes from Soviet Union" and somebody said, I think George Bouhe said "I asked and they tell me he's checked." I thought if he's checked with FBI you suppose not to be afraid to help them, something like that. It was my own inside feelings.

Mr. LIEBELER. You were sort of suspicious of Oswald because he had been in the Soviet Union for a while?

Mrs. MELLER. We could not understand why he stayed there and come back.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did it seem strange to you that he was able to leave the Soviet Union and bring Marina back to the United States with him?

Mrs. MELLER. When somebody asked, he told them they—they let—they go to American Embassy and they let him go. It seem like it was supposed to be in order if they give him even money and American Embassy let him go. I thought it must be in order. I never heard of anything in my lifetime, anything like that happen. I don't recall any case like this one having so much sorrow and trouble. It was in Fort Worth then, I do not recall. We will go in more there later. We find out that Lee Harvey lost his job. I think by the last time we saw Lee Harvey Marina mentioned he is temporary there and may lose his job pretty soon.

Mr. LIEBELER. This was his job in Fort Worth?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes; and I said "Well, if you can't find a job in Fort Worth, come to Dallas and look around." Then one day we heard he was looking for a job in Dallas.

Mr. LIEBELER. Let me go back to the time that Oswald lived in Fort Worth. You said that you and Mr. Bouhe had given groceries to the Oswalds and helped them in other ways. Would you tell me approximately, and take your time to think about it, how much groceries and what other things were given to the Oswalds during that period by friends?

Mrs. MELLER. It was pretty good. I would give her old dresses. I asked three friends to give me something old, old dresses for her, about 10 to 15 dresses, probably. We bought some underwear, probably two, three pairs.

Mr. LIEBELER. For Marina?

Mrs. MELLER. For Marina, strictly for Marina. When we met her we had sorrow for Marina for not speaking word of English; just for sake of woman

with baby. Seems her husband will not care for her about anything. We never saw he will be really—

Mr. LIEBELER. Responsible?

Mrs. MELLER. Responsible for her; thank you, sir; yes. I never saw that feelings, never, and being a Russian myself and go through certain trouble during World War II where the good people helped us very much for all sides of walks when I came to United States, even I was brought up in family at home to help somebody if I can in trouble, so I saw Russian girl couldn't speak word of English and baby and looks like husband didn't caring much about her, it was our mutual feelings toward Marina start to help her. It was only idea. Somehow it sounds strange but somehow it even looks to me like—we didn't see Lee Harvey buying anything, very little; they was just existing—woman and baby in hands, baby 4 months old, young girl. When we went to, George Bouhe and I, to house we took her to store in Fort Worth and George Bouhe bought about \$18 groceries and I tried to let her pick up some of the things she would like and first thing she started with baby food. I will tell you, she's young but it's amazing how she cares about children. She's young mother; she gives pretty good care of the children. I looked and I was wondering; baby was first.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was it only on one occasion that you purchased groceries for them?

Mrs. MELLER. I don't recall exactly but I think it was more probably two occasions that George Bouhe spent lot of money. Second time, I think he bought for child baby playpen, excuse me, I am not familiar with those names, playpen and certainly we tried to buy cheaper and something because child did not have bed and it was same time bed for the child.

Mr. LIEBELER. Mr. Bouhe also bought a bed for the baby?

Mrs. MELLER. No; he bought playpen and it was for time bed for the baby. I think we bought her one dress, probably couple underwears, couple pairs, and stockings; something she is really need and certainly more groceries. Then one day when came with groceries like that Lee Harvey come from work and Mr. Bouhe told him to come with and try to help to pick up playpen. He was furious why we did all that and buy all that and he said "I don't need"; he was in rage; "I don't need," he say.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he go with Mr. Bouhe to get the playpen?

Mrs. MELLER. He went but you can see it was not like he had to go—it was something which was real hard for him to do it—never talked much and I could not talk much to him.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you think that he was strange or somewhat peculiar because he resented this help that you tried to give him, or did you understand that perhaps he had good reasons?

Mrs. MELLER. Sir, he was peculiar, yes; he was and I think he was a person which will not go; he was not easy to go with the other people. He could not talk like—I see first time and anyway, to explain as much as I could, but I doubt if he would talk to you same way I do. He had always something hidden; you can feel it. He was not very—not willing to talk and very much against, against the food you buy, against the milk for baby—"We don't need anything."

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you ever know how much money he was making at his job in Fort Worth?

Mrs. MELLER. No; no idea.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he say anything to you about repayment of a loan that the United States had made to him?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes; he said that he has to pay to Embassy back money and that's what he was doing and he had to send certain amount to American Embassy to pay their passage but I never asked how much.

Mr. LIEBELER. But you knew or he told you at that time that he was making payments to the American Government?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes; he was paying; if I am not wrong, I think he say he mentioned he had to pay and what is left he will never say and I think it was not much at all.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you ever give any money to Marina or did you just confine your help to buying groceries and clothes and giving her clothes and buying the playpen and that sort of thing?

Mrs. MELLER. Well, I give her \$5.00 some good soul give it to me and I give her \$5.00 and I spend two or \$3.00, little bit, not as much as George Bouhe. It's our very good friend, George Bouhe; he—we haven't so very much and he is person who helps everybody. I mean, he never—how to explain—interested what nationality you are. If you are in need and you are not lazy, let me point that out, he is willing to help with his strength, with his car go with you and help everywhere.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you remember who gave you the \$5.00 to give to Marina?

Mrs. MELLER. \$5.00—my goodness! If I could remember.

Mr. LIEBELER. It isn't that important, but if you remember to keep it from being counted twice.

Mrs. MELLER. Just a second, I think it was Mrs. Steed—

Mr. LIEBELER. How do you spell that?

Mrs. MELLER. Steed [spelling], from oilman, wife.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did either Oswald or Marina at any time that you knew them tell you or say in your hearing what kind of a job Oswald had while he was in Russia?

Mrs. MELLER. Oh, my goodness, yes; he mentioned something but, something—how to explain—something that you have with machinery. I mean something to fix like hard—just like hardware store, something with those things. I think it was a dirty job. Not exactly locks but some kind of job in factory with screws and some gauges, I think is kind of work he did but I am very sorry I never was listening real good.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he tell you how much he was paid at the job?

Mrs. MELLER. I don't recall; I just did not pay much attention. I know he was having a pretty good room there.

Mr. LIEBELER. What did he tell you about that?

Mrs. MELLER. That he was having good room and something—maybe I am not right, sir, I am afraid to say, like \$80 month.

Mr. LIEBELER. Eighty rubles?

Mrs. MELLER. Eighty rubles a month.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he say or indicate he received help from the Red Cross or any other phase of the Embassy?

Mrs. MELLER. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. As far as you know any money he ever received in Russia is from his job, is that correct?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes; and I am not clear here because I may have heard something and never paid much attention.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he ever mention anything about hunting trips he used to go on in Russia?

Mrs. MELLER. Something he said one time that he went with some Russian boys, probably young people, hunting one time, I think he mentioned and it was something like duckhunting, something like that.

Mr. LIEBELER. To the best of your recollection, he said that he only went on one hunting trip?

Mrs. MELLER. I mean I heard him saying one time that, just sort mention; he will not go in any detail anywhere I think as much as I know him.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he tell you or did Marina tell you about the circumstances under which Marina and Lee met and became married in Russia?

Mrs. MELLER. Just far away rumors like I cannot imagine because I am not clear with that. It is so far away and so unclear I am afraid to let you know but in short, I think Marina said she met him at somewhere at a dancing place.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did Marina tell you that she had lived in Leningrad for awhile?

Mrs. MELLER. I think she was born there and lived some time and then was in Minsk.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did she tell you why she moved from Leningrad to Minsk?

Mrs. MELLER. No; never asked much.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did Oswald ever tell you why he decided to return to the United States?

Mrs. MELLER. I do not remember.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he speak of any difficulties that he had in returning to the United States, that you remember?

Mrs. MELLER. No; I will not say; it was mentioned Embassy and that Embassy even decided to help with the money. That was all I think I remember.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did Oswald ever express any dislike toward the State Department or the Embassy because they delayed his return to the United States?

Mrs. MELLER. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he ever express any hostility toward the U.S. Government, that you can remember?

Mrs. MELLER. I will not say. I just do not recall. He never said too much is what I say.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you ever hear him speak of President Kennedy?

Mrs. MELLER. No, never.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he ever speak of Governor Connally?

Mrs. MELLER. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he appear to you to be a dangerous person at the time that you knew him in the sense that he would become violent?

Mrs. MELLER. Not exactly dangerous but he would look ridiculous in ways. He was some kind of strange person; you cannot talk to him. You could not find two sentences that will go without difficulties. He will always say something against—some way.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you ever get the impression as to whether Oswald was well liked when he was in Russia or was he unpopular when he was in Russia, do you know?

Mrs. MELLER. My personal opinion, this person could never be friendly with anybody, very friendly, I mean. He was such a person that you never can come near even if you want to.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did Marina ever tell you or give you any indication as to why she married Lee Oswald?

Mrs. MELLER. That's quite a question—why she married Lee Oswald?

Mr. LIEBELER. Yes.

Mrs. MELLER. I don't remember what she said but I remember one sentence which is even caught in my head that she said. She wished all her life to have room of her own, is what she said after, you know; that she's tired living not like a human living. She wanted to have piece of her personal life and piece of her room just to her own. I remember her expressing that very, very deeply.

Mr. LIEBELER. Now, do you remember that some time in the fall of 1962, after the Oswalds had moved out of their apartment in Fort Worth that Marina called you on the telephone one evening and told you that she wanted to leave Oswald? Would you tell us about that?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes, yes, sir. It was in November, I think on certain Monday about 10 in the evening, she will call me and say that her husband beat her and she came out from the apartment and reached the filling station and said the man—she did not have a penny of money, and the good soul helped her to dial my number and she's talking to me if she can come over my house. I was speechless because to this time I even didn't know they were in Dallas. To understand, sir, we went to Fort Worth two or three times to help Marina and then was for certain period quiet and then I do not know how long, maybe 6 weeks, maybe month, maybe 3 weeks and then I had this call. I said "Where are you?" She said "In Dallas." Certainly, then my husband was at home; I came to my husband and I asked him if we can take Marina. He did not want to. We have one bedroom apartment and he said "Do not have very much space." I like a maniac woman, started to beg and said "We have to help poor woman; she's on the street with baby. We could not leave her like that; we had our trouble and somebody helped us." My husband said "Okay let her come. She said to me she did not have a penny of money. I said "Take a taxi and come here and we will pay the way." So, about 11 or 10:40 she came over our house so like she was staying in light blouse and skirt with baby on her hand, couple diapers and that was all; no coat, no money, nothing.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did she appear to have been beaten up at that time; did she have bruises?

Mrs. MELLER. She was very nervous; did not try to cry very much but you can see she was shaking.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did she appear to be bruised?

Mrs. MELLER. I will not say exactly but she was out of herself.

Mr. LIEBELER. She seemed to be upset?

Mrs. MELLER. Nervous, upset and looked like—she did not cry exactly and at me now but looks like she cried—her eyes.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did she tell you what she and Oswald had been arguing about?

Mrs. MELLER. I do not remember. She said he beat her and I do not remember asking really for what or something. I did not ask for arguments, really, because it was so shocking and so unagreeable. I do not think I went into detail.

Mr. LIEBELER. How long did Marina stay with you?

Mrs. MELLER. Marina stay, I think 1 week, 5 days at my home, something like Monday until Friday and Friday she went to another family by the name of Mr. Ford, Mr. and Mrs. Ford.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did Marina tell you any time during that week that she stayed with you what she and Oswald had been arguing about and what their difficulties were?

Mrs. MELLER. No, no; she did not say much. She mention that her husband could not find proper jobs. They don't want to take him or he could not find; she did not know herself very much. You can see without speaking word of English I do not know what he could come home and tell her; I cannot imagine. She said Lee could not find job and they are in trouble and she did not say much. By the way, she was so skinny to this time and so undernourished; look as skinny as she could be and she did not feel good. She had pain everywhere in her body and looking at her I decided to take her to doctor and let check her health a little bit.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you take her to the doctor?

Mrs. MELLER. So, I took her during this week she stay with me. I took her to the G-y-n by the name Doctor Paul Wolff.

Mr. LIEBELER. W-o-l-f [spelling]?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes, W-o-l-f-f [spelling].

Mr. LIEBELER. W-o-l-f-f [spelling].

Mrs. MELLER. He give her examination and said in my presence, said she's very undernourished and if she will not put at least 5 pounds immediately she will have pain everywhere; that she is just weak and need to eat better and mean she was not eating good at all. She had bad appetite.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did Marina tell you how long she had been living in Dallas?

Mrs. MELLER. I do not remember, sir, exactly.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you remember her saying anything about living in the home of Elena Hall?

Mrs. MELLER. Elena Hall; yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. What did she tell you about that?

Mrs. MELLER. That Mrs. Hall was very good to her and she stayed there probably about 3 weeks if not more.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did she tell you how long it had been since she lived in Mrs. Hall's home?

Mrs. MELLER. Can you repeat that question?

Mr. LIEBELER. Yes; did she tell you how long it had been since she had left Mrs. Hall's home? In other words, I want to know how long she had been living in Dallas with Oswald.

Mrs. MELLER. No; I do not recall her saying. But may I go back?

Mr. LIEBELER. Yes.

Mrs. MELLER. It is time—thank you for remembering, helping me here. It was the time between Fort Worth and our family and, in other words, I think now like it is my recollection he lost a job in Fort Worth and went to Dallas look for job. During this time Marina stay at Mrs. Hall home for 3 or 4 weeks, if I am correct. It is not easy to remember, really, and during this time we heard, I think he called on telephone to us, Lee Harvey, and asked if we know something, if we can help him with a job. In all time when we visited them in apartment in Fort Worth and I heard from Marina that her husband may lose job pretty soon, maybe next week or later because he was temporary there, just like good soul, I say "You have to come to Dallas which is larger town and maybe he find job." I did not say personally about George Bouhe maybe

he find job there, just mention in general. So he called and ask if we can help him and again, as I repeat, for the sake of the poor woman which could not speak word of English and her little baby, I asked my husband. I was stupid enough to beg him to help to find job for Lee Harvey in Dallas. Mr. Meller has a former friend with whom he was working back at Harris but this time it was not Sanger-Harris. It was just A. Harris store and he was working with certain Mrs. Helen Cunningham. Later, Mrs. Cunningham left A. Harris and was working for employment office in Dallas.

Mr. LIEBELER. The Texas Employment Commission?

Mrs. MELLER. Texas Employment Commission; so, I asked him and I said "Your former friend, Mrs. Helen Cunningham, maybe she can find job for him. Please ask her." He did not want to do it. He said just because I ask him and begged him so much he called Mrs. Helen Cunningham; told her we had a couple which arrived from Russia; she's Russian, and he is American. They are not very long here and he is looking for job but he made a note and he said, "Mrs. Cunningham, be careful and check him because he came from Soviet Union." He said be careful so we would not have any trouble and you understand, because we did not like they came from Soviet Union and I do not know, however, we heard somebody mention he was checked and Mrs. Cunningham said, "Don't worry, Mr. Meller; we will try do right thing," and that was all when he called to us. He came one time during this period without Marina for half hour to my house. I give him sandwich and cup of tea and he went back to look for jobs.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he tell you at that time where he had been looking for jobs?

Mrs. MELLER. He will not mention exactly. He was sleeping; I think he was staying YMCA this time, living there and looking for job. He said he has little piece of paper and some notices there.

Mr. LIEBELER. Names on them?

Mrs. MELLER. But he never go into detail, never, never, never. He will mention but you will never find details out.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you ever hear of any other place where Lee Oswald stayed during this period other than the YMCA?

Mrs. MELLER. Never hear and when Marina Oswald later called me at night, I was speechless that she was already in Dallas and we did not know a word and when she mention name where she—they were living, I did not have address. I did not know where they were living, how long they are; they did not say a thing but I took her home, over my house for 5 days.

Mr. LIEBELER. Then she went to Mrs. Ford's?

Mrs. MELLER. Then she went to Mrs. Ford's.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you know how long she stayed there?

Mrs. MELLER. I believe 1 week, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did she then go to the home of—

Mrs. MELLER. Then she went to Mr. and Mrs. Ray.

Mr. LIEBELER. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Ray?

Mrs. MELLER. I tried remember first name—Frank Ray.

Mr. LIEBELER. Is it Thomas or Frank?

Mrs. MELLER. Frank Ray; Frank Ray. I think Ray. Now, it was the last time we saw Marina. By the way, I must apologize—coming back when she was living at our home, we did not—she was separated with Lee Harvey to this time. She went out from him. He never call to our home. He never visited. We were working people. We will leave her with food at my home and we will come back in the evening. Nobody call; she never went somewhere because we do not have a car, or even if George Bouhe help with car, something, because we did not have car, could not drive either. It was last time when I saw Marina Oswald and her girl who was about 4 or 6 months, I think. She was not even sitting.

Mr. LIEBELER. Don't you remember seeing Lee and Marina Oswald at a party at the Fords?

Mrs. MELLER. It was after I saw them at my house in December maybe. I do not recall exactly day, 20 or 22 December; it was party at home of Mr. and Mrs. Ford.

Mr. LIEBELER. Could it have been the 28th of December, after Christmas?
Mrs. MELLER. Yes; it was 29th; yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. Tell me us about that party, would you, please—who was there; did Oswald come?

Mrs. MELLER. Well, I do not know; it was probably over 20 people there and as I heard, Marina and Oswald were not invited there at all.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you remember who told you that?

Mrs. MELLER. But were invited certain Mr. and Mrs. De——

Mr. LIEBELER. De Mohrenschildt?

Mrs. MELLER. De Mohrenschildt, thank you very much, and I heard from the other people that the De Mohrenschildt's called to Mr. and Mrs. Ford and asked if he can bring with him people, Marina and Oswald. They are all lost by themselves, have no place to go or something and he brought them with.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you see Oswald come with De Mohrenschildt?

Mrs. MELLER. I did not see exactly walking in but I heard then that he brought them there.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you see Oswald that night at all?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes; I saw him; he was strange acting and strange looking, cold, not very talkative. It was a certain Japanese girl, don't know her name, he was all evening with this girl and Marina was left all by herself going with one group of people or another and when finally somebody play with piano, I see her sitting, trying to catch some songs singing and I saw her try to smile, try to make her face human. I did not remember seeing her and him together this evening. He was all time with different girl which we met first time and I do not recognize her name.

Mr. LIEBELER. Have you ever seen the Japanese girl since?

Mrs. MELLER. Never saw before or after.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you know how we can get her name?

Mrs. MELLER. Do not recall name or anything, sir; I am very sorry. I would like to help you.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you talk to Oswald that evening?

Mrs. MELLER. Do not remember anything; my memory—don't know.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did Oswald drink at the party at all; did you notice?

Mrs. MELLER. Do not remember seeing him.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you know whether Oswald ever drank very much?

Mrs. MELLER. Never saw him drink; do not recall. I saw Marina eating pretty much; looks like she was real hungry. Some our friends notice and we had pity for the girl maybe she did not have at home anything to eat.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you see Oswald leave the party?

Mrs. MELLER. Do not recall.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you recall any discussion about Oswald after he left the party? Did you overhear any conversation about him and Marina?

Mrs. MELLER. No; do not recall; I heard something from the people talking in a group and it was certain person by the name of, oh, my goodness, excuse me just a second my husband help me with the name—Lev Aronson, and I heard later that he talked to Lee Oswald and says that he is a poor idiot and completely crazy man.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did he tell you why he thought that?

Mrs. MELLER. No; I did not talk to him. I heard that conversation, you know, going with a group of people and it was just——

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you have a party at your house some time following the party at the Ford residence?

Mrs. MELLER. After Ford party?

Mr. LIEBELER. Yes.

Mrs. MELLER. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you have an open house on the day following?

Mrs. MELLER. No; you mean 29 of December?

Mr. LIEBELER. Yes; approximately.

Mrs. MELLER. Just a second, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. Or the next day—within a few days following the Ford party?

Mrs. MELLER. I could not recall really, but if I had, I never had Oswalds over to my house.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you know Charles Edward Harris from Georgetown, Tex.?

Mrs. MELLER. Charles Edward Harris, yes; I met him one time or two.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was he at the Ford party; do you remember?

Mrs. MELLER. I do not think so.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was there any discussion as far as you can recall either at the Ford party or at your place or anywhere during this period of time where the question of whether Lee Oswald was a Russian agent was discussed?

Mrs. MELLER. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you ever discuss that question with anybody?

Mrs. MELLER. No; never.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you ever hear anybody discuss it?

Mrs. MELLER. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did it ever occur to you that Oswald might be an agent of the Soviet Union?

Mrs. MELLER. Could not say; can be but I cannot say.

Mr. LIEBELER. You do not remember talking about that?

Mrs. MELLER. No; we never talked about that; I remember exactly.

Mr. LIEBELER. Now, have you told us everything that you can remember about your meetings with Oswald and Marina that you think the Commission would be interested in; can you think of anything else?

Mrs. MELLER. I am thinking and seems to be that's all.

Mr. LIEBELER. How well do you know De Mohrenschildt?

Mrs. MELLER. How long?

Mr. LIEBELER. Yes.

Mrs. MELLER. Oh, I know him about 6 years, probably; met him very seldom and we were never friends, real close, never.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was he friendly with Oswald, do you know?

Mrs. MELLER. Try to help, I think was—try to help as much as we did. He had a car; he took them, I think to Anna Ray house and tried to bring some of her dresses and things belonging. If he was later together with Lee Oswald, I do not have any idea.

Mr. LIEBELER. Were you surprised when you heard that Oswald had been arrested in connection with the assassination?

Mrs. MELLER. I do not—if I say surprised or was shocked when President Kennedy was assassinated; I was shocked. I was in such sorrow that I could not explain to you. I do not have enough English words in my vocabulary to describe what shock it was and later, when I find out it was Lee Harvey, I was completely shocked. I was completely out of my place and afraid for what a person, if he really did that, what it could happen to us. It was terrible shock; I could not explain to you. We could not believe at first at all.

Mr. LIEBELER. You were very surprised when you heard it was Lee Oswald?

Mrs. MELLER. We could not believe he will do things like that.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you remember being interviewed by the FBI?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes, sir; three times.

Mr. LIEBELER. Three times?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes, sir—oh, I mean from FBI one time; Secret Service another time, and third time it was from police. I cannot recall name but it was three times together.

Mr. LIEBELER. As far as you can remember the FBI only interviewed you once?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes; once FBI, once Secret Service, and once Dallas group.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was it the Dallas police force?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. Dallas police officers?

Mrs. MELLER. Yes, yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you ever form an opinion as to who was responsible for these marital difficulties the Oswalds were having? Did you think it was mostly Lee Harvey's fault or did you think it was partly her fault, or what?

Mrs. MELLER. It was not easy to judge but I think since we do not know them very close and very long, let's say this way but it seems to me again that Lee Oswald was not normal because later I heard from somebody that

he beat Marina and he did one time, I think even Marina told to me that when they moved in apartment the bulb is burned through and she has to put new lamp in it. He demanded when the master is home the bathtub supposed to be full with water so he can take bath before he sit down to eat and one time he come home and it was dark and she has to put lamp in the room, she did not have time to put water in the tub and he find tub was without water and he beat her.

Mr. LIEBELER. Marina told you that?

Mrs. MELLER. I think she told me that or somebody from our group; I do not recall who, but I remember that and I was shocked. I thought that something must be wrong with man if he is every time running to beat her.

Mr. LIEBELER. You never saw or talked to either Oswald or Marina at any time after the party at the Ford residence around Christmas time, 1962?

Mrs. MELLER. No, never.

Mr. LIEBELER. Is that right?

Mrs. MELLER. No, sir; never and probably passed 1 year and 2 months since we did not hear or did not know from them anything. When it happened—when the assassination happened, it passed 12 to 14 months.

Mr. LIEBELER. You did not hear that they had moved from Dallas to New Orleans and back to Dallas?

Mrs. MELLER. Nothing; not a word, not a telephone call, or nothing. It was the last time at Ford's family.

Mr. LIEBELER. I don't have any more questions, Mrs. Meller. If you can think of anything else that you would like to add, just go right ahead.

Mrs. MELLER. Would love if I remember but so far I try to think if I did not forget anything. I do not think so.

Mr. LIEBELER. Then we shall terminate the deposition at this time. I want to thank you very much for being so cooperative and coming down and giving us the testimony you have and the Commission appreciates it very much. You have been a very good and gracious witness; thank you very much.

Mrs. MELLER. Thank you very much.

TESTIMONY OF ELENA A. HALL

The testimony of Elena A. Hall was taken at 5 p.m., on March 24, 1964, in the office of the U.S. attorney, 301 Post Office Building, Bryan and Ervay Streets, Dallas, Tex., by Mr. Wesley J. Liebeler, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mr. LIEBELER. Mrs. Hall, would you please rise and raise your right hand. Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in the testimony that you are about to give?

Mrs. HALL. I sure do.

Mr. LIEBELER. Mrs. Hall, my name is Wesley J. Liebeler. This is Albert Jenner. We are both of the legal staff of the President's Commission investigating the assassination of President Kennedy.

The Staff has been authorized to take testimony from you and from other witnesses by the Commission pursuant to authority which has been granted to the Commission by Executive Order 11130 dated November 29, 1963, and Joint Resolution of Congress 137.

It is my understanding that Mr. Rankin, general counsel of the Commission sent you a letter last week and included copies of those two documents, as well as a copy of the rules of procedure pertaining to the taking of testimony. Did you receive that letter?

Mrs. HALL. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. With that letter were included copies of those documents referred to, isn't that correct?

Mrs. HALL. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. We want to question you today about your knowledge of Lee