

© Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI, Inc. 2006

**Interview of Former Special Agent of the FBI
James P. Hosty (1952 – 1979)
Jack O’Flaherty, Interviewer
March 8, 2006**

Edited for spelling, repetitions, etc. by Sandra Robinette on April 13, 2006. Final corrections from Mr. Hosty by Sandra Robinette on May 11, 2006.

O’Flaherty

(O): This is Special Agent Jack O’Flaherty, retired Agent of the FBI. The date is March the eighth, 2006. I’m at the residence of Jim Hosty, retired Special Agent of the FBI.

This interview for the Oral History Program is being conducted at his residence in Punta Gorda, Florida. The time is 1:30 p.m.

At this point in time I would ask Jim to please read the Waiver Rights so we have it on the recorder.

Hosty

(H): “We the undersigned convey the rights to the intellectual content of our interview on this date to the Former Special Agents of the FBI. The transfer is in exchange for the Society’s efforts to preserve the historical legacy of the FBI and its members. We understand that portions of this interview may be deleted for security reasons.

Unless otherwise restricted, we agree that the acceptable sections can be published on the World Wide Web; the recording transferred to an established repository for the preservation and research.”

O: Thank you very much, Jim.

The interview for today in conjunction with the Society of Former Special Agents and the Foundation of the Society for its Oral History Program will be concerning the Lee Harvey Oswald case and the assassination of former President John F. Kennedy. Jim Hosty was assigned to the Oswald case during his active duty time with the Bureau.

So what we will start with, Jim providing us an overview of that particular case and then toward the end of the interview there will be some special comments from Jim regarding additional information that was obtained subsequently to the preparation of the book. The book I’m looking at is entitled *Assignment Oswald*, which Jim has offered and which was reviewed in connection with the preparation for this case.

James P. Hosty

March 8, 2006

Page 2

O: Got that Jim? I'll turn it over to you and get a summary of that particular case and then we'll get into the case, and as we move along Jim, if there are any questions, I'll just pose them to you.

H: All right. I'd like to start out by making a few corrections. Lee Oswald was known as Lee Oswald, very seldom was he called Lee Harvey Oswald which is now a popular way.

As you know the Bureau, we always put in all of the middle names, full middle names and everything so that there would be no confusion as to which Lee Oswald we're talking about. But he was Lee Oswald, and he only used Harvey when he absolutely had to. Of course the Bureau used the full title.

I'm also the third of three Agents who was assigned to Lee Oswald's case. The first one John Fain had it for two years and he is the one that interviewed Oswald twice before the assassination. Then the second Agent to have it assigned was Milton Kaact. K-a-a-c-t.

O: Thank you for spelling it. I should have asked you on Fain. As we move along with any other names, please spell them out.

H: Okay, yeah John Fain.

O: Thank You.

H: Milton Kaact was in New Orleans and he had the case next. Oswald was interviewed one time in New Orleans by Jack Quigley. Unfortunately all three of the people I have mentioned here are now deceased.

I got the case in October of 1963, one month before the assassination, lucky me. I never did interview Oswald until he was arrested. Now one of the criticisms of the Warren Commission was that I should have interviewed him. If they had bothered to ask me which they didn't, I could have told them I was forbidden to interview Oswald because he was a contact case.

As you all know, in 105 contact cases, when they contact the Soviet Embassy, you may not interview them without specific permission. In this case, I am sure it would never have been granted because the CIA was involved. They were the ones that came up with the information about Oswald talking to the Soviets. They would have never, ever given permission because this was a new technique and it would have blown all sorts of cover down in Mexico City and would have serious repercussions in the Mexican Government if they had gotten wind that the CIA was being allowed to monitor the Soviet Embassy.

James P. Hosty

March 8, 2006

Page 3

H: I might add that I found out later that all of the, quote CIA Agents unquote, who were conducting the surveillance were actually FBI Agents who had left the Bureau, gone to CIA and had set up a system almost identical to what we had in New York and Washington Field Office.

I got that straight from the legal attaché from Mexico. I forget his name right off hand but he told me and several other agents at an in-service in September of '63 that these were all ex-FBI Agents and they were conducting a surveillance exactly like we did in New York and Washington.

They picked up this information and relayed it to us, now this then put special coverage on the investigation. I might add that.

Now, let me see what I've got, I changed my train of thought here.

Okay, I might want to add here that I'm extremely bitter towards the Warren Commission and Earl Warren in particular. I was able to find out through recent research that the Warren Commission originally exonerated the FBI. I have in my possession, the rough draft of the Warren Commission's chapter having to do, let's see, criticizing the FBI. There was no criticism whatsoever. I have been able to determine through sources of mine, that Earl Warren, when he saw this, said this is not acceptable and sent it back for re-writing. He wanted the FBI criticized. A reason for this, I have determined through Bureau officials and other research, was because J. Edgar Hoover attempted to block the appointment of Earl Warren as Supreme Court Chief Justice.

I have done research and found out that Earl Warren had his appointment tied up in committee because of a report that Hoover had given to a Senator Langer of the Judiciary Committee. They finally had to give Earl Warren a recess appointment because they could not get the Earl Warren appointment out of committee.

It had to do with, I guess you would call it, personal escapades. I think that was the term we used to use in the Bureau on the part of Earl Warren and he thought that this was not something that Hoover should have brought up to try to block his appointment. Because of this, Earl Warren wanted the FBI criticized so he brought in, now get this, Norman Redlich who was the controversial person who President Ford tried to take off the Warren Commission staff because of his subversive background.

O: Redlich?

H: R-e-d-l-i-c-h. I believe is how you spell it.

O: Okay.

James P. Hosty

March 8, 2006

Page 4

H: Norman Redlich. You know Ford was involved in trying to put him off the committee but Earl Warren over-ruled him and he was put on the committee whether they liked it or not.

Okay. Let's see. He then rewrote the section on the criticism of the Bureau and criticized me by name for not having interviewed Oswald, but not bothering to ask me why I hadn't interviewed him. But then it wouldn't have made any difference if we had straightened that out then Earl Warren would have told them to go back and find something else. This was a situation that was doomed from the beginning. Okay?

O: That's fine, Jim. One of the areas I read through the book that was of interest in the actual Oswald case, which many people may even have forgotten, was the Officer Tippit involvement. I noticed in the book, Jim, that Patrolman Tippit was shot four times by Oswald

H: Right.

O: And that the ballistic tests and reports were, that was from the state authorities or from the FBI? Apparently matched the bullets?

H: Yeah, FBI.

O: FBI. They matched the bullets that Oswald used in his revolver?

H: Yes. Yeah. There were five witnesses to the actual shooting.

O: And that was the other interesting point.

H: Yeah, they had, there was a lock on that one. There was no question that he was observed by five people to do it. The ballistics. They found the shells and they removed four bullets from him. They found four shells. Now five shots were fired, I guess one shell was never recovered; it got lost in the confusion and one bullet apparently missed Tippit and flew off into who knows where. Three of the bullets were matched up with three of the shells and one of the shells cannot be matched up with a bullet and one bullet can't be matched up with a shell.

H: But they can definitely say ... that there were two sisters overheard the commotion came out ... saw Oswald standing over Tippit. There was a taxi driver and I believe, a carpet layer also saw it and then there were other people that saw Oswald fleeing. There were thirteen people all involved in either the shooting of Tippit or his fleeing and going into the theater.

- O: And that Tippit by the way, for the purpose of the recording is T-i-p-p-i-t, I believe.
- H: Right. It might be two T's at the end, I'm not sure.
- O: Okay and how about, did Tippit have the information on the general description of the perpetrator at that point in time or do you know what caused him to stop Oswald?
- H: It went over the air be on the look out for a white male, I think they were off a little bit on the age. They had the right general description, but they had him a little bit older. Oswald's hairline was receding and they had him in his thirties rather than his twenties. And with a rifle. They thought he had a rifle. Well of course he wasn't carrying his rifle but he was apparently walking down the street. Of course a good cop will spot a guy who doesn't look right and maybe has a harried look or has kind of a worried look about him or something drew his attention to Oswald. But he did fit the description that a witness had seen, a white male with this description up in the window prior and then stand back with a rifle at port arms and look down and then walk away.
- O: That was not with the rifle but with his revolver. Was it a revolver?
- H: No, no, this was at the scene of Kennedy's killing.
- O: Oh.
- H: Yeah. There was a witness at Kennedy's killing that gave this description.
- O: I see.
- H: Oswald fit this description with one exception. He was younger than the description. But this person saw Oswald shooting Kennedy.
- O: And then, after shooting Tippit, Oswald then flees from the area?
- H: Right.
- O: And then they, the policemen detect another witness who said that he went into the movie theater?

James P. Hosty

March 8, 2006

Page 6

H: Yes, a witness saw him sneak into the movie theater. Yes, a shoe store salesman saw him. The squad car was going by with a siren blaring and Oswald ducked into the store obviously, didn't want the squad car to see him, looking real suspicious and anxious and then left the store and went into the theater without paying. Walked right by, didn't go by the window to get a ticket, just snuck right in. Apparently the woman at the theater that was selling the tickets heard the commotion and she had come out of the building and there was nobody there to stop him and he just walked, went right in.

Now, the police then that got this information, this person was fleeing and was very definitely the suspect on Tippit. The theater was immediately surrounded by police. There were three FBI Agents, by the way, involved that went into the building, Bob Barrett, Robert M. Barrett, a very close friend of mine. Also Ardwell Odum and I believe another Agent, I believe it was David Yates. I'm not sure of that. They're all mentioned in my book.

O: Okay.

H: Yeah and they all played prominent parts in the investigation, Bob Barrett and Odum but ...

O: So they were there going into the theater with the police officers?

H: Yes. Right and Bob Barrett was involved directly in the apprehension of Oswald. Oswald was sitting down in the theater trying to be inconspicuous and a Sergeant Mc Donald approached him. He was pointed out, by the way, by the shoe salesman, who came into the building with the police and said, "That's the guy I saw sneak in." They then surrounded him and as Sergeant Mc Donald walked up to him, Oswald yelled out, "This is it." And he pulled out the pistol and tried to shoot Sergeant Mc Donald.

Sgt. McDonald used the old technique that they taught us the first day in training school. He got his the web of his hand down in the hammer of the revolver. Like they say, it smarts a little bit when the hammer comes down but it sure beats getting' shot.

O: That's right.

H: That's what the sergeant did. And he took the pistol away from Oswald, you know, snapped his wrist back and pulled it away from him and hit him in the process. It was all in one sweeping motion and Oswald got clipped upside of the head by his own pistol.

James P. Hosty

March 8, 2006

Page 7

H: By the way when I went to the police station to talk to Oswald, Oswald remarked to me, he had this mark on his head and he remarked to me, said, "Well, I fought the officer, I had it coming." Now if that had come up about civil rights and being beaten and all that, I was prepared to testify that he admitted that he had it coming.

O: That's interesting and then of course, in the book there's reference to Marina, his wife.

H: We had an investigation on her under the SOBIR Program, that's the Soviet Bloc Immigrants and Repatriates Program. They had information, good information from informants, defectors that the Soviets were going to infiltrate the United States with immigrants and repatriates to build up an illegal network of espionage in the event that the diplomatic immunity was taken away from the Embassy people and they could no longer operate. Then they would have a network in this country. There were certain criteria; they had to be within a certain age limit, had to have a certain educational limit and come from Soviet Bloc countries.

Marina fit the category perfectly. She was the only the third known Soviet spouse allowed to leave the Soviet Union with their non-Soviet spouse and go to the west. It turns out, we didn't have it at the time, but as the investigation continued it turned out that Marina's uncle, the man who raised her, she was an orphan, was raised by her uncle and aunt, her mother's brother was a MVD Colonel, a full colonel in the MVD in the Gulag section of the prison section. Also, she was a registered pharmacist or the equivalent, the Russian equivalent of a pharmacist so she was not an ignorant little peasant girl as the press tried to pretend she was. You know, the sweet little girl. She was one tough cookie. I interviewed her after the assassination and believe me she isn't what people think she was.

I'm not saying that she was involved. I don't think she was involved in the assassination of Kennedy but we were looking at her for other reasons.

O: Okay. I also noticed in the book that Marina apparently at some point in time when she went to the garage at the house where she was living and showed the policemen where Oswald kept a rifle.

H: Right.

O: And that it was no longer there.

H: Right.

O: And that Marina later confided to Ruth Paine, who wasn't a relative, but was the woman who sort of took them in.

James P. Hosty

March 8, 2006

Page 8

H: She was a Quaker. She was a very kindly person, and people have gone after her as though she was a spy or something. She was sort of a naïve, kindly person who was trying to help out. She knew Marina was in trouble and she was also learning Russian

O: Oh.

H: And she, in fact she taught Russian in one of the local private schools in Dallas, St. Mark's High School. She taught Russian. She thought if people could only talk together, person to person you know it could ease the stress of the Cold War and so forth, that type.

O: And then I see where in the book Marina apparently confided in Ruth Paine ...

H: Ruth Paine moved to Tampa by the way.

O: Oh is that right?

H: Yeah

O: Oh, at the present time?

H: At the present time, yeah.

O: She confided in Ruth Paine. Marina said she knew he had to do it, referring to her husband, Lee Harvey Oswald. That reference, I don't know whether that came out, I wonder if that information was obtained directly from Ruth Paine?

H: Could you say that one again?

O: Yeah, apparently it's around the time that Marina had showed the police officer where Lee Harvey Oswald usually maintained his rifle in the garage but it was gone.

H: Yes, right.

O: And in conjunction with the notice of the assassination of the President, there's a reference saying that Marina later confided to Ruth Paine, her good friend, that Marina supposedly stated that she knew that Lee Harvey Oswald had done it. I guess it's based on the fact that his rifle was missing and all the rest of the circumstances surrounding it.

H: Well yes, of course, and he had shot at General Walker and she knew that.

James P. Hosty

March 8, 2006

Page 9

O: That's right.

H: She knew that General Walker who was a right-wing extremist and anti-Castro type that Oswald had taken a shot at him. Marina also knew that the shots fired at Kennedy had come from the building that she knew he worked in, which was the Texas School Book Depository. She knew that, I think, by that time it had been established that's where the shots had come from.

O: Right, and that attempt, or apparent attempt on the life of General Walker that was attributed to Oswald also.

H: Yes, right. They found a rifle slug, they dug it out of the wall of General Walker's house. It just missed Walker's head by inches, or less than inches, a fraction of an inch. It just missed him. In fact they said there were glass particles in Walker's hair, when he came to the window that's how close it was.

They could not positively say it was from Oswald's rifle because it had been distorted because of being dug out of the wall but it couldn't be eliminated either.

But other evidence was found including Oswald's statement to his wife, a written statement, they found photographs of Walker's house, the back of his house, and things like that showed that Oswald had plotted it out and planned it.

O: Jim, another recollection from reading your book, in connection with Patrolman Tippit's shooting - that Oswald was in that area because he had maintained another apartment or was in a rooming house?

H: Yes.

O: And I guess, was that because of the distance where Marina was living with the Paine's, that was very far from work from the book depository,

H: Well yes.

O: So he rented a local...

H: They were separated temporarily. I don't know, it was more for economic reasons. Ruth Paine took in Marina Oswald and the new-born baby and the other little girl but she didn't take Lee in except, for you know, for weekends.

H: Now that was in Irving Texas which is a suburb between Dallas and Fort Worth, mid-way between Dallas and Fort Worth. And the rooming house he had in the Oak Cliff area was a short bus ride to where he was working.

O: The Texas School Book Depository.

H: Yeah.

O: Okay.

H: So that's where the confusion was. We had the address at Irving. I knew I could find him at Irving. As I say, the Warren Commission in re-writing criticized me for not finding where he was living and going out and talking to him. I knew where I could find him. I could have interviewed him any time I wanted to but I was forbidden, but that's, we've already gone through that.

O: Right.

H: I get bitter over that.

O: Jim, you also mentioned to me earlier that subsequent to the writing of the book, there were several different officials with the FBI or others that maybe they were privy to some information and years later and passing it on to you that were of interest in connection with activities that Oswald engaged in whether it would be his visit to the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City and so maybe you'd like to just comment on that.

H: Okay, that does not appear in the book. Well, after the book came out, I had appeared on a program on CNN. I think Vince Drain was on it and former Assistant Director Cartha DeLoach was on it. What came up was the business of the so-called note that Oswald left for me, which was not threatening by the way. It was sort of a complaining note, not threatening. But they asked about that and they said, "Did Hoover know about that? Did Hoover know about the note being destroyed?"

Of course we can go into that too later. But DeLoach said Hoover knew about it - after the fact, was the way he put it. And that was news to me. And so when the program was over I asked DeLoach what he meant by that. And he explained what happened. Allen Belmont, I won't spell that out because I think we all know who Allen Belmont was.

O: Former Assistant Director.

H: Yeah he was Assistant to the Director which was higher than Assistant Director. He was the, you could say, Chief of Investigation. He had the Criminal Division, the Security Division, and the Organized Crime Division all reported directly to him. Then he to Tolson and Tolson to Hoover was the way it worked.

H: After the Warren report came out, shortly after that, Belmont retired. I think it was in late '64. He retired and Cartha DeLoach was appointed to his position as, I guess you might say, Executive Assistant or Assistant to the Director, I think it was Assistant to the Director is what they said but it was Senior Assistant Director.

DeLoach was promoted from Assistant Director to Belmont's position. And he saw in Belmont's files, that he took over, was a memorandum from Belmont to his file saying that Hoover had found out about the destruction of the note and had asked him to look into it. He says that meant Hoover did know about it because he was asking Belmont to look into it. There was no reply in there, which DeLoach said meant that what they found out was not something they wanted to put in writing so it was never completed.

I had always thought, I'll tell you this, I've always thought that the man that had told Shanklin (Gordon Shanklin, Special Agent in Charge in Dallas), that the person had told Shanklin to tell me to destroy the note was probably Johnny Mohr. I never wanted to say that and when I refused to identify him when I testified for the House Committee because I felt I owed Johnny Mohr. He was the one that saved my neck when Hoover wanted to fire me. So I just said I didn't know who told Shanklin, didn't have any idea and, but now I am of the opinion that it was not Johnny Mohr who told Shanklin. Shanklin did not do it on his own, that's for darn sure. He definitely had to get somebody to tell him.

O: Was there any other, in addition to what you mentioned about Belmont, any other official, any other information as to what occurred? This was all subsequent to your book that you learned from other officials about the Oswald's presence in the Cuban Mission, excuse me the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City. Any other interesting aspects of the case that weren't available at the time that you had the book?

H: Well, could I complete my thought on this.

O: This view?

H: It's kind of, kind of rough here, maybe you don't want to hear it.

O: Well, yeah, I didn't, if it's not really about the Oswald matter per se ...

H: Yeah, maybe it has to do with that, okay. So if you can delete that if you want but I will complete it by saying that I am now of the opinion, I can't prove it, just as I couldn't prove that it was Johnny Mohr, but I am of the opinion it was probably Clyde Tolson. That's the one person that would be immune from any wrath of Hoover but that is only supposition. All I know is that Belmont said Hoover knew about it after the fact and never did anything about it because there was nothing in the file to indicate what had happened.

Now, I've kept that to myself but this is amongst the ex-Agents and I want to set the record straight that there is no doubt in my mind, of course Shanklin has denied it, but I think he is protecting who it was who told him.

O: But I thought also you had mentioned Jim, that there might have been some other information, well you mentioned Cartha DeLoach?

H: Yeah

O: That was what you just revealed to us?

H: That's what I had reference to. Apparently DeLoach told me this and he said Hoover did know but that was it.

O: Yeah, well let me ask you this. With all your experience being involved in the Oswald investigation and the Tippit shooting and the circumstances, is there any doubt in your mind, Jim, that Oswald was the perpetrator?

H: None whatsoever. It was a slam dunk case, as they say. He was seen by, Brennan was his name, Howard Brennan was a spectator, looked up in the sixth floor and saw a person fitting Oswald's description shooting President Kennedy. They found Oswald's rifle with his prints on it. He had his left palm print on the forward part of the rifle where he held it. They found Oswald's right palm print on the bag that he took it into the book depository with. There were threads found on the butt plate of the rifle that matched his shirt that he was wearing. He fled the scene and, of course, the fact that Tippit came up to him and just probably was questioning him, didn't have his revolver unbuckled or out of the holster, so it was probably just one of these things, "Buddy what's your name, can I see some ID?" And with that Oswald shoots him, which is not a common thing.

O: Right. And I guess it would be many people that probably would agree based on as you said, on the physical type of evidence that was available, and then there are many that would say 'well all right Oswald did it but there was some sort of conspiracy.' And, of course, you've heard the whole broad scope of the various conspiracy theories.

O: As far as the fact that Oswald visited the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City, you're convinced that had to do with a prior desire on his part to travel?

H: Oh definitely. Castro had threatened Kennedy. There is an Associated Press release back in September the ninth, shortly before Oswald went to Mexico City. He met with the Russians. He also met with the Cubans but for some reason the CIA withheld that information from the Bureau. But he met with the Cubans. We learned, since the assassination, from SOLO source, that is the two Childs brothers, that Oswald ...

O: Two sources of the FBI?

H: Two of the best informants we ever had.

O: Right.

H: This is all a matter of public record now. We learned that Jack Childs, the New York brother, met with Castro and Castro told him that Oswald had offered to kill Kennedy. Now I don't know what more you need than that.

O: Excuse me, Jim, but as far as you're concerned or what you understand it wasn't that Castro wanted to be any part of that or involved with that.

H: He was probably shooting off his mouth. He was probably angry. He found out about ...

O: Oswald was angry?

H: No, that Castro was probably angry and made this remark to the Associated Press.

O: So this wasn't any information that the Bureau developed during the course of its investigation?

H: No. This was...

O: The Associated Press?

H: Associated Press and for some strange reason none of the press wanted to play this up, they played it down. Neither of the Dallas newspapers had it. I didn't know about it. Both New Orleans newspapers had it. So Oswald would have known about it. Then he went down to Mexico City and, according to Castro himself, said, "I'll kill him for you." So he was obviously referring to the threat that Castro had made.

H: But I've got a theory on all these assassination theories. My theory is that it's all political. There was a good article that appeared in William Buckley's paper, what is it?

O: The Observer?

H: No, Buckley wasn't on the Observer, what is it?

O: The National Review?

H: Review, right, National Review. In April of '64 he came out and said that there is a movement afoot amongst the far left in this country to try to exonerate Oswald.

They were apparently fearful that this could start another movement against the left-wing in this country similar to the McCarthy era. They were all set to put the blame on the right-wing extremists, the General Walkers and the H.L. Hunts etc., and all of a sudden they found out that Oswald was (quote) "their baby" (unquote) and they didn't want this for political reasons. They wanted to blame the right-wing so they then began a movement to either exonerate Oswald or prove that he was not really a left-winger but really a right-winger and this would fit their political agenda.

They have apparently succeeded because we've got such people as Mark Lane with his background getting involved and various other things. We've also got Oliver Stone, who is an out and out apologist for Castro, getting involved in this thing.

So what it is, it's really either left-wing wants to blame the right-wing and there going to twist it around. And I think the big fault that I see in the Warren Commission, there are seven chapters in the Warren Commission Report. As I tell people, I completely believe in five of the seven chapters. The one chapter on criticizing the FBI is, as I've explained earlier, I'm very, very bitter towards the Warren Commission about. The other section has to do with the possibility of a foreign conspiracy.

People want to have a motive. You can show them all the ballistics and everything that you want but until you give people a motive, they're not gonna really buy it and the Warren Commission, because of the restrictions they were under to (quote) "cover-up" (unquote) the Russian and/or Cuban connections, because of the restrictions they had then, they did not come forward with what I think is the obvious motive.

H: That is that Oswald was trying to kill Kennedy to impress Castro and the left-wing movement. They couldn't say that because that could have possibly caused World War III. Without a motive the public is skeptical.

O: Not comfortable.

H: That's what it comes down to. They couldn't tell the whole story, I'll give you an example. Earl Warren would not let the staff put the part about the Associated Press article in which Castro threatened Kennedy. He said, "Well, we can't put that in because we have no proof that Oswald ever read that article." And of course they gave them information from several sources that was totally ignored. I think without the motive, people aren't willing to accept the Government's version.

O: Jim, do you believe when you say the motive as far as maybe to do it for the pro-Castro Cuban movement in the United States ...

H: I am actually convinced that's it.

O: Do you think that Oswald was involved with it apparently for the very first time, the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in New Orleans ...?

H: Right.

O: In fact he was the sole member and the chairman.

H: Right.

O: But as far as what prompted him to get involved in that movement, it's not too clear on that.

H: Well, of course, he, Oswald, was a little bit weird. He was eccentric and he was, and I guess any subversive would be eccentric, in your opinion and my opinion. But he was definitely a left leaning person. Yeah, and he defected to Russia, came back, had a Russian wife. He took a left-wing stand on things.

O: But that's again particularly associated with the group of Castro Cuban movement, it's not really clear, I guess, as to what prompted him to be involved with the movement.

H: No, we don't know. He was apparently... the story that they have was that he first got into it with the Rosenberg case. He got some literature on the Rosenbergs.

O: Julius Rosenberg?

H: Julius Rosenberg and Ethel Rosenberg. Yeah, the committee to seek to free them or something and that's how he got started when he was up in New York. Then he went to Russia and supposedly he hadn't changed his mind on Communism. He just didn't like Communism Russian style and then he was gonna try Communism Cuban style.

You see they wouldn't let, they wouldn't let the staff put that in there and also there's another incidence where the staff was trying to prove that Oswald when he was ...

O: Excuse me, that's the Warren Commission staff you're referring to?

H: Yeah, right.

O: Thank you.

H: And they were trying to prove that Oswald was maybe trying to get back to Mexico City when he was stopped by Officer Tippit, and that he was a short distance from a bus stop that would have taken him out of the city, down to San Antonio and down to the border. And they wouldn't let them put that in either. No hint at all of any foreign connection. Then they came out and said that he was a lone mad man. Which well of course, he was crazy. He's a little bit eccentric. I wouldn't say he was a raving mad man but the public has not bought that story, that motive.

They want more motive. So these people with all these crazy theories are coming up with other motives.

O: Right.

H: And it does make more sense. A lot of people couldn't understand why a liberal President would have been shot by a left-wing extremist. The right-wing extremists shoot liberals. The left-wing people shoot ring-wingers. Now if Oswald had shot Reagan that would have made sense. It's an over simplification.

O: Thank you, Jim. We have to stop there. We completed side A so it's approximately 2:17. I should say 2:20 p.m. and we're going on side B now.

A question, Jim, I'd like to ask you, is based on the information during the investigation and the Warren Commission which, of course, the investigation was primarily conducted by Agents of the FBI for the Warren Commission.

H: Right, yeah there were two phases.

O: Yeah, it indicated that Oswald visited the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City to obtain a transit visa from there to go to Cuba, where he then was going to be awaiting a visa from the then Soviet Government to return to Russia. I was just wondering in the investigation prior to that, was there any indication either through Ruth Paine or other friends that they were aware that apparently, I say apparently, Lee Harvey was interested in returning to Russia with his wife, Marina and the children?

H: Now, you mean did we learn before the assassination?

O: Yes.

H: No.

O: No?

H: We, I was just getting into the deal. I had just talked to Ruth Paine one time before the assassination and I'd kind of have developed her as a source against Oswald that could keep me apprised of what he was up to and also tried to set up an interview with Marina.

Now, as you know, we normally like to have two Agents on a subject interview and I was by myself. We were not office of preference yet, we were waiting for New Orleans to send the material to see ... I thought maybe they had already interviewed Marina because when the case went from Dallas to New Orleans in the summer of '63, an interview was pending. Now they had the case down there for several months and I thought it was very likely that they had interviewed Marina already and I wanted to see if they had any, what they had developed. Maybe it wouldn't have been necessary to interview Marina. And also wanted to see, you know, generally what all, what we could find out and then bring a second Agent back and interview Marina in detail.

Probably if the assassination had not occurred, the interview of Marina would have taken place probably that weekend, Thanksgiving weekend, Thanksgiving week or maybe right after Thanksgiving. But as it turned out, she wasn't a very good person to interview. She lied through her teeth all the time. But I wanted to at least get a run-down to see what New Orleans had and there was nothing.

O: Nothing.

H: Yeah.

O: Do you know where Marina is today?

H: Yeah she's in Rockwall, Texas. She's living with her second husband. I think they were divorced and then re-married or maybe they're back together again without the benefit of clergy but last I heard she was in Rockwall, Texas. Yeah.

O: And the children. There were two children?

H: And then she had one by her second husband. She had a boy by her second husband. She had the two girls, the one that was born in Russia and then the one that was born in Dallas.

O: In Dallas?

H: Yeah.

O: Now they'd be grown by now.

H: Now, Marina could be a grandmother by now.

O: Sure, the two young girls.

Jim, we're just about concluding then. We certainly appreciate all your time and the interest that we've all had in this particular case. On behalf of the Oral History Program staff, we want to thank you very much for taking the time to contribute to this program.

H: Yeah. Anything else you want to add or questions?

O: I don't right now, you have any parting thoughts or comments? We've covered the Warren [Commission] as far as that additional information. I know, of course, the Soviet, the Soviets at that time, everybody was thinking that they may have been involved but all indications were in the cooperation that was given it was ...

H: No, I don't think so. I think SOLO source exonerates the Soviets. But the other half of SOLO source puts Castro in the middle or the Castro people. We don't, the fact that Oswald offered to kill Kennedy, in my opinion ...

O: That's what Castro said?

H: Yeah, Castro said,

O: Supposedly.

- H: They turned Oswald down and I think that's probably what happened. He probably went back and said 'I'll show him, I'll be a hero.'
- O: Yes.
- H: And the thing is, it was so easy to do.
- O: Yeah.
- H: Of course, back in '63, Secret Service had less than three hundred Agents in the entire country.
- O: It was a difficult job.
- H: They were holding their breath and getting away with it. And it was easy to do because they didn't have anybody to check the buildings.
- O: Right, right.
- H: Yeah.
- O: Well, Jim, I want to thank you again
- H: Okay.
- O: Appreciate your time and with that it's about 2:25 p.m. on March the 8 and we will be concluding the interview.
- H: Now have I surely confused you now?
- O: No. It was very helpful, thanks a lot Jim.