

CIA-IR-33

SECRET

9 January 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Barry Harrelson, JFK Project Officer

FROM: DS&T Information Management Officer

SUBJECT: JFK Records

REFERENCE: Assassination Records Review Board
Letter dtd 18 December 1997

1. This is in response to the latest inquiry from the Assassination Records Review Board. Specifically, DS&T was tasked with the following items:

CL: 0524507

CL Reason: 1.5(c)

DECL On: Sources marked OADR

Date of Sources: Oct-Dec 1963; 7 April 1975

DRV FROM: Intel Reports and Memo

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f. CIA IR-33

Request: 1.) What does FBIS do with this citation
"FBIS-USR-92-112"? Is it filed and if so, under what filing

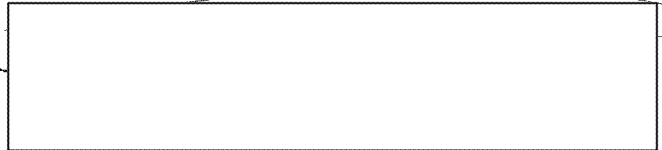
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name. 2.) Is it recorded in a database that can search on Oswald references? If yes, are all references available in the public domain? 3.) Are there any current files on Oswald?

Results: 1.) Citation "FBIS-USR-92-112" would be incorporated into an appropriate FBIS publication (JPRS or FBIS Report). This particular citation also would be in microfiche. 2.) The AFS (Automated FBIS System) would also contain a copy of this citation; and thus, a keyword search on "OSWALD" would be feasible. Effective June 1997, microfiche was eliminated and replaced with a "soft" copy contained in the AFS system. All unclassified FBIS products are available to the public via NTIS (National Technical Information Service.) 3.) FBIS does not keep any past or current files on OSWALD.

2. If you need additional explanations on any of these items, please call me on secure 76297.



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<article num=14>
<pub>FBIS-USR-92-112
<bctype>
<region>FBIS Report: Central Eurasia
<date>2 September 1992</date>
<dv>RUSSIA
<sv>POLITICAL AFFAIRS
<h1>KGB Case No. 31451 on Lee Harvey Oswald</h1>

<sl>924C2102A Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 7, 8, 11, 13 Aug 92
Morning Edition, 11 Aug 92 Evening Edition

<afsnun>924C2102A

<citysrc> Moscow IZVESTIYA

<lang>Russian

<sb>[Article by Sergey Mostovshchikov, IZVESTIYA correspondent:
"Case No. 31451: What Information Does the KGB Dossier on the
Man Known as the Murderer of U.S. President John Kennedy
Contain?"]

<h3>[7 Aug p 7]</h3>

<txt>[Text] Four years before the assassination of U.S.
President Kennedy the Soviet KGB began collecting information on
an American named Lee Harvey Oswald, a young man who on 22
November 1963 was indicted for the murder that has become the
most mysterious crime of the century. The dossier compiled by
the KGB consists of five thick volumes and a small file folder
tied together with shoelaces. The documents appear to contain
detailed information on some rather strange years in Oswald's
life (October 1959 through June 1962), the period when he lived
in the USSR after requesting political asylum for reasons
unknown.

<txt>The dossier, which has lain in Soviet intelligence archives
for the past 30 years marked "No. 31451," remains top secret,
with access to it virtually impossible. However, state security
officers have agreed to answer some questions about the files
preserved in the archives. Furthermore, friends and
acquaintances of Oswald who are still in the former USSR
remember many details from the life of the man whose name is
linked to the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

<h3>I. Surfacing to Periscope Depth</h3>

<txt>The history of the Soviet dossier on Oswald is somewhat
reminiscent of the maneuver of surfacing to periscope depth, in
which a submarine approaches the surface so that it can raise
its periscope and take a look around. In November 1991 the
Oswald case almost surfaced from the depths of the KGB. At that
time the whole world just missed by a matter of weeks finding
out virtually everything the six mysterious case files contained.

<txt>It was Vadim Bakatin, after taking over the chairman's
office at Lubyanka in the wake of the coup, who attempted that
experiment with top secret KGB information. The "Oswald file"
was hardly of fundamental importance to Bakatin; during his
slightly more than four months as KGB chairman he had many more
serious problems to deal with as he attempted to reform the
structure of the Lubyanka empire. File No. 31451 most likely
occurred to him by chance: the latest anniversary of the Kennedy

assassination was approaching, and once again the world was talking about Oswald.

<txt>On orders from Bakatin the dossier was retrieved from the archives. And then the new KGB chief, who subsequently admitted that he did not fully comprehend the secret might of the machine he was directing, attempted to make the documents public. He wanted to do so because, as he put it, he had not found anything in the "Oswald file" that was fundamentally secret, and nothing that the KGB would have any point in keeping a secret any more. Of course, the names of the agents who conducted surveillance of Oswald in the USSR should not be named. Naturally the contents of purely personal phone calls tapped by the committee or intercepted personal letters should not be disclosed.

<txt>The rest of the dossier, Vadim Bakatin asserts, simply consists of interesting historical documents which, even if they could reveal methods of Soviet counterintelligence operations, can only reveal methods from 30 years ago.

<txt>Nevertheless Bakatin's efforts provoked incredible resistance on the part of Lubyanka's professionals: the KGB had never before disclosed information on the activities of any of its agents. A commission established within the KGB to study the matter was virtually beyond the control of its own chief. After several weeks of work the experts selected from the dossier only 12 insignificant documents from the dossier; these they proposed that Bakatin make public. Judging by information in our possession, he was extremely displeased with the results and ordered them to go over the dossier again. This time new players unexpectedly entered the game.

<txt>Bakatin got a call from Belarus KGB chairman Eduard Shirkovskiy. He requested that the "Oswald file" be sent to Minsk for a few days so that his agency could reach a decision on it.

<txt>Shirkovskiy's claim had some justification, because there was no question that the bulk of the dossier had been collected by Belorussian counterintelligence agents -- Oswald spent virtually all his time in the USSR in Minsk. Yet after leaving Moscow for only a few days the dossier did not return...

<txt>Very shortly thereafter Bakatin was relieved of his position, and a majority of KGB personnel categorized all of his reforms as treason.

<txt>The Oswald file was re-registered. Assigned the number 226 and a stamp on each file folder stating "Not to be released without permission of the division chief," it was put in a light brown safe in an office in the Belarus KGB building. Now the only people who have access to the papers are Eduard Shirkovskiy and a few of his subordinates.

<txt>The chairman of the Belarus KGB, to give him his due, is now making very firm statements about the possibility that the dossier will be declassified and is not leaving any illusions on the part of those interested in it. He has already been offered \$50 million for the "Oswald file," yet Shirkovskiy refused because he sees his position as a matter of principle: he will

not transfer the case file anywhere outside of Minsk, and he will make the documents public only if the Belarus Supreme Soviet passes a special decree declassifying all KGB archival materials on which the statute of limitations has expired.
 <txt>The Oswald file, which incidentally according to Shirkovskiy does not contain anything particularly secret, has thus probably now become something of a symbol to the Belarusian leadership, a symbol of new governmental thinking independent of Moscow.

<txt>No one knows how long this will go on.

<txt>However, what Eduard Shirkovskiy did permit during an interview with IZVESTIYA was definitely progress. While categorically refusing to allow interviews with KGB agents who worked on the Oswald case, the chief of Belarusian state security nonetheless did have the file brought out of the safe and also agreed to interviews with some of his subordinates who are thoroughly familiar with the documents. So we can thank the chief of the Belarus KGB for his help with this investigation. Thanks to the assistance of his subordinates we now have at least a general idea of why Soviet intelligence services were interested in Oswald and just how his "case" was handled.

<h3>[8 Aug p 7]</h3>

<txt>[Text]

<h3>II. Red Trackers</h3>

<txt>The system for surveillance of Oswald in the USSR was to all appearances maintained in the spirit of the latest advances in early 1960's Soviet counterintelligence. Present-day experts who have gone over the dossier note that at that time everything was done very painstakingly and, most importantly, cleverly. According to Eduard Shirkovskiy, chief of the Belarus KGB, Oswald was under such tight surveillance that he was watched 24 hours a day. Virtually every method of gathering intelligence information except for chemical substances and psychotropic drugs were employed.

<txt>"Well, maybe they did drop a few tablets in his glass, but just the kind to make him let down his guard and be a little more talkative," said the chief of the Belarus KGB. -

<txt>The dossier has another notable feature. The KGB claims that there is not a single indication in the case file that Oswald was ever interrogated by Soviet intelligence agents. On the one hand that is strange because the circumstances of Oswald's appearance in the USSR and his subsequent behavior should have prompted (and did in fact prompt!) the greatest suspicion on the part of the KGB: in 1959 it was not just every day that a tourist from America so stubbornly insisted on political asylum.

<txt>Oswald arrived in Moscow as a tourist on 15 October 1959, staying in Room 320 of the Berlin Hotel. The very next day he went to the authorities to request political asylum and Soviet citizenship -- and was almost immediately refused. It was reported to Oswald via the hotel's service bureau for foreigners that his request had been denied, and that he must leave the

USSR on 21 October.

<txt>On 21 October, at 2:45 pm, U.S. citizen Lee Harvey Oswald opened the veins in his left arm as a sign of protest against his treatment by Soviet authorities. He was taken to Botkinskaya Hospital and his arm sewn up. A note written in English was found on the table in his hotel room. It read: "Did I come here just to find death? I love life."

<txt>This life-loving foreigner was so peculiar that he petitioned the USSR Supreme Soviet several more times, asking that it grant him political asylum, would under no circumstances leave the USSR, and on 31 October 1959 made a scene at the U.S. Embassy, where he allegedly publicly renounced his American citizenship and went so far as to toss his passport onto the ambassador's desk.

<txt>One would assume that if American intelligence services encountered a Soviet citizen in the same situation they would definitely resort to either a concealed or a direct interrogation. The KGB claims we did not do so. Why not? We probably had our own methods. The request by Oswald, who was clever enough to attempt suicide to gain the attention of the USSR's leaders, was finally granted. Anastas Mikoyan personally gave orders to consider very carefully the American's request for political asylum in a country for which, to all appearances, he felt a great love.

<txt>In November 1959 this troublesome individual was granted the right to live in the USSR temporarily, with a residence in Minsk, a city where the KGB was obviously counting on being able to observe the American in calm surroundings. At least it was a long way from the embassy, and he would associate mainly with Soviets. If he did make any espionage contacts they would be more obvious in Minsk.

<txt>According to information from Belarusan counterintelligence personnel, that was in fact the main suspicion in regard to the American -- that he was working for foreign intelligence agencies. The KGB's main effort to answer this question focused on the dossier, which subsequently grew quite fat. The dossier was marked "Case for agent processing." It is said that that is a term previously used in counterintelligence to mean that the client in question was being "felt out" with the help of a network of agents...

<txt>...In January 1960 Oswald moved to the capital of Belorussia and Moscow handed the case over to Minsk, leaving in the file applications from Oswald received by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the USSR Supreme Soviet, a transcript of a conversation with the doctor at Botkinskaya Hospital who sewed up Oswald's slashed arm and who reported to the KGB that in his opinion the American was capable of irrational acts, reports from the external surveillance service in which Oswald is given the code name "Nalim," and apparently some other initial documents as well.

<txt>In Belorussia intelligence agents gave the new client another code name -- Likhoy [Russian: "valiant" or "dashing"]

(apparently a plan on the name Lee Harvey) and set to work on his case painstakingly and diligently. According to a high-ranking counterintelligence officer, only one or two people in the republic KGB had full information about the operation. Several teams were set up, with none of them knowing what the others were doing. According to some sources the Oswald case involved up to 20 agents recruited by the KGB.

<txt>You can get an idea of how those agents were hired from the recollections of one of Oswald's closest friends in the USSR: Pavel Golovachev. He worked with the American in an experimental shop at the Gorizont Radio Plant in Minsk, where Oswald had been assigned to work as a metalworker at the lowest skills level.

<txt>In January 1960, literally about two weeks after Golovachev made the acquaintance of the foreigner who had unexpectedly appeared in his shop, he met a man in street clothes outside his building who showed identification as KGB agent Aleksandr Fedorovich Kostyukov. At his home 18-year-old Pasha Golovachev was shown photographs of some people that the agent called criminals and was told that it was not good to deal on the black market since he was the son of the pilot Pavel Golovachev, who had been twice awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union medal. Obviously the KGB was counting on the sheer mass of the information to intimidate Pasha and make an informer out of him by "clipping his wings." Finally it was proposed that Golovachev meet with certain people several times a week and tell them everything about Oswald.

<txt>Pavel Golovachev will not say whether he agreed to work for the KGB, but judging by what he say it is clear that he has no great love for that organization today, to put it mildly. In 1963, when Oswald was killed while being transferred to jail, Golovachev wrote a letter to Lee Harvey's widow in America -- Marina Prusakova -- expressing his condolences. Subsequently he was visited at home by KGB agents, who seized all photographs of Oswald and his wife, along with letters that Oswald sent to Minsk after returning to the United States. Then Golovachev was taken to KGB headquarters, where according to him he was first threatened with prison and then advised to keep a low profile and not say too much. Before they let him go they for some reason forced him to write a request to the Main Post Office asking for his letter back, even though it was long since in the hands of the KGB.

<txt>Then Pavel Golovachev was allowed to go home. He assumes that all letters from Oswald addressed to him as well as the negatives of the photographs which have become famous around the world and were included in the Warren Commission's report are still in the KGB archives.

<txt>Judging by what other friends of Oswald have said, the KGB dossier must contain stacks of transcripts from the bugging of Lee Harvey's apartment in Minsk. It has been suggested that the apartment was absolutely full of bugging equipment. Some sources in Minsk claim that once the KGB "asked" Oswald's neighbors who lived in the apartment directly above him to leave for two days.

<txt>It was probably at that time that everything was put in place. If you look at Oswald's apartment from the street, then it is obvious that the balcony of the apartment one story higher is many times smaller than the balcony of Oswald's apartment. Consequently even a child could climb down into the American's home, much less the KGB. So most likely everything that Oswald said and did in his leisure time was recorded or at least carefully listened to.

<txt>In addition to the surveillance, the bugging and agents' reports, the KGB made good use of various "plants," as counterintelligence agents call them.

<txt>For example, judging from certain hints, the dossier contains a large number of documents filed in the course of work on the scenario that Oswald was possibly seeking contacts with people who had access to classified information. It is likely that he was repeatedly put in contact with people who allegedly possessed confidential information and was observed to gauge his reaction. On another occasion someone tried to engage him in anti-Soviet conversations. But according to his acquaintances Oswald rarely made that sort of disclosure. All in all he remained very aloof while living in the USSR, and his friends generally tried not to take any interest in the American's past or his plans for the future.

<txt>Simultaneously the KGB attempted to determine Oswald's attitude toward works by the founders of Marxism. According to some sources it was noted that the American not only had no interest in political self-improvement, but also generally shirked things like the frequent trade union meetings and mass cultural events. That evidently aroused further suspicion, because when he requested citizenship Oswald claimed that he was a communist to the core...

<txt>Naturally the KGB attempted to carry out all these undertakings as unnoticed as possible. Yet Oswald's friends and acquaintances are convinced that he was well aware that he was under surveillance.

<txt>The American's upstairs neighbors -- Semen Samuilovich and Mayya Abramovna Gertsovich -- recall that Lee Harvey (Alik, as they called him) and his wife Marina Prusakova warned them and asked them to be more careful.

<txt>"Marina once said to me something like 'don't socialize with us -- that could cause unpleasantness'," recalls Mayya Gertsovich.

<txt>Ernst Titovets, a close friend of Oswald's in Minsk who is today a professor and a department head at the Belarusian Scientific Research Institute for Neurology, Neurosurgery and Physical Therapy, says that Lee Harvey clearly sensed (and perhaps actually knew?) that every step he took in the USSR and his life after his return to the United States would be carefully scrutinized later. For example, there is a curious detail in the Soviet diary allegedly kept by Oswald in the USSR and later published in the West, a diary that he is presumed to have written after his return to the United States. The American

describes Titovets as an active Komsomol member. The professor says that may well be, but that he was never particularly noted for his Komsomol activism, and that Oswald was well aware of that. Most likely, Titovets feels, that sentence was written in order to protect his friend in Minsk (if the fact that he kept a diary became known in the USSR), who could have been-compromised in the eyes of the Soviet authorities by his friendship with a foreigner.

<txt>But the most interesting thing is that Oswald was not actually overly fond of those authorities, despite all his claims to the contrary. In any event, when he left for America in June 1962 he handed his neighbor Mayya Gertsovich the following text in the stairwell of their building:

<txt>"Build communism by yourselves! You do not even know how to smile like human beings here!"

<txt>The real builders of communism were in fact not smiling, but-rather trying very seriously to determine for what purposes the American Lee Harvey Oswald came to the USSR.

<txt>Today one can draw the following conclusions:

<txt>1. The "Likhoy" described in the dossier did not carry out any intelligence assignments for foreign intelligence agencies and was not of any interest to the KGB.

<txt>2. Likewise, KGB representatives flatly deny that he was ever recruited to work for Soviet intelligence. Since there is absolutely no way to confirm that at the present time, there is only one fact in support of that statement: the relatively large size of the dossier compiled on Oswald. According to experts six volumes is too much for a person who had been recruited by the KGB. In such cases all that would be compiled would be one thin, top secret folder...

<txt>But in order to arrive at the first conclusion the KGB spent years watching relentlessly. Day after day the committee shadowed every step by the American, who incidentally led a very socialist life style...

<h3>[11 Aug p 3]</h3>

<txt>[Text]

<h3>III. A Metalworker's Job for a Metalworker</h3>

<txt>While the KGB was filling its fat folders Oswald led a normal Soviet life.

<txt>In January 1960 the American citizen, after receiving permission to reside in Minsk, got his first job -- helping to build the first workers' and peasants' state in the world. In view of his past -- as a U.S. Marine he was stationed at various bases and serviced communications equipment -- the authorities assigned Oswald to the Gorizont Radio Plant as a metalworker with the lowest salary of all -- R761 [rubles] per month (in very old rubles). Plus a 40-percent progressive piece-rate wage.

<txt>Researchers have always been puzzled by the choice of that particular job. The problem is that Shop Number 25, where Oswald was handed a file, hammer, nails and other tools, was called an "experimental" shop and until just recently was considered a restricted area. By no means everybody who worked at the plant

was allowed to enter it. So why was an American, and a suspect one at that, immediately given a job at an off-limits facility? <txt>However, according to Mikhail Sychev, current deputy plant director for security, the plant was not secret at all in the early 1960's. Shop Number 25 became a restricted area about two years after Oswald went back to the United States. True, other people have claimed that supposedly some "secret" prototypes were made in the shop while Oswald worked there. But even if that is true, that was not really all that illogical. On the contrary, the KGB would have a splendid opportunity, without any risk, to see how the American would behave.

<txt>If something happened he could be picked up with ease.

<txt>But he did not have to be picked up. Oswald not only showed no interest in what the plant was manufacturing, to all appearances he was not even terribly interested in his own job.

<txt>A former co-worker, Konstantin Yalak, recalls that initially the American was fairly good about performing his simple duties, which consisted of nothing more than basic sawing and screwing in screws. But then metalworker Oswald began to tighten fewer screws and spend more time with his feet up on the table, complaining that he was not getting paid enough. It was not enough to live on!

<txt>The foreign metalworker's co-workers felt that the American was just complaining for the sake of complaining. Some people might be having a hard time, but not him. Oswald did not just live on his wages. As a living specimen of the supremacy of the socialist way of life he received an extra bonus from the Soviet authorities. Each month Oswald was paid approximately R800 by the Red Cross (obviously under the guise of humanitarian aid). These payments continued until "Likhoi" wrote to the authorities announcing his intention of returning to America.

<txt>After that he ceased to receive financial assistance.

<txt>Financial support was not all he received. Oswald obtained a one-room apartment on the fourth floor of a plant-owned building in the very heart of downtown at 4 Kalinin St. (now 2 Kommunisticheskaya St.) with amazing speed. He arrived at the plant in January 1960 and by March already had something that Soviet citizens had to wait years for.

<txt>As Oswald's neighbors Mayya and Semen Gertsovich, who lived on the fifth floor, recall it, there was a large family living directly beneath them in Apartment 24. Those people had been requesting larger living quarters for a long time, yet their requests had repeatedly been denied.

<txt>Then one fine day they were given a two-room apartment and asked to move as quickly as possible. Repairs began at once on the now-vacant apartment, and the repairs were done so quickly and so well that it was like nothing that had ever been seen in that building before.

<txt>Then the American arrived. Mayya Gertsovich recalls that she made Oswald's acquaintance by coincidence. Once there was no hot water in his apartment and she went out, leaving the tap open. The water suddenly started flowing again and began running

down into the apartment of a future suspect in the assassination of the President of the United States. He came upstairs and made a row, threatening to complain to the plant. He spoke Russian poorly, and it was hard to understand him.

<txt>They resolved the conflict. But the belligerent foreigner did not greet his neighbors for a long time afterwards...

<txt>They got to know each other better when Oswald married a woman from Minsk, Marina Prusakova. During that period he became somewhat calmer, and by then he could speak Russian better.

<txt>The Gertsoviches visited him at home and recall that Oswald and his wife lived in very poor circumstances. They had some government-issue furniture that the plant had give them: a bookshelf, a kitchen table, two stools... In short, the place made a dismal impression.

<txt>Ernst Titovets, one of Oswald's best friends, states on that point that Oswald bought virtually nothing for the home. From the very start, from the very first months of his life in Minsk, it was somehow obvious that he did not plan on staying in the USSR very long. Titovets claims he had no doubts about that at all, and so was not surprised when Oswald decided to go back to the United States...

<txt>At the plant his co-workers reacted to Oswald's departure without any particular sadness or regret. Oswald was pretty soon forgotten. Naturally they remembered him in November 1963, when the name of the former metalworker from the Gorizont Plant became famous around the world.

<txt>In the experimental shop everyone shook their heads in wonder at how such an ordinary and unremarkable person (and in their opinion a poor worker) could go and kill President Kennedy. There was even more talk when Oswald himself was shot point-blank by Jack Ruby, the owner of a seedy bar, while being secretly escorted to jail without security measures.

<txt>But they did not shake their heads over it for long: soon afterwards KGB men came to the plant and advised them not to engage idle speculation. And generally to forget the fact that an American had ever been there. Whereupon they went and removed from the local library a form containing a list of books that Oswald had read.

<txt>And then they went away.

<txt>While the whole world was saying that the man accused of killing Kennedy had lived in the USSR and probably was a Soviet agent, the KGB went back to its dossier and began carefully filing away newspaper clippings from around the world on the progress of the murder investigation of the century.

<txt>Later, after the furor had died down a bit, Oswald's Minsk file was finally closed and relegated to the archives. Not only specifically KGB data but also a tremendous amount of extremely interesting information about the habits of the man accused of murdering Kennedy were classified top secret.

<h3>[11 Aug p 8]</h3>

<txt>[Text]

<h3>IV. He Was Never a Sharpshooter</h3>

<txt>Only after 30 years had passed did the existence of a Soviet dossier on Oswald become public knowledge. And it is understandable that the information contained in those KGB file folders is of interest not only to journalists and researchers, but also to some of Oswald's former friends and acquaintances in Minsk.

<txt>They feel that they have a right to see the materials in the file that concern them personally. One can only assume that the KGB had the people who came into contact with the American checked out through its own channels. Anyone who had close relations with the American undoubtedly appears somewhere in the dossier.

<txt>It is not hard to imagine today who those people were: the American who worked at the Gorizont Plant had a fairly limited circle of friends. He had a buddy from the shop where he worked -- Pasha Golovachev, the son of the pilot Golovachev who was twice awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union medal. He became friends with a man his own age, Erik [Ernst] Titovets, a student at a medical institute, who was introduced to Lee Harvey by a female interpreter. He also socialized with a man named Aleksandr Romanovich Enger, who at the time worked at Gorizont in the radio receiver division. Enger had had an interesting life: as a skilled specialist he was sent abroad to study, then during the war Aleksandr Enger went to Argentina to escape the persecution of the Jews. From there he returned to the USSR. In addition to an interesting life he also had two interesting daughters -- Eleonora and Anita-Evelin. Most importantly, Enger spoke English.

<txt>As Titovets recollects, a chance to speak his native language was important to Oswald -- the American spoke Russian poorly. At the time Titovets himself was very interested in English, and since in the 1960's it was difficult to find someone to talk with who was fluent in the language he attempted to spend as much time as possible with Oswald. Ernst Petrovich [Titovets] now recalls that at first he regarded the American as something of a talking machine or a walking textbook. He tape-recorded Oswald's voice, and then with the studiousness of a future professor analyzed the features of his pronunciation, his vocabulary, and so on. Incidentally, Titovets still has those tapes, along with many letters written from America by Oswald, at his home -- for some reason the KGB did not seize them.

<txt>Naturally Oswald and Titovets did not just speak English together at the time. They were 20 years old, and there were plenty of attractive girls in Minsk. So the two buddies probably had something to keep them occupied.

<txt>The pair were regulars at dances and in groups of young people.

<txt>It is difficult to say what else Lee Harvey did while he was in Minsk... It appears that he never did anything for very long. For instance, he bought a camera, but then never learned to take pictures very well.

<txt>He bought a radio so he could listen to Voice of America, which at that time was not being jammed here. Incidentally, that radio once broke and Oswald -- a U.S. Marine who had specialized in electronics -- could not repair it. His friends helped him out -- all he would have had to do was straighten out a little plate. (Incidentally, even that incident is recorded in the dossier -- counterintelligence obviously concluded that Oswald could not grasp even the simplest radio devices, and therefore had not undergone any special intelligence training).

<txt>Generally speaking the Belorussian KGB came up with the wildest notions. For instance, counterintelligence was very upset when in August 1960 Oswald joined the plant hunting club and bought a single-barreled TOZ [Tulskiy oruzheynyy zavod -- Tula Weapons Plant] hunting rifle. Later, after Kennedy was killed, it was that rifle that gave rise to the widely circulated stories and speculation that Oswald had always been crazy about weapons and never missed a chance to practice shooting. His wife Marina Prusakova, in her memoirs published in the West, also pointedly focused on this hunting toy, which Oswald allegedly made a great fuss over.

<txt>Naturally at the time the KGB was not aware of how important every detail of Lee Harvey's relationship with weapons would be to the world.

<txt>When counterintelligence found out about the TOZ it came up with its own version: "Likhoy" wanted to use hunting as an excuse to wander around in the vicinity of secret facilities.

<txt>Of course the KGB received a detailed report on every trip to the woods. True, it did not discover anything criminal -- Oswald was not looking for missile silos and did not take any strolls under barbed wire. But in this connection a very interesting detail did come out: the American who, according to the official version of Kennedy's assassination, was a super-sniper actually shot very poorly. Very poorly...

<txt>That is confirmed by David Zvagelskiy, formerly head of the Gorizont Plant's physical culture club. According to him a shooting match was once held at the plant. On that occasion everyone was given a Margolin pistol and herded onto the shooting range -- to prepare "for labor and defense," as the saying went.

<txt>Zvagelskiy remembers Oswald well. He arrived at the match in a yellow leather jacket. He held the pistol in two hands, drew it cowboy-style and took aim. They tried to explain to him that here in the USSR that was not the way people shot. To which Oswald replied that, well, that was the way they did it over there. He proceeded to fire two or three shots at a fairly large target from a distance of 25 meters. David Zvagelskiy says that he would give the results a "three" -- there were other people at the plant who were much better shots.

<txt>After the match Oswald was not seen at the shooting range again.

<txt>As for the TOZ, the metalworker with the code name "Likhoy" did not keep it very long: after a few trips into the woods

Oswald sold it to a second-hand store. For 18 rubles. A fact which, incidentally, is also recorded in the KGB dossier, along with all the rest of the American's leisure time activities.

<txt>People in the employ of the KGB were present at every dance, party or festival attended by the U.S. citizen while he was in Minsk. Maybe he danced with them, had a drink with them or talked with them, never realizing that every step he took was being recorded and filed away in those secret cardboard files.

<txt>Just as Oswald could not have guessed that the evening of 17 March 1961 when he and Erik Titovets went to a dance on the medical institute's evening at the Palace of Trade Unions would also be painstakingly described.

<txt>The dossier mentions the fact that that was the day he made the acquaintance of a 19-year-old Minsk pharmacy worker named Marina Prusakova, the woman who two months later would become his wife.

<txt>The story of that marriage is a topic in itself.

<h3>[13 Aug p 6]</h3>

<txt>[Text]

<h3>V. In Love by His Own Choice?</h3>

<txt>Minsk pharmacy employee Marina Prusakova, who has gone down in history thanks to her spouse, still prompts many questions and hypotheses among students of the Kennedy assassination.

<txt>For example: was Oswald's Soviet wife a KGB agent? If not, then why is she listed in some documents as Marina Nikolayevna and in others as Marina Aleksandrovna? Why should Oswald have married a Russian woman at all? Could he have come to the USSR with the prior intention of simply living here for a short time and finding the first female citizen who came his way in order to eventually compromise the Soviet Union after a brilliantly planned and executed FBI/CIA assassination of Kennedy?

<txt>The latter version is currently the most actively discussed around the world, and many people are inclined to consider it the most likely. History will probably judge who is right and who is wrong. The facts tell us the following.

<txt>People who are familiar with the Soviet dossier on Oswald swear that Marina Prusakova was not working for the KGB. The irregularities in connection with her patronymic are purely a family matter. Her father was in fact named Nikolay, and thus she was Nikolayevna. But her mother remarried after her daughter was born, and her second husband was named Aleksandr Medvedev. Obviously the patronymic Aleksandrovna showed up in some places because of her stepfather -- merely the result of a mistake.

<txt>Marina's early life was a difficult one. Her mother died, her stepfather married another woman, and she was a complete stranger in the new woman's house. Then she moved to Minsk, where she lived with relatives -- a maternal uncle named Ilya Vasilyevich Prusakov and his wife Valentina Guryevna Prusakova. There she got a job in a pharmacy.

<txt>Fate was preparing a future for her anywhere but in a pharmacy.

<txt>In early March 1961 she met Oswald at a dance at the Place

of Trade Unions. After that evening he almost immediately became ill with an ear infection.

<txt>The American was sent to the hospital, and Marina began to visit him. Less than two months later, on 31 April 1961, the marriage of citizen Marina Nikolayevna Prusakova, Russian, born 1941 in the city of Molotovsk, Arkhangelsk Oblast, and U.S. citizen Lee Harvey Oswald, born 1939 in New Orleans, was recorded by the state registry office in Minsk's Leninskiy Rayon as file No. 416.

<txt>The speed with which Prusakova's marriage to the foreigner was registered is enviable, since nowadays it takes about three months between the time one submits a marriage application and the actual marriage. How could it be that the marriage of an American was approved so rapidly, and in the 1960's at that?! That seems strange -- more than a little strange. On the other hand, the explanation could be quite simple: though we were experiencing a thaw with America, we still continued to paternalistically chide it for its capitalism, and suddenly here was this propaganda tidbit. One of their people had defected to us, and fallen in love with a Soviet citizen to boot. Why not?

<txt>The coincidence just seemed a bit strange.

<txt>In moments of openness Marina Prusakova complained to her neighbor Mayya Gertsovich that her husband was a tyrant and was always making a row about something, that he brought virtually no money home, and that he demanded rare steak and wine for breakfast. He really did not love her at all, and that was probably his assignment -- to marry her. When it suddenly became clear that Oswald was preparing to leave for the United States, Marina said that there was no way that she would go to America, and that her husband was teaching her English but that she had no desire to speak that language.

<txt>Once her neighbors even tried to convince her to go to America. They argued that Oswald's mother lived there, so maybe things would be easier for them there. In Minsk there was virtually no furniture in their home.

<txt>Lee Harvey's first daughter, whom he named June-Marina, was born in 1962 and slept in a washtub. What kind of life was that?

<txt>But Marina told her neighbors that America was not for her.

<txt>To hear Oswald's friends in Minsk tell it, things were a bit different. Citizen Prusakova had a reputation in Minsk as a woman who was a little fickle, to put it mildly. According to information from several sources, in America Oswald once even hit Marina when he accidentally discovered that she was writing to some man in Minsk: a letter was returned because Marina had not put enough postage on it.

<txt>Oswald's friend Ernst Titovets is convinced that Prusakova, being a very practical woman, was the one who sought out an American to marry. Oswald was dating and had proposed to another woman, who was working as an assembler in the same shop where he worked as a metalworker. But she rejected the American, who appeared to have actually loved her.

<txt>Nevertheless, Lee Harvey's marriage to Marina in no way

changed his ideas on the sacredness of the institution of marriage. Ernst Titovets claims that Oswald literally worshipped the family, and after the birth of his daughter was a very changed man. He was the one who washed and ironed his daughter's diapers and looked after her. Marina, in the opinion of Titovets and Pavel Golovachev, another close friend of Oswald's, was a sly young woman, and all her protestations that she did not want to go to America were most likely either coquetry or pretence. By the time she left for the United States she was making derogatory remarks about the socialist system as well as any American could have done.

<txt>In response Oswald told her something approximately like this: "No matter what happens to you in the future, never say anything bad about the Soviet Union."

<txt>Which, incidentally, did not keep Oswald on the day of his departure from Minsk, while standing in the stairwell of their building with Marina, a suitcase, a backpack and a three-month-old daughter in his arms, from telling his neighbor to go on building communism herself, without any help from him.

<txt>That farewell to his neighbor took a minute, maybe less. Yet according to several sources it took Oswald more than a year-and-a-half to say those words.

<txt>There is evidence that he first declared his intention to return to the United States as early as December 1960, when he had only lived in the USSR for a little over a year. What about the superiority of the socialist way of life? Who would flee from a country where universal happiness prevailed?

<txt>It is said that attempts were even made to prevent the American from leaving. Pavel Golovachev, one of Oswald's friends, relates how once Lee Harvey signed up for an excursion to Moscow with other plant workers. But he was told that the excursion had been cancelled, even though it actually took place. Some of Oswald's former colleagues repeatedly told me about rumors circulating at the time that once Oswald tried to go to Moscow by train but was taken off the train and sent home -- supposedly because movement of foreigners within the country was strictly regulated.

<txt>Yet, on the other hand, what point was there in working so persistently to hold on to him? The KGB had already written him off when it came to the conclusion that he was hopelessly uninteresting to the Soviet intelligence services. Furthermore, Lee Harvey Oswald was still an American citizen; he did not hold a passport with the hammer-and-sickle cover at all. (There was a story that he allegedly threw his American passport on a desk in the embassy and left it there. In fact he kept his U.S. passport -- No. 1733242 -- the whole time he lived in the USSR, and that is confirmed by KGB information.)

<txt>Clearly, too much pressure on "Likhoy" could turn into a scandal.

<txt>Furthermore, the U.S. Embassy, which Oswald did eventually reach, obviously took an interest in him as well. Buying tickets to America took money. According to some sources about \$400.

There was nowhere a metalworker could have gotten that amount...
<txt>Yet nevertheless he left with his wife and child. His mother wrote to him that she could not send him the money for the trip because she was saving up to help get the family settled when they arrived. So it must be assumed that Oswald got help from the embassy.

<txt>It was in connection with the departure of Lee Harvey Oswald and Marina that the KGB added an additional volume -- the sixth -- to the dossier. That volume contained materials gathered in the course of a special investigation conducted prior to their departure.

<txt>It is said that this was a customary procedure in such cases. Questionnaires, permission to exit, questioning of relatives, affidavits, forms on knowledge of military secrets and state secrets, information on loyalty to the socialist system... It appears that nothing serious was found, since the sixth folder is the smallest of all the volumes in the dossier, and probably contains only a few documents.

<txt>Of course, no one knows what kind of documents they are.

<txt>But it is interesting to note that one fine day, after gathering up his things, Oswald went to the Minsk train station. There to see him off were the Engers -- a family he was friends with -- and his friend Pavel Golovachev. Ernst Titovets, cited in all the sources as Oswald's best friend, did not come to see his friend off, later explaining that he could not because he was busy. Golovachev took a picture of the young couple saying goodbye from the window of the train as it pulled out of the station. That train carried away from Minsk the mystery of Lee Harvey Oswald, the main accused of killing Kennedy.

<txt>Fact: not a single one of the people I interviewed in Minsk believed for a second that the American they knew 30 years ago was capable of killing the President of the United States.

<txt>Speaking separately they all repeated the same thing: Oswald was merely set up to take the fall. He got involved in a plot in which he was used as bait by the very major forces which actually carried out the assassination.

<txt>Ernst Titovets is even writing a book on this subject, investigating the moral aspects of sacrificing an individual human life for political purposes...

<txt>KGB representatives who are familiar with the contents of dossier No. 31451 are also convinced that Lee Harvey Oswald was not independently capable of preparing and carrying out an undertaking as major as Kennedy's assassination. It appears that to counterintelligence officers in this country this is a matter of some sort of strange professional jealousy. How could it be, they reason, that we could write him off as a person absolutely unsuited to carry out any serious assignments, as an ordinary and unremarkable individual, and then that less than one year after leaving the USSR for the United States he could kill the President of the United States?! Does that mean that the round-the-clock surveillance, the tricks and traps, the scenarios and suppositions, in short, all the KGB work that is

being kept secret to this very day, were simply worthless?
<txt>KGB personnel are clearly not fond of such conclusions. Some of them cling to the theory that Oswald was just a link in a very major operation, one in which he was simply assigned a role, with no concept of the overall scale of the operation. And even that was more than Minsk knew...
<txt>...Here the reaction to the news of Kennedy's assassination was unique. On 23 November 1963, one day after the tragedy, what had happened was broadcast on television, along with a photograph of the man arrested for assassinating the President of the United States.
<txt>It was Lee Harvey Oswald.
<txt>"Good lord, that's our Alik! That can't be!" exclaimed Mayya Gertsovich, who had once tried to explain to the future suspect in the Kennedy assassination that she had accidentally let water run down into his apartment, and that it was not worth complaining to the plant about.
</article>

CIA SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

ARRB file

7 April 1998

MEMORANDUM FOR: T. Jeremy Gunn
Executive Director, ARRB

FROM: J. Barry Harrelson
JFK Project Officer
Historical Review Program

SUBJECT: ARRB Request No. CIA-IR-33,
FBIS Files On Assassination

1. The following is responsive to subject request.
2. The ARRB requested information on how FBIS-USR-92-112 was filed; if the FBIS database may be searched by name; and, if FBIS has any files on Oswald.
3. UR-92-112 is the translation of several articles in Izvestiya about Oswald while he was in the USSR which was found on the Internet. These articles within USR-92-112 would be incorporated into an appropriate FBIS publication (JPRS or FBIS Report). Unclassified FBIS reports are available to the public via the National Technical Information Service. The USR-92-112 articles would also be included in the AFS (Automated FBIS System), thus a keyword search on "OSWALD" would be feasible. FBIS does not keep any past or current files on Oswald.
4. If you require anything further in this regard, please advise.


J. Barry Harrelson