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FILE INDEX

FOLDER: Tarasoff Interviews

Transcript -- Interviews of Boris and Ann Tarasoff, former contract employees of the CIA at Mexico City Station. Taken by Jonathan Blackmer and Ken Brooten on November 29-30, 1976. Regarding intercepts of Oswald's phone calls to the Soviet Embassy from the Cuban Embassy. (2 copies)

Attached memoranda of the investigative field trip which included contacts with Ambassador John Jova and [redacted] [redacted] Thomas Polgar, regarding possible information on the assassination coming from the Cuban government.

JFK Act 6 (1)(B)

TARASOFF BRIEFING BOOK

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Goal #2: To determine the nature and circumstances of the monitoring of Lee Harvey Oswald by CIA surveillance in Mexico City in 1963 and the nature of the Tarasoffs' involvement in that monitoring.

Goal #3: To determine if the Tarasoffs ever did voice comparisons in an attempt to identify Lee Harvey Oswald's voice or the voices of the people with whom he spoke.

Exhibits:

EXHIBITS ARE CURRENTLY CLASSIFIED AND WILL, HOPEFULLY, BE PROVIDED AT
A LATER DATE.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND.

The Tarasoffs do not remember identifying the voices of any of the people with whom Oswald spoke prior to the assassination. They do not remember ever being asked to do so after the assassination. They do not remember ever being questioned before being contacted by HSCA investigators.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The Tarasoffs claim to remember translating and transcribing at least 2 conversations involving Oswald. They remember that the first one was fairly short and routine. Oswald did not identify himself in this first conversation. The second one was much longer and Oswald did identify himself in this conversation. The Tarasoffs remember Oswald discussing his financial situation in this call. They deny making any editorial or marginal comments in the transcription of this call.

The Tarasoffs remember nothing unusual about the first call or the circumstances around its delivery or transcription. The second call was delivered to them and they were asked to transcribe the Oswald call as quickly as possible. Their contact expressed a strong interest in the identity of the caller and the substance of the call. The Tarasoffs translated and transcribed the call and returned the transcript on the same day, using an emergency contact as opposed to waiting until the next morning and using their standard contact.

It is not clear whether or not the Tarasoffs have any independent memory of any other calls involving Oswald.

Exhibits are classified and will be added at a later date. Questions based on these exhibits will be asked.

BIOGRAPHY

BORIS DIMITRY TARASOFF

Boris Dimitry Tarasoff was born on 2 November 1908 in Yekaterinoslaw, Russia. He emigrated to the United States. He worked for the Central Intelligence Agency from circa 1955 to October 1970. He was stationed in Mexico City from June 1963 to October 1970. Mr. Tarasoff's main task during this period was translation/transcription of Russian language tapes. He is currently retired and living at the Rancho Contento, Guadalajara, Mexico.

ANNA TARASOFF

Anna Tarasoff was born on 5 May 1923. She is the wife of Boris Dimitry Tarasoff. She worked as a part time CIA contract officer. She assisted her husband in the translation/transcription of the Russian language tapes.

GOAL #1.

To determine the Tarasoffs knowledge of, and participation in, the Central Intelligence Agency's surveillance activities in Mexico City in 1963.

- a) background.
- b) assignments.
- c) awareness of surveillance operations.
- d) duties (translation/transcription).
- e) procedures.
- d) other duties.
- e) personnel involved.
- f) files.
- g) nature of transcripts.
- h) nature of assistance in duties if any.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND.

Boris and Anna Tarasoff were stationed in Mexico City in 1963. They were the Russian translators used to translate and transcribe the Russian language portions of surveillance tapes. Hence, they have actual knowledge of a portion of that operation.

In an interview with members of this staff the Tarasoffs said that the tapes and Spanish language transcripts would be delivered to them on the morning of one day by a person who worked on this operation. The next day the Tarasoffs would return the tape, Spanish transcript and the completed translation/transcript of the Russian language portions. The Tarasoffs said that they made an original copy and two carbons of every transcription. The original and one copy was retained by the Tarasoffs. One carbon was turned over to their contact.

Mr. Tarasoff also said that he was responsible for trying to identify, by their voices, the Soviet Embassy personnel involved in conversations which he transcribed.

The Tarasoffs, by the nature of their involvement in the operation, should have some knowledge of some of the other individuals involved in this operation.

The Tarasoffs said that the transcripts they prepared were literal transcriptions as opposed to summaries. They said that they made no marginal comments on the body of the transcripts.

Mr. Tarasoff was assisted in translating and transcribing the tapes by his wife, Anna Tarasoff.

GOAL #2.

To determine the nature and circumstances of the monitoring of Lee Harvey Oswald by CIA surveillance in Mexico City in 1963 and the nature of the Tarasoffs' involvement in that monitoring.

- a) the first conversation.
- b) the second conversation.
- c) nature of circumstances surrounding the delivery and transcription of the conversations.
- d) any subsequent conversations transcribed.
- e) exhibits.

GOAL #3.

To determine if the Tarasoffs ever did voice comparisons in an attempt to identify Lee Harvey Oswald's voice or the voices of the people with whom he spoke.

23 February 1978

Highlights from Tarasoff interview by Booten and Blackmore.

Full Name: Boris Dimitry Tarasoff.

DOB: 11/2/08

POB: Yekaterinoslaw, Russia.

Present Address: Ranch Contento, Guadalajara, Mexico.

Sent to Mexico on 5 June 1963.

P. 6. Worked as a translator/transcriber outside Embassy at 312 San Puerta Ave.

Robert Zambanardi at times delivered tapes to him. (7)

Also remembers another man who delivered tapes Rudy (LNU) possibly Bruno. (7)

William Bright also delivered tapes to him (9)

Charles Flick supervised the intercept operation (12)

also repaired tape recorders, got new ones etc. (12)

P.17+ transcription operation description:

T got tapes with Spanish transcripts. This transcript would indicate where the Russian language parts were, Tarasoff would run the tape to that point and would then translate and transcribe simultaneously. Ann assisted Boris with conversations that were partially in English.

P 19+ Oswald tape:

? Remembers that a major portion of his conversation (9/28) was in English and his wife worked on it.

was rather short.

remembers that all he was doing on this conversation was trying to make contacts to get into the Russian Embassy.

Did not ID himself in this conversation.

Second conversation:

? Note came with the tape giving conversation reference and asking them to ID the caller. Instruction was that if this was done they were to contact immediately their CIA contact and deliver the transcript to him. "this was top priority" "It was very important to them" This conversation was long, two pages. It was delivered with the usual batch of tapes but this one was singled out and given priority. This conversation was also largely in English. LHO IDed himself in this one. They notified contact and it was immediately picked up.

~~Re editorial comments: "No way. There were no comments made. What was typed was what was being said by this individual."~~

definitely remember that he was seeking financial aid from the Cubans and Russians to get to Cuba/Russia. Does not remember him offering information. He did tell them he was broke.

Do not remember him asking anything about a visa.

Typed on Government Bond with two copies. (33)

P. 38 Tarasoff contacted his "emergency" contact to turn over the 2nd LHO transcript. He declined to give this contact's name. this was done on the same day as he recieved the tape.

Page Two

They would be able to recognize the original transcript if they saw it.
(40)

hey transcribed tapes verbatim, adding nothing and leaving nothing out.

P.43 T.never saw the transcript again or heard the tape.

Tarasoff was never recontacted about the Oswald tapes and transcripts.

Anna.Tarasoff:

DOB 5/5/23

"I filed according to the date of the reel and the reel itself had a number and then following that each conversation had a number and I that would be the original copy that I would file as it is in whole. Then the carbon copy would be also kept in its original state and the second one I would sort of scan it over and just delete what was not pertinent like it was a conversation with somebody saying, well tomorrow I'm going downtown....But it it had to deal with two poeple and especially if there names were mentioned, this was cut out and it was pasted on a piece of paper and it was turned over to our contact." normal procedure was to turn over previous batch of transcripts when new batch of tapes were delivered the next morning. (54-55)

71 Dan VOGEL picked up the equipment and files from the Tarasoff's when they retired.

MEMORANDUM

12-5-76

TO: Richard A. Sprague

FROM: Kenneth E. Brooten, Jr.

IN RE: Contacts with Ambassador John Joseph Jova, U. S. Embassy Mexico City and Thomas Polgar, JFK Act 6 (1)(B)

1. I Initially met with William Calderhead, Deputy Chief of Mission U. S. Embassy, Mexico City and advised him of the following:

- a) I had received information from the Committee Staff indicating that someone had contacted them advising that the Cuban Embassy personnel in Mexico City would be willing to meet with us and provide us with the information which they had on Lee Harvey Oswald.
- b) I had not been advised of the source of the information by the Committee Staff and I did not know the reliability of the source.
- c) I had discussed the matter with you for "instructions" and had been advised by you that I should take the matter up with the Ambassador.

Mr. Calderhead suggested that we make a formal contact through the Department of State and have them go through the Swiss, since the Swiss represent the interest of the U. S. Government in Havana.

2. I met with Ambassador Jova at his residence on December 2, 1976, and advised him of the foregoing. I also advised that while the Committee would be most interested in obtaining any information we could from the Cubans we were very much aware of the complications which could arise should the information prove to be erroneous.

I further advised the Ambassador that we did not want to do anything which could cause embarrassment to the U. S. Government or the Congress and that we wanted to proceed with his consent and advice. The Ambassador advised:

- a) The official U. S. position is that there are to be no official contacts with the Government of Cuba.
- b) He knows the Ambassador from Cuba on a social basis and could make a discrete approach and inquiry.
- c) He would have to get "instructions" from Washington to make an approach and inquiry from the Cuban Ambassador.
- d) He very much appreciated our consulting with him since it was a very delicate matter.

I suggested that possibly the C.I.A. could have some source either direct or indirect which could verify whether or not the Cubans wanted to meet with us.

He stated that he had not discussed our visit with [redacted] but with my consent would do so. He offered to have [redacted] come to his residence or have us meet him at his residence.

3. I met with Thomas Polgar [redacted] and advised him of the situation and requested his assistance and judgement. He advised:

- a) That some of his people had informal contacts with the Cubans and could make an inquiry to see if a "responsible official" of the Cuban Embassy would meet with us. To do so he would have to get "instructions" from C.I.A. Headquarters - but at my request he would proceed to do so.
- b) He said that the Cubans would probably have to go to Havana for "instructions" before they would reply. He further stated that most of the information would probably be in Havana.
- c) I asked if he had any other method of determining the validity of the information and he said that he was not prepared to confirm whether there were wiretaps at this time. Later in the conversation he said as a result of the story - a copy of which is attached that the Cubans had been saying less on the phone.
- d) We agreed to meet with the Ambassador the next day to discuss how to proceed.

4. On Friday, December 3, 1976, I again met with the Ambassador and Mr. Polgar. Mr. Polgar had not yet received a reply to his request for "instructions," from C.I.A. Headquarters and again advised that the Cubans would most likely go to Havana for "instructions" before replying.

Ambassador Jova said he would seek instructions from State on making an informal social contact with the Cuban Ambassador but suggested that that would take time. He said the most proper method would be to go through the Swiss and State here in Washington.

I advised that while we certainly wanted to obtain the information that we wanted to use the most conservative approach so as not to create an incident. The Ambassador again expressed his appreciation for our sensitivity to a "delicate situation."

5. ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

- a) Contact C.I.A. Headquarters to follow up on Polgar's request for "instructions."
- b) Contact the Department of State and request that they go through the Swiss with a formal contact to the Cubans in Havana and follow up on Ambassador Jova's request for instructions.

- c) Both of these follow up actions should, in my judgement, be initiated immediately.
 - d) If we can confirm the contact with the Cubans it will be necessary for me to return to Mexico City, and I would purpose to do so as soon as we receive a confirmation.
6. Jonothan Blackmer accompanied me to each of the meetings.

STREET STAND PRICES (IN PESOS)

	Daily	Sunday
Mexico City, Cuernavaca, San Miguel, Puebla	4.00	5.40
Guadalajara, Chapala	1.60	6.00
Acapulco, Mazatlan, Cancun, Puerto Vallarta, Manzanillo	5.00	7.00

The News

Vol. XXVII Mexico City, Wednesday, December 1, 1976 No. 149

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THE NEWS, Mexico City
Wednesday, December 1, 1976

JFK Murder Probers Sent to Mexico

Investigators for the House Committee on Assassinations have been sent to Mexico to verify a report that the CIA, for unexplained reasons, withheld information about Lee Harvey Oswald from the Warren Commission, according to Associated Press reports from Washington.

Quoting committee spokesmen, AP said the investigators will interview two retired agency employees who reportedly heard Oswald offer a deal to Soviet officials in Mexico City less than two months before the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

The Washington Post has reported that Oswald's voice was picked up through electronic surveillance of the

Cuban and Soviet embassies and transcribed by the two agency employees.

David A. Phillips, a now-retired CIA officer who was stationed in Mexico City at the time, also has recalled Oswald making such an offer.

Phillips and the two former agency employees who

were not identified all recalled that Oswald offered unspecified information in return for a free trip to the Soviet Union.

It was not clear what effect this version of Oswald's conversation would have had on the Warren Commission, AP said.

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 5, 1976

TO: Richard Sprague

FROM: Jon Blackmer

SUBJECT: Specific Inquiry into the Identity of the Person
with whome Oswald spoke in the Two Phone Calls
Intercepted by the CIA in Mexico City and
Transcribed by Mr. and Mrs. Tarasoff.

On November 30, in Guadalajara, Mexico, Ken thought it best that I ask some specific questions of the Tarasoff's as to the identify of the person or persons Oswald may have spoken with during the two telephone conversations that were intercepted by the CIA and transcribed by the Tarasoffs. I thought I should inquire of the Tarasoffs about their knowledge of the voices of the various employees of the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City and the identity of the various KGB men, including the dispute over the "Kostin" identify appearing in the letter Oswald wrote to the Soviet Embassy in Washington on November 8, 1963. The following is a brief report on the substance of that interrogation.

After three sessions with the Tarasoffs prior to the taping of the session for transcription, we learned that Mr. Tarasoff had been assigned to the Mexico City

desk for the express purpose of translating and transcribing conversations in the Russian language going into and out of the Soviet Embassy by telephone. In the course of their employment, the Tarasoffs became familiar with the voices of the Russians and could instantly identify the names of many of the Russians within the embassy when their voices were heard. Mr. Tarasoff even went so far as to put together his own scrapbook with pictures and newspaper clippings of his "Russians" so that he could become as familiar as possible with their identity and background, deemed essential by Mr. Tarasoff to understand the content of the conversation by the voice inflection. That is to say, knowledge of the region these various Russians came from would aid greatly in identifying the context of the conversations when various idioms and colloquialisms were used. In short, Mr. and Mrs. Tarasoff did their jobs well and in many cases were innovators — always toward the goal of proficiency.

Mr. Tarasoff came up with the idea of voice sample tapes to be indexed by identity for use whenever the need might arise to compare voices or a dispute as to identity of voices. But all voices whether identified or not were indexed. Mr. Tarasoff brought this up with Herb Mannell and was given permission to make these identity tapes.

Mr. Tarasoff knew the voices of Yatskov, Kostikov, Kanstantinov among others. He did not, however, know of any of these men's proficiency in English, but felt that only Kostikov and Kanstantinov could handle English well enough to speak it in a cursory fashion. Based on this they formed the opinion that Kanstantinov was more than likely the person to which Oswald spoke, unless there was another individual not known to the Tarasoffs, with whom Oswald may have spoken. It is of interest to note that while the Russians almost exclusively spoke Russian with each other and many Embassy employees spoke Spanish, very few, Boris believes probably only Kostikov and Kanstantinov spoke English well enough to get by. Additionally, because of this fact, Boris was not as proficient at identifying his Russians when they spoke English since the voice sounds entirely different, almost mechanical when the Russians were speaking English. They do not believe Oswald spoke with Yatskov or Kostikov on the occasion of the two telephone calls transcribed by the Tarasoffs.

One thing is certain, Mr. Tarasoff was the expert on the station in Mexico City when Oswald called the Soviet Embassy from the Cuban Embassy. Mr. Tarasoff succeeded George Misko who was in Mexico City in the same function as Mr. Tarasoff. Mr. Tarasoff was never asked who Oswald

spoke with, never identified the person with whom Oswald spoke, nor ever was asked anything about the incident. Mr. Tarasoff had on other occasions been asked to identify voices, and has had tapes returned to him on other occasions for that purpose. Both the Tarasoffs feel the information contained in the October 16, 1963 memo was not the complete and relevant as to the substance of the telephone conversations that the Tarasoff's transcribed.

Thus we are faced with the issue of why when Boris was the expert, heard the tape pursuant to his function, was the best person qualified to identify the Russians by their voices, why was he never consulted by anyone before or after the assassination as to the substance of the phone calls and the person with whom Oswald spoke. Yet the Warren Commission Report states that Oswald contacted Kostikov or Yatskov and based on this other information (presumably from Duran) and in answer to the questions posed by Oswald's letter to the Soviet Embassy in Washington in which Oswald mentions having contacted Kostin. The Tarasoffs do not feel Kostin is the short form of Kanstantinov or Kostikov nor do they know a Kostin. Boris knew Kostikov and Kanstantinov and Yatskov were KGB and knew the voices of Yatscov and Kostikov and Kanstantinov. When the

first call came in Boris was notified that the station was extremely interested in the identity of the caller. That when the second call came, the tape was rushed to Boris and when Oswald was identified the contact (probably Bright) seemed extremely interested and excited. Tarasoff typed transcripts verbatim, since at one point, unlike Misko, his predecessor, Tarasoff made a summary of a meaningless conversation and made his own comments to that effect, and was jumbed on by Bill Bright for so doing. Tarasoff did not make comments on transcripts except for using M.I. for man inside and M.O. for man outside when they were readily identifiable. Boris feels that if at the time had he been asked about the Oswald calls, he would have been able to supply much more information, but 14 years has dimmed his memory and no one, not even Bright, his contact, discussed the subject with him.

In a separate interview with Mr. Tarasoff on November 30, 1976, I learned that the photographic expert on station in Mexico City in 1963 September to November was Bob Zambenardi. Zambenardi's

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Zambenardi was probably the man in

charge of photographing the activities of both the Cuban and Soviet embassies in 1963.

Having a copy of Coup d'etat in America with me. I thought I would ask the Tarasoffs if they could identify any of the photographs in the book. Specifically, photographs of the bums arrested in Dallas on the day of the assassination. Three photographs of Howard Hunt, two photographs of Frank Sturgis. I asked whether the Tarasoffs knew any of these men either professionally or socially. The Tarasoffs were unable to identify any of the photographs, nor could they recall seeing any of the individuals in Mexico City or anywhere else. However, I got the feeling that Boris indicated a faint glimmer of recognition when I showed him the picture of Eugene Edgar Bradley which appears on page 222 of the text. I don't know whether Boris knew this man and as he stated he did not and as his credibility, in my opinion, is very high, I think the man probably resembles someone Boris might have known. They could not recall having known Howard Hunt in Mexico City nor having seen him. These photographs came from pages 208 through 223 of the above book.

We also went over photographs of the mysterious man leaving the Soviet Embassy. The Tarasoffs had their own copies of these photos supplied by Ron Kessler. While the Tarassoffs thought they were all of the same man on

two different occasions, they could not positively identify them. Mr Tarasoff felt the man was Russian, and that he was wearing clothing one would wear on a fishing trip. Mr. Tarasoff noted the Russians were crazy about fishing. He felt the first photograph was blocked in such a way as to make the man appear much heavier than he really was, but in comparing all the photographs with his personal file of photos and newspaper clips, he could not match them. The first photograph we were referring to is the one that just shows the head and shoulders of a man in a dark sweater. He did however feel that one photo looked a lot like Alfredeyev, Soviet KGB, but felt the mystery man was much heavier. I have no photo of Alfredeyev, but he looks a little like the french film star Yves Montand.

I would recommend following this lead by first interviewing Charles Flick, then George Misko, then Bill Bright, then Robert Zambernardi, then Clark Anderson, then Herb Mannell, and then possibly Sylvia Duran to pick up the thread.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Richard A. Sprague

FROM: Kenneth E. Brooten, Jr.

IN RE: Mexico City Trip -- Brooten & Blackmer 11-28-76 to 12-4-76

1. We initially had reservations to depart on an American Airlines Flight at 7:15 a.m. on Sunday, November 28, 1976. Jonathan had called American to confirm the fact that we only had to show our official passports to get a tourist visa for Mexico. We arrived at the airport at 6:30 a.m. and were advised that they could not issue Mexican Tourist Cards on Official Passports. I called the operations desk at the Department of State who said the Official Passport was proof of American Citizenship and that should be sufficient. American Airlines employees would not accept that so rather than create a confrontation as to who we were we took a later flight and traveled on our personal passports.
2. Upon our arrival in Mexico City we were met by William J. Roche, the Chief of Security for the Embassy. The Embassy had reserved rooms for us.
3. On Monday, November 29, 1976, Mr. Roche made airline reservations for us to Guadalajara -- it is a 1 hour flight and approximately 355 miles from Mexico City. He arranged to have us met by Mathias Ortwein the Consul General. Mr. Ortwein made arrangements for our hotel and offered us the use of his personal vehicle.
4. We made initial contact with Boris Tarasoff at approximately 3:30 p.m. His wife was not at home and had been in Guadalajara for 5 or 6 days at their daughters taking care of her sick children. Our interview with Mr. Tarasoff lasted until approximately 9:00 p.m. when we went to Guadalajara to meet with his wife. We interviewed her until approximately 11:00 p.m.
5. Following our telephone conversation on Tuesday, November 30, we taped the formal interview which is transcribed. Jonathan is preparing a separate Memorandum on the specific areas of inquiry which I asked him to make.
6. We returned to Mexico City on Thursday, December 2, 1976, and took up the matters at the Embassy which are the subject of my separate Memoranda. We returned to Washington on Saturday, December 4, 1976.

Interview with Boris Dimitry Tarasoff and Ann Tarasoff at Ranch Contento, Guadalajara, Mexico on Tuesday, November 30, 1976, 1:15 (local time).

Mr. Brooten: Mr. and Mrs. Tarasoff, do you understand that my name is Kenneth Brooten, I am Counsel for the Select Committee on Assassinations of the United States Congress in the House of Representatives and with me is Jonathan Blackmer, also a Counsel to the Committee and that we are recording this interview with you today?

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes sir.

Mrs. Tarasoff: We've seen your identifications and we feel that you're documents are authentic.

Mr. Brooten: And, do we have your consent to tape this interview?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Yes, you do.

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes.

Mr. Brooten: Now, I'll start with Mr. Tarasoff first. Mr. Tarasoff, for the record would you please state your full name.

Mr. Tarasoff: Boris Dimitry Tarasoff.

Mr. Brooten: Thank you sir. And your current address.

Mr. Tarasoff: Ranch Contento, Guadalajara, Mexico.

Mr. Brooten: And your date of birth sir.

Mr. Tarasoff: November 2, 1908.

Mr. Brooten: And your place of birth.

Mr. Tarasoff: Yekaterinoslaw, Russia.

Mr. Brooten: Alright, sir. What is your occupation or profession now?

Mr. Tarasoff: I am retired.

Mr. Brooten: How long have you been retired?

Mr. Tarasoff: Since the end of October, 1970.

Mr. Brooten: Alright sir. And prior to that time, what did you do, for whom were you employed?

Mr. Tarasoff: I was employed by the, so called, Company.

Mr. Brooten: All right. And the Company is the Central

Mr. Brooten: Intelligence Agency.

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, let's put it that way.

Mr. Brooten: All right. We just want to clarify that for the record.

Mr. Tarasoff: All right.

Mr. Brooten: And that is of the United States Government.

Mr. Tarasoff: Oh, definitely.

Mr. Brooten: And, at which, how long did you work for the Company?

Mr. Tarasoff: About 15 years.

Mr. Brooten: All right sir. And in 1963 what was your duty station.

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, I came here from Washington, D.C. It must have been the sixth of June, if I'm not mistaken.

Mrs. Tarasoff: The fifth of June.

Mr. Tarasoff: The fifth of June, 1963.

Mr. Brooten: All right, sir. And, were you on temporary assignment then or what?

Mr. Tarasoff: No, that was to be my permanent assignment. By permanent, I mean that you put in two years. And if you are not satisfactory, they ship you back.

Mr. Brooten: All right.

Mr. Tarasoff: But I managed to survive for about eight years in the same capacity.

Mr. Brooten: All right sir. Who did you relieve in your job when you came.

Mr. Tarasoff: George Misco was my predecessor.

Mr. Brooten: And where did you work specifically when you came from Washington to Mexico City.

Mr. Tarasoff: Do you mean on permanent assignment?

Mr. Brooten: Yes sir. I mean when you were changed, where did you work, for what department or.

Mr. Tarasoff: I don't know which department.

Mr. Brooten: Was it with, were you a translator sir?

Mr. Tarasoff: I was translator and transcriber at the same time. There is a difference, sometimes they use two people for those two jobs.

Mr. Brooten: All right. And your duties when you came down in June of 1963 then were as transcriber and translator.

Mr. Tarasoff: Right.

Mr. Brooten: At the station in Mexico City?

Mr. Tarasoff: Right.

Mr. Brooten: All right sir. Now following, how long did you work inside the station in Mexico Station?

Mr. Tarasoff: Oh, that was on TDY in 1960.

Mr. Brooten: All right, in 1960 you worked in the station. In June of 1963, where did you work?

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, in the house that was rented.

Mr. Brooten: All right sir. And, was that in Mexico City?

Mr. Tarasoff: That was in Mexico City.

Mr. Brooten: All right sir. Do you recall the address of that house.

Mr. Tarasoff: That was 312, I think. Wasn't it? San Puerta Avenue.

Mr. Brooten: All right sir. Did any officials at the American Embassy have that address to know, to contact you?

Mr. Tarasoff: They certainly did have it because they were delivering stuff to me.

Mr. Brooten: All right sir. Now, did you work at that address with anyone else in the translation and the transcribing of things that we'll get into and identify a little bit later on. Did anyone else work with you directly.

Mr. Tarasoff: Directly, just my wife was helping me out until she was put on official status.

Mr. Brooten: Now, what did you receive and from whom

Mr. Brooten: did you receive it, to transcribe and translate?

Mr. Tarasoff: You mean the names?

Mr. Brooten: Yes sir. Well, I want to know what you received first.

Mr. Tarasoff: First, I received a mountain of tapes left over from the previous transcriber.

Mr. Brooten: All right.

Mr. Tarasoff: And I think they were delivered by Bob(Zumbanardi spelling?)

Mrs. Tarasoff: Yes, he was the first one.

Mr. Brooten: All right.

Mr. Tarasoff: The first one, but since he had other duties, I suppose they took the Rudy character.

Mr. Brooten: All right, and you don't know Rudy's last name?

Mr. Tarasoff: No. That's what I say. There is some association in my mind with the name of Bruno.

Mr. Brooten: Bruno? Would you describe, as best you can, the physical characteristics of?

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, he was rather tall.

Mr. Brooten: All right sir.

Mr. Tarasoff: Slim and probably stooped a little bit, with sandy hair.

Mrs. Tarasoff: receding a little bit.

Mr. Tarasoff: No particular distinguishing features.

Mr. Brooten: All right. Did he. How old a man was he about at that time.

Mr. Tarasoff: About 45 I'd say.

Mr. Brooten: Did he have any children.

Mr. Tarasoff: He had two. Two boys.

Mr. Brooten: And, was, he was married?

Mr. Tarasoff: He was married to a French woman who abandoned him or divorced him or just run away from him. Because he wasn't supportable in private life.

Mr. Brooten: Now, did you receive tapes from anyone else, other than Mr. Flick or this Rudy or the individual that you named previously that delivered a bunch of them to you. Did you receive tapes from anyone else?

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, not at the same time. But after.

Mr. Brooten: All right.

Mr. Tarasoff: Oh, what's his name.

Mr. Brooten: Mr. Bright.

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes, Bill Bright

Mr. Brooten: Would you describe Bill Bright to me. Was he a young man or an old man or.

Mr. Tarasoff: He was a young man with 2 or 3 girls. Very small ones.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well, I think they had two youngsters.
The two girls.

Mr. Tarasoff: Typical Anglo-Saxon type.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Blondish hair, sandy hair.

Mr. Tarasoff: I told him. He was driving in a Volkswagon.
We have pictures of him.

Mr. Brooten: Now, would you tell me how Mr. Bright
would deliver the tapes. Do you know where the tapes came
from.

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, at first, no. I didn't know.

Mr. Brooten: Did you ever subsequently learn where the
tapes came from?

Mr. Tarasoff: Subsequently, yes. During my last two years
or three years. I don't recollect exactly when.

Mr. Brooten: All right. But can you now state where
those tapes came from?

Mr. Tarasoff: Now I can, I have a very good idea where

Mr. Tarasoff: they came from.

Mr. Brooten: All right sir, where did they come from?

Mr. Tarasoff: It was a house that had several recording machines set up. The address I don't know.

Mr. Brooten: All right, but they were tapes of telephone taps were they?

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes.

Mr. Brooten: All right. And you did the specific ones to and from the Soviet Embassy.

Mr. Tarasoff: Right.

Mr. Brooten: Now, would you describe for me the procedure to the best of your recollection, whereby the tapes were taken from the house where they were initially recorded, and how they got to you? What was the chain of.

Mr. Tarasoff: I know one thing that, for instance let's say that Bill Bright, he would pick them up. I don't know whether he would pick them up from Charlie.

Mr. Brooten: Now Charlie is?

Mr. Tarasoff: Charlie Flick

Mr. Brooten: And Charles Flick was, what was his job?

Mr. Tarasoff: He was actually, supervising the workings of this tape record listen. If anything went wrong, he was the fellow who would fix it. If he couldn't, then he would send them back probably to Washington to be fixed. Gotten new ones.. How many times I argued with him, and I said, my gosh, give me a better machine because it's breaking down. He says, well, we don't have any more. But eventually, I would get something decent out of him.

Mr. Brooten: Do you know whether or not Mr. Flick monitored both the Cuban and the Soviet wiretaps from this one safe house that you've described?

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, I would say that he was monitoring them because his Spanish wasn't too hot.

Mr. Brooten: I guess, were the tape recordings made from of the conversations / the Cuban Embassy at this same place?

Mr. Tarasoff: I imagine so.

Mr. Brooten: All right sir.

Mr. Tarasoff: Because there were quite a number of people working there.

Mr. Brooten: All right sir. And, were there people working there all employees, were they Americans or were they Mexican nationals or?

Mr. Tarasoff: I think they were mostly Mexican nationals.

Mr. Brooten: All right. But they worked for the CIA in the interception of these communications?

Mr. Tarasoff: I imagine so, of course.

Mr. Brooten: All right. Did you ever personally go to the safe house?

Mr. Tarasoff: I did

Mr. Brooten: And how often did you go there?

Mr. Tarasoff: Not less than once, maybe twice.

Mr. Brooten: All right sir

Mr. Tarasoff: As I recollect, but that was in connection with the defection of (Russian - name on tape but unable to identify)

Mr. Brooten: I see. Was that after the assassination of President Kennedy?

Mr. Tarasoff: Oh yes.

Mr. Brooten: Now, with respect to, I call your attention to September of 1963, some thirteen years ago, you were going to describe for me or I had asked you then I interrupted myself, the procedure whereby Mr. Bright brought you the tapes from the safe house. Would he call you on the phone?

Mr. Tarasoff: Let's put it that way. I am not sure that Bill was there at that time.

Mr. Brooten: All right.

Mr. Tarasoff: It could have been either Bob, which I doubt, most likely it was Rudy.

Mr. Brooten: All right. And Rudy, you don't remember his last name but you've described him for me.

Mr. Tarasoff: The only name that I could faintly tie in with him would be Bruno, but I'm not sure it's his name.

Mr. Brooten: All right sir, now how would you go about getting, how would be these tapes be brought to you, or would you pick them up?

Mr. Tarasoff: No. We would make a certain, how would you say, a chain of posts where we would meet.

Mr. Brooten: All right.

Mr. Tarasoff: Let's say, today we would meet at this, we tried to break it up because if you come to one place everyday at the same time (mumbling) that would bungle your hands, it looks suspicious, doesn't it?

Mr. Brooten: All right. Now Mr. Tarasoff, do you, were these tapes brought to you in briefcases or?

Mr. Tatasoff: At first they were brought in briefcases. I told them, my gosh, you could be robbed, it happened once someplace I heard about. So I said, let's make it as inconspicuous as we possibly can. So I started putting them in the brown shopping bag.

Mr. Brooten: And you would meet either Rudy or Bill Bright at ...

Mr. Tarasoff: At the appointed place of (mumble)

Mr. Brooten: At the appointed place, and you would pick up the tapes.

Mr. Tarasoff: Many a time this, I had it out with Bill because I'm standing waiting, waiting and nobody shows up. Of course I can't wait too long. 15 minutes I said, 15 minutes that's all you get. So I'll go back to the house and then in about 5 minutes he barges in and says, where the hell were you, I was looking all over for you. I said, I was standing there waiting for you. So.

Mr. Brooten: All right, now sir, do you recall receiving tapes in September of 1963 of any intercepts of telephone communications with the Soviet Embassy?

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes, I do.

Mr. Brooten: All right, and did you ever receive one in which an individual called the Soviet Embassy, and said he wanted to talk to him and you later had another telephone intercept on the same individual?

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes, we had that.

Mr. Brooten: All right, now when you received the tapes, would you describe for me to the best of your recollection, how you went about transcribing and translating them, would you listen with ear phones and type, or what?

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, we were furnished with earphones because if you turned it up at full blast, the neighbors will wonder what the heck is going on.

Mr. Brooten: All right.

Mr. Tarasoff: So, we had the earphones, and then what I would do is first, with the tapes would come the Spanish transcripts.

Mr. Brooten: All right, now would you describe what it looked like, how many copies of it and so on?

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, we had the one copy of it, right? Just the yellow sheets, one copy, say for instance, Spanish starts at number 3, that means you would run the tape for three feet and Spanish starts, which didn't interest us because it had already been transcribed.

Mr. Brooten: Okay.

Mr. Tarasoff: So, but then as you go along, it says there, Russo. One of the Spanish transcribers would put down Russian and I would watch out for the number in front of it. If it says 137 I would let machine run until it hits 137 on the counter.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Give or take a few minutes.

Mr. Tarasoff: I would start the machine and start listening to the conversation in Russian and then while I'm listening I'm transcribing at the same time.

Mr. Brooten: All right, so you were translating and then transcribing at the same time.

Mr. Tarasoff: That's right, at the same time.

Mr. Brooten: And how did your wife assist you in this?

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, she assisted me mostly whenever the conversation came in English, and sometimes I wouldn't catch the proper inflection or else. Well she knows English better than I do, let's put it that way.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Then too, if there was anybody that had a slight southern accent, there slight difference of speech was pretty hard for him to pick up what they were saying.

Mr. Brooten: All right. Did you type things in rough and then your wife retyped them on any occasion?

Mr. Tarasoff: Oh no, that would be a double job absolutely unnecessary.

Mr. Brooten: So you just sat down and listened to the tape and typed it.

Mr. Tarasoff: That's right. If it ran away I would stop it and typed what I heard and then start it up again and proceed.

Mr. Brooten: All right, like a transcriptionist would listening to a dictaphone tape?

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes.

Mr. Brooten: All right. Now, do you recall, specifically, having received a tape, getting back to my question that I interrupted myself for, in which a person who you subsequently learned was Lee Harvy Oswald, called the Soviet Embassy. Do you recall transcribing that tape?

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes, more or less.

Mr. Brooten: Do you, to the best of your recollection, remember whether or not that conversation between the person who subsequently identified himself as Lee Harvy Oswald to the Soviet Embassy, was the conversation in Russian or was it a conversation in English?

Mr. Tarasoff: In English, that's why I put her on.

Mr. Brooten: Now, do you recall the essence of that conversation, was there anything unusual about that conversation that provoked any type of further action or further interest on the part of anyone in the Embassy?

Mr. Tarasoff: Do you refer to the previous conversation?

Mr. Brooten: To the first conversation.

Mr. Tarasoff: Previous one, I don't think there was anything to be gained from it. I think it was rather short and he was asking, do you remember?

Mrs. Tarasoff: As I recall, trying to rely on memory for that many years, his first conversation, he was just trying to make contacts to see if he could get into the Russian Embassy.

Mr. Brooten: All right, do you recall the tone of his voice or how, do you have an impression from listening to that tape about?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well I would say at the first one that came out, it was taken as just an ordinary conversation that he wanted most others, is there anyone who speaks English, and they'd say just a minute and they'd try to get a hold of someone, in the meantime you're waiting, and they'd say well at the time there is no one here that could speak English, call back later. Well then, I don't know whether he finally hung up or if he did get to talk to somebody at that time or not, but the final, the other conversation that came through, the long one.

Mr. Brooten: But, with respect to the first one now, is it your recollection, or to the best of your knowledge, did he identify himself in the first conversation as being Lee Oswald or being Lee Harvey Oswald, did he identify himself in any way? In the first conversation.

Mrs. Tarasoff: No. I think in the first conversation he was just trying to see if he could speak to someone at the Embassy.

Mr. Brooten: All right. And now you both stated that

Mr. Brooten: there was a second long conversation between the first conversation and the second conversation, were you asked to attempt to determine the identity of this person?

Mr. Tarasoff: Oh yes.

Mr. Brooten: All right, would you describe that.

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, to the best knowledge, we either got the note or was it passed it verbally, I think we got a note, no?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well, if I'm not mistaken, the party that brought the reels, there was a notation made to listen to number so-and-so on tape so-and-so dated whatever date it was, because each reel had a date and a number and according to the numbers then there were, the transcripts of each conversation within that had a number, so you ran the tape until you came to a certain number and then you listened.

Mr. Brooten: Now, did they want you to or did they give you any instructions about attempting to determine who the caller was in that case?

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes, they certainly did. They wanted to know the name of the person. Then if we learned the name

Mr. Tarasoff: to get in touch with them immediately and turn in the transcript, to make a transcript, turn it in forget about Spanish, Russian or whatever it was on the reel-

Mrs. Tarasoff: In other words, this was top priority if we got the name, to work on it.

Mr. Tarasoff: It was very important to them.

Mr. Brooten: All right sir. Now did you receive a second tape with this same individual speaking to anyone at the Soviet Embassy?

Mr. Tarasoff: Well that's, you mean the third conversation?

Mr. Brooten: All right, no but there was a second one.

Mr. Tarasoff: the long one, yes.

Mr. Brooten: The long one. Now, would you describe, I realize we do not have a copy of the transcript of that, but would you describe, to the best of your recollection, how you received that particular transcript, when you received it, was it in the morning, the tape.

Mr. Tarasoff: In the morning, with the usual batch of tapes that were delivered to me.

Mr. Brooten: All right.

Mr. Tarasoff: This one particular was singled out as a very important one and they wanted to have the transcript as soon as possible.

Mr. Brooten: All right. And did you start to listen, would you describe specifically with respect to that tape what you remember.

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, as far as I know, I think my wife remembers more than I do.

Mr. Brooten: All right.

Mr. Tarasoff: Because I think she is mistaken slightly about my doing the transcript. I might have jotted down several things in pencil but.

Mr. Brooten: All right, were the, was that tape also in English.

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, that's it.

Mr. Brooten: The tape was in English?

Mr. Tarasoff: You mean with this particular tape?

Mr. Brooten: The particular section of the tape of a conversation between Lee Harvey Oswald and someone at the Soviet Embassy was in English?

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes, that's why she was doing it.

Mr. Brooten: All right, now Mrs. Tarasoff, do you recall that particular tape, the second long tape on Lee Harvey Oswald in which he identified himself?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Yes I do. Because my husband asked me if I would confirm what he had typed or transcribed I should say, from the tape, which I did, I listened, and we both got the same feeling that this was something that should be turned in immediately, and if I'm not mistaken to rely on my memory, that he also had given his name, who the party was.

Mr. Tarasoff: They wanted the name, definitely.

Mrs. Tarasoff: They asked, they usually ask who's calling, and he identified himself. And in this way we felt that it was really top priority to be notified to our contact, and

Mrs. Tarasoff: they in turn came by and picked it up and once it left our hands, why from there on we don't know what happened.

Mr. Brooten: All right, but now I want to go back and ask you some specific questions relating to that tape. Do you recall who, which one of you would have put that tape on the reel? Put that reel on the recording machine?

Mr. Tarasoff: I usually do.

Mr. Brooten: All right.

Mrs. Tarasoff: That's his work.

Mr. Brooten: All right. And then you listened to it and you typed?

Mr. Tarasoff: No, I asked her to sit down to listen to it and to type it out.

Mr. Brooten: And do you recall, Mrs. Tarasoff, which typewriter you would have used in typing it out?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well, now wait a minute. If Boris was transcribing it and it was English, he would probably have

Mrs. Tarasoff: transcribed it and typed it. But then listening to it again, there may have been some corrections or certain, as I said, sometimes.

Mr. Tarasoff: No you typed it out.

Mrs. Tarasoff: I typed it. Well, all right if I typed it out then I typed it out on the typewriter that you always used.

Mr. Tarasoff: Which one, the standard one or the.

Mrs. Tarasoff: The one which was issued to you.

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes, are you sure it wasn't our portable?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Or it could have been the portable because, you know, sometimes if the typewriter went you used the portable. Cause we had quite a few breakdowns with the equipment that we had to work with. It was a little sort of.

Mr. Brooten: Okay, but do you recall typing that.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well it would be me, I would say it would be me because Boris would have difficulty picking up

Mrs. Tarasoff: anybody that had a slight, as I said, accent, or muffled voice.

Mr. Brooten: Do you recall the conversation Mrs. Tarasoff, I don't want to be repetitive but I want to make it clear, do you recall that the conversation was in English?

Mr. Tarasoff: Oh definitely.

Mr. Brooten: All right, and do you recall ever putting anything in the transcript, any editorial comments about Oswald's Russian being poor?

Mrs. Tarasoff: No way. There were no comments made. What was typed was what was being said by this individual.

Mr. Tarasoff: They want....

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well, everything was typed, there was nothing that was put in that would be our opinion or our version of the conversion.

Mr. Brooten: Do you recall from listening to this conversation from the intonations of the voice from the substance of the conversation whether you had any impresssion about what type of person was making this call, was this a nut or how would you describe the person making the call

Mr. Brooten: that identified himself as being Lee Harvey Oswald?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well, I would describe him as just being a person they wanted to get out of the country. I mean he did not want to stay in Mexico, that was certain. He wanted to leave the country and he had no desire, he did state that he did not want to return to the U.S. That much I remember. So he was contacting one or two embassies trying to get financial aid in order to Mexico City where he was at the time. And where his final destination was at that time, I don't know, because we never did get any further information as to whether was given any financial aid/^{of any kind}from either the Russians or the Cubans, I understand he went to both.

Mr. Brooten: Do you recall whether or not he said anything about he got to Mexico City or what his financial status was or anything, I know I'm asking you to search your memory, but do you recall anything about that?

Mrs. Tarasoff: His financial status, at the time, if I remember was, he did say he was broke.

Mr. Brooten: All right.

Mrs. Tarasoff: And he had very little money left. and he was seeking financial aid to be transported to some foreign country. And, the thing is I believe either if he said it or we had read it in the paper then when it all came out, cause the article did appear in a paper there, like this news, that he did come down by bus. Now whether it was mentioned in the transcript or whether I had read it in the paper. So I won't commit myself that it was on the transcript, but it was that I had...

Mr. Brooten: But to the best of your recollection, is it fair to say that he wanted financial assistance.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Yes definitely.

Mr. Brooten; That he told them that he didn't have any money.

Mrs. Tarasoff: True.

Mr. Brooten: All right. Do you remember, now I realize again that we don't have the transcript before us and I'm asking you to recall from your memory, but do you recall his saying anything about giving them information in exchange for being transported out of Mexico?

Mrs. Tarasoff: No. As far as I can recollect there was nothing said about any information, and beside, as far as I can recall he was without work.

Mr. Brooten: All right.

Mr. Tarasoff: It's usually the nutty types that always asks . Oh, can we get some more money for our information, we can sell or stuff like this but I don't think...

Mr. Brooten: Would you describe Oswald from hearing I assume a number of conversations over a number of years, how would you characterize Oswald.

Mr. Tarasoff: I would say, judging from the tone of his voice I thought he was a very cool individual, he was determined, he, how would you describe it, the picture that I had of Oswald was like a coiled snake ready to strike. That's what I really remember from the conversation. He sounded like he was quite angry about something. But, at the same time he kept cool, but you could detect a note of anger in his voice about something, whether he wasn't being given a fair treatment by the people he was talking to or why, I couldn't say.

Mr. Brooten: Do you recall whether he told the Soviets that they really ought to him or anything to that effect?

Mr. Tarasoff: No.

Mr. Brooten: You don't remember

Mrs. Tarasoff: I wouldn't say that he , he was ...

Mr. Brooten: Do you recall anything his asking about what news about his visa or anything like that? Do you recall any of that type of conversation?

Mr. Tarasoff: No.

Mr. Brooten: Ok. Now, would you tell me - would you describe for me the type of paper that this was typed on?

Mr. Tarasoff: You mean...

Mr. Brooten: The transcript, was it plain white paper or...

Mr. Tarasoff: The top sheet would be just plain white paper.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Excuse me, the top sheet was U.S. Government bond.

Mr. Tarasoff: Oh, they didn't want us to use that.

Mr. Brooten: Yes, (laughter)

Mrs. Tarasoff: Nine times out of ten that's what we wound up with. Until we had to go out and buy it on our own.

Mr. Tarasoff: I was lugging a whole bunch of this paper.

Mrs. Tarasoff: But, from the beginning, for a long period of time, that's what you had to use so we went out and started buying it on our own.

Mr. Tarasoff: Then two copies of

Mrs. Tarasoff: Carbon copies.

Mr. Brooten: Two carbon copies, all right,

Mr. Tarasoff: Do you want to see it?

Mr. Brooten: Yes

Mr. Tarasoff: Oh. I'll show you the type of paper they used.

Mr. Brooten: Oh. all right, if we could have that. Now, at any time in this conversation, did Lee Harvey Oswald, were you able to identify to whom Oswald was speaking?

Mrs. Tarasoff: I, myself wouldn't because I had very little contact with the transcribing of the reels. That would actually be my husband's duties to recognize the voices.

Mr. Brooten: Now if your husband recognized the voice of the person, the person inside, would he on the transcript then identify that person.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Definitely, it would also be on the transcript - so-and-so spoke to so-and so.

Mr. Brooten: That was a normal procedure then.

rs. Tarasoff: Yes, if you could identify the two parties that were speaking to each other, then you were also - you would also transcribe the names, include the names in the transcript.

Mr. Brooten: Now, if, in this case, do you recall whether or not the person to whom Lee Harvey Oswald was speaking was identified.

Mrs. Tarasoff: I don't really know.

Mr. Brooten: All right.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Because If I was doing the typing of it and if I came to it I would automatically re-run the reel in order for Boris to listen to the - if he could recognize who he was speaking to. I don't recall whether he did recognize who he was speaking to or not. But there was also a close resemblance to several voices that sounded^{alike}/in the Embassy amongst the people who were speaking, so sometimes it was very hard to identify the people, I think there was three that almost had the same tone of voice and speaking habits.

Mr. Brooten: Would it have been the normal procedure?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well, it would sort of be very easy to let's say, weed out who the English speaking people were because there were very few that spoke English, so ...

Mr. Brooten: But on this particular tape, do either

Mr. Brooten: of you remember being able to identify the person to whom Lee Harvey Oswald was speaking.

Mr. Tarasoff: Unfortunately not.

Mr. Brooten: All right sir. And you did not I take it then, if you could not identify the person, that you would not have put any name on the transcript of someone that he had been speaking to?

Mr. Tarasoff: Do you remember putting any names on it?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well, if you were not certain, you would put the name and you would put it in parens and what did we have a question mark?

Mr. Tarasoff: A question mark, I think

Mr. Brooten: Now if you couldn't identify the person, what would you put, what would you use, initials or...

Mr. Tarasoff: No. We just put down the men outside or if the call comes in that's it the men outside. If somebody calls from the Embassy and we don't know his name we can't identify him or recognize his voice then we put down MI or men inside.

Mr. Brooten: All right. Do you recall in this case or if - strike that. We're going to have to change tapes here so let's go off the record and shut the tape recorders off before they run down to the last. Ok we're back on the record now after a break for lunch.

Mr. Brooten: Were either of you ever asked at any time for your opinion as to the identity of the individual to whom Lee Harvey Oswald was speaking on that second tape?

Mr. Tarasoff: I don't think anybody asked us that.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well, if they asked me, I wouldn't know because to begin with I never worked on the tapes constantly to have any sufficient amount of time to recognize voices - that would be Boris's, my husband's part, he would be the one who would be able to identify whoever was speaking, if it was possible to identify them.

Mr. Brooten: Now, sir. You have shown some Huron copysette papers, which is a carbon set, and you stated that you made an original and 2 copies of all of your transcripts that you had translated and transcribed. With respect to the Oswald tape, did you do the same thing with that tape? that is make an original and 2 copies.

Mr. Tarasoff: That's a rule.. We always did that. Before it used to be three copies but then they saw that there was no need to make so many, so they came down to the original and two copies.

Mr. Brooten: Now sir, do you recall what happened to, do either of you recall what happened once you had the second Oswald tape transcribed? What happened then did you make a call to someone or what?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well, after transcribing and typing it up, and the name was mentioned and as we said previously, there was some indication from the, on the reel, that this could be of interest or very pertinent, so we had contacted our contact that we had for any emergency of this type.

Mr. Brooten: Do you recall who that was?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well, I wouldn't want to mention the name, if you don't mind. It was just a phone number and sometimes it would be just passing^{on}/the message in case the party was not there.

Mr. Brooten: All right, let me without trying to pry further, is that person still, is that person an employee of the CIA?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Oh yes.

Mr. Brooten: Is that person still employed by the CIA?

Mrs. Tarasoff: That I wouldn't know. That much I wouldn't know.

Mr. Brooten: But you called this unidentified person?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Yes.

Mr. Brooten: And what transpired then.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well, they in turn would pass by the house and pick it up and take it to the Embassy.

Mr. Tarasoff: No I took the reel and transcription to a corner, I remember that.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Oh, you took it personally? I thought they came by and picked up. Cause as a rule they would come by and pick it up.

Mr. Tarasoff: Probably it must have been the other one.

Mr. Brooten: Now, do you recall that on the same day that you got that tape, that you transcribed that tape and it was delivered to someone that day?

Mrs. Tarasoff: The same day.

Mr. Tarasoff: The same day, very shortly after its been finished.

Mr. Brooten: All right sir. Now, that was an original and two copies. Would either of you be able to identify the original transcript if you saw it.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Yes, because there was a certain procedure in how you type it up.

Mr. Brooten: All right. Would you be able to determine at this point in time, 13 years later, if you saw the original, whether or not it had been altered in any way from what you recall typing it?

Mrs. Tarasoff: That would be hard to determine because actually, the transcript was made verbatim. Whatever one party said, that was typed, whatever the other party said, also was typed. There wasn't anything put in other than what was both people talking to.

Mr. Brooten: There were no editorial comments?

Mrs. Tarasoff: No. None whatsoever.

Mr. Brooten: And I believe you said, Sir, nothing was taken out.

Mrs. Tarasoff: No. There was nothing omitted and nothing added.

Mr. Tarasoff: They asked for verbatim, you've got to put everything in it.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Whether they said oh, ah or everything.

Mr. Brooten: Now, you delivered that, did you ever use any in the transcription of those tapes, did you ever use any code words or any phrases or anything like that that you would add to it?

Mrs. Tarasoff: No.

Mr. Brooten: You would use just your MI for man inside and MO for man outside.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Those were the only two.

Mr. Brooten: Abbreviations?

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, I used to, first when a person was identified, let's say (Russian name), instead of putting down everytime (Russian name) said this, went here, did that, I would put down Yat.

Mrs. Tarasoff: An abbreviation.

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes, saves time and work and what not.

Mr. Brooten: Now, you personally handed the tape and the original and two copies to this person who was your contact.

Mr. Tarasoff: If I delivered it, I did.

Mr. Brooten: All right, sir.

Mr. Tarasoff: If it was picked up maybe ..

Mrs. Tarasoff: The same thing, whether it was delivered or picked up they would have the tape...

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes, but would it be you or me?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Oh no. It wouldn't be me.

Mr. Tarasoff: I mean if they came to the house.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well, it didn't matter because nine times out of ten they'd want to talk to you anyway.

Mr. Brooten: Either way, it would be personally delivered to ..

Mrs. Tarasoff: Oh yes, it would be from hand to hand.

Mr. Brooten: And then after you delivered that transcript and the tape, did you anytime subsequent to that ever see that transcript again or hear that tape again?

Mrs. Tarasoff: No, none whatsoever.

Mr. Brooten: On cases of that nature, which were sensitive, like the Oswald case, was it a normal procedure to save certain tapes?

Mrs. Tarasoff: No, not that we can recollect. I don't think that we ever saved any tapes.

Mr. Brooten: No, but I don't mean you saved. I mean the CIA saved?

Mrs. Tarasoff: That I don't know. Whatever left our house and they picked up...

Mr. Tarasoff: The minute it leaves our hands...

Mrs. Tarasoff: They could have erased everything or they could have saved things or we don't know. As I say, whatever left our hands and went into the hands of the other party, we never knew what happened, whether they kept it, erased it, burned it or destroyed the whole works, this we never knew.

Mr. Brooten: Do you know anything about the filing system, how they file these transcripts. Did either one of you ever have anything to do with that.

Mrs. Tarasoff: No. Now wait, I was, no, this was my, at first I was filing it, taking the original,

Mr. Brooten: With respect to the typing of this, would you describe for me the type of portable typewriter you would use?

Mrs. Tarasoff: If I was using my portable typewriter, It's a Royal typewriter and it's in kind of a brownish/beige case.

Mr. Brooten: All right M'am.

Mrs. Tarasoff: And if it was a typewriter that was issued by the Company, then I don't remember whether it was a standard, then it would be on that. But many a time we would have breakage of tape recorder, typewriter, so we'd have to improvise every now and then.

Mr. Brooten: Now, did you get, I know you don't want to reveal the one name, but did you, was the person who picked up the Oswald tape the same person that you received the tape from?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Nine times out of ten yes.

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes, most likely.

Mr. Brooten; All right. With respect to CIA personnel, within the embassy, I'm talking about subsequent to the assassination of President Kennedy, did any person from the CIA ever contact either of you about that particular tape or your transcription of the Oswald tape at any time?

Mr. Tarasoff: I think my answer should be negative. but I may have to qualify that statement. Do you remember if Herb ever mentioned it to us.

Mrs. Tarasoff: About the recall on the tape.

Mr. Tarasoff: No, not the recall, I mean about the whole business.

Mrs. Tarasoff: No, In fact I think, well I don't think Herb was there then.

Mr. Blackmer: Are you speaking about Herbert Mannell?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Yes, I don't think he was there then. Because shortly after we came...

Mr. Tarasoff: He was from the first because I had dealings the minute I came...

Mrs. Tarasoff: Yes, but the thing is that shortly after that he was transferred.

Mr. Tarasoff: He was actually there for quite a while.

Mrs. Tarasoff: All right, well time went by. Well anyway, no we weren't

Mr. Tarasoff: I was at a meeting at his house shortly after I came, because I said that the load that they put on

Mr. Tarasoff: me is tremendous. I just cannot do this. Not humanly possible. So he said, don't worry about it, have the Spanish transcribers do the Spanish part of it again.

Mr. Brooten: Now did anyone from any agency of the Federal Government, from the Warren Commission or anyone else talk to you or discuss with you your translation of the Oswald tape? Or your transcription of the Oswald tape.

Mrs. Tarasoff: No. That is negative. Absolutely no one.

Mr. Brooten: In thirteen years, no one has talked to you?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Not even the Embassy employees or the officials at that time that were our employers approached us on the subject.

Mr. Brooten: Now M'am, I just need some more information from you just for purposes of identification. Your full name is?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Is Anna Tarasoff.

Mr. Brooten: And your address Mrs. Tarasoff?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Rancho Contento, Guadalajara, Mexico.

Mr. Brooten: And your date of birth?

Mrs. Tarasoff: May 5, 1923.

Mr. Brooten: And your social security number if you remember it?

Mrs. Tarasoff: No, I don't.

Mr. Brooten: And what is your occupation or profession?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Right now, just a housewife.

Mr. Brooten: All right, and are you retired from any agency of the Federal Government or?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well, I'm semi-retired, I should say.

Mr. Brooten: All right, from which agency?

Mrs. Tarasoff: CIA.

Mr. Brooten: All right, and how long did you work

Mr. Brooten: for the CIA?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Oh, I was employed as of April 1957 and then I was picked up, and then I had actually a year off duty, when we were transferred to Mexico City. And then I was picked up on contract and from, I would say, from 1964 up until 1970 and that was my length of duty with CIA.

Mr. Brooten: Now, did you know in the Embassy or did you ever have contacts, I'm going to ask you about a number of, or about some names, with Ann Goodpasture?

Mrs. Tarasoff: I know Ann Goodpasture but I didn't have any dealings with her.

Mr. Brooten: Did Ann Goodpasture ever bring tapes back and forth as a courier type of a person and pick up transcripts and stuff, to your recollection?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Ann, I think Ann did it once when Charlie, or something went wrong, I think she brought it by once, if I'm not mistaken.

Mr. Brooten: But, were, as far as you know, or as far as you may remember,

Mrs. Tarasoff: That wasn't her duty.

Mr. Brooten: That wasn't her duty?

Mrs. Tarasoff: No.

Mr. Brooten: All right.

Mrs. Tarasoff: It was just a fill in if there was for some reason or other.

Mr. Brooten: What about a Clark Anderson? Did you know Clark Anderson in the Embassy?

Mr. Tarasoff: I'm not sure about his first name, but I knew Mr. Anderson.

Mr. Brooten: And was he the legal attache?

Mr. Tarasoff: I met him when I was there on TDY.

Mr. Brooten: All right.

Mr. Tarasoff: We had a meeting at his home. And we talked about furniture that he made. That's about all I can tell you about him. If that's the same person, but his name wasn't, his family name was Anderson, whether he was

Mr. Tarasoff: Clark or somebody else, I don't know.

Mr. Brooten: What about a Mr. Phillips? Did you know Mr. Phillips on the Cuban desk?

Mrs. Tarasoff: No.

Mr. Tarasoff: No.

Mr. Brooten: All right. Did you know Mr. and Mrs. Mannell?

Mr. Tarasoff: Mannell sounds...

Mrs. Tarasoff: Yes.

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes.

Mr. Brooten: All right. And did, how closely did you work for 1963 until 1970, how closely did you work and associate with people from the Embassy?

Mr. Tarasoff: Well.

Mr. Brooten: Directly work with them?

Mr. Tarasoff: On, you mean dealing in official capacity?

Mr. Brooten: Yes.

Mr. Tarasoff: I don't think we ever attempted anything like that.

Mr. Brooten: All right.

Mr. Tarasoff: Just socially sometimes.

Mrs. Tarasoff: That was rarely. Because they were skeptical, very cagey about having us being seen with them and vice versa. So, I don't know, it was the chief's idea that we shouldn't be socializing with the inside people since we were on the outside for some reason or other.

Mr. Brooten: What, did you have any particular type of cover or anything, how, what did it appear to your friends and associates that you were doing in Mexico City?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well, most of our friends and associates were CIA people anyway. So if we were sent overseas you didn't have to tell them, they could more or less guess on their own or put two...

Mr. Tarasoff: Besides when we were talking about company, well, I'm giving out a very deep and sinister secret, you always refer to the Company as Pickle Factory

Mr. Brooten: Laughter - Pickle Factory.

Mr. Tarasoff: We now wrote letters to each other we'd put down PF, they knew what we were talking about.

Mr. Brooten: Did you ever see any, did either of you ever see any transcripts of any tapes from Spanish involving Oswald?

Mr. Tarasoff: Spanish?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Spanish?

Mr. Tarasoff: She used read the whole thing and see if it's pertinent. Did you explain your functions? (unintelligible)

Mrs. Tarasoff: No. He started to ask me, but I didn't finish, because he had to change the tape.

Mr. Brooten: I want to go into some of your functions when you came to Mexico.

Mrs. Tarasoff: When I first came to Mexico, the first few months, I was told I could help Boris because there was such a backlog of work that was left on his shoulders when his predecessor left. And so, since I was employed by CIA there was no reason for them not to say yes because they didn't have to worry about a clearance. So I was helping him out with the filing and more or less putting it into category, in order.

Mr. Tarasoff: It is very important the part that she played in it.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Because I filed according to the date of the reel and the reel itself had a number and then following that each conversation had a number and I that would be the original copy that I would file as it is in whole. Then the carbon copy would be also kept in its original state and the second one I would sort of scan it over and just delete what was not pertinent like it was a conversation with somebody saying, well, tomorrow I'm going downtown, do you want to go with me? I'll pick you up at such-and-such a time. Or I'm having lunch at, or its a phone call and they said no one is here and hangs up. But if it had anything to deal with two people and especially if there names were mentioned, this was cut out and it was pasted on a piece of paper.

Mrs. Tarasoff: and it was turned in to our contact. In the morning it was handed to the same person that delivered and it was delivered then to the people at the Embassy and from there I guess they filed it according to their own system. At first, they wanted everything, and then they found out why a million times somebody's dialing for the time, somebody's calling to see if their husband's come in, and so they said that this was just a waste of time to try to file all of this, what we're looking for is people that are carrying conversations with each other, and especially if they're identifying each other.

Mr. Tarasoff: Actually, if was left to your discretion.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Yes

Mr. Tarasoff: To throw all the unnecessary...

Mrs. Tarasoff: all the rubbish. Because they were trying to do this at the Embassy and they found out that it was taking up too much of their time for work that is more pertinent than just sitting and just cutting little pieces of paper, so they decided that it would be up to me to use my common sense to see what was pertinent and was not pertinent. And, as I say, I would put it on a piece of paper and they in turn filed it, and if they had comments to make

Mrs. Tarasoff: on it they would make their own personal comments.

Mr. Brooten: But on these tapes you didn't and on these things that you did, you didn't put you own.

Mrs. Tarasoff: No.

Mr. Brooten: personal comments on.

Mrs. Tarasoff: There was no comments made on my part.

Mr. Brooten: Well, I believe that that is all the questions that I have for right now. My colleague has prepare some questions relating to some areas that I haven't covered, and so I'm going to shut the tapes off and we'll let him come around to this side of the table.

Mr. Blackmer: Mr. Tarasoff, I'm going to ask you a few questions concerning specifics of your function in Mexico City in 1963 between the periods of September and November. I understand from your answers to Mr. Brooten's questions that your responsibility was to translate and transcribe intercepts of telephone conversations coming into the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City.

Mr. Tarasoff: And going out of the Soviet Embassy.

Mr. Blackmer: Coming in and going out of the Soviet Embassy. During the course of your employment, did you become familiar with many of the voices of the people at the Embassy:

Mr. Tarasoff: Oh yes, ^{you}/gradually begin to realize who they are, the way they talk and you associate yourself very closely with them after a while, but it takes time. Unfortunately.

Mr. Blackmer: Is it not a fact that these Russians were cautious when they spoke on the telephone?

Mr. Tarasoff: Oh yes, very definitely.

Mr. Blackmer: Did they, they didn't usually identify themselves by name?

Mr. Tarasoff: No.

Mr. Blackmer: So therefore, it was really necessary for you to become familiar so you could place them.

Mr. Tarasoff: Unless, of course, a certain person asked whoever answered the telephone for another Soviet individual, whoever he might be.

Mr. Blackmer: And then the name would come up and you'd be able to identify them?

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes, I don't think it happened very often.

Mr. Blackmer: All right sir. Can I ask you a few if there were any particular individuals that you could instantly recognize, their voices?

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, Yakinov was one of them.

Mr. Blackmer: Yakinov.

Mr. Tarasoff: Then they had Eukerrikov. Oh, it's a riot. I tell you.

Mr. Blackmer: So you recognized instantly certain voices of individuals and I see that you have a scrap book in front of us and in that it's got, it seems to be photographs of people in the Soviet Delegation here in Mexico City. Is that

Mr. Tarasoff: Soviet Delegation?

Mr. Blackmer: Soviet Embassy in Mexico City, you have

Mr. Blackmer: various names ~~in~~ there in different sections. So you state on top who these people were and where they were in the Embassy.

Mr. Tarasoff: What I could scrounge out, because I asked for the photographs. I said how am going to tell who's who if I don't see what the heck he looks like. And Herb told me, he said try and work without pictures, and give me a report on them, what you think of each of them. And the first one apparently was so successful that he was jumping with joy. I described, I kind of cheated a little bit. I saw the picture of the person I was describing.

Mr. Blackmer: All right sir, so they kept you in the dark, and you made clippings from newspapers, and you got various photographs.

Mr. Tarasoff: Later they relented and let me see the pictures.

Mr. Blackmer: All right, let me move into one specific area. Are you familiar with one Pavel Antonovich Yatskov?

Mr. Tarasoff: Yatskov.

Mr. Blackmer: Do you know this individual?

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, yes and we have his pictures.

Mr. Blackmer: You have his picture, and do you recall having transcribed telephone conversations in which Mr. Yatskov was one of the people on the telephone, so you would recognize his voice?

Mr. Tarasoff: I imagine I would, but as I said before, I'm not sure about anything right now.

Mr. Blackmer: Well, back then constantly doing these transcripts you..

Mr. Tarasoff: Oh yes, then you pick it up, to know exactly who it is.

Mr. Blackmer: So this man is not unfamiliar to you? Yatskov.

Mr. Tarasoff: No.

Mr. Blackmer: He made many phone calls.

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes.

Mr. Blackmer: Now, you explained to me that, let me ask you if this is correct, someone's speaking Russian the voice sounds in a certain way, and the same person speaking English might not sound the same, is that correct?

Mr. Tarasoff: That's correct because the person who speaks the English uses very stilted languages and long pauses between words and so forth, so it sounds mechanical to me.

Mr. Blackmer: This is a Russian speaking English?

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes, a Russian speaking English.

Mr. Blackmer: All right, and you, I understand from reviewing the Oswald tape when you were transcribing the two telephone conversations, do you have an opinion right now as to whether Yatskov was one of the, was the party that Mr. Oswald was speaking to on those two occasions?

Mr. Tarasoff: I doubt it very much. Because by comparing the pictures I would say that it's not the same person.

Mr. Blackmer: But, had you ever heard Yatskov speaking English?

Mr. Tarasoff: That I cannot answer.

Mr. Blackmer: Were you aware that he could speak English?

Mr. Tarasoff: That I don't know.

Mr. Blackmer: You don't know. But you did recall many conversations from Yatskov in Russian.

Mr. Tarasoff: Oh yes, yes.

Mr. Blackmer: All right. Do you believe, you stated that you doubt very seriously if Yatskov was one of the parties speaking. Now I ask you if you are familiar with a Kostikov? Valeriy Vladimirovich Kostikov.

Mr. Tarasoff: Valeriy Vladimirovich Kostikov.

Mr. Blackmer: Do you know Mr. Kostikov?

Mr. Tarasoff: I had transcribed some of his calls.

Mr. Blackmer: Before the Oswald calls?

Mr. Tarasoff: Most likely.

Mr. Blackmer: So you are familiar with Mr. Kostikov's voice speaking Russian. Is that true?

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, that is if I remember it correctly.

Mr. Blackmer: Can you tell me whether or not you had ever recall Mr. Kostikov's speaking in English?

Mr. Tarasoff: No. If a person was speaking in English I doubt if I would know him.

Mr. Blackmer: Can you recall any conversation in which these high ranking Russians, you did know their function, did you know they were secret police? Yatskov and Kostikov?

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, eventually I got to know them, who's who, I think I have that list of them. (turning to his wife he asks) Do you remember.

Mrs. Tarasoff: You were given a list of all of the Soviet Embassy employees and their status as to whether they were a Secretary Treasurer, or the one at the gate answering the phone, and they also issued certain information if they were able to prove it.

Mr. Tarasoff: Suspected KGB.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Suspected KGB and suspected operator that they had. So this list was furnished.

Mr. Blackmer: Could you tell me if you had this list before the Oswald conversation?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well this list was furnished practically every time they had a changeover of personnel.

Mr. Blackmer: Did you know at the time of the Oswald conversation that Kostikov was a member of the KGB?

Mr. Tarasoff: But I can't swear to that.

Mr. Blackmer: But was this also indicated on this list that you got, whether they were KGB or not?

Mrs. Tarasoff: If they suspected and they had proof, they would put in question mark.

Mr. Blackmer: Do you recall this man Kostikov having been one?

Mrs. Tarasoff: No, that I wouldn't know.

Mr. Blackmer: All right.

Mr. Tarasoff: You have to realize one thing. There were fifteen employees plus their wives who chatted on the phone. So actually, there were quite a number of people to take care of. It was almost impossible to realize who's who and unless you get to know their voices perfectly.

Mr. Blackmer: All right, Can I ask you if you're familiar with Antonovich Kanstantinov?

Mr. Tarasoff: Kanstantinov.

Mr. Blackmer: Do you know a Kanstantinov?

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, I heard them on the tape.

Mr. Blackmer: Do you know what position he had in the Embassy?

Mr. Tarasoff: Absolutely no.

Mr. Blackmer: Do you recall whether he was suspected of being a KGB official?

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes, I was told that he was.

Mr. Blackmer: You were told that he was KGB.

Mr. Tarasoff: That he was confirmed.KGB.

Mr. Blackmer: Confirmed KGB. Do you know when you found this out?

Mr. Tarasoff: Pardon me?

Mr. Blackmer: Do you know what period of time you found this out?

Mr. Tarasoff: No.

Mr. Blackmer: You don't know whether it was before or after the Oswald phone call?

Mr. Tarasoff: No.

Mr. Blackmer: Do you recall the name Kostin?

Mr. Tarasoff: It sounds familiar but again, as I say I doubt it.

Mr. Blackmer: Did you ever come across the name Kostin Mrs. Tarasoff?

Mrs. Tarasoff: No.

Mr. Tarasoff: Unless they, what they've done..

Mrs. Tarasoff: abbreviated it.

Mr. Blackmer: You're fluent in Russian sir, does that look to you like it could in any way be an abbreviation of either the name of Kostikov, or Yatskov or Konstantinov? Would someone familiar with the language of Russian use that as an abbreviation of any of those names?

Mr. Tarasoff: I am completely at a loss here. It sounds Russian I know.

Mr. Blackmer: It sounds Russian. But you didn't know the individual?

Mr. Tarasoff: No, I don't recollect frankly.

Mr. Blackmer: Do you know of any of the high-ranking officials in the Soviet Embassy, whether they spoke English on the telephone conversations or did they speak Russian mostly?

Mr. Tarasoff: Oh, they spoke Russian. Very seldom

Mr. Tarasoff: did you have English. Very seldom and then usually I called upon her (Mrs. Tarasoff) to verify my idea, whatever they were talking about. Sometimes their English was so bad that it was impossible to make heads or tails out of it.

Mr. Blackmer: I would like to ask you if you can state an opinion as to whether or not you think the party talking to Mr. Oswald, on the two conversations that you intercepted, were any of the individuals we just discussed. Yatskov, Kostikov, Konstantinov or Kostin. Do you know for a fact whether Mr. Oswald spoke with any of these individuals?

Mr. Tarasoff: Well my unconfirmed guess would be that it must have been either Kostikov, or Konstantinov.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well that's for the simple reason, out of the whole group that was at the Embassy there were only about two that really spoke English well enough, where they could carry on a conversation.

Mr. Blackmer: And those two are?

Mr. Tarasoff: Would be these two people/

Mr. Blackmer: Kostikov and Konstantinov.

Mr. Tarasoff: Because the others were sort of a beginner, a word here or there, but they couldn't carry on a conversation, in fact if a phone call was made and an American was calling trying to get some information, well even the party at the gate that would be there, or at the switchboard. They would hardly understand what they were trying to say. They would try to tell them in Spanish that they don't understand them. Or telling them in Russian or in Spanish and they would finally hang up because even the party at the switchboard very seldom knew English. So you could boil it down to how many there were that really spoke English well enough where they could carry on a conversation.

Mr. Blackmer: All right, I understand that you have made voice tapes. Could describe to me what you did and why that was done?

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, first of all I wanted to familiarize myself with the way each member of the Embassy was talking. Secondly, if I had somebody doing my work for me after I was transferred or for any other reason, that they would listen to the voices of the Soviet/^{embassy} employees and figure out who was talking. And in order to build up a library, let's say, of the voice prints, so consequently, ~~as I had~~ quite a

Mr. Tarasoff: number of these spools, empty spools from eight millimeter movies, I used those for cutting off a section of the tape and then winding it on the spool and then my wife would mark it and put a piece of paper identifying each voice when it was spoken and so forth. After a while we would run out of it because there were so many different voices. So we had to go to Kodak store and we bought a whole mess of these empty reels.

Mr. Blackmer: Did you deal with anybody in the Embassy on this voice taping?

Mr. Tarasoff: No. I sent them notice to that effect to the embassy. I said that it would be a good idea. They didn't think so at first, but then, remember, I think it was Herb that said actually, take the voice samples.

Mr. Blackmer: So you definitely communicated this to Herb Mannell.

Mr. Tarasoff: I think so. That's who it was.

Mr. Blackmer: Can you tell me a little more about the voice identity tapes that you made, when you left the employment, did you turn them over to anyone in the Embassy?

Mr. Tarasoff: Oh yes, after we had a box full of them we had to turn them over. Do you remember who picked them up, probably one of the boys.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well, when we were leaving all the equipment went. There were a couple of them that came out and Charlie came out and who was the other fellow who and they took them. came out with them/ You know the one that brought the dictionaries for you.

Mr. Tarasoff: Oh, Dan Vogel.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Yes, he took some of the staff.

Mr. Blackmer: I'm sorry, Dan Vogel?

Mr. Tarasoff: His name is in the

Mr. Blackmer: In what, sir? His name is in the book the CIA diary, Dan Vogel was someone that you gave these voice identify tapes to?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Yes.

Mr. Blackmer: I see. Do you know if these tapes are still in existence?

Mrs. Tarasoff: That, I have no idea.

Mr. Blackmer: I'd like to show a memorandum sir, it's dated the 16th of October, 1963. It is a teletype message to the Ambassador concerning Lee Harvey Oswald's contact with the Soviet Union. I'd like to read for you this paragraph and I want to ask you if you think it's a fair representation of the information that you transmitted to CIA headquarters during the time you transcribed the Oswald tape. If we can, we have a minor delay, if we can cut off just for a moment and we can return. Mrs. Tarasoff, Mr. Tarasoff, I was going to ask you, give you the information that's contained in October 16, 1973 CIA memo to the Ambassador. It also has carbon copies to Immigration and Naturalization, Navy, Legal Attache, Regional Security Officers, Counselor for Political Affairs and the Ministry. This is information that was sent to these different agencies concerning Mr. Oswald's appearance in Mexico City in the period September-October, 1965 (sic) (means 1963) and I'll just read it and I'll just try to emphasize the part that when discussing Mr. Oswald. This memo starts: the following information was received, and of course the source is blanked out, on October 1, 1963, now I want to read this following information and tell me if you think there is anything more in the transcripts than what's contained in this message. An American male contacted

the Soviet Embassy and identified himself as Lee Oswald. Is that correct so far? Is that basically what you had in the transcript?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Yes.

Mr. Blackmer: This officer determined that Oswald had been at the Soviet Embassy on 26 or 28 (unclear) September, 1963 and had talked with Kostikov, a member of the Counselor section. Now do you know for a fact whether he was at the Soviet Embassy?

Mr. Tarasoff: We could never know that.

Mrs. Tarasoff: No.

Mr. Blackmer: You never knew that. And do you know for a fact whether or not he talked to Kostikov on the telephone?

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, as I said before, it's a very doubtful proposition and we could jump at conclusions all weekend.

Mr. Blackmer: But, you don't know for a fact that he did?

Mr. Tarasoff: Not as a fact.

Mr. Blackmer: Mr. Oswald's contact was done in order to learn if the Soviet Embassy had received a reply from Washington concerning his (Oswald's) request. Now, do you know, if in the conversation intercept, whether he was requesting something?

Mrs. Tarasoff: If I can remember, I think he was requesting financial help to go back to either go to Cuba or to go to Russia.

Mr. Blackmer: You don't recall whether or not being... (interrupted).

Mrs. Tarasoff: But he needed financial assistance because he didn't have much money.

Mr. Blackmer: Do you recall whether he asked the Soviet Embassy people if they had received replies from some previous requests he'd made?

Mrs. Tarasoff: No.

Mr. Blackmer: That is the information. So is there any more information that you know from the transcripts

Mr. Blackmer: about Mr. Oswald's telephone conversations, is there more than is mentioned in the paragraph I just read you? And, if so, what else did you know?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well, I couldn't really rely on my memory, but I know the conversation was quite lengthy, in fact, the transcript must have been at least a couple of pages or two and a half pages, because it has to be done verbatim, word for word, it wasn't just listening to it and then you making a summary. It was a verbatim transcript made of both parties speaking to each other.

Mr. Blackmer: Well, was there any more in the context of what went on in that conversation other than the fact that he just wanted to know if he'd gotten a request (sic) back from the Soviets. Did he ask for anything? Do you recall that he asked for anything? Did he ask for a visa?

Mrs. Tarasoff: That I wouldn't swear to. But I know he was requesting financial help because he said he was just out of money.

Mr. Blackmer: So that much is very clear. You do remember he at least asked for financial help.

Mrs. Tarasoff: And he wanted to speak to someone

Mrs. Tarasoff: in the Embassy who would be able to finance, I guess give him the money.

Mr. Blackmer: Did he indicate that he wanted to leave Mexico?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Oh, definitely, he didn't want to stay, well I know that he didn't want to stay in Mexico because he was going to leave, if he couldn't get results from one of the embassies, the Cuban or the Soviet embassy, he wasn't about to stay in Mexico.

Mr. Blackmer: Did you know this from the transcript or is this from some other knowledge that you gained since then?

Mrs. Tarasoff: I don't know whether that was in the transcript or whether it was something that came through another source.

Mr. Blackmer: Can I ask you if you can recall from the transcript, either one of you, whether or not he said he wanted to go to Cuba or to Russia? You said he wanted to get out of Mexico, did the transcript, can you recall from the transcript, did he indicate where he wanted to go? He wanted to leave Mexico, where did he want to go?

Mrs. Tarasoff: If any place, he would go back to
of
Russia. Because his wife is/Russian extraction. And this
is the one reason it puzzled both Boris and I that although
he married a Russian, why was she given permission to leave
the country when it is so difficult for others to leave?
So there must be some sort, there must have been sort of
an angle there. While he married a Russian girl, and he
lived there, I believe it was three or four years.

Mr. Blackmer: While we're on this record, let's not
get into opinions, I want to get anything that you can
recall having seen on that transcript that indicated where
he wanted to go. You say he wanted financial aid, that
he was broke. Did it indicate where he wanted to go?

Mrs. Tarasoff: He really didn't care. He wanted to
go to either Cuba or to Russia.

Mr. Blackmer: Do you know that from the transcript?

Mrs. Tarasoff: I would say that's exactly what he wanted,
if I can rely on my memory.

Mr. Blackmer: And your memory of what was in the
transcript, that he wanted to go to Cuba or to Russia.

Mrs. Tarasoff: He didn't want to stay in Mexico. That was for sure. His purpose in coming to Mexico was to contact either one of the embassies because he couldn't get any results in Washington from the embassies.

Mr. Blackmer: We want to stay only with the knowledge that you have based on what you transcribed. And you think that you transcribed something that indicated that he wanted to leave Mexico City and travel to Cuba or Russia?

Mrs. Tarasoff: That's right.

Mr. Blackmer: And is that anywhere contained in this 16 October 1963 memo?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Well, as far as dates are concerned.

Mr. Blackmer: You see the memo before you. Do you see anything in there that indicates that he said that he wanted to travel to Russia?

Mrs. Tarasoff: No, none whatsoever.

Mr. Blackmer: Do you see anything in there sir?

Mr. Tarasoff: I don't. I can't recollect.

Mr. Blackmer: Well, you have the memo in front of you.

Mr. Tarasoff: Well, I mean I can't recollect the transcription.

Mr. Blackmer: We will see if we can get that transcription. I want to thank you very much. I will conclude my questioning and Mr. Brooten will now conclude the remaining session. Thank you Mrs. Tarasoff, Mr. Tarasoff.

Mr. Brooten: Now I have given Mr. Tarasoff a receipt for that portable typewriter.

Mrs. Tarasoff: When you send it back, have it in working order.

Mr. Brooten: Just for the record, do I have your consent to take that and to run any tests on it.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Yes, you certainly do.

Mr. Brooten: As I explained to you, at some future date, the Select Committee on Assassinations of the House of Representatives may request your presence to appear and testify. Would you be willing to appear and testify before the Congress regarding the matters to which we have discussed

Mr. Brooten: today, that is your transcription of the telephone tape between Lee Harvey Oswald and officials of the Soviet Embassy.

Mrs. Tarassof: I have no objection. As long as it would be a closed session and not a public thing.

Mr. Tarassof: I have no objection.

Mr. Brooten: All right.

Mrs. Tarassof: You know, some of these are open to the public and everybody likes to sit in on a conversation and then everybody draws their own conclusions.

Mr. Tarassof: By God, the KGB has^{got} a stack of documents about me that high.

Mr. Blackmer: Kenneth, before you conclude there is one thing I did not go over with Mrs. Tarassof, and I'll do that very briefly. Mrs. Tarassof, I want to show you a few photographs. And tell me if you recognize that individual.

Mrs. Tarassof: No.

Mr. Blackmer: I'm showing photographs taken from the publication Coup e'etat In America. These are photographs. I wonder if you could tell me if you recognize either one of those two. (These were taken from pages 208 through 223 of the above book.)

Mrs. Tarasoff: As far as the people are concerned I wouldn't be able to recognize any of them. Because I never was shown any photos.

Mr. Blackmer: Having been in Mexico City during this period of time, I was wondering if maybe you'd seen any of these people?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Oh, you mean just casually on the street. No.

Mr. Blackmer: Could I ask you if you know Howard Hunt?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Know Howard Hunt, Hunt?

Mr. Tarasoff: Is he a defector from Russia?

Mr. Blackmer: I'll show you three photographs of Howard Hunt, and I ask you if you recall having seen this man in Mexico City in 1963, when you first arrived, whether it be at the Embassy or on the street, or at a party?

Mrs. Tarasoff: No

Mr. Tarasoff: No.

Mrs. Tarasoff: Because as far as our contact with the embassy was very limited.

Mr. Blackmer: Can I also ask you if ever in transcribing any of these tapes in Russian, if you ever heard the Russians discuss the fact that their Embassy was broken into or someone was attempting to burglarize their Embassy?

Mr. Tarasoff: I cannot answer that positively because I don't remember.

Mr. Blackmer: Very good. That concludes my questioning.

Mr. Brooten: Mr. and Mrs. Tarasoff, I thank you very much for taking the time that you have to discuss this both last night and tonight with us. I would request on behalf of Richard Sprague, Chief Counsel of the Committee, that you not discuss this. I can only make that as a request. If anyone should contact I would like to certainly know about it. Other than someone officially from our Committee. And this concludes these interviews.

Mr. Blackmer: We are going back on the record for a brief question. I understand that you succeeded George Misko, who was familiar with the voices of the Russians in the Russian Embassy, because he did the translating of the tapes. Is that correct?

Mr. Tarassof: That is correct.

Mr. Blackmer: I would also like to ask you if you know if there was anybody else, other than George Misko, who was in the American Embassy, in September and October 1963 that was as familiar with the voices of the Russians in the Russian Embassy than yourself. As familiar as you were.

Mr. Tarassof: I doubt it. For the simple reason that I had to deal with them day in and day out, and the people at the Embassy would probably get a crack at them once in a while, which wouldn't give them sufficient basis to know the people, to identify them.

Mr. Blackmer: To identify the voices to put them with the people.

Mr. Tarasoff: To identify the voices to put them with the people.

Mr. Blackmer: Then I would like to ask you if anyone checked with you to verify whether or not you had an opinion as to who the voice was on the other end of the call with Oswald, on both conversations?

Mr. Tarasoff: No, not that I know of.

Mr. Blackmer: Mrs. Tarasoff, do you know of anybody in the American Embassy during that time that was as familiar with the Russian voices as your husband?

Mrs. Tarasoff: No, I don't think there was really. Because actually the reason why they had him come down, was that needed somebody that was proficient. There were some people that had a slight knowledge of Russian, but as far as being proficient, no.

Mr. Blackmer: Can I ask you when you were talking about voice identity tapes that you made putting the tapes with the name, were those identity tapes made before or after the Oswald call?

Mrs. Tarasoff: These tapes were made regularly.

Mr. Blackmer: Do you recall having made them when you first came on or was it sometime after?

Mrs. Tarasoff: No this was sometime after.

Mr. Blackmer: Was it sometime after the assassination?

Mrs. Tarasoff: Yes, definitely.

Mr. Tarasoff: Yes, definitely.

Mr. Blackmer: So there were no voice identity tapes that they could match voices with during the time of these calls?

Mr. Tarasoff: Unless that particular tape was kept for some reason.

Mr. Blackmer: Later on. But at the time the tape was transcribed, there was no identity tape and no one as proficient in Russian and knowing the voices than yourself?

Mr. Tarasoff: No. I don't think so.

Mr. Blackmer: Very good. Thank you very much, we can conclude the interview now.