

This is an extract from

THE TWO FACES OF
**LEE HARVEY
OSWALD**

by Glenn B Fleming

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First published in 2004

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EMPIRE PUBLICATIONS

1 Newton Street, Manchester M1 1HW

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ISBN 1 901 746 37 2

Cover photographs courtesy of the author.

Cover design and layout: Ashley Shaw & Glenn B Fleming

Edited by: Ashley Shaw

Printed in Great Britain by

Ashford Colour Press,

Gosport, Hants.

For Joanne

**In memory of Hazel Hale
and William Bobo**

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About The Author

Glenn B Fleming was born in Manchester, England and has spent the last thirty years researching this book.

In 1973, a chance encounter with a magazine article and several conversations led him to begin research into the assassination of President John F Kennedy. Though the trail was by then ten years old, Fleming's meticulous research led him to conclude that Lee Harvey Oswald had not played any part in the actual shooting of JFK but may, incredibly, have been infiltrating the group that were planning the murder.

Since publishing a series of articles in the magazine *Undercover* in 1993, Fleming has remained silent, although his research continued. The result is *The Two Faces of Lee Harvey Oswald* - a stunning trip through perhaps the most famous crime of the twentieth century through the eyes of John F. Kennedy's alleged assassin.

Foreword

Although researching and writing this book has been an intensely private, frustrating yet uplifting effort throughout many, many years, a great number of people have crossed my path brandishing their own brand of wisdom and humour.

‘Forget it,’ they laughed. Then, ‘How do you know?’ followed by, ‘Yeah, yeah, I knew that all along.’- there have been only a mere handful who listened and still fewer who thought I might just have something to say.

Those people know who they are and I thank them for their support. Ruth and my family must also take a bow for just being there, especially my late father, who could never quite fathom how I managed to get so involved.

Glenn B Fleming

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks go to Ashley Shaw for his help on the manuscript, my publisher, John Ireland, for his encouragement and support throughout and Andrew Clarke for his enthusiasm.

“We are opposed to apartheid and all forms of human oppression. Our concern is the right of all men to equal protection under the law.”

JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY

Preface

Heart pounding against his ribcage, a tidal wave of anxiety covered Lee Oswald as he ran toward the rooming house. He slowed to scan the area behind him - there were no cars travelling either way along the road, nothing moving toward him that he should worry about - but worry he did. Oak Cliff was usually quiet at this time of day, he knew that, but today was different. He'd felt out of breath since the short jog from the taxi that had dropped him at the northwest corner of the intersection of North Beckley and Neely, just a few hundred yards from his room. He was out of shape, that much was obvious, and his fitness was something he'd always prided himself on: he normally felt he could run all day if he needed to. But today, when he felt he may have to run all day, he knew he couldn't.

...Del Gado would roast me alive in hog fat if he see me now, puffing and wheezing...

It must have been 70 degrees on the sidewalk and seemed to be getting hotter by the second. The road merged into a heat haze half a mile away; the shimmering lampposts, buildings and sky blended into one fuzzy image, reminding him of distant drunken nights with his Marine buddies in the Philippines. His legs wouldn't carry him fast enough to the room and he felt vulnerable partly because he had left his .38 in his room that morning but mainly because he was no longer in control of the situation around him. He'd never felt so... open to harm.

Apart from when he was in the service, he had never carried a firearm with him and had never wanted to - until

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now. For almost three years in the Soviet Union he'd felt so confident that things would work out that he never carried a weapon. And things had worked out there in the end, hadn't they?

For the most part he consoled himself that for all the intrusions and bother from the local NKVD or whomever those guys had been, he'd always felt somehow protected. Safe. But now, back in the country of his birth, among so many people he knew, some he even trusted, a hundred yards from the relative safety of his room, Lee felt uneasy.

Is Ruby around? Where the hell is Ruby ...

He turned and saw the red roof of his rooming house.

...damn sumbitch...

Oswald spat, cursing the thought.

...I'll get you, you bastard - someone ought to fix you, somebody soon - somebody will...

As he jogged, he considered going straight to Ruby's apartment less than a mile away.

...nah...too obvious...wouldn't be there anyway... I need my revolver ... I have to stick with the plan ...that cop should be here soon ... what did Ruby say? "Go on home after the job. One of our guys will pick you up from there. I'll see you at Redbird airport around two. Don't fuck this up, Oswald. Don't fuck this up!" Well, fuck you, Ruby - you fucked up...

Oswald felt sick to the stomach and scared right down to the very depths of his soul. More scared now than... ever before.

... I need to change ...

His T-shirt was stuck to his back and it was dirty from his morning's work.

...God, I need a shower, won't have time...

He was almost there. A thought crossed his mind...

What will the housekeeper think of my turning up in the middle of the afternoon...

He dismissed it. It wasn't important. He needed the

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revolver much more than he needed to explain to her why he wasn't at work. He felt deep into his pocket for his key. He pulled it out and clasped it in his hand as he ran down the path, the door growing larger in front of him.

... she never locks the door anyway ...

The key returned to his trouser pocket as he moved to the mesh door and pulled it open. Holding the mesh with one hand he wrestled the door handle with the other.

...she'll hear the noise but fuck it... no time to wait around. I'm in and out and gone...

The door pushed open effortlessly - it wasn't locked. He moved through the mezzanine and into the hall, the lounge was at his left and he could hear the television booming. He stopped for a second, framed in the doorless entrance to the lounge. Mrs Roberts was there, a handkerchief close to her cheek, some guy wailing on TV. Lee watched her for a long second. He wanted to ask her the question, but dare not. His eyes shot from the TV screen to the back of her head. Everytime he looked at her, the question zapped from his eyes like a laser beam and hit the back of her head. Still, controlling his breath, his chest rising and falling, his heart strong and obvious, he made no sound.

Suddenly, Earlene Roberts turned and stood in one movement, facing him. The handkerchief stayed where it was. Her large glasses usually hid her eyes well, but now they were wide with disbelief, touched by horror. Her jowley face seemed to shake as she saw him, as if a cold shudder had gone down her spine. Lee stared at her, his face betraying a similar confusion.

'Oh, Mister Lee!' She blurted. 'Someone shot at the president'

Lee grunted as he moved to his right away from the outburst and to his room, the first along the corridor. No time for conversations. No time for questions. No time, even, for answers. He almost pushed the door off its hinges

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as he made for his dresser, stood at the right of the room, past the foot of his bed. The door bounced back behind him and he lunged for the bottom right dresser drawer. He pulled it open and felt his way through his work shirts. Then Lee felt the cold metal of the revolver - lying there, waiting. He pulled it out, snapped it open and checked the drum to see if it was loaded. He knew it was, but still needed to be sure. He felt the six shiny, round, brass Remington-Peters .38 Special bullets housed snugly in their chambers. Waiting.

Lee dropped the gun onto the bed and reached into the drawer again, pulling out a box of cartridges. In his haste, he spilled them into the drawer. Rescuing four or five bullets, he pushed them deep into his pocket. He pulled off his plaid overshirt, then the soiled off-white T-shirt almost in one movement and threw them onto the bed next to the revolver, reaching for another T-shirt from the open drawer. Pulling it quickly over his head and sticky body, he reached for the overshirt he'd just removed - though he knew it was hot out there, he also knew that any flight from Redbird in Ferrie's Piper Cherokee would be a chilly affair, not to mention the cold Texan nights ahead. He felt sick again at the thought of flying with Ferrie and Ruby.

Then, he quickly straightened his T-shirt and put his overshirt back on. Casting a swift backward glance to the bedroom door, he picked up the revolver and shoved the gun into the front waistband of his pants, before fastening the overshirt to the chest to cover the gun. He could hear the noise from the TV but couldn't make out what was being said. Then another noise pervaded his dizziness. He heard the sharp tit tit of a car horn, directly outside the house. Lee moved to the window and pulled back the curtain lace. Opposite the front lawn was a Dallas police patrol car. Oswald thought he could make out two uniformed officers in the car.

...two of them...

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His mind raced.

...Ruby said 'one of our guys'...

The vehicle wasn't quite stationary, moving ever so slowly along the street. Then it speeded up and moved out of his sight.

...what's going on...

Lee moved swiftly back into the hallway, through the bedroom door that he'd stupidly left open. He could hear a reporter talking on the TV set but couldn't grasp the meaning of the words. Earlene Roberts was looking out the window too. She frowned and let the curtain back.

'You sure are in a hurry...' Her words followed him through the door and he was gone.

Part One

Incarceration

1

'Jesus,' Oswald muttered to himself.

'Keep your fucking mouth shut, cop killer,' spat the police officer to his right as he clutched Oswald's face in a vice-like grip - knuckles white with pressure.

'Maybe we should fix this guy right now, Tom. What do you think?'

'Love to. Just give me one good reason and I'll blow this sonofabitch's head off.'

Lee Oswald stared ahead; eyes fixed on the driver in front.

The car sped on.

Turning corners at high speed, sirens wailing, only feet, sometimes barely inches, from the lead car. Oswald heard the tyres screech as the driver, thankfully, failed to turn the car over.

Lee's wrists were manacled behind his back. He was almost sitting on his hands. He could do nothing to prevent the occasional blow to his face or body that the cops would level at him. He felt tired and longed to rub his sore face, but could not.

One of the police called through to headquarters. He heard them report that they were headed east on Jefferson with a suspect in a cop slaying.

The static coming back over the two-way obscured most of what was said by headquarters and Lee was not familiar with the jargon anyhow. With the two policemen sat either side of him talking at each other and sometimes screaming at him, Lee saw little point in trying to listen to half garbled messages over the radio.

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He sat further back into the seat and closed his eyes.

Suddenly he was hungry, then just as quickly Lee felt violently sick. He desperately wanted to throw up all over the car and these bastard police officers who had violated him so much. Instead, Oswald just took several silent deep breaths. If he'd shown any signs of doing anything, anything at all, it would have only resulted in more blows raining down upon him. The arresting officers seemed convinced that Oswald was trying to escape from them even now and he was sure that he wouldn't enjoy being ejected from the car, however fast it may have been moving.

...but what of the plan? The 'impossible-to-go-wrong' plan that Bishop told me about? The plan that was so watertight that it couldn't possibly fail, even if it had wanted to? What of it? It had gone wrong. Something, or someone, had messed up...

A nudge disturbed Lee's thinking, followed by a booming, unfriendly voice.

'You still in there? Don't think you can dream yourself out of this one, buddy, 'cos you ain't goin' no place.'

...asshole...

Lee opened his eyes.

The dullness in his skull was quickly turning into a thunderstorm.

'Where are you taking me?' Lee said quietly, turning to one of his captors, 'What have I done to...'

'Just keep your mouth shut, boy, you'll get to know all you need to know in due time.'

'But, I've done nothing. You must have the wrong guy...'
Lee dropped his head. It was painful to even try and talk. His jaw ached and he searched his mouth for loose teeth with his tongue.

'Well, boy, ain't that the truth. If y'all done nothin', then I guess you got nothin' to worry about.' The detective spoke with venom, as the two men looked each other squarely in the eye.

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‘But if you’ve done what we think you’ve done, then you’re in big, big trouble, my friend.’

The detective grinned slyly, as if he knew something that Lee didn’t. Then he sat back in his seat and stared ahead. Lee continued to stare at him for a few seconds longer. The detective must have been about thirty, only a few years older than himself. Oswald began to wonder if this man was like this at home, if he had a home at all. Or maybe it was the job he was in. No wonder people disliked the police so much, especially if they treated other people in the same manner as he’d been this afternoon, never mind the fact that they may have been innocent. As he was.

...and yet, I’m not as innocent in all this as I’m trying to make out. But a cop killer? That’s what the detective in front said over the radio...

The radio squawked again and Lee couldn’t help straining to hear its semi-coded message.

‘Two.’

The officer in front picked up the microphone and held it to his mouth.

‘Two, go ahead.’

‘Two, suggest you take route five on returning suspect to home, over.’

‘Home this is two, copy you on that. Looks like we got us a good one, over.’

The detective looked over his shoulder at Oswald, his dead pan features revealing no feeling. Lee looked away, trying to look disinterested. The detective faced forward again.

‘Two, this is home, out.’

The radio crackled and went dead. The detective put down the microphone and looked back at Oswald.

‘You got anything you wanna say, fella?’ he said, ‘Anything at all?’

The detective glared at Oswald but Lee held his gaze.

You are an empty, lifeless shell...

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He fixed the vibes between them with contempt. A long, slow grin appeared on the policeman's face but even that could not hide his cold, hard, expressionless features. Lee held the stare for as long as he could, then glanced away. Nothing he could do here would change this man's problem. Things were bad, that was evident. Lee would not let the thought that things were as bad as they could be settle.

...if these police think I've had anything to do with Dealy Plaza...

Oswald stopped himself asking about the condition of the President. He remembered when he'd entered his rooming house on North Beckley; his landlady had been watching television.

'Oh, Mister Lee! Someone has shot at the President?' she had said... just what had she meant by that? Was the President dead or just wounded? That was something too big to deal with right now and Lee figured that there was enough on his plate as it was. Maybe Kennedy hadn't been hit at all...

A feeling of unease slowly settled upon him as he tried to get some perspective on events. No amount of training could perceive actualities. Whilst in the marines, Lee had often wondered what combat was really like and, on the odd occasion, he had practically yearned for it.

Oswald remembered Nelson DelGado, his sergeant, almost wetting himself one day on the shooting range. Lee had fired a full clip and two hand-loaded rounds and missed the target. Not missed the top score, but had missed the target itself. Lee's embarrassment had only been avoided later that month when he beat all of his comrades, including DelGado, in their first Russian language test. After all, Lee knew he and his unit were never going to see action, even if there were a war in the near future. Intelligence was to be the name of the game for Oswald and his buddies. Intelligence gathering and evaluation. It didn't matter one damn thing whether he could shoot straight or not, nor did it matter whether he knew which end of a rifle was which. No

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ordinary marine was he. No, sir. Smart cookie is Lee Harvey Oswald.

*

So just where the hell am I now?

In a cell, with green walls.

Lee exhaled loudly, but stopped abruptly as his lungs began to hurt. The sharpness of the pain took away what little breath he had left.

Thankfully, after he'd been booked, the detectives had allowed him to be handcuffed with his hands in front. At least he could take a pee, he thought, glancing at the john in the corner. And, thank God, he was alone. That should give him time enough to think his way out of this mess.

Slowly, deliberately, Oswald pressed his hands against his ribs as he searched for anything that may need a doctor.

... nothing broken ... but just what are those bastards waiting for? They can't possibly have anything on me ... a cop killer? What cop?

The only cops he'd seen that day were outside the Book Depository, those that had just tried to beat him to a pulp inside and outside the theater and the one who gave him the lift.

Something was wrong though and he dare not let the thought prevail that all this was connected with the President.

...No, it's deeper than that. Bishop wouldn't be too far behind me now. He might already be upstairs speaking to the Chief, clearing me of any involvement in absolutely anything that has happened today, especially a cop slaying... no, give it a couple of hours and I'll be out of here, gone... back to Marina and back to New Orleans. A new start with the money waiting from this little caper. A new place to live, probably a whole new identity, our very own home. No more leaning on other people like the Paines. Or my brother or mother for that matter...

Love him as they might, Oswald's relations certainly

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figured that if they were going to help him and his family through these difficult times they were going to call all the tunes and no mistake.

It was the same as New Orleans, back in the summer. Start a fuss, get arrested, booked and the local FBI man would be down to sort it out.

...then I'll be free. Then I'll walk. Walk right back to New Orleans, money in my billfold, Marina holding my hand, Junie by my side and Rachael in my arms...

His very own family. Nobody to depend on, no one to rely on. Just him and his three girls.

...yeah...

For a split second that thought made him feel better.

Much, much better.

Lee dropped his head and felt the utter frustration of the situation. It was worse than that and he knew it. This was a big deal, not a scuffle with some jumped up Cuban in a street nobody had heard of. This was serious. And he couldn't help wondering if he were the only one of the group in jail.

...but for killing a cop? I never killed no cop. I never killed anybody. It doesn't make sense...

Oswald slowly stretched out on the bunk as he let his mind wander back to the theater.

2

Lee stood on the corner of Jefferson and Zangs, waiting for Billy. He'd walked to the corner from the police car that had dropped him off midway between Jefferson and Davis.

The police officer driving, who he was sure he'd seen someplace a few weeks before, was to take him to Red Bird airstrip, just a couple of miles south-west of his rooming house.

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Lee was alarmed to discover that this plan had fallen through and that now he was to meet with Billy in the Texas Theater on West Jefferson. Oswald's first inclination was to proceed the few blocks east to Marsalis Street and Ruby's apartment, but considering the situation he let that idea fall. The cop was quite adamant about the change in plan and refused to answer any of Oswald's questions.

'Look, buddy,' said the patrolman, moving away from the kerb even before Oswald had closed the car door, 'that's all I have for you. You gotta go to the Texas Theater. Why? I don't know. I only hope you do, that's all. You think I care?'

The cop seemed somewhat perturbed by Oswald's presence. Lee eyed him cautiously. Could the cop have any idea about what had happened in the Plaza? Oswald noted that the car radio was off.

...maybe the guy is off duty, but I don't believe that... maybe he's a bogus cop... whatever... he seems ...scared. But of what?

'If you wanna get out of the car here, there you go. I got my orders. I give you a lift. Where to?'

Oswald looked at the patrolman, who stared ahead at the road.

After a long pause, Lee said, 'Just follow your plan, buddy. Let's just get there in one piece and we'll all be fine.'

Lee Oswald sat back into his seat. He didn't like changes in plans. To replace one thought with another in a situation like this could be fatal. The police car headed south on Beckley. The police officer did not engage Oswald in small talk. Oswald sank further back into his seat.

...make this ride last forever... make it last a million years and more...

Lee felt tired and the easy roll of the vehicle calmed him somewhat and he slowly rubbed his face. The car cruised on down Beckley, past Neely Street.

The cop leant over and switched on his radio.

A sharp blast of static disturbed Oswald's quiet demeanor.

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Lee held his breath as the officer picked up the microphone and began to speak - Oswald eyed him curiously.

...what is he going to tell dispatch? That he had arrested a suspect in the shooting of the President? He couldn't be...

The police officer couldn't know whether Oswald was armed or not, surely he wouldn't take that chance. The cop glanced at his watch. The Dallas police dispatcher cut into the murmur of traffic clogging up the radio.

'Oak Cliff, go ahead.'

This was it, anticipated Oswald. Lee slowly brought his right hand up to his waist. The driver could not see this action, nor did he seem to be expecting it. Lee looked at him. The cop was too damn cool, he thought.

'...am approaching Beckley and Tenth ...'

That's not our present position ... Beckley and Tenth is a block over to the east ...

The officer continued. 'Do you have anything for me, over?'

'Oak Cliff, be at large for any emergency that comes in, over.'

The patrolman threw a glance at Oswald then looked away. 'Copy, Oak Cliff. Out.' He replaced the microphone.

Oswald could contain himself no longer, 'What the hell is all that about?' he inquired.

The cop looked at him, then back at the road ahead.

'Beats me. Get that sort of thing all the time. Nothing usually comes of it though.'

'Sounded pretty serious. How do you work that kind of thing out?'

'Well,' said the cop, 'you just do. I mean, you can't dwell on it too much, even if something does come of it.'

The patrol car turned right onto the Davis intersection and then left onto Zangs Boulevard. The car quickened as the police officer pressed the gas. Oswald waited for the Eighth street sign. Seconds after the car had passed it, he

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spoke.

‘Here,’ said Oswald abruptly. ‘This will be fine.’

‘Whatever you say, buddy, whatever you say.’

The police car slowed to a halt, midway between the intersections of Davis and Jefferson. Oswald opened the door and got out. Neither he nor the officer spoke. Lee pondered the cop’s role in the day’s events. After a few seconds, he concluded that he might have been involved but rather doubted it. This kind of activity must go on all the time. Informers, stoolies must get rides in police cars all the time.

As Lee walked away from his ride, he heard the radio burst into life again.

‘All cars, all cars, be on the look out for a white male, approximately thirty years old ...’. The police car sped off down Zangs. Oswald watched it turn left and head east on Jefferson. Lee concluded that the officer was heading to the location that he’d mentioned to the dispatcher moments ago.

Oswald continued south, following the police car’s route, down Zangs to the intersection.

The Texas Theater is only minutes away ...

Oswald snapped out of his reverie. Outside the cell along the corridor but out of Oswald’s sight, there came the distinct sound of movement, scuffling, fighting. Someone else, a drunk by the sound of things, was being led to a cell.

Lee got up from the bunk swiftly and grimaced as the pain shot through his ribcage. Moving on with teeth clenched, hands to his chest, Lee peered through the bars. Left, then right.

Pushing his face up to the cold metal, he heard curses from different sources filling the air. The outcries were silenced with the shattering clang of metal on metal as the cell door was closed. Then, that awful twisting of the keys rattling in the lock, more metal on metal drifting aimlessly

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down the corridor toward him, echoing in the stillness. The sounds flowed through the bars, into his cell, into his soul.

Footsteps walked away into the distance and Oswald returned to his bed. Lee's mind again returned to the corner of Jefferson and Zangs.

3

...Any news from downtown is evidently taking its time to reach this quiet suburb ...damn - doesn't anyone have a radio or TV on in this place? Someone must have some news from Dealy Plaza by now ... they must know the condition of the President, presuming that he's been hit ...

Oswald slowly, reluctantly, let that thought wash over him. He began to breathe more deeply, the warm afternoon beating down on him as never before. Wiping his brow, Lee scanned the area around him.

To his right was Jefferson Boulevard and the old Library building, one of those early so-called masterpieces dating from the previous century. Its red bricks reminded him of the old Court House building in Dealy Plaza, just a block or so south east of the Book Depository. The Court House stood out like a sore thumb, much the same as this Library did.

Turning to his left, Oswald had a perfect view of Jefferson as it angled away at forty-five degrees.

Anything heading his way would be noticeable to him in seconds. The buildings were low, nothing higher than the gas station sign hanging twenty feet in the air. He stared at the sign as it creaked occasionally in the mild breeze.

...God, what wouldn't I give to be in a cool shower right now...

Oswald could almost feel the cooling water pouring over his body as he closed his eyes, washing away the morning's grime from the Depository and the terrifying thoughts in his

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head.

And Marina?

His lovely Marina joining him in the aqueous coolness, feeling her tender caresses and her his. For a few scant seconds, Lee Oswald made silent love to his wife, something they'd not managed in weeks. He became angry as Marina's last words to him the evening before fell squarely on his tortured peace.

"We must leave Ruth's soon, Lee."

Marina had whispered to him as Ruth Paine had gone into the kitchen to make them all coffee.

"Ruth is the kindest person I know here - she has helped us a great deal. But we must move soon," she continued.

Lee had nodded slowly in agreement, shame and frustration.

... how can I tell Marina what I'm up to in Dallas? How dangerous it is for me, for us all? How can I explain that I could get better work with better pay back in New Orleans or that there's four thousand dollars in cash in a post office box at the bus station near the apartment we lived in on Magazine Street...

Lee recalled how often he'd been close to tears. Then he remembered how many times those same tears had fallen as he pined for his wife and young family during sleepless nights in his lonely room on North Beckley. This thinking was not relieving his situation.

Lee pulled himself together and focused on the present. Shops, stores and the occasional diner littered the long straight Jefferson Boulevard, crossed only by various intersections of roads and railway lines.

Oswald hated this area of Dallas. He hated those who lived here and despised the county's brashness. Abhorred vehemently the entire Oak Cliff section of the State.

...why don't those rich, smug oil millionaires and billionaires living over on the nice side of town put some of their spare cash into providing jobs for the poor and needy, living, no surviving, in this

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area...

Hearing a car backfire sent more chills through his slender frame, jogging the thought of attempted assassination back into his confused head.

...those people shooting at the President were the best around. They must have hit Kennedy. Damn, what the hell could have gone wrong ...everybody would have been in position and I told Bishop almost the exact layout the group had discussed at the meetings in Mexico City. Who was here, who was there... what the hell had happened...

Lee tried as hard as he could to get some positive thoughts into his confusion, but to no avail. His mind wouldn't, couldn't stop racing through a myriad of negative impulses, over and over. He began walking to the Texas Theater. At first he moved briskly toward the supposed haven just over fifty yards away. Cursing aloud, Lee berated himself for his eagerness, convinced that someone may identify him later. Slowing down and glancing all around at the same time, he concentrated on the job ahead.

...just keep moving... nice and easy...

As long as he walked toward the Theater at normal pace no one would suspect him of anything. Wearing his paranoia on his sleeve had become something of a trademark since those early days in the Soviet Union. Part of the art of not being stopped over there had been to look like you expected to be checked. After another glance about the street ahead, memories of cold days in Moscow and Minsk disappeared like breath in the wind. Not only was there nobody observing his seemingly innocent actions in a poor suburb of a city somewhere a million miles from the oppression of the Soviet Union, there wasn't anybody walking these streets in any case.

Moving from the corner was like hearing the starter pistol on sports day at school. The sharp crack was instantly followed by a rush of blood to the limbs fuelled by adrenaline, then the breath sticking in the throat only to be

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superceded by the expectancy of the crowd. Oswald's blood pressure was doing a whole lot better than any hundred-meter athlete right now, but it was an ordeal all the same.

Lee put his right hand into his shirt, just above the waist.

There, warmed by his body heat and feeling smooth against his skin, his .38 caliber Smith & Wesson revolver nestled passive and inert.

Oswald wanted to pull the revolver from its sanctuary and check that it was fully loaded. He knew that it was of course but to remove it now would be nothing short of suicide. Pulling his hand from under his plaid colored shirt; Lee fixed his sight on the theater and what was going to happen in the next few minutes.

Knowing that he would be back in the lion's den gave Lee another odd feeling.

Of all the emotions he'd touched this fateful day, this was the most horrifying. Oswald had had no contact with the group nor Bishop for the best part of a week. He'd encountered no-one connected with the hit on the President that morning at the Book Depository and now he was on his way to meet with at least one of them in the darkness and seclusion of a semi-public place.

Trying not to let the thought of his role with the FBI and his relationship within the group, not to mention the day's events, invade his mind, Lee again fondled his revolver. Try as he might to keep his mind clear, one thought did break through his mental screen.

If it came to it, would he be able to shoot Billy, or anyone with him, if they had rumbled him?

Beads of perspiration broke on Oswald's brow and he managed to suppress the urge to run and take his chances later, when he knew they'd come looking for him.

Lee was now less than seventy feet from his immediate future when all hell broke loose.

Incarceration

Police sirens shattered the still afternoon air, one police vehicle followed quickly by another screamed around the corner one block over from Beckley. Stopping dead in his tracks and spinning to his right, Lee looked into a shop window. Lots and lots of shoes filled his vision, the kind of shoes that Marina had pored over in one of Ruth's magazines. This thought and others passed quickly through his head.

Oswald's breathing quickened and he thought his heart would burst from his chest.

Through the window of the shop Lee thought he saw the movement of people rushing about. He instantly dismissed it as reaction to the chaos on his side of the plate glass. Oswald could feel sweat trickling down his back and stomach beneath his shirt. Getting hotter by the second Oswald held his breath as more police cars screeched around the corner from Zangs.

...what the hell is going on...

One squad car stopped abruptly behind him, tires screeching on the tarmac road, its siren whining down as if its life breath were being squeezed from it.

Staring into the reflection on the glass, Oswald saw the two officers sat in the front of the vehicle. The driver was busy talking on the radio as his colleague pulled a shotgun from its rest on the dashboard.

Oswald took a sharp breath as the officer pulled the barrel. Lee imagined he heard the snap and click as a round was pushed into the chamber.

He swallowed hard.

...a shotgun blast from this range...

The police car stayed motionless for what seemed like an age. The officer with the shotgun had opened his door and was in the process of leaving the vehicle when his colleague, still speaking into the radio, reached over and pulled him back into the car.

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Oswald narrowed his eyes as he tried to fathom what words were being exchanged between the two men. As he concentrated on the car behind him, Oswald failed to see the store manager on the opposite side of the glass approach him cautiously. The store manager was taking a good long look at the man staring into his shop window. He had correctly observed that the police were trailing someone and he believed it was the man currently staring in the window.

The police car behind Oswald suddenly roared off west down Jefferson, its rear tires throwing up small stones and gravel from the road surface. Oswald could smell the gas fumes from the car's exhaust as it shot down the Boulevard, its siren again bursting into life. Another patrol car chased it, its siren also wailing.

Several people had collected on the corner of Bishop Street and were being questioned by another officer.

Lee exhaled heavily, thankful for a moment's respite but still not daring to move. Then he noticed the movement in the shop on the other side of the glass. Oswald saw the store manager watching him closely.

Their eyes locked for a second and Lee's instinct now was to run but he dare not. To his left were three other patrol cars and two at his right. Although they were many yards from his position, Lee knew that any movement he made would draw their attention to him and, he presumed, they couldn't see him from where they were parked. Their voices could be heard but only barely above the squawking of their car radios.

The immediate area was in chaos and more and more people were coming out onto the streets from their places of work.

Oswald remembered the man in front of him, re-focused his vision to the inside of the shoe store. The man had gone. Lee considered going into the shop, telling the man who he was and what was going on, but he knew he'd never believe

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him.

The police car that had stopped so abruptly in front of Oswald was now a hundred yards away. Lee turned his head slightly to his left and saw its tail-lights flash on as the driver applied the brakes. Almost in the same movement, the car swung around to the left, the driver performing a perfect U-turn. Had the car not turned away, the patrol vehicle at its rear would have smashed into it. Then the second car also completed a U-turn and both cars were now headed back up the boulevard, back toward Lee, by now standing frozen in the doorway.

Panic set in and Oswald's right hand moved slowly up to his shirt and the revolver.

...Christ the last thing I need right now is to kill some cop...

Oswald's clammy hand and fingers touched the opening in his shirt where the revolver was hidden. More sweat appeared on Lee's head and above his top lip. His breathing became more erratic and labored as the police cars drew closer.

As the lead car was level with Oswald, his hand rested firmly on the .38, the gun suddenly felt very different. Right now, Lee knew exactly what this gun could do to someone and it passed his mind that somebody had designed it for that reason.

Lee was beginning to shake but his gun hand remained calm. He had the odd feeling of being a spectator in what was about to follow. As if it were not he these policemen were looking for, as if it were not he who now had the power of life and death in his hand. A nasty taste formed in his mouth and Oswald found it difficult to swallow.

Almost drowning in anticipation, Lee began to turn toward the street, steeling himself for his next action.

A picture of his family glazed over his eyes and he saw baby Rachael in Marina's arms.

How will they react when they are told of my death? How will they

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react when they are told that I've been shot down? How will they react when they are told that I've killed a Dallas police officer?

Still, the police patrol cars did not stop. He couldn't believe it. They drove right on past him; east on Jefferson then sharp left back onto Zangs. All of them.

As he turned to watch them go, Lee stepped further away from the window so he could observe the street.

As he reached the edge of the kerb all the police cars had started their engines and sped away. Oswald dropped his hand from his shirt, turned and began to walk briskly toward the theater, now just fifty yards away. The skin on his face was as tight as a mask, all the way from his jaw-line to the top of his skull. Any tighter and Lee was certain that it would rip. He passed an elderly couple who were clutching each other, obviously shocked and upset by the commotion.

'You ever known such a thing?' said the women to her man, who had his arm protectively around his her. The old man said nothing as Lee passed them. The police sirens wailed on into the distance and soon were lost in the Texan afternoon. As Oswald approached the theater, the patrons were stood looking toward Zangs, speculating as to what the commotion might be.

Oswald saw his chance. He walked up to and past them, he did so casually, looking over his shoulder in the direction of the fast vanishing police vehicles. Entering the theater, Lee could smell the dank aroma of cigarettes, mingled with the stale, still air. Moving into the semi-gloom, Lee walked past the ticket booth positioned to the left of the foyer doors and heard a movement to his right. He stopped.

An elderly Negro was sat reading a newspaper behind the concession stand. Oswald saw the ice cream and popcorn machines. Below them and in front were myriad candy and chocolate bars. The man shuffled his paper. Lee could hear no sound from outside, no sirens, not even conversations from the patrons talking outside the theater. As he reached

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the door to the foyer, he nipped quietly in. Glancing round as he headed for the double doors to the main area, Lee increased his step.

The darkness of the main floor enveloped Oswald as the door silently closed behind him. The air was cool and he began to feel the sweat running down his back, stopping only at the waist band of his trousers. He shuddered and felt the revolver thrust in his pants. Suddenly the .38 was a hindrance to him and he wished he could be rid of it, though Lee knew now that it was at this point that he might need the revolver most.

The support picture had just started as if someone had waited for Lee to enter. He allowed himself a tight grin. Someone was definitely waiting for him in the theater, but it had nothing to do with any film. Only maybe that person wasn't alone. The theater was all but empty. Oswald counted ten or maybe twelve heads scattered around the main floor.

Only two people were sat together that he could see. Straining his eyes to locate Billy, if he was there, Oswald slowly moved along the back row of the center aisle. He sat down midway between both aisles. The music roared from the film: the soundtrack mixed with the sound of cannon firing. Lee glanced up at the screen as the titles came up.

'Cry Of Battle'

The glare from the movie lent an eerie light to the main floor of the theater. Lee could see around him much better now, but still could not put his eyes on Billy. He settled back into the uncomfortable chair and tried to think out a plan in his spinning head.

Lee thought of putting his gun under one of the seats and leaving the building, taking his chances outside in the broad daylight, but dismissed the idea when he remembered Billy and his cronies would only come looking for him later.

No, he had to sweat it out. He must follow the plan so the group didn't suspect his FBI role.

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Anyhow, if they had succeeded in murdering the president, surely they wouldn't be looking too hard for an informer among their ranks...

Of that he was sure. If the President were dead and they'd all got away, he could pick up his blood money and disappear. Lee horrified himself when he began to even contemplate the President's death in the hope that the group wouldn't need to search for the person who upset their plans.

The thought sickened him to the core. He felt more and more depressed as the seconds ticked by. Rubbing his face to relieve its tightness, Lee stared blankly at the screen. The actor Van Heflin and his troops were charging an enemy machine gun post, firing into it. The audience could see the killing, hear the shooting, screaming, shouting, cursing, falling, dying.

Oswald began looking around the main floor before him again. His eyes darted to every head in the place, from one to the other, over and over.

...Billy must be here...

Lee's eyes dropped to the two men sat eight or nine rows directly in front of him. His heart leapt to his mouth. It was Billy... or was it? Even with the light from the film it was still too dark to see them clearly, the light was projected in front of them, leaving their bodies in silhouette.

Narrowing his eyes and stretching his neck and head forward toward the two men, Oswald slowly wetted his lips. He felt dry and his tongue seemed shriveled inside his mouth. Unconsciously, Oswald's right hand moved into his shirt, searching for his revolver.

... if it is them, they haven't seen me. Maybe I could fix them both now and explain to the cops...

Lee sat back and took his hand out of his shirt.

... stupid idea. Damn stupid idea ...

As Oswald meditated on his dilemma, he failed to notice

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the house lights brightening. Lee was in another world, one where he could just get up and go home to Marina and the kids and get the hell back to New Orleans or maybe California or some damn place away from all this.

His eyes had drifted in a subconscious way; away from the two men back up to the screen. Lee couldn't hear the sound now, such was his concentration on the situation. Oswald blankly observed a man walk out onto the stage in front of the screen, followed by several police officers. Then he suddenly and distressingly realized why he hadn't been hearing the sound track these past few seconds. The picture was silent. As this dawned on him, the screen went blank altogether and the house lights came up.

Cold chills ran the length of Oswald's spine.

The man on the stage appeared to be pointing straight at him. Oswald recognized the man as being the person in the shoe store who had watched him as the police cars did their fine work on Jefferson. The police stood on the stage were following the line of the man's arm.

They were looking directly at him, there was no doubt about that. Oswald glanced about him. To his right and left he saw the exit signs, dimly lit in the front corners of the theater adjacent to the stage. A cop barred the way in each.

If Oswald chose to run, the only place would be down the aisle, a sharp right and back out the front entrance.

Simple as this may have been, Lee knew that that action could cost him a whole lot more than he wanted to pay right now. He stared ahead, frozen to his seat and watched as the police officers, uniformed and plain clothed, moved down from the stage and begin to mingle with the people sitting before him.

A heavy silence hung in the air. One detective to Oswald's right motioned for a woman sat in the front row to stand. The woman did so and Oswald wondered if she were as frightened as he. The Officer checked her bag, but all the

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while kept Oswald in his sight. He couldn't have been more obvious about it. The woman, bewildered and tense, resumed her seat and stared rigidly ahead.

Another movement to Oswald's front right averted his gaze. Another detective had moved up the aisle toward him. Lee lowered his head but kept his eyes firmly on the approaching policeman. He held his breath, clenching his teeth behind closed lips. Again his right hand moved closer to his shirt and the .38 now felt as large as a howitzer and just as heavy.

Then, to Oswald's astonishment, the policeman turned to his right and began to move down the aisle toward the two men sat in front of Lee. The two men stood and raised their hands as the officer came to them. Lee saw the sides of their faces for a second and they looked bewildered and confused but no more than any ordinary person would when confronted by a cop frisking them for no apparent reason. Oswald strained his ears as one of the men said something to the detective. Lee couldn't catch the conversation, but saw the detective's mouth move in answer. The plainclothes officer searched his companion before telling them both to be seated. Oswald still couldn't see who they were and then could only see the backs of their heads and shoulders again as they sat down.

The detective didn't look at Lee as he moved back down the row of seats toward the aisle. Oswald's eyes followed him all the way though, even a slight movement from the officer to his left went unchecked as his gaze impaled the detective like a spear.

As the detective reached the row of seats occupied solely by Oswald, he stopped abruptly.

'On your feet.' He barked, startling Oswald, who instinctively pulled his hand away from his weapon. Oswald stood straight up, faced the policeman, raising both hands in the air, Oswald couldn't believe it. The detective was

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smoking a large cigar. Lee hadn't noticed it previously, but now he could smell the lingering odor from it.

... smells like hell ...

Oswald had dismissed the matter in less than a second. The detective looked angry and determined as he moved slowly toward Lee.

Oswald spun his head around, taking in the full situation. All the members of the public were sat back in their seats except the two men in front of him, but he still couldn't identify them. Now the detective was within a couple of feet of him.

Lee's thoughts were jarred as the detective put his hands onto his waist, searching for a hidden weapon.

Oswald, for the first time that day, panicked. In a voice barely louder than a whisper and to no-one in general, he blurted, 'Well, it's all over now.'

The detective's head was at about Lee's chest level. Oswald looked down at him. The policeman looked up, his cigar smoke getting in his eyes. Lee looked down, contemptuously. The detective's hands were moving fast and getting closer to the revolver.

Oswald had about a second to react. Moving slightly away from the officer he shouted, as loud as his terrified lungs would allow him, 'I am not resisting arrest, I am not resisting arrest—'

The detective flung himself at Oswald; his body weight aimed at Lee's abdomen. The two men fell down into the seats. Amid curses and groans, Oswald felt an armrest dig into his back, a sharp pain cleared his head. He now had his hands around the officer's neck while the detective began hitting him and hollering at the same time.

Lee looked ahead, the ceiling whirling as the policeman pulled him up and then pushed him further down into the seats again.

'I am—', was all Lee managed to get out this time, the

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officer's hand falling across Lee's mouth like a clamp. Lee turned his mouth and head away as fists began to reign down on him.

'I am not ... resisting arrest! If ... if they shoot me, you're all witnesses!'

Oswald managed to get the words out. His determination to speak seemed only to increase the detective's determination to overpower him. Oswald was half this man's age and in all probability fitter than he, but the policeman fought like a demon.

One of the officers screamed at Oswald. 'Shoot the President, will you?' But the cry was all but lost in the confusion, as fists continued to fall amid Oswald's verbal protests.

Oswald struck the cop a good one between the eyes. That was the first and only blow he threw. Three other officers moving toward the scuffle grabbed Oswald from the front, rear and side.

'Okay—okay, we got him.' One said as another landed a punch squarely on Lee's left eye. The pain shot through his skull and dazed him, causing him to drop his guard for an instant. Before he could recover, all four of the cops were punching him about the head and body. Long ago at school, one of Lee's classmates had told him that when someone was beating up on you, the pain lessened as your body became more and more numb.

It was quite true. Lee could only see sparks before his eyes and feel a puffiness rising from his face.

'Look out, he's got a gun!' Someone shouted. A woman screamed and Oswald felt his .38 being pulled from his trousers.

'Okay, okay I got it.'

'I protest this police brutality,' screamed Oswald, all the fight knocked out of him. 'I am not resisting arrest, you're all witnesses. If they shoot me, you're all witnesses.'

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Another officer put his hand over Lee's mouth but still Oswald tried to shout. Throwing his head left and right loosened the cops' grip.

'I am not-' His mouth was covered again.

There were now five officers carrying Oswald from the row of chairs. His head bowed, Lee knew he had taken a terrible beating. As his schoolmate had also reassured him, he'd know all about it in the morning.

Oswald and his captors reached the aisle. Lee was being held upright by the officers and he thought he heard the rattle of handcuffs. Two policemen held his wrists forward. Tilting his head to the left, Lee saw a policeman with a shotgun go in back of him. Suddenly, just as he thought he could feel no more pain in his body, another blow, which felt like a baseball bat, crashed into his back. He screamed, collapsing to the floor. As he was pulled to his feet again, Lee fought back tears of pain and frustration and shouted one last time. 'I have not resisted arrest!' His voice weakened, but he continued. 'You all saw this... you all saw this! You're all witnesses!'

Oswald's cries were lost beneath the shouts of the policemen as they hollered for everyone to get out of the way. One of the uniforms finally got his handcuffs onto Lee, securing his hands behind his back. Lee, by now supported by two officers, finally reached the foyer doorway.

Half staggering, half dragging his legs behind him and weak from the blows, Lee dropped in and out of unconsciousness, his head hung low, panting.

The shoestore man stood there, a look of sadness on his face. As Oswald lifted his head, their eyes met for an instant, but Lee did not recognize him. The shoestore man studied Oswald's face before he was finally dragged away to a waiting patrol vehicle.

A face dressed in abject terror.