**RUTH PAINE – B1 PART TWO**

TALBOT: So, in some ways, he was probably using you and your generosity.

R. PAINE: Oh, yeah. Oh, absolutely. Just as I was using Marina to learn Russian.

TALBOT: Right. Was that your main… I mean, there's all sorts of speculation too about your relationship…

R. PAINE: (Laughs)

TALBOT: … and all that. We don't need to go into that. I've read Tom Mallon and all that, but I'm curious about, did you see her as a damsel in distress? This young…

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: … Russian woman who was…

R. PAINE: Oh, yeah.

TALBOT: … in trouble, in a troubled marriage …

R. PAINE: Yeah. When I went down to visit, we walked out to the park with the little girl, and she said that she wasn't sure that the marriage would hold up and last and she’d found that she was pregnant again, and she was really distressed. And I was distressed that he didn't want her to learn English, and he didn't want her to have any contact with the Russian community.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: And, uh… So, I didn't know that, I didn't know that he had hit her. I found that out later.

TALBOT: You never saw bruises?

R. PAINE: No.

TALBOT: ‘Cause de Mohrenschildt writes about that, that they would often see bruises.

R. PAINE: Yeah. Uh…

TALBOT: But, maybe…

R. PAINE: No. They bickered, they yelled at each other and argued.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: But her Russian was a good deal more fluent…

TALBOT: Uh-huh.

R. PAINE: … and she would get the better of him.

TALBOT: That's what I heard. I mean, it wasn't like she was just passive.

R. PAINE: No.

TALBOT: She was letting him have it verbally, too.

R. PAINE: And he would just say, "Mulchi," meaning, “shut up.” He would tell her that. But...

TALBOT: What would she say to him that would get under his skin?

R. PAINE: Well, I can tell you one thing I heard her say that I felt was very inappropriate. See, I was trying really hard to be... I could tell he was emotionally fragile…

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: … and I was trying to be somebody that he could get along with, so his wife would get along with me.

TALBOT: So, he would not be threatened by you.

R. PAINE: Exactly.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: And at one point Marina says, you know, "Ruth's grammar is so much better than yours." [laughter] So, that would be the kind of...

TALBOT: Was he a smart guy though? I mean for a high school dropout, I mean kind of bright to be able to learn Russian at all right?

R. PAINE: Yeah; Learning disabled again. Did you look at his ‘Historic Diary’?

TALBOT: No.

R. PAINE: They accused him of not being a good speller. Well, learning disability is written all over it.

TALBOT: Bright guy, but…

R. PAINE: Bright guy, probably about one standard deviation above the norm, which is what the guy found that tested him, you know, in New York when he was evaluated.

TALBOT: Yes. Was there a little symmetry there with Michael then, in a way?

R. PAINE: What?

TALBOT: With your ex? Was there some symmetry between them? I mean, because here are these bright guys who are a little… not that they were exactly the same, but I mean they were both disabled.

R. PAINE: Well, Michael was bright.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: But Lee was smart, and he thought very highly of how smart he was. That's very different from Michael.

TALBOT: So, Lee was smart and arrogant about it?

R. PAINE: I thought, yeah, in the sense that, you know, if you're not agreeing, if you don't understand my point of view…

TALBOT: You just don't get it.

R. PAINE: Yeah, uh-huh, and I got the feeling… well, he was fragile, that if you’d disagree with him, he'd be threatened.

TALBOT: Right. Okay. I want to ask you about, then, the Oswalds. So afterwards, you know, Robert Oswald is suddenly...

R. PAINE: I think I want to tell you just a little bit more what I saw directly, which is very strong and what I feel about why I think Lee was the one…

TALBOT: Okay.

R. PAINE: … that did the shooting. First of all, he had the option; he'd bought a gun in April.

Both: The Mannlicher

TALBOT: … Carcano. Yeah.

R. PAINE: And the pistol…

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: … which is what he was showing off in that picture, both of them. And when, after the assassination…

TALBOT: Mm-hm.

R. PAINE: … the police came out…

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: … and, that they had him in custody for shooting an officer…

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: … and asked Marina if he had a gun and she said yes. We led them to the garage thinking it was still in the blanket roll.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: And it wasn't. And that was the point at which I thought, oh my God.

TALBOT: He's done.

R. PAINE: He’s – He’s… You know.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: Yeah. And then the next day…

TALBOT: And you still didn't know about the Ed Walker thing though, at that point.

R. PAINE: No. That's what I'm getting to.

TALBOT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: On the next day, Marina left with the new baby and the older little girl and her mother-in-law…

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: … who had spent the night in my house.

TALBOT: Who was real case, yeah. Marguerite.

R. PAINE: Yes, you’re right. (laughs) And a couple people from Life magazine.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: And then I didn't see Marina again until March (1964) after she had testified in Washington and she invited me over and said they're all nice old men, it would be all right. But almost two weeks after that, two guys came from Secret Service and showed me this note.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: And the guy who… the Russian speaker was just doing this in Russian. So, I thought he really wants to see what I what I sound like, I'll talk back in Russian.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: And you know, had I ever seen the note? No.

TALBOT: And this is the note to…?

R. PAINE: Do I know what… do I recognize the handwriting?

TALBOT: Uh -huh.

R. PAINE: No, but I see he doesn't know how to spell ‘key’ in Russian, he'd transliterated it and so on. Um, and it really came out in Marina's testimony when they said, ‘Okay, what is this note?’

TALBOT: Right, right.

R. PAINE: And that was the first it was known beyond Marina or Lee.

TALBOT: This was the note that Lee left for Marina…

R. PAINE: This is the note he left when he went out to shoot General Edmund Walker.

TALBOT: … in case he was arrested or whatever.

R. PAINE: Right.

R. PAINE: “This is how you get to the jail house. This is the key to our mailbox. Don't worry about the rent, I've already paid it, and don't keep my clothing, but I would like you to keep my papers.” And so clear. And so, to me, accidental…

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: … that note was discovered.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: ‘Cause I didn't know it was in the book that I sent along with other stuff. I'd never seen it. You know, the conspiracy guy from the Secret Service said, you know, "Mrs. Paine, we know you sent this." No, I'd never seen it. “No… yes, you sent it.”

TALBOT: It was stuffed in the book, the Russian book, yeah.

R. PAINE: And then when I translated it to the English speaker who was sitting there wondering what was going on, he said it was in a book.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: I sent the book. I was so mad at that guy.

TALBOT: Well, one question I had, you know, Ruth, was about the politics of both these shootings. You know, I'm prepared to believe he took a shot at Walker…

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: … either trying to kill him, or just make a statement.

R. PAINE: Oh, no…

TALBOT: Because if he was a good shot, he probably could have killed him.

R. PAINE: Well, he thought he had.

TALBOT: He thought he had. He was obviously a right -wing guy and an opponent of Kennedy. And Kennedy was forced to push him out of the military because of his John Bircher stuff.

R. PAINE: Yeah. That's right.

TALBOT: Then here's a liberal president who he spoke well of, at least his civil rights record and all that, so I can't make… yeah. It's contradictory, right? To shoot at two guys from different points of view?

R. PAINE: Is it possible that his mind wasn't working very well?

TALBOT: Well, that's what I want to ask you.

R. PAINE: Yeah. It seems to me it wasn't. And I was just beginning to see this deterioration, you could say, because he had given us a phone number to call if the baby came, the new baby, born in September… no, October. And we should dial this number and tell him if the baby came. Well, the baby came on a Sunday and he was there, which is handy because he could stay with my kids while I drove her in to the hospital.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: Um, and… Hm. I lost the thread.

TALBOT: It’s all right.

R. PAINE: it's very emotional.

K. CROFT: Well, you said you saw some evidence that….

R. PAINE: Well, all right, on Sunday night, he didn't come out that weekend before the assassination. And when he came on Thursday, Marina assumed, and I sort of did too, that he was coming out to make up because she’d been mad at him.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: And we called… she missed seeing him over the weekend. You have to understand, there was a relationship. They really did...

TALBOT: There was love there…

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: … even on her part.

R. PAINE: Oh, yeah, I think so. And so, she wanted to talk to him, so I dialed this number and asked for Lee Oswald and was told, "There's no Lee Oswald here." I said, is this the number? “Yeah, this is the number.” So, the next day, Lee called, as he usually did when he got home from work, and Marina said, "We tried to call you. They said there wasn't a Lee Oswald there." He said, “Never try to call me. I'm using a different name." And…

TALBOT: Oh, right, at the boarding house.

R. PAINE: Yeah. And so, he gave us the number to call, but didn’t tell us who to ask for, which wasn't terribly well put together.

TALBOT: So, he had a kind of a, already different name and a different persona…

R. PAINE: Well, and Marina then said how distressed she was by his fantasies …

TALBOT: Ah-hah.

R. PAINE: That he has used assumed names at other times, and she wishes he would grow up, you know …

Talbot. Right, right.

R. PAINE: … Uh, was really worried about his mental health, you know…

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: … and so was I at that point, wondering what was going on.

TALBOT: So, his politics then, were… they capable of being malleable, you think, particularly as he decomposed psychologically?

R. PAINE: Well, I doubt it was a political act. I think it was an act to say, I am important.

TALBOT: Right.

K. CROFT: Then why would he not say that he did it?

**Un-identified male speaker**: I often thought that, when I was a kid, the first time I had a gun, the one thing I wanted to do was to shoot it. Here he is with a pistol and a rifle and nothing to do. He went out and did target practice …

TALBOT: I can see that. A lot of loners and people who are psychologically damaged obviously take a shot…

**Un-identified male speaker:** Sure.

TALBOT: … at somebody big for the glory. But as Karen said, why did he say I'm a patsy then? Why did he deny it when he was in custody?

K. CROFT: Why do you think?

R. PAINE: I don't know.

TALBOT: Yeah.

**Un-identified male speaker:** Maybe because he missed, and he didn't want to ...

K. CROFT: No, no…

TALBOT: … Kennedy.

[Crosstalk]

K. CROFT: We were talking about Kennedy.

R. PAINE: That's, yeah, not the Walker one. Um, I think he was appreciating the attention.

K. CROFT: He saw him primarily as an attention needer, needer… needy for that.

R. PAINE: … the recognition.

TALBOT: Michael said he did claim credit for it when Michael talked to him after he was arrested. Did you know that?

R. PAINE: No.

TALBOT: Oh, okay. I was interested to see that. I would like to ask Michael.

**Un-identified male speaker:** When did Michael talk to him after he was arrested?

TALBOT: Did Michael talk to him after he was arrested?

R. PAINE: News to me.

TALBOT: Could it have been on the phone, ‘cause he talked to you, right?

R. PAINE: It could have been…

TALBOT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: … apocryphal as well.

TALBOT: Oh, okay.

R. PAINE: He read a lot of apocryphal stuff before you got here, I can just tell.

TALBOT: Yeah, well, that's why I'm trying to weed it out, that's why we're here. Yeah, yeah. But Michael wouldn't have made it up, when you say apocryphal.

R. PAINE: No, no, no. If he tells you, you can ask him.

TALBOT: Okay.

K. CROFT: Yeah, there’s no point….

TALBOT: Right. And you did talk to Lee, though, on the phone. He called you.

R. PAINE: That Saturday.

TALBOT: Right.

TALBOT: Just once?

R. PAINE: He called twice, actually.

TALBOT: Okay. And did you talk to him both times?

R. PAINE: Yes, mm-hm.

TALBOT: And he asked you for help in getting a defense lawyer?

R. PAINE: John Abt, yes.

TALBOT: He was a well -known lefty lawyer.

R. PAINE: Right.

TALBOT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: Yeah, who was out of town, no doubt, ‘cause I could never...

TALBOT: Did you make attempts to get him…

R. PAINE: Oh, I tried to reach him several times, but he was not there.

TALBOT: Right. So, it's interesting, then, Lee... I mean, would Lee have identified as a young leftist?

R. PAINE: Oh, yeah.

TALBOT: So, those politics, as far as you could tell were genuine, that he was, you know, he would subscribe to sort of the general left opinions of the day, like for racial integration, for world peace...

R. PAINE: Okay, he subscribed to The Worker and The Militant.

Right. Those folks don't talk to each other, right?

TALBOT: I know, that's a little contradictory. So, he didn't know the left’s internal story.

R. PAINE: He didn’t. One of the most interesting guys I met post-assassination, knew all the different groups…

TALBOT: The factions…

R. PAINE: Yeah, the factions, and what was going on… Oh God, what's his name?

TALBOT: Was he… he was a conspiracy author?

R. PAINE: No, no, he knew more than anybody else. Um… Isaac Don Levine, long dead I'm sure now, but…

TALBOT: Oh, yeah… I know who he is, yeah.

R. PAINE: And, he pointed out things like…

TALBOT: We should, yeah: *The Mind of the Assassin*. I remember that, yeah.

R. PAINE: But it's about the Trotskyite, the Trotsky…

TALBOT: Right, right.

R. PAINE: Anyway…

TALBOT: He pointed out… why did you find his observations…

R. PAINE: Well, he recognized that Lee didn't have a clue …

TALBOT: Uh-huh.

R. PAINE: … was not connected with existing organizations or with…

K. CROFT: The Old Left.

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: Right. So, look, I have to say, so there's two interpretations of the man that you speak about. One is that he was in psychological distress, that he was desperate for attention, that he was, like Marina said, living a world of fantasies more and more because his own life was so disappointing to him. I can completely buy that and understand that. There's another interpretation, as someone on the Left who's known a lot of informers and people who are just hanging around as groupies on the Left and kind of oddballs, there's another interpretation I see of someone who's an unwitting tool, who’s being…

R. PAINE: Unwitting?

TALBOT: An unwitting tool. That's exactly the kind of people that authorities often use who are infiltrating groups and peace movements and all that.

R. PAINE: My parents had a name for that. They called them Shut-Eye Liberals.

TALBOT: Shut-Eye Liberals. That's exactly the kind of person who would fall into the hands of perhaps an intelligence operation.

R. PAINE: I don't think he liked working with other people.

TALBOT: You know what Senator Schweiker said…

R. PAINE: No.

TALBOT: … about Lee Harvey Oswald when he was, for the Church Committee, investigating him. Richard Schweiker who’s a Republican. He's not, it's not like a raving liberal. He was a moderate Republican, and I interviewed him. He's still alive. He said that when you look into Lee Harvey Oswald and do all the research he and the committee did, you see the fingerprints of intelligence all over him. That's what he says. He says, "Soviet defector, supposedly." And he comes back without being molested by authorities, that he's this, that he's being sent here and there. Now, part of it is that he's an adventure seeker. I can't believe that, but the two aren't contradictory. I mean, he's the kind of guy who does want to be where the action is, he wants to have a, be kind of a celebrated life. That's how someone falls into these things sometimes and is used.

R. PAINE: Mm-hm.

TALBOT: I just don't see Lee Harvey Oswald as the sole shooter. I think he was involved in some way. I don't know if he knew completely how he was being… participating in this. I agree with you, I think he shot Tippet…

R. PAINE: Where did he find another shooter?

TALBOT: … I think he shot tippet.

R. PAINE: I guess there are a lot of…

TALBOT: I agree with you; I think he probably shot at Walker; I agree with you on all of that. I think he was playing some role that he wasn't even clear about in the book depository. But when he was caught, and he said, "I'm a patsy," that to me is not saying, "I'm completely innocent," by the way. To me, when someone says ‘I'm a patsy,’ you're part of the gang, but…

K. CROFT: You got set up.

TALBOT: He knew he was being set up.

**Un-identified male speaker:** Or else he didn't know what the true meaning of the word patsy was.

TALBOT: Well, a patsy, and I think in this case, is a guy who's a stooge who's part of the operation.

**Un-identified male speaker:** That's what we know, but he may not have known.

TALBOT: Maybe. No, but that's what I think he was trying to communicate. So, my feeling is, once I, you know, you'll read my book, you know, and you'll make your own determination. But, what my book looks at, among other things, is how Robert Kennedy looked at this, the Attorney General of the United States, the President's brother, what he was doing to investigate it. And what Robert Kennedy, among other things, did immediately after the assassination was look at Jack Ruby. And when they looked into Jack Ruby, you'll see in my book, these are all in government documents, they said, Jack Ruby, when you looked at his phone records, who he was talking to right before the assassination and all that, it looked like the witness list for the Rackets Committee hearings that Bobby had famously conducted in the '50s. Jack Ruby was a mafia errand boy.

Why would someone be sent immediately by the mob to kill Oswald? So, I just think there's some -- and you've been through this, I don't want to belabor at this point.

R. PAINE: [unintelligible] … a very little.

TALBOT: Okay, I just think poor Lee Harvey Oswald was both a participant in this, he was actively involved. I agree with you. He was not a complete innocent the way a lot of the conspiracy people think, but he fell into something much bigger than he was aware of, and he was in way over his head. That's how I see it.

K. CROFT: You're not buying that?

R. PAINE: No.

K. CROFT: Right. I can see by your face.

TALBOT: Okay.

**Un-identified male speaker:** No.

K. CROFT: And the main reason is … you're not buying that …

TALBOT: Because you knew him.

K. CROFT: … because you're looking at it from knowing his psychology…

TALBOT: And what he was – you think he was capable of.

R. PAINE: What he was like.

TALBOT: Okay.

R. Paine. Yeah. Mm-hm.

K. CROFT: And what did you think of Kennedy?

R. PAINE: Well, and, you know, the FBI came out a couple of times to look at him in October.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: And so, I was not surprised. I thought, well, sure, they'll want to keep track…

TALBOT: Sure.

R. PAINE: And that's essentially what I said to Oswald; and I gave Oswald a card from Hosty.

TALBOT: And you liked Hosty? You thought he was a decent guy?

R. PAINE: He was a sensible guy, yeah.

TALBOT: Okay.

R. PAINE: And not trying to make life even harder for Oswald, but his job was to keep track of where he was.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: Mm-hm.

TALBOT: Later, and I know this drove you crazy too, the Jim Garrison investigation, obviously. And you'll probably agree more with my interpretation of Garrison. I think he was, you know, he blew it, you know. But I think he had genuine, you know, he was genuinely motivated in some ways…

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: … but I think he blew it. But anyway, I, and that's what Bobby Kennedy thought too about him. But, you know, one of the things that's come up in my research is that Marina gave testimony to the grand jury in New Orleans and you know there's that quote about you where she says… they asked her why did you stop associating with your friend Ruth Paine after the assassination and she says, “I was advised by the Secret Service not to be connected with her; seems like she was…” and this is her faulty construction or, you know, simplistic English, “…seems like she was … not connect,” so, she's not saying you were connected to the CIA, but, “…she was sympathizing with the CIA. She…” meaning you, “…wrote letters over there, and they told me, (the Secret Service) told me, for my own reputation to stay away from her.” So, is that familiar to you or…

R. PAINE: No, I hadn’t heard that.

TALBOT: Okay.

R. PAINE: I had that feeling that, uh…

TALBOT: Why would the Secret Service say that about you, do you think? Any clue?

R. PAINE: Well, I thought that it was mostly Robert Oswald that thought that she shouldn't be in touch with me.

TALBOT: Oh, okay. And was whispering in her ear of certain things about you?

R. PAINE: Well, he was the head of the family at that point, as far as she was concerned.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: Clearly, she didn't want to contact me because I tried to be sure that she knew what rights she had, what was going on, and I was worried that she wouldn't know how to deal with...

TALBOT: But you were in communication with the FBI because they were coming out, obviously, your home and interrogating you …

R. PAINE: After the assassination.

TALBOT: After the assassination. Did you have any contact with the CIA as far as you knew? I mean, why would the Secret Service be saying that to her, if that's accurate, if that's what they were talking about?

R. PAINE: Yeah, I have no idea.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: Mm-hm.

TALBOT: Okay, so you had no contact with the Agency, CIA?

R. PAINE: Not that I’m aware of. (laughs)

TALBOT: Okay, sometimes you don't know, that's the thing. (all laugh) Um… Another question that's popped up a lot from Lyman (George Lyman Paine Jr.), a quote that gets circulated after the assassination, Lyman, and this was, I guess the wiretap from the FBI wiretap, Lyman Paine called his son, called Michael, and he said, "We all know who did this. Be careful."

R. PAINE: (Laughter)

TALBOT: Now, a parent can often mean just like, you know, who knows? There's lots of speculation after the assassination; everyone was wondering who. I mean, some people were saying it was a Castro plot…

R. PAINE: Well, I've heard the same rumor, but I'd have different characters running it.

TALBOT: Okay.

R. PAINE: Michael called me to say, "We know who did it."

TALBOT: Ah-ha.

R. PAINE: And several have said, you know, "What about that?" Well, apocryphal. He called after we heard that Kennedy had been shot, and we sort of commiserated about it: ‘Oh, God, we saw this coming,’ kind of thing.

TALBOT: So, this was like an Oswald – a reference to Oswald…

R. PAINE: No, not at all!

TALBOT: Oh.

R. PAINE: We didn't have any clue that Oswald was involved at this point.

TALBOT: Oh, okay.

R. PAINE: This was just calling to say we've heard on the radio and it's just awful.

TALBOT: I see.

R. PAINE: But nobody's been able to come up with the phones that they came from or any kind of, or who reported this ...

TALBOT: I see.

R. PAINE: And, so …

TALBOT: So, this is just an inaccurate reading of a phone conversation, not between Lyman and Michael.

R. PAINE: Well, it probably is inaccurate, not only a reading, there may not have been a phone conversation. I mean, you really have very little to go on. If there was a phone conversation and somebody reported it, wouldn't we know who?

TALBOT: Well, this was an FBI transcript supposedly from a wiretap and, that caught this, you know, conversation between Lyman and Michael. And again, maybe Lyman, look, everyone was panicking at that point. People didn't know what was going on, so there was lots of speculation. I'm not saying this was necessarily—

R. PAINE: It wouldn't have come from my house because –

TALBOT: No, no.

R. PAINE: … he was living somewhere else.

TALBOT: I was just asking if you ever had the occasion to talk to Lyman about the assassination yourself and what he might have thought.

R. Paine. Unh-unh.

TALBOT: Okay.

R. PAINE: You’ve really introduced me to some of the things I've avoided.

TALBOT: I know, I'm sorry about this Ruth, but I warned you in the beginning …

R. PAINE: Yeah, you did.

TALBOT: … that some of these questions would go. Let's talk about something that's happier subject for you. I assume, Tom Mallon's book (*Mrs. Paine’s Garage*). What was the impact of that book in your life? I mean, it got a lot of attention.

R. PAINE: Well, he kind of, it was two or three, maybe four years that he approached me and sent me things that he'd written and so on and said, "I'd like to interview you," and so on.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: And then he said he was going to do an article for the New Yorker. And so finally I said, okay. I can't remember what the trigger was, but somebody else was asking me. I thought, "Well, this guy's been in line a long time." I'll say, "Okay, I'm going to talk to you." And he did remarkably good research. He read up a lot of things. He prepared his questions. He knew what he wanted to ask. And we spent probably most of three days.

TALBOT: Mm-hm.

R. PAINE: Talking. And he did things like look up the small number of artifacts that I gave to the Quaker Library in Swarthmore. As far as I know, he’s the only person who's ever been there to look it up.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: And, yeah, so I was impressed with his seriousness...

TALBOT: His diligence, yeah.

R. PAINE: Yeah, and with some of the things he'd written, other things that he shared with me. I did not know he was going to do a book.

TALBOT: Ah-ha. You thought it was an article.

R. PAINE: It was an article in the New Yorker, I thought, yeah, let’s do that.

TALBOT: Right, and originally it was an article.

R. PAINE: That's right yeah and I thought of a very good one. Um, the book was much more personal.

TALBOT: Uh-huh. Because he went into your marriage.

R. PAINE: Yeah, and connected as was certainly connected in my feelings and emotions at the divorce and the timing of the assassination because I had just filed for divorce.

TALBOT: Right. And that was difficult.

R. PAINE: I didn't know how it would go or how -- how I'd feel over time, but it didn’t lead to a lot of other interviews.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: And, uh …

TALBOT: Well, certainly, it humanized you.

R. PAINE: I felt, yeah, I felt exposed by the same token, but I recognized that it was helpful to me in the fact that I could say to somebody who was wanting to ask me a lot of questions, ‘go read the book.’

K. CROFT: ‘Read this.’

TALBOT: Yeah, ‘read this,’ which I've done, and I still have a lot of questions!

R. PAINE: Yeah, so overall, I think it's been a good thing.

TALBOT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: And he remains a friend; just the correspondence I just have by email; his long -time partner was very ill, was back in the hospital and things are looking better.

TALBOT: Oh, that's good.

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: How old, is Tom like my age probably, right?

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: Yeah, 40.

R. PAINE: Yeah … 40?

TALBOT: (Laughing) 60!

K. CROFT: So, some of your motivation in talking to people like Tom or us to sort of step the record straight, is that part of it for you that you don't want …?

R. PAINE: Yes, it's definitely that. But it's also that I'm irritated by the implication that people won't talk; you know, that, it seems to me, if I want truth to be served, I need to be available.

TALBOT: Right.

K. CROFT: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

R. PAINE: And so, if people have done their homework and, you know, I talked to them.

TALBOT: Right. Well, in our case, maybe we're splitting the difference, in a way, with you, Ruth, because I believe that you're completely innocent, that you were a person who was, out of the goodness of your heart, trying to take care of this young woman and Lee …

K CROFT: Yeah, just happened to be there.

TALBOT: And you happen to be in the middle of a cyclone. But I think you maybe don't know entirely what that cyclone was about. My feeling, and you’ll read my book or maybe you won't read it, is that there was a conspiracy that Lee was part of it in some way, but it wasn't just Lee Harvey Oswald that day, there was something more involved. But I don't think you or Michael or any of your family were in any way… you were just innocent bystanders who got run over by this thing. That's my opinion.

R. PAINE: Yeah well, you know; how do you … I just don't see him as working with anybody, quite frankly.

TALBOT: He wasn't working, he was being used, but, really, I don't even, we could talk about this all day long.

K. CROFT: What about the job. You wanted to ask about the, getting the job, I mean, the Chris Matthews thing.

TALBOT: Yeah, well, no, I accept what you've said about yeah Linnie May Randle was a neighbor you knew that he needed a job and that her brother he says we're in there as written there. And she heard that they might be hiring, just a seasonal kind of thing. So that's, and then there's no more mystery to it than that, right?

K. CROFT: That was only, that was like a couple of weeks before the assassination.

R. PAINE: It was a little more than that. I think it was early October.

K. CROFT: Okay.

TALBOT: Did you stay in touch with them later? They probably felt run over.

R. PAINE: Linnie Mae Randle? They’re still my neighbors. Yeah.

Talbot: They probably felt run over later.

R. PAINE: And I saw them, saw her and her brother, Buell. You know, there was a, a BBC did a trial of Lee Harvey Oswald.

TALBOT: Was that the Bugliosi thing?

R. PAINE: No. Oh, yes, he worked for it. Yeah, he was the prosecuting attorney, and Jerry Spence was the defense.

TALBOT: Yeah. Why did you decide to do that, by the way, because, that's kind of against your character in a way that, I mean, that's kind of a big circus, you know, I mean literally a media circus, and you tend to be …

R. PAINE: Well, they convinced me that they were going to really try to get the facts out …

TALBOT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: … and as far as I was un-aware, it's one of the very few times they’re letting cross -examination of witnesses …

TALBOT: Yeah. That’s true.

R. PAINE: … and they did that, so I thought that was a good thing.

TALBOT: Right. No, I think it was interesting, uh, you’re right, for that reason. So, okay, I just, a couple more questions? Is that alright? Okay.

R. PAINE: I'm getting tired.

TALBOT: No, I understand. Looking back at the Warren investi … Warren Commission investigation, you know, what do you think of the quality of it, in retrospect, now these years later?

R. PAINE: Well, they were certainly very thorough, everything I saw…

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: … very thorough…

TALBOT: And Wesley Liebler was the main, the attorney …

R. PAINE: Liebler?

TALBOT: … was the main person who you had contact with?

R. PAINE: No.

TALBOT: Oh, okay.

R. PAINE: No, he was working on Motive, and he was imagining things. (Laughs)

TALBOT: Oh, okay. Yeah, yeah.

R. PAINE: (Laughing) You probably like him.

TALBOT: No. What was he imagining? I actually don't know anything about him. I mean I know the name, but I don't know…

R. PAINE: Well, things like, Lee was upset because his wife wouldn't come back and live with him right away. This is still early Women's Lib; It was the wife's fault.

TALBOT: I see. So, Marina drove him to it.

[All laugh]

K. CROFT: Interesting theory.

TALBOT: Well, that sort of goes along with the times. But you went back to Washington.

R. PAINE: Yeah. My understanding, I got the impression from what you said that you were trying to write a book that talks about the times, what was going on.

TALBOT: This was one of the major events of the time.

K. CROFT: Big picture.

TALBOT: The big picture, yeah.

R. PAINE: Okay. Yeah.

TALBOT: So, when you went back to testify, did you get a sense of the committee itself, and who tended to be the sharpest and most engaged members of the committee, of the commission?

R. PAINE: Well, they were all there except for …

TALBOT: Richard Russell.

R. PAINE: Richard Russell, right, who was doing filibuster, I guess.

TALBOT: Yeah, against the Civil Rights bill. [All laugh]

R. PAINE: So, my contact really was with the attorney that interviewed me.

TALBOT: And it wasn't Leibeler, it was one of the others.

R. PAINE: No. Jenner.

TALBOT: Albert Jenner, yeah.

R. PAINE: Jenner. And he was good. He was clear, you know, thought of me like his daughter or something.

TALBOT: A nice guy.

R. PAINE: Uh-huh. And asked good questions, and I didn't get a lot of questions from the Commission itself.

TALBOT: Right, right.

R. PAINE: But some.

TALBOT: Not from… any from Dulles, for instance, who's also in our book.

R. PAINE: Yeah, he's the guy who shuffled in in slippers.

TALBOT: Did he actually come in slippers? Because he had gout.

K. CROFT: He had gout.

R. PAINE: Oh, is that it?

TALBOT: He often suffered from gout. Yeah. Did you think that was odd, a little eccentricity?

R. PAINE: No, no, they told me, "Old guys," as Marina said, "they're old men and they'll be polite." (Laughs) And they were.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: You know, it's really reading their report that tells me how thorough they were …

TALBOT: Yes.

R. PAINE: … along with the fact that they came out and did a disposition: “Mrs. Payne, did you ever have curtain rods in your garage?” (Laughs)

TALBOT: Right. And that was Jenner who came out to Dallas?

R. PAINE: Yes. Uh-huh.

TALBOT: So, you never chatted with Dulles afterwards, or you never mentioned some of the family connections or anything like that?

R. PAINE: No. I found out about those much later. (Laughs) What do you know about …

[Laughter]

TALBOT: Mary Bancroft, you know, and that whole thing.

K. CROFT: What do you know about those?

R. PAINE: I didn't know about that. Yeah.

TALBOT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: Well, my mother -in -law did say that...

TALBOT: They were good friends, right?

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: Yeah. She confirmed that.

R. Paine: Well, and that she'd invited them up at the house there on Naushon Island, so that they were there.

TALBOT: Right. You mean...

R. PAINE: It was Dulles and Bancroft.

TALBOT: Oh, okay. At what point was that?

R. PAINE: Well, I just heard about it. I have no idea.

TALBOT: Okay. You don't know what historical time frame. Just when they were younger or, you know, she just mentioned it, okay.

R. PAINE: Were they married or were they, etc.

K. CROFT: What was going on there?

R. PAINE: Yeah, right.

TALBOT: Oh, I see, right. Yeah.

R. PAINE: I didn't know any of that.

TALBOT: Well, that was around the wartime, so maybe it was...

K. CROFT: Yeah, yeah.

TALBOT: But, you know, she stayed close to Clover Dulles. They became good friends.

R. PAINE: Is that right?

TALBOT: The mistress and the wife. Yeah.

R. PAINE: Oh, really?

TALBOT: Yeah. And their papers are both together at, uh...

R. PAINE: Is she the mistress?

TALBOT: The mistress.

R. PAINE: Oh.

TALBOT: I mean, they stopped being lovers, apparently, after the war.

K. CROFT: Clover kind of knew he had several women, and she kind of got used to it, she said.

TALBOT: What's Naushon Island, like, that estate, the family estate, is it big?

R. PAINE: It was bought in the 1850s by a forebearer, John, Murray Forbes. It's about seven miles long and one mile wide, and there are about 30 houses around the harbor.

TALBOT: They all belong to the family?

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: Uh-huh.

R. PAINE: Yeah, they belong to the family, and there's three islands, actually: There's Pasque, and there's Nashawena, and then there's Cuttyhunk. Cuttyhunk is public, and where the county seat is.

TALBOT: Okay, so Naushon is totally private, the whole island?

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: Oh, wow. And are you still welcome out there? Do they still have it?

R. PAINE: Oh, yeah, they still have it; Um, the family did a remarkable job of owning something in common. They have, uh, trustees who look after it, and you don't really own your house.

TALBOT: Oh, okay.

R. PAINE: You pay for building it, and you pay for keeping it up, and they rent it out to anybody who …

TALBOT: Oh. Okay.

R. PAINE: You have a first call on it. And it's, for instance, the house on Naushon that we went to was built, designed by Lyman, who was an architect, and built, and I think her father, Ruth's father, paid for it. But, it's definitely a world of affluence that I wasn't familiar with. [All laugh]

K. CROFT: A whole ‘nother world. Right.

TALBOT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: Yeah, a different world, But very open, friendly people. There was no arrogance.

TALBOT: Do your kids still go out there? Do they feel like it's part of their childhood?

R. PAINE: My son does, I think. But it's not a very large part of their childhood. I mean, we went a few summers. So …

TALBOT: Yeah.

K. CROFT: Did you ever try and get in touch with Marina after all of this? I know after they told her not to talk to you, but you were very surprised.

R. PAINE: Well, she apparently made a decision to call me after she was in Washington, and then she also suggested we get together in the fall after she bought her house in Richmond, ‘Rich” whatever it is, one of those suburbs of Dallas, and I went out to her house and we talked.

TALBOT: This is back in the '60s now, so.

R. PAINE: Yeah, this would have been '64, fall of '64.

K. CROFT: So you got back into it, but you haven't been in touch with her all this time?

R. PAINE: No. That gathering, the meeting there was very painful because, you know...

TALBOT: With the family, you mean, and Robert and Marguerite?

R. PAINE: No, never saw them. I just went out to Marina's house, that she had bought.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: And so, the babies, her little girls were there, and my two kids, and, you know.

TALBOT: Well, do you think you’d shared so much pain together that she didn't want to be reminded of it?

R. PAINE: That's the way I felt.

TALBOT and CROFT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: And I think she felt embarrassed.

TALBOT: Uh -huh. That she'd drawn you into this.

R. PAINE: No, that it all landed on us. Yes.

TALBOT: Yeah. Yeah.

K. CROFT: So, she agreed with you that he did it?

R. PAINE: Well, she did at first …

TALBOT: At the time … She changed her mind. -

K. CROFT: So, at that time, with that painful conversation, you felt like you both were the same.

R. PAINE:- Oh, we didn't talk about that.

K. CROFT: You didn't, it was just in the air. –

R. PAINE: Yeah, yeah. –

TALBOT: Robert never changed his mind, though. He always thought Lee did it, you know, and he never, as far as I know, he still does.

R. PAINE: That's a very sensible guy. –

TALBOT: Right. What then, do you think Marina, just for emotional reasons ended up changing her mind, because she didn't want … ?

R. PAINE: Well, I think she was besieged by a lot of people who wanted to tell her why, all these other stories.

TALBOT: And her kids went that direction too, apparently.

R. PAINE: Yes.

TALBOT: Or at least the oldest daughter, I guess.

R. PAINE: Yes.

TALBOT: Yeah. And did you have any contact with them?

R. PAINE: No, I didn't have any contact.

TALBOT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: Yeah. Very sad.

TALBOT: Yeah, no, it must be. What about, do you and Michael … I know you don't see him much, I guess, at this point, but have you ever had interesting conversations with him looking back at it, and do you tend to see eye to eye about it?

R. PAINE: I don't think so.

TALBOT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: I was one of the ones who was stunned that he didn't think that picture had any importance.

TALBOT: I know. I was going to say, Earth to Michael! [All laugh]

K. CROFT: I'm not getting that story at all. Michael goes to Lee’s house…

TALBOT: To pick up Lee, to bring him…

R. Paine: No. No, I'm home with the kids, fixing dinner…

K. CROFT: The April before the assassination. And in passing he happens to see this photo…

R. PAINE: No, not just passing. Lee shows it off.

TALBOT: He takes him up to his room, right? He takes him into the room … or wherever it was.

K. CROFT: Yeah, okay, and so, but he doesn't mention it to you when he comes home …

R. PAINE: No.

K. CROFT: So, how do you hear about …

TALBOT: or he doesn't even mention it later?

K. CROFT: So, so, when do you hear about it when you see it on LIFE Magazine?

TALBOT: 1993 credit Tom Mallon. He gives an interview. This is what Michael – Michael, years later; It was a TV interview, it just doesn’t happen, “Well, I happened to see this,” that's why I was asking does Michael’s memory play tricks maybe?

R. PAINE: Well, it does now.

TALBOT: But in ‘93 it wouldn't have.

R. PAINE: No, I don't think so.

K. CROFT: Marina wasn't there, it was just Michael and Lee, ‘cause it …

R. PAINE: Marina would have been there. Michael went to get them in the car and bring them to our house for dinner.

K. CROFT: Okay. Okay. All right.

TALBOT: So, the first time you saw the photo was …

K. CROFT: on LIFE Magazine.

TALBOT: On the cover of LIFE.

R. PAINE: Yeah.

K. CROFT: And is that where Michael wasn’t there and he didn’t say, I saw that. He didn't say that.

R. PAINE: No.

TALBOT: Yeah. That's a strange glitch.

R. PAINE: It is strange. Yeah.

TALBOT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: But I think your ‘*Earth to Michael*’ comment tells the story there.

TALBOT: Yeah. (Laughing) Thanks, Michael. Well, you think that, here's the other thing; I mean, you think of a protective husband or ex -husband and a father would have said, "My God, this guy's out in my wife's house with our kids all the time," and he's showing off his guns. Maybe he's used to the guys in Dallas because they love their guns.

K. CROFT: Well, in Dallas' guns are no big deal.

R. PAINE: Yeah, that's right.

TALBOT: Did you think that was it? You just saw another gun nut down in Texas?

R. PAINE: I think so. And, you know, Michael had had a .22 or something when he was a kid and didn't think much of it. One of the news people, wondering how Dallas could be so casual about guns, bought a gun and walked down the street …

K. CROFT: and then they saw it for themselves …

TALBOT: No one batted an eye. They said, "Hi Bob…

R. PAINE: Yeah, that’s true.

TALBOT: … nice gun." Um …

K. CROFT: Okay. Got it.

TALBOT: So, you and Michael, before the assassination, never talked about, you know, this guy seems a little like he's coming unhinged and maybe he shouldn't be around the kids and our family.

R. PAINE: Well, the unhinged … when I really began to worry about it was just the weekend prior. There was little worry before that. He had written, Oswald had written a draft letter that said, I thought it said, "Dear Sirs,” I didn't know who he was writing to, but I noticed that he was lying …

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: … which is not the same was being unhinged. But it bothered me.

TALBOT: Right.

K. CROFT: Who was he writing to?

R. PAINE: Well, I found out later, it was to the Soviet Embassy.

K. CROFT: Oh.

R. PAINE: You know, we have friends, if, you can get help if you need it.

TALBOT: He was using your typewriter.

R. PAINE: Yeah. [unintelligible]

TALBOT: And then he left it out. Which is for...

R. PAINE: He left the note out. Yes. Yes.

TALBOT: Which McCloy would have a Field Day with that.

R. PAINE: Yes. Well, especially because when he was typing it and I came by, he covered it with his body, like I shouldn't be reading it, and there it was in plain sight on my desk.

TALBOT: But he loved being part of the world of events it sounds like, you know, he was a show -off in some way, you know.

R. PAINE: Yeah, uh-huh.

TALBOT: … that he'd been to the Soviet Union he had opinions about world events.

R. PAINE: Show off, yeah.

TALBOT: Right. Just, last questions, and just flashing forward. I mean so, obviously, you've been kind to entertain us; I know Tom Mallon did his book, which was important; but, um, so, does this continue to haunt you to this day? I mean …

R. PAINE: Yeah, sure.

K. CROFT: What part of it?

**Un-identified male speaker**: No uncertainty.

K. CROFT: But what haunts you, then?

R. PAINE: The grief. I just really was so sorry that Kennedy was killed.

TALBOT: Yeah. So, you loved him as a president.

R. PAINE: I thought he was terrific.

K. CROFT: Yeah.

TALBOT: And you saw what it did to the country.

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: We all did. Yeah.

R. PAINE: Uh-huh. Sure. My eyes were opened at that point. But, anyway …

K. CROFT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: So, the grief is very...

TALBOT: And I'm convinced there would have been no Vietnam. I interviewed Robert McNamara in my book; I interviewed a lot of people around him. They were determined, he was determined to withdraw from Vietnam after he beat Goldwater, you know, in '64.

R. PAINE: Yeah, yeah.

TALBOT: He knew he couldn't announce that before '64.

R. PAINE: Uh-huh.

TALBOT: So, I mean, history would’ve been so different.

R. PAINE: Very different. Yes.

K. CROFT: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

TALBOT: Yes. Exactly. Yeah. So, that's what haunts you, the enormous tragedy of it.

R. PAINE: The loss. The loss. Yeah.

TALBOT: And then the personal tragedy in your own lives, and Marina’s, I'm sure, is also difficult.

R. PAINE: Yeah. And, you know, any interview like this, I go around feeling gloomy for a while.

TALBOT: I'm so sorry. Yeah.

K. CROFT: Well, it's ironic that it was yesterday.

TALBOT: Oh my God, yes.

K. CROFT: I didn't plan it, we didn’t plan it that way. [unintelligible] I had no idea. It was like, "Oh my God, this is so strange that it happened to be …"

TALBOT: But there's so few people now still living who are eye witnesses, like you.

R. PAINE: Well, that's another reason I feel I should talk to people.

TALBOT: Yeah. I know. And I'm sure with the 50th anniversary coming up, it's just...

K. CROFT: You might get some more calls.

TALBOT: You might get even more calls. [All laugh]

R. PAINE: Yeah, I think you're probably right.

**Un-identified male speaker:** There's a program coming out on the YouTube channel.

TALBOT: Oh, yeah.

R. PAINE: Well, he hasn't put it together yet. There's a guy, almost a year ago, who…

K. CROFT: filmed you, or?

R. PAINE: Filmed, yeah. He does programs he puts together and sells to Mr. Chen.

TALBOT: Do you think Michael would talk to us if we went out to see him?

R. PAINE: Yes, I think you would find that his memory is faulty.

TALBOT: Is it?

R. PAINE: And that he will go on at some length.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: You may have to say, "And could we get back to that?"

TALBOT: Right. Right. We've done interviews like that. [All laugh]

K. CROFT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: Okay.

TALBOT: Is there anything you’ve [unintelligible] that you think is important? I mean, we could, I know you’ve had a whole life after that. A lot of it’s in Tom's book, I know. But I know you've been involved in the peace movement, and you were in Nicaragua.

R. PAINE: Yeah, yeah.

TALBOT: And the *Friends* obviously is still a very important part of your life.

**Un-identified male speaker**: Tax withholding.

TALBOT: Tax withholding? Are you doing that?

R. PAINE: Did you look up the Wikipedia article?

TALBOT: No.

R. PAINE: Oh, you didn't?

TALBOT: On your tax withholding movement?

R. PAINE: No, just look up my name, there’s a page on Wikipedia, because it references an interview in St. Petersburg that I did about withholding income tax.

TALBOT: When you lived down there?

R. PAINE: Uh-huh.

TALBOT: Oh. My friend Tony Serra, who's an attorney, a radical attorney in San Francisco, you know, Tony … he served time for that.

R. PAINE: Really?

TALBOT: Twice.

R. PAINE: You have to really work at it now. [Garbled]

BREAK

FINAL SECTION

R. PAINE: … the CIA.

TALBOT: That's right. That's what he said right afterwards. “I'm done listening to these people.”

R. PAINE: Yeah. Mm-hm.

TALBOT: And he fired Dulles, of course.

K. CROFT: Yeah. Yeah.

TALBOT: It was tough.

K. CROFT: That was a very brave or, you know, foolhardy. If you look at it the other way, I mean, it signed his fate.

TALBOT: Well, the tensions within that government are just palpable as you read more and it gets worse and worse each year.

K. CROFT: That's why it’s like a thriller that way.

R. PAINE: Oh, really?

K. CROFT: Well, to see what Kennedy was up against. I had no idea.

TALBOT: Yeah.

K. CROFT: It was amazing how courageous he was to fight against those forces.

R. PAINE: Hmm.

TALBOT: Well, great.

K. CROFT: Thank you so much.

TALBOT: If we could get contact information for Michael…

R. PAINE: For Michael?

TALBOT: Yeah. Is that … Or do you want to talk to him first?

K. CROFT: Yeah, is he a phone person, is he …

R. PAINE: Uh, he's a phone person; he has an email.

END OF RECORDED INTERVIEW