**RUTH PAINE B1- PART ONE**

TALBOT: I want to get into your family background because there's been a lot written about that, about your father, William Hyde… [Brief discussion with Karen Croft to confirm recording device being activated] So your father, William Hyde, sounds like a very interesting man, prominent in the insurance industry, of course, and again, like some of the people I've been writing about, during the war was in the OSS.

R. PAINE: Well, so I understand. I didn't see it that way.

TALBOT: But he never talked about his wartime experiences with you? Like Karen's dad was a bomber pilot.

K. CROFT: Well, a lot of people who were in the OSS, or later CIA, didn't say that. They said they were doing something else.

R. PAINE: I don't think he was.

TALBOT: No? You don’t?

R. PAINE: I don't know where you got that. What I know about him is that he took a job with the… he was working with Bell Helicopter and then he wanted to work with cooperatives. [See page 10 RE Bell Laboratories]

TALBOT: Oh, yeah. Uh-huh.

R. PAINE: And that got him into the...

TALBOT: Was it the International Cooperative Associations?

R. PAINE: He was interested in that, but Nationwide started as a cooperative.

TALBOT: Oh, really?

K. CROFT: The Insurance company.

R. PAINE: Insurance company, yeah, and he just went with it and became more and more a desk person, you know, they did the statistics for the actuarial tables.

TALBOT: Uh-huh.

R. PAINE: But, his first connection with the government of any sort that I’m aware of -- He was too young to get any to be… He was too old for the first war… too young for the first war, too old for the second one.

TALBOT: Okay.

R. PAINE: So, he wasn't related to the military in any way, nor would he be.

TALBOT: Right. What's your memory of him during World War II then? You were very young, obviously.

R. PAINE: Yeah, well he was home, we were in New York for whatever it would have been, '43, '44, something like that.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: Moved to Ohio; he was promoted to a different position with Nationwide insurance. But what he got was a relief -- release from his work with Nationwide to go with the Aid for International Development…

TALBOT: Oh, right.

R. PAINE: … which some people think of as CIA.

TALBOT: The Agency for International Development: AID.

R. PAINE: And, what he did was to work in Peru, helping develop credit unions…

TALBOT: I see. Right.

R. PAINE: …and it was so fulfilling because most of his life he'd been much too close to a desk and doing, you know, paperwork, and this was a chance to really get out there and do something that people needed and he believed in credit unions very much and, and was very pleased to be able to do this toward the end of his working life. Now, where you get the idea that he was ever connected with the military or with the rest…

TALBOT: Not the military, no, with the OSS.

R. PAINE: Oh, this is very early…

TALBOT: The OSS was during the war; it was during World War II. It was not the CIA, it was the predecessor of the CIA.

R. PAINE: Yeah, I would be really surprised; extreme news to me.

TALBOT: These are all, these are government documents, Ruth, that are online at the Mary Ferrell website. There was a lot that after you know all the hullabaloo around the JFK film, and so the House as you know the House Select Committee had lots of documents and there were lots of documents that were released in those years in the mid-90s to late-90s, so you know, there was references to your father being in the OSS and look there were a lot of times when the international businessmen were actually asked to play…

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: … you know, a very quiet role.

R. PAINE: And later-on, he did report that, because, he was asked, after he'd been in Peru, he was asked to go to South America, where was it? One of the Guineas.

TALBOT: Oh, okay. He was never in Haiti, was he?

R. PAINE: No.

TALBOT: Oh, okay.

R. PAINE: But he went there and came, they were saying, "Should we work there? Should we do something?" And he came back and said, that I heard, was he reported it as too corrupt, don't go there.

TALBOT: Oh really?

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: Like this would be in Guyana or…

R. PAINE: Guyana, one of the Guyanas.

TALBOT: Oh, okay. Yeah. Still notoriously corrupt.

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: Some things never change.

R. PAINE: Yeah, but…

TALBOT: So, in any case…

R. PAINE: Now, he did know German.

TALBOT: He did? Yeah.

R. PAINE: And he'd been in Germany before the war. One of the early memories I have of my parents is they huddled around the shortwave radio and listened to Hitler, because my father could understand it and they found it just terrifying. And at this point to describe who they were and how they saw themselves, they were very active in the Fellowship of Reconciliation with A .J. Musty.

TALBOT: Oh, really? So, they were socialists?

R. PAINE: Yes. And hostile to communism because…

TALBOT: Communists were trying to take over every organization.

R. PAINE: Exactly. And they had them, they were trying to take over the cooperative movement organizations that they were in and they had to learn how to vote them down.

TALBOT: That's right. Yeah.

R. PAINE: Uh…

TALBOT: And there were a lot of liberals like Schlesinger, Arthur Schlesinger, the historian who, you know, wrote about that being the Americans for Democratic Action, a lot of the ACLU and a lot of the liberal people…

R. PAINE: Yeah, trying to take over…

TALBOT: …the CPA’s, (Communist Party of America) or trying to…

R. PAINE: or manipulate them into supporting…

TALBOT: Whatever the party line was, yeah. Right.

R. PAINE: So my father, to tell more about him, he told the story when the war started, you know, the Daily Worker was saying this is just a fight among the capitalists, let them fight me to kill each other off and so on and stay out of it and so, that was what the party line was there and then when Russia was invaded…

TALBOT: There was a popular front period the, they shifted…

R. PAINE: What he did, he went out and bought what was on the stands of the Daily Worker, and then the next day he went out and bought the next one…

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: … to see the party line.

TALBOT: That’s right. According to what Moscow was telling them, you know.

R. PAINE: Well, yeah. And that's obviously, it's the people's war now, because we've been invaded.

TALBOT: Exactly.

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: Well, anyway.

TALBOT: They could switch on a dime, the CP, yeah.

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: Well, you know, when I grew up in the New Left period, and there was a rejection of all that, the Old Left.

Ruth Paine: Where were you?

TALBOT: Well, I wasn't in any group like SDS or, but I was at Santa Cruz with Steve.

R. PAINE: Oh, yeah. Okay.

TALBOT: And we just, you know, invented our own hippie radical groups. But we knew the history of the CP from reading about it in our classes and groups. And we knew that the CP had played a very detrimental role on the left in this country.

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: And that's why my generation called itself socialists rather than like your parents and stuff. So, were you involved, would you say your family was a very political family? I mean, there were a lot of discussions around the table.?

R. PAINE: Some, probably more than most families. And I was very young. But they did have me, this came out recently, you know, so I'm going to talk about. When I was eight, it was an election year, 1940. And they took me to the Socialist Party Convention.

TALBOT: Uh-huh.

R. PAINE: So, here's this little eight -year -old passing out Norman Thomas' buttons.

TALBOT: I was gonna say, yeah.

R. PAINE: Just having a great time! Because

TALBOT: Thomas was a candidate, right?

R. PAINE: Yeah!

TALBOT: That's a collective item.

R. PAINE: I'm sure it is. I've got it tucked away. Anyway, I think they voted for Norman Thomas one time, probably, or twice or whatever…

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: … and one of the things they commented was that third parties often don't win, don't win, period, but the platform of the Socialist Party gradually crept into the Democratic Party, which is, I thought very interesting because you get discouraged about there not being any change in the parties and stuff, but I think there is some.

TALBOT: Well, that was always the hope of, you know, we on the left, that the Democratic Party would, you know, see the light and then…

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: … take more of our ideas, which is kind of true. I mean, you know, when there's a strong Left, whether it's, you know, Labor movement or other things, that's where Social Security and, you know, Labor legislation all comes, right, crops up.

So, okay, so, so his later career then, your dad, went to work for, as you say, AID in Latin America.

R. PAINE: It was just one year.

TALBOT: Oh, just one year, okay.

R. PAINE: Yeah, it was an arrangement where executives from different companies could be released to do that kind of work.

TALBOT: Gotcha. Yeah. So, then you married Michael, and you both seem, you know, to me fascinating because here in the ‘50s you think it was so conventional, so, you know, kind of drab, so very conservative. And yet there is this kind of free -spirited, bohemian, you know, kind of strain still in American life. You know, you needed a folk dance, a folk dance. Was it a class?

R. PAINE: No, no, it was just somebody, a teacher came up and gave an evening program.

TALBOT: Right, right. And so, Michael himself comes from a kind of a free -spirited family too, even though a very prominent East Coast family, the Forbes…

R. PAINE: That’s right.

TALBOT: … the Cabots, all that. But his father himself was kind of, well, he was a Trotskyite.

R. PAINE: He was a Trotskyite.

TALBOT: Right, Lyman.

R. PAINE: Correct. Yeah. It was George Lyman, but he was known as Lyman, right?

R. PAINE: Yes.

TALBOT: Yeah. And so, what are your memories of Lyman? What was he like?

R. PAINE: Well, I didn't really know him until he till he was quite old.

TALBOT: Oh, okay.

R. PAINE: And he had emphysema and was on oxygen and still smoked, drove me crazy. So, I was not happy with how he was treating himself or how he was treating his wife who was a really wonderful, wonderful person.

TALBOT: This was his second wife?

R. PAINE: His second wife, yeah. Freddie Paine, who was definitely radical. She rode the rails.

TALBOT: Oh, that's right. She was like a hobo.

R. PAINE: Well, she went…

TALBOT: She organized.

R. PAINE: She organized for unions and went to various places.

**Un-identified male speaker:** So, we ran into Jack London.

TALBOT: Yeah, in fact, though.

R. PAINE: She was in the east…

**Un-identified male speaker**: So was he.

R. PAINE: But in those cold countries. Oh, yeah. Yeah. Uh-huh. But a marvelous person. Never knew whether she was... whether she was documented.

TALBOT: Oh. Where was she from?

R. PAINE: Eastern Europe somewhere; came over with an uncle at age 12 or so.

TALBOT: She's like an Anna Goldman type.

R. PAINE: Yeah And she's not sure how she got in or what kind of papers might exist or not exist. And so, she wasn't too keen on…

TALBOT: That's wild. And then, then Michael's biological mother was also a fascinating person.

R. PAINE: Oh, yes. Yes. And so how well, you knew her quite well.

R. PAINE: I knew her much better, yes, of course.

TALBOT: And so, what was she like? What were your memories of her?

R. PAINE: Well, you probably know that she worked with the International Peace Academy, which now has a different name.

TALBOT: And what is that? I don't know that.

R. PAINE: All right, it's, it was sort of an outgrowth of people who had been in the numbers or the names are going to escape me. Anyway, she was the basic fundraiser for a program to gather new projects engine, whatever you call it, meeting with junior diplomats in situations where they could talk freely because they weren't representing their country at that point. And they did role plays, taking "I will be Serbia, you will be someone else" kind of thing. Yeah, some very interesting things. And I'd have to look up International Peace Academy, It'll tell you what the new name is, because it's changed its name.

TALBOT: Now, is that the group she started with, Arthur? Or was she involved with that when she was younger, before she married Arthur?

R. PAINE: She was involved… she didn't start it with Arthur. I don't know, just when she started.

TALBOT: Because there was a peace fellowship organization that she and Arthur started in Berkeley…

R. PAINE: Oh, really?

TALBOT: In Berkeley, later on.

R. PAINE: Oh, really? Okay.

TALBOT: Yeah, that’s what, I heard about that.

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: Yeah. So, she was involved in peace work for years.

R. PAINE: Yes. Mm-hm, mm-hm.

TALBOT: And, was Michael, you know, this is the kind of thing I want you to clarify for me; So, what I've read about Michael is that he grew up in this great prominent family. His father was, you know, a controversial guy, very active. That Lyman was actually on the FBI watch list at one point because it was political activities like a lot of people who are liberal and so Michael had, yeah go ahead…

R. PAINE: I went once to the archives in Washington…

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: … to look up what they had to say about my family members…

TALBOT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: … and so I came in I said, Oh, in my FBI files? That's right. I just wanted to look and see what they have on the end of the assassination. And here was this report from the FBI going to their little meeting of this splinter Trotskyite group.

TALBOT: Right, right.

R. PAINE: It wasn't even mainstream in LA, and he's reporting that they were planning a picnic next Sunday, and they checked on what they had in the kitty for a treasury and they had about three dollars or so, they wouldn't have to chip in. And there were maybe six people present. And it sounded just, how scary could you be? [All laugh]

TALBOT: I know.

K. CROFT: Definitely, subversive activity.

R. PAINE: Yeah, right.

TALBOT: I should have told Steve, I once looked at our files at Santa Cruz, this little radical group, you know, we got them through the Freedom of Information [Act]. And it was like the same thing, it was so boring. I was just reading again. I go, "Oh my God, it was so boring."

K. CROFT: They gave you the records without a Freedom of Information Act request? They just gave them to you?

R. PAINE: No, I was just reading. It was in the archives and I was just reading what they brought me a box and said, "Here you go."

TALBOT: That's great.

R. PAINE: And Lyman's letter to his 20th anniversary reunion at Harvard telling them, "I'm working for peace and for improving the world, what are you guys doing?

[All laugh]

TALBOT: Right. So, what was Michael's relationship to his family then? So, what I read was that he had a difficult time in some ways because he felt a little overshadowed, it seemed…

R. PAINE: Uh-huh.

TALBOT: … by these prominent names…

R. PAINE: Uh-huh.

TALBOT: … in his family; that he himself took a while to sort of get on track, that he would like a lot of young people…

R. PAINE: Still working on.

TALBOT: Still working on it: [Laughs]

R. PAINE: The ex -wife speaks.

[All laugh]

TALBOT: So, is that generally true then?

R. PAINE: He felt burdened by the illustrious legacies…

TALBOT: The legacies of his ancestors?

R. PAINE: … of, of his ancestors. Yes.

TALBOT: Was he close to his father and mother?

R. PAINE: Well, his parents were divorced, I think he was four.

TALBOT: Oh, okay.

R. PAINE: And so, she went out to Nevada and got a divorce there. And his early memories are either in Nevada or in Santa Barbara, and he loved California. And at Naushon Island, where they went in the summer time. And that was where he, he had that's off Maine?

R. PAINE: No, it's Massachusetts, it's off of Woods Hole.

TALBOT: Oh, right.

R. PAINE: It's a string of islands…

TALBOT: Like Martha’s Vineyard and all that.

Martha's Vineyard launch goes that way and the Naushon Island launch goes that way, they're very close. Anyway, that's where he had some, some male presence in his life. He'd love to hang out at the boat house where they are always doing something and working with tools and stuff. That's what he really liked, and still does. Yeah.

TALBOT: Right. And did he hit it off with Arthur? Because Arthur was an inventor and...

R. PAINE: I think so.

TALBOT: He’d be good with his hands, also.

R. PAINE: Well, and he worked for Arthur for a short time.

TALBOT: And that was the Bell Helicopter connection because of Arthur.

R. PAINE: Yes…

TALBOT: Or was it you?

R. PAINE: Step by step. Arthur was already finished working with Bell Helicopter, but he was working on vertical takeoff and landing kind of thing.

TALBOT: Uh-huh. Right.

R. PAINE: And so, he hired Michael to do some of that work.

TALBOT: Oh, I see.

R. PAINE: And when I met Michael, that's what he was doing. He was working for Arthur.

TALBOT: And he had some engineering skills, I would think.

R. PAINE: Oh, yes, he did.

TALBOT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: Didn't graduate from school.

TALBOT: Uh -huh.

R. PAINE: And I suspect slight learning disabilities.

TALBOT: Oh, really? That's interesting.

R. PAINE: Yeah. Yeah. But that's, you know, I turned into a school psychologist after all.

TALBOT: That's right, yeah.

R. PAINE: I couldn't work out what the history was.

TALBOT: And you said your dad was involved with Bell also?

R. PAINE: No, Bell Laboratories.

TALBOT: Bell Laboratories.

R. PAINE: Different guys all together.

TALBOT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: This was right out of Stanford.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: He got a really good job. He was a metallurgical chemist, I think, or engineer or whatever. So, it was a very scientific thing, and he got a great job in 1927 or whenever it was, and went to Bell Laboratories in New Jersey.

TALBOT: Yeah, yeah.

R. PAINE: But then he quit that in order to save the world with cooperatives. We starved through the Depression.

TALBOT: Uh-huh.

R. PAINE: I don't remember ever being hungry, but they had to manage things pretty carefully.

TALBOT: So, does Tom in his book, does he pretty much get your relationship with Michael accurately, do you think?

R. PAINE: What did he say?

[All laugh]

TALBOT: I’ll look him up.

TALBOT: Well, that you were soulmates, but there was never a passion there; that he was a little, little mysterious; that he a little kind of flaky, he would seem to like, you know, that you were the one who seemed to be the most engaged making things happen; that he was kind of in-and-out and a little hard to read almost, you know?

R. PAINE: Mm -hmm. Guess so. He lives near here; he's out where my son is and, outside of Great…

TALBOT: So, your whole family's here now in California.

R. PAINE: Well, my daughter's in Massachusetts.

TALBOT: Oh, she was, she switched. How is Michael's health these days?

R. PAINE: Well, he's like, doing fine, I guess and, uh…

TALBOT: He's older.

R. PAINE: He’s older…

[CROSSTALK]

TALBOT: Amazing.

R. PAINE: And, uh, I see him there occasionally and, and he still drives, which we're doubtful about, but anyway, he probably still will.

**Un-identified male speaker**: People do.

TALBOT: Yeah, I know. I just went through this with my father -in -law, yeah.

**Un-identified male speaker**: Michael totaled a car three weeks ago…

TALBOT: Oh, did he?

**Un-identified male speaker**: and the next day went out and bought another one.

TALBOT: Oh, boy. That sounds like your dad. [Speaking to Karen Croft]

R. PAINE: Really? Oh, boy.

TALBOT: Her dad’s at the VA.

K. CROFT: He was a … veteran.

**Un-identified male speaker**: Oh, yeah.

K. CROFT: We had to take his keys away.

R. PAINE: And you did, okay.

TALBOT: Yeah. It's upsetting, but you have to do it.

K. CROFT: Does Michael live on his own?

R. PAINE: Well, he’s, uh, my son and Michael have created this environment of, it's basically a latter-day hippie ranch.

TALBOT: Oh really? That's interesting. Where is it?

R. PAINE: It's well understood in this county.

TALBOT: Oh yeah. Been there, done it.

K. CROFT: That’s right!

R. PAINE: So, it's about 30 people, on 150 acres or so, and…

K. CROFT: Wow!

R. PAINE: And, uh…

TALBOT: Which one is it? Maybe I know it, actually.

R. PAINE: Green Valley Village.

TALBOT: Oh.

R. PAINE: Look it up.

TALBOT: Yeah.

K. CROFT : How far from here?

R. PAINE: You go up to [Indistinct] Road…

[CROSSTALK]

TALBOT: Uh-huh, right. The Russian River area?

R. PAINE: Yeah, almost. They have a tributary to the Russian River.

TALBOT: Oh, cool. A little stream. And is your son happy there?

R. PAINE: Good question.

TALBOT: Uh-huh. Is he doing it more for his dad or is he...

R. PAINE: No, no, he wanted to do it and encouraged his dad, and his dad really had to be the one talking to the bank because he could do the mortgage.

TALBOT: Oh, I see. Right.

R. PAINE: I think it's like being married to lots of people.

TALBOT: Yeah. Yeah. I know.

R. PAINE: It’s hard. It’s hard.

K. CROFT: Hard enough with one.

R. PAINE: That's right! So, I think he's glad, you know, that it's a good thing. And he has a new love, which helps.

TALBOT: How old is Christopher, your son?

R. PAINE: Yeah, he's 51.

TALBOT: 51. Uh-huh.

R. PAINE: Born in '61, so he'll be, oh, maybe he's 52.

TALBOT: 52, yeah, almost.

R. PAINE: Yeah, yeah, in February he'll be 52.

TALBOT: Right. Yeah, so anyway, and he looks after his dad and others there…

TALBOT: Right, right.

R. PAINE: … as well.

TALBOT: So, it's multi -generational, though. That sounds interesting,

R. PAINE: Oh, yeah.

TALBOT: Well, that sounds interesting, yeah.

[CROSSTALK]

R. PAINE: There are others, one of the people who works on the farm, we get the CSA box from them.

TALBOT: Oh, really? Yeah.

R. PAINE: The community -supported agriculture weekly box.

TALBOT: So, you get vegetables and all that?

R. PAINE: Vegetables and stuff.

TALBOT: That's great. That's great.

K. CROFT: Is Michael still good at engineering type, does he still do that?

R. PAINE: Oh, very. He's still got excellent design ideas and concepts and creative. His trouble is delivering them.

K. CROFT: Uh-huh.

R. PAINE: Getting it done and doing it. But, uh...

K. CROFT: Does he draw it? The designs?

R. PAINE: No. No.

K. CROFT: Or does he just have it on his head?

R. PAINE: I really don't know.

**Un-identified male speaker**: He made an exhaust system or something out at the farm.

TALBOT: Oh, really?

R. PAINE: Yeah. It really looked like a real Rube Goldberg, though.

TALBOT: [Laughing] Yeah. But it worked, I guess, huh?

R. PAINE: Well, it was in the basement of this large old house, farmhouse, and it heated the whole house because it was heating this pipe from some… Anyway.

TALBOT: Yeah. Well, maybe we should go visit him. I lived in a commune in Santa Cruz for a while.

R. PAINE: Oh, did you?

TALBOT: Yeah, and it is it's a, it's a commitment.

R. PAINE: [Laughs] Yeah.

TALBOT: I mean, you know, it is like being married to, you know, in my case 20-25 or 30 people.

R. PAINE: Yeah, yeah. I think it's very difficult.

TALBOT: So, I wanted to jump forward if I could to the, you know, to the main event, in a way, and ask you about your first meeting with Lee Harvey Oswald.

R. PAINE: Mm-hm.

TALBOT: And it was at the home of Everett Glover, who was a friend of yours and Michael’s, I guess.

R. PAINE: Oh, yes. Mm-hm.

TALBOT: And who was Everett?

R. PAINE: Well, he was somebody I'd met because we were both singing in a..

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

R. PAINE: Well, not a chorus, a madrigal group.

TALBOT: Everett was part of this group?

R. PAINE: Yeah. And he knew that I had been studying Russian and thought I'd be interested. He was roommates, it seems to me, with... I knew his name and I don't remember, and I believe that they were both in that house. –

TALBOT: Oh, okay.

R. PAINE: It wasn't just Everett's house, but I'm not sure.

TALBOT: So, again, you seem to be anomalies, obviously, in Dallas. You are the sort of Quaker, you know, pre -Hippies, I guess, in a way, in some ways, or the seekers of the progressives and whatever you would call yourself at that time. What would you call yourself back in those days? A Stevenson liberal or…

R. PAINE: A Democrat.

TALBOT: Yeah, Democrat, okay.

R. PAINE: Rare enough.

TALBOT: Which was rare enough in Texas. And yet because of your interest in Russian, you were also part of this Russian emigree community, which I'm sure was…

R. PAINE: Well, I wasn’t really.

TALBOT: … very conservative.

R. PAINE: Yes, it was. But, I really wasn't aware of them.

TALBOT: Oh, okay.

R. PAINE: I met Lee and Marina that one evening in February.

TALBOT: Right. Was Marina at that? I forgot.

R. PAINE: Oh, yeah. I spent most of the evening with her.

TALBOT: Okay. I thought she was sick at one party and not there.

R. PAINE: She was mostly in the bedroom. Michael was sick.

TALBOT: Oh, Michael was sick, right.

R. PAINE: But, you know, she was taking care of their little baby girl and didn't want to, didn't really want to hang out with the crowd, I guess. But anyway, I talked with her in the bedroom in Russian.

TALBOT: In Russian. Because she was probably very self -conscious about her English at that point. She couldn't speak really.

R. PAINE: She really couldn't speak. She couldn't even understand it very well.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: And you know how you tune out after a while if you're trying to work in a foreign language. But she was very patient for somebody who was struggling to learn the language and that was nice for me.

TALBOT: And so, your Russian was not advanced at that point?

R. PAINE: Not very advanced. I had had a summer at Middlebury where you had to just speak Russian, which meant I was pretty quiet most of the summer. But I studied at Penn on the summer course there, so I guess I was like late third-third year Russian level, something like that.

TALBOT: And you took this, you took kind of a disliking at some point to Lee, but what was your first impression of him?

R. PAINE: Oh, well my first impression was that he was pleased with the amount of attention he was able to gather as he talked about what he did, going to the Soviet Union, and what he thought about their mistakes. And then he came back and he could talk about our mistakes. And I, I was peripheral. I really didn't go in and listen.

TALBOT: Right, right. But he was holding forth, kind of.

R. PAINE: Yeah, he was, kind of. And I think he liked that.

TALBOT: Yeah, he liked to be the center of attention.

R. PAINE: This is the first and only time I met de Mohrenschildt, too.

TALBOT: Well, that's why I was going to ask you. So, de Mohrenschildt, in his memoir, said that he introduced the two of you. Is that correct?

R. PAINE: Yes, he brought me in.

TALBOT: And had you known de Mohrenschildt before, or?

R. PAINE: No.

TALBOT: That was the first time you met him as well.

R. PAINE: Only.

TALBOT: Only time. Because he also said that you later had dinner back in 1966 at a dinner party, that's not correct? That he, for, I guess it would have been in Dallas. You were gone by then, right, from Dallas?

R. PAINE: No, I was still in Irving, but, dinner party? I had Lee and Marina to my house for dinner.

TALBOT: No, but this would have been after the assassination, years later in '66, de Mohrenschildt said that he invited you to dinner, I guess he and his wife, but you have no memory of it?

R. PAINE: Didn't impress me, apparently.

TALBOT: Yeah, okay. So that, your only memory of de Mohrenschildt is from that,

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: … that one dinner party. What was he like?

R. PAINE: Well, it's, it's colorful.

TALBOT: Yeah, that's what it seems like.

R. PAINE: And really stood-stood out a lot more than Lee.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: And they had been on a hike in Mexico.

TALBOT: Yes!

R. PAINE: And we were talking about that.

TALBOT: This trek that he and his wife went on.

R. PAINE: Yeah. Yeah.

TALBOT: And in middle, late middle age, I guess.

R. PAINE: Well, they weren't young.

TALBOT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: Uh-huh, and so, I thought it was very interesting, but beyond that I really didn't get to talk that much...

TALBOT: And he was an elegant man, right? I mean, he was well dressed, and he seemed like a man of the world…

R. PAINE: Yes.

TALBOT: And an accent. He still spoke in an accent.

R. PAINE: Whether he said something or I just surmised that he came from a somewhat aristocratic background.

TALBOT: His father had been a Tsarist official and head the Tsarist Russian oil company, Nobel Oil. So, he was very connected. And when he first came to this country, he knew the Bouviers, he knew Jackie as a little girl, he was very plugged into that whole upper-class world.

R. PAINE: Oh.

TALBOT: And very well-traveled.

R. PAINE: Yeah. And then worked for an oil company.

TALBOT: And worked for oil and was in Latin America and Haiti and all over.

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: So, the way some people interpret this is that de Mohrenschildt, of course, he did have connections to intelligence; His father had done business with Dulles because Dulles (Allen) was in Sullivan and Cromwell, the major Wall Street law firm, and they represented his father at one point.

R. PAINE: Really?

TALBOT: This is like the 1920s…

R. PAINE: Well.

TALBOT: … or something, yeah.

R. PAINE: And where was his father? Did he leave? He must have left.

TALBOT: His father fled Russia after the Revolution, and they ended up in France. I mean, George is a complicated guy. He later went to work for the Vichy government, and then was captured by the British. He then turned… He came over to our side then, and so he always was playing kind of a murky role of these things. Look, when you do international oil, you have to have connections everywhere, right? So, there's a thin line between the world of intelligence and international oil, you know. And so, he -he straddled that line. So, one interpretation of this whole thing, Ruth, of course, is that de Mohrenschildt was babysitting Oswald in some way. I mean, here you have, it's a strange thing I mean here you have this young Marine who defects to the Soviet Union; It would be like someone going off today I think at the height of the Cold War then to work with the Taliban coming back to this country un-molested, apparently, by the authorities, but the authorities certainly had an interest in him.

R. PAINE: Mm-hm.

TALBOT: And de Mohrenschildt, many people think, was his babysitter and that he was informing on Oswald to someone in government.

**Un-identified male speaker**: I really doubt it.

TALBOT: You don’t think that.

**Un-identified male speaker**: I don’t think that.

TALBOT: Okay. [To Ruth Paine] So, what's your interpretation of that relationship between Oswald and de Mohrenschildt?

R. PAINE: Well, I think Oswald admired de Mohrenschildt, and uh…

TALBOT: Looked up to him?

R. PAINE: Looked up to him, I think. sure. And I don't know how many times they actually met, but I don't think it was a lot of times.

TALBOT: Right. Well, no, de Mohrenschildt writes in his... So, he writes this memoir, you know, that now became an appendix in the House Select Committee on Assassinations.

R. PAINE: Oh, really?

TALBOT: And you can find it online, and it's called "I'm a Patsy," and it's de Mohrenschildt's memoir about his relationship with, uh... His wife gave it to the committee after he died. And what he says is that he presents this very interesting picture of Oswald as a young kind of pre -new leftist, pre -hippie guy in a way, loved adventure, wanted to be in the middle of things, but was, you know, genuinely idealistic according to de Mohrenschildt. And de Mohrenschildt, who lost his own son who was roughly Lee's age…

R. PAINE: Oh.

TALBOT: … felt a real father -son connection…

R. PAINE: I didn’t know that.

TALBOT: … is what he writes about it, and took him under his wing, but clearly it seems that there was a quid pro quo that he was doing a favor for government in order to get these contracts in Haiti. That's what de Mohrenschildt really was eager to do.

R. PAINE: And that's in his book?

TALBOT: There's an inference that he was doing this for people he knew, for friends, but then in the course of getting to know Lee, became genuinely fond of him and spent a fair amount of time with him. I mean they're over there when they're arguing, they're separating them. I mean, they were in and out of Lee and Marina's life a lot, helping him move from one place to the next and all this. But then, there's a sense of guilt that he later feels that he'd been used in some way because he was babysitting Oswald for whoever and that he was made to, in his testimony before the Warren Commission, he regrets it, thinking that he made Lee into being more of a bad guy than he really felt he was. And so, he's wrestling with his own guilt a lot in this memoir. It's a fascinating reading. I mean, you know...

R. PAINE: Well, what's his view about when you say the title or what they... ?

TALBOT: He seems to Imply that Lee was not involved in the assassination, which I don't believe. I think Lee was involved in some way…

R. PAINE: Uh-huh.

TALBOT: … but perhaps in a way that he wasn't even clear about. That's my own feeling after all my reading and studying and interviewing.

R. PAINE: Okay, and he was being treated for depression, I guess, and committed suicide.

TALBOT: Lee did? Oh, de Mohrenschildt.

R. PAINE: De Mohrenschildt.

TALBOT: Oh, at the time, yes, when they found him in Florida.

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: Yes, he had been subpoenaed by the House Committee on Assassinations. Their star investigator, Gaeton Fonzi, had just been there that morning, and given his card to his daughter, Alexandra, and right then he was found, you know, shot by himself, as he sat in a corner later that day. So, but he wrote, he writes a very interesting note to George Bush before that…

R. PAINE: George…

TALBOT: … where he said… the senior George Bush, he was head of the CIA at the time, and what he says in this note, which is also you can find in the government records online that have been declassified, he says, "George, I made a mistake." They're old family friends too, 'cause de Mohrenschildt knows everybody. It turns out his nephew had been college, or roommates at Andover, I think, with George Bush. Anyway, there's some kind of funny connection there. He writes to George saying, "George, congratulations on your new job as head of the CIA. I did something that was very intemperate. I wrote this memoir about Oswald. I shouldn't have done that. But my daughter…” – I think a relative, a daughter had just died, he was very distraught, he said, “and please now, I'm being harassed. I feel I'm being harassed. Can you make sure that that harassment stops?”

R. PAINE: Hm.

TALBOT: So, he's alleging somehow government surveillance of him or something.

R. PAINE: Mm-hm.

TALBOT: And you can see then George, what George does: he talks to his staff and there's memos back and forth between his staff and saying, "I do know this guy, de Mohrenschildt." And his staff looks into it and they say, "No, we're not, you know, on his case." And they said, "Maybe it's media." And so, he writes a note back to George [de M.] saying, "George, I looked into it. The government's not involved in your case at this point. It probably is the media and have a good life." And then, you know, he kills himself or whatever happened, shortly after. But this is a long -winded thing. My interest is who you think de Mohrenchildt was and what that relationship with Lee was all about.

R. PAINE: - I don't have that information.

TALBOT: No, no, no. Just, do you have a sense of it at all, what the connection would have been, and just that Lee looked up to him?

R. PAINE: Well, we saw the two of them together at that time, and either one of them was talking to the other. Um, I know nothing directly.

TALBOT: Okay, nothing more than that. And, de Mohrenschildt never came up in, you know, your life in any other time other than that. I'm throwing this all out, Ruth, because there's other reports that your father and he were part of the same organization, the International Cooperative Organization at one point. Is this absurd or?

R. PAINE: What year are we talking about?

TALBOT: I don't know the year. And again, this would have been, look, he was an international businessman. There's lots of organizations you join at different points.

R. PAINE: I don’t see my father as an international business man.

TALBOT: Okay.

R. PAINE: He wrote the fine print for your insurance policy.

TALBOT: Right, right. Nothing more than that.

R. PAINE: Looking with the mathematics at the actuarial tables, He wrote a textbook for people going into insurance and taught a course.

TALBOT: Right. Okay, so you don't know of any connection between your dad and de Mohrenschildt.

R. PAINE: No.

TALBOT: So, you clearly think it was complete happenstance that de Mohrenschildt introduced the two of you. You know what the other, you know, the conspiracy researchers over the years have said, which is that there was some kind of handoff there. Not that you were witting in any way, but de Mohrenschildt wanted to be sure, as he was going to Haiti, he was about to leave Dallas, that someone was keeping an eye on him, and that you were known in this world, you and Michael, because of all the connections that people have talked about, and so you were somehow an unwitting tool in some way of some kind of operation, intelligence operation. Does that...

R. PAINE: You believe these guys, do ya?

TALBOT: Pardon me? No, I'm asking for the record. I'm asking for the record. That's... I wanted from the horse's mouth.

R. PAINE: Yeah, that's nonsense. Okay.

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: Okay. So, in your mind, it was complete coincidence that George de Mohrenschildt that evening happened to introduce you to Oswald, there was nothing that you suspected? You’ve had a lot of years now to think about this, Ruth.

R. PAINE: Well, at the… I guess I found out later that George de Mohrenschildt had brought the Oswalds, or maybe I knew, and saw very little of either of them that night.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: But, obviously they came together.

TALBOT: Right. And it was, I mean, from reading his memoir, he was fond of them and he was concerned about them. I think just -just in human terms…

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: Whether or not he was playing some other role, I think he genuinely was interested in them. And I think he worried about them, you know, because they were at each other's throats all the time. He worried about their marriage. He worried about the kids. Is there a sense that he saw in you a sympatico person, a good -hearted person who would, as he left Dallas ‘cause he was about to move to Haiti…

R. PAINE: He didn't know me at all.

TALBOT: He didn't know you. Okay. So, it was just kind of the blue, I mean, there was no follow -up conversation about him later, how's Lee doing?

R. PAINE: No, absolutely no conversation.

TALBOT: He never phoned you…

R. PAINE: Never.

TALBOT: … or wrote you?

R. PAINE: No, the connections that were made by me really, I got an address…

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: They didn't have a telephone, I got an address and wrote to Marina and arranged to come down and visit one day.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: And another day arranged to have Marina and Lee and their baby come up and have dinner with Michael and me and Michael would pick them up.

TALBOT: And you probably know that Michael was reported having seen the picture.

TALBOT: Yeah, which he didn't tell you.

R. PAINE: He didn't tell me. He didn't consider it important.

TALBOT: The famous photo of Lee with the rifle.

**Un-identified male speaker**: He made no connection at all.

R. PAINE: Yeah, he didn't even... Yeah.

TALBOT: Is that credible to you that he would...

R. PAINE: No, but made a connection later, but at the time, he thought this is just a kid bragging kind of thing.

TALBOT: He didn't make anything of it. But why wouldn't he have told a committee about it later when he had the opportunity?

R. PAINE: You might want to ask him.

TALBOT: I’m sure that…

R. PAINE: It seems to me…

TALBOT: Did you ever ask him later?

R. PAINE: No. My take on it is that, and maybe I have asked him, that he just didn't consider it credible or important.

TALBOT: Right. Okay.

R. PAINE: But…

K. CROFT: He must have thought he could cover...

TALBOT: No, no, no. Well…

R. PAINE: That's the picture.

TALBOT: That's the famous picture. He saw it before Lee showed it to him, apparently.

R. PAINE: When Michael went to pick them up to bring them to dinner at our house, he was bragging. And this was in like April or so. He was working at Jaggars-Chiles, or whatever that company was where he could do photography things and he had made an enlargement and had this and…

K. CROFT: Lee had?

R. PAINE: Lee had. Yeah.

TALBOT: Ya know, Michael seems again to me as an innocent…

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: You know, I don't think Michael is involved in anything…

R. PAINE: [Laughs]

TALBOT: and I'm sure if you get to know him…

[All laugh]

TALBOT: I'm not inferring anything here, okay, by this question. But often innocents are sometimes used, okay? And he was a do -gooder. He was a guy who was involved in politics, I guess, in a way. Is there a way that he could have been manipulated himself? And here's one, you know, specific. Apparently, in his FBI file, there's a story about Michael eating regularly at a cafeteria near SMU, Luby's, it was called.

R. PAINE: Luby's, okay.

TALBOT: You know that? Okay, and at one point he would get into discussions with the students, the college kids, and he got very exercised about Castro at one point. I don't know if he's a pro -Castro or anti -Castro, you would probably know. And then he started referring to the fact, I know this Soviet defector, you know, and not bragging about it but being very vocal about it. That got reported to the FBI by some probably conservative kids, college kids, saying, "Hey, there's this radical down here." And the FBI actually went to talk to him about it. Do you have that… Did he ever mention that to you?

R. PAINE: No.

TALBOT: Okay. But I mean, if I were married to someone and he was doing, engaging in that kind of, you know, political theatrics in a way, I guess is what you call it.

R. PAINE: Would Michael do political theatrics?

TALBOT: (laughing) Do you think that's the—

R. PAINE: He's a very shy guy.

TALBOT: So, it maybe was a low -key conversation.

R. PAINE: Maybe it never happened.

TALBOT: I mean, we know about the FBI too. Or maybe the FBI made it up.

R. PAINE: Yeah, I read some of the FBI files of people they visited.

TALBOT: Very distorted.

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: (laughing) That's the FBI.

R. PAINE: Yeah.

TALBOT: All right, so it feels phony to you that day.

R. PAINE: It is phony.

TALBOT: But that it was maybe exaggerated or whatever.

R. PAINE: Well, okay, you have to understand that there was a period when Michael and I were separated.

TALBOT: Sure.

R. PAINE: So, if he was having lunch at Luby's, you know, he wouldn't be telling me about it.

TALBOT: Does Luby, is that a familiar name, Luby’s?

R. PAINE: Yeah, it's a chain.

TALBOT: Oh, okay.

R. PAINE: They’re a chain in the Dallas area.

TALBOT: In Dallas, Okay.

R. PAINE: Uh…

TALBOT: So, it wouldn't totally shock you because you weren't seeing him that much.

R. PAINE: I wasn't seeing him that much, but it would totally shock me.

TALBOT: Because it's against his character.

R. PAINE: Mm-hm.

TALBOT: Gotcha. Okay. Okay. Um… Again, I'm going through what's…

R. PAINE: You’ve got an awful lot of stuff.

TALBOT: I've done my visa, that's my job. Very few people think that. You've done a lot too.

R. PAINE: I tend to avoid the conspiracy theories and the theorists. So that limits my reading. (laughing) I checked on Amazon that somebody had done a list of books that he recommended for people who were studying the Kennedy assassination. So, I looked at the list.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: There wasn’t one on it…

TALBOT: That you thought was valid.

R. PAINE: Yeah, well… that included things that I would recommend. Let's put it that way.

K. CROFT: What's the book that you... how did you get your, your…

R. PAINE: Well, I liked Marina and Lee. I thought Case Closed, was well researched…

K. CROFT: Uh-huh.

R. PAINE: … and apropos. I think the... the Warren Report.

K. CROFT: You read the Warren Report.

R. PAINE: Well, dipped in.

K. CROFT: Yeah. I was going to say. And the Bugliosi is pretty heavy.

R. PAINE: Yes. But, it's good.

K. CROFT: Uh-huh.

TALBOT: Yeah. So, these are the books right here, right?

R. PAINE: Yeah. Those are the ones that I... There are a couple of them.

TALBOT: The Norman Mailer book and Oswald, Case Closed by Posner, Bugliosi, Manchester. Max Holland.

K. CROFT: So, were you predisposed not to believe the conspiracy because of your, what you knew about Lee?

R. PAINE: Well, you know, the things that I saw personally, all pointed to Lee.

K. CROFT: Okay.

R. PAINE: And the things that I knew of his character, and what I've seen of him, he came out to the house most weekends. But he came out on a Thursday, and it was the only time he didn't ask to come out…

TALBOT: Mm-hm. Right before the assassination.

R. PAINE: … and the only time he came out in the middle of the week.

TALBOT: So, November 21st, yeah.

R. PAINE: Right. And, he left in the morning before I was up, or before Marina was up, to get his ride…

**Un-identified male speaker**: Carrying his curtain rods.

TALBOT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: Yeah, he'd done a cover story for what he would be bringing back. He was really a strange person.

TALBOT: Was he? Is that your main recollection that he was just odd?

R. PAINE: I felt, this is before I had any study as a school psychologist, I felt he was threatened by people who disagreed with him. And I was interested in being somebody he would trust to have his wife. So, I was not going to confront him on anything.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: But in conversations that I heard that he had with Michael a couple of times, I could see that, you know, if you didn't agree with him, you were an enemy.

TALBOT: Uh-huh. Would he lose his temper with you?

R. PAINE: No. No. No.

TALBOT: He would get cold with you?

R. PAINE: I just felt like he would dismiss you as naive or not informed or whatever if you disagreed.

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: I didn't discuss with him at all. First of all, he didn't want to speak anything but Russian with me…

TALBOT: Oh, really?

R. PAINE: … because he didn't want to have Marina learning nothing as nice as that. He didn't want Marina to be learning English, he wanted to be able to keep up his Russian. So, he wanted to talk, and he did talk with me in Russian, which was alright except when I tried to teach him to drive, I didn't know those words…

TALBOT: Right.

R. PAINE: He could jolly well listen in English.

TALBOT: Right. Was he, I mean, so this guy who in some ways comes off as very liberal and idealistic seems pretty sexist? I mean, I mean, this was early 60s in Texas,

R. PAINE: Oh, yeah.

TALBOT: But was he, did he strike you even by your standards at the time as…

R. PAINE: Oh, absolutely, yeah.

TALBOT: … kind of retrograde? Yeah.

R. PAINE: Keep her down.

TALBOT: Yeah.

R. PAINE: Yeah. Didn't want her to have any power.

[END OF PART ONE]