

Mr. JENNER. Where is 831 Pauline Street with respect to 1012 Bartholomew?
Mrs. BOUDREAU. That would be about 4 blocks, I would say, from where I live.

Mr. JENNER. From 1012 Bartholomew to where you live would be about 4 blocks?

Mrs. BOUDREAU. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. Did you learn that she lived at one time at 1010 Bartholomew?

Mrs. BOUDREAU. No; I didn't. I don't know where she lived after she left there.

Mr. JENNER. Were these rented homes, or could you purchase them?

Mrs. BOUDREAU. The one where I was living?

Mr. JENNER. Yes.

Mrs. BOUDREAU. They were rented, but now I own my home.

Mr. JENNER. But they were being rented at that time?

Mrs. BOUDREAU. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. The former landlady, is she alive?

Mrs. BOUDREAU. No; she's not.

Mrs. JENNER. She's dead?

Mrs. BOUDREAU. Yes; she's dead.

Mr. JENNER. Until this tragic event occurred last fall, had you heard of any of the Oswalds from the time they moved away?

Mrs. BOUDREAU. No; I didn't know until the FBI man told me—until he got to questioning me, that it was the boy who lived in that house. I didn't realize that until he told me. The only other contact I had—I don't know if it's important or not—

Mr. JENNER. Well, you let us decide what is important and what isn't. We want to get all the information we can possibly get as to the facts and circumstances surrounding this matter; so you go right ahead.

Mrs. BOUDREAU. Well, I bought the boy's baby bed, and I gave Mrs. Roach the money to pay for it, and she left the bed in the house, and then they never came back for the money, I don't think.

Mr. JENNER. In advance of moving in, you purchased their baby bed?

Mrs. BOUDREAU. Yes; I bought the bed, which I still have, and I raised all my children with it.

Mr. JENNER. Is that right?

Mrs. BOUDREAU. Yes; I raised my five children with it, and I intend to give it to them even though this happened. Like I say, it wasn't concerning them at all.

Mr. JENNER. Now, these depositions will be written up by the court reporter, and you have the privilege, if you wish, of reading your deposition and signing it, but you can waive that if you want so as to avoid the inconvenience of coming down here again, but if you wish to read it and sign it, that's your privilege. If you decide to waive the reading and signing of the deposition, the court reporter will transcribe it, and it will be sent by the U.S. attorney to Washington to be read by the members of the Commission conducting this investigation.

Mrs. BOUDREAU. I don't need to sign it. All I was saying was the truth, and that's all I can do.

Mr. JENNER. Then I take it you would just as soon waive the necessity of reading and signing the deposition?

Mrs. BOUDREAU. Yes, sir.

Mr. JENNER. Very well; thank you very much for appearing here voluntarily and giving us your statement.

TESTIMONY OF MRS. VIOLA PETERMAN

The testimony of Mrs. Viola Peterman was taken on April 7, 1964, at the Old Civil Courts Building, Royal and Conti Streets, New Orleans, La., by Mr. Albert E. Jenner, Jr., assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mrs. Viola Peterman, 1012 Bartholomew Street, New Orleans, La., after first being duly sworn, testified as follows :

Mr. JENNER. This is Mrs. Mildred Peterman, is that right?

Mrs. PETERMAN. No; that's Milfred.

Mr. JENNER. Milfred?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes; that's M-i-l-f-r-e-d. That's my husband's name.

Mr. JENNER. It's Mrs. Milfred Peterman?

Mrs. PETERMAN. That's correct.

Mr. JENNER. What is your given name, Mrs. Peterman?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Viola.

Mr. JENNER. Is that V-i-o-l-a?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. You received a letter recently from Mr. Rankin; is that correct?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. JENNER. The general counsel of the Warren Commission?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. There was enclosed with the letter three documents, weren't there?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. One was the Senate joint resolution authorizing the creation of the Presidential Commission to investigate the assassination of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy; another was the Executive order of President Johnson appointing that Commission and fixing its powers and its duties, and the other was a copy of the rules and regulations under which we take depositions, such as this one, and have testimony before the Commission; is that right?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. JENNER. Do you understand from those documents, Mrs. Peterman, that the Commission is directed by the President to investigate the facts and circumstances surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. JENNER. In that connection, we of the Commission's legal staff, in addition to presenting evidence before the Commission itself, are deposing various people around the country whose lives came into contact with Lee Harvey Oswald and with other individuals involved, or possibly involved, in the assassination, and we understand that you have some information that might be helpful to us; is that right, Mrs. Peterman?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Well, I can only tell you what I know.

Mr. JENNER. That's all we ask, Mrs. Peterman. First, let me ask, are you a native of this part of the country?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes; New Orleans, La.

Mr. JENNER. You were born here?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. JENNER. And was your husband likewise born here?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. And what is his business or occupation?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Well, he's retired now. He was taking care of the building and things over at LSU, but he retired last year.

Mr. JENNER. He retired last year?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes; since March last year.

Mr. JENNER. Now, I understand you were acquainted with Marguerite Oswald, mother of Lee Oswald; is that right?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes; she lived right next door to me, at 1010 Bartholomew. I live at 1012 Bartholomew, but, gee, that was 23 years ago that they lived there.

Mr. JENNER. She lived at 1010 Bartholomew, right next door to you?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. How long have you lived at 1012 Bartholomew, Mrs. Peterman?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Well, let's see—I moved there in 1941; that's been 23 years ago that I moved there.

Mr. JENNER. Was she already living there when you moved there?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes; she was there, I would say, well, it couldn't have been more than a month before we moved there, because both of the houses was sold

at the same time, but we bought ours after she did, because she was in there first.

Mr. JENNER. Were these relatively new houses?

Mrs. PETERMAN. No; they were old places.

Mr. JENNER. They had been lived in before?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Oh, yes.

Mr. JENNER. When you say you lived next door to each other, was that across the street from each other, or right next door, on the same side of the street?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Right next door. There were three single homes on two lots, you see.

Mr. JENNER. Three single-family dwellings on two lots?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes; on two city lots.

Mr. JENNER. Are they identical houses?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Well, they were when we bought them, but everybody fixed theirs up different, you see.

Mr. JENNER. Describe those houses for me.

Mrs. PETERMAN. What do you mean?

Mr. JENNER. Were they four-room, five-room, or six-room dwellings, and so forth—give me just a general idea of how they were composed, and how large.

Mrs. PETERMAN. Well, they had four rooms and a bath is all; just straight houses.

Mr. JENNER. Four rooms and a bath?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. JENNER. Of what construction; wood?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Wood; yes.

Mr. JENNER. Did you have any children, Mrs. Peterman?

Mrs. PETERMAN. I had four children.

Mr. JENNER. What were their ages around that time?

Mrs. PETERMAN. When she moved there and we moved there; right around that time, you mean?

Mr. JENNER. Yes.

Mrs. PETERMAN. Well, let's see; my oldest girl was 21; my boy was 12; my next girl was 10; and the other one was 8.

Mr. JENNER. Your eldest child was a boy or girl?

Mrs. PETERMAN. A girl.

Mr. JENNER. And her present name?

Mrs. PETERMAN. She's a Herrmann now. She married Felix Herrmann.

Mr. JENNER. How do you spell that—Herrmann?

Mrs. PETERMAN. I think it's H-e-r-r-m-a-n-n.

Mr. JENNER. What's her first name?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Marian is her first name.

Mr. JENNER. Does she still live in New Orleans?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Well, she lives down in Chalmette.

Mr. JENNER. Is that near here?

Mrs. PETERMAN. That's down in St. Bernard; below, in St. Bernard.

Mr. JENNER. Is that a city?

Mrs. PETERMAN. What, Chalmette?

Mr. JENNER. Yes.

Mrs. PETERMAN. I wouldn't call it a city; it's a different part of St. Bernard.

Mr. JENNER. But it's in the vicinity of New Orleans?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. JENNER. She's now what; 45?

Mrs. PETERMAN. No; she's going to be 46, I think; I am pretty sure she will be 46.

Mr. JENNER. Was she living at home at that time?

Mrs. PETERMAN. You mean when Marguerite was living next door to us?

Mr. JENNER. Yes.

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes; she was.

Mr. JENNER. Your next was then 12 years old; is that right?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. Was that a boy or girl?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Boy.

Mr. JENNER. His name?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Emile.

Mr. JENNER. Where does he live now?

Mrs. PETERMAN. He lives, I think it's 13 St. Claude Court.

Mr. JENNER. St. Claude Court?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes; that's right.

Mr. JENNER. Is that in New Orleans?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. JENNER. Then your next was a 10-year-old; right?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. JENNER. What was her name?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Myra; another girl.

Mr. JENNER. Myra?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. Myra is now married; is that right?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. JENNER. What's her married name?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Davis.

Mr. JENNER. What's the name of her husband?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Eddie.

Mr. JENNER. Edward?

Mrs. PETERMAN. No, Eddie; E-d-d-i-e is how they spell it.

Mr. JENNER. Does he work here?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes; at Public Service.

Mr. JENNER. Where do they live?

Mrs. PETERMAN. They live on Cedar Avenue—713 Cedar Avenue, in Metairie.

Mr. JENNER. Metairie?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. Is that part of New Orleans?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes; that's in Jeff Parish, but it's part of New Orleans. It runs into it, I mean.

Mr. JENNER. All right; and then your youngest?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Let me explain about her.

Mr. JENNER. Go right ahead.

Mrs. PETERMAN. She wasn't really my own. She was my husband's sister's child. I didn't adopt her, but I raised her. The father and mother both died, and I raised her from 5 years old. She went by her own name.

Mr. JENNER. What was that?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Her name was—when she was single, Welbrock, but she married, and now it's Kushler.

Mr. JENNER. And that's the one that you said was 8 years old at the time?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes; at that time, yes.

Mr. JENNER. What was her first name?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Cecelia.

Mr. JENNER. And she's married, and her name is now Kushler?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. And they reside where?

Mrs. PETERMAN. 3207 Rabbit Street, Gentilly.

Mr. JENNER. Rabbit Street in Gentilly?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. JENNER. Is that a part of New Orleans?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes; it's the part out by the lake.

Mr. JENNER. Which lake?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Lake Pontchartrain.

Mr. JENNER. All right; now, Emile; how old is he now?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Emile?

Mr. JENNER. Yes.

Mrs. PETERMAN. He will be 34; no, 35. He will be 35 in September. He's 34 right now.

Mr. JENNER. He's 34 now?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. JENNER. And Myra will be how old?

Mrs. PETERMAN. She made 32 in February.

Mr. JENNER. And Cecelia?

Mr. PETERMAN. She will be 30 this month—I mean, in May—May 15.

Mr. JENNER. So at that time, Emile, Myra and Cecelia were attending elementary school, is that right?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. Did they all attend the same school?

Mrs. PETERMAN. They went to Washington, yes.

Mr. JENNER. Washington Elementary School?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. Where is that?

Mrs. PETERMAN. St. Claude and Alvar.

Mr. JENNER. And your son Felix; had he graduated from both elementary school and high school at that time?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Who is that?

Mr. JENNER. Oh, I'm sorry; your daughter Marian. Did she graduate from high school?

Mrs. PETERMAN. No; she went through Washington, and then she went to high school 3 weeks or thereabouts.

Mr. JENNER. You became acquainted with Marguerite Oswald immediately when you moved into those houses, I assume; did you?

Mrs. PETERMAN. No, I wouldn't say that. She was a person that kept to herself, and I did the same. She must have lived there about 3 years, maybe a little less, but I didn't bother her and she didn't bother me. I had my hands full with my children, and she had three little ones herself, so she had her hands full. We would speak, but that was about all.

Mr. JENNER. But you did become acquainted with her?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Oh, yes; I would say that.

Mr. JENNER. You were aware that she had three children?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Three boys, yes. The oldest one was John Pic, because she married his father before she married Oswald. She told me that herself, but not whether she was divorced from him or whether he was dead, I don't know.

Mr. JENNER. All right. Now, one of her boys was John Pic, is that right?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes, P-I-C-K.

Mr. JENNER. Well, I think it's P-I-C, and her second boy was——

Mrs. PETERMAN. Robert.

Mr. JENNER. And the third?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Lee.

Mr. JENNER. Lee was the third one?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. Now, at this particular time John and Robert were about within the age range of your three younger children; that's Emile, Myra and Cecelia; is that right?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Well, they were more around Cecelia's age.

Mr. JENNER. Around Cecelia's age?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. JENNER. Lee, however, was considerably younger, was he not?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes. He must have been not quite 18 months when she moved there, maybe less; that's 23 years ago, you know, and it's hard to recall all of that, to be exact.

Mr. JENNER. That's all right. We want you to just give us the information as you recall it. Now, Robert was about what age at that time?

Mrs. PETERMAN. I really couldn't say, but I imagine about 4 or 5. I really don't know to be exact on that.

Mr. JENNER. And John?

Mrs. PETERMAN. He must have been at least 7 or 8, because he was going to school.

Mr. JENNER. So she had Lee, who was a baby infant, you might say, is that right?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. And another child who was not yet of school age, and that would be Robert?

Mrs. PETERMAN. That's right.

Mr. JENNER. And John, her eldest. Was John attending Washington Elementary at that time?

Mrs. PETERMAN. I am almost sure he did, but I wouldn't swear to that; I am not positive.

Mr. JENNER. So as I get it, during the 3 years that they lived there, Robert eventually entered Washington Elementary School, is that right?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Well, I couldn't say that. In fact, I think she moved before that, because she didn't stay there long. I don't think it was 3 years.

Mr. JENNER. About 2 years maybe?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Maybe along in there; she moved before 3 years, I know.

Mr. JENNER. You say she was inclined to keep to herself most of the time?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes, she was.

Mr. JENNER. You didn't regard that as strange, did you?

Mrs. PETERMAN. No; I am a person like that myself. I don't bother much with the neighbors.

Mr. JENNER. I take it from what you have told me, Mrs. Peterman, that Marguerite Oswald was unmarried at the time, that she had just divorced her husband, or been divorced by him, is that right?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Well, the first one I don't know, but the second one was dead. He died and left her a widow. She told me that herself when she moved there. Now, her first husband, I didn't know whether he was dead, living, or what. She never mentioned him.

Mr. JENNER. When did you say you moved into that house?

Mrs. PETERMAN. In 1941.

Mr. JENNER. You moved there in 1941?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. All right. Well, in any event she was unmarried at that time, is that right?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes.

Mr. JENNER. Do you know how she supported herself?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Well, at first I don't. I know she told me that she sold her house, where they came from, but how much that was or anything I don't know. She might have had insurance from him; I don't know. Then later she opened a little dry goods store.

Mr. JENNER. A dry goods store?

Mrs. PETERMAN. I won't say a dry goods store—more like a grocery store, I guess you would say—just a small place there in the front room. She sold bread, milk, candy, and things like that.

Mr. JENNER. Where was that?

Mrs. PETERMAN. In her front room.

Mr. JENNER. The front room of her house?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes; it was a little grocery store.

Mr. JENNER. Would the local city ordinances permit that?

Mrs. PETERMAN. I don't know about that, but she did operate it for a short time—not too long. Finally she gave that up, but as far as I know that was the only money she had coming in at that time.

Mr. JENNER. Give me your impression of Mrs. Oswald, would you please; what kind of person she was.

Mrs. PETERMAN. Well, like I said—I don't know how to explain it, but she was a person who was not overfriendly, and she wasn't no snob either. I can't say that, but I don't know. She was the kind of a person that—I don't know how to say it. I mean, I had no trouble with her, and she was a good mother to her children.

Mr. JENNER. She was?

Mrs. PETERMAN. That she was, and she would always keep, like I say, to herself. She didn't do much talking, that is, to me; but now whether she did to the other neighbors, I don't know.

Mr. JENNER. You didn't regard her conduct as strange?

Mrs. PETERMAN. No; nothing like that. Like I told you, I am the kind of person who keeps to myself too. I have been right now 23 years in that neighborhood, I—there are some people living around there right now that I couldn't

tell you their name. I am always inside. I never go out, you know, but I have nothing to say against her in any kind of way.

Mr. JENNER. She seemed to be industrious and a good mother, is that right?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes, sir; she was good to her children, and she kept them all, you know, nice and clean, but I don't know anything about her business at all.

Mr. JENNER. What was your reaction to the two older boys, John and Robert?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Well, they were like all kids, I guess, you know, having a good time, but I will say that they were not running like the kids do today.

Mr. JENNER. What do you mean by that?

Mrs. PETERMAN. I mean children back in those days were not like children are today, and I know, because I have grandchildren now, and they are altogether different now. Even Lee, he was a good little child, and he didn't do things like the boys do today. That's why I just can't see how this all came about. I can't understand it. We didn't even know anything about it until the man found me, you know. We all thought maybe it was Lee, but we just, you know, couldn't believe it.

Mr. JENNER. Do you recall the names of any other children in the neighborhood who were about the ages of Robert and John?

Mrs. PETERMAN. No; I don't think so.

Mr. JENNER. Would your daughter Cecelia still have a recollection of those boys, do you think?

Mrs. PETERMAN. I doubt it, because she was only 8 then. She was small. My older ones might remember them.

Mr. JENNER. That would be Myra and Emile?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes; Myra and Emile.

Mr. JENNER. All right. Is there anything else that occurs to you that might be helpful to the Commission that I haven't asked you about, either because I don't know about it or I have neglected to ask you about it, or anything you might want to contribute?

Mrs. PETERMAN. No; if there was anything else, I would be glad to tell you about it. Like I say, he was such a little bitty fellow, and after she moved away we lost track of them.

Mr. JENNER. After they moved away from there, you never heard of them and you never saw them until this tragic event occurred, is that right?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. JENNER. And even then you didn't believe it was them until, as you said, the man found you?

Mrs. PETERMAN. I really didn't. Lee was a good little child, and Marguerite took good care of him.

Mr. JENNER. All right. I very much appreciate your coming down with your husband to talk to us.

Now, these depositions that we are taking will be sent by the U.S. attorney back to Washington, and you have the privilege, if you wish, to read over your deposition and to sign it.

You don't have to do that unless you wish, but I would appreciate knowing what you prefer to do, because if you wish to read your deposition and to sign it, then we will have to have the reporter write it out promptly and have the U.S. attorney call you in and then you may come down and read your deposition and sign it.

Mrs. PETERMAN. Well, as far as I can; I have told the truth about everything, you know, as much as I remember. Like I said, about the ages of the children and all, I am not positive. This was so long ago.

Mr. JENNER. Well, I think you were pretty close.

Mrs. PETERMAN. After 23 years you can't remember like just yesterday, or the day before.

Mr. JENNER. Well, all right then, as far as you are concerned, you would just as soon waive the signing of the deposition, is that right? You don't want to read it over and sign it?

Mrs. PETERMAN. Yes, sir; I waive it.

Mr. JENNER. Very well, and thank you again for coming down, Mrs. Peterman.