

*The Examination of the Handwriting
and Fingerprint Evidence*

submitted by Joseph P. McNalley, David J. Purtell,

Charles C. Scott, and Vincent Scalice

HSCA volume VIII, pp. 223-250

with exhibits following

Kevin Tiernan

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Summary

The experts studied 54 documents which included writing samples that were verifiable as Lee Harvey Oswald's writing, Marina Oswald's writing and Jack Ruby's writing. They also studied examples of handwriting which may or may not have been written by one of these three people. Generally, the task was to determine that the Lee Oswald who applied to the Marine Corps in 1956 (JFK exhibit F-479) was the same Lee Oswald who wrote the "Historical diary" in Moscow in 1959 (JFK exhibit F-491), and signed a hotel register in Mexico City in September of 1963 (JFK exhibit F-499). In other words they set out to determine whether there was an Oswald impersonator signing documents as Lee Harvey Oswald over the seven year period 1956-1963. They also compared examples of Marina Oswald's handwriting to evidence that was alleged to have been written by Marina Oswald (the FPCC card signed by A.J. Hidell). The experts compared a signature on an undated Cuban identification card signed "Jack Ruby" to examples of Jack Ruby's signature. And Vincent Scalice verified that the finger and palm prints which appeared on the three different Lee Harvey Oswald fingerprint cards belonged to the same

person.

Background

Joseph McNalley was formerly a document identification and handwriting expert with the New York City Police. He was a fellow of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS). David J. Purtell was chief document examiner for the Chicago Police Department. He was a fellow of the AAFS, and past president of the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners. Charles C. Scott served on the first board of directors of the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners. His book *Photographic Evidence*, was the standard textbook on document examination. Vincent J. Scalice was president of Forensic Control Systems, Inc., and formerly a detective and crime scene/fingerprint examiner for the New York City Police Department.

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pages 228-232 A list of 63 items (originals and copies) examined by the handwriting panel. Included in this list are the following; Lee Oswald's Marine Corps paperwork, Lee Oswald's passport applications from 1959 and 1963, personal writings of Lee Oswald, correspondence to U.S. Embassy in Moscow from Lee Oswald, immigration papers of Marina Oswald, a copy of the backyard photograph inscribed on the back, "To my friend George from Lee Oswald 5/IV/63" and "Hunter of fascists ha ha ha!!!" and

"copyright G. deM."¹, a page from a hotel register dated 9/27/63 and signed on line 18 "Lee, Harvey Oswald", three inked fingerprint cards of Lee Oswald, and exemplar writing of Marina Oswald and Jack Ruby.

page 233 The panel concluded the following. The signatures and handwriting purported to be written by Lee Oswald were generally consistent, and were written by one person. Marina Oswald wrote the signature "A.J. Hidell" on the 1963 Fair Play for Cuba Committee membership card. All three inked finger and palm prints were identical and were Lee Oswald's.

pages 233-249 Each of the experts explains *in detail* his methods and conclusions concerning each of the documents examined.

page 235 In McNalley's conclusions, he explains two documents where the handwriting does not seem to correspond to the others. The signatures of "Lee H. Oswald" in receipt for his salary at the TSBD do not correspond to the other Oswald signatures. The writing and signature on the "Hunt note" does not correspond to other examples of Lee Oswald's writing. He notes however that they were working with a poor photoreproduction of the Hunt note, which makes analysis difficult and the note itself

¹For a discussion of the writing on the back of the backyard photograph, JFK exhibit F-183, see HSCA Volume II, page 391.

suspicious.

pages 236, 238 McNalley concludes that the person who wrote "A.J. Hidell" on the Fair Play for Cuba Committee membership card was consistent with the exemplar writing of Marina Oswald.

pages 247-249 In addition to the three fingerprint cards from Oswald's induction into the Marine Corps, his arrest in New Orleans, and his arrest in Dallas following the assassination, Scalice examined finger and palm prints taken from the assassin's rifle, and from the sixth floor of the TSBD. He identifies the controversial palm print lifted from the underside of the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle as identical to Lee Oswald's right palm.