

Wednesday, December 12, 2001

The last thing I would ever want to do is harm another person by my careless words or deeds. I have tried to refrain from talking about Judyth Vary Baker and her alleged association with Lee Harvey Oswald for more than a year now – afraid that I might say or do something that would hurt her or her family. I have been uncertain as to her motives and preferred to believe that she was delusional and, although I believed she had actually known and probably worked for a short time with Lee Harvey Oswald, her “affair” with Lee Oswald was all something she dreamed up.

Judyth came to my home more than a year ago, late in the afternoon in November 2000. A charming young woman named Debbie Reynolds accompanied Judyth. Debbie was and is an employee of American Airlines. Debbie had managed to obtain free transportation on American Airlines for Judyth to come from Lafayette, Louisiana, to visit her sister, Mrs. Tony (Lynda) Bauer, in Dallas.

One of the first things Judyth did when entering my home was look at a set of the 26 volumes in shelves adjacent to my front door. Judyth said, “Oh, is that what they look like? I’ve seen pictures of them but I’ve never actually seen them before. I’ve never read anything. I just know everything that happened because I knew Lee.”

She seated herself on the floor close to my feet and started telling all about her wonderful love affair with Lee Harvey Oswald. She told how she met him in April of 1963 in a New Orleans or Metairie, Louisiana, post office, while standing at the General Delivery window. She said she and her soon-to-be husband, Robert Baker, had chosen to write to each other through General Delivery using code names. One of the names used was similar to Rorke and either she or Lee misunderstood and thought the name being used was Alexander Rorke. Judyth said it had been planned that Alexander Rorke would pick up Lee Oswald in a plane in some part of the Yucatan, Mexico. She was so startled that she dropped a rolled-up newspaper that was under her arm and Lee Oswald stooped and retrieved it. When he handed it to her, she thanked him in Russian.

I asked her why she would use the Russian language to a man she didn’t know standing in a line at the post office in Louisiana. She claimed that Dr. Oschner and his colleagues had insisted that she study Russian and become fluent in the language. She never gave a coherent answer about why she was instructed to learn Russian. She did ramble off several portions of sentences that did not make sense. (I studied three years of High School Latin, four years of High School Spanish and, following the assassination, I used every available text book, audio aide and visual aides to intensively study Russian for one year. I was only able to think in English at the end of that period.)

When talking about Alexander Rorke, she said she was to meet Lee and Rorke in Cancun, Mexico, following the assassination. She had a book that she claimed David Ferrie had given to her to use as her pass into Eglin Air Force Base in Florida where she

was to be put aboard a plane and flown to Mexico to meet with Lee. "Eglin Air Force Base" was stamped on the spine of the book.

I questioned Judyth about her first meeting with Oswald and the exact date it occurred. She claimed it was within a day or two of his arrival in New Orleans in April 1963. She also claimed she accompanied him to visit his father's grave but never gave an exact location of the grave. (According to the Warren Commission's investigation, Lee visited his aunt, Mrs. Arthur A. P. Alice Barre, on St. Charles Avenue in New Orleans, to learn where his father was buried. Judyth did not answer me when I asked if she was with him when he visited his aunt.)

At one point, Judyth said, "I can tell you where Lee was on the two occasions when you don't know where he was." I asked her how she knew that there were two periods when I didn't know where he was. She stuttered a bit and finally said that Martin Shakleford had questioned her from my chronologies. However, she never gave any explanation of when those two periods were nor where she knew that Lee was during the two periods.

She said 60 Minutes had intended to film her story but some unnamed persons had stopped 60 Minutes. She seemed to blame David Lifton because she said Lifton's book would not be published if her book were published. She seemed to think Debra Conway had some part in her dismissal from 60 Minutes because Debra would no longer have Lancers if Judyth's book were published.

Judyth said the most ironic thing about the whole thing was that CBS made the decision not to use her in a film on Lee's birthday, October 18th, a month before her visit to me.

She begged me to help her get her book published. I told her I would have to read the book first but finally agreed to write a note to a friend of mine in New York, Frank Weimann of the Literary Group. On November 27th, I wrote a short note to Frank Weimann on a scrap of paper. I have since learned that Judyth has circulated Xerox copies of that note as proof that I endorse her story.

My note read: "Nov. 27, 2000 Dear Frank, I think you should take a look at this woman's story. I believe she is credible and I believe her story will sell. Best regards, Mary Ferrell" I later learned that she placed a small photo of herself in a pose that looked very much like an early photo of Marina on the note before she sent it to Frank. I later asked Frank to make a copy of Judyth's book for me since she refused to let me look at the book. I have never seen any portion of the book and I now have no desire to see it.

She and Howard Platzman immediately started sending notes to Frank Weimann wanting to know when he was going to sell the book, apparently wanting advances. Frank finally sent the whole book back to them and refused to work with them. Frank

apologized to me and I told him I was surprised that he had tolerated them as long as he had. Frank told me that the book would have sold but needed rewriting, which they refused to do.

Until now, I have discussed this matter with only four people: Robert Chapman, David Lifton, Debra Conway and Louis Girdler. They have all kept my disclosures in confidence because I begged them not to do anything that might cause Judyth to harm herself.

It has now reached the point where I believe Howard Platzman and Judyth are using what they think is a form of blackmail to prod me into endorsing Judyth and her entire story. Howard wrote a long email message to me indicating that I must go on camera or write a message saying that I believed Judyth's story or I would be branded a demented old woman. Judyth came to visit me, unannounced, Monday night and she said almost the same words that Howard had used. Then she brought up a name from my past – the name of a woman I had not even thought of in almost 50 years. I asked her where she got that name and she said, "Carol Anne told me." I immediately said to my son, "Judyth is leaving. Will you see her to the door." Jimmy escorted her to the door. I called Carol Anne and told her what had happened. Carol Anne became almost hysterical and said, "Mother, you know I never said that." I explained that I had not believed she had said it. Carol Anne said, "Mother, those people are not only crazy, they are dangerous."

I want to make it clear that I have never believed Judyth's "story." I have believed that she knew Lee Harvey Oswald, either as a co-worker or as an employee she remembered after the assassination. I have NEVER believed the story of the mad, passionate love affair. I can account for almost every minute of Lee's time from the time he joined the Marine Corps until the day of his death. There was absolutely no time for nights of passionate love and Russian poetry reading. I do not believe that they had sex in the back of trucks in Adrian Alba's garage. At the very most, Judyth knew Lee a total of less than five months. She claims that she talked to Lee just two days before the assassination by way of a Mafia wire-service phone line. I do not believe this.

Judyth claims that Lee introduced her to David Ferrie. She claims that Ferrie introduced her to "Sparky" Rubenstein. She claims that Lee told her that Carlos Marcello called Jack Ruby when Lee was a child in Fort Worth and asked Ruby to keep an eye on Lee. She claims that she last saw Ruby in New Orleans in June 1963.

She claims that as soon as she arrived in New Orleans, in April 1963, Dr. Oschner got her an apartment where prostitutes were living and the place was immediately raided and everyone taken to jail except Judyth. She says Lee got her another apartment. They then lived close to each other and would ride the bus from Reily out to the end of the line and ride back so they could sit together.

Her first job, after arriving in New Orleans, was as a waitress in a hamburger restaurant in Metairie near Carlos Marcello's Town and Country Motel. She speaks very familiarly of Carlos Marcello and says that Lee acted as a courier for Carlos and Lee's uncle, Dutz Murret.

Her story of Lee's reading to her from the small gray book, *The Queen of Spades*, did startle me because I had seen either this book or a replica of it in Ruth Paine's living room two or three years following the assassination. Judyth claimed that the library in Lafayette, Louisiana, did not have the 26 volumes of the Warren Commission's work and did not have a copy of *The Queen of Spades*. When I asked her if she had tried the university library where she worked, she said they had nothing. Louis Girdler called the university library and talked to a woman named Sandy who worked there and they had everything on the assassination and also had a copy of Pushkin's play, *The Queen of Spades*.

Judyth tells a fantastic story about the man who wrote *Andersonville* – MacKinlay Kantor. She claims that she would walk with him through a garden, holding a tape recorder and Kantor would dictate into the recorder. She says that Kantor “fell in love” with her. She claims she was still a teenager when this happened.

She claims she wrote to Bertrand Russell about her reluctance to have sex with Lee because she and he were both married at the time. She says that Russell wrote to her that she must not let anything hold her back if they were in love. They must have sex. Joan Mellen was married to Ralph Schoenman for a number of years. Schoenman was the top aide to Bertrand Russell during the last years of Russell's life. Schoenman told Joan that during the period Judyth claims this happened Russell was not even able to read his own mail and he NEVER wrote such a letter.

I could go on and on for pages about her truly incredible stories. I just want to emphasize that I have never told her I believed she and Lee had a romantic relationship. I have assured her that I do believe she knew him. I can't explain her knowledge about the book I saw in Ruth Paine's house between Christmas and New Year's of 1967. I believe the little book was unique and I know that Judyth described it perfectly. With few exceptions, Judyth's accounts of her relationship with Lee could have been concocted from things that have been published. She has repeatedly said that she loves me because I want to clear Lee's name and reputation. I have only said that I do not believe that Lee planned, executed and covered up the assassination alone. I am not at all certain that Lee's name and reputation can be “cleared.”