

Ruth Paine did *not*—repeat, did *not*—get Lee Harvey Oswald his job at the Texas School Book Depository

Greg Doudna

December 31, 2024

www.scrollery.com

Contrary to over sixty years of reporting and belief, Ruth Paine did *not* get Lee Harvey Oswald his job at the Texas School Book Depository.

She made a phone call to Roy Truly, superintendent of the Book Depository, on Mon Oct 14, 1963, on behalf of Lee Oswald in hope that he would be hired there. That happened.

And Roy Truly told her in response Lee was welcome to come in and apply. That happened.

And Lee did go in the next day, Oct 15, was interviewed and hired by Truly. That happened.

But that phone call from Ruth did *not* play a significant role in that hire, and there is a very good chance it did not play *any* role.

Although it sheds no light on the assassination of President Kennedy, it is time for this detail to be corrected simply in the interests of accuracy and history. The argument follows in five parts.

(1) Buell Frazier got Oswald his job in the Book Depository

It was Buell Frazier, not Ruth Paine, who got the job for Oswald at the Texas School Book Depository in October 1963, six weeks before the assassination of President Kennedy.

The story of how Buell Frazier got Oswald that job is in Frazier's 2021 book: Buell Wesley Frazier, *Steering Truth: My Eternal Connection to JFK and Lee Harvey Oswald*, backed up by common sense. Frazier:

“During her testimony, Linnie [Linnie Mae Randle, Buell's sister] stated that she couldn't remember saying anything to me about inquiring about work for anyone, but I can tell you she did mention it to me in passing. Linnie had a way of looking out for people. She really cared about others and hated to see them go through difficult times. **She never directly told me to talk to anyone about a job. I made the decision to ask on my own.**

“**I went to work the next day and spoke to Mr. Shelley about whether they were hiring, and he talked to Mr. Truly.** Later that afternoon, Mr. Shelley informed me that anyone wanting a job **could come in and fill out an application.**

“**I came home and told Linnie** what Mr. Shelley had said. *A few days later*, Linnie told me that the husband of the lady living down the street with Mrs. Paine **had gotten a job at the Texas School Book Depository.**” (Frazier, *Steering Truth* [2021], p. 35)

Upon receiving this information conveyed by Linnie Mae to Ruth and Marina on Monday Nov 14, that it looked like there was an opening for Lee at the TSBD, Ruth made a phone call to Truly that same day to try to help, but that was neither necessary nor decisive in causing the hire. It may even have been entirely irrelevant.

Because: Superintendent Truly is not likely going to do a charity hire of someone unknown just because a housewife in Irving, equally unknown to him, cold-calls him on the phone asking him to do a charity hire.

Truly was polite when Ruth Paine called. He told her the same he had had Shelley tell Buell, yes Lee Oswald was welcome to come in and apply.

Though Ruth meant well with her phone call, it is unrealistic to assume that phone call caused the hire to happen or would have caused it if Truly was not already predisposed to consider it *by his employee Buell Frazier—the well-regarded employee on the inside who inquired on Lee’s behalf. That inquiry from Buell—not the phone call from Ruth—is what got the invitation from Truly for Oswald to come in and apply.* This is supported both from timeline considerations (see below) and realism in how the business world works.

Oswald still had to present satisfactorily at the interview, which he did, and Truly hired him.

The notion that Ruth Paine got Oswald that job at the Texas School Book Depository—no matter how entrenched that has been reported—should be corrected, the notion ecognized for the illusion it has been, or at least put into context. That *wasn’t* the key factor in causing that hire to happen, and there is a good chance it was no factor at all. Ruth Paine’s phone call was unnecessary to the hire which would have happened anyway if Ruth had not called.

(2) The choice of Dealey Plaza as the location on the parade route utilized to plan an assassination attempt on President Kennedy occurred after Oswald was employed there

At some point after Oswald was employed at the School Book Depository, an assassination attempt on the President was operationally planned to occur in Dealey Plaza, to take place during the parade of the upcoming visit of President Kennedy to Dallas. On November 22, 1963, that assassination attempt succeeded in its objective, and a nation reeled in shock and grief.

A rifle formerly possessed by Oswald, a Mannlicher-Carcano, had been infiltrated into the Texas School Book Depository building. This was a rifle Oswald had obtained by mail-order under the alias “Alek Hidell”. *On the morning of Monday, November 11, 1963, Lee and Marina Oswald removed that rifle from where it was in the Ruth Paine garage—its presence there unknown to Ruth Paine—and took that rifle to an Irving gunsmith to be repaired preparatory for a disposition or conveyance of the otherwise unused weapon. It was not returned to the garage. There is no known information of that rifle’s whereabouts or custody for a critical eleven-day period between Nov 11 and Nov 22, 1963, nor is the mechanism or timing secure of how that rifle came to be on the 6th floor of the TSBD on Nov 22, 1963* (<https://www.scrollery.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Irving-Sport-Shop-109-pdf.pdf>).

(3) Non-involvement in the assassination of those who helped Oswald get the job in the TSBD

There is no evidence or cause to suppose any of those involved in helping Lee learn of and get that job—neither Linnie Mae Randle, Buell Wesley Frazier, Ruth Paine, or Roy Truly who made the final decision—were participants in or responsible for the assassination that happened six weeks after Oswald was hired to work in that building. Obviously, it is impossible to know what someone may or may not do six weeks later.

(4) Timeline

Oswald began looking for work upon his arrival to Dallas on Thursday, October 3, 1963, after his return from Mexico City. During the next week Oswald made a number of unsuccessful applications and interviews for jobs. Marina was expecting their second child. Both Ruth and Marina hoped Lee would find employment, and Lee wanted to find employment.

In the Irving neighborhood of Ruth word got around. A house of a neighbor, Mrs. Dorothy Roberts, was where women including Ruth Paine, Marina, and Linnie Mae would drink coffee some mornings. Sometime during the week of Oct 7-11 Linnie Mae learned of Oswald's job search.

“Around the first or second week in October, Linnie went down the street to visit her neighbor Mrs. Dorothy Roberts. This was something she did pretty regularly ... While she was there Linnie met with Mrs. Ruth Paine and a lady named Marina.” (Frazier, *Steering Truth*, 34)

This was the first of two occasions Linnie Mae met Marina. From a statement Linnie Mae signed the night of the assassination, Nov 22, 1963, to the Dallas Police:

“My brother Wesley Frazier lives with me. A boy named Lee Oswald works with Wesley. I have seen this boy a few times. His wife and his children lives with one of my neighbors, Mrs. Michael Paine, 2515 West 5th. His wife's name is Marina. **I have met her twice.**”

(<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph338721/m1/1/>)

The first time was in the week of Oct 7-11. That is when Linnie Mae learned of Marina's husband's need for a job, followed by: Linnie Mae telling Buell, Buell asking at work on Lee's behalf, and Buell back home telling Linnie Mae the favorable response from Shelley and Truly that Lee could come in and apply.

Linnie Mae in her Warren Commission testimony placed her first meeting of Marina in the first week of October:

Mr. BALL. When did you meet her [Marina Oswald]?

Mrs. RANDLE. **The first time** I met her was over at this Mrs. Roberts. I had gone up there to see Mrs. Roberts and her, Mrs. Oswald and Mrs. Paine was over there drinking coffee, that was the first time I met her.

Mr. BALL. When was that?

Mrs. RANDLE. Well, **I believe it was the first week in October.**

Buell Frazier dates that first meeting of his sister with Marina and Ruth "around the first or second week of October" (*Steering Truth*, 14). Returning to Linnie Mae's Warren Commission testimony:

Mr. BALL. Was there some conversation at that time about her husband Lee Oswald?

Mrs. RANDLE. Well, they had—it was just general knowledge in the neighborhood that he didn't have a job and she was expecting a baby ... just being neighborly and everything, we felt sorry for Marina because her baby was due right away as we understood it, and he didn't have any work, so they said ...

(...)

Mr. BALL. And then you also mentioned the Texas Book Depository?

Mrs. RANDLE. Well, I didn't know there was a job opening over there.

That is true, Linnie Mae did not know at that point. Back home, Linnie Mae mentioned the situation of Marina and Marina's husband's predicament to Buell. The next day Buell resolved asked at work. Buell Frazier:

“During her testimony, Linnie stated that she couldn’t remember saying anything to me about inquiring about work for anyone, but *I can tell you she did mention it to me* ... I went to work the next day and spoke to Mr. Shelley about whether they were hiring, and he talked to Mr. Truly. Later that afternoon, Mr. Shelley informed me that anyone wanting a job could come in and fill out an application. (Frazier, *Steering Truth* [2021], p. 35)

Back home, Buell told Linnie Mae it looked like there was a job opportunity for Lee.

On Monday Oct 14, Linnie Mae made a point to walk down the street to Mrs. Roberts’ when Ruth and Marina were there and conveyed to them the news. This was Linnie Mae’s second time seeing Marina at Mrs. Roberts’. Linnie Mae told Ruth and Marina what she had learned from her brother Buell.

Mrs. PAINE. ...while we were having coffee, the four young mothers at Mrs. Robert’s house, and *Mrs. Randle mentioned that her younger brother, Wesley Frazier, thought they needed another person at the Texas School Book Depository* where Wesley worked. Marina then asked me, after we had gone home, asked me if I would call.

Ruth called Truly that same day, Mon Oct 14, getting Truly’s answer repeating what he had told Buell Frazier earlier, yes, Lee could come in and apply.

That evening of Mon Oct 14, when Lee phoned in as he did nightly, Marina and Ruth told him of the job opportunity at the Book Depository.

On Tuesday morning Oct 15 Lee went to the Book Depository and applied, was interviewed by Truly and hired. Lee called Marina and Ruth mid-day and told them the happy news that he had a job.

The news that Lee had been hired must have gotten to Linnie Mae that same day, Tue Oct 15, because that night Linnie Mae told Buell Lee had got the job, a few days after Buell had inquired of Shelley and Truly on Lee’s behalf.

A few days later [*after checking at work on Lee’s behalf*] Linnie told me that the husband of the lady living down the street with Mrs. Paine had gotten a job at the Texas School Book Depository.” (Frazier, *Steering Truth* [2021], p. 35)

The next day, Wednesday Oct 16, was Lee’s first day on the job.

Buell Frazier (who had not yet met Lee face to face) was introduced to Lee at work and assigned to train Lee in how to fill the book orders, etc.

Six weeks later, on Friday Nov 22, President Kennedy was assassinated by shots believed fired from the Texas School Depository from a rifle which was traced to Oswald.

Of course neither Buell, Linnie Mae, Ruth, or Roy Truly had any idea that was coming, or had anything to do with that horrible event.

(5) Superior explanatory power in understanding the hiring of Oswald as an in-house employee referral

There is a whole literature and commonplace awareness of the effectiveness of employee referrals in bringing about new hires in companies.

~ ~ ~

On a Reddit thread the question was asked: “Are employee referrals really the difference maker of a candidate getting their foot in the door?” Two typical comments from employers:

“[Y]ou are *vastly* more likely to get hired if you were referred by someone I already trust than if you come to me cold.”

“Generally, in almost any company, an internal referral will at least get a human to review a resume and most of the time get an initial HR phone call ... I don't think you could find a company that treats internal referrals and cold applications identically.”

(https://www.reddit.com/r/cscareerquestions/comments/wgsxfi/are_employee_referrals_really_the_difference/)

~ ~ ~

From Aptitude Research, a Boston-based leading human resources advisory and consulting firm:

“According to Aptitude Research, 84% of companies believe employee referrals are the most cost-effective way to find talent.”
 (https://www.apituderesearch.com/research_report/solving-the-sourcing-challenge-demystifying-referrals-to-improve-hiring-outcomes/)

~ ~ ~

From Greenhouse, a company in the employee recruiting industry:

“Greenhouse’s data reveals that 30% of eventual hires were referred candidates, even though they constituted just 5% of the applicant pool. This statistic underscores the substantial impact of personal connections on hiring outcomes.” (<https://www.employee referrals.com/the-power-of-personal-connections-employee-referrals-in-modern-hiring/>)

~ ~ ~

My question to Google and Google’s AI answer:

Question: Can a phone call from a stranger get someone else a job?

Answer: The stranger would need to have a strong professional relationship with the hiring manager to make a significant impact with their recommendation.

~ ~ ~

Buell Frazier was the employee known to Shelley and Truly whose inquiry mattered. Roy Truly knew Buell Frazier, who had an exemplary record as a good employee. Roy Truly did not know Ruth Paine when she called him over the phone.

It makes far better sense that Buell Frazier got Lee Oswald that job at the Texas School Book Depository, than that Ruth did.