

According to one of them, so did the chief of Dallas homicide, Captain Will Fritz, who, by his own admission, picked up the weapon and ejected a live round from it. The police, Fritz and the Dallas district attorney, told the press all day November 22 and well into the next day that the rifle found on the sixth floor of the Book Depository was a bolt-action Mauser. It was only late on November 23 that the story abruptly changed, and by some feat of legerdemain, the murder weapon became a 6.5 Italian Mannlicher-Carcano that belonged to Oswald. By that time, of course, the Dallas police had time to carefully search Oswald's home.

PLAYBOY: Are you saying that the Dallas police switched the Mauser for the Mannlicher-Carcano in order to frame Oswald?

LANE: I'm simply suggesting it's a possibility that should be investigated. For example, when Marina Oswald first heard the news of her husband's arrest, she rushed to the garage to check on the rifle and later testified that she thought she saw it there resting on a shelf. Then the Dallas police arrived and "later it turned out that the rifle was not there [and] I didn't know what to think." Neither do I. The Dallas police quickly explained that Marina had not really seen the Mannlicher-Carcano on the garage shelf; she had only seen a rolled-up blanket and mistaken it for the rifle. Of course, the Warren Commission wholeheartedly endorsed that explanation. The Italian carbine, which could be traced to Oswald—to the Commission's satisfaction, at least—was accepted as the murder weapon, and we heard no more about the 7.65 German Mauser.

PLAYBOY: Again, you seem to be looking for a conspiracy. Isn't it possible that in the chaos following the assassination, the rifle could have been mistakenly identified?

LANE: Yes, it's possible, but if that were the case, and the Commission sincerely desired to resolve the discrepancy, all they had to do was ask Deputy Constable Weitzman to examine the rifle and tell them whether or not it was the weapon he discovered in the Book Depository. But when Weitzman appeared, he was never shown the rifle. Consider this a moment—the policeman who first discovered the weapon that allegedly killed the President of the United States is not even asked to identify this weapon by the Presidential Commission investigating the assassination. Anyway, when I testified before the Commission, I *did* demand to see the weapon, and after some procrastination, the Commission allowed me to examine it. Now, I'm not a rifle expert or a policeman, but I was able to take one look at that weapon and unhesitatingly identify it as a 6.5 Italian rifle, not a 7.65 German Mauser.