

The Rambler

... Traces a Rifle

By JOHN McKELWAY

In 1940, in Italy, a Mannlicher-Carcano rifle was manufactured. It may have been in use in World War II. But, at any rate, it eventually wound up in the possession of Crescent Firearms, Inc., of New York City, a distributor of surplus Italian military rifles.

In February, 1963, the firm shipped the rifle to Klein's Sporting Goods Co. of Chicago, Ill.

The next month, Klein's sold the gun for \$21.45.

Officers of the company, on Nov. 22, 1963, searched for some record of the sale from 10 p.m. until 4 a.m. of the following day.

They discovered, on microfilm, that the rifle had been purchased with a money order by one A. Hidell, Post Office Box 2915, Dallas, Tex.

The post office box, it was later learned, had been rented to "Lee H. Oswald."

The President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy has since concluded Lee Harvey Oswald used the name of Hidell as an alias on several occasions. And fingerprint experts found the handwriting on the money order used to pay for the gun was that of Oswald.

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AND FROM THE COMMISSION'S report one can read:

"Marina Oswald testified that the rifle found on the sixth floor of the Depository Building was the 'fateful rifle of Lee Oswald.' Moreover, it was the only rifle owned by her husband following his return from the Soviet Union in June 1962.

"It had been purchased in March 1963, and taken to New Orleans where Marina Oswald saw it in their rented apartment during the summer of 1963. It appears from his wife's testimony that Oswald may have sat on the screened-in porch at night practicing with the rifle by looking through the telescopic sight and operating the bolt

The Oswalds moved back to Dallas, actually Irving, Tex., and, again according to evidence gathered by the Commission, the rifle was stored in a green and brown blanket in a garage at the home where the Oswalds were staying.

There the gun seems to have rested and then, again from the commission report:

"On the day of the assassination, Marina Oswald was watching television when she learned of the shooting. A short time later Mrs. Paine (a friend) told her that someone had shot the President 'from the building in which Lee is working.' Marina Oswald testified that at that time "My heart dropped. I then went to the garage to see whether the rifle was there and I saw that the blanket was still there and I said 'Thank God.'" She did not unroll the blanket

Evidence, the commission said, showed that Oswald carried the gun to work in a paper bag and after the shooting left it on the sixth floor of the Depository Building.

With that, the gun was retained in the custody of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Over the months following the tragedy, a question came up: Should the rifle be returned to Mrs. Oswald?

- Tolson _____
- Belmont _____
- Mohr _____
- DeLoach _____
- Casper _____
- Callahan _____
- Conrad _____
- Felt _____
- Gale _____
- Rosen _____
- Sullivan _____
- Tavel _____
- Trotter _____
- Tele Room _____
- Holmes _____
- Gandy _____

*Clearance information of President
John F. Kennedy to Kennedy*

Handwritten signatures and initials, including "John" and "J.F.K."

*File
62-107060
57 Oct*

- The Washington Post and Times Herald _____
- The Washington Daily News _____
- The Evening Star *C / Final*
- New York Herald Tribune _____
- New York Journal-American _____
- New York Daily News _____
- New York Post _____
- The New York Times _____
- The Baltimore Sun _____
- The Worker _____
- The New Leader _____
- The Wall Street Journal _____
- The National Observer *A*

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RECENTLY, A COLORADO MAN claimed to have paid Mrs. Oswald \$10,000 for the rifle—as well as the pistol used in the shooting of Patrolman J. D. Tippit. A suit was filed against the attorney general for possession of the assassination weapon and the revolver.

Just the other day in the House a bill was passed providing for the "acquisition and preservation by the United States of certain items of evidence pertaining to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy."

Rep. Byron G. Rogers, D-Colo., summed up the measure this way:

"The Constitution of the United States provides that property may not be taken without just compensation. Under this bill these items which are private property, may be acquired by the United States. The bill also authorizes that just compensation be paid to the individual who may own the item, by a suit brought in the federal district court in the district—in which he resides or in the Court of Claims."

So the long trail of the gun seems to have come to an end—although Senate passage of the bill is still required.

It will be interesting to see, if and when it happens, what the worth of the gun will be, as determined by a court.

It all depends, of course, on how you look at it.