

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

Assassination of President John F. Kennedy

Dick Schaap

This Gun for Hire?

Any day now, the Smithsonian Institution is going to start exhibiting, along with The Spirit of St. Louis, the flag that flew at Fort McHenry and Jacqueline Kennedy's gown, the 6.5 mm. Mannlicher-Carcano rifle that Lee Harvey Oswald purchased through the mails for \$12.88 and then used to kill the President of the United States.

The primary test for inclusion of any item in the Smithsonian is significance, and, beyond any doubt, the Mannlicher-Carcano is significant. The next step, of course, is to set up a separate wing in the museum to exhibit napalm bombs that were dropped, accidentally but significantly, on the wrong targets in South Viet Nam.

Oswald's rifle is going to the Smithsonian because a Federal judge ruled the other day that the weapon legally belongs to the government. John L. King, an oilman from Denver, had already paid Marina Oswald Franklin, the assassin's widow, \$10,000 to reserve the rifle for him whenever the FBI released it. But Judge Joe Estes decreed that Mrs. Franklin never really owned the weapon—and her late husband didn't either—because it had been purchased, under an assumed name, through "a flagrant violation of the Federal Firearms Act."

I think that if the rifle belongs in a national museum, so does John L. King. As much as all the ancient rocks and all the modern space satellites in the Smithsonian, it tells an awful lot about the United States that a citizen of this country is willing to spend \$10,000 for a down payment of a murder weapon.

Maybe Oscar Wilde meant to say that each man loves the thing that kills.

I'm confident that the Oswald rifle will be a wonderful attraction at the Smithsonian.

No trip to Washington will be complete any more without a look at it. Children will pester their parents to take them to see it, just as surely as they will demand toy machine guns and disintegrating-ray guns at Christmas. Some smart toy manufacturer will hustle out miniature Mannlicher-Carcanos, and the first kid on the block to get one will take it to show-and-tell and then the teacher can give a brief history lesson.

The adults who would feel funny carrying a toy rifle can, instead, purchase a new book called "A Mother in History," which is also certainly significant. It is written by Jean Stafford, who is a fine writer, and it is the result of three days Miss Stafford spent with the mother of Lee Harvey Oswald, Marguerite Oswald. In the book, Mrs. Oswald advances, among other terrible and outrageous thoughts, her theory that her son committed a mercy killing because John F. Kennedy was dying of an incurable disease. She also compares her son to Jesus and herself to Mary. She still has some mementos of her son and she will sell them to the highest bidder.

And, don't worry, she will find bidders. I don't want to suggest there's anything wrong with this country, but I keep remembering that a few weeks ago the government barred the ashes of Robert Thompson, a World War II hero, from Arlington Cemetery because Thompson was later a convicted Communist. Then the same government decides to enshrine Lee Oswald's rifle in a national museum. The connection may be tenuous, but I think it exists.

It's too bad that Perry Smith and Dick Hickok, the killers of "In Cold Blood," had to be executed. With the exposure they've gotten, any good agent could make them a fortune on television.

White
Boyer
Shelton
Rudis
Spill
Lebedev

- The Washington Post and Times Herald
- The Washington Daily News
- The Evening Star
- 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
- People's World
- Date

1001

File
62-109060
no assassination
5/rel

62-109060-A

NOT RECORDED
101 MAR 7 1966

FEB 28 1966