

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

TO: Mr. Belmont

DATE: May 7, 1965

FROM:

Mr. Rosen

- 1- Mr. DeLoach
- 1- Mr. Sullivan
- 1- Mr. Conrad
- 1- Mr. Belmont
- 1- Mr. Rosen
- 1- Mr. Malley
- 1- Mr. Shroder
- 1- Mr. Raupach

SUBJECT:

ORDER OF RIFLE FROM  
KLEIN'S SPORTING GOODS, INC.,  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS,  
APRIL 29, 1965  
MISCELLANEOUS - INFORMATION CONCERNING

PURPOSE:

This concerns the individual who attempted to purchase a rifle from Klein's Sporting Goods, Inc., Chicago, Illinois, utilizing the name "A. J. Hidell," return address 6404 Pelican Drive, South, St. Petersburg, Florida. Tampa determined that the only resident at this address is Lowell Brandle, feature writer for "The St. Petersburg Times." It is a well known fact Lee Harvey Oswald purchased the assassination rifle from Klein's Sporting Goods, Inc., under the name "A. Hidell." Attached is a teletype to Tampa instructing that Brandle be thoroughly interviewed.

BACKGROUND:

Chicago Division by teletype 5/5/65 advised information was received from [redacted] of Klein's Sporting Goods, Inc., that [redacted] MAY 11 1965 order for a .30.06 Enfield "Sporter" rifle with a variable three to seven power scope had been received from an individual utilizing the name "A. J. Hidell", 6404 Pelican Drive, South, St. Petersburg, Florida. [redacted] determined through a "source" of his that one Lowell Brandle resided at this address who was a reporter for "The St. Petersburg Times." He said due to the "bizarre implications" Klein's definitely was not filling the order and felt the FBI should be advised.

Tampa has determined Lowell Brandle is a feature writer for "The St. Petersburg Times" and resides at 6404 Pelican Drive, South, St. Petersburg, Florida, with his wife. In addition, there were no references in the St. Petersburg City Directories for "Hidell." Tampa and Bureau indices reveal no derogatory information concerning Brandle and he has previously written several favorable articles about the Bureau and in addition has written articles in which he was

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Enclosure

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critical of the John Birch Society, one of which was dated 10/29/64, wherein he states in effect the Bircher's were told to arm themselves and buy guns for children. The editor of "The St. Petersburg Times" is Mr. Courtland Anderson. It is noted we had cordial relations with this newspaper until October 14, 1964, when the paper printed in an editorial critical parts of the infamous book "The FBI Nobody Knows" written by Fred J. Cook. In the March 26, 1965 issue of this paper they took another "pot shot" at the Bureau by publishing an article captioned "Distorted Crime Rate Figures." In response to this article a letter was directed to the editor, Mr. Anderson, dated 4/2/65, which set the facts, as relating to this article, straight.

Consideration was given to the fact whether the ordering of this weapon under a fictitious name was a violation of the Postal Laws. Liaison Section contacted the Post Office Department and Mr. Saul Mendel, Assistant General Counsel, Post Office Department, advised that based on available facts he did not believe a violation of Postal Laws was involved in this instance.

Further, it is noted the ordering of this weapon which was not shipped does not constitute a violation of either the National Firearms Act or the Federal Firearms Act. The National Firearms Act deals generally with a weapon with a barrel of less than 18 inches in length or a machine gun and such weapon has been unlawfully transported, possessed or imported and the identification marks obliterated or changed. The Federal Firearms Act concerns the possession of a weapon or transportation thereof by a person who has been convicted of a felony.

ACTION:

In view of circumstances surrounding this matter it is believed we should interview Brandle to determine if he did order the rifle and, if so, his purpose in using the name "A. J. Hidell." Attached for approval is an airtel to Tampa instructing Brandle be immediately interviewed. Results of interview will be furnished to U. S. Secret Service, which agency has been advised of the information developed in this case. Department being advised.

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