

# Bill Seeks U.S. Hold on Kennedy Death Rifle

## Congress Considers Measure to Put Guns in Assassination Into National Archives

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WASHINGTON (AP) — The rifle that killed President John F. Kennedy would remain in government hands forever if Congress approves a bill to be proposed by the Justice Department.

This and other key evidence used by the Warren Commission in pinning the assassination on Lee Harvey Oswald would go into the National Archives if the attorney general determined its retention would be in the public interest.

While no decision has been made about what items of evidence the government will want to keep, an authoritative federal source said it will certainly include the 6.5-mm. Italian-made, mail-order rifle used by Oswald when he fired on the Kennedy motorcade in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963.

### Pistol Included

It also will include the .38-caliber pistol wielded by Oswald in the fatal shooting of Dallas policeman J. D. Tippitt on the day of the assassination, the source said.

Oswald's wife, Marina, as administrator of his estate, has been offered \$10,000 for the two weapons by a gun collector—even though they still are in government possession.

Under the bill being drafted by the Justice Department, persons whose property is claimed by the government could sue in federal court for compensation.

The Justice Department will base its proposal solely on the argument that be-

cause the assassination will be burned in the memories of Americans for generations to come, the key physical evidence should be made absolutely secure so that no doubts can be raised about it in the near or distant future.

"We want it always to be in hands responsible to the government, so that no questions as to its authenticity can be raised if, for instance, the investigation is ever reopened," the government informant said.

The bill resulted from a request by the now-disbanded Warren Commission that the Justice Department solve the problem of what to do with the evidence it examined in its 10-month investigation.

### To Set Price

The government does not contemplate that the weapons and other evidence would be placed on public display by the archives.

The department has determined that it has no power to claim forfeiture of the property by its owners, he added.

"People are entitled to be paid for it," he said. "The courts will determine how much. But it's horrible to imagine that the instruments of such a heinous crime could result in a windfall to anyone."

The murder weapon and other prime evidence now lie in an FBI storage vault. The Warren Commission's working papers already have been turned over to the archives. *END*