

RELEASED PER P.L. 102-526 (JFK ACT)
 NARA CEC DATE 7/21/00

RG 65
 Box 1110 F.79

~~28~~ 24
 (11)

of an organization of which Oswald was the only member.

When seeking employment in New Orleans, Oswald listed a "Sgt. Robt. Hidell" as a reference on one job application and "George Hidell" as a reference on another. Both names were found to be fictitious.

The frequent use of "Alek" as a first name for Hidell is a further link to Oswald because "Alek" was Oswald's nickname in Russia. In possession of the Commission are letters from friends of Oswald, addressing him with the familiar "Alek," and letters to Marina Oswald from her husband signed "Alek."

OSWALD'S PALMPRINT ON RIFLE BARREL

Oswald's purchase of the rifle was determined within 24 hours after the assassination and confirmed later by expert witnesses before the Commission. Additional proof of ownership was provided in the form of palmprint identification.

A few minutes after the rifle was discovered on the sixth floor of the Depository it was examined by Lieutenant J. C. Day of the Identification Bureau of the Dallas Police. He lifted the rifle by the wood stock after determining that the wood was too rough to take fingerprints. Captain J. W. Fritz was then permitted to eject a cartridge by operating the bolt, but only after Day viewed the knob on the bolt through a magnifying glass and found no prints. The rifle was then dusted with fingerprint powder and traces of prints could be seen on the side of the metal housing near the

RELEASED PER P.L. 102-526 (JFK ACT)

NARA CEC DATE 7/24/0

- 8 -

40c
trigger. At 11:45 p.m. on November 22, the rifle was released to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and forwarded to Washington where it was examined on the morning of November 23 by Sebastian F. Latona, Supervisor of the Latent Fingerprint Section of the FBI's Identification Division.⁴¹

In his testimony before the Commission, Latona stated that when he received the rifle, the area where prints were visible was protected by cellophane.⁴² He examined these prints, as well as photographs which the Dallas police had made of them, and concluded that "the formations, the ridge formations and characteristics, were insufficient for purposes of either effecting identification or a determination that the print was not identical with the prints of people. Accordingly, my opinion simply was that the latent prints which were there were of no value."^{42a}

Latona processed the complete weapon but developed no identifiable prints.^{42a} He stated that the poor quality of the metal caused absorption of the moisture from the skin, thereby making it difficult to obtain a clear print.⁴³ Moreover the rough quality of the wood made it unlikely that the stock could take a good print.^{43a}

On November 22, however, before surrendering possession of the rifle to the FBI laboratory, Lieutenant Day of the Dallas Police Department had "lifted" a palmprint from the underside of the gun barrel "near the firing end of the barrel about three inches under the woodstock when I took the woodstock loose."⁴⁴ "Lifting" a print

RELEASED PER P.L. 102-526 (JFK ACT)

NARA CEC DATE 7/24/00

- 9 -

involves the use of adhesive material to remove the fingerprint powder which adheres to the original print. In this way the impression is actually removed from the object.^{44a} The lifting had been so complete in this case that there was no trace of the print on the rifle itself when it was examined by Latona.^{44b}

Day apparently assumed that sufficient traces of the prints had been left on the rifle, because he did not release the lifted print until November 26.^{44c} When received in the Bureau laboratory in Washington on November 29, the print had been mounted on a card on which Lieutenant Day had written the words "off underside gun barrel near end of foregrip C2766."⁴⁸

Latona testified that this palmprint was the right palmprint of Lee Harvey Oswald.⁴⁹ At the request of the Commission, Arthur Mandella, fingerprint expert with the New York City Police Department, conducted an independent examination and agreed that this was the right palmprint of Oswald.⁵² Latona's findings were also confirmed by Ronald G. Wittmus, another FBI fingerprint expert.⁵³ Moreover, experts testifying before the Commission agreed that palmprints are as unique as fingerprints for purposes of establishing identification.^{53a}

Oswald's palmprint on the underside of the barrel demonstrates that he handled the rifle when it was disassembled. A palmprint could not be placed on this portion of the rifle, when assembled, because the wooden foregrip covers the barrel at this point.⁴⁵ The print is additional proof that the rifle belonged to Oswald.

Latona is on story line full

RELEASED PER P.L. 102-526 (JFK ACT)

NARA CEC DATE 7/24/10

- 10 -

FIBERS ON RIFLE

In a crevice between the butt plate of the rifle and the wooden stock were several cotton fibers of dark blue, grayish black, and orange-yellow shades. ⁵⁴ On November 23, 1963, these fibers were examined by Paul M. Stombaugh, a special agent assigned to the Hair and Fiber Unit of the FBI laboratory. ⁵⁶ He compared them with the fibers found in the shirt which Oswald was wearing when arrested in the Texas Theatre. ⁵⁵ Stombaugh testified that the colors and twist of the fibers found on the rifle matched those in Oswald's shirt. The three basic colors in the shirt were present in the fibers on the rifle, and there was a match of shades within each color. ⁵⁷

Mr. Stombaugh explained in his testimony that in fiber analysis, as distinct from fingerprint or ballistics analysis, it is not possible to state with scientific certainty that a particular small group of fibers come from a certain piece of clothing to the exclusion of all others because there are not enough microscopic characteristics present in these fibers. ⁵⁸ Judgments as to probability will depend on the number and types of matches. ^{58a} He concluded that the fibers "could easily have come from the shirt." ⁵⁹ Moreover, he stated, "In my mind I feel that these fibers came from this shirt, but I know of no scientific method to prove this, so therefore I am unable to say this." ⁶⁰

On the basis of Stombaugh's testimony the Commission has concluded that the fibers on the rifle most probably came from the shirt worn by Oswald when he was arrested. The Commission has also found that