

Metulae Mon, Jul 28
Dick Schaap 1966

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No trip to Washington will be complete any more without a look at it. Children will prefer their parents to take them to see it. All but surely as they will demand toy machine guns and disintegrating-ray guns at Christmas. Some smart toy manufacturer will make up 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 money 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.