

8 June 1969

Dear Sylvia:

Thanks for your correspondence of 5 June, including your letter to Thompson and Oct. 1965 memo re telephone conversation with Eisenberg.

I must clear up a misunderstanding. I did not intend to imply that the Philadelphia resident who spotted the dent in Frazier's test and had it photographed was Thompson or in any way connected with Thompson. I mentioned Philadelphia merely as a means of designating the person; it did not pass through my mind that Thompson was living in the same area. The Philadelphian is ~~Harold~~ Harold Roffman, a high school junior, who is interested in the assassination and doing some research. I have been in touch with him by mail, and hope to hear from him again. Included with the picture that Roffman ordered was his name and address and a sketch showing how he wanted the cartridge cases posed.

I suspect that your belief that Thompson ~~had taken~~ might have had that picture taken, or your belief that I was implying that, might bear on your estimate of Thompson's explanation. As far as I know, there is no connection between Thompson and Roffman, and I have no reason to suspect any. Sorry if I caused you to think otherwise.

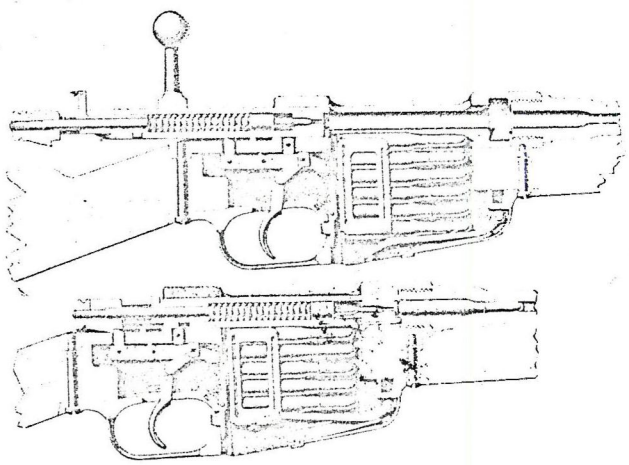
I agree that the issue of the ammunition clip is not disposed of, and have no criticism of your remarks in Accessories, for I consider them fully justified. But on every issue there are always two matters that have to be handled: What really happened? and How did the WC treat the issue?. We can comment freely and with certainty on the latter, for it is part of the public record, but we can't always treat the former because (as in this instance) the public record does not give a full account of what ~~was~~ could be known-- indeed, it sometimes gives a false account. When I examined the rifle and clip I would not have imagined it possible for the clip to stick in the magazine, but by pure accident we found that it could. What bothered me was that Harold was going to treat it as though it couldn't, that the clip could not have been found in the ~~xxx~~ rifle if the rifle were used in the assassination. If you know Harold (and you do), then you know how this is possible. I had written to him and described the action of the clip; at that time I said that I thought the clip could not be in good enough condition to hold cartridges and still be in bad enough condition to stick. I think he must have made up his mind that I was right and didn't "un-make " it when we saw the rifle sticking. Criticism along the lines of Accessories is proper and required, but the assertion that the clip could not stick is not justified. Harold's mind was still running on that track when we learned that the clip could stick, and I am still not sure whether his thought on that matter have been "de-railed". I'll back any criticism that says the WC should have explained why the clip was not found near the window, for it should have been there if the rifle did not have a mechanical irregularity. It is something that should have been brought up in Frazier's testimony,

While this system resembles that of a Mauser, it has some differences. The bolt lever is set farther forward than is customary with the Mauser system.

The principal difference, however, is in the magazine construction. There is no bottom plate covering the magazine opening as in the Mauser type. In place of the standard magazine, there is a spring-supported arm on the underside of the receiver. When the clip is loaded in from the top with its six cartridges, it compresses this spring arm so that the arm can force cartridges up into line as the bolt is worked. This arm presses against the cartridge case and not against the clip. As a result when the last cartridge has been chambered, the empty clip falls clear through the bottom opening.

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Stripping. Turn down the retaining catch on the right side of the receiver, pull the trigger, and the bolt may be drawn back out of the weapon.



From: W. H. B. SMITH and JOSEPH E. SMITH, SMALL ARMS OF THE WORLD (The Stackpole Co., Harrisburg, Pa., 1962) p. 494