

PRELIMINARY SUGGESTIONS FOR REVISION OF "BACKFIRE!" (Meagher 6/23/68)

Page references to GUNS May 1967

Page 19 last paragraph

Revise: "The real irony is that the Commission's inept gyrations worked against its own purpose. Flagrant errors--if not in fact, at least in judgment--made suspect much that might otherwise have seemed acceptable. As its study progressed, evidence was elicited that conflicted with the simple explanation for which the Commission hoped--that is, that Oswald alone was the assassin. Competent investigation by firearms experts might have resolved the conflict, or might have shown indisputably that there was more than one assassin. Although much illiterate trash has been written by status-seeking "researchers," there is a body of responsible and serious criticism of the Warren Report that opens the strong possibility and perhaps even proves conclusively that there was in fact more than one assassin."

Page 20 column 2 paragraph 4

Revise last sentence: "Because the evidence for this conclusion was questionable, to say the least, an attempt should have been made to determine by blood tests or groupings whether the bullet had passed through either the President or the Governor, or both, or neither. No such attempt was made when the bullet was delivered to the FBI Laboratory, because it appeared to the naked eye to be clean of blood or tissue. It is not clear from the testimony if microscopic examination failed to reveal such traces, or if--in contravention of standard forensic procedure--the bullet was washed with a blood solvent before examination."

Page 56 paragraph 1

Revise last four sentences: "The clip holds six cartridges but only four are in evidence. No rounds of this ammunition were found in a search of Oswald's person or residences. To load this rifle with less than a full clip (i.e., 4 instead of 6 cartridges) is to invite loading difficulties. The question then arises--if Oswald could buy 4 cartridges, why not 6? Indeed, why not a full box? The Warren Report, curiously, is silent as to Oswald's purchase of the ammunition. All the more ominous, then, is the information found in the Commission's exhibits: that the FBI conducted an intensive canvass of gun shops and found that only two had ever carried

Western Cartridge Company 6.5 Carcano ammunition and that Oswald had never made any purchases in either establishment."

Page 57 paragraph 1

Delete last 2 sentences and insert: "Moreover, although the rifle was in well-oiled condition when it was discovered, there were no traces of oil on the paper bag nor on the blanket in which the rifle supposedly had been stored for some months in the Paine garage. There is a 91/38 Carcano that would fit into the paper bag without being disassembled: the Moschetto version is four inches shorter than the evidence rifle. What makes this all the more paradoxical and arresting is the fact that the advertisement and order coupon from the February 1963 American Rifleman (to which the Warren Commission linked the 40.2-inch Carcano) were actually for a 36-inch Carcano. The Commission seemingly did not notice this discrepancy, or preferred to ignore it; and while we can assume that the mail-order house made an error in filling the order by sending the longer model Carcano, failure to investigate the discrepancy casts further doubt on the ownership and possession by Oswald of a rifle or rifles."

Page 57 paragraph 4

Delete everything which follows the first three sentences (starting with "Why did the investigators fail to make any effort to trace the sources of ammunition..." to the end of the page). Insert new closing paragraph up-dating the question of gun control laws as a reaction to the assassination of Robert Kennedy.

Other suggested insertions

As mentioned in telephone conversation: That the field of vision through the telescopic sight on the Carcano was comparable to looking through a keyhole as compared to an expensive scope (through a window). That if you had actually been present on the 6th floor and witnessed Oswald shooting the rifle, you would still find it very hard to believe he was the assassin.