

Tests Show Rifle Like Assassin's Might Be Able to Get Off 3 Shots in 5 Seconds

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ACCURATE FIRING THOUGHT POSSIBLE

Quick Action Facilitated if
a Clip With 6 Cartridges
Is Used, Expert Shows

By OSCAR GODBOUT

If the Italian surplus military rifle that killed President Kennedy were in standard condition, the assassin could easily have fired a series of shots in eight seconds or less. And if well practiced, he might have fired three times in five seconds, a weapons expert believes.

There has been speculation that the gun, a Model 1938, 6.5-mm. bolt-action rifle, could not have been operated fast enough to have fired several shots into the Presidential car during the few seconds it took to complete the slaying.

In a number of tests made yesterday by a firearms expert of the National Rifle Association in Washington, the same kind of gun that killed the President was used.

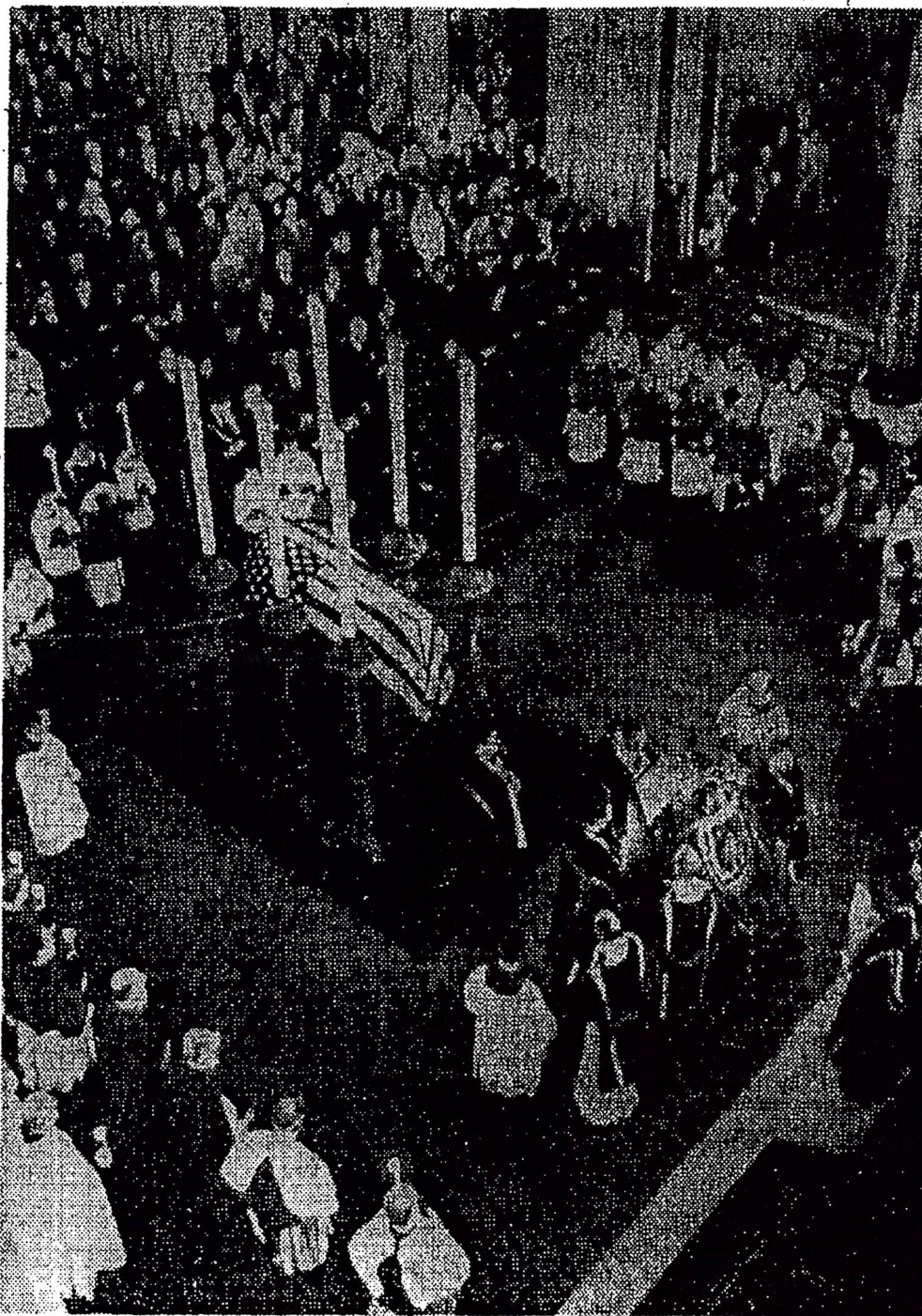
The rifle is odd in the manner of its loading. A clip or charger, is required for rapid firing. Six cartridges are loaded into the charger, which is then inserted in the action of the rifle.

To be in standard condition, the rifle must be equipped with a charger, as it was in the expert's tests.

Can Cut Down the Time

Without the charger the cartridges must be loaded singly by hand, a time-consuming procedure. With practice a shooter could reduce the time required somewhat.

The expert loaded the charger with three cartridges. Although he had had no experience in firing it, and although the old gun had been long unused, he fired the three shots in 11 sec-



Associated Press Cablephoto

LONDON: The scene yesterday in Westminster Cathedral as William Cardinal Heard officiated at a mass for President Kennedy. Many officials and diplomats attended.

onds.

His target was 50 feet away and all the bullets hit inside a circle an inch and a half in diameter. Reloading the weapon, he fired three more shots, this time in eight seconds. All the bullets landed in a one-inch circle.

In theory, by extending the range to 100 yards, the bullets would probably have hit within a 6 or 8-inch circle.

In subsequent tests, the expert operated the rifle's bolt and pulled the trigger without using live ammunition. Repeatedly in this test he fired three times in 5 seconds. He concluded that with some practice a person would be able to get off three accurate shots in about five seconds.

The man who was accused of the killing, Lee H. Oswald, had once achieved the sharpshooter class, the middle of three markmanship classifications, in the Marine Corps. Oswald was trained in that service.

Could Hit a Person

A shooter of this classification should be able accurately to place bullets in a human-sized target at the range between the Presidential car and the building from which the shooting was done.

The Italian newspaper, *Corriere Lombardo* of Milan, said yesterday that if the Model 38 were used and that if more than one shot were fired "there must have been a second attacker."

In Vienna, the Olympics champion shot, Hubert Hammerer, said that the initial shot could have been made under the conditions in Dallas when Mr. Kennedy was killed. But he considered it unlikely that one man could have triggered three shots within five seconds with the weapon used, according to Reuters.

If the Federal Bureau of Investigation eventually supplies technical details concerning the shooting from its laboratory tests, a number of questions may be answered.

These include:

How many bullets hit the President? Did they all come from the same gun? How accurate was the rifle found at the scene?

Probably the most important question still unanswered is whether or not a clip or charger was found in the gun or at the scene or whether the assassin might have used one and disposed of it.

If no charger had been used, this would indicate the rifle had been laboriously loaded with a single cartridge at a time into the chamber before firing.

Thus, there would be some doubt whether several shots could have been accurately fired by one Model-38 rifle in the seconds between the first report and the speeding off of the Presidential car.