

NYT March 28, 1992

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A Line of Cheap Guns

To the Editor:

Like Hudson Hatcher (letter, March 2), I have read that Lee Harvey Oswald was a marksman (lowest pass rating of a military rifleman). Moreover, military targets are much larger than those civilian riflemen use. But Oswald had the equivalent of a braced foxhole position, one of the steadiest and most accurate from which to fire. He could use the wind-dowsill to allow a steadier shot or shots. And the low recoil of the Manlicher-Carcano rifle would allow him to refocus on the target rapidly.

True, this is one of the last rifles I would pick for a battle rifle, but it can kill at much longer distances than 88 yards and can be made to shoot accurately enough at those distances.

We will probably never be certain that Oswald operated alone, but the preponderance of evidence certainly points toward Lee Harvey Oswald and his cheap and old military rifle.

As a historical note, John Wilkes Booth killed President Lincoln with a cheap single-shot derringer. A more knowledgeable assassin would have used a more powerful Colt Model 1860 .44 caliber revolver.

President James A. Garfield was killed by Charles Guiteau, who used a .44 caliber "British bulldog" revolver, which did not compare with high quality Colts or Smith & Wessons.

President William McKinley was killed by Leon Czolgosz, who used an Iver Johnson .32 caliber revolver, in- expensive and not powerful.

Thus, all four Presidents were killed by gunmen who knew little about firearms and used cheap ones to do the job. ROBERT S. KRAUSS

Bensalem, Pa., March 10, 1992

The writer is a firearms consultant.

Made Students Think

To the Editor:

David Belin (Op-Ed, March 7) fears that American students will be brainwashed by the teacher's guide we produced connected with the Oliver Stone film "J.F.K." Comments from hundreds of teachers are overwhelmingly positive. Their most frequent comment about the film is that it "made students think."

Warner Brothers asked us to prepare a unit about the film for teachers. Since neither film nor script was then available, we wrote the piece as a background so young people, born in the 1970's, could put the film in historical context. We made no attempt to present the film as truth. We reported the findings of the Warren Commission, the House Committee on Assassinations and other sources, and pointed teachers clearly in the direction of asking students to research the event and make up their own minds.

BREWSTER BARTON
Partner, Learning Enrichment Inc.
New York, March 10, 1992