

Salesman insists FBI discounted facts on Oswald

By EARL GOLZ

The salesman whose demonstrator car Lee Harvey Oswald supposedly sped down Stemmons Freeway when Oswald didn't know how to drive has told The News the FBI dismissed the incident because the bureau pegged it one week too late.

Eugene M. Wilson insists Oswald knew how to drive and that it was he who walked into the Downtown Lincoln-Mercury dealership to buy a new car on Nov. 2, 1963, not Nov. 9.

The Warren Commission concluded that Wilson and several other salesmen had mistakenly identified Oswald as the man who test drove a red Comet Cabriolet hardtop several weeks before the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Several other incidents that could have placed Oswald with assassination conspirators also were discounted by the commission because Oswald supposedly didn't know how to drive.

WILSON'S NOV. 2 date would make the Lincoln-Mercury salesman's story more plausible. It would not conflict with the recollection of a key witness whose testimony was an important factor in ruling out Oswald test-driving a car on Nov. 9.

Now retired, Wilson says he knows that after Oswald drove the car, Wilson used the same vehicle later that day to drive his wife and friends home after a meeting of the Lone Star Bulldog Club in Fort Worth. Wilson said he has ribbons won by his dogs at a Dallas show the next day to pinpoint the Nov. 2 date.

The Warren Commission found the car salesman's story hard to believe, starting with the assertion by salesman Albert Bogard that he rode on the passenger's side as Oswald drove the demonstrator car at speeds up to 75 to 85 miles an hour on the freeway.

Even more unbelievable and intriguing were Wilson's and Bogard's contentions that Oswald couldn't make the

\$300 down payment but said he would return in two to three weeks to buy the car with \$3,500 cash.

Oswald's newfound bankroll would have materialized about the time Kennedy was assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963.

Bogard told the commission Oswald said he would return "in a couple or three weeks, that he had some money coming in."

Oswald was subsequently accused of shooting the assassination rifle from his place of employment, the Texas School Book Depository, only two blocks from the Lincoln-Mercury dealership at Commerce and Industrial.

"I was the one that finally took the turn on Oswald," Wilson said. "What I mean by turn, the other boy (Bogard) couldn't do anything with him and didn't see anything in the deal, looking at the credit statement and what he was trying to buy."

"HE DIDN'T have any money. It would be three weeks before he would have any money. I took the turn and that's when he got violent. And we just ran him off."

When the FBI interviewed Wilson only two weeks before the Warren Report was released in September, 1964, he said he tried to tell the agents that the incident occurred Nov. 2, but they were already locked on Nov. 9. The agent's report states Wilson merely said the event occurred "on some day about the first part of November, 1963, believed to be a Saturday, but exact date not recalled."

The report states that Wilson described Oswald as reacting "rather sarcastically" to Wilson's refusal to make a deal on the Comet.

"Maybe I'm going to have to go back to Russia to buy a car," Oswald was quoted by Wilson.

"Maybe that's where you should go."

Wilson retorted.

Mrs. Ruth Paine, at whose Irving home Oswald would visit his wife every weekend, was asked by Warren Commission lawyers if Oswald could have visited the Lincoln-Mercury dealership on Nov. 9.

Mrs. Paine, who drove Oswald to the state driver's license office to get a learner's permit on Nov. 9, testified before the commission that he could not have visited the car dealership that day because he "was not out of my sight for any length of time."

However, twice Mrs. Paine indicated to the commission that Oswald may have visited his wife at Mrs. Paine's home on Saturday, Nov. 2, rather than the usual time on Friday.

"May I say if there was a weekend other than Oct. 12 when he came on Saturday instead of Friday night, it would have been that weekend (Nov. 2-3)," Mrs. Paine testified.

Later, asked by the commission lawyer if she recalled "if he (Oswald) didn't visit or come to your home on the 1st, that he did come on the 2nd," Mrs. Paine replied that she had "no clear recollection."

THE WIFE of another salesman at the Lincoln-Mercury dealership, Mrs. Oran P. Brown, also told the FBI that her husband had brought a piece of paper home with Oswald's name on it "about three weeks" prior to the assassination on Nov. 22.

Mrs. Brown said her husband had told her that Bogard had given him the name of Oswald as a prospective customer.

Wilson said he spoke up again because "I just want to get the record straight."

"It kind of bugs you whenever you know something that is historical to a certain extent," he said. "And the dates you like to get correct."