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Kennedy Rifle 250

DENVER, Colo. AP — The question of who rightfully owns the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle used to assassinate President Kennedy may finally be resolved by jury trial here, after a bizarre twisting series of claims and counter-claims.

Central figure in the suit is John J. King, a Denver oilman who says he has paid \$10,000 for the mail-order weapon and owes another \$20,000 on delivery. The government claiming it is best "to keep this weapon off the curiosity market," has asked for dismissal on the grounds the rifle "has no real or historical value."

U.S. Dist. Judge William E. Doyle ordered the jury trial earlier this week and, in a 16-page order, admitted "it's not clear who owns the rifle or how much the owner should receive from the court." In an earlier hearing before Doyle, King asked the court for some \$5 million in damages. He claimed he had been deprived of the rifle, which he said had great historic value.

A statute enacted by Congress in 1965, two years after Kennedy was gunned down in Dallas, allowed the U.S. Attorney General to seize the weapon and other exhibits presented before the Warren Commission for the federal archives. But the law states anyone claiming ownership of any of the items may be paid by filing suit in district court.

King says he has signed a contract with Mrs. Marina Oswald Porter, wife of the accused slayer, Lee Harvey Oswald, for delivery of the weapon. Earlier, a district court in New Orleans ruled the weapon was not forfeited when Oswald fled the murder scene.

No date has been set for the jury trial.

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Phillips, Nov 9