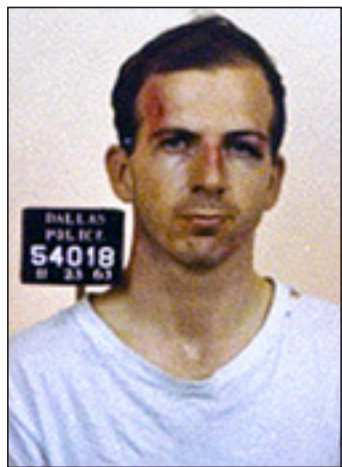


Hotshot Oswald's records on sale



KILLER: Lee Harvey Oswald

MILITARY shooting records of the assassin who killed President John F Kennedy are expected to sell for more than £75,000 at auction.

An 80-page workbook issued to Lee Harvey Oswald by the US Marine Corps in 1956 shows he became so proficient on the firing range he achieved the level of "sharpshooter". A spokesman for RR Auction said the records are "highly significant," adding: "For the last 57 years, many claimed Oswald was a lousy shot and could not have killed Kennedy. These test scores show otherwise."

Included with the workbook are letters between Oswald's mother Marguerite and Kennedy historian

By **Mike Parker**

Dr John Lattimer. She writes: "My son's Marine score book is in the same condition as when he left it with me. Someday soon, it will be proven a conspiracy did exist and my son was indeed the 'patsy'."

The online auction, ending on Wednesday, features police mugshots and a signed fingerprint card of nightclub boss Jack Ruby, who shot Oswald dead at Dallas police HQ. They are expected to fetch up to £15,000 each.

The sale also includes a letter written by prohibition agent Eliot Ness, whose famous Untouchables waged war with Al Capone's mob.

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COHEN:

By **Harry Freedman**

HE WAS the rock superstar whose songs were loved by millions of fans. And yet Leonard Cohen, who died five years ago today, never intended to be a musician.

Growing up in Montreal, his ambition was to be a poet or novelist. It was only a shortage of cash and perhaps a stroke of luck that made him one of the heroes of our age. The American folk singer Judy Collins was perhaps more responsible than anyone for him becoming a performer.

Cohen had been living on the Greek island of Hydra with his first great love, Marianne Ihlen, about whom he would later compose one of his most famous songs. It was idyllic, but hanging out with other expats and working on his novel, *Beautiful Losers*, didn't pay the bills so Cohen would travel back to his native Canada to earn money from odd jobs.

One uncle owned a clothing company, another a brass foundry. Cohen would take various jobs, get money together and then return to Greece and live for as long as is lasted.

That was fine for a while, but eventually he decided to go to New York, hoping to make a name for himself in the vibrant Greenwich Village community.

He started out reading his poetry at venues around the village, often finishing his performance by playing his guitar and strumming along to one of his poems. But reading poetry still didn't earn him enough so he decided he would set some of his poems to music and find a manager to help him to sell his songs.

In 1966 his manager did just that; she sent two of his songs to Judy Collins and she recorded them on one of her albums.

One of them was Suzanne, a song about a church in Montreal and a woman he was clearly in love with, but who would not let him be her lover.

Cohen carried on sending songs to Collins and the two of them became friends. A year later, when she was asked to perform in a concert at the Village Theatre, in a line-up that included Pete Seeger and Tom Paxton, she persuaded him to appear on stage with her.

He wasn't keen but Collins persisted and, eventually, he agreed she should call him onto the stage to join her in singing Suzanne.

In the event, Cohen wandered onstage, had trouble tuning his guitar, couldn't find the right key to sing in and swiftly fled. It wasn't the most spectacular beginning to a career. At that stage, at least, he

was not the performer he could've become. Ask any fan of Leonard Cohen what they like about him and they will probably tell you that, although his music is great and his melodies captivating, his songs are so much more than that.

The words draw us in as much as the music.

His love songs are both tender and graphic and his spiritual, almost mystical, compositions, of which there are many, are intriguing.

He has a way of writing that makes us stop and think about his lyrics. When we listen carefully, we can recognise stories and ideas that are familiar to us, tales from the Bible or other old legends.

Cohen's spirituality and his familiarity with religious legends and ideas goes all the way back to his upbringing. He was born into a prominent family in the Montreal Jewish community, his grandfather on his mother's side was a rabbi, as was his great uncle on his father's side.

And when he was a child his Irish Catholic nanny often took him to church.

So he was familiar with both traditions. And he would spend his life exploring different spiritual approaches.

He dabbled with Scientology, and had a guru, in India, who he visited regularly.

He read a lot about the kabbalah, the system of Jewish mysticism, and was profoundly influenced by 13th century Sufi mystic Jalal-ad-Din Rumi.

Most of all, he was a student of Buddhism; he spent many years regularly visiting his teacher, Joshua Sasaki Roshi, in his Buddhist monastery on Mount Baldy, California. Eventually, he moved into the monastery permanently and, in 1996, after he had lived there for three years, was ordained as a Buddhist monk.

He was 82 years old when he died and had been making public appearances and recording music almost until the end. He needed to, because for a long time he couldn't afford to do anything else. While he was living in the monastery, more or less shut away from the world, his money was stolen and he had to start again.

Cohen didn't find out about the fraud until 2004, when he received a phone call from his daughter. A friend had told her that Cohen should take a look at his bank account. To his horror he discovered it had been almost completely cleaned out. More than



FATEFUL FOLK SINGER: Judy Collins first got a young Cohen on stage

RELUCTANT GENIUS

INDIAN SUMMER: Forced to go back on the road aged 77 after being defrauded of his fortune, Leonard Cohen, pictured in Leeds in 2013, enjoyed a remarkable burst of late creativity

Picture: GARY WOLSTENHOLME/GETTY



£3.6million had disappeared. His manager, Kelley Lynch, a trusted friend and former lover, had been embezzling money from him.

The problem was he hadn't paid much attention to his affairs while he was in the monastery.

He trusted Lynch to look after his accounts and had no idea she had been systematically ripping him off. Cohen sued her and won the case but the money wasn't repaid and his manager began a campaign of harassment that only ended when she was sent to prison.

Despite this, at the age of 70 Leonard Cohen was almost broke.

There was only one thing he could do: go back on the road.

Most of his fans will tell you that it was the most productive period of his life. He began touring again at the age of 77 and played 387 concerts over a period of five years. Even after he collapsed on stage, while playing a gig in Spain,

he kept going. He brought out three new albums and recorded a fourth that was issued three years after his death. The day after he died, Donald Trump was elected President of America. Clearly, the world would never be the same again.

Cohen's best known song is Hallelujah. It is one of the most recorded songs in history. More than 300 artists are known to have covered it. But it had absolutely no impact at all when Cohen released it in 1984, on his *Various Positions* album. In fact his record company refused to release

the album in the USA. They told him: "We know you are great, Leonard, we just don't know if you are any good."

It wasn't until Jeff Buckley released a cover version, ten years later, that Hallelujah got into the charts. Then, Alexandra Burke won *The X Factor* singing it and her version shot to number one in the UK. Jeff Buckley re-released his version and Leonard Cohen's record company put out his original recording as a single. Nearly 25 years after he began writing it Leonard Cohen's own Hallelujah

finally made the charts, alongside the two covers. It always took Cohen years to write a song and every track went through many different versions before he was finally happy with it.

He said he discarded dozens of possible verses as he wrote Hallelujah, some with different lyrics to the version he finally recorded.

The lyrics are based on the Biblical story of King David's adultery with Bathsheba and his subsequent crime of sending her husband into battle to be killed. As a result, David suffered disaster after disaster, punished for his sins. Like Cohen, King David was also a musician and a poet and it was he who first used the word Hallelujah; it means "praise God" and it only occurs in the Book of Psalms, which David is supposed to have written.

So David, who sinned and was punished, ended up praising God.

And the thought Cohen leaves us with is that, no matter how badly things go wrong, even if everything falls apart, as it did for King David, the one thing that we are left with, the only thing really we can do, is to sing Hallelujah.

When he played it in Warsaw in 1985, he told his audience: "I know that there is an eye that watches all of us."

There is a judgement that weighs everything we do. And before this great force, which is greater than any government, I stand in awe and I kneel in respect."

● *Cohen: The Mystical Roots of Genius* by Harry Freedman (Bloomsbury, 18.99) is out now. For Free UK P&P on orders over £20, call Express Bookshop on 020 3176 3832 or visit expressbookshop.com



SPIRITUAL: Cohen, photographed in 1972, mined mystical stories

