

clinic on 34th Street in New York. He was undergoing a special course of therapy in an annexe filled with wonderful apparatus specially devised for him. Kennedy Senior, alas, was unable to move a single muscle, and could close his eyes only with difficulty. It will never be known whether he understood all that happened at Dallas and after.

"I STARTED in politics," John Kennedy once said, "because Joe died. If something happened to me tomorrow, my brother Bobby would take my place, and if Bobby died too Teddy would succeed him."

It was, indeed, a matter of a veritable dynasty, conceived in the mind of the father. Kennedy Senior did not only train his eight children tirelessly towards his ambitious objectives; he made good use of his wealth and connections, his aptitude for intrigue, and all the social, family and religious advantages to establish his children in the front rank.

Joseph Kennedy must bitterly have regretted not having lived in earlier times, when the Hapsburgs, Capets and Romanoffs founded Empires to pass on to their issue.

Everything, then, had been organised for Joseph, the eldest. When the Liberator crashed somewhere over Germany, Kennedy Senior had only to change the label: it was for the second son, John, to take up the standard.

One morning in January 1960, Kennedy Senior went to see his friend "Uncle Dan" O'Connell, one of the patrons of the Democrat Party.

"Dan, I've come to ask for votes for my son . . ."

"He's rather young, your John," was the answer.

"Yes, I know. But *I'm* seventy-two, and I want to be there to enjoy his conquest . . ."

He was there, but not for long.

It is said of him that he was the *eminence grise* of the White House, that nothing was decided without his being

consulted, that the Government was really a Regency – his; even that the United States were ruled collectively by the Kennedys.

EVENTS PROVED that John Kennedy grew in stature as a statesman after his father was incapacitated, and that he could manage very well without a mentor.

He remained in power for only a little more than a thousand days. But he proved capable of confronting two great crises with authority. The first was Cuba; the second was during the summer of 1963, when several days before the negro protest march on Washington he dared to throw overboard the politicians' prudence and confront the nation squarely with its moral responsibility.

He did not want to win the cold war. He wanted, on the contrary, to make the Americans realise that it was madness to let themselves be dominated by dread of it. He wanted to make them grasp the fact that the future of the country, and of the world, depended upon an honourable understanding with the Soviets.

He was not a theorist. His philosophy was simple: to defend Freedom, keep his sense of humour, live his life fully and tackle the highest peaks. He considered himself something of a mountain guide.

As a Senator he had been rather shy, and absent a good deal of the time; he transformed himself into an excellent administrator and brilliant diplomat – and also a magnet to men. He knew how to surround himself with brilliant people, and how to make them share in his own enthusiasm and vitality. He was not first-class, but had great respect for the first-class in others.

Like all other presidents in American history, he did not speak any foreign language, yet he was the most international of the masters of the White House.

The ballet sent him to sleep; but he wanted very much

to encourage it, to create an American tradition. He preferred reading detective stories, but surrounded himself with great writers and chose the old poet Robert Frost to read a poem at his inauguration.

In many spheres he was mediocre, but he knew it; and knew that what mattered was to recognise the existence of a higher level, which he must try to attain. After all, Lorenzo the Magnificent was not poet, painter or sculptor either.

He was a *promoter*, an impresario, rather than a statesman, a political leader or a ruler; one of those men who inspire, organise, utilise the talent of others for great ends.

JOHN FITZGERALD Kennedy was born on May 29th, 1917 at Brooklyn, Massachusetts, but his education was entirely Bostonian. He was very proud of having that accent, and often noticeably stressed it.

His studies at Harvard therefore counted enormously; and he showed a remarkable loyalty to his *alma mater*. It was enough to be a Harvard graduate to be something in his administration.

But he also studied at the London School of Economics, during his father's term as Ambassador there. He even acted as private secretary to Kennedy Senior, just before the war. He had already written and published a rather critical thesis on the English policy of temporisation.

After his war-time adventures and discharge from hospital, he went back to London as a war correspondent. At the end of hostilities, he went into active politics, standing for Congress in Boston in 1946.

He went to Washington at the age of twenty-seven. It was just a spring-board. In 1952 he challenged Henry Cabot Lodge (the same who was later to be a candidate for the vice-presidency with Nixon) for the Senate. Lodge



Above left, No. 1 suspect Lee Oswald in a photograph which his mother claims is a fake. *Right*, with his Russian-born wife Marina and *bottom left* in the uniform of an Air Cadet. *Bottom right*, Marina Oswald with her baby and mother-in-law, Marguerite Oswald, leave Dallas jail after questioning





The moment of death for Lee Oswald. Night-club owner Jack Ruby steps forward with a gun as the President's alleged assassin is escorted by Dallas police officers



belonged to a very old American family; he represented tradition, aristocracy, prestige.

Kennedy was elected.

Some years later, he spoke of the presidency, and let it be known that he would temporarily accept the vice-presidency. But fortunately for him – since the Democrats were beaten – no one took him very seriously.

The climate was very different in 1960.

Kennedy Senior had prepared the ground very thoroughly, and there was no “strong” candidate. Kennedy began well in advance, going up and down all over the country. From the first he was convincing and people began to take notice. Then some started to get worried.

“He is too young, lacks experience,” Truman said of him publicly. But Youth worked for him – the young have votes too.

“He’s a Catholic,” said the professionals, and quoted the unhappy precedent of Al Smith in 1928. But America’s Catholics had profited by the lesson of the past. They knew how to concentrate their forces, and bigotry was no longer widespread.

The negroes and Jews voted for him, in the hope that one day it would become possible to vote for a black or a Jewish president.

Kennedy – helped by his brothers, his sisters, his brothers in law, his sisters in law, his friends in Hollywood and on Broadway, in Wall Street, Boston and Harvard, and by his irresistible charm on television – was elected, the youngest president in the history of the United States. He had achieved what he had so passionately wanted.

“HE NEVER took himself too seriously,” his intimate friend Benjamin Bradley says of him. “He loved stories against himself.”

In fact, a disc on which an unknown actor, Vaughn

Meador, imitated his voice and made fun of a *soirée* at the White House, had a phenomenal success because Kennedy himself praised it highly during a press conference.

"He got into tremendous rages and broke everything in sight," says Arthur Schlesinger. "His rages lasted four minutes. On the fifth, he forgot it."

Despite his exacting calling, Kennedy knew how to guard the privacy of his family life. He would take pains over such small details as the renting of his villa, and the author's rights in a film on his life. He always found time to telephone his nieces and nephews to wish them a "happy birthday".

His love for his brothers, Bob especially, was unlimited. The boys were always fighting, and trying to out-do each other, but it was all in affectionate rivalry.

Kennedy never allowed the slightest remark against a member of the family. "The Boston Mafia", as it was called in Washington, had total respect for the code of family unity.

Perhaps, under professed admiration for Freedom, Kennedy was at the bottom of his heart something of the dictator. Congress bored him; he had not the slightest esteem for his erstwhile colleagues. Indeed, the sole big set-backs of his term of office were due to his inability to persuade them to approve his projects. It was perhaps that vague tendency to totalitarianism which made him (in a letter written in 1938) express some admiration of the régime of Benito Mussolini.

Would John Kennedy have become president without his father's \$200,000,000 to \$400,000,000 (no-one knows just how much); or the prestige of his paternal grandfather; or the particular set of political circumstances prevailing in 1960?

What does it matter?

He knew how to galvanise the American people, and

after saving them from one risk of atomic destruction, to canalise their energies towards the spiritual "new frontiers" which would certainly – had he been able to remain at the helm – have brought about a decisive transformation of the whole national life.

Despite their elegance of style, his speeches always produced a great effect on the crowds. But they do not allow us to divine his real thoughts. For, alas, though it is hard to understand why men who have attained great heights should need "ghosts" to write their speeches, Kennedy had specialised assistants to do this for him. He approved the texts, certainly, and made alterations, but that doesn't change the fact that he read them as an actor declaims his rôle, and not as an author does his own work.

There is, however, a slogan which characterises the real Kennedy, the Kennedy who still lives on in the memory of those who knew, loved or admired him:

"Do not ask –" he said on the day of his inauguration to the presidency, before the steps of the Capitol – "Do not ask what the country can do for you. Ask yourself what you can do for your country."

WITHIN A few minutes, the blue and gold plane would land at Dallas, where his rendezvous with Destiny awaited him: John Fitzgerald Kennedy was that day to receive an answer to his own question.

The Chatelaine

WHEN JACQUELINE STEPPED from the plane – which had touched down gently on the tarmac at Love Field, Dallas, promptly at 11.30 – the Mayor's wife presented her with a magnificent bouquet of red roses . . .

"Three times that day in Texas we were greeted with bouquets of the yellow roses of Texas. Only in Dallas they gave me red roses. I remember thinking: How funny – red roses for me," the First Lady was to say when at last she was able to look back on things quietly.

The yellow rose, indeed, is the emblem of Texas. A folk-song dating from the Civil War, which is to all intents and purposes a national anthem, tells of "The Yellow Rose of Texas" – the young girl waiting at home for the warrior's return.

"Come, you'll be welcomed with love, like a hero," it says.

A college band was playing this ballad at the airport, but the music was drowned by the happy cheers of the crowds.

WHILE JACQUELINE was receiving her bouquet of red roses, Lee Harvey Oswald was on the fifth floor of the Texas Book Depository building, eating a chicken sandwich brought with him from Irving. The sandwich had been wrapped up in the same thick brown paper which shrouded the long parcel.

Oswald, too, had got up early, at about six-thirty. He drank some black coffee, which he made for himself, and went (without saying good-bye to wife or children – they were all asleep) to the garage of his work-mate, Wesley Frazier.

Marina would be late rising this morning; she had had to get up twice during the night to see to the new baby, and was tired out.

Mrs William Randall, Frazier's sister, was at her window – it was about half-past seven – and saw Oswald with that long brown-paper parcel. It was long indeed: about a yard or so. At the time she didn't take any particular notice; lots of people carry parcels.

Frazier saw it, too.

"What have you got there, Lee?" he asked straight out.

"Curtain-rods," replied Oswald, without further explanation.

"That was our only conversation that morning," reports Frazier. "But Oswald was taciturn. The only time he ever talked was when someone asked after his children. Then he would laugh, tell you all about them, and show you photos of them . . .

"We got to work about eight o'clock," Frazier's account continues. "Oswald said hello and went off. That was the last time I saw him."

There are two lifts in the Texas Book Depository building. The one at the front, to the right of the entrance door, is automatic; it is mostly used by the officer workers. On the other side of the building, reached either from the courtyard or by passing through the main ground-floor office, is a goods lift worked by a lever. It is not much used except for loads of books. It seems reasonable to suppose that Oswald went up in it to the fifth floor, since no one can swear to having seen him that morning.

The fifth floor is like a huge barn, with no walls except

the exterior ones. The room must be over a hundred yards long, and about sixty-five wide. The books are piled up like bricks, forming partitions; there are, too, some metal filing-cabinets which also divide up some areas. It is therefore difficult to see from the lift what is happening in the more distant sections, alongside the windows, or inside the "rooms" formed by the walls of books and filing-cabinets. You could, in fact, live for days on end in some corners without ever being discovered.

To get a clear view of this labyrinth you would have to take down all the books, which would take at least a week.

It would have been perfectly possible for someone with evil intentions to go up the previous evening, spend the night there, and get away again – especially if he had an accomplice in the place.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY had already taken his place in the Lincoln-Continental GG300; but Jacqueline was still shaking hands, talking to people in the crowd, saying "Thank you" again and again. The President decided to go and get her; he took her gently by the hand and tried to lead her towards the car. He had to start shaking hands all over again, passing close by the placard proclaiming *Let's bury King John*. Someone in that crowd must have been the last person to shake hands with John Kennedy.

Jacqueline had been late to the official breakfast that morning because she could not make up her mind whether to wear the pink suit, or a thin dress with a fur coat – a magnificent leopardskin, a tribute from the Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. But she remembered what the Somali Ambassador, Muhallim, had said to her; it is well known, of course, that the Ethiopians and Somalis are bitter enemies.

"Above all, don't wear the leopard in Texas," he had begged her. "They'll all want to imitate you, thousands

will be ordered, and there will be another massacre – just when we are trying to prevent the species becoming extinct."

Since, anyway, the temperature was rising in Dallas, Jacqueline decided in the end not to wear the fur coat. A First Lady is always having to cope with such diplomatic dilemmas; the smallest thing may have weight.

AT ABOUT the same time, the next Sunday's issue of the magazine *Parade* was being distributed to forty or so of the great dailies throughout America.

Parade, like *This Week*, belongs to a class of weeklies which constitutes a phenomenon peculiar to American journalism. They have colossal circulations – 10,000,000 in the case of *Parade* – and are printed weeks in advance. Each daily is sent a number corresponding to its own circulation, and the magazine is clipped into the pages of the Sunday edition, as a free "extra".

This new number had a big front-page article under the appetising title *Is Jackie Tired of the White House?* The theme was not new, but one wonders why just that moment was chosen to return to it.

Referring to her as "the Cleopatra of the Potomac" – the Potomac is the river which runs by Washington – it said that her high-and-mighty ways had made her many enemies in the capital.

She issues a kind of imperial ban against anyone she does not like; as, for instance, in the case of Nina Steers, barred from the White House for being pro-Nixon. Nina is vaguely related to her by marriage; her mother married Hugh Auchincloss, who after parting from her married Jacqueline's mother.

Jacqueline disliked many facets of being a president's wife. She hated electioneering, had no respect at all for the double-dealing of politicians, and for a long time regarded the White House as a mouldering cage.

In fact, she was not really happy except when she was travelling, or hunting in Virginia.

THE AMERICAN press – so prompt to publish photos of Queen Elizabeth with skirts flying, or Prince Philip talking with a shopgirl – observes the completest taboo on the private life of the presidential couple.

The president has at his service a highly skilled outfit whose official title is "Press Secretariat". In reality, they are nothing but blatant publicity agents; they know very well how to erect a wall of silence where most needed.

The White House is not just another source of news among many. It is an important centre, with a hundred journalists permanently accredited to it. They live there all day, and often stay there all night. They have no other duty but to follow the president around and receive his pronouncements.

For these journalists, the White House is a career. You can't be a hero all the time; it would not be easy to risk your agreeable, profitable and useful job, perhaps have to move house, leave Washington or even the U.S.A., because you had violated a taboo. In any case, such details of private life, even a president's, for the most part are unimportant. If we are to violate these taboos it is to enable all the roles in this drama to be properly focused.

DESPITE HER undeniable charm and model-girl figure, Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy was neither the most beautiful nor the youngest mistress of the White House.

Dolly Madison was most attractive, and many men lost their heads over her. The very lovely Frances Folsom was married in the Blue Room on June 2nd, 1886, at the age of twenty-one, to President Grover Cleveland. Another girl of twenty-one, not, however, anything like so beautiful as Frances Folsom, married President John Tyler.

Jacqueline was born on July 28th, 1929 at Southampton, a very fashionable place on the Atlantic coast, about a hundred miles from New York; high society goes there as in Europe they would go to Biarritz or San Remo. The Bouviers, indeed, belong to the "pure" aristocracy of America.

That word "aristocracy" may cause some smiles on the other side of the Atlantic, since in America everyone is of obscure origins, and many of the great fortunes arise from Stock Exchange speculations only more or less honest. But the great adventurers of the last century, the captains of industry, the masters of Wall Street, the gold-prospectors and some few descendants of political leaders, consider themselves an *élite*, the Nation's nobility, and live in a strange little world of their own.

John V. Bouvier, "Jackie's" father, came from people who lived in a small Provençal village, but was himself a stockbroker. Her mother, Janet Lee, also "of very good family", remarried after the death of her first husband, to Hugh D. Auchincloss, also a financier.

"Jackie" is very close to her sister, her adopted sister, her half-brother and her two adopted brothers, but due to the various divorces and widowhoods the family ties are rather involved.

She was only just ten when her parents were divorced; but she was brought up in the best private schools in America. She did her undergraduate studies at Vassar (the *nec plus ultra* of the American girl). She took a course at the Sorbonne, staying meanwhile at a *pension* in the rue Vaugirard. She also stayed for a time in an art school in Venice, and after returning to Washington took a course in journalism at the university there. She speaks French quite well, can get by in Italian, is not bad at Spanish and can even manage a little Latin.

Despite the strong disapproval of her father, who died not

long after, Jacqueline got herself a job as a photo-reporter on the *Washington Post*. She stopped people on the street to ask their views on current affairs. She was, of course, used to interviewing top people; the other reporters were not at all pleased. They called her "this little rich girl playing at being a reporter", and described her as cold and distant.

Like so many girls of her class, Jacqueline professed an inverted snobbery, in favour of anything labelled "culture" and everything European. Thirty years ago, rich heiresses wanted to marry impoverished Counts and Marquises, and to dance the Charleston in Trafalgar Square. Now they want to see Ionesco's plays, hear Stravinsky and dine with Pinter – and for them the real "great world" is that of the intellectuals. All this is by way of reaction against the philistinism of the American masses, who understand nothing of such things; they go to Broadway to see the leg-shows, spend their evenings watching television and never read any but best-selling writers.

With her flowing chestnut hair, doe-like eyes, and soft voice (she murmurs rather than talks) Jacqueline looks the arch-type of that American ideal, "the girl next door". Her temperament, however, is very different from what the American women's magazines call "the typical American woman". She can be headstrong and impatient, hates housework and cooking, and is bored by the cocktail parties of the capital. Neither can she bear the affections of political ladies. If the President's wife and the Vice-President's sat side by side their silences could be disturbing.

LEGEND SAYS that Jacqueline came to know the young Senator Kennedy through being sent to photograph him for her paper. It is more likely that they were often thrown together in the salons of the capital. Washington is a very provincial city, where they could hardly not meet.

He courted her ardently.

When the rich, attractive and ambitious young politician proposed, it was thought that she had made the catch of the year.

The Bouviers themselves didn't think so at all. They regarded the Kennedys as peasants, being Irish; and as newly-rich, the father's fortune being of such recent date. Worst of all, they were Democrats. It is even said that one reason why Kennedy so much wanted to become president was in order to prove to his in-laws how very wrong they had been.

Jacqueline was bored to death during the first months at the White House. She could not simply spend all her time painting in the grounds, drawing caricatures of her husband and reading Byron. But her husband suggested that she should restyle each of the 107 rooms of the residence on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Jacqueline set to work with a will, renewing everything, removing the tasteless *bric à brac* accumulated over nearly a century. Then she gave a kind of world-wide housewarming, with a television programme in which she acted as guide.

The telecast had a tremendous success, making Jacqueline appear in a rather fairy-tale aspect – the chatelaine whose smile irradiated those so-historical premises. She was that indeed: a chatelaine who with grace and exquisite manners received kings, presidents, writers, philosophers, explorers, patrons of art, actors, astronauts, queens and princesses. Never before had Washington known such splendour. Casals came to give a concert. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was performed. It was Jacqueline who arranged for the Mona Lisa to visit Washington.

All this also gave rise to strong criticism. She was accused of sacrilege in having made alterations to the White House, and of being unfaithful to the national sport, Baseball, in favour of foreign and esoteric pastimes.

But Jacqueline liked flouting public opinion. She dared to appear in a simple woollen coat in the middle of January, when it was freezing; the American middle-class (who believe absolutely that you aren't a success if you haven't a mink coat) were horrified at seeing a president's wife dressed "like a typist". It would have been useless to try to explain to them that a Lanvin coat is quite as smart as any fur in the world.

She was criticised for buying her clothes in Paris, and for spending more than \$30,000 a year there.

"If that's true," she replied a little tartly, "it's because my underwear is made of sable."

Although there were many divorces in the family, Jacqueline's own adherence to the Catholic faith is sincere.

"I don't like praying in public," she says. "Religion is a matter of conscience." But she was brought up along strict lines, and considers her first and most important duty to be the moral training of her children.

She adores those children. For her, they come before everything. If they need her, she will neglect any other task at all, any party or amusement. She will get up several times during the night to see that all is as it should be in their room.

"A child," she says, "should be surrounded with love, security and discipline; but he must follow his instinct. The growth of a child should give us joy."

She had paid a great price for the joy of being the mother of little John and of Caroline. She has been known to have had at least two miscarriages, one in 1954, and one in 1956 (during her husband's first presidential approach). Then, on August 7th, 1963 she gave birth to her second son, Patrick Bouvier Kennedy. It was a premature birth, and despite a Caesarian operation and the efforts of the best doctors Patrick died two days later.

After that, Jacqueline wanted to get away from Washing-

ton. She went to join her sister in Greece; then stayed on, in spite of her husband's pleas that she should come back. At last she did so. Two days before the visit to Dallas, she made her first social appearance, inviting more than seven hundred people to the White House.

Jacqueline always loved her husband madly. She often teased him, imitated his accent, made fun of his not always distinguished tastes, called him a vulgarian; and when someone asked him "What sort of music do you like, Mr President?" replied for him: "The presidential anthem." But still she loved him madly.

"I like to read history books," she was to confide later to the writer Theodore H. White, "because it was history which made Jack what he was. You must think of him as a little sick boy, who reads and reads. For Jack, history was a procession of heroes. That is how it was that history transformed him. My husband saw the heroic everywhere. Men are a mixture of good and bad; Jack had an ideal view of history - his world was peopled with heroes . . ."

JACQUELINE HAD one quality which her husband admired most of all: her self-control. She knew how to face up to the most adverse moments with calm and reserve. She knew how to keep a hold on herself.

In a few minutes, when the presidential car was to turn the corner of Houston and Elm Streets in Dallas, Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy would need to call upon all that self-control.

CHAPTER EIGHT

'They're Going to Kill Us All!'

"YOU CAN'T SAY NOW," said Governor Connally's wife, turning towards the President as the car rounded the corner from Houston Street into Elm Street, "that the people of Dallas don't love you, and aren't glad to see you."

"No, no-one can say that any more," John Kennedy answered.

They were his last words. At that moment, the first bullet hit him. He lifted a hand to his throat.

Jacqueline, who was smiling and waving to some people on the other side of the road, turned back towards him, to see what was happening. The chauffeur looked up at the small bridge, trying to see what had caused the noise.

Kennedy slumped down in the back of the car, and Jacqueline cried:

"Oh my God! They've killed my husband. Jack ... Jack!"

That was when Governor Connally turned to the right. He was to say later:

"The President had blood on his cheeks. He said nothing. Then a bullet hit me in the shoulder. I knew that the wound was serious. I tried to get up, but collapsed into the arms of my wife. It was then that I heard a third shot, maybe a fourth. I saw that the President had been hit again. I cried out: 'My God, they're going to kill us all'."

It was exactly twelve-thirty-one, Texas time. The history

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III

of the United States stopped short then, like the mechanism of an electronic computer when the current is abruptly cut off.

Kennedy's blood was spattered on Jacqueline's dress. It was on her stockings, on the seats, on the carpet. Throwing down her bouquet of red roses, she took her husband's head in her arms, still managing to make desperate signals to the men of the "Queen Mary" behind.

For there were no guards at the side of the car when it happened. Bill Greer, the chauffeur, had slowed down. Behind, on the running-board of the "Queen Mary", agent Clint Hill saw what had happened - he was still looking in the direction of the bridge - and decided to go to the aid of the Kennedys. He leapt from the running-board, ran on and caught up with the presidential car, putting one foot on the rear bumper. He slipped, but managed to keep hold of the handle of the boot and kept on running.

At that moment the chauffeur came out of his stupor, said, "Let's get the hell out of here!" and put on speed.

Mrs Kennedy was still holding her husband in her arms, as if to protect him with her body. She looked round, and saw that Hill was not yet in the car.

"Help me! My God, help me!" she called out to him, as if in reproach. Then, laying her husband's head on the car-seat, she turned and climbed on to the luggage compartment, lay flat and held out her right hand to Hill. She was holding on with her feet; her nylon stockings turned slowly red.

Hill climbed into the car. He pushed Jacqueline into the back again, and snatched up the telephone.

"The President has been shot," he reported to headquarters. "Which is the nearest hospital?"

The presidential car shot like a rocket into the motorway,

at a speed of 100 m.p.h. Policeman Hill punched the metal of the car several times with his fist in his agitation.

The film taken by amateur photographer Zapruder proves that the whole drama lasted exactly sixteen seconds. An eternity in history.

At the time when the first rifle shot rang out – for at that distance, it could only have been from a rifle – the presidential car was moving very slowly. It was exactly eleven yards beyond the junction of Houston and Elm Streets; and on a direct line between the furthest right-hand window of the fifth floor of the Texas Book Depository building and the foot of the bridge over the motorway, on the other side of the avenue.

Because the chauffeur slowed down still more, and even stopped for a moment after the second shot, the car did not travel much more than thirty yards during the whole of this unbelievable episode. But it all happened so quickly that nobody had a clear view of what occurred.

Tailor Zapruder was filming, as so often happens, without really seeing what the camera was recording, because he was concentrating so hard on not losing sight of his subject.

Some cars had cut through the procession to reach the centre lane of the three turning off the motorway. It seems fantastic, but not one of the drivers saw anything, although the fourth bullet must only just have missed hitting one of them.

Charles Brehm tells how he saw Kennedy's face alter, change colour and then fall to one side.

Mary Norman, who was using her instant-print camera to photograph Kennedy, shouted:

"My God, they've shot him."

David Miller, dissatisfied with his first photographs of the President, had meanwhile run round the Texas Book Depository building and arrived at the side of the motor-

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way. So it came about that he saw a car with the American flag and a blue and gold pennant come tearing along flanked by police motor cyclists. Without proper view-finding, he levelled his camera and took a photograph which must be the most striking of all the pictures taken that day . . .

It shows the policeman, Hill, standing in the back of the car trying to calm Jacqueline and telling her to keep her head down (there could well have been other attempts, or accomplices further along the route). Mrs Connally is huddled up in the bottom of the car, covering her unconscious husband. The President's body is lying on the back seat, but one of his feet remains caught on the top of the car. Another Secret Service man, sitting next to the chauffeur, has turned round to see what is going on, and cannot believe his own eyes.

Young Miller did not know until later that he was the last person in the world to photograph Kennedy – at least, his foot. When he developed the film, he could not make it out; his father then told him about the assassination.

CHAUFFEUR BILL GREER was now following a Dallas police car, on the way to Parkland Hospital. The sirens which had been silenced all day so that the President could hear the people's cheers now screamed madly. The Secret Service "Queen Mary" followed. Its men now had their rifles and sub machine-guns at the ready, fingers on triggers.

Next came Vice-President Johnson's car. Policeman Rufus W. Youngblood was the only one of the occupants visible.

"I thought at first, like everyone else in the procession," he was to say later, "that some over-enthusiastic spectator had thrown a firework or let off a rocket. But from my point of view, this was an unusual noise, and the regulations laid down what I must do in such a case. I shouted to the

people in the car: 'Get down on the floor, quick', and repeated the same thing several times, even after they had all got down on the bottom of the car. I had taken the Vice-President by the shoulders and roughly pushed him down on the seat. Johnson didn't say even a word in protest. Then I shouted to the chauffeur: 'Damn it, get out of here'."

Agent Youngblood lay across Lyndon Johnson, covering him with his own body.

"I heard the three shots," said Mrs Johnson, "but I said to myself 'What a party! Now we've got rockets . . .' We were all so gay. Then I saw that President Kennedy had bent forward, and just then our Secret Service man ordered us to do the same. Senator Yarborough was lying right next to me, and he kept telling me: 'The President's been shot, the President's been shot.' But I wouldn't believe it, he must be having a nervous crisis, it was all unbelievable. Just like in the film *Seven Days in May*. Make-believe. Then, after an eternity, I raised my eyes and I read the word 'Hospital'."

LATER, WHEN he was decorated by Johnson personally, Rufus Youngblood explained modestly that he had done no more than follow regulations.

"I've been paid every month since 1951 for the job of defending with my life the man I have to protect."

His courage and presence of mind perhaps averted from the United States what would have been the gravest catastrophe in its history. Youngblood was not to know whether there were several assassins, or if it was planned to get rid of Johnson too; certainly, the man who had fired so rapidly and skilfully at Kennedy's car might well have decided to have a go at Johnson's. All the indications are that that was possible, even probable. Youngblood saved the situation.

The death of Johnson would have created a vacuum in Washington. His constitutional successor was a man of seventy-one, with no experience whatever of government and unknown to the masses: John W. McCormack, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

In the press car it was thought that Johnson had had a heart attack, and the rumour spread like a flash. Others said that an attempt had been made on his life, and that for security reasons the procession had nonetheless gone on to the Trade Mart, its destination. The pressmen therefore decided to go there.

A few reporters, however, chose instead to go and see what was happening on the lawns which lined Elm Street. Douglas Kiker was one. Supposing that there had been some disorders among the crowd – a negro demonstration, maybe – he began to run down the middle of the road, waving his press-card.

It was pandemonium here.

People were lying on the grass. There was shouting. Policemen were waving their guns. Secret Servicemen forcibly swept everyone out of their way, their machine-guns pointing upwards.

The negroes had concluded that right-wing extremists were about to massacre them all; they thought it was they who were being shot at from windows. The fathers among them had thrown themselves across their children, stretched on the grass. One of these negroes, John Draster, cried: "Lynch! They're going to lynch us!" and tried to run away, pulling his little girl by the hand. A policeman, revolver in hand, ordered him to stop and get down on the ground too; there might be more shooting.

Then there was an outcry from among the crowd:

"The assassin's been arrested." Police were swarming round a fair-haired young man.

Kiker met Marianne Means, a "Hearst" correspondent.

She looked desperate; great tears were rolling down her cheeks.

"Something's happened to Jack, something terrible. God help us!"

A secretary spoke to them; she was still automatically eating a ham roll, her lunch, without realising it, she was in such a state of shock.

"Yes, the President's been shot at," she said.

But journalist Kiker refused to believe her. "She's hysterical, like the rest of them," he thought.

There was no sign of the three official cars.

A photographer was taking pictures of a girl who had hidden herself behind a column, part of a small monument above the grassy slope.

Mary Norman had developed her "Polaroid" photo, and stared at it in amazement.

Journalist Kiker approached one of the police cars which had meanwhile drawn up alongside the pavement. The radio of one of them was turned on: A headquarters official was saying: "The President is wounded. He is being driven at top speed to Parkland Hospital. Protect the area."

Instantly another journalist, an agency representative, started to run for the entrance to the Texas Book Depository building, ahead of a policeman, and darted towards the telephone near the door. It was thus that the world received the first intimation of what had happened in Dallas on this terrible afternoon of November 22nd.

MORE THAN half the fifty-odd Secret Service men were still among the crowd at the scene of the tragedy but not a shot was fired. No cordons were set up. The Secret Service knew nothing at all of what was happening in the Texas Book Depository building. Just one or two men tried vaguely to go towards the bridge over the motorway.

Their confusion was painful to watch. For sixty years they had planned and practised a thousand times what should be done in the event of an assassination attempt. Now there they stood, like kids who have lost their parents.

The retired chief of the Service, U. E. Baughman, was later to ask why they did not riddle the windows of the building with bullets; why they did not instantly leap to the President's aid at the first shot, without waiting for Jacqueline Kennedy's calls for help.

Later the whole world was bitterly to reproach the Dallas police for having failed to protect the President, and for the sketchiness of their investigations. But the Secret Service, so distinguished in the intimidation of journalists, must bear a very great part of the responsibility for what happened.

MRS GONNALLY, believing her husband dead, was sobbing in the bottom of the car. Policeman Hill was still standing, and still telephoning. Jacqueline was weeping silently, pressing her husband's disfigured face to her breast, like a mother feeding her baby.

Her right stocking was saturated with blood, and her pretty pink dress stained all over . . . Mary Lincoln's dress was also pink that Good Friday evening at the Ford Theatre. Her pink dress, too, was splashed with blood . . .

THE PARKLAND Memorial Hospital, built in memory of the war-dead, is on the left-hand side of the motorway, half-way between the town centre and the airport. It is a huge modern building surrounded by trees, and is visible from very far off. It was here that Lee Harvey Oswald was cared for at the age of seven, after a car accident. And it was here that only a few weeks before his little girl had been born.

The presidential car stopped before the Emergency entrance. But there was a wait while attendants brought out

stretchers. The Secret Service men made a half-circle round the vehicle, sub machine-guns at the ready.

Vice-President Johnson got out of his car, one hand pressed against the small of his back, and went inside without looking round. He was dead white, and limping. Those who saw him like this at once thought that it was he who was the cause of all the alarm. Already Washington had been informed that he had succumbed to a heart attack.

After two interminable minutes, the stretcher-bearers came out. They saw to Connally first, then brought a stretcher close up to the car and laid Kennedy on it. Jacqueline went with them, holding on to the hem of her husband's jacket, and supported by a Secret Service man. The door closed behind them.

It was twelve-forty-two.

Senator Yarborough gave the impression that his hair had gone white in that quarter of an hour. He supported himself against the hospital wall, just under the *Ambulance* sign, as if to stop himself falling. He was weeping. It was like this that he faced the first journalists to arrive at the hospital after the fruitless call at the Trade Mart. The guests there had been told that there would be a delay in the programme, and that they should finish the banquet meanwhile. To stop them getting too impatient, Texan folk-music was played.

"I saw nothing," Yarborough said to the journalists. "But there was a smell of powder in the air everywhere. Kennedy and Connally are inside, in the Emergency room. It's too horrible to describe . . . their wounds are serious, very serious. It is a devilish act, a horror . . . I can't say any more. . . ." And he wept, the right honourable and distinguished Senator of the highest parliamentary assembly of the United States, covering his face with his hands.

He went inside in his turn, followed by the thunderstruck journalists.

Where was everybody? This is the great unanswered question in Dallas and the police still do not like to discuss this point.

The Secret Service men followed the car of the president to the Parkland Memorial Hospital; some were with the vice president, some left for the airport, others stayed along the parkway around the hospital . . . only a few remained on the spot to guard the retreat and then left for the airport. Their duty was to protect the president, not to maintain order.

Some have criticized this attitude, stating that the Secret Service should have split and tried to catch the killer.

THERE WERE very few policemen from the Dallas police force on the spot as this was the end of the itinerary and there was no crowd. Elm Street is only an access to the parkway and there is thus no need for great police protection. All but one of the agents were on motor-cycles and they were first to reach the presidential car. They then rushed toward the building while several others tried to calm the people.

There was chaos. Some detectives ran towards the bridge as they thought the shooting came from there. By the time they had reached the building and returned to the scene there was nothing but bewildered newspapermen and spectators.

THE PRESIDENTIAL car, the wonderful blue Lincoln-Continental, stood deserted alongside an ambulance. On the bonnet was the hat which Kennedy never wore but always took with him to wave to the crowds. The blood-soaked carpet was strewn with the yellow roses presented to Mrs Connally and Jacqueline's bouquet of red ones.

Most of the remaining police along the route had left their posts when the presidential car had passed by, either to eat or to return to headquarters for new assignments. They were informed of the events like everyone else, by rumours and radio. Some just stayed where they were, bewildered, talking. Some phoned headquarters, but no one had given them instructions what to do in such an event. The whole of Dallas was confused, the police more than anyone else.

CHAPTER NINE

'Si Vivis, Ego Te Absolvo'

THE LOUDSPEAKER SUMMONS irked Dr Malcolm Perry, peacefully swallowing salmon croquettes in the canteen of the Parkland Municipal Hospital.

"STAT for Dr Tom Shires!"

STAT was the code-word for "disaster". But there were on an average 273 urgent cases at the hospital daily, and Dr Shires, the resident head of surgery, was never called out for them in this way. Anyway, today he was absent. It was for Dr Perry, professor in surgery, and his assistant, to respond to the summons.

Unwillingly, he picked up a telephone and called the operator:

"Mary, you're crazy. Can't one even eat something in peace?"

"President Kennedy is dying. STAT. He has just been brought into Casualty."

There were two Casualty rooms in the hospital, distinguished as Trauma Room 1 and Trauma Room 2. Kennedy had been taken to number 1, and Connally to number 2.

Dr Malcolm Perry went down one floor, to ground level, to that narrow room with grey tiled walls and cream ceiling.

In the middle – still on the same wheeled stretcher of aluminium, since it had been thought best not to take the risk of moving him on to an operating table – the President

of the United States lay on his back, dying. A huge lamp flooded his face with pale light.

Perry noticed a young woman in a pink dress, shrunk back against the wall. She stayed there perfectly still, saying nothing, her eyes fixed on Kennedy's face. There was blood on her dress, on the stretcher, and in great quantities on the floor. The pool went on growing. Mixed with the blood was brain tissue, and on a nearby table Perry noted a fragment of the President's brain almost an inch thick.

Dr Carrico had cut away the President's jacket, shirt and cotton vest.

"How big he is, the President. Much bigger than I'd have thought..." went through Perry's mind. He unbuttoned the rest of the plaid sports jacket, and threw it down near the pool of blood. Then he held out his hands to a young nurse, who put on the rubber gloves.

One thought obsessed him: *Here in front of me is the one man most important to the world's destiny... His life depends on me...* And mentally he went over all he had ever learned of the technique of resuscitation.

OUTSIDE, IN the ante-room, journalist Douglas Kiker, overcome by emotion, turned the corner so fast that he collided with a negro male nurse who was carrying a large dish of boiled potatoes. The negro staggered, the boiled potatoes showered down on the flagstones, and Kiker, the male nurse, and Secret Service men guarding Trauma Room 1 all hurried to pick them up.

Kiker was still on his knees when he saw the outline of the black silhouette of a soutane. It was the Reverend Oscar Huber, of the Society of Jesus, priest of Holy Trinity church. He was accompanied by Father Thompson, his assistant.

"No, no-one told me to come. But the hospital area is in

our parish. I was at the edge of the motorway with the children of my school... We saw all the confusion. So I took the children back to school, and then the television announced rumours of an assassination attempt. So I came..."

DR CHARLES James Carrico, a twenty-eight-year-old interneer, who had qualified in 1962, had been the first to examine the President, at twelve-forty-three.

All the doctors on duty that tragic Friday made immediate and separate detailed reports of what they had done and their observations. It is on an examination of these reports, a historical document of inestimable value, that this account is based. The Federal police and the Secret Service did not take them over – one does not know why. Perhaps they were unaware of this medical practice. There are very strong reasons for uncertainty as to the number of bullets which actually wounded Kennedy; and upon their number depends the validity of the theory of a single assassin. Therefore these reports constitute the only authentic and irrefutable evidence.

So – according to Dr Carrico – when the patient entered Trauma Room 1 he was already dying; there were some efforts to breathe, and uncertain heartbeats could be detected by auscultation. The young doctor took immediate note of two external wounds. One was low down at the back of the neck. Part of the brain tissue had been expelled from the other, larger one; therefore the bullet must have entered at the front of the head.

The doctor inserted an endotracheal tube into the throat in order to facilitate artificial respiration. Examining the inside of the throat with a laryngoscope, he at once saw an appalling wound in the trachea, below the larynx. The tube was pushed beyond this laceration, and artificial respiration began. Air was forced into the President's lungs

by means of an electric air pump; later hand pumps were used, for greater speed.

At the same time, a lactate solution was injected intravenously in the patient's right leg. A nurse took a sample of the President's blood: ORh Negative.

It is usual in America to wear a bracelet or carry a card indicating one's blood-group. The President had neither. No-one had thought of asking him to take this vital precaution. However, a bottle of this type of blood was immediately obtained from the hospital blood-bank.

IT WAS at this moment that Dr Perry arrived. He realised at once that his task was an impossible one, that he was being asked to do miracles. His patient was no longer breathing. The chest was still, the back of the head half-shattered, and blood was pouring out over the stretcher and on to the floor. It is difficult to imagine the damage that can be done by a rifle bullet.

"Send out an urgent call for Doctors Clark, McClelland and Baxter," he cried to one of the three nurses present. He had not realised that Dr Baxter, another surgeon, was behind him; Dr Jones was also present.

Dr Carrico now remembered having read somewhere that Kennedy suffered from an adrenal deficiency, a malfunction of the kidneys. He suggested another injection, of liquid cortisone. Dr Jones made an incision in the patient's arm and inserted a second tube. Dr Curtis arrived meanwhile, and took charge of the intravenous injection in the leg.

In cases as serious as this, the medical staff of the hospital automatically go to the Casualty room, in accordance with a well-worked-out plan whose timing is calculated in tenths of a second. In those short eighteen minutes, fifteen doctors were thus to come to the President's side.

What was pumped into his veins was a *Ringer* lactate

solution, also called "white blood", which is injected while awaiting blood transfusion. The flask of O Negative blood arrived almost immediately after, and the change-over was made. No one will ever know who gave his blood to the President; the flask was labelled "universal donor" – anonymous.

When the nurse had the door opened to bring in the blood-bottle, a big, strong, broad-shouldered man tried to force his way into the room. But the Secret Service man on guard at the door knocked him down with a vicious upper-cut.

"I'm from the F.B.I.," protested the newcomer, getting up on his knees and waving his warrant card. "I've got to telephone J. Edgar Hoover." But the Secret Service had paralysed the whole telephone network at Dallas; he had to wait ten minutes before he could get through.

THE THROAT wound was such that mixed blood and air were compressed inside the chest. Dr Perry decided to operate and called for a scalpel. He intended to perform a tracheotomy; that is, to open the throat below the wound and insert a tube into the respiratory tract so as to be able to pump out the blood and air in the lungs, which otherwise would smother the patient.

PERRY SAW nothing now but the appalling wound; and, beyond, deep in the shadows, the face of a woman, still as a statue, whose eyes were fixed upon him.

Kennedy had not been anaesthetised; that would have been superfluous – he no longer felt anything. Malcolm Perry had satisfied himself from the start that the first bullet had rendered the President unconscious. Kennedy never knew what had happened to him some seconds after twelve-thirty-one.

The front of the mobile stretcher had been winched up in order to place Kennedy in a slightly tilted position – so

that the blood might be helped to return to the heart. Now Dr McClelland, another surgeon, noted that air-bubbles were escaping from the patient's mouth . . . indicating a hole in the lung.

Dr Peters, assistant professor in urology, therefore inserted a tube in the upper part of the right lung, just under the shoulder; while Dr Charles Cremshaw, an interneer, did the same on the other side. A nasogastric tube was passed into the stomach.

DR WILLIAM KEMP CLARK, doyen of the neurosurgical department, and highest-ranking of those present at the hospital, was lecturing to his pupils at the time of the alarm. He was the last to arrive in Trauma Room 1 - five minutes after the rest.

He at once established that there was no longer a pulse. "Kennedy's pupils were widely dilated and fixed glassily on the light-bulb. The eyes were divergent, there was no reflex of the tendon - that is to say, the muscle at the bottom of the leg (called the Achilles heel). *Any medical student would know what that meant!*"

DR CLARK wanted to speak to Malcolm Perry, but the latter stopped him with a quick movement and with a look indicated Jacqueline, still flattened against the wall. Perry had guessed what Dr Clark was about to say.

Clark went over to Mrs Kennedy and said in a polite but authoritarian tone:

"Wouldn't you rather leave, Madam?"

But without moving her lips Jacqueline answered firmly: "No."

MEANWHILE, DR Jenkins, aided by Doctors Giesecke and Hunt, had set up an anaesthetic machine to pump pure oxygen into the patient's lungs.

Dr Clark began artificial respiration as a last resort, to try to resuscitate Kennedy, pressing the chest with both hands in regular rhythm. Then he asked for a "torpedo", meaning, in hospital slang, a machine for measuring the movement of the heart. They are shown on a screen, like radar, a luminous oscillating line representing the heart-beats. But the little green line remained appallingly as level as a calm, mid-summer sea.

Dr Clark stopped his work; and forgetting Jacqueline's presence exclaimed in despair:

"Mac, it's too late . . ." (Mac is a very familiar American expression, like calling someone "old man". Never, in normal circumstances, would Dr Clark have used it to a colleague).

It was twelve-fifty.

But Perry wouldn't listen. He began furiously to continue working on the chest. Sweat poured from his forehead, still he went on. At one point, he shouted:

"For God's sake, someone give me a stool."

Dr Giesecke brought one at once, and Perry continued his work.

Dr Clark had asked for a precise cardiogram. Dr Fouad A. Bashour, a Lebanese doing a term as associate professor in cardiology, was informed by telephone, and at once brought in an oscilloscope. He was accompanied by Dr Donald Seldin, doyen of interneer staff.

Dr Clark now examined the wounds. The one in the occiput, the back of the head, was very large; part of the skull had been shattered. He found a bullet on the stretcher, doubtless fallen from one of the wounds during the surgical treatment.

There was blood everywhere: more than 1,500 c.c., according to Clark's estimate. There was a small hole at the back of the middle of the neck, and the huge wound in the throat.

The doctors of Parkland Hospital are accustomed to the sight of gunshot wounds; the Texans are always shooting each other. There was no doubt in the opinions of Clark, Perry and the rest that one bullet entering from the front had caused the throat wound.

Dr Bashour had attached the electrodes of the oscillograph to Kennedy's wrists. Perry continued to give artificial respiration like one possessed. He was sweating heavily, the drops falling upon the red chest of the President. An attendant stood by with two wooden batons, used in such cases to pound the patient so that the shock may re-start the heart-beat.

The oscillograph remained still.

Dr William Kemp Clark put out a hand and stopped Malcolm Perry. It was one o'clock exactly by the IBM electric clock on the grey wall of the room.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy was officially pronounced dead.

It was then that Mrs Kennedy said: "Call a priest."

Dr Jenkins cut off the flow of oxygen.

Kennedy was dressed only in his trousers and the support worn for his injured back. Dr Baxter went and got a clean sheet, and with the help of Dr Jenkins gently drew it over the President's body.

The floor was strewn with bottles, flasks, labels, cotton-wool, bandages and blood.

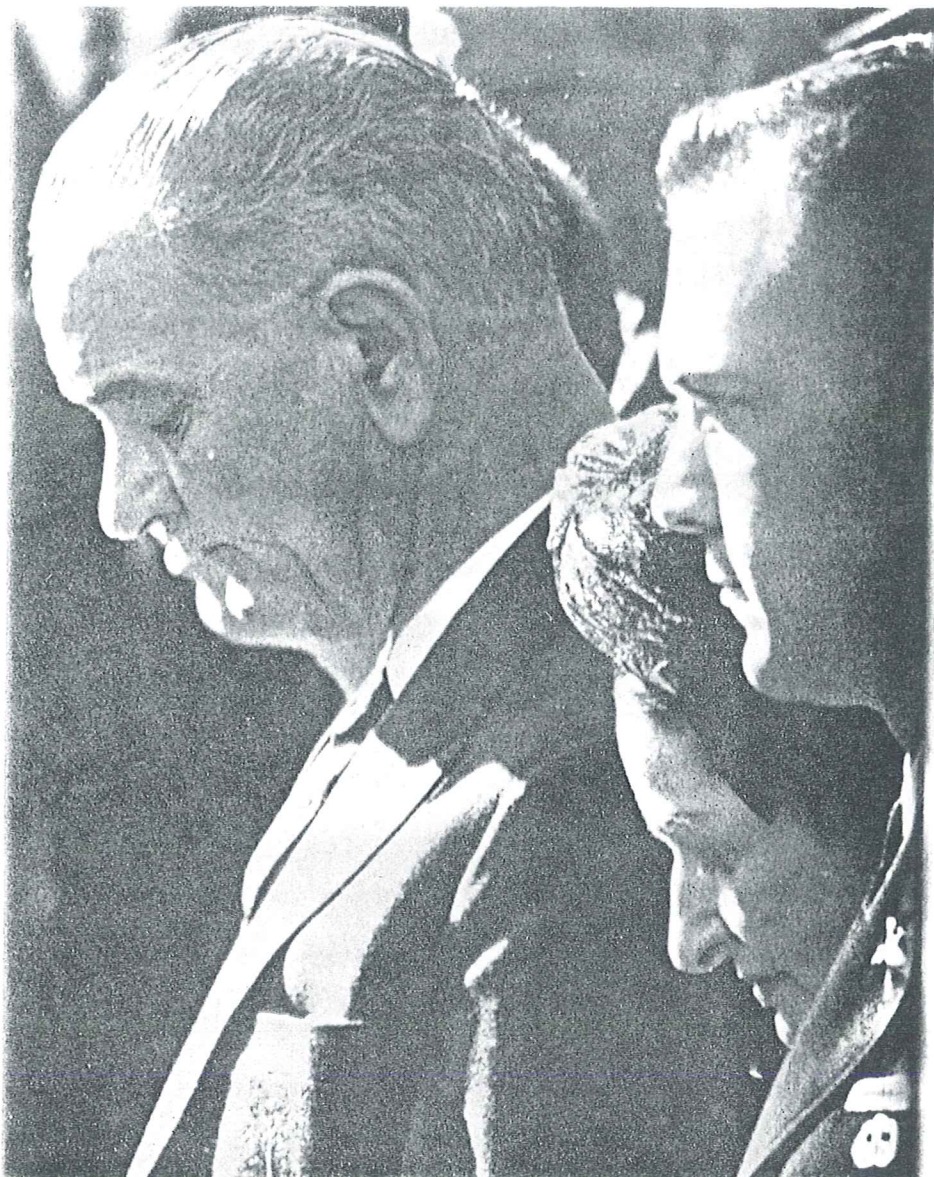
Dr Peters gathered up Kennedy's shoes, and put them on his clothes, piled on a little steel cupboard.

OUTSIDE, SITTING on a form, face in hands, in a state of great shock, was Lyndon Baines Johnson. He did not yet know that he had become the thirty-sixth president of the United States of America.

SUPPORTED BY two Secret Service men, who had come in at the same time as the Reverend Oscar L. Huber, Jacques-

Right, the flag-draped President's casket is carried by members of the United States Services on the beginning of its journey to Washington's St Matthew's Cathedral. Below, the procession leaves the Capitol





The new President, Lyndon Johnson, and his wife leave the Mass at St Matthew's Cathedral with bowed heads

line Kennedy went towards the stretcher. The sheet did not cover the feet. Jacqueline kissed the toes of the right foot. Then she took three steps forward and stood at the right of her husband's head. The priest had lifted the linen in order to uncover and touch the face.

"Please accept my deepest sympathy, Madam," he said.

"Thank you, Father . . ."

The Reverend Huber had never before seen the President, except on television.

"Kennedy looked dead. But I was told that there might still be a faint heart-beat. I didn't want to ask questions in front of his wife. So I began the conditional rites." These rites are accorded by the Catholic Church when a person is unconscious, and incapable of receiving the full rite of absolution.

"*Si vivis* — If thou livest — John Fitzgerald Kennedy, *Ego te absolvo ab omnibus censuris et peccatis, in nomine Patris, et Filii et Spiritus Sancti,*" said the Jesuit Father, extending his hands to make the sign of the cross on the President's forehead.

"Amen," murmured Jacqueline.

Then with his finger Father Huber traced another cross in holy oil:

"*Per istam sanctam Unctionem indulgeat tibi Dominus quidquid deliquisti. Amen.*" Then, finally:

"*Ego, facultate mihi ab Apostolica Sede tributa, indulgentiam plenarium et remissionem omnium peccatorum tibi concedo, et benedicto te. In nomine Patris . . .*"

"Give him eternal rest, Oh Lord," the priest went on in English.

"And may perpetual light shine upon him," responded Jacqueline. Then she said:

"Thank you for your care of the President."

"I am persuaded," the priest said, "that the soul had not yet left the body. This last sacrament was valid . . ."

Jacqueline was then left alone in Trauma Room 1. Now John belonged to her.

OUTSIDE, in the ante-room, the feverish impatience of the journalists was getting out of hand. They swarmed round the priest.

"Yes, the President is dead, gentlemen . . ."

But the world was not yet to know it. The Secret Service still blocked the telephones.

The doctors were conferring in one of the nearby rooms. Who should sign the death certificate? It was decided that this should fall to Clark, since officially the cause of death was the destruction of the nervous system.

In Trauma Room 2, Governor Connally was saved by a team of five doctors. He was wounded in the chest, arm and thigh by the same bullet. He was declared out of immediate danger some minutes after one o'clock.

But the doctors of Parkland Hospital had not yet finished their labours. An hour and a half later, the body of a policeman was brought to them: Tippitt. He was declared DOA (Dead on Arrival).

Bill Greer, the presidential chauffeur, looked through the telephone book. He stopped at one page, rang a number.

"Oneal Funeral Home," replied a voice, that of the owner himself, Vernon B. Oneal, living at 3206 Oak Lawn, right opposite Father Huber's church.

"This is the Secret Service. Please select the best casket you have in stock and bring it here as fast as humanly possible. It is for the President of the United States."

Jacqueline was still alone with her husband. She bent to kiss first his cheek, then his hands. Round his neck she saw a medal of St Christopher. She would have liked to take it with her, but then she remembered . . .

John, to whom she had given a similar medal, had put it into the coffin of little Patrick. He had asked her to give

him another for their wedding anniversary, which had been a month after the infant's death.

This medal belonged to John. She could not put it into his coffin as a remembrance of her. He would want something specifically hers, something he had loved . . .

So she took off her wedding ring and put it on John's finger.

It was one o'clock in the afternoon in Dallas.

In Washington, in their little blue and pink rooms at the White House, John-John and Caroline still slept like angels.

'Mummy, Why isn't there any Mickey Mouse on the Television?'

MARIE WILSON, SECRETARY to a New York lawyer, was monotonously typing a conveyance, in her office on the fifty-seventh floor of the Empire State Building. She had left the radio switched on, since it helped make her work a little less boring. Suddenly a Frank Sinatra song was broken off, and a newsflash was announced — a special bulletin, as they say in America.

"Oh dear," said Marie Wilson to herself impatiently, "they're going to tell us that the East Freeway is jammed, or that some Harlem school is in uproar . . . They do pile it on with their 'bulletins'." She was about to twist the knob when the word "Kennedy" stopped her.

"It is reported that President Kennedy has been shot at in Dallas," said the announcer. "Nothing serious. We will keep you informed."

It must, thought Marie Wilson, be some sort of bad joke. Perhaps one of the office-boys had set up a microphone on the main aerial of the sky-scraper, which feeds all the radios and television sets in the building. Or perhaps it was one of those diabolical stories made up by journalists short of "copy". Still, she snatched up the telephone; her reaction was that of hundreds of thousands, of millions of Americans. But the telephone lines were blocked.

It was one-forty-five, New York time.

It will not be known with any certainty for some years if

the blocking of telephone communication was due to the fact that the apparatus, lines and employees were overstrained — the whole U.S.A. was trying to call relations, friends, newspapers, radio and television stations, the police and the Pentagon — or if orders had come from high places. This could have been part of the plans for coping with a national emergency; to avoid panic; to reserve the lines for the use of the organs of national and civil defence, and to prevent their use by an hypothetical invader.

THE PENTAGON, that fortress on the edge of the demarcation line between Washington and the State of Virginia, had been directly informed by General Godfrey T. McHugh, the President's military *aide-de-camp*. He used an Army transmitter which was in his car, operating upon a special wave-length. Secret Plan "F" of the Wilson Code, "Incapacity of the Ruler", came into operation. (This was so named because President Wilson was for a long time before his death almost entirely unable to take decisions — in practice, and secretly, his wife, Edith, ruled in his place.)

In the trebly-barricaded corridors at the heart of the building, the Officers of the Day opened sealed envelopes giving emergency orders, while couriers warned the four Service chiefs: Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines.

Almost at once, the giant machines of the Strategic Air Command at Omaha took off, their atomic and hydrogen bombs ready armed. Planes out on patrol (there is at least one atom-bomber always in the air) were ordered to mid-Atlantic. The Navy sent out a "red" signal to submarines armed with Polaris.

While the radio continued to deny the very rumours it had helped to start — that Kennedy's condition was grave, and even that he was dead — the Pentagon underwent the most serious crisis of the post-war years; although there were few officers who really believed that the President could be

dead. To them, as to all Americans, such an idea seemed absurd.

At the Pentagon, where everything is planned for ahead in minutest detail, the idea of a plot had already been considered. The President might be kidnapped; false news broadcast by a group of revolutionaries; above all, there might be a Soviet, or at least a Cuban invasion.

The Dallas assassination attempt might be no more than a prelude to such an invasion. It could be just part of a plot by Southerners mad enough to try to seize power – rather like the conspirators of July 20th, 1944 in Germany, attacking Berlin in the belief that Stauffenberg had succeeded in eliminating Adolf Hitler.

The possibility of a Soviet invasion is certainly a remote one, but thanks to its “electronic brains” the Pentagon had already visualised that a surprise attack on the lines of Pearl Harbour could start with such an assassination attempt. The Soviets would launch a few rockets, announce that others were on the way, and at the same time present an insulting ultimatum.

A Washington without a president – and, it seemed, perhaps without an effective Vice-President either, since the most contradictory rumours were circulating about him – would have the greatest difficulty in facing up to the Soviet demands. There was also the chaos paralysing the capital...

The Americans have invented the most amazing things, but a mere heavy fall of snow can bring all activity to a halt. The confusion was such that it would most probably have been difficult if not impossible to carry out the plans prepared by the government against a national emergency.

The President is both Commander-in-Chief and sole arbiter of the retaliatory atomic forces. He alone has the right to order the unleashing of the system of nuclear annihilation which constitutes the sole means (at any rate for the American strategists) of deterring a Soviet aggression.

His successor, Johnson, was not for the moment in a position to take on those responsibilities. In the first place, he had not yet been sworn in. In addition, many high officers might well have refused to take orders from him; they would have insisted on hearing Kennedy’s voice, suspecting some ruse by the enemy. The “enemy”, after all, could have made up the whole story of an assassination, and be now trying to throw the various commanders into confusion – either by cutting them off from each other, or by leading them into the trap of provoking an isolated act of aggression which would justify massive Soviet reaction. (“Isolated” because in such circumstances the commanders are not in touch with each other, and do not know if the order for retaliation is general.)

Certainly, there are at the Pentagon very secret instructions transferring the presidential powers to the Chiefs of the General Staff in the event of a president’s sudden death. It is obviously impossible to know the details of such plans. But no one is sure that they are really effective.

The “hot” teleprinter line allowing direct communication between the Pentagon and the Kremlin remained unused on that day. Krushchev did not initiate any enquiries; he was probably as much taken by surprise as the rest of the world. And no-one thought of informing him personally of what had happened in Dallas. First of all because only Kennedy had the authority to make use of the teleprinter; secondly, because the men of the Pentagon feared that the very act of informing the Soviets might give them the idea of profiting from the situation and deciding upon an offensive.

Perhaps, then, the world can find one consolation among the misfortunes of that day: the belief that the Soviet Premier is sincere, at any rate for the moment, when he claims to want peace. For if Krushchev had desired the destruction of the United States, Fate had given him then

an un hoped-for opportunity. He could have had America at his mercy – or at least have made the attempt, like the Japanese at Pearl Harbour, by exploiting the appalling situation.

Between the time when the President's death became generally known, and that of his successor's arrival in Washington, the Kremlin could have turned the world upside down. It would not even have been necessary to have attacked the United States. They could have occupied Berlin, forced the Dardanelles, menaced Japan and taken Saigon.

All that in several hours?

American strategists are always saying that it could be done.

IN SPITE of the still silent telephone lines, the radio succeeded in getting together bits of news on what had happened at Dallas – incomplete, certainly, often contradictory and always much more optimistic than the reality. The great number of private transmitters – in Secret Service cars, taxis, police offices and the radio stations themselves – allowed messages sent "in clear" to be heard, and reports received from correspondents on the spot.

The first indication of the gravity of the situation was the news that Governor Connally had been taken to the hospital's operating theatre, while President Kennedy still remained in the Emergency room. This must mean that his condition was so serious that he could not be moved.

Work in offices stopped. People began to gather on the corners of 5th Avenue in New York, Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles, on the Fisherman Wharf at San Francisco, in stations and airports, and in front of the windows of television shops. Teen-age possessors of transistor radios, normally held in horror, were surrounded. Some shops

shut their doors. Taxi-drivers went home. Harlem was in a hubbub, believing that the Dallas negroes had been massacred.

Thus began a paralysis of American life which was to go on for four days, and which caused a loss of over \$1,000,000,000 in national revenue.

There was a sharp fall on Wall Street, more than six million shares changing hands. The Dow Jones index, a sort of Stock Market barometer, fell by 21.16 points in half an hour. Such a fall had not been recorded since May 28th, 1962, when it was by 34.95 – causing fears of another such crash as in 1928. The Board of Governors of the New York Stock Exchange ordered a closure at 2.9 p.m., thus ending a situation which could have finished in a financial panic. Later, an enquiry revealed that in spite of plans for keeping share dealings steady some powerful interests had speculated on the fall. For them, the Dallas drama was nothing more than just another chance to get rich.

IN WASHINGTON, Gerry Behn, head of the White House special detail, was one of the first people to know for certain of Kennedy's death, informed by an agent in Dallas. He at once sent six men to the Capitol – the historic home of the Senate and House of Representatives. The "gorillas" burst into the offices of the Speaker of the House, John W. McCormack; the clerks thought they were being raided by gangsters. But McCormack had been warned by telephone.

The law of succession, amended in 1947, provides that in the event of the incapacity or death of both president and vice-president, it is the Speaker of the House of Representatives, as highest in the hierarchy of the electoral system, who automatically becomes President of the United States. (The Senate has no Speaker, the vice-president acting as one there).

A mechanised unit from the Washington garrison was ordered to speed to the Capitol.

With a presence of mind which would have been more useful in Dallas, the Secret Service men took routine precautions. They entered the National Cathedral School for Girls, and went into one of the classes. They ordered Luci Baines, Lyndon Johnson's younger daughter, to go with them. She was taken home, and the house put into a state of siege. In Austin, the capital of Texas, others went to the University, looking for Lynda, the headstrong elder daughter. She was with her boy-friend, Bernard Rosenbach, a young naval officer. And what if the young man had put up any resistance to this strange kidnapping?

"We'd have knocked him down with a punch on the jaw," one of the "gorillas" said later.

THE TWO small children were still sleeping on the second floor of the White House, their dreams undisturbed.

But in the Senate, there was near-pandemonium.

Wayne Morse, the rebel Senator, broke off a speech criticising Kennedy's foreign policy when a page brought him a message. He started, and went over to the chairman. Ted Kennedy, the new Senator for Massachusetts, and also the President's younger brother, was presiding over the debate.

Ted listened to him, went dreadfully pale, got up and left the room hurriedly – forgetting to bring the session to a formal close. Such a thing had never happened before in that grave assembly.

THE TELEVISION stations stopped their regular programmes, cut out the raucous advertising sessions, and tried to organise themselves to keep the public informed. Commentators, reporters and cameramen were even more overcome than the audiences.

"I operated my camera like a robot – my mind was elsewhere," explained one photographer, who was filming outside the hospital at Dallas.

The jovial presidential Press Secretary, Pierre Salinger, was of course ignorant of what had happened, being en route to Japan. In his absence, a harassed *aide* at last admitted to the press that Kennedy was dead.

Radio announcers sobbed as they read the brief communiqué. The lights went out on Broadway. Women went to light candles in the churches. Car drivers stopped their vehicles at the roadside. Manhattan, like so many other American towns, was enveloped in a mantle of mist and rain.

In Berlin, young girls threw flowers – red roses – on the "Wall of Shame".

In Rome, the President of the Republic did not hide his tears, but wept with his face in his hands.

In Moscow, even, Mrs Nikita Krushchev showed strong emotion.

"I have always wanted to know what people felt on the day Abraham Lincoln died," said a Kansas City student. "Now I know. It's dreadful to think that I am still living while he, Kennedy, is dead."

The people of Dallas hid themselves in their homes. The town had become a city of shame.

In Chicago, a man in front of the *Tribune* building, shouted, addressing himself to the South:

"We are a nation possessed, which amuses itself by periodically massacring its presidents."

The head of the Supreme Court of the United States declared publicly:

"It is the Southern fanatics and the extreme right-wing who are responsible for the murder of our President."

"He has written the last but finest chapter of *Profiles in Courage*," said Richard M. Nixon, the man so narrowly

beaten for the presidency, of his rival. *Profiles in Courage*, which brought Kennedy a Pulitzer Prize, was an anthology of the lives of great Senators.

Although world reaction was perhaps even more solemn than in the United States, life there stood still for four days, as if a barbarian invader had clutched hold of the nation – no theatres, no cinemas, no bars, no cafés.

People mourned Kennedy as he had been a Knight of the Round Table, clad in shining armour, the ideal of people of every land and clime. America is always complaining that she is misunderstood, and too much criticised abroad; but she should realise that in spite of everything it is of her that others dream, her they want to love.

The midinettes of Paris decided to pay homage to Kennedy by giving up their traditional fête on St Catherine's Day.

ROBERT KENNEDY, who so much loved his brother John, received the terrible news while lunching in the garden of his villa with his wife and the wife of the French Ambassador in Washington, Mme Herve Alphand. The shock must have been terrible. Still it is difficult to understand why he did not, in his capacity as Attorney General, at once fly to Dallas to take charge of the police investigations, and unravel any plot which might be afoot. Even his immediate – but recalcitrant – subordinate, J. Edgar Hoover, boss of the F.B.I., did not think it necessary to go there. Another of the thousand mysteries of that inexplicable day.

Rosemary Kennedy was watching television that afternoon, in the lounge of the St Colleta institution at Jefferson, Wisconsin, for retarded or mentally handicapped children; she had been there for twenty-one years. It was thus that she learned of the death of her big brother.

A labourer working in the grounds of the Kennedy estate

at Hyannis Port heard the news on a portable radio, and rushed into the house crying: "Kennedy's been shot! Kennedy's been shot!"

The President's mother, who at seventy-two had undergone so many family troubles, did not show surprise. She gave the impression of having known that yet another misfortune was on the way. She woke up old Mr Kennedy and told him the news. Someone turned on the television. Probably no one will ever know whether Kennedy Senior, so completely paralysed, really understood what had happened to this son, the head of the dynasty which he had founded.

When informed of the tragedy, Peter Lawford was in a show at Stateline, Nevada – the same cabaret in which some months later Frank Sinatra, Jnr, appeared at the time of his sensational kidnapping.

"God have pity on us all!" he exclaimed, and at once telephoned his wife, Eunice, the President's sister; then his friend Frank Sinatra, head of "The Clan" – a group of actors prominent in the film colony. Sinatra ordered general mourning in Hollywood.

John Kennedy's grandmother, Mrs Fitzgerald (wife of the famous politician and Mayor of Boston), was not informed; she is 96 years old. To this day, she does not know that her favourite grandson is dead.

The trial of Gene Thompson, the man accused of having procured his wife's murder, was adjourned *sine die*. The presiding judge explained that the jury might well be so emotionally disturbed by the assassination as not to be able to give an objective verdict.

In Shiokawa, Japan, Kohei Hanami wept on learning of the death of the man he had once tried to kill. He is the former commander of the cruiser which so nearly did so during the war, when his ship sliced Lieutenant Kennedy's patrol boat in two.

"The world has lost an irreplaceable man," said Hanami, now manager of a shoe factory.

Also in Japan, in Tokyo, Mme Inejiro Asanuma, wife of the Socialist leader who was publicly assassinated by a teen-age fanatic, declared:

"The life of a politician's wife is bitter and sad. I too saw my husband die in my arms on the way to hospital . . ."

But another widow was less sympathetic: Mme Ngo Dinh Nhu, whose husband had been brutally murdered in Saigon shortly before, on November 1st. In Los Angeles she had told me that she held John Kennedy responsible for his assassination, and that she believed God would revenge it.

Now she sent an ironical letter of condolence from Rome:

"I do not know you, but you must understand now what a wife feels when told that her husband has been brutally done to death. What has come to you is only one effect of the frightful injustice of which my husband was an innocent victim . . ."

Cruel words, and flagrantly lacking in tact; but later – much later – history, no sentimentalist, may perhaps say that Mme Nhu was not altogether wrong in linking the two events. Extremists who blamed Kennedy for Nhu's death might have had some hand in his.

When Kennedy's death was announced to the elementary school children in Dallas, and they were told to go home, the pupils all started to clap enthusiastically, and sang "Dixie", the anthem of the Southern rebels.

Princess Paola of Belgium heard the news with annoyance. She was dancing at the home of Count Bismarck, when it was thought best to stop the orchestra playing.

"Now they'll shut me up like a novice again, just as I was having some fun for the first time since Laurent's birth!" she said.

In Santa Barbara, California, lives the shadowy but very

middle-class head of the semi-secret John Birch Society; there, Kennedy and Warren were hanged in effigy.

The wife of Earl Cabell, Mayor of Dallas, who that same morning had presented Mrs Kennedy with her bouquet, received a death-threat by telephone. Her husband gave up his intention of going to Washington that evening after a warning that there was a bomb in the plane he was going to take.

James R. Hoffa, irremovable boss of the truck drivers' union, the man President Kennedy's brother had been trying for years to bring down, remarked with a smile:

"Now Bob Kennedy's nothing more than any other little no-account lawyer."

In Nashville, Tennessee, a speaker at a plenary session of the municipal council declared:

"Jack Kennedy died the death of a tyrant." He was warmly applauded.

In the New York suburb of Brooklyn, thirteen-year-old Johanna Malandrucchi was alone with her sixteen-year-old sister Mary. After hearing so much talk on the television about rifles and gunfire, the two girls decided to play with their father's sporting guns, imprudently displayed on the walls. Mary aimed a carbine at her little sister. Johanna did the same, but pressed the trigger. Mary was killed on the spot.

In Columbus, Ohio, a young man who had made a disparaging remark about the dead President was stabbed to the heart by an outraged neighbour.

That day, in the United States, eight deaths took place – almost all ignored – following arguments caused by the President's death. Two old men had fatal heart attacks.

The twenty-six dancers of the Joffrey Negro Ballet were in Kiev. During the evening, some minutes after the second act had begun, came the news from Dallas. The American dancers abandoned the performance, and organised a

memorial service – in which Soviet officials took part – in the Russian Orthodox Church of St Vladimir.

In Berne, Switzerland, the new United States Ambassador, True W. Davies, was due to present his credentials next day to the President of the Swiss Confederation. But since an ambassador is the president's personal representative, the papers signed "Kennedy" no longer had any value; from the point of view of protocol, the Ambassador was nothing more than a foreign tourist. Finding his position somewhat ridiculous, Davies telegraphed desperately to the State Department for new credentials, but no one in Washington dared to bother Johnson with such a small matter . . .

There was no televised entertainment whatsoever. Nothing but discussions of what had happened, the rare intervals filled by concerts of sacred music. With common accord, the television companies had banned all advertising.

Still the Americans remained rooted before their screens; television, like the telephone, they realised, had grown into the very fabric of their lives. It was only the little ones – those of about the same age as "John-John" – who asked vainly:

"But, Mummy, why isn't there any Mickey Mouse on the television today like there usually is?"

In the White House – which from outside seemed deserted, and whose walls looked grubby under the fine grey rain which had not ceased all day long – the two small children had at last woken up. They were not given time to ask questions; they must get dressed as quickly as possible, because they were going to be taken to their aunt's home.

The editors of *Parade* magazine tried desperately to call in all copies of the issue containing the article in which it was claimed that Jacqueline Kennedy was fed up with the White House.

In Hollywood, a decision was taken to stop the showing of



The Kennedy family attend the funeral of the late President. On Mrs Kennedy's right is Edward Kennedy, and on her left Attorney-General Robert. In front are Mrs Kennedy's children, Caroline and John



Mrs Kennedy at the graveside in Arlington National Cemetery.
The eternal flame she lighted is in the foreground

the film *PT109*, inspired by the adventure in the Pacific; to postpone the premiere of *Seven Days In May*, of *Fail Safe* and of *Dr Strangelove*; and also to shelve without further ado all films dealing with the assassination of presidents. It was also decided to cut certain scenes; for example, where in the film *Take Her, She's Mine* a student imitates Kennedy's voice.

A book was called in from library circulation, a book which, however, had great success: *J.F.K.: The Man and The Myth*, by Victor Lasky. In it, the author sharply criticised the President; it was feared that mobs might stone the shop-fronts.

But at the same time plans were made in Hollywood for a dozen future films based on what had happened in Dallas; and already publishers were telephoning their authors to discuss books, albums, gramophone records, photo and portrait distributions. The idea was to put them on the market without losing a moment, to be first in the field. The advertising industry wanted to cover the walls with pictures and slogans honouring Kennedy; to write his name on the sky; strike medals; sell napkins stamped with his name; statuettes, lapel-buttons, dolls.

Capital cities, towns, villages, hamlets, already proposed to re-name their avenues, squares, airports, golf-courses, dog-tracks, nurseries and reform schools in his honour.

DESPITE THESE extremes, the whole world, that evening, seems to have found a common denominator in its affection for the widow in the bloodstained pink dress and the young leader so wickedly struck down.

Twelve people, however, did not share in this universal sorrow. These were twelve jurors, who had been deliberating since the morning on a criminal case before the Federal court in Manhattan. They had not been able to reach a verdict, and had decided to retire to their hotel rooms and

continue their deliberations next day. As the law compels, they were kept cut off from the outside world and not allowed to talk to their guards – still less to listen to the radio or read the newspapers.

These were perhaps the only people in the United States who went to bed that night of November 22nd, 1963 without knowing of Kennedy's death.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A Bad Tipper

R. S. TRULY, MANAGER of the Texas Book Depository, had watched the parade from the steps of the building. Now he was pushed down on to the road by the crowd – some hurrying towards the assassination spot, others trying to get away.

"I didn't know," he says, "that the shots came from our building, but I saw a man run in there and go to the telephone, and then a policeman dash in. I thought he wanted to go up on the roof, to get a full view of the scene. I caught up with him and said 'Come on, I'll show you the way.'"

"We went through the ground-floor offices to get to the back and take the goods lift. The front lift only goes to the fourth floor. The two cages of the goods lift were at the top, which was odd, but at the time I didn't think about that. I supposed that everyone had gone to lunch, and would have brought the lifts down. I pointed towards the stairs. The policeman leapt up them two at a time; I could hardly keep up. When I did, on the first floor, he had drawn his revolver and was confronting Lee Harvey Oswald. The young man was in front of the door of a sort of employees' canteen. He had a bottle of Coca-Cola in his hand, which he must have got from one of the vending machines put there for the use of the staff.

"Does this man work here?" the policeman asked me.

" 'Yes,' I answered. Then we went on up the stairs to the third floor, took the lift from there to the seventh and went out on the roof."

The police never thought of throwing a cordon round the suspected building; at the time, however, no one was quite sure that the shots had come from there.

Certainly, photographer Bob Jackson states that he saw a rifle fired from the window at the end of the fifth floor. But he did not get a photograph; he was still changing his film.

H. L. Brennan, a turner, tells of having seen "a thin young man, healthy-looking, with a rifle, press the trigger twice . . . He wasn't in any hurry, that guy."

A television cameraman, Mel Couch, states that he saw a rifle, but is not certain whether it was on the fourth or the fifth floor.

A photograph taken a few seconds later shows two negroes at the end of the fourth floor. But they are looking down at the road, not up at the window above them, where the shot came from.

Buddy Walthers, the policeman from the Sheriff's office, states for his part that the shots – or at least one shot – came from the balustrade of the motorway bridge. He ran towards it; that was when, with a Secret Service man, he found a rifle bullet in the grass near the bridge – the "fourth bullet"?

JACK RUBY, alias Rubinstein, went into the office of the show business editor of the *Dallas News* at 12.45. The newspaper's offices are five minutes' walk from the spot where the assassination took place. He seemed quite untroubled.

MARINA OSWALD had put the baby into its cot. The other little girl played nearby as she watched a women's programme on television. She still could not speak more than seven words of English, and did not understand the announcement which interrupted the programme.

Later, her friend Mrs Paine told her of the assassination. "I was very much upset," said Marina, when she made her first free statement. "I was so sorry for Mrs Kennedy. What frightful person could have done such a thing? I would have imagined anything in the world except that it could be my husband."

While Truly and his policeman were on the roof of the Texas Book Depository, the Detective Captain of the Dallas City Police, Will Fritz, was directing a systematic search of the building. In the fifth-floor warehouse, one of the windows was found two-thirds open. On the floor near the window were three 6.5 mm. cartridges. Three cardboard boxes, one on top of the other, had probably served to steady the gun. Fragments of a chicken sandwich were also found.

Five minutes later the rifle was found, hidden under a pile of books. The cartridges were of the same calibre. The Texas police had difficulty in recognising the maker's trademark. First a German Mauser was mentioned, then a Japanese rifle; finally, it was stated that it was an Italian Carcano 91, coming from surplus stocks, and with a Japanese Canon telescopic sight.

Truly went down again to the ground floor and called together all the ninety-one employees. They were all there except one: Oswald.

"I don't know if it's of any importance," he said to a detective, "But I've one man missing. A guy named Lee Oswald."

"It could be very important indeed," answered the policeman. He reported to the Detective Captain, who telephoned a description of the missing man to the radio control room at police headquarters. "Twenty-one years old . . . About five feet ten in height . . . Weight, a hundred and sixty pounds. Name: Lee Oswald."

Fritz also sent two investigators to Irving, to see Mrs

Paine — hers being the only address for Oswald in Truly's staff records.

LEE HARVEY Oswald had quietly gone down to the office, where it seems that a telephonist said to him: "Someone's tried to kill the President, isn't it terrible?" — to which he did not reply. The telephonist does not swear to this incident.

He went out the front way, mixed unnoticed with the crowd, walked up the avenue, made a detour, went back again and knocked on the window of a bus which had come to a halt in the middle of the road because traffic was at a standstill.

The bus conductor, C. J. McWatters, says he is certain that this was at 12.40. He kept looking at his watch all the time, being late on schedule. "Oswald went and sat in the middle of the car. There were two other passengers."

The route of the bus was much the same as that of the presidential procession. Oswald would pass right by where Kennedy had been killed — like the murderer returning to the scene of his crime in a detective story. But for the moment the bus was still seven blocks away, to the west of the spot. It could only creep forward. At one point, a motorist who was just in front got out of his car, went to the front of the bus, tapped on the window and called out: "Kennedy's been killed." Oswald showed no reaction.

A woman in the bus, not wanting to lose her train, decided to get off. Oswald followed her.

"Give me a transfer," he said. A transfer is a ticket permitting the use of another line without extra payment. McWatters franked the ticket with his day's code-letter. It was from this that the police traced him when the ticket was found in Oswald's pocket.

William Wayne Whaley, a taxi-driver, was waiting in

front of the Greyhound Bus station — an intercontinental line — some two hundred yards or so north on Elm Street. There are not many taxis in Dallas, and the drivers prefer to wait for custom. Oswald opened the door and said to him: "I want to go to 500 North Beckley." He didn't live there, but the address was close to the house where he had his little furnished room in Oak Cliff.

The taxi-man was used to all sorts of passengers, and was not over-surprised by the man's silence. He got no answer to the question:

"What the devil's going on down there?" — meaning the spot where the tragedy had taken place.

Perhaps if Oswald had given him a 25 cent tip, he would have forgotten this fare. But on arrival, with 95 cents on the meter, Oswald gave him just one dollar, and got out without even saying thank-you. The driver was furious.

The housekeeper of the lodging-house remembers having seen Oswald go into his room at about one o'clock. He came out soon after changing his jacket.

At exactly one-fifteen, Mrs Helen Markham was waiting for a bus on the corner of East 10th Street, about a mile from Oswald's lodging. Some way up the road, she saw a white police patrol car stop: No. 10. A policeman got out: J. D. Tippitt. He was alone. No one will ever know why he went there, or whether or not he had received the "alert" message from the control room.

Mrs Markham had only an indistinct view of what happened. She "saw a man aged about thirty, with curly hair and a white jacket, go towards the policeman and speak to him. Then the policeman went nearer. They stopped. The man in white said something. He took a revolver from his pocket and shot the policeman. I thought he was going to kill me too," said Mrs Markham.

At the crossroads, Ted Callaway, second-hand car

dealer, was standing in front of his office. He had heard the shocking news about Kennedy on the radio.

"I heard a shot, screams, I crossed my used-car lot, and I saw this guy running down the other side of the road. He had a gun in his hand, and was waving his arms . . . I called out: 'Man, what goes on?' But he did not answer. I am sure that it was Oswald – I recognised him the same evening."

A couple of miles further on is the Texas Cinema. That day they were showing *War Is Hell*. There were only a few dozen people in the audience.

On the same side of the pavement as the cinema there is a big block of houses and shops, among them the Hardy shoe-shop. Salesman Johnny Brewer was looking out of the window when he saw a man in shirt-sleeves coming along. He was behaving oddly, going from doorway to doorway, as if trying to hide. (The police later found a beige jacket abandoned behind a petrol-pump not far away). Johnny Brewer went out and saw the suspicious character go towards the cinema. He asked the cashier, Julie Postel, if she had seen him. She said that she hadn't. The ticket-collector had not seen anything either. Brewer then asked the cashier to call the police.

There had already been two alarms in the district. Someone telephoned to say that a dangerous man was hiding in a church. Then a woman ran down the street like a mad thing. The police had sent out patrol-cars.

Policeman M. N. McDonald was first on the spot.

"I arrived at the cinema at half-past one. I asked for reinforcements. I had the lights put on, and the film was stopped. Brewer got on to the stage and pointed out to me a man sitting in the centre of the front stalls."

Other policemen, including the Sheriff's detective Buddy Walthers, arrived. The theatre was surrounded. The rest of the audience were asked to go up into the circle. Agent

McDonald came level with Oswald, and "seeing that he was reaching for his gun, I clutched him round the waist. We fell together on to the seats. I had my hand on the butt of his gun, but his finger was on the trigger. I heard a click. The hammer didn't work. That saved my life. The other policemen jumped on the man, and hammered his face with their fists."

Oswald is supposed to have said then:

"It's all over," but this is not quite certain.

At the sound of sirens, a crowd had gathered outside. Now they yelled threats to lynch the man. Oswald answered them calmly:

"I protest this brutality."

He was taken to the pleasant little police building near the Statler Hotel. He entered it just before two o'clock. He was never to leave it alive.

WARNED BY radio, the officers sent to Mrs Paine's address roughly arrested Marina. They asked her if her husband owned a rifle; she must have said "Yes" and shown them the hiding-place in the garage. But the rifle was not there.

She too was taken to headquarters, and submitted to endless interrogations. The police claim that she recognised the murder rifle as her husband's.

Thanks to a note found in Oswald's wallet, the little furnished room in Beckley Street was traced. The proprietor, Mrs Johnson, back from her restaurant, could not understand what the police wanted: there was no Oswald living here. Never heard of him.

Then a neighbour who had been watching television exclaimed:

"But that man they've arrested, it's Lee, our Lee."

The police rushed into the little room, and searched it for two hours. They found nothing.

FROM THE first moment, Oswald behaved with unbelievable arrogance towards his interrogators, taking the line that they were hired toughs. Gestapo dogs, madmen.

Assistant District Attorney William F. Alexander charged him with the murder of policeman Tippitt. At the time of the arrest there was no direct evidence of his involvement in the assassination, so the police contented themselves with holding him on this charge. It was not until later, in the evening, that he was taken before an examining magistrate for the second time, and charged with the murder of "one, John F. Kennedy". The law does not permit the victim's office or title to be mentioned.

When charged by Alexander, Oswald sneered:

"Tell that to my legal representative." He continued to ask for a lawyer, but did not specify who it should be. At one point, he cried:

"You treat me as if we were in Soviet Russia, and not in a free country."

Justice of the Peace David Johnston told Oswald that he had all the rights guaranteed by the Constitution, and need not answer questions put by the police.

"You treat me like a slave," Oswald shouted back. "I'm in a concentration camp here."

He refused to admit anything at all. He knew nothing of Kennedy, nothing of Connally. He had not been near the window on the fifth floor, had never seen the rifle before, hadn't the least idea what might have happened to policeman Tippitt. He had gone quietly off to the cinema, believing that all the Texas Book Depository employees had got the afternoon off. When not accusing the police of brutality, or calling them monsters or degenerates, he told them, "You're mad..."

But he admitted being a Marxist and a revolutionary.

THE TEXAS police have an iron reputation: when they get their hands on a suspect they know in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred just how to extract a confession. But police chief Jesse Curry realised that Oswald would not talk easily. He therefore decided to play for time, get together as much evidence as possible and then confront Oswald with it. Malign Fate was to decide otherwise.

After Oswald's arrest, and when he had been photographed and finger-printed, a request was sent by teleprinter to the F.B.I. in Washington for an Identification. In the huge classification room at the headquarters of the Secretariat of Justice, on Pennsylvania Avenue, electronic brains gave the answer within seconds. Ten minutes later, the Dallas police had the information: Oswald had renounced his nationality and lived in Russia; he was considered to be a Communist agent, or at least a sympathiser.

A little after three o'clock, still Texas time, a brief communique was issued to the press:

"We are holding a suspect, a young man who has lived in the Soviets..."

Until then, the American man in the street, politicians, journalists, television commentators, had supposed that the only possible assassins must be extremists opposed to Kennedy's policy of racial equality. Perhaps acting alone, perhaps a group of fanatics, perhaps men in the pay of such Southern organisations as the Klu-Klux-Klan, the "Citizens' Councils".

Had not Earl Warren just declared: "Those responsible are bigots, ultra-nationalists, those who hate the negroes and oppose progress."? He was a man of highest standing in Washington, Chief Judge of the Supreme Court – and in the American hierarchy a Chief Justice is almost the President's equal.

BUT IF the word "Communist" did not convince the special correspondents of the foreign press (now on their way from New York to Dallas in a special plane kindly organised by the American Airlines only an hour after the news of the tragedy) it worked like magic upon the imagination of the American people. It paralysed their reasoning powers as surely as the rifle bullets had paralysed John Kennedy's nervous system.

The killer was a Communist? – Everything was explained, everything was justified, everything was beyond question. There was no point in enquiring further. As in all the best scripts, the Communist agent was the assassin.

Since the afternoon the people of Dallas had deserted the streets; they seemed very much less afflicted by the death of the President than by the shame which had fallen upon their town. Now they breathed freely for the first time this Friday. So the killer was a foreign agent ... He had probably chosen Dallas as the scene of his crime so as to bring down shame on this centre of anti-Communism. The men of Dallas, tall as giraffes, who love to parade in their umbrella-like hats, said to each other in their incomprehensible English:

"Oswald is 'it' ... It's him ... There aren't any Communists in Dallas ... If Oswald is a Communist he must be the criminal, because only a Communist could have done such a thing."

– Councillor Davies declared to a journalist:

"It's a good thing that they've arrested an outsider, a stranger ... Otherwise blood would have flowed tonight in the South ... The Yankees would have decimated us ..."

As for the police – we want to be fair; the Dallas police cannot be held entirely responsible for the errors of that evening. The Secret Service were working with them, encouraging them in their attitude, and probably insisting even more than they did upon Oswald's guilt – the fact that

he was a Red was decisive evidence. They didn't need any more proof.

So something extremely strange happened, something unique in the annals of police work. They stopped their investigations. No more searches were made. No roads were barred. No stations were raided. No nets were thrown out. No one thought of checking on the identities of people staying in the hotels.

A Pan-American plane due to leave Love Field airport at Dallas for Germany by way of Frankfurt was able to take off without let or hindrance. No officer asked to see the passenger list; there was not even a Customs' inspection.

Foreign journalists who had come to the town had expressed a fear that they would not be permitted to leave freely, but would be stuck in Dallas indefinitely. Many had preferred to stay in Washington.

But after 5 o'clock in the evening, Dallas was a free city. You could have camped on the cross-roads in front of The Book Depository all night long, without fear of being disturbed. The doors of the building were wide open. It is true that you had to walk upstairs, because the lifts were not working; but you could freely open and close any of the windows on this henceforth-historic fifth floor, amuse yourself with the cardboard boxes and juggle with the books.

Now and then, indeed, you did meet a policeman or two. But they didn't question you. It was they, rather, who wanted to talk; they poured out what they had heard, and insisted that Dallas is the pleasantest town in the world, and that it was all the fault of the Cubans. They wanted to be photographed, and to have their names noted down – they wanted to be "in the papers" too.

It is kindest to suppose that the Dallas police, like the Secret Service, were only delighted that they could present America with a guilty party just one hour and some minutes after the assassination. The Secret Service had lost

its first president; the City Police had proved unable to protect the illustrious visitor. But bad things *do* happen . . . and now they had proved their brilliance, their efficiency, their infallibility. They had tracked down their man in one hour . . .

The word "Communist", moreover, seemed to them like a justification. As a detective squad chief told me: "We can defend ourselves against the ordinary criminal, or against a malefactor who 'plays the game' . . . but the Communists – they belong to another planet. Theirs is a formidable conspiracy, the most gigantic menace . . ." – Rather like the Japanese Generals in 1945, telling the Emperor that their honour was untarnished because there was no possible defence against an atomic bomb.

WE OUGHT not to forget that in some other countries the security forces would have reacted much more violently and blindly to such a situation. A suspect would probably have been shot down on sight. Troops would have occupied the town. A curfew would have been declared. Not just one Communist sympathiser, but thousands of people not in good odour with the authorities would have been arrested.

The real reproach, the sole justified reproach, that can be made against the Dallas officials is for their inactivity after Oswald's capture. If indeed they believed him to be a Communist, then logically they should have reasoned that a Communist never acts on his own, or without orders. A search should have been made for his accomplices. Some attempt should have been made to get to the bottom of the conspiracy . . .

Oswald, the killer, had gone to the cinema, perhaps to lay a false scent . . . but could there not have been a fellow-conspirator who took the plane from Dallas to Frankfurt, whence it is so easy to reach Berlin? Mexico closed its frontiers with the United States hardly an hour after the

President's death; but Texas' own inner frontiers remained wide open.

Just anybody could get into the police headquarters.

It was a circus, really a circus. Photographers stood on the desks. A journalist was sitting in the chief's chair, taking notes. Cards were being played in the lift. The television cameras were there; hundreds of cables littered the floor. There were reflectors, giant mirrors. Yes, it was like being in a Hollywood studio.

People were shouting, changing the ceiling lights, telling stories of what happened that time in Tokyo or Rio – for here were journalists from the four corners of the earth. Since most of them were staying at the hotel opposite, the Statler-Hilton, they were in the habit of calling in at police headquarters, by way of taking the air, each time they left or went back to the hotel.

District Attorney Henry Wade presided over this fun-fair, holding a non-stop press conference. Since each reporter, each radio and television station, wanted its own exclusive statement, he had to repeat the same thing again and again. A president had been assassinated in his town; he had the guilty person on the floor above his office – and he passed his time, almost all his time, in chit-chat. Oh Publicity, what is not done in your name?

"Sure, Oswald's guilty. I'm going to send him to the electric chair. The case is an open and shut one," he said – not once, but a dozen times. "No, there was no plot, no foreign responsibility. It was an independent act . . ."

How could he claim to know all that?

Oswald was obstinately refusing to talk; he covered his ears when Kennedy's name was mentioned. So he could not have denied the existence of a conspiracy. And on that day, no investigation at all was made into the possibility of fellow-conspirators. Like Joan of Arc, Wade must have been hearing voices . . .

The formidable press invasion following announcement of the arrest was justified; their curiosity still more so. But not the fun-fair atmosphere. A president had been murdered. These were historic hours. The future of the whole world was in the balance – things should have been done in a more seemly way.

OSWALD MADE two appearances before the journalists that evening. The rest of the time, as if at a show, the press was kept quiet by showing them the rifle, the police dossier and so on; and Oswald's wife Marina, his mother, his brother and the witnesses were paraded before them.

Oswald was very much at his ease, although his face still bore traces of the scuffle at the time of his arrest. He exchanged pleasantries with the pressmen, showed his handcuffs, shook his hands pettishly, as if to dislodge the detective holding him by the arm.

"I did not kill Tippitt," he said, in much the same tone as someone who says "I haven't had any tea this afternoon."

Then someone asked him:

"Why did you shoot Kennedy?"

"Kennedy? No one has said that I was mixed up in that. It's ridiculous." Then, rather insolently: "I'm being ill-treated here. Give me a lawyer, and in two days I'll be out of here . . ."

He could not know in just what way his prophecy would come true.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Anatomy of the Accused

THE EVIDENCE AGAINST Lee Harvey Oswald was entirely circumstantial, but damning.

He worked in the building, he was seen there, and he had no alibi. His palm-prints (not to be confused with finger-prints) were on the carbine. His own rifle, according to his wife, was not in its hiding-place in Mrs Paine's garage. A paraffin test showed that Oswald had traces of powder on his hands. A photograph was found, showing Oswald holding the murder rifle. Near where policeman Tippitt was murdered, cartridges were found in the street; they were of the same calibre as the pistol which Oswald was alleged to have had in his pocket at the time of his arrest. The carbine found among the books on the fifth floor of the Texas Book Depository was shown by the F.B.I. to be, without the shadow of a doubt, the one used to kill the President. Later, the F.B.I. was authorised by President Johnson to make an independent and full investigation – until then, the local police and the Secret Service had looked very much askance at any interference by the Federal police; they found bits of tissue from Oswald's shirt on the butt of the weapon.

S. Klein & Co., arms dealers specialising in the sale of rifles, sub machine-guns and revolvers from Army surplus stores, informed the F.B.I. that they had sent the assassination weapon to a certain A. Hidell. It was, to be precise, a

Mannlicher-Carcano carbine, 3 ft 11 ins long, and weighing 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs.

This type of weapon had been used for a time in the training of N.A.T.O. forces. Then it was discontinued, and later sold at give-away prices. Klein & Co. had advertised it in sporting and "girlie" magazines, at the low price of \$12.78 post free. The so-called Hidell ordered one on March 20th, 1963, to be sent to his address - poste restante, Dallas. At his request, holes were made in it for the insertion of a Japanese telescopic sight, with quadruple magnification, which cost \$7 more.

The Dallas police found on Oswald a notebook, in which were written the name A. Hidell and the postal box number to which the rifle was sent. In the end, the F.B.I. found in Chicago the original handwritten letter ordering the weapon. According to the experts of this police organisation, the letter was written by Oswald.

Immediately after the details of the gun were published, almost world-wide doubt was expressed about its potential. In Italy, a Milan newspaper stated that it was impossible for such a weapon to fire three times in a few seconds; it needed much longer for re-loading. Innumerable experiments were made; journalists, policemen, Olympic champion marksmen, and expert armourers expressed divergent opinions. Possible, probably, difficult, out of the question...

But the F.B.I.'s opinion being the only one which counted, they reported to Chief Justice Earl Warren's special Commission:

"Oswald was an expert marksman. He had had special training in the Marines. It has been proved that it is possible to shoot at the intervals indicated by the film of the assassination. From the distance at which Oswald was, it would only be necessary to have a telescopic lens with double magnification to be able to hit the target easily."

A Dallas detective put it more picturesquely:

"Oswald was like a hunter lying in wait in the bushes for the deer to cross the path..."

The ease with which he could obtain this weapon caused a shock of indignation through all America, and horrified the rest of the world. The fact is that this is a very flourishing trade, and that anybody at all can buy deadly weapons very cheaply, just by going to the right kind of shop, or at a pawn shop. Specialised publications abound with advertisements offering bazookas, anti-tank grenades, all sorts of rifles, revolvers, daggers and even mines - a traffic with a turnover of more than \$2,000,000 a year.

In Dallas itself, there are in some shop-windows machine-guns "which once belonged to Hitler's personal guard", and "revolvers from the collection of King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia".

Only one State in the Union bans this trade: South Carolina. Only one demands the weapon's registration: Hawaii. Only one imposes a licence to carry arms: New York. Everywhere else, you are free to buy yourself an arsenal. The only restrictions are on how you transport it: in general, it is forbidden to carry a concealed weapon in a public place.

The Senate is even now diligently searching for a means of putting an end to this dangerous situation. But oddly enough it is the conservative elements, the ultra-nationalists and men of the South who oppose it:

"We need arms to defend ourselves against Communist invasion" ... "If we weren't armed, the Yankees of the North would invade us" ... "The Constitution guarantees us the right to have a weapon." Those who urge prohibitive measures are accused of being enemies of the Homeland.

It may be that in and around Texas, the right to possess a revolver is considered as a male attribute, reminiscent of Wild West days. Within a few weeks after the assassination, S. Klein, of Chicago, who sold the type of carbine used to

kill Kennedy, were completely sold out. Everyone wanted to buy this same Mannlicher-Carcano . . .

SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATIONS, and reconstructions of the crime have not taken into account one decisive factor: chance.

Detectives covered with medals, practised in the use of their guns, may fire at a criminal – and he may still get away quite unscathed. Hunters with high-priced weapons may miss a big stag at a ridiculous distance. There are infinite possibilities for miscalculation: the turning of a car, an atmospheric reflection, blinding by the sun, a bad-quality bullet – and Army surplus stocks often contain very old, defective and uncertain ammunition.

In addition, Oswald had suffered from nervous conditions since the age of thirteen. He had not killed before. He had never fired from that window. How did he during those unforgettable seconds, remain so entirely in control of his fingers?

He was shooting at a moving car, in which there were five people, and yet he hit only the two chosen victims – and hit them in vital parts.

It would seem that that afternoon he had a most powerful ally: Fate itself.

“THERE IS no doubt at all,” proclaimed District Attorney Henry Wade, speaking of Oswald’s guilt.

“So far as it is humanly possible to assure ourselves of it, he is guilty,” repeated police chief Jesse Curry. “The investigation is closed.”

Those who, like myself, saw Oswald close up, and talked to him, on that night of November 22nd, could only record such final statements. We could only note, too, that Oswald did indeed look like a maniac assassin.

He seemed to enjoy his triumph, and the attention of

which he was the centre. A different man accused of so monstrous a crime would have behaved quite differently. He would have struggled, protested, shouted, wept – not taken it all almost as a joke.

It is quite evident that the explanation of Oswald’s criminal act lies in his character. All his life he had been disgruntled, a failure, a good-for-nothing. He was, like a man possessed, who is betrayed by that very demon which has so exclusively ruled him. The chance had come to hurl defiance at society; to revenge himself upon it *en bloc* (since in shooting Kennedy he shot, as it were, millions and millions); to prove that he, the obscure, unimportant, eternally thrust-to-one-side Lee Harvey Oswald, could change the course of history. So he snatched it.

But was Oswald a Communist, or under Communist orders, that day? That question will never receive a satisfactory answer. It will continue to divide American opinion for years to come. It may be that the answer lies somewhere in the huge ultra-secret F.B.I. dossier – two volumes of 125 typed pages, and three volumes of photographs and documents. Washington has wisely delayed its full publication.

Oswald had gone to live in Russia, and had renounced his American nationality, but the Soviet authorities had never been keen on him. Why?

Why did the United States Embassy immediately give him his passport and pay the costs of his return?

All this seems very odd. Certainly, he claimed to be a Marxist, but he had also been through the school of the Marines, and whatever you say about that *corps d’elite*, you can’t say it turns out future Communists . . .

Anyway, the militants of the Red parties were not very proud of him. Not only did the American Communists disown him indignantly, but they hastened to publish certain letters – requests for propaganda leaflets – which he had written to them.

In Moscow an unprecedented step was taken: the Soviet Government passed over Oswald's dossier to the American Ambassador.

The American Committee for Fair Play to Cuba – more simply, the centre for Castro's propaganda in the United States – declared that Oswald was never a prominent member.

On the evening of November 22nd the Dallas police had quite wrongly announced that Oswald was one of the movement's leaders. He had done no more than ask the Committee for leaflets, which he distributed on his own account in the streets of New Orleans. He was indeed arrested by the police during one of these appearances on the street, and fined some dollars. The pro-Cuba Committee of course encouraged him, as they would have done anyone who gave them support – in their situation, they could not afford to do otherwise.

Oswald, then, was rejected by those he considered his own.

Even his wife – who on the evening of the assassination declared that Lee was not easy to get on with and that she, Marina, was the only person who loved him – forsook his memory, or at least seemed to do so.

Some weeks later, after a visit to the hairdresser for a new permanent wave and more flattering "make-up", she declared before the Commission of Enquiry that she now believed her husband to be an assassin. She even spoke of another crime: Oswald had told her of his attempt to kill the extreme right-wing General Walker, who had preached rebellion against Kennedy, and so on.

Many documents were found at Oswald's home, including photographs of army draft cards, lists of names, and letters from left-wing organisations. But nothing of all this suggests any active part in political conspiracies. On the other hand, it is reasonable to suppose that anyone in-

volved in a plot would be careful not to have compromising papers about.

Moscow, too – if it *had* been concerned in the matter – could of course cynically pretend that Oswald had not been wanted there. They could forge false dossiers and send them to Washington – or even order a Soviet citizen to make such statements about her husband as would best serve the ends of their tortuous policies.

The F.B.I. was later to study minutely a list of books borrowed from the New Orleans public library. Oswald's long stay in the capital of the State of Louisiana – from May to September 1963 – has never really been explained. What was Oswald doing there? Why did he stay on there, most of the time unemployed, and far from his family?

Oswald read *Portrait of a President*, a book on Kennedy – but with a preface describing the death of Abraham Lincoln, and an account of the assassination of Huey Long – Louisiana's little dictator; *Mao-Tse Tung: Portrait of a Revolutionary*; *The Berlin Wall*; and *What You Should Know about Communism*. All these books were violently anti-Communist.

He also read some detective stories; those written by Ian Fleming – the James Bond series. This was John Kennedy's favourite author.

Oswald himself had written a book. A young shorthand typist, Pauline V. Bates, of Fort Worth, states that Oswald dictated to her most of a manuscript on his life in the Soviet Union, which he meant to publish. The book was a bitter attack on the Russian *régime*. It said that living conditions there were terrible, and that fear was the common denominator among the people.

Oswald took the manuscript with him; he told Pauline Bates that he had become an American secret agent, and would soon be going to Russia on Washington's behalf.

Oswald's mother makes the same claim: her son worked

for the Central Intelligence Agency. But she saw her son very rarely, and even the few letters he wrote her from Russia said nothing much about what he thought and did. Oswald had no confidants.

Once or twice in Moscow, however, he agreed to talk to some American journalists: Aline Mosby and Priscilla Johnson. Women, "because women are more understanding . . ."

He had come to Russia because he had known only penury in the States. For him, Marx was just a refuge. "I've never been a Communist, I've never even known one," he claimed. He had saved up a long time to pay his fare to Russia. He had learned Russian all by himself with the help of an old grammar book.

But it was easy to divine his real motive. He had gone to Russia to better himself.

It's crazy to theorise, but one just can't help wondering what would have happened if he had stayed there much longer. Perhaps one day he would have taken a shot from a window at Nikita Krushchev . . .

In New Orleans, Oswald also frequented agents of the anti-Castro movement. One of the organisers of such a group in exile, Carlos Bringer, remembers that Oswald suggested joining their movement and infiltrating the ranks of Castro's supporters on their behalf. Later on, perhaps, Bringer would have discovered that the young man was playing a double game, and have reproached him bitterly.

OSWALD RARELY had more than a dollar or two in his pocket. His pregnant wife and their daughter would have to depend on the generosity of strangers. Yet suddenly he departed, at the end of September, for a mysterious destination.

With admirable good sense – when one recalls that at Dallas even the main motorway through the scene of the

crime was not blocked – the Mexican Federal Government ordered the complete closure of the common frontier, half an hour after the official announcement of Mr Kennedy's death.

In Mexico City, nothing was yet known of Oswald's arrest. It was not until next day that the Mexican Secret police (who have the double task of guarding the President of the Republic, and maintaining a political security check in the country) discovered that someone named Lee H. Oswald – holding Passport N.154679A issued by the American State Department – had passed the frontier at Laredo, Texas, on September 26th, 1963.

The "Frontera" Line, whose buses date from before the first world war, must provide the police with lists of those passengers who cross the frontier. One of these lists contained Oswald's name. An employee of the bus company, watching television after the Dallas tragedy, remembered him; Oswald had made rather a nuisance of himself, first asking to be shown a cheap hotel and then trying to get a reduction of the Federal tax on the ticket.

I have spoken with the employee, Lucio Lopez, who showed me his records. These reveal that Oswald told him he intended to go to Cuba, and asked if there were a clandestine route.

I WENT to Mexico from Dallas because I thought it should be very interesting to follow his tracks in that country. In the Mexican capital I discovered some remarkable facts.

It is known that Oswald stayed there from September 26th to October 3rd; and when a man has for months nursed and perfectly laid a diabolical plan, which has led to the most dramatic political assassination of the century, he does not go to Mexico just to breathe mountain air or hear the "mariachi".

Oswald, who was always short of money, did not go to Mexico without very strong reason. Had it been just a question of obtaining a visa for a return to the Soviet Union, he could have got this directly in Washington, by post, or by making another approach through a tourist agency. If it was the action of an unbalanced man, subject to crazy impulses, then why did he stay so long in this foreign town, in an unknown country whose language he could not speak, and where he knew no one?

There is a quite simple and logical answer. Oswald wanted to prepare his get-away. He hoped to get back into Mexico, taking advantage of lax protection of the frontier, and go on to Cuba. If he held a pre-dated visa, this would arouse no suspicion.

But I found out something else in Mexico: in the first place, that the Cuban Consulate has not told all the truth about the Oswald case, and is trying to cover his tracks.

Thanks to the valuable help of an old friend in the "secret police" (he was one of the bodyguards assigned to both Kennedy and Eisenhower when the two presidents visited Mexico) I found out that Oswald had had time to go to Havana. An underground liaison exists between Mexico and Cuba. It is only necessary to go by plane or bus to Merida, and from there more or less clandestine planes will fly you to Havana. Or one can even take a plane directly from Mexico City airport. The dates of departure and arrival co-incide with those of Oswald's stay.

For this, it is only necessary to hold a *laissez-passe* from the Cuban Consulate, recognised by the Mexican authorities. Since almost always these *laissez-passe* are in false names, the Mexican Immigration service have no means of knowing if Oswald made such a journey. The Cubans of course deny it, but no one in Mexico believes a word they say.

The other point established is even more striking.

I had talks with people high up in the Mexican Government, and with influential foreign diplomats well informed on the situation. I was told that Mexico believes Oswald to have been involved in a Cuban plot; that he was, indeed, acting for a group of Communist Cubans operating without Castro's approval or knowledge. This group may be under the influence of neo-Stalinists, and their motives in instigating such a crime are easily divined.

They may have wanted to create chaos, a chaos which, in the end – in view of the political situation in Latin America – could only profit the extremist agitators of the Left. Or they may have sought to strike a historic blow whose propaganda value would compensate for political pointlessness. We should not overlook the fact that we have to do here with revolutionaries, and that fanatics are rarely diplomats of the classical school.

So completely is Mexico convinced of this that the President no longer opposes military action by the United States against Cuba, as always in the past.

Moreover, the American State Department would have been fully informed of this plot. Why then did Washington remain silent – unless because it was not desired to inflame American public opinion? To reveal officially that Havana was even indirectly responsible would have led to such a reaction that the situation would have got completely out of control. There is more than one general at the Pentagon quite capable of duplicating – against Cuba – Ruby's action against Oswald.

The change of government in Washington also necessitated a pause for reflection and evaluation.

I FOLLOWED, then, step by step in Oswald's tracks. From the bus station he went to the little "Commercial" hotel – or rather inn – in a lane named Bernardo de Sahugan.

It has four floors, is built in glazed red brick, and is very difficult to find. It is an ideal hide-out. The inside is clean, even modern – but not the kind of place where you would expect to find an American. The customers are mostly Indian lorry-drivers, and – according to the police – smugglers and pickpockets.

The chambermaid, Matildra Guarnica Hernandez, showed me the fourth-floor room Oswald occupied – small, but comfortable, with its own shower-bath. Oswald paid 16 pesos a day for this room, No. 18: \$1.60 in American money. He had no suitcases, but a haversack. He washed his shirt himself and talked to no-one; in any case, he knew almost no Spanish.

He had no visitors, certainly no women visitors. Not that the hotel concerned itself about that; there was a second door which could have been used.

The night porter who received Oswald, Sebastian Perez Hernandez, told me that as he was an American he asked him to sign the register; and that he showed his passport. (Why in heaven's name did the State Department give this new passport to a man who had gone over to Russia, come back again and was under partial surveillance by the F.B.I.?)

Usually, said the porter, they do not bother to register everybody, but Oswald made no objection. The Mexican police wonder why; did he wish to record the fact of his presence in Mexico City in this way?

Oswald ate in a kind of bar alongside the hotel, called *La Esperanza*. It belongs to an observant widow, who remembers Oswald very well. For an American, he was very economical, even mean, asking the price of each dish in advance and never leaving a tip. And he was always in shirt-sleeves, a thing which in Mexico City at once betrays the "Yankee".

The widowed Senora Dolores Ramirez de Barrero says

that Oswald ate in her bar for only three days. He came at exactly one o'clock and left at one-thirty. His menu was the same: a beefsteak, and rice, costing altogether 4 pesos. In the evening, at ten, he came and had a coffee, at half a peso.

It is therefore possible that Oswald was away for two days.

I went back to the neighbouring hotel, and this time talked with the proprietor, who had not himself seen Oswald but was horrified at the idea that the assassin of a Catholic president should have lodged at his premises. He made some calculations, and told me that it was quite possible for Oswald to have been away from the town over the week-end without anyone noticing. The porter was on leave on Sunday, and the proprietor himself took his duty. He did not see Oswald at all. The chambermaid does not make the beds on a Sunday, and works very irregular hours on Saturday and Monday; after two months, she could not remember if a particular client was absent or not. Certainly, Oswald paid the full bill.

At the Cuban Consulate, which I approached on the pretext of applying for a visa, applicants are received in succession in a special room, and interviewed in private. I was not asked for my passport, but was told to fill up a form.

I then asked, as a journalist, to speak to the Ambassador, Joachim Hernandez Armas. He received me, in the presence of a Press attaché, Fernandez Roa. I asked him to talk to me about Oswald.

The Ambassador repeated the official story, as if by rote. Oswald had gone to the Consulate, in the Cajo Fernandez Markes, on the morning of September 27th, and asked for a transit visa to Russia. He talked to an employee, the Consul being "away travelling". He was told that in order to get a transit visa he must first have a Soviet visa. His

passport was not in any case valid for Cuba. Oswald showed impatience and disappointment.

I asked to see the dossier, and to talk to the secretary concerned.

"Senora Silva Duran is resting," the Ambassador replied. "She was so upset by the questioning of the Mexican police, that she had to go to the country for a rest. As for the dossier, the Federal political police have impounded it . . .

Fortunately, I had already gone into this, and I knew that the police had done no more than photograph this dossier, which as a diplomatic document they could not impound.

The Ambassador said then that he would enquire, and that I should come back later that afternoon to see the files, and also to photograph him. This I did. But only to be told that the Ambassador was out – he had left for Acapulco. There were no instructions for me, and no message.

The Iron Curtain had snapped down in my face.

I have reliable information that on the day following the assassination, the Mexican Federal police arrested Senora Silva Duran. The political police seem to have known of several meetings between her and Oswald. The dossiers were seized, but later returned.

Senora Duran was severely interrogated, and her home searched from top to bottom. The Mexican police accused her of being concerned in the conspiracy.

So secret was this interrogation that at first it was thought that Senora Duran had been kidnapped by anti-Castro extremists. The regular police took the matter up, and so became the unwitting means of letting the cat out of the bag. The Consulate then intervened and obtained the Senora's release.

Senor Roa, the Cuban Minister for Foreign Affairs, sent a very strong Note to Mexico. Its language, indeed, was so violent that the Mexican Government not only refused to

accept it, but at one point threatened to break off diplomatic relations. The Cubans backed down after the Mexicans had freed Senora Duran and returned the files. The Mexicans said that she had been arrested in error, as a Mexican citizen, because she had "never said that she had Cuban nationality."

Why, it is asked in diplomatic circles, did Cuba send such a protest? The incident was unimportant, and it would have been normal to accept the questioning of employees on such a matter as this. Why, above all, did Senora Duran immediately go back to Cuba (the Ambassador was not telling the truth when he said that she was in the country) if her part in the affair was only that of a mere secretary accepting an application for a visa?

The Soviet Consulate and Embassy are only a hundred yards or so from the Cuban ones. There Oswald was coldly received, like anyone else who enters a Soviet Embassy . . . it's always like that with the Russians. He was told that his application would be forwarded to Moscow, and that that would take time.

No-one in Mexico City doubts in the least the version given by the Soviet Government. It is perfectly normal for the Embassy to do this; they have no power to grant a visa without authorisation. Nor was Oswald important enough for a telegram to be sent – which in any case Soviet consuls do very rarely. On the contrary, in view of Oswald's past history, the fact that he was not resident in Mexico and other peculiarities, it was natural for the Consular officials to be circumspect. Mexican agents stationed in the street state that Oswald left the Soviet Embassy looking furious, and that he made scornful remarks about the Soviets to them.

But what is interesting here is that, as I have established, the Russian Consulate only takes applications on Fridays. On all other days the doors are closed, and no one, whoever

he is, can get in. September 27th was a Friday. It was natural, then, for Oswald to go to the Soviet Consulate, so near the Cuban one, on that Friday; and to learn then that the offices were closed the rest of the time. In that case, why did he stay in Mexico until October 3rd? If it was in order to return to the Soviet consulate, why did he not wait until the 4th, also a Friday?

On Thursday, October 3rd, Oswald went to the bus station at 2.30 p.m.; that day's bus was late starting. He bought a ticket for Laredo, Texas, via Rio Grande, for 75 pesos. (\$5.71). The 690-mile journey took nearly twenty hours. He arrived at the frontier at about eight in the morning on the following day.

HAD OSWALD, while in Mexico, been in contact with other conspirators, perhaps also with Right-wing groups? It should not be forgotten that the anti-Castro elements were rather embittered against Kennedy, whom they accused of having betrayed the exiles' revolutionary movement . . . No one knows. The capital of Mexico has five million inhabitants, a swarming world in which a scent is soon lost.

Oswald could have been acting for pro-China Cuban Communists who wished thus to damage either the United States or Krushchev.

Oswald had very bitter memories of Russia, but he retained a lively admiration for Castro, a man whose exuberance and rashness appealed to him. Castro had called Kennedy an idiot and a demagogue, and said that if "the rulers of America seek to eliminate the Cuban revolutionaries, they themselves in their turn will be in mortal danger."

I recall that some months before his death, in his cell in the prison of St Quentin in California, Caryl Chessman talked to me at length of his plan to "kill or kidnap Hitler",

and make a triumphal return to the United States – he, the dregs of society, gangster and public enemy No. 1.

Perhaps Oswald followed the same mad dream. To kill Kennedy, and then flee to Cuba or to Moscow, where surely – such would be his naïve reasoning – he would be looked upon as the greatest hero of our times.

'I could stay here for ever'

WHEN THE SECRET Service man pushed Lyndon Johnson roughly down on to the floor of the car, the Vice-President came close to fainting. He was nearly suffocated beneath Youngblood's heavy body, his living shield.

"What's happening?" he groaned. But Youngblood did not know what to answer.

Jacks, the chauffeur, had been trying vainly to contact agent Roy Kellerman by radio; the latter was out in front, sitting next to the driver in the presidential car. The only answer he got was "Follow us to the hospital." Later, Emory P. Roberts, head of the Special Detail, ordered Youngblood "Protect your man."

Johnson staggered as he got out of the car in front of the hospital. His pallor and silence, and his mechanical movements, sharply struck all who saw him. That is why the rumour ran through the whole country that Johnson had had a heart attack. In one cinema, the performance was interrupted for an announcement of the deaths of all three: Kennedy, Connally and Johnson.

Johnson was taken into a part of the hospital normally used for less serious operations: one large room and one small one, with fluorescent lighting. Johnson sat down on a stretcher, and inhaled oxygen through a special mask.

It will be very difficult for a historian to sift truth from legend when it comes to recording objectively just what Johnson did during the terrible hour he had to live through

between his arrival at the hospital and the moment he took the Oath as president.

It is said that he broke down and could not decide what to do and that he wished to go back to Washington at once without waiting for Jacqueline Kennedy. She, for her part, wanted to stay with her husband's body and take it back with her to the White House, in the plane *Air Force I*.

In Washington, they are just as good at re-writing History as in Moscow. Today Johnson is president of the United States, and may remain so for another four years yet. He has at his orders publicity agents who are the cleverest and best paid in the country. They are also the most unscrupulous. He has the power. He is surrounded by a crowd of journalists, most of whom do nothing else all the time but try to please the White House "boss", and meekly respect all the taboos.

There were not many witnesses of what exactly happened in those two rooms at the hospital. The shutters were closed, and the doors strictly guarded by armed men. We must therefore follow the official version.

When President Johnson was told of Kennedy's death, he feared armed conspiracy, even revolution. He therefore decided that in the country's best interests he must at all costs withdraw from the dangers of Dallas and return to the capital.

This romantic idea of a "conspiracy" seems reasonable enough at first sight. It might be asked, however, why this interpretation of the facts had to wait several weeks before becoming known; the revelation came from the White House. The details given out, and spread through the world at the time, were sheer bromide.

If there was any question of a conspiracy, why did the Dallas police behave as if the murder was the work of one man on his own? Why did the Secret Service not use their arms, call in the military, ask for the proclamation of

martial law in Dallas, or at least demand an escort of fighter jets to protect *Air Force I* on its way back to Washington with the new president and all his suite?

A man who believes himself threatened by conspiracy or rebellion, *coup d'état* or invasion, starts right away in his hospital room to give orders, contact the Pentagon, the Central Intelligence Agency and his ministers. He does not waste precious hours doing nothing, or risk being out of touch for another two hours on the flight between Dallas and Washington. He would think that plotters might have hidden a bomb in his plane, or prepared an aerial attack – since, after all, one is much more vulnerable in a plane than on the ground. He would think twice about going to Washington at all, since it might be in the hands of the “rebels” or “invaders”. And once in Washington he would not go to his own home, as Johnson did, but to a military strongpoint – or at least somewhere easily guarded.

The plane with Johnson aboard took off from Love Field, Dallas, at 2.47 p.m. Texas time. But by then, Oswald had been arrested, the Dallas police had declared themselves satisfied of his guilt, had rejected the conspiracy theory and had practically ceased further investigation. There was not a single road-block on the roads between hospital and airport. Love Field itself looked just the same as on any other day. Departures, even departures abroad, had not been interrupted.

Yet there is not the slightest allusion to this in the accounts of the matter inspired by the White House.

Johnson was informed of Oswald's capture. What was his reaction?

Here is a man who learns that his predecessor's assassin – who may perhaps have wanted to kill him too – has been caught. Why did he not give orders for a full investigation? Why did he not himself take charge of it?

Johnson telephoned Robert Kennedy for his advice.

Why did he not say to Bob: “The brother you loved so much has been wickedly murdered. Come at once to Dallas, you're the Attorney General, with all power to punish his killer.” Or: “Bob, order J. Edgar Hoover, your subordinate, the boss of the F.B.I., to come to Dallas at once. Tell him to bring his best investigators, squads, apparatus, forensic equipment – all that kind of thing – and let in some light on this matter.”

Maybe these questions now serve no purpose, but many people in America are asking them, in the bars and the subway, in their homes by the fireside – and in Embassy boudoirs.

THE GREAT American magazines have given us the official version in minutest detail:

At 12.38, when all hope for Kennedy seemed at an end, a little man one vaguely remembered having seen around the White House corridors was sitting in front of the door of the room in which Johnson was waiting. On his knees was the “football” – the Washington slang term for the briefcase which holds all the codes in which the presidential orders must be given to the atomic patrols and strike-force centres.

Roberts, head of the White House detail in Dallas (he had served twenty years in the corps), telephoned Colonel James Swindal, pilot of the presidential plane, and told him to get ready to take off without delay. The pilot at once ordered complete re-fuelling, the plane's tanks being almost empty – not much fuel would have been needed to get to Austin, which should have been the next stop.

Johnson asked for assistance. Four Congressmen from the Texas delegation therefore went into the room and stood round him as if to protect him.

At 1.13 p.m. the man guarding the door of Trauma Room 1 reported that Kennedy was dead.

Malcolm Kilduff then asked Johnson if he could confirm the sad news to the journalists.

"No, Mac," Johnson replied. "Better to wait a bit. I must get out of here first and get on the 'plane. For all we known there could be a world plot, and they might mean to kill me as they have Kennedy . . . We don't know." And Johnson went on to recall the assassination of President Lincoln.

IN WASHINGTON, at that moment, a Senate Committee of Enquiry was in process of throwing some light on the Robert Baker scandal. Baker, Senate majority Secretary to the Senate, had enjoyed the friendship of the vice-president and the witness Reynolds was at that time making revelations extremely embarrassing to Johnson. When the Chairman of the Committee learned that Kennedy was dead, and that the man indirectly involved by the witness was now President of the United States, he abruptly adjourned the sitting.

JOHNSON LEFT the hospital shortly before 1.30 p.m., and got down on the floor of the car in such a position that his head could not be seen from outside. In this crouched position he arrived at Love Field.

According to the Constitution, Johnson was not yet president; he must first take the Oath. Johnson wanted to do that in Washington, because he was in a hurry to leave – but what would happen if the plane should be held up by bad weather? America could not wait.

So Johnson telephoned Bob Kennedy, who was at the time with John McCone, head of the American Intelligence Service – the C.I.A.

"You must take the Oath immediately," said Bob. "We will telephone through the whole text. Any judge can administer it."

Johnson knew Sarah T. Hughes, a woman of sixty-seven, whom he had had appointed to the Federal Court.

"Yes, I'll be there in ten minutes." She arrived at the wheel of her little red Fiat sports car, with a Bible in her lap.

"We must wait for Mrs Kennedy," said Lyndon Johnson. "She is bringing her husband's coffin."

Someone commented that Mrs Kennedy's presence at the ceremony would in a way confirm the continuity of the régime; she would, so to speak, "legitimise" the new president.

At 2.18 p.m. Jacqueline Kennedy arrived. Three Secret Service men, and some soldiers, carried the coffin to the back of the plane – but still in the passenger cabin. Jacqueline sat down beside it.

When Johnson took the Oath, Army Captain Cecil Stoughton, official photographer at the White House, recorded the scene on a special 50 mm. camera. He took nine photos. Three journalists boarded the plane, as representing the world press.

Jacqueline was on Johnson's left, as the latter repeated the Constitutional formula after Judge Hughes. The woman judge was trembling; she did not use the Bible she had brought with her, but a small Catholic Missal, found in the plane near Kennedy's bed.

Johnson gently kissed Jacqueline on the cheek, then his wife. Then he said firmly: "Now let's take the plane back to Washington . . ."

Air Force I was airborne from Love Field at exactly 2.47 – within a few minutes, just three hours after its landing there.

The first act of the Dallas drama had thus lasted three hours. Three hours in which life in the United States had been turned upside down.

The flight took two hours thirteen minutes.

Telephone calls were made to Rose Kennedy, the mother of the murdered president, to offer condolences; to members of the Cabinet; and to officials summoned in haste to the White House. While Johnson conferred with his *aides*, those closest to Kennedy preferred to retire discreetly to the rear compartment. The new president seemed very much on edge, drank caffeine-free coffee and a good deal of water with whisky.

Jacqueline Kennedy did not go to the telephone to speak to her husband's mother. She sat quite still, like a Madonna near the coffin.

At her husband's request, Mrs Johnson took notes, on which would be based the later writing or re-writing of what took place during those hours of upheaval.

By the time the plane arrived at Washington's Andrews Military Airport, an impressive crowd had gathered. It had been arranged for the press to be there, so as to put an end to the persistent rumours of Johnson's death. Ministers, diplomats, senators, high officials, relations and friends were waiting, their faces betraying their extreme agitation. Many were weeping. Among them was Senator Herbert Humphrey, leader of the majority in the Senate – he had succeeded Johnson in that position. He had a handkerchief to his eyes, sobbing, and clinging to his wife.

Bob Kennedy was the first to board the plane. Holding Jacqueline by the hand, he led her gently to a black Cadillac ready waiting near the mobile platform down which the passengers came. But Jacqueline wanted to go in the ambulance which would take her husband's body to the Bethesda Naval Hospital, where the autopsy must take place. She spoke and moved as if hypnotised.

It was she who took the initial decisions about the funeral arrangements. From the hospital where she watched by her husband, she telephoned a request for a history book

giving details of the conduct of Lincoln's funeral. She gave orders that all the funeral ceremonies should be exactly modelled on this – even to the design of the catafalque in the White House.

She asked too that her husband's face should not be exposed, as is usual at State funerals, when the crowd passed the bier, either at the White House or the Capitol. This must certainly have been for religious reasons, the Catholic Church not approving this procedure. But the fact is that the President's face was so much disfigured that to have exposed it would have horrified the public. The world must not be left with such a last picture of Kennedy.

CAROLINE AND John were taken back to the White House at about seven o'clock by their maternal grandmother, Mrs Hugh D. Auchincloss. They still knew nothing, but they realised that something dreadful had happened. They asked questions no one dared answer.

JOHNSON, his wife and his colleagues had already arrived by helicopter.

Three secretaries had stripped John Kennedy's office of the personal mementos which decorated it: the coconut on which he had scratched the message asking for help when his ship had foundered in the Pacific; the metal calendar on which were engraved the dates of the Cuba crisis, which had so nearly unleashed a world war; photos of Jacqueline and the children. But Johnson did no more than pass through that room; that evening, he dared not sit in Kennedy's rocking-chair.

He visited the Situation Room, where General Staff officers gave him a summary of the military situation. Then he went to his own office, on the other side of the grounds, where he first wrote a letter, meant to be read later on, to Caroline and John. Then he telephoned ex-Presidents

Eisenhower and Truman. Hoover, being sick, was inaccessible.

At nine o'clock, he went home to his villa, *The Elms*, on the outskirts of Washington, and took a light meal. He passed the evening watching television – which kept up a non-stop coverage of the drama – and in conferring with his *aides*.

JACQUELINE STAYED near her husband's body.

There were only a few lights on in the White House, where the children were once more asleep.

The fine grey rain went on falling pitilessly.

AT MIDNIGHT on this fateful November 22nd, 1963, the cannon of Fort Meyer sounded the first salvo.

At the same moment, other canon echoed this last salute to their Commander-in-Chief: at all the American military establishments in the homeland and in its overseas territories, aboard warships on all the oceans, at bases throughout the world. This cannonade was to go on all next day at half-hour intervals.

THERE ARE historic days which do not come to an end when the clock-hands meet at "twelve". In this way, this November 22nd was to go on beyond its desolate midnight, through the weekend, until twilight on the Monday of those grandiose funeral ceremonies.

It was at four in the morning, on the Saturday, that Kennedy's body was brought back to the White House. It was taken straight to the East Room, Lincoln's room. Still Jacqueline watched stoically over the coffin. She waited until dawn, then for her children's awakening. It was she who told them of their father's death.

Caroline, knowing beyond her years, understood at once. For John, "a bad man has hurt Daddy . . ."

Only then did Jacqueline agree to take some rest. She put on the table beside her big empty bed two red roses which had been given to her by Dr Buckley, the White House physician. These two red roses came from the bouquet given to her on her arrival in Dallas. During the tragedy, the flowers slipped under the President's shirt. The doctor found them, bloodstained, when the dead man's clothes were given to him at the hospital.

Jacqueline also held the wedding-ring which she had put on Kennedy's finger, before leaving him the first time, in the grey Trauma Room 1 in the Dallas hospital. Kenny O'Donnell, one of the President's staff, who had been in the autopsy room at Bethesda, had removed the ring from Kennedy's finger and brought it back to Jacqueline.

I ONCE saw black-clad Greek peasant women at Chypre watch with regal impassivity the burial of their children, brutally massacred by the Turks. Jacqueline Kennedy, whose Spanish mantilla heightened the livid pallor of her face, reminded me of them next day.

It was on the Sunday, when, holding Caroline and John by the hand, she climbed the thirty-six marble steps leading to the magnificent rotunda of the Capitol.

Inside, she kissed the catafalque and knelt to pray.

After her, more than 250,000 people came to pay their respects, taking eighteen hours to pass. And thanks to television, the whole world paid homage to Kennedy then, despite the shock of the second drama unfolding in Dallas.

That morning, Kennedy's coffin had been taken to the Capitol on a gun-carriage. In accordance with a very old tradition, the cortège was led by a riderless horse. In the time of Genghis Khan and the Mongol hordes, the sacrificial horse must precede his master through "the great door of the sky", to serve him in the Beyond.