

Red Roses From Texas

NERIN E. GUN

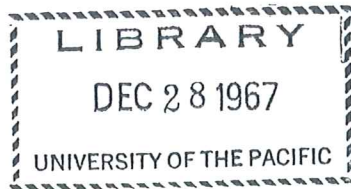
Red Roses From Texas

FREDERICK MULLER LIMITED
LONDON

*First published in Great Britain in 1964
by Frederick Muller Limited
Printed by Tonbridge Printers Limited,
Peach Hall Works, Tonbridge, Kent*



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176590

“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.”

MRS JOHN F. KENNEDY

Contents

1	Noon Cavalcade in Dallas	11
2	Counting Our Blessings	24
3	'Join The Marines - They will make a Man out of You!'	38
4	'It is the Fashion to Hate . . .	53
5	He didn't like the 'Sardine Can'	67
6	The Promoter	85
7	The Chatelaine	100
8	'They're Going to Kill Us All!'	110
9	'Si Vivis, Ego Te Absolvo'	121
10	'Mummy, Why isn't there any Mickey Mouse on the Television?'	132
11	A Bad Tipper	147
12	Anatomy of the Accused	161
13	'I could stay here for ever'	178
14	The Devil's Advocate	192

Illustrations

The fateful visit to Dallas begins . . .	<i>facing page</i>	32
The assassination		33
Dallas police guard the building believed to house the assassin		48
A plain-clothes officer carries the high-powered rifle used to kill the President		48
Detective Bill Walthers pictured retrieving what the author believes was the fourth bullet		49
Robert and Jacqueline Kennedy watch as the President's body returns to Washington; Mrs Kennedy witnesses the swearing in of the new President, Lyndon Johnson		80
The arrest of Lee Harvey Oswald		81
No. 1 suspect Lee Oswald, his mother and wife, Marina		96
The moment of death for Lee Oswald		97
The President's casket is carried at the beginning of its journey to Washington's St Matthew's Cathedral; the procession leaves the Capitol		128
The new President, Lyndon Johnson, and his wife leave the Mass at St Matthew's Cathedral		129
The Kennedy family attend the funeral of the late President		144
Mrs Kennedy at the graveside in the Arlington National Cemetary		145

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Noon Cavalcade in Dallas

THE PITILESS GLARE of the Texan sun was making Jacqueline Kennedy very uncomfortable, but she dared not put on her blue-tinted sunglasses; she must keep on waving and smiling at the crowds cheering along both sides of the route.

It was a joy-day in Dallas. The enthusiasm of the townsfolk had surprised all those in the procession. John Fitzgerald Kennedy, seated on the right of the huge blue Lincoln-Continental bearing the number-plate GG-300 of the Columbia district, was thoroughly enjoying it all. He kept turning from right to left, and back again, waving and beaming that wide presidential smile.

He had been warned to expect something quite different from this from the hair-trigger-tempered Texans. He had been told that they would spit in his face – as had happened a few weeks before to Adlai Stevenson. This was, after all, the domain of his bitter rival, Senator Barry Goldwater, who wanted to turn back the clock to the days of King George III.

Yet now he was being received with acclamation, “Howdy Jack” and “Viva Jacuelina” resounding on every side, received yet more warmly than in Paris, Mexico or even Berlin. The very weather had changed for him, despite the warnings of last evening’s papers, which had forecast rain and mist. The temperature was 85° F in the shade. It was Friday, November 22nd, 1963.

The presidential procession was preceded only by motorcycle outriders from the local police. They had been ordered not to use their sirens at all, perhaps so that the cheers of the crowd, expected to be far less warm, should be heard to the full.

At midday, the procession arrived at the centre of Dallas, that wide-spreading town – in Texas everything and everybody is larger than anywhere else – whose real population centre is relatively tiny. There is just the one principal road, Main Street, reflected in several parallel byways.

President Kennedy glanced at the small whitewashed building, pseudo-Spanish in style, standing at the sharp corner where Harwood Street turns into Main Street. This was the City Hall, whose basement houses the police headquarters. From a window of his office on the third floor, District Attorney Wade was watching the passing of the cavalcade. Just above him was the detention centre for “his” suspects.

ON THE two bucket-seats of the special Lincoln, opposite the President and Mrs Kennedy, were John Connally, also on the right, and his wife Nellie. Connally is the Governor of Texas, and a loyal supporter of the President – whose Navy Minister he had been not long previously.

The original plan had been for the Texas Senator, Ralph Yarborough, to have the honour of travelling with the presidential couple. Yarborough is the leader of the Texan liberals, and was at the time making things difficult all round because of the presence of Vice-President Johnson, whom he considered a rival. In fact, he had obstinately and persistently refused to sit beside Lyndon Johnson, calling him “the sleeping mummy”; and Kennedy, who had come to Texas in order to re-unite the party there, tried to smooth him down by offering him a place in his own car. But that morning Yarborough’s ill-humour seemed to have

vanished like the fog and mists of the previous evening. Smiling and shaking hands, he got willingly into the Johnsons’ car.

THE JOHNSONS’ car was the third in the procession, being preceded by the “Queen Mary” – the Secret Service men’s shuttered vehicle, with officers armed with sub-machine-guns on the running-boards. Some of these faced forward, and others back towards Johnson, an added precaution since for obvious reasons the President and Vice-President should never travel together.

“But here in Texas,” grumbled Winson G. Lawson, head of the presidential bodyguard, “nobody listens to reason.” At his side, but outside the car, standing balanced upon the left running-board, was special agent Clint Hill, complaining of the great heat, and that he was hungry.

The press car was further back. The reporters were also hungry, and still more thirsty. They were wondering whether they would be able to get some Scotch at the Trade Mart, their destination, while the banquet was going on.

Dallas is a “dry” town, where alcohol cannot be bought in a public bar; you have to belong to a club, or buy a bottle and take it back to your hotel room to drink. Fortunately, a colleague on the *Dallas Times* had passed round some booklets of vouchers authorising the purchase of drinks at the Press Club premises. So from time to time one of the journalists stopped the press bus, leaving the procession and making tracks for the Press Club.

Rear-Admiral George Buckley, the President’s doctor, dozed in the last car of all, far away from the Kennedys. These affairs tired him out, and he had not properly digested his hotel breakfast.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY smiled across at a dark, well-built woman who was applauding spiritedly. This was

Antonietta Stella, prima donna of the Dallas Opera, who had interrupted rehearsals for *Ballo in Maschera*, soon to have a gala first night, because she wished to see Kennedy.

Then, for a moment forgetting the crowds, the President studied the bunting strung from building to building, prettily transforming the appearance of Main Street. These decorations were not for him; the silver angels with gilded wings and red-and-white plastic Santa Clauses, hand-in-hand were part of the traditional display which every self-respecting American town puts on as Christmas draws near. Certainly, December 25th was still far off – but in Dallas, the town of the newly-rich, where everyone is extremely rich, they always start well ahead of “the rest”.

John Kennedy must have thought then of the presents he would take back to his children when he returned home on Monday. It would be a special occasion. John-John (as he lovingly called him, disliking the bourgeois term “junior”) would be three years old on that day. And Caroline, the charming, impudent “big girl”, would be six on Wednesday. That very morning, the President had been given an enormous cowboy hat; he could imagine John-John’s joy when he took it back to him . . . Would there be time to buy something else as well?

AT THE Trade Mart – a sort of exhibition hall – hundreds of the town’s leading citizens had begun their meal, expecting to hear Kennedy’s speech at dessert. The text had already been distributed in advance to the journalists present by a White House *aide*. The guests had paid a hundred dollars a head for the privilege of being there. For this, they were served great wedges of Kansas steak and baked potatoes Idaho. The Reverend J. A. Schumacher, of the Dallas diocese, had granted a special dispensation for the day, although a Friday, so that his Catholic

flock could eat their steaks in the President’s honour.

David Miller, a seventeen-year-old cashier at a nearby supermarket, had finished work, and taken along his new instantprint camera, meaning to use it this same afternoon for the first time. He saw the procession near the Neiman-Marcus crossing, but decided to take his pictures further along, where it was more open, with no skyscrapers to shadow his subject. There was plenty of time, since the procession was moving forward at only about fifteen miles an hour, and now and then coming to a standstill.

ALL DALLAS seemed to be on the street: the schoolchildren waving flags, mostly Confederate ones, true, but what did that matter? Shirt-sleeved men cried “Hooray”. Confetti poured from the windows. The police looked on smiling, not interfering as people swarmed all over the footpaths to get nearer the presidential car. They looked rather as if they had stepped out of a John Ford film, these Dallas policemen, in their gold-embroidered grey uniform, with huge stetsons pulled down over their eyes, revolvers inlaid with silver and belts dotted with semi-precious stones.

Yes, all Dallas was out on the street – except, perhaps, for the duty editorial staff of the *Dallas News*, preparing the evening edition. Obviously they hadn’t too much to do: the speech had already gone to press, with an account of the visit written up in advance, and a photo of the arrival at the airport already in place above six columns of “copy” on the front page. The unexpected apart, all was ready. In any case, the Friday evening edition was always rather routine – people don’t read much on a Saturday, day of odd-jobs and departures for the week-end.

TONI ZOPPI, editor of the show business page, had a visitor, a certain Jack Ruby, who came in to talk about his

club, the *Carousel*. He seemed quite unconcerned with what was going on in the town.

Sidney Marcus, boss of Nieman-Marcus, the most exclusive store in Texas, certainly in America, perhaps in the world, was waiting on the main entrance steps. He was wondering whether Jacqueline Kennedy would find time to come and buy something there. Thank goodness, the store did not need the publicity – petrol millionaires queue up to get in – but to have as a customer a First Lady renowned for her elegant good taste would certainly do no harm.

A remarkable shop, this Nieman-Marcus: and everyone in the procession instinctively looked into its windows, as they drew level. Perhaps they recalled the story of the Texan blessed by the Oil-gods who came to Marcus one morning, a few days before Christmas, and declared:

"I'll buy all the window-displays as they stand. Just shift the lot to my ranch, around my wife's window – it's my Christmas present to her."

The story is true. True, too, the one about the farmwife who came to the store bare-footed. She made purchases right and left, to the value of hundreds of thousands of dollars, and finally bought one pair of shoes, which she put on on the spot.

"But – forgive me, Madame – why did you come bare-footed?"

"They only struck oil on our land the day before yesterday. I've never had any shoes in my life before."

At Nieman, Marcus they sell more mink coats than anywhere else in America, and that in a region where it is almost always tremendously hot. They have a Bargain Counter with a minimum price of ten thousand dollars. The sugar in the sugar-bowls of the restaurant is sea-blue, to match the walls. For eight thousand dollars you can buy a ready-made library. Or Marcus will choose a collection

of Picassos or Bracques for you, and send a professor to instruct you in the rudiments of the history of art . . . Or hire guests for your daughter's wedding . . .

Nieman, Marcus is the pride of Dallas, as Dallas is the pride of Texas.

THE "SNOBS" who live there claim that Dallas is the Paris of the oil-millionaires. But the Chamber of Commerce frowns upon any such comparison. For ninety per cent of the town's 634,462 inhabitants have never in their lives heard of Paris – unless you mean the village of that name about a hundred miles away to the east, lost in the great Texan plains.

Dallas is a smart city, whimsically and artificially constructed in the desert. It sparkles like one of those shining cars all over chrome, in brilliant colours, with push-button conversion, radio, pick-up and bar, abandoned in a sand-dune. It is a metropolis not only because it has a theatre and occasional opera (very rare things in the Far West), and a fine university, but above all because it is the capital for cotton, banking and oil.

Dallas is a fabulous city, with homes where the kitchen taps run not only with cold and hot water, and iced water, but also with foaming wine on demand. It has a building whose tenants can watch what goes on in the vestibule and corridors through closed-circuit colour television. It has a sixteen-lane motorway, the biggest in the world. Biggest in the world, too, is its motel, where the waitresses are dressed as slaves of ancient Rome, and serve their customers on terraces decorated like those of the Palace of the Caesars.

Dallas owes its name to one of the most obscure vice-presidents of the United States, a Philadelphian who served under Polk. It has an airport where the public move from one counter to another by means of a moving pavement. It has the most luxurious villas of the continent – John

Murcheson's is as big as the White House, and in Dallas lives H. L. Hunt, whose income is \$150,000 a day. Dallas is also very proud of its District Attorney, Henry Wade, who has the reputation of being infallible: out of twenty-four accused persons for capital offences, he has sent twenty-two to the electric chair.

DOUGLAS KIKER, special correspondent of the *New York Herald Tribune*, was wondering if the press car would arrive at its destination in time to allow him to telephone to his office: it was now a quarter past twelve.

He had decided to write a piece about Jacqueline. That day she was radiant. Such, at least, was Kiker's impression as he watched her smiling, slightly waving a hand, making remarks to her husband which seemed to amuse him. Her strawberry-pink wool dress suited her like a dream, her pill-box hat was of the same colour and Chanel could be proud of her.

Ordinarily, Jacqueline dislikes hats; so much so, that on one occasion she received a petition from a national delegation of despairing milliners. But on this particular day she wanted to please the local matrons. For all its dreams of grandeur, Dallas is still only a provincial city, and in America provincial ladies consider the hat indispensable – as much for themselves as for a general in uniform. They wear hats to go shopping, while taking tea, at church and at concerts. Even at the office, they work with hats on their heads . . .

The President was obviously delighted with his wife at that moment, proud of her charm, her elegance, her popularity . . . He knew that Jacqueline was his greatest electoral asset, and was the first to say so. That morning, while speaking to the crowd assembled before his hotel at Fort Worth, he had explained why he had come out alone:

"Mrs Kennedy's still getting ready . . . She takes a bit longer than we do, but then she's a lot better-looking!"

They had been married exactly ten years, two months and ten days, give or take a minute or so, at that moment when the car drew near to Houston Street, a road running along the South side of the rectangle regarded as the "downtown" of Dallas – the centre of the city. Madge Yaltin, an employee of the Survey Department, remarked to her friend Julie Tarati:

"You'd think they were on honeymoon!"

Even the hardened pressmen were astonished to see Jacqueline Kennedy so gay, so lively, so very much the "politician's wife". At the start of the journey, when Andrew Hatcher, the negro Assistant Press Secretary, had announced that Mrs Kennedy would be there, there had been some sarcastic comments.

The First Lady hated electoral tours; she had kept out of electioneering since the presidential nomination and candidature. But today she was more the "professional" than even the party diehards. She was in her element.

It was twenty seven minutes past twelve.

Detective Buddy Walthers was on the corner of Main and Houston Streets when the presidential Lincoln passed, turning right close up to the pavement. Walthers was not on duty. One of the County Sheriff's men, who had no responsibility at all for public order in the town, he had just come to see the show. But from time to time he looked towards the provincial lock-up on the top three floors of the building there, where many of the prisoners had been given permission to look out of the windows.

To be precise, it should be said that there were two buildings under the Sheriff's jurisdiction. One, on the opposite side of the road, on the left, looked like an old deserted castle. Here were the court-house, the Records Department and certain administrative offices. Sheriff

Decker's offices, and the prison, were in the new building on the right.

The presidential procession had little more than a hundred yards to go along Houston Street before making yet another turn, sharp left into Elm Street.

Just in front of the Sheriff's offices was a kind of monument, apparently copied from the Joliette of the Schoenbrunn Palace at Vienna, its centre-piece a statue of Sam Houston, the Texan hero. Beyond were green lawns haphazardly but efficiently criss-crossed by roads leading into the Stemmons motorway, which cuts Dallas in two. Once on this motorway, the procession would pick up speed and arrive within a few minutes at the Trade Mart, just a few miles further on. Further still, again at the right of the motorway, was the Parkland Municipal Hospital.

There were almost no more police left along Elm Street; James M. Chaney, the motorcyclist preceding the presidential car by a few yards noted that here the crowd was much less dense, and mainly consisted of negroes.

The negroes rather looked upon Kennedy as their champion, but had preferred to group together here, apart from the whites. At Dallas, despite a seeming veneer of liberalisation, racial barriers remain firm.

PHOTOGRAPHER JACKSON, of the Dallas *Times Herald*, was trying to get a reflection of Kennedy in the water of a small rectangular pool lying between the statue in the centre and the Elm Street crossing. Suddenly he realised that he had used up his film, and began to re-charge his camera.

The pool also reflected the image of a big yellow building topped by a huge neon sign. In the water, the building seemed to have something graceful about it, but in fact it was horribly ugly – a cubic structure with dead-level windows, stark in these semi-rural surroundings, an outrage to its idyllic setting of lawns and gardens. This was the

Texas Book Depository Building, headquarters of a private firm supplying the State's schools with text-books, exercise books and atlases. The top floors had been turned into a warehouse.

NEARLY ALL the employees were at the windows: on the fourth floor, at the right, were Ralph Erwing and Washington Harris, two negroes very excited at the thought of seeing the President for the first time in their lives. The windows of the floor above were deserted. One was half-open; on the sill was a cardboard box, left there no doubt by a thoughtless employee.

Roy S. Truly, the manager, was outside the door facing the junction of Houston and Elm Streets. He was talking to a friend, a certain Abraham Zapruder, proprietor of "Jennifer Junior", a gown shop nearby. Zapruder was an economical person. He was explaining to Truly that while he wanted to film Kennedy's passing, he wanted to use up as little film as possible.

"Kodachrome costs money – four dollars for twenty-five feet – and the camera eats it up. I'll get Kennedy just as he passes . . ."

He decided upon a more favourable angle, and went twenty yards or so further on, to the platform in front of a little arcade overlooking the grassed area towards Elm Street. There he was right in the middle, between the crossroads and the bridge over the motorway. There was no-one in front of him, and on the opposite side of the road only a few sightseers sitting on the grass as if for a picnic.

AT TWELVE-THIRTY (one-thirty Washington time) Caroline and John were sleeping peacefully in their separate rooms on the second floor of the East Wing of the White House. Usually John was troublesome, but today he had been very good when the time came for their afternoon rest.

He had been promised that when he woke up he could watch his parents' arrival at Austin, the Texan capital, on the television. Their stop at Dallas had not been considered important enough to be televised as a whole.

For the first time in his life "John-John" had not cried when his father left on the previous day. But he had watched silently, and then asked sadly: "Why does Daddy always leave me alone?"

IT WAS twelve-thirty exactly as the blue Lincoln turned the corner. David Miller took his photograph, but having noted that just at that moment Kennedy and his wife were looking the opposite way, he decided to run round the Texas Book Depository Building in order to get another picture when the car reached the motorway.

Secret Service man Clint Hill looked attentively ahead, towards the bridge, beneath which the procession must shortly pass. There were three or four people on it, and Secret Service men are always wary of bridges and balconies.

Kennedy, too, was looking towards this bridge, and beyond it, at the silhouettes of several sun-gilded skyscrapers in the direction of Oak Cliff – regarded as one of the town's more proletarian suburbs.

The chauffeur slowed down again, enabling the tailor-turned-film-man Zapruder to get a better picture.

It was twelve-thirty and fifty-five seconds.

It was then that Nellie Connally, still clutching her bouquet of pale yellow roses, turned to Kennedy and exclaimed triumphantly:

"What a reception, Mr President! You can never say after this that they don't love you in Dallas . . ."

THE FEW seconds which followed will last an eternity in the

history of the United States. The chain of events then about to unfold would have such consequences as to be like an earthquake to all America, and therefore to the rest of the world – since nothing important could happen there without the whole world necessarily being affected.

Yet despite the huge crowds, despite the presence of forty-six Secret Service men, of policemen, officials, journalists, the County detectives at the window of the prison opposite, and of the thousands of cameras of every make and all sizes, there was to be not one single real witness to what happened.

This was a country the smallest phases of whose existence are televised night and day, where photographers worm their way into the most private sectors of the lives of important people, where technology is so advanced that one can photograph the planets electronically, see in the dark, and transmit sound and pictures from continent to continent by means of mirrors floating in space. Yet, in that same country, by a strange irony of Fate, there was to be no single really concrete documentation of the most significant happening of the century. Apart from the blurred snaps of a few amateurs, nothing.

All the world was there, but nobody saw a thing, on that fatal day of November 22nd, 1963, at twelve thirty-one, American continental time.

Counting Our Blessings

ON THAT FATEFUL Friday, a drama was being enacted in several different places at once, as if on a revolving stage. It began under a fine rain at Fort Worth.

It was a little after midnight when the Kennedys entered their apartment at the Texas Hotel.

They had not been given the most expensive quarters – No. 1348, called the Will Rogers Suite, after the old Hollywood actor, an idol of a former generation – because the Secret Service had objected that it had several different access doors. It was the Johnsons who had to occupy it, to the great annoyance of Lady Bird, who, as a good economical housekeeper, did not see why she should pay \$100 the night while the President himself paid only \$75.

This was the price of apartment No. 850, on the eighth floor, which had only one access door (guarded by a pair of Secret Service men and a City policeman), despite its two bedrooms, sitting-room and three bathrooms.

The apartment had recently been decorated in “modern oriental” style, with very low couches covered in gold brocade, standing out from walls covered in blue silk paper. In addition, Mrs J. Lee Johnson III, a lady prominent in Fort Worth “aristocracy”, had turned the place into an art gallery by installing thirty or so pictures, from Rembrandts

to Picassos, and some pieces of sculpture and pottery from her own collection and those of other local notables. In each room she had put huge bouquets of yellow roses, the national flower of Texas.

THE FIRST lady was, in any case, too worn out that night to examine her little temporary museum. She had been standing almost all day, since at 1.31 p.m. she had left the blue and white Boeing 707 presidential jet at San Antonio airport. A wonderful day, certainly . . . there had been 100,000 people, according to the mayor, to welcome them. And at Houston, twice as many.

Jacqueline made a little speech in Spanish at a gathering at the Rice Hotel:

“Estoy muy contenta de estar en el gran estado de Texas.”

All those present, most of Mexican origin, gave her a wild ovation. The “*mariachi*” (itinerant musicians) yelled “The Yellow Rose” in her honour, and some cried “*Olé*” as if at a bullfight.

There was a short stop at the Centre for Space Medicine at Brooks Base; then on to arrive at Fort Worth, illuminated with small yellow lamps in their honour.

Now Jacqueline was dropping with sleep, and with a tender goodnight went to her room.

THE PRESIDENT was also tired, and had to be up very early in the morning for his last and most taxing day of the Texan tour. But he wanted first to listen to the local television news, to hear what was said of his visit; and since there was still another ten minutes to go before the news bulletin, he looked through a copy of *Life* magazine.

A prominent illustrated article caught his attention. Splashed across several pages was a series of pictures and photographs of the time, showing the funeral ceremonies of King Edward VII of England. Here were almost all the

rulers of the earth, following the coffin of the sovereign best remembered as the architect of the "entente cordiale". Wilhelm II, in the glittering uniform of the Grenadier Guards, his famous moustaches pointing aggressively upward, rode beside England's new King, George V. They headed a showy parade of uniforms, decorations and jewels from seven other kings, five Crown Princes, forty princes of the blood, seven queens and a multitude of diplomats representing seventy nations of the world.

"Never again could this grandiose spectacle of May 1910 be repeated," thought Kennedy. "Our modern world is too realistic to waste time over one man's funeral." The President smiled as he saw that the United States representative was one of the last in the cortège: ex-president Theodore Roosevelt, ill at ease in his tight frock-coat . . . The United States hadn't counted for much in those days.

The article which so caught Kennedy's attention was inspired by a bedside book of his, *August 1914* by Barbara W. Tuchman. Kennedy had given copies of it to his friends; the British Prime Minister, Macmillan, had received one on his last visit. Kennedy was particularly struck, in this book, by the way in which a whim of Fate can overturn the world. 1914 was a Golden Age in Europe — but it had needed no more than a few pistol-shots from an unknown at Sarajevo to change everything, destroy everything, wipe it all out.

Kennedy remembered what he had said to Senator Mike Mansfield, head of the Democrat majority in the Senate, before leaving Washington:

"I am very worried about Romulo Bethancourt" (the Venezuelan President): "These Venezuelans are mad. They're capable of shooting him and in a few seconds reducing the country to nothing . . ."

The United States, certainly, was not a turbulent nation

like Venezuela. Still you would have had to go a long way back to find a day which began as serenely as that November 22nd.

JOE BROWN, his wife and their seven children were waiting at that moment, some minutes after one in the morning, for their train at Pennsylvania Station, New York. They had to get to Vermont, to spend the holiday with the rest of the family.

Although so late, the station was full of travellers, for this was the beginning of the great exodus of the long weekend of "Thanksgiving". This takes place on the last Thursday in November, and is the most American of all festivals, since on that day everyone, without distinction of religion, origin or race, stays at home to give thanks to Providence. The tradition stems from the pioneers who debarked at Plymouth more than three centuries ago. Like them, one eats a turkey dinner and "counts one's blessings".

THE NATION had plenty for which to give thanks: it was only necessary to look through the newspapers bearing tomorrow's date, but already on sale in the big towns, to see that. The papers were all very thick, with lots of advertising; gigantic Christmas sales were expected.

The *Queen Elizabeth* had weighed anchor with a record number of passengers on board, and that day more than thirty other ships were to take 22,000 Americans on holiday cruises to the four corners of the world.

The *Daily News*, the best-selling American newspaper, with a 4,000,000 circulation, announced on the front page that Zsa Zsa Gabor had been robbed, but that the police had recovered part of the booty. But the day's big news, at any rate for those interested in criminal cases, was that of the Minneapolis lawyer, Gene Thompson, accused of having procured the murder of his wife, Carol. The affair

fascinated the public because of the extraordinary details revealed by the prosecution. Thompson had hired the services of a killer, and the conspiracy showed marked resemblance to one uncovered by the Italian police when the wife of a Milanese business man was murdered in Rome.

That night, an entirely new edition of *Who's Who in Café Society* went on sale, edited by Cleveland Armory. For the first time, alongside those of the negro leader Dr Martin Luther King and the inevitable Elizabeth Taylor, it contained the name of Caroline Kennedy.

That night, at Springfield, in the Federal prison, died Robert Stroud, known to the world as "The Bird-Man of Alcatraz", the Dr Faria of "The Rock" in San Francisco Bay; the old man, kept in solitary confinement since 1910, knew how to talk to the birds.

In the big stores, Father Christmas costumes were being given out to the men who for the next month would spend all their time taking kiddies on their knee to hear what they wanted for Christmas.

At the Central Post Office in Washington the postal code number 25000 had been given to Father Christmas, who was already receiving the first hundreds of the some half a million letters which would be addressed to him by American children. That year, progress was making itself felt everywhere. An electronic brain would reply to the letters – which was the reason for the announcement that it wouldn't do any longer for the young ones to address them to Santa at the North Pole, but must put the ZIP-Code number 25000 on the envelope instead.

In Seattle, they had just finished installing in a shop-window another electronic machine; this one told parents instantly what they should buy for their children's presents.

John Henry Faulk, a former radio commentator banned as an alleged Communist sympathiser in the McCarthy era, had his \$3,511,000 in damages reduced to a mere

\$550,000 by the Court of Appeal. But even this limited verdict was a severe setback for the political calumniators; it would have been inconceivable under any other president but Kennedy.

At Harvard University, the members of the student rugby team had gone to bed early; the traditional clash with their rivals of Yale (America's "Oxford-and-Cambridge") would take place on Saturday. Harvard, though usually beaten, wanted to have a brilliant revenge this time, by way of showing their gratitude to their "old boy", Kennedy, who had not only filled the top jobs in his administration with Harvard graduates, but had strictly barred those of Yale.

Nonetheless, there was one member of Yale University with a very personal reason to be grateful to the President at that moment. At a few minutes after midnight, he entered his apartment on the eleventh floor of 100, York Avenue, at New Haven.

Despite the presence of an armed policeman sent by the State Department, all was quiet in that university residence. Professor Frederick C. Barghoorn had come in late, and tired out – but happy to be there, and not in the narrow little cell 87, at the Lubyanka Prison in Moscow.

The professor, an expert in Soviet social problems, had been arrested in Moscow, for no apparent good reason – while leaving the American Embassy, where he had been for cocktails – and accused of espionage. Without the very energetic intervention of Kennedy, who made immediate representations to the Kremlin, Barghoorn would probably still be confined in the celebrated fortress of Catherine II, cut off from the rest of the world.

Kruschev had freed him in order to please Kennedy, and that victory was perhaps the American President's most personal and most human diplomatic triumph. The time had gone by when whole fleets were sent to secure the

safety of a single citizen; yet Kennedy had achieved something similar for an unknown pedagogue.

YES, KENNEDY could be proud that night, listening to the latest news about Barghoorn on the television. Yale University had organised a meeting in the President's honour by way of showing their gratitude.

ANOTHER INTELLECTUAL was awake late that night. He was working in his studio at Princeton University on a speech which he was to deliver a few days later, at the presentation of the Enrico Fermi Prize, at the White House. Dr J. Robert Oppenheimer, one of the scientists to whom America owes her atomic superiority, had been barred from the programme under the Eisenhower Administration as "a risk". But Kennedy, showing great political courage, was going to receive him publicly and give him the \$50,000 prize, whose symbolical value was probably a hundred times greater.

AT THE United Nations a resolution had been passed with acclamation, proclaiming "the year of international co-operation".

The world's day was beginning peacefully. Certainly, the Soviets had brought down an Iranian plane, but as their president, Brezhnev, was at that moment the guest of the Shah, the incident did not seem grave.

Premier Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia had renounced American economic aid. Far from irritating public opinion, this had caused some amusement in Washington: at last the head of a foreign state who was *not* going on begging for dollars.

Nothing new in Viet-Nam.

Erhard, the new German Chancellor, had gone to Paris to pay his respects to General de Gaulle, but it was un-

likely that a new anti-U.S. intrigue was brewing there – hadn't de Gaulle himself announced a visit to Kennedy for next year?

At the Vatican, the Eucumenical Council had just authorised the use of the English language during the sacraments – a little compliment from Rome to the first Catholic president of the United States.

All the newspapers had the photo of an aged Texan, wearing, of course, a ten-gallon hat, and watching two television receivers at once, because just one picture bored him. The aged Texan was John Nance (called "Cactus") Garner, famous in the U.S.A. not only for having been Vice-President under Roosevelt, but for being ninety-five years old. Kennedy had telephoned him this evening. All presidents with an election ahead telephone Garner.

ANOTHER VICE-PRESIDENT was in Texas that night: Richard M. Nixon and his wife, waiting at Dallas airfield for the plane which would take them to New York. It is not exactly known what Nixon (who claimed to be interested only in the Bar, but was most active politically) was doing in Dallas several hours before Kennedy's arrival. He had made a vague speech there in which he criticised the President's policies; but in Texas he had not much following, the darling of the opposition there being still Senator Barry Goldwater.

Thinking back three years, to the election night of November 1960, it is difficult to realise that this same Nixon only just missed being elected President; a few thousand more votes would have been enough for him to beat Kennedy. A flood which had put out of action a few Democrat villages; a tactical error in Chicago; a few Republican voters who had given up their fishing trips on Election Day in favour of going to vote – and it would have been Nixon who now rode triumphantly into Dallas, and

Kennedy who waited, unnoticed by anyone, on that rustic chair at the airport restaurant.

There was some talk of Dwight Eisenhower having been back to Columbia University, to receive a medal marking the tenth anniversary of the day on which he assumed its presidency. The general was welcomed by a young undergraduate, David Syrett, who once as a child had met him in the road outside the University and offered him a plastic gun. Dwight D. Eisenhower did not talk politics, preferring not to risk his prestige in a battle he believes already lost for the Republicans.

Another president slept, watched over by a nurse, in his vast apartment in the Waldorf-Astoria Towers: Herbert Hoover, despite age and cancer refusing still to give up.

Harry Truman, that night, was awake in his studio on the third floor of his house at Independence, Missouri. He was writing an article for the next day's papers, an article in which he launched an indirect attack upon Kennedy's policy of racial equality.

Macy's, the big New York store, had published an advertisement, splashed across several pages:

"Tomorrow, Friday November 22nd, there's just one thing to do: Buy our bargain-price Whisky. It'll cheer us up - we shall need it."

Another advertisement, by a motion-picture company, announced a new film.

"There are other ways of getting rid of a president than by an election," it proclaimed.

In all the papers appearing that Friday, November 22nd, Paramount published an advertisement in huge type of its film *Seven Days in May*, in which a right-wing fanatic, Burt Lancaster, plots to get rid of the president of the United States, played by Frederic March.

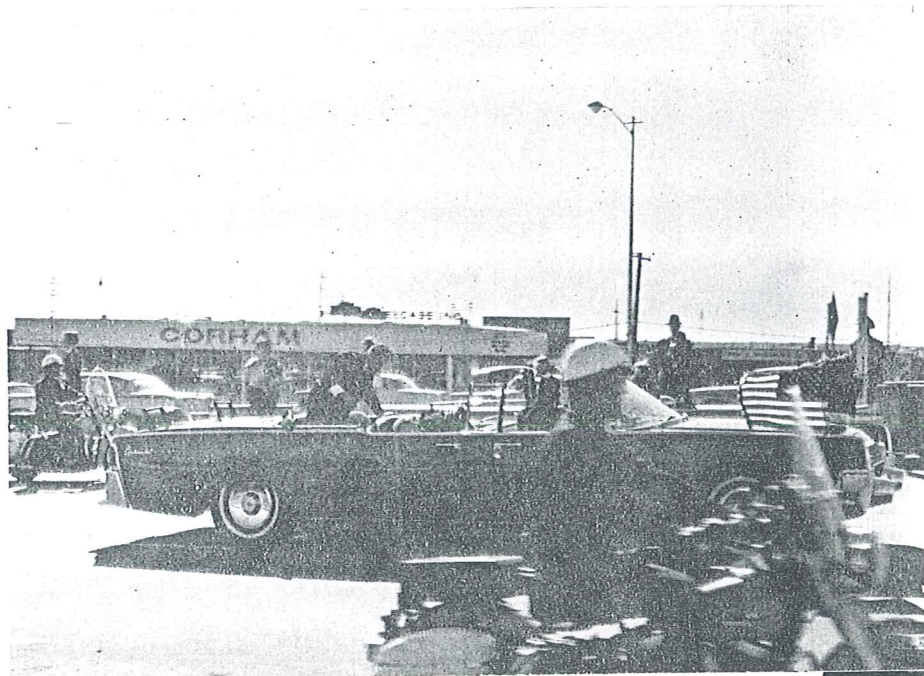
"The president," ran the advertisement, "knew more than 25,000 people - but could trust no more than five."

The fateful visit to Dallas begins as the Kennedys arrive at Love Field airport. *Right*, Vice-President Johnson makes the introductions to Dallas dignitaries while behind the President, Governor Connally helps his wife from the plane. *Below*, Mrs Kennedy holds her red roses





The assassination. Above, Mrs Kennedy helps agent Clint Hill climb into the car. Below, the race to Parkland Hospital



It is strange to note how many films were being made at the time, or had just been released, which had this theme of an attempt on a president's life. Peter Sellers, the celebrated British actor, had played a president threatened by rebels, and in *Fail Safe* the president's life was also in danger. A fantastic plot to kill the president during a Madison Square Garden meeting occurs in *The Manchurian Candidate*.

The Des Moines Television Station that night showed the film *Suddenly*, with Frank Sinatra, as its midnight matinee; an old "B" film, which was probably being shown at the same time by a dozen other stations, and which had been telecast all over America during the previous year. It shows Frank Sinatra as a killer in the pay of conspirators who arrive in a small town where the American president is expected. He shuts himself into a small house overlooking the station and the road down which the presidential procession will pass. He sets up an automatic rifle with telescopic lens at a window . . . but in the film, the Secret Service men intervene in time.

ON BROADWAY, the night's shows were coming to an end. The programmes were rather more cheerful: Charlie Chaplin (no longer banned) in *City Lights*; Walt Disney's charming story, pleasing to both old and young, of the search by two dogs and a siamese cat for their master; Fellini's mystifying *8½*.

Meanwhile, at star level, at Sardi's Restaurant, at the El Morocco and Roma di Notte, all the talk was of who would be lucky enough to be invited to the great reception the Kennedys were to give at the White House for the elite of the film world.

The Kennedys had done a great deal for the theatre. The shows they had been to, *How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and *Beyond The Fringe*, had had enormous success. Another, *The Best Man*, a kind of reconstruction of

the atmosphere of an electoral campaign, had had an indifferent reception; Kennedy went to see it, and immediately thereafter it was "house full" for months.

By organising the first-ever performances of the ballet at the White House, Jacqueline Kennedy had done much for dancing. It was she who, with her husband, influenced the decision of the Ford Foundation to grant \$20,000,000 to the principal dance schools in America. There was therefore a great crowd that night pouring out after seeing the Mexican Ballet.

At the paybox of the Biltmore Theatre, two steps off from Broadway, hopeful provincials were still being told that *Barefoot in the Park* (with a young actress closely resembling Jacqueline) was sold out until April.

Mary, Mary had been running for three years. There would be a long wait, too, for anyone wanting to see the British revue, *Stop the World, I Want To Get Off*, which Jacqueline had seen with her sister, Princess Radziwill.

Broadway, therefore, had good reason, despite the ever-increasing competition of television, for expecting a record season.

ALTHOUGH IT was half-past one in the morning (New York time being an hour ahead of Texas) the offices of the finance house, Ira Haupt and Co., one of the most important on the stock market, were not in darkness. The firm was facing bankruptcy, to the tune of \$30,000,000, and the Stock Exchange had frozen the accounts of its 20,000 clients. All Wall Street was in a hubbub and share values had fallen sharply by nine points – a fall graver than any since the last great crisis of more than two years before.

Kennedy was unintentionally the cause of this fall. He had delayed the conclusion of an agreement which would have allowed the Soviets to buy large quantities of grain in order to supplement their bad harvests.

The men of Moscow had made it known that they wanted to buy soya oil. A speculator, Anthony de Angelis, president of Allied Crude Oil, had bought up almost all available supplies. To finance the deal (according to the findings of the later enquiry) he borrowed some 90% of the necessary capital from his stockbrokers. In freezing the negotiations, Kennedy had given a shock to the Stock Exchange, and share values fell sharply.

Wall Street could meanwhile have ignored this contretemps, since share values had shown a constant rise since the beginning of the year – from 20 to 35% omitting increases in dividends. The Telephone Company had that very evening announced a doubling of revenue for its two million shareholders. But since the quarrel with Roger Blough, Chairman of the Board of the gigantic U.S. Steel, Wall Street was always a bit suspicious of John F. Kennedy.

The President had deplored this that very afternoon, to a journalist in the aeroplane, while the air-hostess, Jan Tyrell, had been serving their coffee:

"I talked for a long time the other day at Miami to a business man and begged him to understand that I am not 'anti-business' . . . You accuse me of putting obstacles in your way, I told him, and blame it on me each time the Exchange has a tremor . . . but when you make record profits, you don't give me the credit."

BUT THE Stock Exchange was one of the lesser Kennedy worries. The President had every reason, that night, before going to bed, to count his blessings – he too, like every other American.

On his night-table was a little gold plaque, one of a number which he had had engraved to give away to his friends. It was a calendar, the calendar of October 1962. He thought back now to those thirteen days in October,

those of the Cuba crisis. He had saved his country and the world from the horrors of atomic destruction, yet at the same time confirmed his stature as a great President and put Communism on the run. The plaque bore his initials and Jacqueline's, *JFK* and *JBK*, for without his wife at his side he could not have gone through that time.

Since that October of crisis, a year had gone by, a year of many dramatic events which Kennedy had confronted with dignity and flair. He had overcome the Mississippi crisis, kept hold on the Atlantic Alliance, prevented Viet-Nam from falling into chaos, inspired the historic Negro march on Washington, and stood up against the whims of Congress. Above all, he had concluded the pact ending atomic bomb tests, perhaps the most important diplomatic achievement of post-war years.

Kennedy had hoped to receive the Nobel Prize for that, and was very disappointed to learn that Professor Linus Pauling had been chosen – Pauling, who this very day had left his Californian home to begin the journey to Stockholm for the prize-giving ceremony. Never mind! The Soviets were talking now of closer relations, and of co-operation in Space. The end of the cold war was in sight.

As the young Senator Edmunsden was to say later:

"I don't know why the President needs to make an election tour here. He will be elected with acclamation next November."

He was right. But Kennedy loved the crowds, loved talking to them, loved the fight.

He must also bow to the political rule that every president must give up one year in four of his term of office to his re-election. Perhaps he wanted to get such electoral unanimity that his "dynasty" would thereby be firmly established in American political life.

So it is likely that Kennedy went to sleep that night thinking of his chances of conquering the votes of a reluctant Dallas.

THE NEXT day's horoscope, syndicated in hundreds of American newspapers, read:

Serious political surprises may be expected.

And in Paris, where the newspaper kiosks were already re-opened, there was widely displayed a strange booklet of astrological predictions by Andre Barbault, published by Albin Michel. On page 90 it forecast "for November 1963, the tragic end of the President of the United States."

Had Kennedy read that book, he would only have laughed at it. One of his friends, Stefan Lorent, had remarked to him some days earlier on the evil coincidence that ever since 1840, the president elected in every twentieth year had died in office. Roosevelt, re-elected in 1940, died in office in 1945. Kennedy had replied:

"You'll see. I'll put an end to that superstition."

'Join the Marines—They will make a Man out of You!'

THE SHABBY WOODEN bungalow at 1026 North Beckley, in the Oak Hill quarter — “on the other side of the tracks” — was in darkness. Mrs A. C. Johnson owns that jumble of a house, whose builder must have thought he was constructing a maze, it is so difficult to find your way round.

Mrs Johnson is a very good manager indeed. She has seventeen rooms, let furnished at modest prices. The tenant who on October 14th had taken the small room off the main sitting-room near the entrance paid only \$8 a week — which is reasonable in any country in the world, and above all in Dallas.

The room was no bigger than a railway carriage, some 6ft. by 8ft; with a window (and air-conditioning it is true), a very small, plain bed, and a child's cupboard, white with blue painted flowers — bed and cupboard taking up almost all the available space. Anyway, the tenant had almost no possessions: a small radio and a half-empty suitcase, said Mrs Johnson. The room was too small to hide anything.

The tenant behaved very well, giving no trouble, never asking for anything and paying the rent regularly. What more could Mrs Johnson — who, with her husband, was busy not only with this nice little place but also with a restaurant nearby — have wished for?

The tenant, whose name was O. H. Lee, went regularly to work every morning and returned every evening almost

as regularly at about nine o'clock. He read in his room, or listened to the radio. Sometimes, at midnight, he would go into the big sitting-room for the television news bulletin. But he never made any comment upon it. Lee was a very silent person.

That night, he did not come in at news-time. No-one noticed his absence. Mrs Johnson was at the restaurant, and the housekeeper, Helen Roberts, had other things to do than bother with the tenants.

Some weeks before, an unknown woman had telephoned and asked to speak to a certain “Oswald”.

“No-one of that name here — and I'm not a telephonist,” Mrs Roberts had snapped, cutting off the caller's protests. Had she been a bit more friendly, she might perhaps have realised that the initials of O. H. Lee were those of this Lee Harvey Oswald — and might have put a spoke in the wheels of destiny . . .

IN THE same district, a quarter of an hour's walk away, lived policeman J. D. Tippitt, who had at last made up his mind to go to bed. When not on duty, he was always at home with his family, helping his wife, Marie.

They owned their own little house, but in theory only, since it was heavily mortgaged. A salary of \$490 was quite insufficient; there was no butter on the bread after the 20th of each month — and Tippitt, who at thirty-nine had served for ten years in the City police, worked on Fridays and Saturdays in a restaurant.

The next day he would be free (he did not have to go to the restaurant until the evening), and had therefore been able to chat at length to his elder son. This was Allen, fourteen years old, whose ambition it was to be an astronaut.

Brenda Kay, ten, was helping her mother wash up; little Curtis Ray, four, had long since been in bed.

"Tippitt? A good guy, a real buddy," his Sergeant said of him. "Never talks about anything except his family . . . They're poor, but they're happy."

Next day was to be a holiday for them, since owing to Kennedy's arrival and the festivities which would follow, the children would not go to school.

JACK RUBY, the proprietor of the *Carousel* Club, had not yet gone home. Despite its pretentious sign, the *Carousel* was nothing but a sleazy bar, where watching the "strip-tease" show the customers bought more and more drinks for the hostesses. Ruby usually stayed at the club until the middle of the last show, about two in the morning, then checked the cash and deposited the evening's takings in the night-safe of a nearby bank.

His real name was Jack Leon Rubinstein, but he had shortened it. Either because that is often done in America, or because in Dallas, despite the presence of a strong and prosperous Jewish minority, anti-semitism is latent – and in Ruby's *métier* one cannot afford the luxury of making enemies for non-commercial reasons.

Ruby was very popular with everybody, as a night-club proprietor must be – above all with the police. The Headquarters men, and those of the Sheriff's office, often came in. They ate and drank free, joked with the girls, and went off again without so much as leaving a tip for the waiter, but giving "Jack, my pal" a friendly tap on the shoulder in passing. That was "business" too; in dry Texas, where alcohol is sold in clubs, you have obviously to keep in with the police.

Jack Ruby gave himself "little Al Capone of Dallas" airs, believed he resembled "Scarface", and dressed to imitate him. He was born obscurely in the ghetto of Chicago's West Side. The word *ghetto* is not a metaphor here: every big American city has its ghetto, where the Jewish poor herd

together by choice, and they continue to be given that name. His father, Joseph, a building contractor, brought him up very strictly, together with his three brothers and four sisters.

But Ruby early detached himself from the family; at fifteen he was already well known in Chicago's underworld, selling tickets for sporting events and acting as bookie's runner.

He became one of the characters of the "Loop" (the city's Soho). They called him "Sparky", because although he never seemed to have any money he always managed to be flashily dressed. The Chicago police did not take him very seriously. Once he tried to get into a boxing match without paying, was severely beaten and has ever since carried a steel plate in his skull. Later, Rubinstein became a commercial traveller in cruets; then organised the more or less shady activities of a syndicate of road-sweepers.

Ruby left Chicago for San Francisco, where during the lean years of the Depression he tried to make his way in that jumble of dance-halls, houses of assignation, nude shows and sleazy dives which is the "Barbary Coast". But the native gangsters chased him off.

He went back to Chicago, and timidly and unnoticed frequented the violent world of Tony Accardo, Partin Ochs and Paul "No-Nose" Labriola. He offered to "tell all" to Kefauver's Senate Committee, which was enquiring into crime in the United States. Washington laughed at him; humiliated, Ruby in 1952 agreed to his sister, Eve Grant's, suggestion that he should take over the management of a bar which she had inherited.

In Dallas Jack Ruby found fortune. He at once became "the Chicago cowboy", looked on by everyone as a tourist sight. He bought another bar, then the *Carousel*, and despite five recorded arrests seems never to have paid the smallest penalty.

"Really, he was never interested in politics," said his best strip-tease artiste, Jada Conforto, a red-head of twenty-seven. "And I didn't think he could hurt a fly. He could never make up his mind."

THAT NIGHT, Ruby returned late to his apartment. He had three rooms in the Marsala Building, 233 Erwing Street. The rent was only \$125, but Ruby, always careful with money, shared it with a postcard seller, George Senator.

They had been friends for a long time, and Senator thought him a "regular guy, good-hearted, with a code of his own – not everybody's, but still a code."

Ruby was a bachelor, and gave all his love to his basset-hound, a chestnut-coloured dog called Schatzi. Neither Senator, nor his staff at the club, nor the police knew that he also had a revolver.

THE WOMAN who had so unseasonably telephoned the rooming-house at Beckley Street was a pleasant blonde, very tall and well-built, of Russian origin (like her husband) and professing the Quaker faith.

"Oswald reproached me very much for that telephone call," Mrs Ruth Paine said later. "Then he calmed down when I explained that his wife, who was pregnant, wasn't well and needed him. Sure, I ought to have been alarmed by this business of the false name. But I knew how much trouble he'd had to get work in Dallas, with his past. And it isn't a crime in the United States to go under an alias."

How had it come about that this quiet middleclass woman – living at Irving, a small village some ten miles from Dallas, and whose husband Michael worked in the Bell factory making helicopters – should know Oswald?

It's an odd story.

Mrs Paine studied Russian at St Marks School in Dallas, and never missed a chance of perfecting herself in

the language. She was born in New York, but grew up in Philadelphia, and had lived at Dallas for only four years.

She mixed a great deal with White Russians, and militant anti-Communists who also wanted – in order to pursue their activities – to increase their knowledge of Russian.

In Dallas, everyone is anti-Communist in the same way that at the Vatican everyone is Catholic.

One day, a chemist invited her to a small cocktail party.

"We're expecting a man called Oswald, who has lived in Russia and came back disillusioned about ten months ago. His wife is also Russian, born during the Stalin era. To her, America must be like fairyland."

Ruth Paine was to say later that Oswald made a very bad impression on her:

"Obstinate, violent, always arguing . . ." But Marina, the young Russian, was charming, gentle, eager to please, always talking about her little girl, June Lee.

"We got on together like sisters, and as her husband had not taught her English she was a valuable teacher, since we always talked Russian together."

The White Russians and other refugees from Communist persecution were to confirm that Oswald was an impossible person, and that he treated his young and lovely wife very badly indeed. He hit her, did not buy milk for the child, and treated her like a servant. Marina was to admit that he did not make love to her more than once every two months or so. But Marina loved him, and a woman in love puts up with everything.

They say that she did try two or three times to leave him, and even thought of asking the help of the Soviet embassy. But she did not dare, believing herself too deeply compromised in the eyes of Moscow because of the friends she had made in Dallas and because of her marriage.

Ruth Paine often visited Marina, but believed that the

couple got on well together. Then, one morning in April, she found the young Russian in tears.

"Lee has lost his job, and here I am pregnant . . ." Oswald had been working for six months at Jaggers, Chiles and Stowall, a photo-engraving firm.

The official reason, as given by Robert Stowall, its head, was:

"He made no progress at all as a specialist printer in the photographic lab."

The true reason was quite different. The other workers were indignant at seeing Oswald reading a copy of the *Daily Worker*, organ of the American Communist Party, while eating his lunch. They insisted on his dismissal.

Mrs Paine, who lived apart from her husband, took pity on them and offered to shelter Marina and little June while Oswald went to New Orleans, his native town, to look for work.

The real life-story of Lee Harvey Oswald will not be revealed for some time, when the "Secret" stamp is removed from his dossier. Perhaps even then the whole truth will not be known about him — his past, his ideas, his plans.

Yes, there are hundreds and hundreds of witnesses; but the human memory is not an electronic brain which records every detail passively and objectively. Unconsciously, people remember only what is derogatory to him.

What is certain is that apart from his wife, whom he loved, Oswald had not a single friend in the world. It may therefore never be known with certainty if he really was the central figure of that fatal Friday, November 22nd; or simply the victim of a freak of destiny.

However that may be, he now belongs to history, and we shall try to give a true picture of that strange man who had all his life been a rebel — a rebel without a cause.

LEE HARVEY OSWALD was born on October 18th, 1939 in New Orleans, city of jazz, slaves and carnival. His father, an insurance agent, had died a few months before.

His mother, Marguerite Oswald, who today lives on the outskirts of Fort Worth, at 2200 Thomas Place, where she works as a living-in nurse, was in her second marriage. She had had one child of her first husband, John Edward Pic, now a regular officer in the American Air Force. Lee had an elder brother, Robert, who today has his own family, and works near Dallas as a brick merchant.

Trouble was the lot of the Oswalds.

At the age of three, little Lee and his brothers were placed in a Lutheran institution.

The mother decided to re-marry, to a certain Edwin A. Eckdahl, an engineer living at Fort Worth. This proved a tumultuous marriage, and in 1948 Eckdahl accused his wife of cruelty and of going through his pockets. His lawyer, Fred Korth, who later became Navy Minister, got him a divorce — and one without alimony.

In order to bring up her children, Mrs Oswald worked in a sweet factory. Lee went to the Fort Worth elementary school: a quiet child, a great reader, who did not join much in the games of his classmates. As a pupil, his rating was average.

When his mother decided to go to live in New York, where the elder son was doing his military service, Lee was sent to the public high school in the Bronx. But he very often played truant: forty-seven days in four months. It was decided that he should be put in the care of the children's court.

The investigator John Carro discovered that the fourteen-year-old boy preferred staying at home to watch television. His mother refused to take the matter seriously, and Lee was summoned before the children's court despite all her protests. To this day, Mrs Oswald claims that the only

reason for her son's trouble was that in class he was mocked because of his Southern accent.

"But," she says, "we were poor, and with the poor they do what they like."

Dr Renatus Hartogs examined the weedy little boy for a month, and classed him as "potentially dangerous". He was found to be violent under his quiet appearance, to have a hatred of authority, to be aggressive, unfeeling, obstinate and solitary.

But the New York authorities, who have managed to preserve and find this curious medical report ten years later, did nothing to cure him. The town hadn't the necessary funds for such small matters.

The mother returned to New Orleans. Lee seemed to improve, and somehow got his high school graduation diploma. He haunted the libraries, and discovered Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*. Later he was to say:

"That day I was like a very religious man who opens the Bible for the first time in his life."

Yet another move, and the Oswalds were back in Fort Worth. Here, at the high school Lee attended, a girl fell madly in love with him. The youth was gauche, danced badly, was not generous – and with good reason – but there were moments when he could show a great deal of passion. The affair did not last long. Lee was seventeen. Seventeen is the minimum age for volunteering for the Marines. The Marines (or expeditionary corps of soldier-sailors) are the élite of the United States Forces – rather like the S.S. under Hitler, or the parachutists under de Gaulle. A marine is a hero, a superman, a legend. The corps takes only volunteers, and in a few months transforms boys into men.

In the United States, more films and books are produced to the glory of the Marines than on any other subject. Without the Marines there would never have been the

landings at Tripoli, Havana, Normandy, Iwo Jima, or in Korea. The Marines make a cult of super-patriotism and give hope of glory.

Lee Harvey Oswald had at last found the key to his future.

Oswald must have been an excellent soldier. He was mentioned several times in despatches, and received a medal for his excellent marksmanship. But he was not over-popular with his companions in arms.

"He wasn't tough enough, and he didn't talk much. When he did talk, you couldn't understand a word," says Donald Goodwin, his sergeant instructor.

John E. Donovan, who commanded the section at the Tustin Radar Base in California, where Oswald served, says that he read many Soviet newspapers and studied Russian literature.

His room-mate, Mack Osborn, says that Lee praised Marxism.

All this happened while he was in the Marines . . .

HE WAS sent to Japan. He was immediately court-martialled for the improper possession of a pistol. A second court-martial followed, this time for having insulted a sergeant-major.

Back in the United States, and after completing three years of service, Oswald asked to be discharged on the pretext that his mother was in uncertain health. The request was granted.

He did in fact go back to Fort Worth. He had on him \$1,600, his pay and gratuity. But he stayed only one night with his mother. Next morning he announced coldly that he was going to embark at New Orleans on a ship bound for Leningrad.

"Why did he go? Do you think I could have stopped him? He wanted to write a book which would make him famous," Marguerite Oswald was to say later.

The young man was only twenty when, on October 13th 1959, in the middle of the "cold war", he arrived in Moscow. He booked in at a small hotel, entering himself in the register as "an export agent".

Some days later, on the 31st of the same month, he presented himself to an official of the United States Embassy and declared:

"I've had enough. I want to become a Soviet citizen."

The affair caused a stir. His mother telephoned from Fort Worth, and he hung up on her. He sent to the Embassy a sworn declaration:

"I swear fidelity to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

The Command of the Marines at Washington were in a state of shock lest the matter became known to Congress.

"They're capable of refusing our finance estimates - all our publicity will go for nothing . . ."

So Oswald was "dishonourably discharged" from the Marines on the pretext that as a Reservist he had had no right to go to Russia.

Oswald was outraged. His position in the Marines seems still to have been important to him, although he was no longer an American citizen. He addressed a letter of protest to the Navy Minister, Connally - the same who was to become Governor of Texas. Connally sent the letter to his successor, Korth - the lawyer who had obtained the divorce decree against Oswald's mother . . .

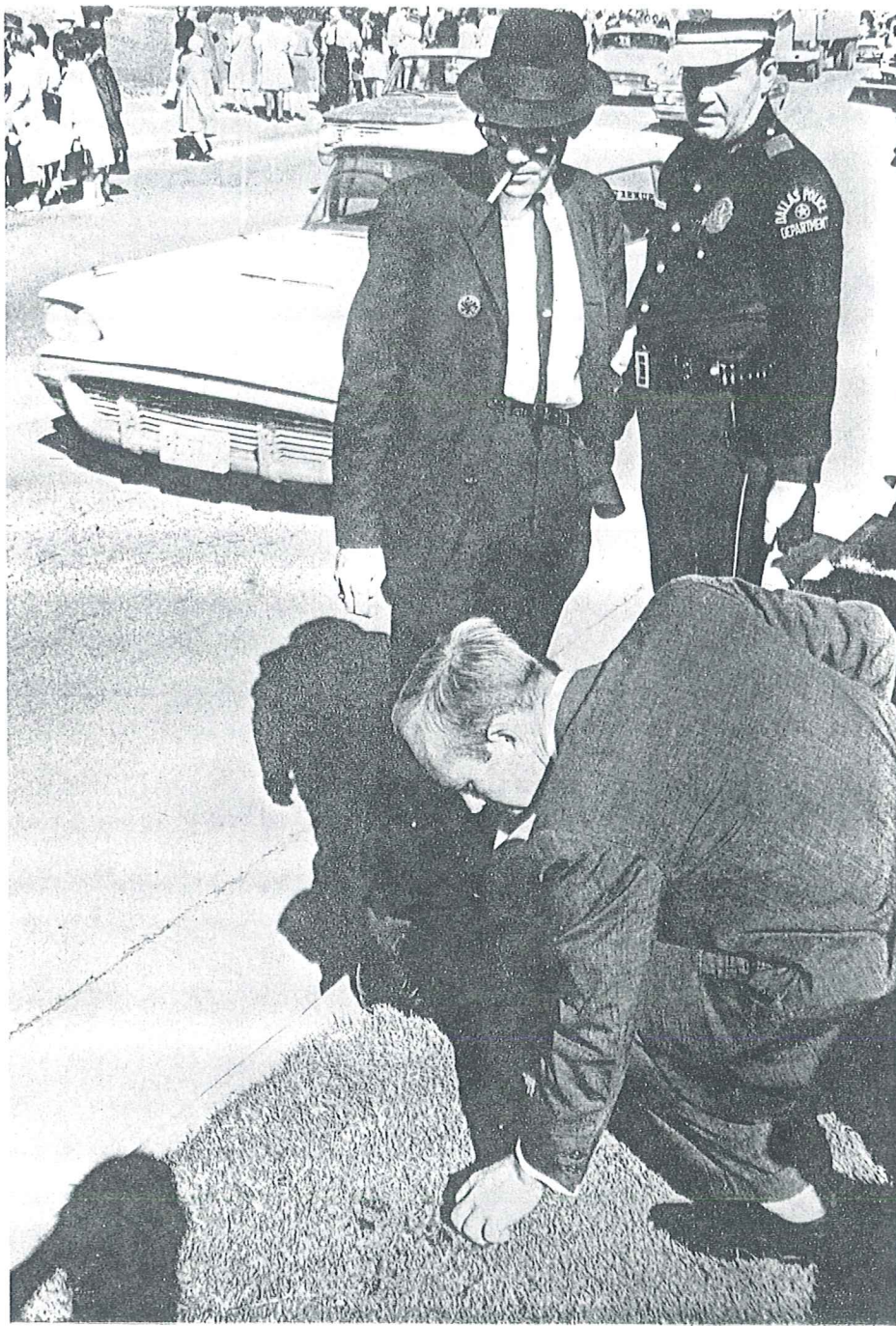
The Soviets are a little more difficult than the Americans when it comes to sheltering defectors. They want only the cream. Oswald did not inspire them with much confidence, and he had no particular talent. He was refused citizenship. He must live in Russia as a foreigner, and content himself with a job in a steel factory at Minsk, at 80 roubles a month.

Oswald was later to say that life there was horrible:

Dallas police guard the building believed to house the assassin



A plain-clothes officer carries away from the building the high-powered rifle used to kill the President



Detective Bill Walthers pictured retrieving what the author believes was the mysterious fourth bullet a few minutes after the assassination

mean lodgings, insufficient food, no holidays, and nothing but long Communist propaganda tirades.

But there was Marina Feodorovna Prusakova, the young pharmacist at the factory. She was born in Leningrad in 1941. Her father died when she was two and her mother married Alexander Medvedyev. In 1957 her mother died and Marina, sixteen, left home for Minsk. When her stepfather heard of her marriage to Oswald he immediately disowned her. Marina fell in love straight away with the exotic Yank. She was to say later:

"He was so lonely, so sad, *so very much on his own.*"

Oswald had decided to go back to the United States, but for that a Soviet exit visa was necessary – and this was refused him. He had to wait for it a year and a half. He married Marina, and they had a little girl, June Lee, born on February 5th 1962. Oswald wanted to have her baptised by proxy at Fort Worth, but when he learned that the Pastor wanted an "offering" in dollars, he was much annoyed, and gave up the idea.

He wrote a letter to the Senator for Texas, John G. Tower, a diehard conservative, declaring:

"I am a prisoner in the U.S.S.R. against my will. Help me." The Senator intervened with the State Department; later he said that he had simply forwarded the letter, without comment. The State Department then made very energetic representations to the Kremlin to obtain this visa, and at the same time gave Oswald a new passport for himself and his family.

While at Minsk, Lee wrote often to his mother:

"Send me some shaving cream, razor blades, chocolate, chewing gum, magazines and detective novels . . . a pocket edition of Orwell's 1984 . . . I am going to be a papa. I hope it will be a boy! . . . Mama, don't try to come here to see us . . . Good news, we are leaving in a month's time. Mama, do something important for us – write to an organisation

called the International Rescue Committee* and ask them for \$800 for two tickets, Moscow–New York–Texas. Don't send us anything out of your own pocket. And don't take a loan, ask for it as a gift . . .”

The mother could not get the money, and it was the United States Embassy in Moscow which advanced the funds for the return journey. The Government were later repaid by Oswald.

THE OSWALDS arrived in New York by ship on June 13th 1962. Oswald gave a fantastic account of his stay in Russia to the representative of the Aid Organisation sent to meet them. He had served as a guard at the Embassy and been kidnapped by Communist agents. Oswald asked to be repatriated to Texas at the organisation's expense. But they telegraphed to his brother Robert, who promised by telephone to send the necessary \$300.

WHILE HIS wife was staying with Mrs Paine, Oswald went to New Orleans, where he found work with another engraver. But when Mrs Paine went to see him in September, he was once again out of work.

Marina returned to Irving with her friend. The young Russian woman was expecting another baby, and needed care. The good Mrs Paine also took back in her car, a 1956 station waggon, all the Oswalds' possessions, including a mysterious long object completely enclosed in a covering.

For his part, Oswald was supposed to be going to Houston. He did not return to Dallas until twelve days later, went to see his wife, and then rented the little room in Mrs Johnson's lodging-house under a false name.

On Monday, October 14th, Mrs William Randell went to see her friend, Dorothy Roberts, who seemed troubled . . .

“You know my neighbour – there's a Russian living with

*An Organisation for anti-Communist refugees.

her, a poor woman persecuted by the Communists. She's expecting a baby at any minute, and her husband is out of work . . .”

“Try at the Texas Book Depository,” Mrs Randell suggested.

Note that on that day President Kennedy's visit to Texas was not known of for certain, and that no-one knew anything of the route he would take.

Mrs Paine telephoned the Book Depository, and was put in touch with the manager, R. S. Truly.

“Send us round this future papa, we'll try to help him . . .”

Oswald went there next day, and made an excellent impression on Truly, whom he told that he had only recently left the Marines.

“I engaged him on the spot at \$1.25 an hour, forty hours a week. He was to work from 8 in the morning to 4.45 in the afternoon, with three quarters of an hour for lunch, from 12.15 . . .

“It was intended,” Truly was later to say. “That day, two people applied. I needed one for the main building and the other for an out-of-the-way depot that no-one would ever have passed . . . Oswald arrived first, and I decided to keep him with me . . .”

On October 20th, Marina gave birth to a little girl, Rachel Lee, at the Parkland Municipal Hospital. The ever-kind Mrs Paine had sold two pints of her blood in order to pay part of the expenses.

Dr Malcolm Perry can remember the sweet, sad and lovely Marina. They exchanged a few words in Latin, of which language Marina, as a pharmacist, knew a little.

The father did not go to the hospital, but he was very happy at the birth. Each week-end he spent all his time with the new baby. And on the evening of Thursday November 21st, instead of going back to his rented room he

asked another employee, Wesley Frazier, to give him a lift to Mrs Paine's house . . .

His colleague was surprised.

"I thought you only went there at week-ends."

"I want to see my children, and I also have to get some curtain-rods for the curtains in my room . . ."

Oswald played with the babies, watched the television for a bit, then went to the garage. Mrs Paine remembers it, because he forgot to turn off the electric light.

He went to bed early, as usual. For him, there was not much point in pausing to count his blessings. Since his return, he had not earned so much as \$3,000 – an absurdly low sum – and had changed jobs seventeen times. He lived apart from his family, and could not even provide for the new-born child. People shunned him, called him unbalanced, arrogant, good-for-nothing.

In the F.B.I. file on him is noted:

"He's a Marxist who has never carried through a single project."

Perhaps Lee Harvey Oswald dreamed that night of the act that he was to commit next day – the first successful one of his life.

It is the Fashion to Hate . . .

THE HEAD OF the printing department of the *Dallas Daily News* tried vainly that night, Thursday–Friday, to get in touch with the paper's Advertising Manager. The latter had already taken advantage of the long week-end to go fishing in the Gulf of Mexico. The print manager had a problem: an advertiser, a certain Bernard Weissman, was patiently waiting for the first proof of a publicity lay-out, a full page spread, but was insisting that the advertisement should be framed with a black border, just like those on a card announcing a death.

"There's nothing like that on my order-sheet," grumbled the overseer. "I must have an O.K. from upstairs . . ."

Finally he got hold of the Managing Editor:

"The announcement by the American Fact Finding Committee? Oh yes, give it a good splash. Just think, the boss likes it so much that he might even put it in free . . . That would spare him the trouble of writing his own editorial."

In the last few days, the *Dallas Daily News* had indeed devoted a whole barrage of editorials to criticism of President Kennedy's policies. They called him incompetent, irresponsible, idiotic, conscienceless, anti-American, anti-Republican, anti-capitalist, anti-Protestant, and of course anti-Texan. So the advertisement in great black type on page 2 of the newspaper which would go on sale in

the early hours of Friday morning would not greatly shock its readers:

"You are not welcome, Mr President. Dallas rejects your policies and your philosophy. In fact, you are a traitor . . .

"The people of Dallas know that the head of the American Communist Party, Gus Hall, is in league with you and will help in your re-election . . .

"You, Kennedy, have struck the Monroe Doctrine from the book of our Nation in order to replace it by the spirit of Moscow."

BERNARD WEISSMAN, a young Jew of twenty-six, was supposed to be only passing through Dallas, although he was living there in a luxurious bachelor apartment. He had obviously not had much difficulty in persuading the newspaper to pass his text. Hadn't the head of the political section of the same newspaper written:

"Here in Dallas, hating Kennedy is a popular game."? Had not the director of the same newspaper, Ted Dealey, dared to say impudently to Kennedy, during a press conference at the White House:

"Mr President, we need a knight who will lead this Nation on horseback, but you lead it pedalling on your daughter Caroline's tricycle . . ."? On his return, Dallas had fêted him for saying that.

It is not known for certain just who put up the \$4,500 for the advertisement, but in Dallas it is very easy to find the money when one wants to attack the Government.

THE MULTI-MILLIONAIRE L. H. Hunt, whose income from his oil-wells is half a million dollars a day, has a whole army of "bravi" in his pay. After having supported the ill-famed Senator Joseph McCarthy, he now finances a daily programme on television and radio which propagates extremist views.

There is Don Snoots, whose Political Letter has 55,000 subscribers, and that in a town of some 400,000 inhabitants. The Letter is also read, on paid time, from fifty radio and ten television stations. For Don Snoots, Washington is a nest of traitors.

There is the retired General, Edwin Walker, a professional soldier who has gone into politics because the Government compelled him to leave his post in Berlin, where he commanded the American garrisons. It was this same Walker who was involved in disturbances at Oxford, Mississippi, when the coloured student Meredith wished to enrol at the University there. The Government arrested Walker, then magnanimously did no more than submit him to psychiatric examination. Walker, in protest, flew the American flag the wrong way round in front of his house – also situated in the Oak Cliff quarter – whenever a high Washington personality visited Dallas. He had done it with Stevenson, and he did it that night with Kennedy. But Walker was not at home; he had gone, for some reason unknown, to New Orleans, Oswald's native town, where the ex-defector had worked for a number of weeks before returning to Dallas.

Another association hostile to the Kennedys was the National Indignation Convention, which combined all those who considered the Government in power to be dangerous.

THAT NIGHT *The Thunderbolt*, a weekly published in Alabama, was sold in Dallas. The title, in giant letters on the front page, was KENNEDY KEEPS MISTRESSES. That front-page story was lurid . . .

THAT NIGHT, too, a group of volunteers from that section of the Republican Party which upheld Senator Barry Goldwater finished making a huge banner meant to be

held aloft at the airport next morning during the President's arrival.

LET'S BURY KING JOHN was the slogan; and that phrase was a little masterpiece of election propaganda.

"Let's bury King John" seems simple enough; but a play on the word "bury" was intended, since when spoken with the American accent, there is little difference between "bury" and "Barry" – the implication being that Senator Barry Goldwater would triumph over Kennedy.

The nickname "King John" was a malicious reference to the fact that in the eyes of the Right Wing Kennedy was a despot who, like Napoleon, gave all the members of his family important positions.

But the word "bury", too, had another dangerous double meaning, an allusion to Krushchev's unfortunate phrase about "burying the United States" – thus slyly accusing Kennedy of helping the Soviets in their grave-digging task.

Fortunately, next day neither Kennedy nor anyone else took the slightest notice of this placard, which was lost amid the popular enthusiasm. Had it not been for a chance photograph, this little dramatic detail of the arrival in Dallas would have been lost for ever.

ALTHOUGH Robert Welch the "pope" of the John Birch Society (a semi-secret but publicity-hunting organisation) lives in Santa Barbara, California, most of his supporters are to be found in Dallas. The society claims to wage constant war on "the Communist conspiracy" undermining the American way of life. It looks upon Eisenhower as an agent of Moscow, and the Republican Head of the Supreme Court, Earl Warren, as Enemy No. 1 of all true American patriots.

THE HEADQUARTERS staff of the Minutemen had just finished their weekly meeting, and had gone to have a

whisky or two with their "fuehrer", Robert Dupugh, on the second floor of the private club at the Hilton Hotel. "Alert" was the watch-word. The Minutemen are a sort of clandestine armed militia, who are in constant training with a view to opposing a "Communist invasion". They had just put out a proclamation announcing that thanks to them Dallas was an impregnable city, and that the Reds would be trapped by their "guerilleros" in the vast Texan deserts.

WHILE HE was still in Moscow, Lee Harvey Oswald had declared to an American journalist:

"In the United States it is the fashion to hate."

The phrase could well that night have been applied to that city of Dallas. And the Governor of Texas, John Connally, was very uneasy. He had several times, but in vain, asked Kennedy to give up the idea of driving through the town centre.

"It's too dangerous. It'll be quite enough to go quickly from the airport to the Trade Mart for the speech."

But Kennedy would not listen.

IN HIS so-expensive apartment at the Texas Hotel, at Fort Worth, Vice-President Johnson was having difficulty in going to sleep. He too was worried about what might happen next day in Dallas. He remembered that appalling incident during the campaign of 1960, when he and his wife were hooted at by the mob. They had spat in their faces and forced them to take refuge in an hotel.

And yet he, Johnson, was a product of Texas, the favourite son, champion of the South. Thanks to him, Kennedy had obtained a narrow majority in the State, 46,233 votes among 2,311,845 voters; without him Nixon would have won everywhere.

There had been, too, what had happened to Adlai

Stevenson, who like Johnson had tried in 1960 to obtain the presidential nomination (Kennedy beat them both) and who had since as a consolation prize been appointed ambassador at the United Nations. A month earlier, on 24th October, 1963, Stevenson had come to Dallas by invitation. He was coolly received at the airport. At the door of the hotel, while he was smiling and shaking hands, a young woman swathed in a mink cloak, Mrs Cora Frederick, shook a heavy placard and hit Stevenson in the face, while a young man (who lived, like Oswald, at Irving) spat at him.

"We Texans," this aggressive Amazon later explained to the press, "we are cowboys, who aren't satisfied just to shout. We go into action when necessary."

Since then, Stevenson had several times advised Kennedy not to set foot in Dallas.

"The President is safer in Berlin or in Moscow, than in Dallas" had prophesied Allan Maly, head of the local council of the AFL-CIO, the trades union organisation. And very properly the police chief, Jesse Curry, had announced that his men would not allow the smallest hostile gesture against the President's person.

Russell W. McLarry did not take the police chief's threat very seriously that night. A machinist by day, he went to night-school at Arlington University, situated in a suburb of Dallas. He had stayed on late with his friends. Then someone had given him a lift in a car to his home in the Oak Cliff quarter – that same district in which Oswald had rented a little furnished room under a false name.

"Tomorrow," said McLarry, who looked a lot younger than his twenty-one years, "I shall be at the Trade Mart with a gun, and while Kennedy's speaking I'll shoot him..."

WHAT, THEN, had John Fitzgerald Kennedy come to do among this assortment of people?

All the forecasts agreed that he would be re-elected in

1964 without need of Texas, and even without need of the South. The Democrat Party in Texas was in a chaotic state. There was Johnson's faction, Connally's, Senator Yarborough's, and that of Congressman Henry Gonzalez (the spokesman of the minorities). All these Democrats had just one thing in common – they were none of them on speaking terms. Kennedy was the only person with whom they were willing to talk.

However, the stake was worth the trouble; the stake was this marvellous State of Texas, directly south of the Union, but not a part of the South. Texas, which considers itself an independent unit, and even often seriously talks of becoming independent indeed. Texas, which has so much influence on what is called The West – the West of multi-millionaires, cowboys, wide open spaces and virgin lands. Texas, where is the Alamo, that Thermopylae of modern America, where a handful of heroes fought to the last man under siege by the armies of the Mexican general Santa Ana. Texas: huge, prodigious, astonishing – the one place in the United States after New York and Washington which the foreign tourist absolutely *must* see.

Although Alaska, which in 1960 became the 51st State of the Union, is bigger, Texas with its 267,339 square miles is formidably large. 77 of its 257 districts are bigger than the State of Rhode Island, which in turn is larger than Luxembourg. If Texas were located between New York and Chicago, it would overlap them both; if in Europe, it would stretch from London to Berlin. One ranch alone – belonging to the King family dynasty – is larger than all Switzerland.

Texas provides the western world with half its synthetic rubber, a third of its petroleum, a quarter of its rice and a fifth of its cotton. It has ten million inhabitants, a million of them black and a million of Mexican origin. It has ten

million cows. Everything is on a giant scale there – even history.

Texas is the only State of the Union which was independent for 9 years and 301 days, with its own flag, a blue star on a red field, and which as an independent republic voluntarily agreed to become part of the United States. That single star gave rise to the name “The Lone Star State”.

“Texas” derives from the Indian word *tejas*, meaning *friendship*. The region was colonised by the Spanish and the French, then came under Mexican domination. But the adventurers Stephen Austin and Sam Houston organised a coalition with the two thousand Yankees who had come to settle in those vast plains, and in 1836 rebellion became war.

After the tragedy of the Alamo, General Antonio Lopez de Santa Ana was beaten by Houston at San Jacinto, and Texas proclaimed itself a sovereign state. It sent ambassadors to London, Paris and Berlin, and had its own postal service and a fleet of six torpedo-boats.

Houston became the first president, and was re-elected. In 1846, Texas was admitted to the Union with Houston as its Governor. His reputation was formidable; he was nicknamed, with respect and admiration, “the great drunk”. After the Civil War, Texas seceded with the rest of the South, but suffered relatively less from the defeat, because of its immensity.

The cattlemen dominated the State until 1900. This was the time of the great ranches, the cowboys, and of that romantic conception later seized on by literature and Hollywood. Then came the growth of the cities, until at last, in 1901, near Beaumont, came the finding of the Spindletop well, which so suddenly that there was no hope of catchment, gushed skywards 900,000 barrels of oil. From being the largest, Texas now became the richest

State, private bank deposits alone being today in excess of five billion dollars.

One cannot speak of Texas as a unit. In the southeast are the immense forests of Piney Woods, some 850,000 acres – a relatively poor area, most of whose population is black. The trees, gigantic firs, almost all belong to the millionaires of Beaumont and Dallas.

The south, along the border with Mexico, has retained the pleasant charm of the Latin way of life. Here is great prosperity. There are so many pipe-lines, oil-wells and sources of natural gas that it is called “the spaghetti dish”. Labour is cheap and accommodating, mostly Mexicans who cross the frontier to find work in the factories and ranches.

The west, the redoubtable west, called The Panhandle, has not yet arrived in the twentieth century. The population is thin, 150,000 at the most; the climate capricious; the countryside depressing. No cars, no telephones, no trees. Here and there in the vast desert a wooden cross marks where a man died of thirst – come from no-one knows whence, going no-one knows where.

The cowboy wears the huge Borsalino hat and jeans, and always has a revolver at his belt. But often his horse has been replaced by a jeep, and he probably does not use his gun except on July 4th, Independence day.

The real heart of Texas lies in the great cities: Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston and Austin, the capital.

“I love dawns and sunsets,” said Lyndon Johnson, “and at my ranch near Austin I can see both. It is a dry country,” he went on, “there is always the sun, and the wind. And we have birds that sing and flowers that grow and girls who laugh . . . It is also a strong country, breeding fearless soldiers and men with great courage. The grass is rich in minerals, and the cows are strong, big . . .”

Because of their past, the Texans are very chauvinistic indeed. They sell postcards which show Texas as dominat-

ing a map on which the rest of the United States can hardly be seen. Their patriotism, like everything else about them, is out of all proportion. This is why they are so easily impressed by extremist movements. Theirs is neither a State nor a province, but an Empire which has preserved its feudal traditions.

Side by side with great wealth there is great poverty and much exploitation; but because they are Texans the poor and exploited will not admit to being so. The Texan who travels spends twice as much as he can really afford, to prove himself "big". And he will always have ready an endless recital of statistics: Texas has the biggest bookshop in the United States, 59 radio stations, the deepest oil-well; the Governor's palace is the eighth largest in the world; they produce the most garlic; Uvalde, Texas, is the world's capital for honey; Tyler, Texas, the capital for roses; Port Aransas the greatest oil-port in the world; Texas has 410 telephone companies, 4,000 varieties of wild flower, 95,200 oil-wells, and 42,000,000 chickens; while in Texas you find the most beautiful women in America, Joan Crawford, Ginger Rogers and Doris Day included.

There are less flattering statistics: the largest number of illiterates, the least encouraging scholastic results, and the greatest number of people refusing to cast their votes on election day.

In Texas lives Mrs Clara Driscoll, who one day - because a waiter at the White Plaza Hotel at Corpus Christi did not jump to answer her call - decided to buy up the land facing the White Plaza and there build a skyscraper much higher. She turned the skyscraper into an hotel, went out on the terrace and cocked a snook at the White Plaza . . .

IN ORDER not to give up some of its feudal conditions, to protect the interests of the oil millionaires (who pay less in

taxes than the rest of the Americans) and to keep high the name of Texas in Washington, Texas has created a highly efficient political machine. Its last boss was Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the House of Representatives and ranking third in the succession to the presidency.

It was with Rayburn that Lyndon Baines Johnson served his political apprenticeship.

Lyndon Johnson's grandfather came to settle in Texas in 1846, and with a brother founded a small town which was to be named Johnson City - not in the grandfather's honour, but because a great many people named Johnson lived there. Johnson is the commonest name in the United States after Smith.

The grandfather raised cattle and took some part in politics. His son, Samuel Ealy Johnson, went in mainly for politics. He married Rebekah Baines, a farmer's daughter, and their son was born in a poor little log cabin at Stonewall, now abandoned.

For the first three months the infant was just called "Baby"; then the father suggested the name of Clarence, then Dayton, and finally Linden. The mother agreed to the last name, provided that it was spelled Lyndon.

Samuel died in 1936, but Rebekah lived until 1958 and was to see her son take his seat in the Senate at Washington.

Lyndon Johnson began life as a shoe-shine boy, then ran away to California and finally, after borrowing seventy-five dollars, took a course at the training-school in Texas. In 1932 he went to Washington as secretary to a Congressman. Worthy son of his father, he rapidly made his way in politics.

As Sam Rayburn's protégé, he was elected Congressman for Texas at twenty-nine; and so impressed Roosevelt that the latter told him:

"One day you will sit in my chair . . ."

Washington became Johnson's country, his home, and

in 1948 he was elected to the Senate with a majority of only 87 votes over his rival, Governor Coke Stevenson . . . soon he became leader of the Democrat majority in the Senate – a position which made him the most important man in Washington after the president.

At a dance in 1934 at the University of Texas, he met Claudia Alma Taylor, daughter of Thomas Jefferson Taylor, a second-hand dealer in Karnock, a poor village on the edge of the fir forest. A negress had nicknamed the child Lady Bird, thinking her bird-like, and the name stuck.

Lady Bird has often been quoted on the remote location of the farm where she grew up. It had no running water or bathroom. In such surroundings a girl learns to be a practical housekeeper. But she had more than backwoods good sense; she had ambition. She fell in love with the young political secretary, but she was farsighted enough to realise that he was a man with a future. This was not the starry-eyed wishful thinking of a bride.

They married within six weeks of meeting. It was well she had learned thrift on that Karnock farm. They set up home in a small Washington flat. The rent was \$47. Lady Bird walked miles with her shopping basket to make each dollar do the work of two.

In her husband's climb to the political peaks she was his wise guide and more. Her help was practical. She borrowed \$10,000 from her father to finance his first election campaign.

"Later, a \$46,000 inheritance from an aunt gave wider play for her initiative. She multiplied her capital many times. Today she controls several television stations, worth more than a million dollars.

Johnson, master of the Senate, expert in compromise, with a genius for parliamentary manoeuvre, and popular in the South, was the obvious Democrat candidate for the

presidential election in 1960. He was opposed by Stevenson (whose chances were slender since he had twice been beaten by Eisenhower), and by a young Senator rarely seen in the House but well backed by his father's millions: Jack Kennedy.

The American public is not keen on professional politicians. It much prefers the "outsider", the amateur, and the daring. Kennedy was chosen at Los Angeles. Johnson was very much disappointed; to such a point, indeed, that he swore never to work with the new candidate again, and never to be in any way obliged to him.

Johnson was sulking in his apartment, No. 7334 of the Biltmore Hotel at Los Angeles, when the telephone rang; Lady Bird took the call.

"This is Room 9333," said an unknown voice. It was Kennedy's room, and the young candidate came on the line straight away.

"Do persuade your husband to accept the post of Vice-President. We need him."

Some hours later, the news was official, and everyone in the party was greatly surprised. The spokesmen for the trades unions, the liberals, the negroes and internationalists, were all horrified: Johnson, the Southerner, the conservative, the schemer! But Kennedy had asked for no-one's advice; he needed Johnson's prestige in order to conquer the South, and he did not want a hostile Johnson making difficulties for him in the Senate.

After the election, Johnson was forgotten. Kennedy was too authoritarian to share with another the responsibilities of power. His entourage did not hide their hostility to the new Vice-President, who received many honours, travelled around the world, but was completely ignored by the White House.

A story went the rounds that a certain Lyndon Johnson was waiting at the Bureau of Missing Persons of the

Washington Police – but no-one arrived to claim him . . .

Johnson himself, by no means lacking in a sense of humour, said that Mrs Kennedy had had a huge crystal chandelier, which clattered with every draught, installed in his office “in order to stop me going to sleep.”

But this visit to Texas was to be a revenge for him. Here he was at home, here he counted for something. And on that very evening of Friday, November 22nd, Kennedy and his wife would sleep in the “Spanish Room” at his home, the ranch on the Pedernales river.

The ranch had been built by his grandfather as a strong-point against Redskin attack. It was made of great stones, with loopholes for firing upon the enemy. Thanks to his wife, Johnson had modernised and furnished it lavishly; he kept cattle on the 40 acres surrounding the main building. There was even a landing-strip, not to mention the short-wave transmitter, swimming-pool and huge garage.

That night, all the staff were awake, feverishly getting everything ready for the reception on Friday evening when Kennedy would arrive at the ranch after his Dallas meeting. Johnson would receive him there as in other days a baron received the sovereign in his castle.

IT WAS on that same night that around three o'clock Mrs Jeane Dixon, in Washington, was abruptly awakened by a nightmare. She at once telephoned the White House and asked for “the Secret Service”.

“You must warn the President – he's going to be killed tomorrow. Don't let him go to Dallas. My visions are always right. I foresaw his election, and Rockefeller's marriage . . . He must be warned at once.”

The officer on duty, furious at having been awakened for this, is reported to have not even thanked her and gone back to sleep on his sofa.

CHAPTER FIVE

He didn't like the 'Sardine Can'

HALF-A-DOZEN SECRET SERVICE men, part of the presidential escort, had not yet gone to bed that night. They were at the Fort Worth Press Club (two steps from the hotel at which President Kennedy was staying) drinking beer, vodka and bourbon. It was against regulations, but the discipline of the Secret Service had become oddly relaxed under Kennedy.

Even bodyguards are human. They could hardly be blamed for living it up a bit, especially when their hosts were the accredited journalists, much better paid than policemen; and since apart from the Press Club there was no alcohol to be found anywhere else in all “driest” Fort Worth.

The special agents would catch up on their sleep on the aeroplane journey and during the long procession next day – which seemed likely to be very dull for them.

Gerald A. Behn, head of the White House section of the Secret Service – about which there is nothing secret except the name – had not come to Texas. This was rather strange, since Behn always took part in presidential journeys. Was it some sort of silent protest? The special agents were furious because the Senate had just refused the credits necessary to take on a further twenty-five detectives.

With only four hundred men, most of them engaged in chasing counterfeiters, the Secret Service had no longer the

staff necessary to guard a Head of State in an age of rapid communications, and when leaders feel it necessary to mix with the crowds. For big occasions they had to apply for re-inforcements to the F.B.I., which was quick to "lend" its men, but not without some ironical comments . . . which made the Secret Service gnash their teeth.

THE ORIGINS of the Secret Service go back to the Civil War. In 1865, some weeks before his death – it was to be one of his last legislative acts – Abraham Lincoln decided to form a corps of adventurers (several forgers among them) to combat the traffic in counterfeit money in the reconquered Southern States. Their organisation was very vague, and they were paid from the Secret Fund of the Treasury Department – hence their title.

In 1901, after the assassination of President McKinley, the Government decided that it was essential to do something for the protection of the president. They did not want to use the Armed Forces, the civil power in the United States being always suspicious of the military. Nor, for similar reasons, did they wish to create a sort of political police; the services of public order in Washington were anyway quite insufficient.

Then someone remembered the Treasury Department's odd corps of "gorillas", and the White House asked for a number "on loan". The solution was all the more convenient because it made it unnecessary to ask Congress for funds.

SECRET SERVICE agents must all be very strong and healthy, well-educated and highly skilled in the use of weapons. When in Washington, they practise every day with pistol, rifle and sub machine-gun at a special range, in the vaults of the Treasury Department. They are taught judo, and from time to time take special courses at the

F.B.I. training college. They must be excellent swimmers, know how to ski and pilot a helicopter (in case it is necessary to save the president from peril at sea or in the mountains). They must be excellent investigators, know how to examine an electrical circuit to guard against sabotage or tapping; be experts in explosives; and be able to wear evening dress with an air in order to mix with the guests at White House receptions without it being suspected who they really are – or that they are armed.

Entry is not easy, but the salary is relatively attractive: between \$600 and \$1,000 a month, according to seniority. After all, a policeman is a policeman, whatever he's called, and \$600 is three times as much as he could earn elsewhere – while the prestige is enormous.

They wear plain clothes, but their sartorial style tends to be characteristic: a navy blue suit, "varsity cut", white shirt, and multicoloured tie. You can tell them by their way of dressing without having to look for the betraying little blue enamel star in the lapel.

In private, they are very polite; but in public heaven help the journalist who finds himself in their way. While he was still just a candidate, Kennedy was once roughly thrust aside when he found himself near to Eisenhower.

The great majority of the four hundred men of "the Service" are permanently engaged in tracing counterfeit money. The "White House Detail" consists of only fifty-six men; though to these must be added the specialists who supervise the mail, and those engaged in special enquiries connected with the Presidency. The White House receives some 30,000 letters a week. They are all sorted in a special room. The Secret Service examine them; X-ray parcels; make chemical analyses of certain papers and fluids; and if need arises trace the origin of threatening telephone calls.

The president regularly receives threats to his life,

warnings of attempts upon it, threats to drop an atomic bomb on the White House. Almost always they come from the deranged or from practical jokers. But the Secret Service study each one, follow up clues, and if necessary request action against those uttering threats, whose names are all placed on a long Black List.

The Secret Service also screen the employees of the presidential household, and of course make discreet enquiries each time a journalist or photographer is accredited to the White House.

But the function of the Secret Service is not political. It does not concern itself with the deep plots which may go on in the Senate or at the Pentagon, and would do nothing to prevent a *coup d'état*. Their work is purely practical and policemanly. There is nothing of the Gestapo about them.

However, James Rowley, director of the Service, by profession a lawyer, must keep up-to-date with events. For example, he had to surround both Kennedy and Johnson with guards immediately the first results of the presidential elections were announced. During a visit by a foreign Head of State he must also use a good deal of diplomacy, especially when the visitor comes from a country behind the Iron Curtain.

The uniformed guard at the White House should not be confused with the Secret Service. At the beginning of the century, the Washington police sent a group of men to keep guard at the grilled doors of the presidential palace, in much the same way that men are sent to keep order in a theatre, or to a disorderly bar.

Then it was decided to form a special squad, whose men would be better paid and assigned to permanent duty. Their task is relatively easy. They open doors, answer tourists' questions and chase off the squirrels; but in the event of danger it is their duty to form a living barrier.

That is how two of them came to be shot down before President Truman's door.

WHEN A president travels, a selected group of Secret Service men precedes him in their own special plane, and confer with the local authorities on security plans.

Every detail of the visit is studied; hotel rooms, stations and halls are examined with special detection apparatus. Above all, well-armed men are posted throughout the area. Finally, the dossiers of the local police or of the F.B.I. are carefully studied, so that suspect persons may be kept under surveillance, or even detained for a short time.

The head of the Secret Service had a power of veto over the president's movements. Eisenhower said once: "They won't let me watch the atomic tests."

Franklin Roosevelt complained that his private train was rather uncomfortable because of its ancient springs. But the Secret Service insisted on it because the old train was made of steel, and would give better protection in the event of an assassination attempt.

Truman didn't like having his bodyguard trotting after him every morning, when at 6 o'clock he took his "constitutional".

"They walk too slowly, your men," he said. And once, one Christmas Eve, he deliberately ignored the Secret Service veto on a proposed visit to his mother at Kansas City. Bad weather had closed almost all the commercial airports. Truman went, just the same, from a military airfield.

The president must never be alone is the cardinal rule of the Service. Agents swim with the president, go to the cinema with him and follow him everywhere. The whole of the special squad was at the Yalta Conference; and again, later, with Kennedy at the Berlin Wall.

When President Woodrow Wilson was courting Edith

Bolling, whom he was to marry, he was aware, from their first meetings, of a vague sensation of being watched all the time. He telephoned the police.

"But, Mr President, don't you know that two Secret Service men follow you constantly . . .?"

Wilson did not protest. "Go on. It's your duty," he said – and ever since there has been no private life for the Chief Executive or for the members of his family.

LIKE HIS predecessors, Kennedy kicked against it. He tried to prove his independence on the very evening of his inauguration.

He disappeared mysteriously at about 2 o'clock in the morning, causing a veritable panic among the Secret Service men. After that, his escapades were endless. He went alone incognito to the cinema, and went to dinner with friends. During the visit of King Hassan of Morocco he left the White House on foot without telling anyone, crossed the avenue and went to see his royal guest in Blair House.

During his last visit to New York, on November 14th, a week before the journey to Dallas, he did without his motorcycle escort and even asked that there should be no protective line of police at the roadsides. The New Yorkers had indeed protested that such security precautions were enormously expensive, upset city traffic and were bad for trade; shopkeepers could sell nothing while their customers waited for the president to go by. The official car even had to stop like any other at each red light.

There was an alarm when at the corner of 72nd Street a young man went right up to the President – taking advantage of the fact that the car had been halted at the crossroads by the traffic signal – and took as many photographs as he liked before the escort could intervene.

This carelessness of Kennedy's was not just a consequence of his rebellious character. He was an elected president,

whose election largely depended upon his personal popularity. Like a dictator, a president of the United States must satisfy the demands of the crowd. He must shake hands and smile, let himself be seen.

When begged to be more careful, John Kennedy would reply with a shrug:

"It's an occupational risk."

For him, it was also a matter of principle. He was the leader of the free world, Democracy's champion. He could not refuse to be seen. He did not want to hide behind closed blinds, or surround himself with hundreds of policemen armed to the teeth like a Communist tyrant.

What impression would it have made on the Berliners if he had hid himself behind a wall of sub machine-guns? No, he must prove to the world that the president of the United States was a free man, living among free men, in safety and confidence.

It was difficult for the Secret Service to ignore these arguments; after all, it is not for nothing that they refer to the president as "the boss". It's the boss who has the last word.

As U. E. Baugham, retired from the post of Secret Service head for some years, explained philosophically: "A president gets the protection he deserves."

AMERICA IS today in the forefront of Democracy. But that does not automatically ensure her wisdom and experience. She is above all a young country; her history does not yet span two centuries. She is also, alas, a country which periodically murders her Heads of State in as sinister a way as Tsarist Russia, or some eastern empire.

It is true that the assassinations do not always have political motives. At least, it has never been proved that they had. Most of the assassins were deranged; but that alone does not explain what they did.

What lies at the root of these repeated assassinations and attempted assassinations is the miasmatic climate of hatred; the constant friction; the taking for granted of the use of firearms; the idea that in politics one can be a kind of avenging angel.

America is the Land of Freedom – but not the Land of Tolerance.

One must not forget that within her huge frontiers live many races, many religions, many nationalities; and that in the United States today internal dissensions are as intense as they were in Europe during the Middle Ages.

With a sort of Irish Nationalist fervour, the Southerners continue to regard themselves as a conquered people. They are always waving the Confederate flag, singing *Dixie*, talking of the men of the North as “Yankees” – enemies. (The children play in Southern Army uniforms). They still look on Lincoln, the greatest president in American history, as a monster; to such a point that in the South the television stations ban documentaries of his life.

In such an atmosphere, the function of the Secret Service must be essential; it is vital for the security of the state, and perhaps Kennedy was wrong to undervalue it.

THE FIRST attempt on a president's life took place in 1835. It failed.

President Andrew Jackson was attending a funeral at the Capitol, in Washington. A mad-looking man stepped out of the crowd, went up to Jackson, took a pistol from his pocket and fired. But the gun did not go off. At once the man took out another pistol. Again the gun did not fire.

Recovering from his surprise, the President struck his assailant with his walking-stick, and the man was then overpowered by the police.

Later, experts examined both guns and fired them many times without the least difficulty. It has been stated that the

odds against such a double misfire were a million to one.

The intending assassin, Richard Lawrence, was a painter by profession, and lived in Washington. He was confined in a mental home, and died there sixteen years after Jackson, on June 13th, 1861.

ON GOOD Friday, 1865, Abraham Lincoln appeared in public for the first time after the victorious conclusion of the Civil War.

Just five days earlier General Grant had received the surrender of his Southern adversary General Lee, in a schoolhouse in Appomattox. The long, appalling, bloody civil war which had so fundamentally split the nation was over at last.

Lincoln lunched with his wife and two children; one of them, Robert, had just arrived from Appomattox. He had been invited to a first night at the Ford Theatre. The play was a farce called *Our American Cousin*, the fun arising from the misadventures of an English girl in America. Lincoln had turned down the invitation; he wanted to spend Easter in quiet. Then, during the afternoon, he was informed that General Grant was not going either. But the people of Washington wanted to celebrate their triumph; if neither went, there would be great disappointment. So the President decided to go.

The presidential box, draped with the national flag, was next to the stage. Mrs Lincoln sat in the front, while Lincoln preferred a deep armchair in the shadows. A plain-clothes man from the White House moved from the back to the front of the box, because he could see nothing from behind the President. No-one noticed that a hole had been pierced in the door, through which Lincoln's movements could be observed.

During the war, Lincoln's person had been protected night and day, but there had never been an attempt on his

life. The only such attempt had been in February 1861, before Lincoln had taken the oath, and therefore while he was still only president-elect. A group of conspirators planned to blow up Lincoln's train in Baltimore station but were arrested before they could do so.

It was during the third act, while Lincoln was laughing heartily, that a bearded young man opened the door of the President's box, levelled his long pistol, a "derringer", fired, and shouted stridently: "*Sic semper tyrannis!*" (Thus perish all tyrants.)

Lincoln's head fell forward upon his chest. The bullet had struck him in the nape of the neck and lodged near the right eye.

Mrs Lincoln cried "Oh, no!" and an official tried to arrest the assassin, who jumped from the box on to the stage, spraining an ankle as he fell, then disappeared into the wings.

The audience was still laughing, not understanding what had happened.

Soldiers carried Lincoln into a nearby house, but despite desperate efforts by the doctors the President died at seven next morning. Two coins were laid on his eyes, and the War Minister, Stanton, said heavily: "Now Lincoln belongs to all time."

The assassin was John Wilkes Booth, a twenty-six year old actor, very intense and romantic. Though a Northerner by origin he was a fanatical partisan of the cause of the Confederacy.

His intention at first was to kidnap Lincoln and exchange him for Southern prisoners of war. He put himself at the head of a small group, but his accomplices soon gave up - perhaps because they were frightened of this handsome young man who talked in verse, waving a dagger. Only three stayed with him. It was they who, while Booth was killing Lincoln, invaded the house of the Secretary of

State, William H. Seward, cut down his son before his eyes, wounded him in the shoulder and escaped. The Secretary of State ordered martial law.

Booth was traced to a farm in Virginia. It was set on fire and he was shot down while trying to escape from it. He never gave any reason for his crime, or confessed anything at all. His accomplices were hanged, as was the owner of the house where he lodged. A doctor who, innocently he claimed, had attended him while he was still at large was imprisoned for life.

The trial was held *in camera*. The accused's heads were hooded and their hands manacled. They had no legal aid.

Many people in America have never believed that Booth was the real assassin. The mystery of the crime has never been fully cleared up, despite a good deal of investigation.

WHEN, IN 1881, James A. Garfield became president, a certain Charles Guiteau, claiming that he had given great help in the election campaign, demanded that he should be appointed consul in Paris by way of reward. Garfield passed him on to his Secretary of State, who tactfully explained that for the moment there was no vacancy in the Consular Service.

Guiteau besieged the White House for months in the hope of being appointed. Gradually he came to hate Garfield, and to believe that he had a divine mission to exterminate the President.

He bought a revolver, and made up his mind to kill Garfield one Sunday while the President was sitting in his pew in church. But on the Saturday the President had to leave Washington, and the newspapers gave the time of departure. Guiteau lay in wait for him at the station, but when the President passed near him he was accompanied by his wife. Guiteau gave up the attempt, not wishing to frighten Mrs Garfield. It was not until Garfield came back

that he followed the President and shot him twice in the back. Then he quietly surrendered his weapon to the police and asked to be protected from the crowds.

Garfield died three months later, and Guiteau was executed for his crime.

ON SEPTEMBER 6th, 1901, President William McKinley was attending the opening of the Great Pan-American Exhibition at Buffalo, near Niagara Falls. He shook hands with hundreds of visitors and when a slender, dark young man with a bandaged hand came up to him the President made to take his other hand. The young man, Leon Czolgosz, an immigrant of Polish origin, offered his left hand – and with his right drew a pistol, with which he shot McKinley twice through the chest.

The President staggered, his friends holding him up. The crowd wanted to lynch the assassin, but McKinley insisted that they leave him alone. McKinley was to die eight days later.

Czolgosz was condemned to death.

It was after this that the Secret Service was given the task of protecting the President's person.

STILL ASSASSINATION attempts went on.

When, on October 13th, 1912, John N. Schrank, a barman of German origin, shot at Theodore Roosevelt as he came out of the Gilpatrick Hotel in Milwaukee, the latter was no longer president. But he still had a right to Secret Service protection.

The bullet was miraculously stopped by the manuscript of the speech which Roosevelt was about to make, and his spectacle-case. Roosevelt made his speech, and did not go to hospital for attention until two hours later. The bullet remained in his chest until his death, the doctors considering its removal too risky.

UNTIL 1937, the presidents of the United States were installed in March, not in mid-January as they are now. Accordingly, Franklin D. Roosevelt was still only President-Elect when in February 1933 he arrived in Miami during a cruise on multi-millionaire Vincent Astor's yacht – a much-needed post-election vacation. Roosevelt went ashore in order to take part in a Democrat Party meeting.

An anarchist, Giuseppe Zangara, a thirty-two-year-old mason working in Miami, wanted to kill President Herbert Hoover. But Hoover was in Washington and he, Zangara, here . . . Then suddenly Roosevelt arrived.

Zangara told himself that a future president was well worth one soon to retire. He managed to get near to Roosevelt, and shot five times at point-blank range. He missed the President, but killed the Mayor of Chicago instantly.

Although believed insane, he was nonetheless tried, and electrocuted in Florida.

THE ATTEMPT upon Harry Truman's life was even more spectacular, the work of Puerto Rican nationalists.

Puerto Rico, of course, is one of America's Caribbean possessions, and receives from her huge economic aid. New York has been invaded by Puerto Rican immigrants who have the vote and receive all sorts of subsidies. It is hard to imagine that the island really wants its independence; still there exists a tiny "irredentist" party, whose aims are not very clear.

Oscar Collazo and Griselio Torresola, two young members of this party, arrived in Washington on October 31st, 1950. They later claimed that they merely wanted to demonstrate in front of President Truman's residence; but they were armed with guns, and sixty-six bullets.

At the time, Truman was having the White House re-decorated, and was living on the otherside of the avenue, at

Blair House. This is simply a big house, with no railing, gateway or garden.

Outside, the house was guarded by uniformed policemen and a few Secret Service men, armed with nothing more than revolvers. Inside, at the foot of the stairway, was another protective ring, of men armed with revolvers but also with sub machine-guns to hand. In addition, there were two other armed men at the President's bedroom door. Truman was having his afternoon nap.

After studying the terrain, the two daring assassins decided to separate. They shook hands (it was the last time they were to see each other) and approached Blair House from opposite directions. Collazo had bought himself a new suit for the occasion.

The uniformed guards were quite unsuspecting.

Torresola arrived first at a little sentry-box in which Leslie Coffelt, one of the guards, was sitting. The latter never knew what was happening: Torresola shot him down coldly, the revolver touching his chest.

At that moment, Collazo arrived at the sentry-box at the other end of the pavement, but walked calmly by as if he were just a sight-seer. He went up the steps. Another guard, Donald T. Birzell, was on duty at the door. He did not see Collazo draw his revolver and fire.

The shot did not go off. Stupefied, Collazo hit the gun with his hand, as if trying to unjam it. It was then that Birzell realised what was going on. He tried to draw his own revolver, but just then Collazo's weapon did fire, and the guard was hit in the leg.

Collazo went on shooting. With great courage, the guard then went down the steps before swinging round to return his assailant's fire - in order to prevent injury to the many passers-by along the road.

Collazo thought Birzell mortally wounded, stopped firing and tried to open the door. It was then that two other

Right, hands clasped tightly, Robert and Jacqueline Kennedy watch the body of the President being placed in an ambulance for its journey back to Washington. *Below*, Mrs Kennedy witnesses the swearing in of the new President, Lyndon Johnson, prior to his return to the capital





The arrest of Lee Harvey Oswald, after he had been found in a Dallas cinema

policemen (the one in the second sentry-box and a colleague) opened fire on him. Collazo turned round, only to find that his revolver was empty.

He then did something quite unbelievable. He sat calmly down on the steps and set to work to re-load his revolver. The policemen were shooting at him, but a little iron balustrade protected him. Collazo was thus able to get up and continue the battle. He fired three times, and was then hit in the chest, collapsing in front of the door.

If Collazo was not a very good shot, Torresola on the other hand proved an excellent one. After shooting down Coffelt, he fired at another policeman, Joseph H. Down, who was seriously injured, then went to the aid of his comrade, Collazo. He wounded Birzell in the other leg, thus reducing the guard to helplessness.

In his turn, Torresola had to re-load. But the guard Coffelt (whom he had shot three times at point-blank range in the sentry-box) found the strength, despite his terrible wounds, to aim his revolver at him. Torresola was mortally wounded in the head, and died instantly.

While the policemen were getting themselves killed for him, President Truman did a very foolish and childish thing, which could have cost him his life. Awakened with a start by the shooting, and still in his underpants, he went to the window to see what was happening. Had he been noticed by one of the assassins, or had there been a third, catastrophe might have followed.

Collazo recovered, and was tried and condemned to death. Truman commuted the sentence to one of imprisonment for life.

In 1958 and 1959, other Puerto Rican nationalists planned attempts on the life of President Eisenhower. The first involved the throwing of grenades under his car; the second a fusillade of shots during a public ceremony.

Neither plot came to anything, thanks to preventive measures by the Secret Service.

ANOTHER PUERTO Rican, Silverio Cruz, threw himself, armed, at Kennedy's car in Chicago, while Kennedy was still only a candidate.

Then, while he was still President-Elect, John F. Kennedy only just missed falling victim to a certain Richard P. Pavlick, who was apparently deranged.

The incident took place at Palm Beach, where the Kennedys have a winter residence, on the morning of Sunday, December 11th, 1960. Pavlick left this car, a Ford, outside their luxurious villa. In it were found seven sticks of dynamite with automatic detonators. The man had intended to engineer a collision with the future President's car, and in the confusion blow Kennedy, himself and guards all sky-high.

Fortunately, that morning Jacqueline and her daughter Caroline were with the young politician; and Pavlick, by a miracle of sentimentality, did not want to kill the wife and child as well. He decided to wait for another chance.

But the Secret Service had been alerted. A hunt for Pavlick began, and some days later he was arrested. He made a full confession. At his home were found films of all Kennedy's movements and a huge collection of photographs.

A year later, while Kennedy – now President of the United States – was preparing to go to Venezuela, a group of masked men burst into the police station of the little village of Urachiche, and after killing two officers seized a quantity of arms and ammunition.

Urachiche is on the motorway leading from La Guaira airport to Caracas, along which Kennedy was to pass. The bandits belonged to the so-called Liberation Movement, more or less pro-Castro.

Romolo Bethancourt, Venezuela's President (for whose safety Kennedy was in his turn to be concerned on the eve of November 22nd, 1963) at once warned Washington, and suggested that the visit should be postponed. Disorder had meanwhile broken out in his capital.

But Kennedy decided to take the risk.

"After all, if Nixon wasn't afraid, I – Kennedy – have no right to let myself be intimidated."

The guerrillas were fortunately put out of action by regular troops. A hundred Secret Service men were sent on ahead. American Marines were debarked from the cruiser *Northampton*. The Caracas police threw out a giant net. All possible precautions were taken.

However, one rebel, a certain El Toro, did succeed in getting into the airport grounds at La Guaira, and with grenades in his pocket. But he was not able to do anything; he was surrounded by Secret Service men.

The Kennedys' visit to Venezuela went off triumphantly.

ON THIS morning of Friday, November 22nd, 1963, special agent Bill Greer woke up very early.

For some reason, his first thought was that since 1901, when the Secret Service took on the task of protecting the presidents, the "record" was unblemished. The Service had never lost a president. All assassination attempts had been baulked.

Today he was to drive the presidential car. He went to his hotel window, and saw with dismayed surprise that the weather had turned fine.

"Damn!" he exclaimed disgustedly.

In good weather, the "bubble-top" (a plastic dome specially designed to cover the passengers in the presidential car without hiding them) could not be used. Actually, the plastic did not give complete protection against a bomb

or a bullet; but it would deflect them, which was something.

Unfortunately, Kennedy (like his predecessor, Eisenhower) did not like this dome, and had ordered Bill Greer not to use it except in very bad weather.

"It's suffocating under that thing. Like being in a sardine can," the President would often say to his chauffeur.

CHAPTER SIX

The Promoter

THE FLOOR WAITER, George E. Jackson, a negro, served breakfast in the President's room punctually at half-past eight, on this fateful morning of November 22nd.

Kennedy was already shaved and dressed. He had ordered orange juice, toast, coffee, and eggs boiled for five minutes. For Jacqueline, still asleep, there was orange juice, toast, and coffee served on a hot-plate.

The President had risen at quarter to eight, and had already had a talk with his *aide-de-camp*, General Godfrey T. McHugh.

"Nothing new," that officer said. He handed over some newspapers, and two pages of telegraphed reports on the situation in Viet-Nam and Cambodia. Fuller reports would be supplied later, during the plane journey.

The President took the lift, smiling at young Lupe Guerrero, the lift-girl. She was quite overcome; she had spent half a week's wages on a permanent wave in Kennedy's honour, and was delighted at being noticed.

Despite the night's fine rain, a small crowd had been waiting since three in the morning in front of the hotel doors. When Kennedy came out, there were about 10,000.

A teen-ager who had been there since dawn began shouting:

"Jack, Jack, come here. I want to touch you. I love you. We all love you . . ." Her name was Lila Lazo.

The greater part of the crowd was waiting in a car-park whose proprietor had put it at the disposal of the Democrat Party organisation. A temporary platform had been erected, and Kennedy went towards it, shaking hands and smiling acknowledgement of the increasingly hysterical cheers. Near the platform were Vice-President Johnson, Governor Connally, Senator Yarborough and other politicians.

Kennedy was wearing a grey flannel suit, without coat or hat. As the rain had begun again, a supporter offered him a raincoat, but he refused with a smile:

"I'm all right. I don't need it."

He began to speak, without notes:

"Our hearts are strong . . . Thanks to the town of Fort Worth, we are militarily the most powerful nation in the world . . . Soon we shall shoot into Space an even more formidable rocket than the Russian ones . . . Space is a new Ocean . . . and no-one must get ahead of us there. Next year we shall be first in every field." He finished with more praise of Fort Worth, and got down from the platform to walk back through the delirious crowd.

A GROUP of Democrats had paid \$3 each to attend a political breakfast with the President in the ballroom of the Texas Hotel. The price was a nominal one; the tickets had been changing hands on the black market at \$15 to \$20.

Kennedy went back for a moment to his suite before joining his audience. He probably wanted to ask Jacqueline to hurry up, as her absence had been noticed. He also made several telephone calls. It is supposed that he talked with his brother Bob, in Washington.

He went down again, to the lounge, to greet a group of notables, and then led them into the ballroom. It was exactly nine o'clock. An orchestra of pupils from a local

high school played the presidential anthem, "Hail to the Chief".

Kennedy was seated in the centre of the table of honour. Breakfast was served. Having already had his, Kennedy just went through the motions of eating. He was used to this bit of play-acting, his doctor having forbidden him to eat food served at banquets in hotels or other public places.

Things were at the coffee stage when at last Jacqueline appeared, doll-like in pink, and took her place beside her husband. She received a tremendous ovation.

Jacqueline excused her lateness: "I travel light, and have to do my own hair."

There was nothing very remarkable in Kennedy's speech. It was much the same as before: he covered the same ground, making flattering allusions to the town and its more prominent citizens. He spoke partly from notes, partly extempore. But this Fort Worth speech must become part of history because these were to be John Fitzgerald Kennedy's last public words.

He spoke again of the power of America, and of the aeroplanes made at Fort Worth. His elder brother, Joseph, had been in one of them, a Liberator, at the time of his death in the last war; and as if on a sudden inspiration Kennedy went on to speak of "the very dangerous and uncertain world in which we live . . ."

He broke off abruptly after that phrase. The audience remained pensive and silent, and did not applaud as he left the room.

THE PRESIDENTIAL procession went slowly towards the Carswell Air Base, madly cheered all the way. Kennedy and his wife shook hands hundreds of times before boarding the aircraft. The plane took off at 11.24. Kennedy went to the front, where there was a separate compartment with table, armchairs, two beds and a cloakroom.

Fort Worth is separated from Dallas by only some thirty-five miles of motorway through the desert. But the two towns are bitter rivals, careful to ignore each other's existence; it was good politics to arrive in Dallas by plane, as if coming directly from Washington, or at least from far away.

The plane journey also gave some opportunity to recoup oneself. The press used it to have a drink – much needed, the bars at Fort Worth being closed – and to read through their notes.

Vice-President Johnson had his own special plane. The rule is that president and vice-president should never travel in the same one, so as to avoid a succession crisis in the case of accident. He used the opportunity to talk over Texan problems with his friends, and to arrange the evening's big reception at his ranch.

Kennedy himself studied important dossiers sent from Washington, signed a number of letters, including the telegram of good wishes to Winston Churchill, then began to read the morning's newspapers.

Among the dailies was the *New York Herald Tribune*, which he had banned for over a year from the White House because it criticised him more than he liked. Now he had changed his mind, and read it each morning.

Finally, he began to make notes on the manuscript of the Dallas speech, the text already distributed to the press and others attending – but Kennedy liked to make last-minute alterations.

THIS SAME morning, at Tampa, Florida, John E. Maguire was collecting signatures to an address to the President of the United States, thanking him for his visit of some days before. Maguire was altogether suited for this task, it having been Kennedy who had appointed him "Marshall"

– roughly equivalent to Chief Constable – of Central Florida.

He had known the President for twenty years; since, in fact, as radio-telegraphist second-class he had been one of the crew of the naval patrol boat PTB 109, commanded by Lieutenant Kennedy.

Maguire could go to Washington to see the President whenever he liked. The White House door was always open to him. So it was to William Johnson, who that morning (despite his fifty-three years and his stomach ulcer) was driving a lorry at Waltham, Massachusetts, for a petrol company. Johnson had also served on PTB 109, and with him Charles A. Harris, called "Buckley", the ship's gunner, who was that morning making shoes in a Boston factory.

Machinist Gerald E. Zinser, a postal employee in Florida, and Saul Edgar Mauer, for eighteen months now confined to a military hospital because of a nervous condition, could not hope to see their old commander again.

A further member of the crew, Maurice Kowal, worked in a cemetery. He was the sailor Kennedy saved from certain death at risk of his own life, when PTB 109 was wrecked.

FOR THE crew and their commander came within inches of a horrible death one moonless night in the Blackett Straits in the Solomon Islands, some fifty miles from their regular base of Randova, south of New Georgia.

It was a little after midnight, on August 2nd, 1943. PTB 109 was on patrol, the second in command, George Ross, at the helm. Suddenly, out of the darkness surged the *Amagiri*, a Japanese destroyer, heading at 30 knots for the American boat. It cut it in two and went on its way without slowing up for a second.

Two members of the crew were killed instantly, and two others wounded. Kennedy was thrown on to the bridge.

The boat did not sink, but the sea was aflame. It was expected that help would come quickly, but the rest of the flotilla went on, believing them lost.

During the following night, the vessel went down and the crew swam towards a small deserted island. Kennedy, an excellent swimmer, towed one of the wounded, holding the sailor's life-jacket between his teeth. Having got him ashore, Lieutenant Kennedy did not stop for rest, but plunged back into the water, carrying a lantern. All night long he swam around in the Ferguson Passage, much used by naval units, hoping to be able to signal to one of them, but without success. He went back to his men. The third night, they all managed to get to another island.

Next day, Kennedy and Ross found some water and biscuits left behind by the Japanese. There was also a canoe, which they tried to use, but a storm swept them off course.

Natives came to their aid and gave them a stronger boat. Kennedy scratched a brief message on a coconut shell, indicating their position and asking for help, and gave it to a group of natives who promised to go to Randova.

Kennedy and his second in command then tried to get back to their comrades, but the boat foundered. They were saved a second time from certain death by the island people.

It was not until the seventh day that at last they were brought a letter from Randova . . . a few hours later they were rescued.

Admiral Halsey gave Kennedy a mention in despatches, and he was decorated for valour. Unfortunately, he fell victim to malaria, and had to give up active service. In December he returned to the United States, and was confined to a military hospital until Autumn 1944.

ALREADY, WHILE at Harvard University (where he was in the champion swimming team and the rugby team)

Kennedy as a young student had seriously injured his spine. For this reason, the Army would not accept him at the outbreak of war. But Kennedy did not want to be an enforced civilian. Thanks to the influence of his family, he obtained a Naval command.

The adventure in the waters of the Pacific aggravated his physical condition. Later, he had to undergo a whole series of painful operations, two of which involved risk of death. He had to learn to walk with crutches, and even at the White House he had always to put up with a very strict regimen under the direction of Dr Travell. His rocking-chair, therefore, was not a paternalist symbol but a therapeutic necessity.

Every cloud has its silver lining: a long stay in hospital in 1955 enabled Kennedy to write a book prophetically titled *Profiles in Courage*, which brought him the Pulitzer Prize.

WHEN I think of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, I see him alighting from his plane at Texas, hatless and coatless, red hair flying in the wind. He wanted to brave the elements in just the same way as he wanted to brave the ups and downs of politics.

For him, life was a continual challenge, which he accepted with an unchanging enthusiasm each day and night — like a skier who plunges down from the height of the track to leap into the void.

His one really big worry was time:

"I've so much to do," he would say. "I shall never manage to finish it all in four years . . . Even in eight, I'll have to hurry."

Power had brought about a physical change in him. He had got fatter, his cheeks were full, there were dark circles around his eyes. He often gave the impression of being very tired, discouraged, disillusioned. But he remained an idealist, and above all a man young in spirit.

His fondness for children was endearing; he would often interrupt an important conference to go to the next floor to see what "John-John" was doing. (He called the boy that because he did not like Jack, the baptismal name; still less "Johnny" or "Junior").

Prominent on his table there were always boxes of sweets, for John and Caroline to dip into. The children could come and see him often throughout the day, and not only for the benefit of photographers. His favourite game was to take "John-John" in his arms and whisper in his ear; then the little boy would hiss in his father's ear a vague "buzz-buzz" – and father and son would burst into hearty laughter. It was their "secret".

THE EVENTS of November 22nd, 1963 have created a Kennedy myth. Attempts have been made to turn him into another Lincoln, a genius, a pioneer or an idol.

We ought not to anticipate the verdict of history. It will not be possible for a long time to make a true evaluation of his uncompleted work. Let us, for the moment, just note that on this Friday morning of his journey to Dallas, he was under critical fire for many reasons. The Republican group in the Senate had recently published a statement which called his presidency the worst since Harding's.

Kennedy was very irritated by criticisms of this kind; perhaps his desire for repeated renewal of contact with the crowds was rooted in a need of re-assurance.

Despite family, friends and admirers, a president is appallingly alone. He is perhaps the most isolated man in the world. His is a hard calling; and, as Truman once said to me. "Each year at the White House is an eternity."

I remember Kennedy on the evening when he thanked his supporters for having chosen him as their candidate for the presidency; the atmosphere in the Los Angeles Stadium was hysterical. He still had a boyish face then. You wouldn't

have thought that it was the future president of the United States up there. He looked more like a page who had just come up with a message, and then, suddenly drunk (as in some film comedy), grabbed the microphone. Near him was his mother, Rose Kennedy.

THIS *mater dolorosa* has been much neglected since the Dallas tragedy; it was the young and lovely Jacqueline Kennedy, by her husband's side at the time, who caught the public imagination. But does a mother suffer less because she was not there when her son died?

Rose Fitzgerald, daughter of a famous politician, had had the great joy of seeing her John elected to the highest office in the country; any mother would wish her son one day to be president, and Rose had wanted it more than any other. But she had had to pay dearly for that satisfaction.

Her eldest son, Joseph, a bomber-pilot in Europe, left his English base on August 12th, 1944 never to return. That same year, her daughter Kathleen, wife of the Marquis of Hartington, was widowed; she was to die in her turn in 1948, in an air disaster in the south of France.

Rosemary Kennedy, the eldest of the four Kennedy daughters, has always been mentally handicapped; she is under care in a Wisconsin sanatorium. The family very bravely revealed this secret in order to encourage the creation of a vast fund in aid of retarded children.

On December 19th, 1961, Rose's husband, Joseph P. Kennedy, succumbed to an apoplectic attack which almost completely paralyzed him. He was the *deus ex machina* of the clan. He had built up an immense fortune by daring and not always orthodox speculation, become an Ambassador, dominated the Democrat Party and determined to make not just one of his sons president, but all four of them in succession.

It so chanced that I met the elder Kennedy in a famous