2-30

The City Goes Dark and Cancels Activities as the President Is Mourned

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their doors and darkened their marquees. Television chains canceled all entertainment programs and commercials.

As dusk came, automatic devices turned on the huge, gaudy signs that normally blot out the night in the Times Square area. Then, one by one, the lights blinked out, turning the great carnival strip into what was almost a mourning band on the city's sleeve.

The Harvard-Yale and Princeton-Dartmouth football games and scores of other contests at colleges and schools were canceled for Saturday.

Dinner dances, cocktail parties, banquets and other social events were called off throughout the metropolitan area. All the city's major hotels canceled entertainment in their public rooms.

There were exceptions, of course. In outlying Manhattan neighborhoods and in the other boroughs the visible evidence of shock and sorrow was less spectacular. Movie theaters and shops remained lighted and open, but crowds were sparse and subdued.

Restaurants, by decision of their trade associations, operated as usual for public convenience and necessity. Bars were open, often with customers three deep, talking in hushed tones, eyes glued to television sets that repeated the news over and over again.

Twelve all-night movie houses on 42d Street between the Avenue of the Americas and Eighth Avenue darkened their main display signs but were open for business. One of them expressed the street's attitude with a picture called "Carry On, Regardless."

In the solar area, in a penny arcade, rifle shots snapped against moving targets and none of half a dozen marksmen seemed to think it was bad odd way to pass the time. Two record stores blared music into the otherwise subdued street.

Crowd Below Normal

Elsewhere in the city's five boroughs, stores and most theaters remained open as usual, but in many centers crowds were well below normal for Friday night.

Most neighborhood movie theaters remained open; but they had nearly empty houses. In Greenwich Village most of the major night spots that offer entertainment were closed and the majority of off-Broadway legitimate houses also canceled performances.

In Brooklyn, only the young seemed to be out in normal force and spirits.

In the King's Highway area, the police and store-keepers found activity off by at least 60 per cent. There was a similar relative hush at Flatbush and Church Avenues, where a taxi driver commented, "It looks like a different town."

Most Brooklyn movie houses were open, but the Albemarle Theater on Flatbush Avenue turned away would-be patrons with a sign: "Out of respect for the late President John F. Kennedy this theater will be closed for the rest of the day."

Along Jamaica Avenue in Queens, the three big department stores that dominate most busy Friday nights — Macy's, May's and Gertz — had closed their doors. Many smaller stores also closed, and those that remained open had little or no business.

The early evening pattern was less distinct in Harlem, where night life normally gets under way at a later hour. Crowds appeared nearly normal and the only notable closing reported was that of the Apollo Theater, a vaudeville house on 125th Street.

Rights Drive Questioned

Harlem bar conversation centered nervously and with some hostility on the new President, Lyndon B. Johnson, and speculation that the drive for integration and a major civil rights bill would be slowed or halted with a Texan in the White House.

"Let's see what your cracker President is going to do for you now," a Harlem bartender said to his customers.

At the Chinese Public School, supported by Chinatown residents, Kenneth Chan, the principal, called 700 students together for a special memorial service at nightfall.

Earlier in the day, hundreds of public and private events—school and university classes, receptions, formal dinners, dances—were halted in mid-course or canceled.

All city, state and Federal courts closed as soon as word of the assassination spread.

George Szell, conducting the New York Philharmonic at Philharmonic Hall, ended the concert abruptly after completing Beethoven's "Leonore" Overture No. 3.

Among scores of social events abruptly canceled was the Annual Freedom Award Dinner of the Order of Lafayette at which former President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Gen. Lucius D. Clay were to have received awards.