

# DALLAS IS GROPING FOR A REASON WHY

Some Say 'Crackpots' Have Touched Off Violence

NY-11/25  
By JOHN HERBERS

Special to The New York Times

DALLAS, Nov. 24 — "We think it's this Western tradition," a minister's wife said. "They are used to shooting at everything they don't like."

This was one explanation for a series of impulsive acts of violence that has occurred in Dallas—the abuse of President Johnson in a hotel lobby during the campaign in 1960; the attack on Adlai E. Stevenson, chief delegate to the United Nations, a few weeks ago; the assassination of President Kennedy, and the slaying today of the President's assassin.

Dallas does have a Western tradition, but it is not predominant. The city is really neither Western nor Southern. A civic leader who has been concerned about the rise of right-wing extremism here explained it like this:

"Dallas has a lot of professional people who are responsibly conservative and individualistic. It has some leaders who are interested in making money under the free and open Texas tradition. These people have attracted a lot of crackpots and the crackpots have inflamed the weak-minded and emotionally unstable."

## Attracted by the West

Jack Ruby, the night-club operator who shot Lee H. Oswald, was described as a Chicagoan who was attracted by the Western tradition in Dallas.

His club in the heart of Dallas is decorated in Western decor, with the picture of a steer's head on a street sign.

A friend of Ruby's said he was an efficient bouncer. "He was tough all right, but you can't run a night club here and be a sissy," he said.

One block from Ruby's club is a similar night club called "The Horseshoe." It is decorated with pictures of scantily clad women, some of them wearing pistols on their hips.

Both night clubs are in the shadow of a partly completed, 50-story office building. Dallas has several skyscrapers going up. A taxi driver was asked if the city needed that much office space. He replied:

"I don't know about that, but

you see that new building there. It was built by a bank. Another bank is building that tall structure. They couldn't stand to let the first bank get ahead of them."

## 'Like a Cancer'

"Something has happened here," Dr. Thomas A. Fry, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, told his congregation today in a memorial service for President Kennedy. He continued:

"We are proud of our heritage and our image. But something has happened like a cancer you cannot quite put your finger on.

"We have allowed the apostles of religious bigotry and the purveyors of political pornography to stir up the weak-minded.

"These events should cause us to see to it that never again will we allow persons to brand a President a Communist unless he can back up his charges in court with facts, to call a person an adulterer with nothing more than a picture of a man in front of the house to prove it."

Dr. Fry was referring to literature distributed in the city by extremists.

Oswald's slaying today added to the feeling of defensiveness, confusion and hurt that has been evidenced here since the President was killed.

People on the street have felt

throughout that there was some kind of conspiracy involved in the President's death.

Hundreds of persons gathered under clear skies today at the spot where President Kennedy was shot. They placed scores of floral wreaths in the small park that adjoins the street. Many of them stood in small groups discussing Oswald's death.

"I said all along that there was something else behind this," a woman said. "This shooting proves it. He won't be able to talk now."

A waitress said, "I just don't believe Oswald was acting on his own."

These people said they found it difficult to believe that the President's assassination was the act of a single demented person.

Extremists here have contended that any left-wing activity was part of a worldwide conspiracy. Oswald has been a defector to the Soviet Union and was a self-proclaimed Marxist.

There was anger against Ruby for shooting Oswald before he could be brought to trial.

"This makes it worse than

ever for Dallas," a businessman said "It seems like the police would have had enough sense to keep out people like that; it will be hard to convince the nation that Dallas people aren't wild-eyed gunmen."

Some residents expressed doubt that the authorities had enough evidence against Oswald to convict him. "I don't believe he did it," a woman said.

Dallas also has a strong Southern tradition, even though most residents claim Western ties first. It is a city of many churches and their members turned out in great numbers today, obviously deeply grieved and disturbed over what had happened.

A minister said "I think it is significant that the President received a warm and genuine reception by thousands of its residents before he was shot by a single emotionally disturbed man. Dallas cannot be explained in a few words. It is a lot of things."