

RIISING AGAINST DALLAS POLICE

By RICHARD DUDMAN

A Staff Correspondent of the
Post-Dispatch

DALLAS, Tex., Nov. 26—Re-sentment is rising against the Dallas Police Department over what many consider a series of blunders culminating in the fatal shooting of Lee Harvey Oswald Sunday.

The second shooting has jolted many Dallas citizens out of the stunned shock caused by the assassination of President John F. Kennedy last Friday.

The comment, "It could have happened in any city," is giving way to the question, "What is wrong in Dallas that lets these things happen here?"

Groping for Answers

Criticism is aimed mainly at the Police Department, but the operations of the Secret Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation are being questioned as the people of Dallas grope for answers.

All three agencies are being blamed for the fact that no search was made of the Texas Textbook Depository Building before the presidential motorcade passed it. The assassin shot the President from the deserted sixth floor of the warehouse.

The window the killer had chosen was a perfect vantage point. It faced the parade route, overlooking a downward curve of the roadway so that a passing automobile would be moving directly away and thus would present an easier target.

Angle of Window

The level and angle of the window were such that the assassin could have aimed a gun at Mr. Kennedy's head from a point 10 feet behind the sill, safe from the sight of anyone close to the building.

Officials have excused the failure to search the building in advance by saying it would have been physically impossible to search and secure every building along the route. With the benefit of hindsight, however, many are saying the textbook building was unusually suited to the assassin's purpose and should have been searched if no other building was searched.

A second major blunder, as

many here see it, came immediately after the shooting of the President. Dallas police raced to the warehouse building and began a quick look for the killer. At one point they had Oswald in their hands, but let him go when the manager of the textbook company said the man was an employe.

They later took a muster of employes, found Oswald missing and broadcast his description. It was that information that led Patrolman J. D. Tippit to stop a man on the street four miles away. That man shot and killed Tippit and has been identified

as Oswald.

Building Not Sealed

The question here is why did police not seal the building immediately when they thought the killer of the President was inside? One explanation has been that the first search had to be a quick one and that any employe of the place could easily be traced afterward if necessary.

Another, which seemed to some to be the only explanation, was that the officers were so unsettled by the shooting that they neglected to follow normal police practice.

A criticism expressed by a leading Texas criminal lawyer in Houston, that the Dallas authorities might jeopardize their case by questioning Oswald at length without letting him have legal counsel, seemed to carry little weight in Dallas.

In Accordance With Law

Percy Foreman, president of the National Association of Defense Lawyers in Criminal Cases, questioned the procedure here, but few Dallas residents seemed impressed. Several Dallas lawyers, questioned on this point, said the interrogation was fully in accordance with Texas law.

Two lawyers began a discussion by saying, "Of course, he has a right to counsel, but here in Texas. . . ."

The crowning blunder, in the opinion of many here, was Chief of Police Jesse E. Curry's attempt to transfer Oswald from the City Hall to the county jail in daylight in accordance with a widely-publicized schedule.

Fixture at Police Station

Compounding that blunder, police on duty in the City Hall basement permitted the hoodlum operator of a strip-tease joint, known as a pistol-carrying brawler with a police record, to mingle with the crowd that awaited Oswald's emergence from the jail. Apparently he escaped notice because he had become a fixture as a police station hanger-on.

The result was the second shooting witnessed by millions on television, in which Jack Ruby fatally wounded the man who was accused of killing the President but had not confessed or been convicted of the crime.

Yesterday, when Ruby, in turn, was transferred skillfully to the county jail, slouched in the back seat of an unmarked automobile and without any prior announcement, the sentiment heard over and over again in Dallas was that the gate had been locked after the horse was stolen.