

Ex-Chief Criticizes Performance Of Secret Service in Dallas

Expresses Doubt That Agents Did Everything They Could to Protect Kennedy

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ALEXANDRIA, Va., Dec. 7 — Urbanus E. Baughman, former chief of the Secret Service, raised sharp questions today about the performance of the agency at the time of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Baughman expressed doubt about whether the Secret Service had inspected the Dallas parade route thoroughly beforehand and whether agents assigned to the President did everything they could to protect him.

The former chief made his comments after the Treasury Department had honored two Secret Service agents for heroism in Dallas.

He expressed his views in an interview with the

Post-Dispatch, the Detroit News, the Newark News and the Washington Star. He met with the reporters in his home in Alexandria, Va., across the Potomac river from Washington.

Baughman, 58 years old, retired Aug. 31, 1961, after serving as chief for 13 of his 33 years with the Secret Service.

Among the questions he raised about the Secret Service performance in Dallas were these:

Why was Gerald A. Behn, agent in charge of the White House detail, not in Dallas with the President? Behn and James J. Rowley, Baughman's successor as chief, remained in Washington during the Dallas trip.

Why did not the agent in the front seat beside the driver of the

the President's car cover Mr. Kennedy with his body as soon as the first shot was fired?

What did the agents do who followed the President's automobile in the Secret Service follow-up car?

Why did not the Secret Service men use a machine-gun to spray the window in the Texas School Book Depository building, where a rifle barrel was seen immediately after the

shooting? The former chief raised these other points about the performance of the Dallas police on matters in which they normally would act under Secret Service advice:

Did the police search the textbook warehouse before the presidential parade passed?

Did police search and patrol the railroad overpass that the President's automobile was approaching when he was shot? Baughman said policemen normally would be stationed on top and underneath and all other persons would be cleared from the viaduct.

Why was Lee Harvey Oswald permitted to leave the textbook warehouse after being questioned briefly as officers searched the building after the shooting?

The Secret Service declined to comment. Special agent John H. Warren Jr., to whom reporters were referred, said the agency had instituted a "blanket policy" prohibiting any comment until after the presidential commission has completed its investigation.

Awards Offset Criticism
Treasury Department ceremonies honoring two Secret Service men for heroism at the time of the assassination have tended to offset public criticism of the agency, whose chief function is to protect the President.

The department's exceptional service award was presented to Rufus W. Youngblood and Clinton Hill.

Youngblood, riding in the front seat of Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson's automobile, on hearing the first shot, "instantly vaulted across the front seat of the car, pushed the Vice President to the floor, and shielded the Vice President's body with his own," the citation said.

Hill, who had been riding in the follow-up car, ran to the presidential limousine and shielded Mrs. Kennedy.

List of Psychopaths
In the interview, Baughman told also of the Secret Service list of thousands of known psychopaths. He said the agency's protective service research section sends out advance information on such persons to the police of a city the President is scheduled to visit.

The former chief said he saw no possibility of affording a President absolute protection, so long

as protection to a President in a motorcade against people suiting up close to the car.

Baughman: That is correct.
Q: But the problem is from a distant sniper. Would it be practical to ban people from windows in buildings along a parade route?

Baughman: I would like to do that. But I don't know if it would be practical. We do everything possible. But there is nothing to prevent an assassin—suppose he rented a room six months in advance, or he lived in a hotel. Hotels can't stop that.

Q: When the President is going to another city, does the Secret Service round up known psychopaths?

Baughman: We have a list. Everyone is on the list. And if we don't have the manpower, police or someone will cover them and check them that they don't get near the parade.

Q: Sometimes are they actually detained in jail or put under surveillance?

Baughman: That is very rare. After all, we are Americans and we just don't detain anyone unless we have a justifiable cause.

Q: You could, in an extreme case?

Baughman: We could, if we had, perhaps, something definite. But you don't just arrest people.

Q: How many people are on that list?

Baughman: I couldn't tell you. There are thousands. When the President goes up to a city, our Protective Research Section mails out the list of names and the photographs. Then the agents there, plus the police, are alerted.

Q: Is it possible that Oswald, who was accused of shooting the President, was clever in not being until the motorcade was past him—when perhaps Secret Service agents' eyes had gone past the building?

Baughman: The unfortunate thing is that that fellow (Oswald) was killed. I don't know whether somebody else was involved.

as he rides in motorcades and has contact with the public.

A partial transcript of the interview follows:

Q. Chief Baughman, you spent many years as head of the Secret Service and faced the problem of protecting Presidents. Is there anything that can be done to guard against this sort of assassination in the future?

Baughman: When anyone shoots from a distance with a long-range gun, you are almost helpless. Our preventive measure in the past has been to intercept anyone who comes out from the street, and if you know the history of assassinations, the majority of attempts have come from close range.

I wasn't down there. I don't have any facts whatsoever about this Dallas affair. I have the greatest respect for the police force, but I don't know what happened.

They are supposed to have searched the building from which the shots apparently were fired. I don't know if they did it. This fellow is supposed to have shot from the window. I am not critical of the Secret Service, but why didn't they use the machine gun to spray the window? The agent with President Johnson, Rufus Youngblood, fell on him or covered him. I don't know what happened in that follow-up car. As you know, we (the Secret Service) have a car right back of the President, and Mrs. Kennedy was supposed to have climbed over the back of the presidential car to get help. I don't understand that. There are a lot of things to be explained.

I mean, after all, Mrs. Kennedy was fortunate she wasn't shot.

Q. From your experience, would you say that the chief danger to a President these days is in a motorcade?

Baughman: I have always said that.

Q. Would it be a wise thing to have the President protected by a plastic bubble?

Baughman: A plastic bubble is not bullet proof. And even a bullet proof car is not practical. Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "If they are going to throw a hand grenade in here, I am going to get slaughtered."

Q. The bubble is not bullet proof?

Baughman: No.

Q. How about the windshield?

Baughman: No, nothing. We did that for the speed in getting away in case something like this happened.

Q. You say that a bullet proof car would be too heavy for a fast getaway in an emergency?

Baughman: That is right.

These cars we had when Franklin Roosevelt was in office were heavy, cumbersome, and didn't have the speed. The point is this: At the first shot, you speed away and you need the full power. Unfortunately, these bullets hit.

Q. You have told us that the Secret Service can give effective

That has to be determined and that will take some work.

Q. In Dallas, the President's car was going toward a railroad overpass. The highway went under the railroad tracks. In the case of an overpass like that, what is the routine procedure for the Secret Service?

Baughman: They would have

policemen on top and underneath. You don't permit anyone to assemble on that bridge.

Q: Do you think the day of the motorcade is over?

Baughman: I would hope so, but I doubt it.

Q: Are you saying that as long as Presidents insist on these motorcades, the Secret Service, despite its obligation in law, really cannot protect the President?

Baughman: They can, to a certain extent, but I am talking about (attacks from) the distance. It's like an atomic bomb. You couldn't protect the President.

Q: You can't protect him from a man who is determined, who has made good advance planning, who is a good shot, and who has an advantageous position from which to fire that shot?

Baughman: You can prevent that, if you cover that building. That is the only thing. Cover the building.

Q: And you haven't got the manpower?

Baughman: No, we don't. When I left the service, we had only 300 agents to staff 59 field offices as well as protect the President and his immediate family around the clock.

Q: I know you don't want to make a judgment on what happened in Dallas, but there must be some questions in your mind that you are hoping will be answered by the investigation. Can you tell us what some of those are?

Baughman: I think I answered that by asking: Is there one or more involved? And why wasn't that fellow (Oswald) stopped from getting out of the building? I wouldn't have let anyone out.

Now this is second guessing. We are all smart when we do that. But according to reports, someone saw a gun sticking out this window. Who saw the gun? I would like to pin that down.

Q: Are there any other questions that come to your mind? Did you say something about the agents in the front seat (of the President's car)?

Baughman: I don't know who was in the front seat. I understand (Gerald A.) Behn is the agent in charge (of the White House detail) and he was not in Dallas. I can't understand that. And why that agent in the front seat didn't sort of cover him (the President) the way Rufus Youngblood did the Vice President.

Q: As much as anything, people want to know whether this kind of thing could happen again? Do you think it could?

Baughman: Yes. You can't do the impossible. It depends on the man in office.