

Kennedy Murder Remembered

BY LOUIS HARRIS

© 1965, Washington Post Co.

CAT-11/22/65

On the second anniversary of the assassination of John F. Kennedy, nearly 3 out of every 4 Americans say they still frequently think about it and feel sad. And the Kennedy assassination topped the list when a national cross section was asked recently which happenings of the past 10 years makes them "feel ashamed to be an American."

This mixture of sorrow and guilt strikes home in a special way to residents of Dallas, where Lee Harvey Oswald fired the shots that struck down the 35th President. Although the sense of personal loss is somewhat less in Dallas, the sense of guilt is significantly higher.

A cross section of adults in both the nation and Dallas was asked:

Do you often feel bad about the assassination of John F. Kennedy, or do you find you don't feel that way often?

	Nation	Dallas
Feel bad often	73%	66%
Don't feel that way	27%	34%

A similar question on whether people often reflected sadly on American casualties in Vietnam was answered affirmatively by 48% of those interviewed nationally and by 61% of those living in Dallas. By this measurement, the shooting of the President two years ago persists as a major source of national grief even in an era when young Americans are giving their lives in combat.

Both Dallas residents and the national cross section were also asked:

What happenings of the past 10 years have taken place in the United States that made you feel ashamed to be an American? Any others?

	Nation	Dallas
Assassination of J.F.K.	40%	54%
Way Negroes have been treated	21	18
Race violence	20	34
Bay of Pigs invasion	13	4
Negro demonstrations	8	5
Increase in crime	4	7
Vietnam situation	3	8
National debt	2	4
College student demonstrations	1	3
Low moral standards	2	2
Taking religion out of schools	1	2
Ku Klux Klan	2	1
Never ashamed	3	5

(Figures add to more than 100% because some persons volunteered more than one event.)

The assassination of President Kennedy leads the list of events volunteered in this survey, but this time the proportion in Dallas was a full 14 percentage points above that in the country as a whole. The sharpness of the sense of shame over the tragedy of Nov. 22, 1963, most particularly among residents of the city where the assassin's bullets were fired, was illustrated by a Dallas businessman who said: "It could have happened anywhere, but it happened right here. We can't live with it, so we try to put it away. But somehow it won't go away." **END**