

NEWSPAPERS

Comprehensive Coverage

By any measure, the assassination of John F. Kennedy in Dallas was the greatest challenge ever to confront the city's newspapers. But Dallas' two dailies met it with professional skill.

The noon arrival of the President gave Dallas' afternoon paper, the Times Herald, a big advantage over the Dallas Morning News—and the Times Herald was ready to put that advantage to good use. The copy deadline had been pushed up 45 minutes, to 1:15. JFK VADES CONSERVATIVE DALLAS—LEVELS BLAST AT RIGHTIST CRITICS, read the prepared headlines. Advance stories

were already in type, one on the security measures surrounding the visit, another on the visit itself, lacking only a few lead paragraphs. At Dallas' police station, alert for any unexpected excitement, Times Herald Reporter George Carter sat by the police radio.

When the tragic news broke, the Times Herald was as ready as a newspaper can be. Seconds after the bullets struck, Carter caught an ominous message on the police receiver and called his paper at once. Some "trouble" had occurred on the presidential motorcade, he said, and he asked the paper to stand by. Only minutes later, Carter called again: the President had been shot. Within 20 minutes the Times Herald knew that Kennedy was at Parkland

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"CAN YOU RIDE A HORSE?"

Hospital, and within 30 minutes it knew that he was dead.

Heavy Demand. Such a story demanded prodigies of professional journalism. From both papers a torrent of newsmen poured out to reinforce the men already assigned to Kennedy's arrival. At the Times Herald, Managing Editor Hal Lewis threw out all of Page One, ordered a new lead and a new head—SECRET SERVICE CHECKS IN VAIN for the security story; he called for a more appropriate ending on the pre-written story of the visit, which had closed on a happy note. The Times Herald's conditional front-page banner head, linked to Kennedy's upcoming Dallas speech, gave way to another in 150-point linoleum-block type: PRESIDENT DEAD. Page One was overhauled to accommodate Police Reporter Carter's story of the assassination—which ran for six columns on the first page and two more columns inside.

By 2:30 that first afternoon, the Times Herald was on the streets with a remarkably comprehensive account that included quotes from eyewitnesses and police, and a description of the assassin (who was then still at large). At 4:15, the paper was reporting Lee Oswald's arrest and the murder of Dallas Policeman Tippit. It also carried a pic-

ture of the assassin's rifle and a map of the assassination scene. Demand was so heavy that although the Times Herald jumped its normal 200,000 press run by 82,000 copies, vendors hawked the 5¢ paper for as much as \$1 per copy.

Point-Blank. During the fast-breaking hours and days that followed, Dallas newsmen, familiar with the city, managed to beat visiting correspondents repeatedly. OSWALD'S ROOM YIELDS MAP OF BULLET'S PATH headlined the News in a copyrighted story; the News also interviewed the cab driver who had taken Oswald home after the shooting, copyrighted the driver's account.

And when Accused Assassin Oswald himself died by an assassin's bullet, photographers from both Dallas papers recorded his murder with a clarity and drama that television cameras on the scene missed. For the News, Photographer Jack Beers snapped a picture, a split second before the killing, that showed Jack Ruby's gun aimed point-blank at Oswald. Times Herald Photographer Bob Jackson caught the actual moment of shooting and the grimace of pain on Oswald's face, the looks of horrified disbelief on the faces of his police escorts.



FRONT PAGE IN DALLAS  
Prodigies of professional journalism.