

Assassin Crouched And Took Deadly Aim

By KENT BIFFLE

The assassin crouched in a dusty corner of the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building at 411 Elm.

Through a half-open window he watched the Presidential procession through the cross hairs of a 4-power scope. Even at a hundred yards the shooting was easy. The scope brought the President up close.

As the motorcade passed, the assassin fired. He worked the high-powered rifle's bolt and fired again. He took deliberate aim and fired a third time.

"I saw the President's hair fly up . . . I knew he was hit," sobbed Miss Karen Westbrook, 19, a stenographer for a publishing firm with offices in the School Book Depository Building.

With other workers from her office, she'd walked out in front of the building to see the motorcade.

The assassin made his way from the death window on the southeast corner of the half-century-old, rust-brick building to a stack of school book boxes on the northwest corner of the floor.

Here he hid the rifle in stacks of boxed basic readers.

"They've shot him . . . they've shot the President," screamed a middle-aged man holding the hand of a small boy. The man was weeping.

Police Patrolman J. M. Smith, 31, ran to the west side of the building throwing open his holster. Several people had fallen on the grass. Others were ducking behind bridge abutments and bushes.

Police Patrolman W. E. Barnett, 31, made for the back door of the building. "There must have been 2,000 people in a one-block area here," he said.

Confusion ruled. Some people were screaming and crying. Smiles were still frozen on the faces of others who had at first assumed this was a prank.

Dozens of people, thought the

reports from the killer's muzzle were just firecrackers. A few pointed toward the textbook building. But most ran to the west side of the building thinking the shots came from behind bushes and a fence dividing the street from a railroad yard.

There were many faces in the windows of the building.

A few people outside the building, like H. L. Brennan, a 44-year-old steamfitter, actually got a glimpse of the gunman.

"After the first shot, I looked up and saw him. The gun was sticking out the window. I saw him fire a second time.

"He was a slender guy, a nice-looking guy. He didn't seem to be in no hurry," said Brennan.

"I heard a shot and saw the President sort of slump down in the seat," said Jerry Broseh, 19, of Grand Prairie.

"This is going to be a black mark on Dallas history forever," said somebody. "Dallas? What about the U.S.?" asked another.

Homicide Capt. Will Fritz led police on a floor-by-floor search of the building. The sixth floor is a storeroom, a maze of crated textbooks, cobwebs and steam pipes.

Police found three spent cartridges at the window at the southeast corner. There was a gnawed piece of fried chicken nearby and an empty cold drink bottle.

A little later police found the weapon, its steel butt plate and muzzle exposed at either end of a stack of textbooks.

R. S. Truly, superintendent of the textbook building, was standing in front of the building. "I just went blank at first . . . couldn't believe it was happening."

Truly said about 90 people work in the building but most of them were out front at the time the shooting started.

Deputy Police Chief George Lumpkin used scores of firemen and policemen in a systematic search of the building.

An officer entered and told the lawmen that a policeman, J. D. Tippit, had just been killed. No details.

An employe of the textbook firm walked up: "I don't know if you're interested in this . . . but one of the fellows who works here is gone. Can't find him anywhere."

The police were interested.

"He's 23, about five-foot-nine and weighs around 150 pounds. I'd have to check the payroll records to be sure but I think he's been here a couple of months. "His name is Lee Oswald."

Let's visit Snopes

*Dallas Morning News 11/23
Source R.H. vol. 2
open contradiction #18
we & Star witness
H.H. Brennan
Eye witness statements
File*