

'... no one had ever lived a national tragedy in quite these terms before.'

From the moment the first TV news bulletin cut through the sticky story line of a soap opera called "As the World Turns," at exactly 1:40 (EST) on Friday afternoon, the world of communications—if not the world—was to be a vastly different sort of place, never to be quite the same again. It was not just the sudden, senseless cutting down of a young, vigorous President that made the experience cut so deep, but the fact that no one had ever lived a national tragedy in quite these terms before. When Lincoln was assassinated by a frenzied actor at Ford's Theater in 1865, Americans had time to assimilate the tragedy. Most people in the big cities knew within 24 hours, but there were some in outlying areas for whom it took days.

In the new world of communications there was no time for any such baby-



This teen-ager cried, later buried her face in the shoulder of the boy, a stranger.

ing of the emotions, no time to collect oneself, no time for anything except to sit transfixed before the set and try to bring into reality this monstrous, unthinkable thing. Because the word was not only instantaneous but visual, and because at no time did the television reporters know any more than the viewers did, 180,000,000 were forced to live the experience not just hour to hour, or minute to minute, but quite literally from second to second, even as the reporters themselves did. According to Nielsen statistics, a point was reached during the funeral on Monday afternoon when 41,553,000 sets were in use, believed to be an all-time high. For four days the American people were virtual prisoners of an electronic box.

Thus what happened on the television screen became in every sense an epic drama four days long, in which the viewers were not so much spectators as participants. The insistent commercial, the thin, strident melodrama and the pleasantly foolish prattle of the quiz game had suddenly been stilled, as a blizzard stills the clamor of a big city. No pat endings here. In their place came the endless images of human frailty, dignity and grace, until it seemed the spirit could absorb no more: Mrs. Kennedy, vibrant testimony to the heights to which the human spirit can rise. The new President, constantly reminding us by his actions that there was still



Outside Parkland Hospital in Dallas, these women gasped in disbelief of news.

someone in charge—"Now then, let's get this airplane back to Washington." The endless thousands filling by the caasket of the President in the rotunda. Robert Kennedy, a man so shattered he seemed almost to be walking in his sleep. The solid phalanx of visiting heads of state advancing on the church and looking for all the world like factory workers at closing time. The turn-tum-tum-ta-tum of the muffled drums crossing Arlington Memorial Bridge. John-John's heart-stopping salute to his father on the steps of St. Matthew's. Blackjack, the riderless horse, ancient symbol of the fallen hero, all skittish and full of spirit. The white-gloved hands during the flag-folding at Arlington National Cemetery. The bugler who played the sour note during taps—"The bugler's lip quivered for the Nation," Edward P. Morgan observed later.

The nasal voice of Richard Cardinal Cushing, whose burial service

seemed at times more like a cry of anguish. Counterpointed against all this, the jarring impact of the alleged assassin's own murder, so quick, so unexpected, so nightmarish in its implications and so immediate because an already-staggered Nation saw it as it happened on TV. "It was as if the sacrifice of a President were not enough," Charles Collingwood said.

Most unforgettable of all were the faces of the crowd, especially the teen-age Negro girl, she of the beautiful face, in Rockefeller Center, minutes after the President's death was announced. Chet Huntley said that she spoke for all the world when, asked how she felt, she replied, "I really couldn't say. . . . Really right now I don't know what to do. . . . I don't even know where to go. . . . or what to say. There is nothing for me to say."

The intense personal involvement of the ordinary man, so evident throughout the Four Days of broadcast,



A joyful moment before tragedy struck. The Kennedys are welcomed warmly at the airport by Dallas officials and crowd.

News photo, held up to the TV camera, had been taken moments before the shots.



was heightened by still another circumstance: John Fitzgerald Kennedy was, more than any other public figure in history, a product of television. Young, personable, fast on his feet, he seemed born to the medium.

His wife seemed in every way the perfect visual complement to such a man. A young woman faced with older responsibilities, she bore them with a dignity and grace surpassed only by her near-superhuman behavior after her husband's death. Together, they were the perfect embodiment of the American success story, and it was TV that had heralded the fact.

No wonder then, that, exposed to the tragedy's every agonizing detail through television, 180,000,000 people reacted as they did.

A permanent record of what we watched on television from Nov. 22 to 25, 1963

Walter Cronkite, the anchor man of the CBS team, was the first on the air with the bulletin. At 1:30 (EST) when the soap opera, "As the World Turns," went on live, Cronkite was preparing his regular evening news show, and in every sense the day was an ordinary one, at least judging by the trials and tribulations of the characters in the soap opera. In retrospect, the hero's sudsy dilemma as to whether or not he should remarry his divorced wife, and his mother's subsequent conversation with his grandfather about it, seems about as eerily remote as another galaxy. Actress Helen Wagner was just saying, "I gave it a great deal of thought, Grandpa," when the program was interrupted.

Cronkite's voice came through, dolorous but contained, as a bulletin slide was displayed on the screen.

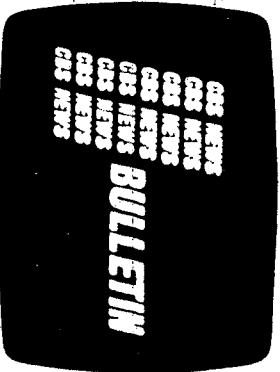
"Bulletin . . . In Dallas, Texas, three shots were fired at President Kennedy's motorcade. The first reports

say the President was seriously wounded, that he slumped over in Mrs. Kennedy's lap, she cried out, 'Oh, no!' and the motorcade went on . . . The wounds perhaps could be fatal . . ."

Viewers turned to ABC and NBC at the moment heard similar bulletins. At that point CBS switched back to the soap opera. The actors, unaware, continued their performance, but the show was cut off at the second commercial. ABC and NBC blacked out a variety of local and regional shows. Bulletin:

"Further details . . . The President was shot as he drove from the Dallas airport to downtown, where he was scheduled to speak at a political luncheon in the Dallas Trade Mart . . . Three shots were heard . . . a Secret Service man was heard to shout, 'He's dead!' . . . The President and Mrs. Kennedy were riding with Gov. [John] Connally of Texas and his wife . . ."

It was shortly after this that the video portions of the broadcasts came



The CBS bulletin (right) broke into As the World Turns as Nancy (Helen Wagner) was telling Grandpa (Santos Ortega) about the marital problems of son, Bob.

For an hour-by-hour account of America's Long Vigil please turn to page 23. Readers will have an uninterrupted section to keep if they remove the programming pages after those pages have served their purpose.

on (almost simultaneously) all networks, and the last entertainment or commercial that anyone would see for three and a half days had run its course. Thus there began what Cronkite was later to describe as "the running battle between my emotions and my news sense." Yet, of all the newsmen who covered the first tense hours (Ed Silverman and Ron Cochran of ABC; Bill Ryan, Chet Huntley and Frank McGee of NBC; Charles Collingwood and Walter Cronkite of CBS), it was Cronkite who agonized the most and controlled it best. For a man obviously deeply affected by the tragedy, he was able to exercise precise control without seeming to cancel out what he was feeling. Huntley, while almost as well controlled, met the situation with righteous indignation. At one point Friday he talked bitterly of "pockets



CBS's Walter Cronkite: dolorous, contained.



For NBC: Chet Huntley and Bill Ryan.

of hatred in our country and places where the disease is encouraged. You have heard," he said, "those who say, 'Those Kennedys ought to be shot!' ... It seems evident that hatred moved the person who fired these shots ..."

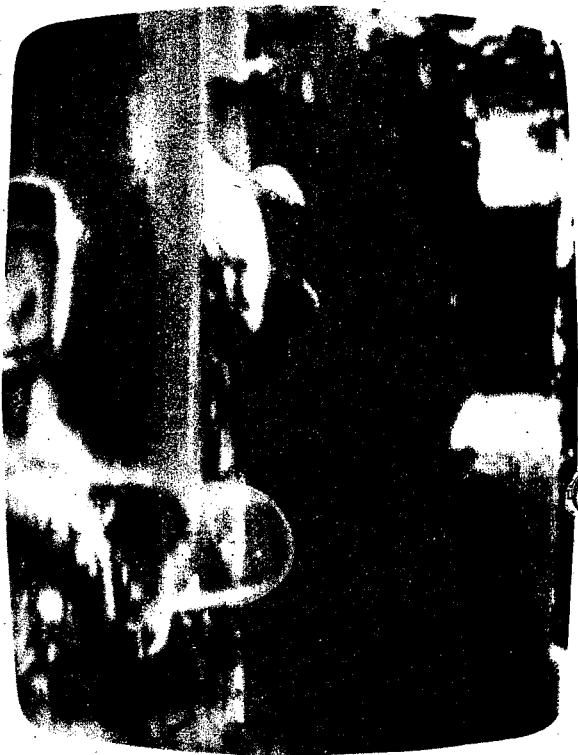
That sort of talk did not come easily from Cronkite, let alone from Cochran, a more formal kind of man who prides himself on a rigid professional detachment from emotion. Yet it was Cochran who several times on Friday afternoon visibly shook. All three men seemed to be trying desperately to stave off the inevitable news that the President was dead, and all three advanced as gingerly through the reports as a buck private through a mine field.

Still the reports kept coming. Governor Connally, shot in the chest, is "serious but not critical." The President is now in the emergency room. Mrs. Kennedy is unhurt. The Vice President is unhurt. Rep. Albert Thomas (D., Texas) reports, "The President is still alive but in very critical condition." Blood transfusions are being given. In Washington David Brinkley calls the White House to see if they have any late information. "No," replies a sniffling member of the White House staff. "We were watching you to see if you had any."

An abrupt switch to the Dallas Trade Mart, where the camera hammers the tragedy home by lingering on the lectern where the President was to speak,



ABC's Ron Cochran: rigid detachment.



The President is hit by the assassin's bullets (a still photo, on television).

by panning over the milling guests and the uneaten luncheon—and a waiter drying an eye with a napkin. Two priests are reported entering Parkland Hospital. A small boy saw the fatal shooting by a man in the window of the Texas School Book Depository building near the underpass where the shooting took place. The stock market slumps, the stock exchanges close. Connally is quoted as saying, "Take care of Nellie."

It is now 2:32 (EST). The two priests say the President is dead. UPI reports at 2:35 (EST) that the President has died. Cochran, lowering his voice, says that Government sources now confirm that the President is dead. Over at NBC, Bob MacNeil is relaying the news from Dallas: The White House says the President is dead. At CBS, at 2:38 the awful news is finally announced without qualification:

"From Dallas . . . a flash . . . The President died at 2 o'clock Eastern

Standard Time . . . The President is dead . . ."

On a New York street NBC focuses its cameras on a chicly dressed, middle-aged woman wearing dark glasses and a tailored hat at the moment the news comes over an auto's loud-speaker. The woman starts, lets out a cry and falls back into the crowd.

At that moment there began something which could only happen in the age of TV. As a Nation we were able to live out our grief in concert and at the same time begin the arduous business of picking up the pieces. Moreover, we were able to prepare ourselves for the new order of things. At the end of the Four Days we were to know the new President intimately—who he was, where he came from and, most important of all, how he behaved in a time of extreme stress.

As Cronkite was later to comment: "We saw before our very eyes a smooth transition of government. No confusion,



Shots ring out; a woman crouches in fear.



A banquet is called off; a waiter cries.

Only a man in command moving ahead to the problems at hand." And Cochran was to add: "Television had actually become the window of the world so many had hoped it might be one day."

Through that window now came many things: ABC's brilliant tapes (obtained through its Dallas affiliate) of the President's arrival at the airport that morning, for example. This footage, among the most heart-stopping to be seen during the whole coverage, showed the smiling President, alive and vibrant, moving through a sea of outstretched hands which wanted only to touch him. ABC was to follow this later with an interview with James C. Hagerly, in which the onetime Eisenhower Presidential press secretary, now a broadcasting executive, illuminated the nature of the security problem.

"This is the President's way of saying thank you to the people," Hagerly declared, referring to the scenes at the airport. "How can you stop it? I don't think you want to stop it. . . . It's rather difficult, while guarding the President, to argue that you can't shake hands with the American people or ride in an open car where the people can see you. . . ."

By late afternoon the great and small were trying to find the right words. And TV was recording every halting one. Harry S. Truman was reported so distraught that he was un-

able immediately to make a statement. The following day the cameras caught up with a saddened ex-President at the Truman Library at Independence, Mo. Mr. Truman, his voice low, paid a forthright tribute. Kennedy was "an able President, one the people loved and trusted. . . ." he said. At the end a reporter asked him how he felt the new President would do. The former Chief Executive peked up. "Perfectly capable of carrying out the job," he snapped. "Don't you worry about him." If the Nation had been in a cheering mood, it would have cheered.

President Kennedy's predecessor, Dwight D. Eisenhower, came on at about 5 o'clock Friday. He felt, he said, not only shock and dismay, but indignation. His voice verged on anger when he spoke of "the occasional psychopathic thing," then he assured us that we are a Nation "of great common sense." We are not going to be "stammered or bewildered."

Shortly after 3 P.M. (EST) the President's casket was moved aboard the Presidential airplane. Mrs. Kennedy, still wearing the blood-stained pink suit in which she had started out the day, never left her husband's side except to attend the swearing-in of the new President.

The swearing-in, conducted by U.S. District Judge Sarah T. Hughes, took place in the airplane itself with no television coverage. The still pic-

tures were broadcast, and showed a stunned Mrs. Kennedy, hard by the side of the new President.

All afternoon the air was alive with film from Dallas, terrifying in the confusion it showed—milling crowds in the police station, parade-route spectators flattened on the grass at the moment of the shooting, motorcycle policemen with slightly dazed looks on their faces, footage of the Texas School Book Depository from which the shots were alleged to have come, and visual reconstruction of the killer's supposed route. Then there was the young construction worker, who stood 20 feet away from the President when the shot was fired, who described the scene in almost too-vivid detail: "We heard a shot and the President jumped up in his seat. I thought it scared him because I thought it was a firecracker." "Stunned disbelief" became the byword, and if Huntley used it once he

must have used it a score of times. In late afternoon the networks announced the cancellation of all regular programming until after the funeral. Gen. Douglas MacArthur told the Nation that "The President's death kills something in me." And Adlai Stevenson, speaking from the UN, said "And all men everywhere who love peace and justice and freedom will bow their heads." Later he observed, "It's too bad that, in my old age, they couldn't have spent their violence on me and spared this young man for our Nation's work."

On the streets total strangers consoled each other. At the White House aides wept openly in the corridors. In Dallas Governor Connally was pronounced out of immediate danger. And in New York Charles Collingwood came in to relieve harassed Walter Cronkite in the CBS anchor position. "Where's your coat, Walter?" asked Collingwood. For the first time Cronkite realized



NBC's David Brinkley, beside a photo, describes President Johnson's swearing-in.



Former President Eisenhower said: 'We... are not going to be stampeded . . .'

he had been too busy to put it on.

As the Nation groped for meanings, the Presidential airplane put down in Washington's Andrews A.F. base shortly after 6 (EST). The television eye hungrily devoured every detail as the hydraulic lift lowered the casket and the honor guard placed it in the waiting ambulance. It was followed closely by Mrs. Kennedy, never far from her husband and still wearing the pink suit. The step from lift to runway was long and somehow symbolic. An aide made the actual assist down to the level of the ambulance, but it was clearly made in the name of every American. In a way hard to define, it was one of the most moving moments of the Four Days—the small, determined figure, devastated but not un-



Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused assassin, was puffy-eyed, morose, uncommunicative.

done. And America marveled.

As the ambulance sped away, Mrs. Kennedy and the casket sped away, the new President, Mrs. Johnson at his side, walked purposefully out of the airplane to face a barrage of cameras. "This is a sad time for all people," said Lyndon Baines Johnson in the first public pronouncement of his Administration. "We have suffered a loss that cannot be weighed. . . . I will do my best. That is all I can do. I ask for your help—and God's."

In Dallas there was emerging in grisly counterpoint the portrait of the man who was ultimately to be charged with the President's murder. In mid-afternoon, the networks reported that "a Dallas policeman had been shot while apprehending the suspected assassin." The arrest of one Lee Harvey Oswald, 24, had taken place in the Texas Theater, some six blocks from the spot where he had allegedly gunned down Officer J.D. Tippit. Television cameras had a field day photographing the marquee, "Battle City" and "War Is Hell," it said. But it took until much later to confirm that the police had found the murder weapon, an Italian-make rifle with a telescopic sight, beside the sixth floor corner window of the Texas School Book Depository—along with a sackful of chicken bones. And that the onetime defector to Russia and militant espouser of pro-Castro causes had already undergone hours of intensive questioning.

At 7:30 (EST) viewers got their first good look at the man. He was preceded into the bedlam of the Dallas police station by an officer holding the rifle aloft over the heads of the milling throng of reporters. Oswald entered, an animal-like figure looking puffy-eyed and morose, flanked by beefy, stone-jawed police, and wearing the T shirt about which he was later to complain because no one had offered him a clean one.

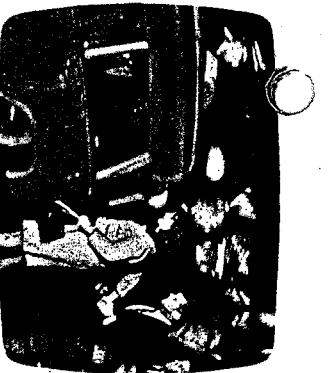
Viewers got only a fleeting glimpse



Mrs. Kennedy, still wearing blood-stained pink suit, lands in Washington with body.

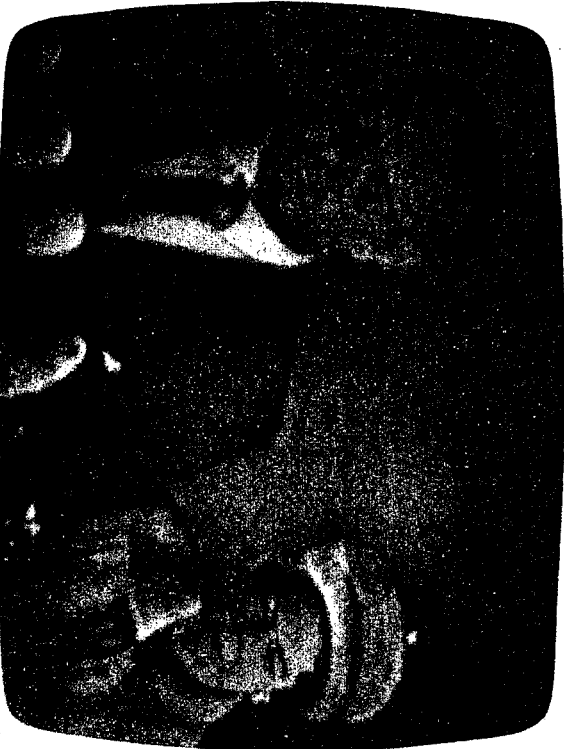
as, handcuffed, he was whisked away to a fifth floor cell. Later the cameras offered vignettes of Oswald's Russian wife, a pathetic figure with her two young children, and his mother, who could only murmur, "But he's really a good boy."

Later that night the Dallas police formally charged Lee Harvey Oswald

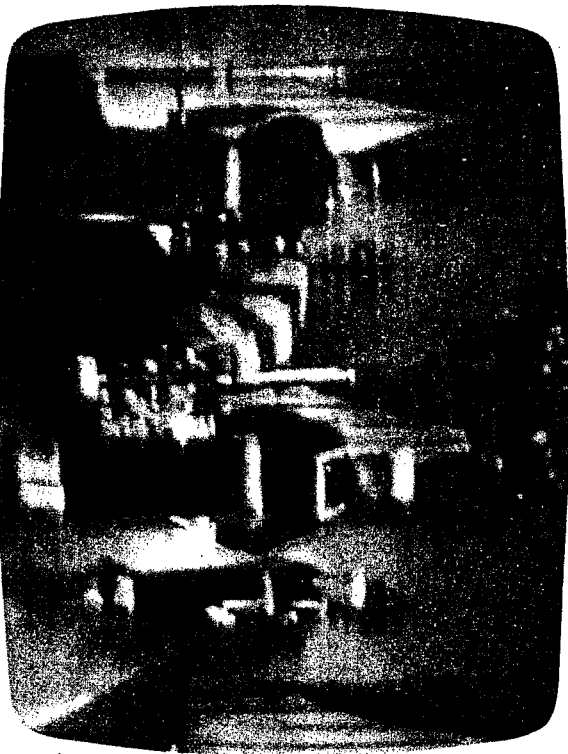


Robert Kennedy met her inside the plane, held her hand as she boarded ambulance.

with the murder of John F. Kennedy. As the image faded, most Americans felt a sinking feeling in the pits of their stomachs. The inescapable truth, as it came through so clearly on television, was that Oswald was beneath contempt, unworthy of the emotions we all felt toward him—anger and



President and Mrs. Johnson in Washington: 'I ask for your help—and God's.'



The President's body, as was Lincoln's, was placed in the White House East Room.

Saturday was a day to shore up the human spirit, a time to prepare for the massive emotion of the lying-in-state at the Capitol on Sunday and the funeral on Monday. In Hyannis Port, Mass., Mrs. Rose Kennedy was with son Ted, the Massachusetts senator, and daughter Eunice, wife of Senator Shriver. She went to the 7 A.M. Mass, stayed through another at 7:30, then returned home, where Ted broke the news of the President's death to the ailing Joseph Kennedy, the late President's father.

Very early in the morning (4:30 A.M.) the President's body had been moved into the White House and placed in the East Room on a catafalque similar to the one on which Lincoln had rested. At 10:30 the Washington Kennedy family members attended a private Mass in the East Room. Later, dignitaries arrived to view

the casket. Former President Eisenhower came first, followed later in the day by Chief Justice and Mrs. Warren, former President Truman, Governor and Mrs. Rockefeller and the new President. In between times a steady stream of Government officials, senators, con-



Saturday morning, President Johnson picks up the reins with a round of conferences.

gressmen, the military and friends of the family filed past the bier. The camera caught them all, heads bowed as they mounted the steps of the White House.

At one point during the morning the new President crossed the street to the White House to confer with Secretary of State Rusk, whose plane had turned around in mid-Pacific (he had been on his way to Tokyo for an economic conference) to return to Washington. As Rusk came out, Secretary of Defense McNamara went in. The Nation took silent comfort in this reassuring visual evidence that the Government was still functioning.

Saturday was the day, too, when the reaction began to pour in. By Relay satellite we saw and heard Pope Paul from Rome, who was "profoundly saddened," he said in hard-to-follow English, "by so disturbing a crime" and prayed that "the death of this great statesman may not damage the cause of the American people, but rather reinforce it." England's Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home declared that the President had left "an indelible mark on the entire world."

The camera offered us a glimpse of just how indelible by taking us to see the crowds outside the American Embassy in London, where the faces again told the story. Premier Khrushchev was later to appear personally at the

embassy in Moscow to pay his respects. General de Gaulle let it be known that he intended to attend the funeral, as did 19 other chiefs of state and heads of government and three reigning monarchs before the weekend was done. We saw faces of Frenchmen, Italians, Germans crying. In London, the regular cast of "That Was The Week That Was," the outrageously irreverent British TV satire on the week's events, tossed out their regular script and in just 16 hours prepared as moving a tribute as was seen during the entire Four Days, rendered even more moving in that it came spontaneously from the hearts of Englishmen whose stake in an American President was presumably not as great as ours. The tape, flown over by jet, ran on NBC Sunday night and was repeated on Monday. One of the young men said, "There wasn't anything anyone could do about it...."

Another talked of "the All-American humanity of the man." And still another said that "Behind the rocking chair . . . and Caroline's pony . . . behind the trappings of the image, [the President] was the first Western politician to make politics a respectable profession for 30 years." And another: "Death has become immediate to people all over the world." Housewives wept.

Former Vice President Richard



Chief Justice and Mrs. Earl Warren arrive at the White House to offer condolences.



Former President Harry Truman: 'If Mr. Johnson needs any advice, he'll ask . . .'



In Moscow, Premier Khrushchev pays his respects. Right, U.S. Ambassador Foy Kohler.

Nixon, speaking from his New York City home, said, "President Kennedy yesterday wrote the finest and greatest chapter in his 'Profiles in Courage.' The greatest tribute we can pay is to reduce the hatred which drives men to do such deeds. . . ."

Sen. Barry Goldwater in a news conference at Muncie, Ind., paid an extravagant and typically American compliment to his late political opponent. From the South came the voices of those staunch segregationists, Govs. George Wallace of Alabama and Ross Barnett of Mississippi, who found in the man in death qualities which they apparently could not find in life.

There were other forms of reaction, too. The networks were deluged with mail. Particularly poetry.



Via Relay satellite from Rome, Pope Paul said: 'I am profoundly saddened. . . .'

Later Cronkite was to comment: "This was real mail. Not fan mail. People were desperate to express themselves about this thing. And poetry seemed a natural form. They seemed intent either on finding a way to accept the guilt we were all feeling or laying it on someone or something else, or simply eulogizing the man." Edward P. Morgan and Chet Huntley reported similar reactions. Morgan says in retrospect: "It is probable that when all this is over we will find it created a more personal response than any other event in history."

There were negative responses, too. There was the word from Peking that there would be no expressions of regret forthcoming from Red China. There was the man on the street who could only advocate an eye for an eye. "I hope these radicals have got their pound of flesh," he said bitterly. And there was the anonymous phone caller from Little Rock who, when put through to Huntley, requested that harassed gentleman to "Drop dead!" As the day waned, President Johnson in his first proclamation as President, designated Monday as a national day of mourning. Skitch Henderson, Alfredo Antonini and others were heard in special memorial concerts. The Rutgers University Choir sang a Brahms Requiem with the Philadelphia Orchestra. CBS did a one-hour report on the new President.

For Lee Oswald, the day had begun early. At 11:36 (EST) the networks switched to the Dallas police station as Police Chief Jesse Curry, a chunky, balding man with glasses, explained through the hubbub that he not only had the rifle which did the killing, but the order letter to the mail-order house where it was purchased. The handwriting, Curry said, matched Oswald's.

At that point Oswald was exhibited. The newsmen and the cameras closed in like hunters on the fox. Oswald looked a little weaselly. He said, "I have been told nothing. . . . I do



Back in Dallas, the police hold aloft the Italian-made rifle used in the crime.

request someone to come forward to give me legal assistance." To questions of why he did it, he did not respond. As the police led him out, a reporter slipped up close to him, and said, "Oswald, what did you do to your eye?" "A policeman hit me," whined Oswald for 180,000,000 to hear.

Throughout the day Oswald adamantly insisted he was innocent. As the evidence mounted, the police and District Attorney Henry Wade became surer that they had the case wrapped up, and drew criticism when they said so on TV. At one point on Saturday Wade told the TV audience: "We have sufficient evidence to convict him."

To which Huntley replied privately: "I'm a TV man, but I hope I'm also a responsible citizen. TV is not a courtroom." And yet the Nation's involvement was such that not admitting to opinions would have been like not admitting that your house was on fire.

That then was the mood as Saturday drew to a close. The stage was set, but the actors were weary. The Nation slept fretfully. If it had known what was in store for the following day it might not have slept at all.

Sunday, November 24

Sunday started quietly with Cardinal Cushing's eulogy, from Boston, to the



A harried Dallas police chief, Jesse Curry, talks to reporters at news conference.

late President. The President's widow was reported holding up well. She, with other family members, was scheduled to follow the caisson bearing the flag-draped coffin down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol rotunda, where the body of the President was to lie in state. Before that could happen, however, the Nation was to be subjected to yet another shock, one which in some ways was the most jarring of all.

NBC was just concluding a two-minute report from Hyannis Port, when Frank McGee in New York heard Tom Pettit set up at the Dallas police station shout, "Give me air! Give me air!" NBC quickly switched to Dallas, just in time for the following, as officially recorded in the NBC log:

12:20 p.m. Dallas City Jail.—NBC cameras are trained on Lee H. Oswald, the man accused of shooting Pres. Kennedy, he is flanked by detectives, as he stepped onto a garage ramp in the basement of the jail for transfer to an armored truck—Suddenly out of the lower right corner of the TV screen came the back of a man. We hear a shout & Oswald gasps as he starts to fall grabbing his side. NBC's newsmen Tom Pettit on air says "He's been shot! Lee Oswald has been shot! There is absolute panic—parademonium has broken out."



An incredible scene caught by the TV cameras: Oswald is shot by Jack Ruby.

The shooting of the alleged killer of the President on camera was an event whose deep psychological significance was matched only by its horror. The wielder of the gun, a minor night-club operator named Jack Ruby, deprived the country of something it needed badly, the chance to formally try Oswald according to law and the oldest traditions of this country. It also served as a reminder that, as CBS's Charles Collingwood put it, "Violence had not yet subdued its appetite."

ABC's Edward P. Morgan and Howard K. Smith were to be blunter. "Vengeance is a bludgeon," said Morgan. "... We will never hear this man's story," lamented Smith. "There is something wrong and we do not know what it is."



Confused and shocked, police seize Ruby.

Oswald flanked by two detectives. A figure moves out of the group of newsmen, a dark blob in a crouch. He darts forward and toward Oswald. We see the gun. A shot is heard. Oswald cries out and grabs his midsection. There is a split-second for the reflexes to take hold, then a great crush of bodies converges on Ruby. The screen is filled

with milling, scuffling bodies, thrashing arms and legs.

Perhaps a minute later a stretcher is brought. The camera eye is periodically blocked by arms, bodies, ambulance doors, other newsmen, moving across it. The stretcher is lifted into the ambulance. But the ambulance is blocked by the armored car in which Oswald was to have been removed to the county jail.

Tom Pettit moves about the melee like a sleepwalker, showing his hand mike into the face of anyone he can get near. The dialog is strangely flat and disassociated, as talk in moments of crisis is likely to be:

Pettit (to Officer P.T. Dean): How would it have been possible for him to slip in?

Officer Dean: Sir, I can't answer that question.

Pettit (to Capt. Will Fritz): Do you have the man who fired the shot?

Captain Fritz: We have a man, yes. The police, sleepwalking themselves, give out nothing.

The Fates had indeed arranged things strangely. During all this time the procession had been forming at the White House portico to take the body of the President to the Capitol rotunda and the networks had to scramble to get back in time to record the beginning of the solemn, tradition-steeped ritual with which a grieving Nation assuages its grief.

"Ceren...," remarked Collingwood, "is man's built-in reaction to tragedy." And it was never more so than on this sunny Sunday afternoon.

The images begin to flood the screen in overwhelming profusion: The caisson so strangely imbalanced with its seven white horses and their four riders; the limousines, long black fish, glutting the curving driveway; the foliage making a tracery as cameras pan up to the flag at half-mast; the chiefs of staff standing nervously on the steps; the three priests who would precede the caisson emerging from the crepe-draped White House door, abreast and solemn; a still photographer darting in front of the camera to get a better angle.

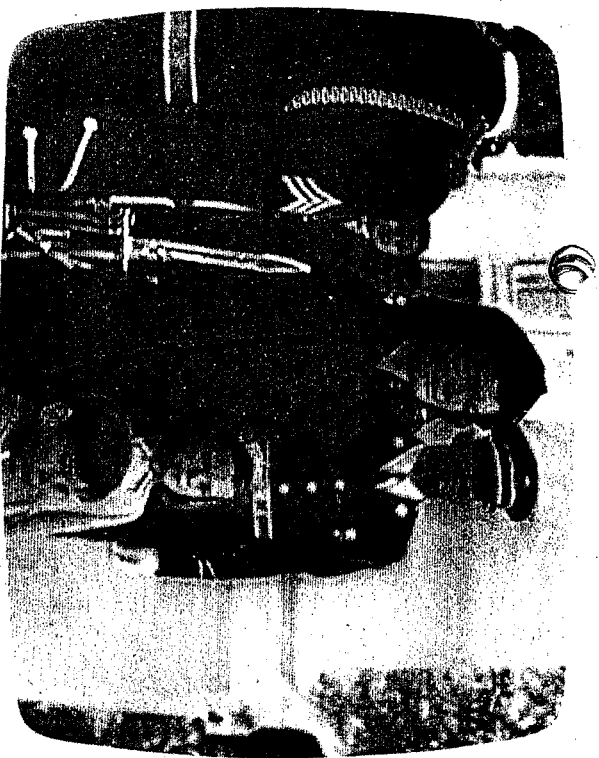
The casket emerging, borne by eight enlisted men representing five branches of the service, stiffly inching their way down the steps to the caisson; moments later Mrs. Kennedy, majestic, erect, wan and beautiful, her face a haunting mask of sadness, pausing at the top of the steps where the camera provides one of the memorable pictures—still or moving—of the Four Days. The children, Caroline and John, seen for the first time, make dating, childlike movements and cling to their mother. The awkward shuffling and whispered words as President Johnson, Robert Kennedy, the family, the myriad Kennedy children, find the right limousines.



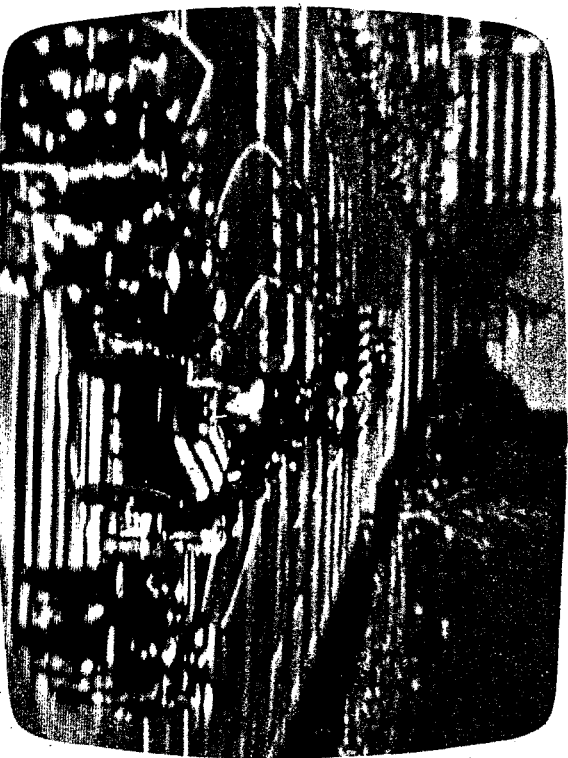
Oswald writhes on floor as Ruby struggles.



Oswald is rolled to a waiting ambulance.



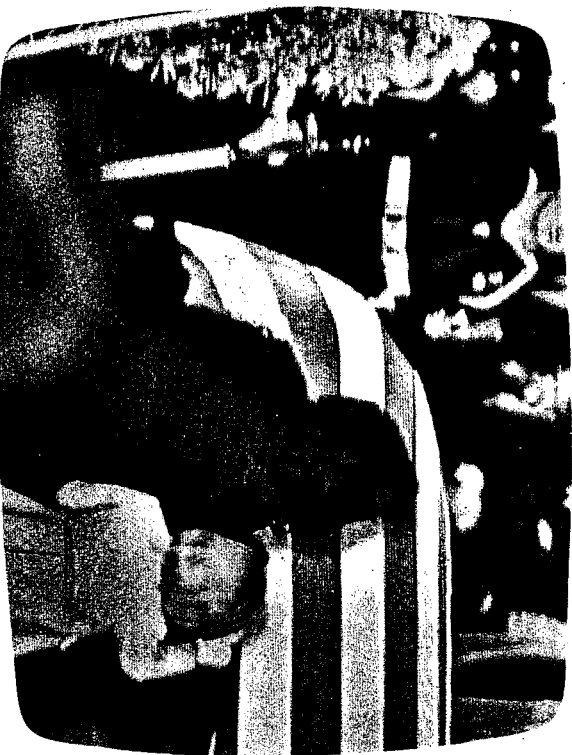
A study in grief: Jacqueline Kennedy and her children on way to Capitol rotunda.



As millions mourn, caisson bearing the coffin moves down Pennsylvania Avenue.



At the rotunda, Senator Mansfield: 'He gave us of a kindness and a strength...'



A heart-rending scene: A mother and daughter kneel to kiss the coffin's flag.



Secretary of State Dean Rusk met visiting dignitaries at the airport. Right, Prince Philip; left, Germany's Ludwig Erhard.



At 1:05 (EST) the caisson begins to roll out of the driveway. We hear the hollow clack-clack of horses' hooves, then the muffled drums. Parade-route spectators, some motionless, others moving restlessly across the back of the picture, still others holding children aloft, crane for a better look at Blackjack, the riderless horse, sword strapped to the saddle, boots reversed in the stirrups in the ancient tradition of Tamerlane and Genghis Khan.

Then the camera picks up the long, long shot down toward the Capitol as the cortege turns down Pennsylvania Avenue. Then as quickly the long, long shot the other way, the cortege in the distance with the Washington monument in the background. It is an awesome sight. Edward P. Morgan intones, "History saturates these pavements. . . . And 180,000,000 agree with him."

At the Capitol, the march orders are audible as the military units turn into the plaza. The caisson stops. The high-spirited Blackjack grows skittish and the tall private who has been leading him has to restrain the animal. The pallbearers remove the coffin as the band plays "Hail to the Chief." In dige time. A flag-bearer precedes the coffin up the steps, dolefully, one step at a time.

Inside the great rotunda the casket

rests on the Lincoln catafalque. Mrs. Kennedy, looking straight ahead, takes her place. Caroline's head bobs as a curious child's head will. An aide takes John-John's hand and leads him from the crowded rotunda as the honor guard is posted.

Presently Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield begins to speak. In the great rotunda the voices sound hollow, and over all there is an eerie obligato of nervous coughing which the microphones amplify. The television audience strains to catch what Mansfield is saying:

" . . . He gave us of a good heart from which the laughter came. . . . of a profound wit from which a great leadership emerged. He gave us of a kindness and a strength fused into a human courage to seek peace without fear."

Caroline's hands fidget and her mother reaches down and stills them as Chief Justice Earl Warren is intoning:

" . . . A believer in the dignity and equality of all human beings, a fighter for justice and apostle of peace, has been snatched from our midst by the bullet of an assassin. . . . The whole world is poorer because of his loss."

The camera plays over Robert Kennedy's immobile face. He looks drained, wrung out, hardly hearing

House Speaker John McCormack:

" . . . Thank God that we were privileged, however briefly, to have had this great man for our President. For he has now taken his place among the great figures of world history."

As the Speaker's voice fades, the new President, face implacable but strong, inches forward toward the catafalque, following a soldier who positions a wreath for him. Mrs. Kennedy sits and, taking Caroline's hand, comes quickly forward and kneels at the coffin. She kisses the flag and Caroline follows suit, her little hand fingering the striped silk before they move back to the periphery of the mourners.

Only the coughing and shuffling can be heard as the family goes quickly out. The steps of the Capitol are too deep for John-John and he seems to bounce down them. The President gives Mrs. Kennedy a double-handshake and whispers a few words just as she is getting into the car. The line of

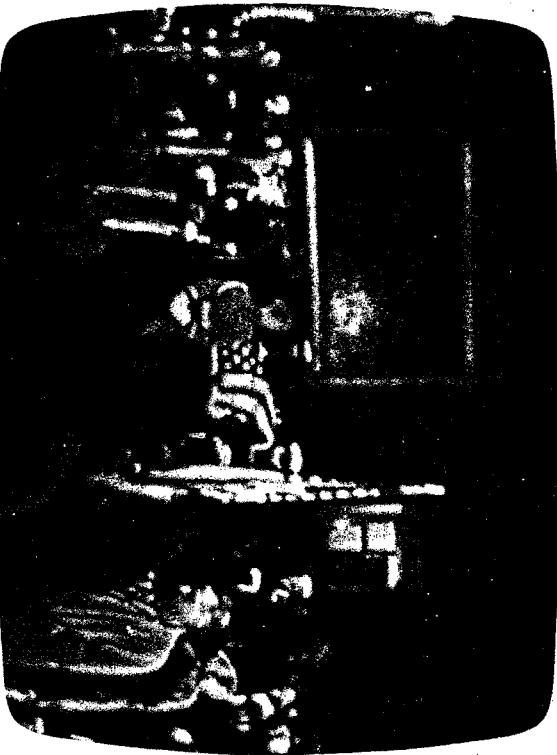
limousines moves off.

Back inside the rotunda, with its great cavernous dome, the file past the bier is beginning. ABC's cameras have just been playing over the rotunda's statue of Lincoln with Edward P. Morgan's voice over—"It is not the great solemn grandeur but the little human things that are almost too hard to bear," he is saying—when ABC cuts in for a bulletin:

"FLASH . . . LEE HARVEY OSWALD IS DEAD"

In the rotunda a very young couple with a baby, looking very lost, wander aimlessly by the camera. It moves Morgan to comment to his running-mate, Howard K. Smith, "You keep thinking, Howard, that this is a dream from which you will awake—but you won't."

Throughout the afternoon and evening the great line outside the rotunda swells. At one point it stretches five miles, but the camera eye cannot



Nightlong, until 9 A.M. Monday, mourners passed the bier in the Capitol rotunda.

see it in the darkness. An announcer later estimates that 250,000 have passed by the catafalque. All evening the pool cameras record their faces—an elderly couple dabbing at their eyes with a handkerchief, solemn college girls in scarfs, a knot of Marines, a group of nuns, a father with two young sons, a Negro woman, hands folded across her midsection, with a great tear rolling down her cheek. Some wait 10 hours. Some have small children sleeping on their shoulders. As the evening wears on, the pace slows and the guide-lines around the coffin are moved inward so that the flow of mourners widens into a great river. Still they come.

It is Morgan who captures the feeling best. It is, "the mood of mournous, somber sadness," he says. Earlier this morning the cameras have caught a fleeting glimpse of Mrs. Rose Kennedy coming out of church in Hyannis Port. Now at 4:30 (EST) they watch again as the President's mother, her daughter Eunice Shriver, and son Edward leave Hyannis Port for Washington.

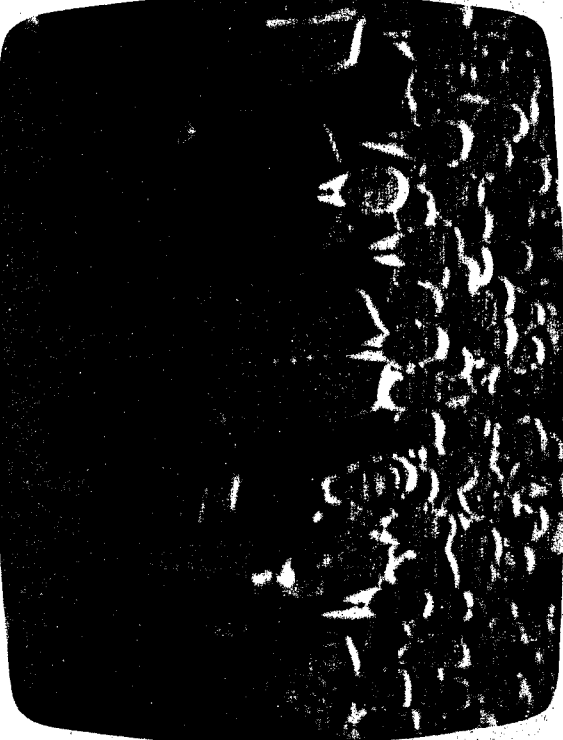
Television is at the airport with Secretary of State Rusk about an hour later to greet General de Gaulle. The general emerges briskly from the airplane, declines to say anything for television and strides toward the waiting limousine. Again at 9:30 the special New York Philharmonic concert conducted by Leonard Bernstein is interrupted as cameras go to Dulles airport where Prince Philip and Sir Alec Douglas-Home are arriving from London.

NBC stays on the air. All night long the mourners are still visible, moving past the coffin under the great dome. They are still coming at 9 that morning.

Monday, November 25



On Monday, the body was carried from the rotunda for the funeral services.



From the White House, the dignitaries followed on foot. Among them: Charles de Gaulle of France, Queen Frederika of Greece, Ethiopia's Haile Selassie.

"This was the day we were restored to sanity," Charles Collingwood said. The scene at the White House portico at 10:15 A.M. was much the same as the previous day, except that the rhythm had somehow slowed. Six limousines lined the driveway to drive the Kennedy family to the rotunda. Mrs. Kennedy was first out, followed by Pat Lawford, Bobby, Teddy, Eunice Shriver and assorted Kennedy in-laws and children. Notably absent were Caroline and John. Their mother had decided to meet them at St. Matthew's Cathedral after the trip to the rotunda. (Later, at the church, John-John was taken out for most of the Low Pontifical Mass. Neither Caroline nor John went to the cemetery.)

It took just 13 minutes for the procession to make the trip to the Capitol plaza. The widow and the two brothers again took the long walk up the Capitol steps and quickly approached the coffin, knelt, and backed away. As quickly, they turned and walked out of the rotunda.

It took just seven minutes to get the cortege under way—the caisson with the flag-draped casket, the ever-present riderless horse, the three clergymen, the honor guard, the six limousines and the carful of Secret Service men—but, since it was now a full military funeral procession, it was 45 minutes before the cortege again approached the portico, bringing John Fitzgerald Kennedy to the White House for the last time.

At 11:43, the family, the 19 chiefs of state and heads of government, the three reigning monarchs, the dignitaries, President Johnson, Chief Justice Warren, start the long walk behind the caisson from the White House to St. Matthew's. Advancing like a great phalanx, they seem to march right into the television lens. De Gaulle



After the funeral Mass, as the coffin is placed back on the caisson, Mrs. Kennedy leans down



dominates the front line of march. But Queen Frederika of Greece (the only other woman visible besides Mrs. Kennedy) is there, too. And so are Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, Crown Prince Akhito of Japan, King Baudouin of Belgium, Prime Minister Lester Pearson of Canada, Chancellor Erhard of West Germany, Prime Minister Inonu of Turkey, First Deputy Anastas Mikoyan of USSR, President Eamon De Valera of Ireland, Prince Philip and Prime Minister Alec Douglas-Home of Britain.

It is an impressive group of mourners. The emotion tells on the voice of David Brinkley. The camera picks up the shadows thrown by the caisson. The wind takes the edge of the flag as the pallbearers, who seem to be

carrying the weight of the world, mount the steps with the coffin. Once inside the church the foreign dignitaries follow De Gaulle to their seats to the right of the family. Again the camera catches the ineffable sadness on the face of Bobby Kennedy, close to his sister-in-law.

The Low Pontifical Mass begins. The fiat, nasal voice of Cardinal Cushing is heard praying "for John Fitzgerald Kennedy and also for the redemption of all men." The Mass is said to include all those who are present. So on this day it might be said to include 180,000,000.

"For those who are faithful to You, Oh Lord, life is not taken away; it is transformed." The Cardinal blesses the casket with holy water. Turning to

John-John, whispers, takes his pamphlet. He salutes, then turns to retrieve pamphlet.

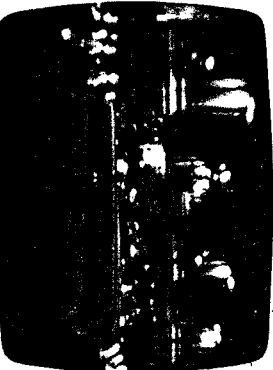


leave the church he leans down and kisses Caroline Kennedy on the cheek. Outside the church John-John stands hard by his mother as the coffin is brought out. In his hand is clasped the pamphlet which he was given while sitting out the main body of the Mass.

As the pallbearers place the casket back on the caisson and the procession prepares to leave, John-John leans over—a "majestic" figure, the London papers will say—she whispers something to him, she takes his pamphlet, then he salutes his father. The camera holds on it a full 30 seconds—the small figure and his courageous mother—the camera does a slight shimmy—as if the cameraman, too, were shaking.

As the caisson starts to roll, the heads of state and visiting foreign dignitaries are forced to stand about, waiting for their cars like ordinary men. Ex-Presidents Eisenhower and Truman walk to a car together.

The muffled drums begin. And the hoof-clacks. The family cars fall in behind the caisson and the riderless horse. President Johnson's car is accompanied by the Secret Service men. A young, black-hatted priest peers out of the crowd lining the streets, a woman with hands clasped over her bosom, a handsome soldier in dark glasses, a college boy with a transistor radio at his ear, an older woman with an oversize handbag, a family of five sitting on a curbstone with their lunch. Ten minutes later the dignitaries



The coffin rests at the foot of the altar.



Cardinal Cushing bends to kiss Caroline.



Former Presidents Eisenhower and Truman.



At the cemetery, flag-folding ceremony.



After the cemetery services, Robert and Jacqueline Kennedy hold hands, leave.



At the White House reception, President Johnson greets Anastas Mikoyan.

are still waiting for their cars and David Brinkley opines that the head of the procession will arrive at the cemetery before the last of it leaves the cathedral.

It is not hard to believe. For it is a procession miles long. As the cortege starts across Arlington Memorial Bridge, the camera captures majestic long shots from Arlington National Cemetery showing the Lincoln Memorial in the background. Over all, the muffled drums.

As the cortege enters the cemetery, the Irish Guard stands at parade rest next to the grave, and the coffin slowly advances to the wall of the bagpipes. As the coffin reaches graveside, a flight of 50 jet planes (one for each state) zooms overhead. In keeping with tradition, one plane of the formation is missing. Last to fly over is "Air Force One," the President's personal jet, dipping its wings in tribute to a dead President. The pool camera, panning across the sky, catches it all.

Soon the gently rolling hillside is a sea of somber figures. Cardinal Cushing begins to intone the prayer:

"Oh God, through Whose mercy souls of the faithful find rest, be pleased to bless this grave and Thy holy angels to keep it . . . the body we bury herein, that of our beloved Jack Kennedy, the 35th President of the United States, that his soul may re-

joice in Thine with all the saints, through Christ our Lord. Amen. . . ."

The pool camera takes a serene long shot, sweeping over the line of military graves to the Custis-Lee mansion on the hill behind; then, during the 21-gun salute, cuts to Mrs. Kennedy. She seems to start with every shot. Cardinal Cushing asks the Holy Father to grant John Fitzgerald Kennedy eternal rest, and the bugler, lip quivering for humanity, plays taps.

Now the flag-folding begins. The camera moves in for close-ups of the white-gloved hands of the honor guard, anxious, eager hands, making triangular folds of the flag that covered the dead President's coffin. There is a poignancy about the image which again recalls the part hands have played in the Four Days—Mrs. Kennedy's hand in Robert's at the rotunda and at the funeral; the hand of the small boy in a farewell salute to his father; Carolines hand fingering the flag at the rotunda; the hands of the unseen detective holding aloft the murder weapon in Dallas; the hand of Ruby shooting Oswald.

Now the folded flag passes from hand to hand. The camera follows lovingly. John C. Metzler, superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery, takes the flag, turns and gives it into the hand of the young widow. Finally the hand of Cardinal Cushing sprinkling holy water on the coffin as with

voice rising, he says ". . . The wonderful man we bury here today."

Mrs. Kennedy lights the eternal flame and the funeral is over.

Jackie and Bobby turn and leave the grave together. Jackie's foot catches and she stumbles momentarily.

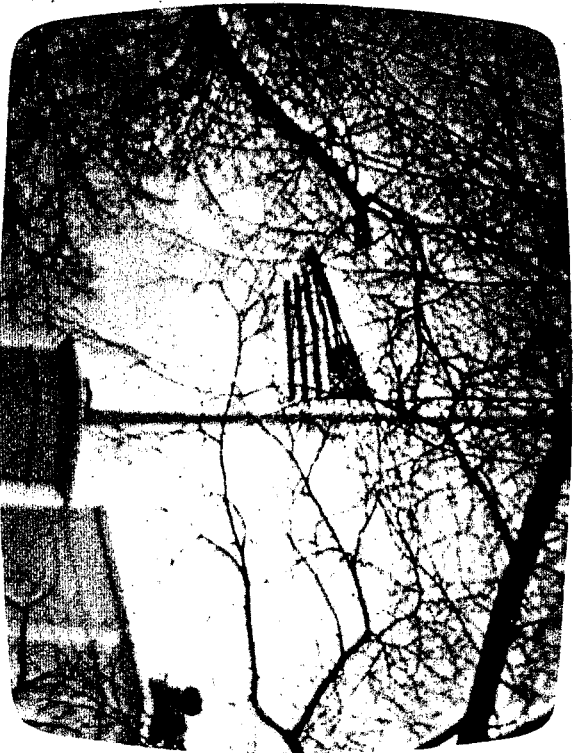
That evening was a time for recalling little things: Chet Huntley's story about John-John at the rotunda, how at one point an aide took the restless child to the office of Speaker McCormack and gave him a small American flag to play with. And how John-John asked if he could have another one—"for my daddy." How the new President looked, saddened but confident—and confidence inspiring. How NBC's Bill Ryan could not read the official word of the President's death and had to turn it over to Frank McGee. The sad eyes of Walter Cronkite, the poetic irony of Edward P. Morgan, and the righteous anger of

Chet Huntley, and his summation of the Man and the Tragedy: "I didn't always agree with JFK, but I liked his style."

It was also a time of beginning. The Nation marveled when the word came through that Mrs. Kennedy would, after 3:30 P.M., receive the visiting dignitaries and heads of state. And, from the news reports, one took away the comforting sense that the new Government not only was beginning—it had begun.

For television it was a beginning, too. For if nothing else had happened during the Four Days, the medium had gained a new sense of what it could do, if pressed. Moreover, it had shown that it did indeed deserve to be called, as Ron Cochran had put it, the window of the world. And that the window was capable of encompassing not just life's trivia, but the deepest of human experience.

As the long vigil ends, the TV cameras pan to the White House flag at half-mast.



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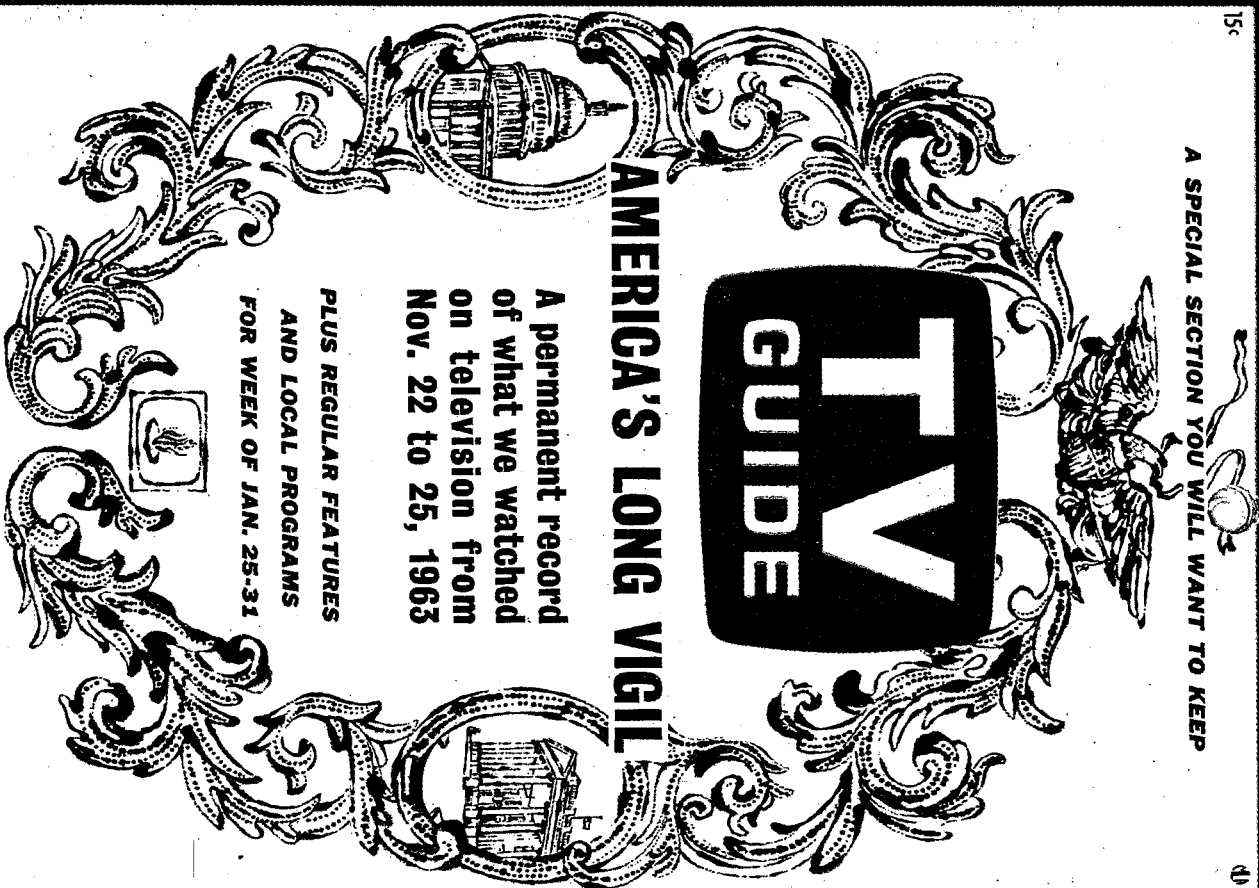
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