

APPENDIX H

Jim Underwood

that routine, but there was time for planning. It was good training for the funeral, when there was no planning time at all.

Maybe it's a good thing there was no time. No time to gripe or argue with what had to be done. No time to realize how scared you might be or how tired you might be. Just enough time to show, at long last, what TV news could do.

Appendix I

JIM UNDERWOOD

*(Assistant news director of KRLD-TV in Dallas at the time of the assassination and at the time of this interview in Dallas, June 30, 1964)*

Since the assassination some people have said that violent demonstrations had been predicted in advance. I think that's a bit misleading. We knew there was strong "right-wing" sentiment in the city. We remembered the harassment UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson had received during and after his speech. We knew these demonstrations had been planned in advance.

While Adlai Stevenson was speaking at Municipal Auditorium, a huge banner reading "Welcome Adlai" suddenly flopped down to reveal another one saying "Let's get out of the UN," or something to that effect. You will recall UN Day was the occasion of Stevenson's speech. That took careful advance planning, and there had been speculation that somewhere along President Kennedy's route a huge banner might suddenly appear with a similar slogan. But as it turned out all I saw was a couple of small, mild signs at the airport.

I was in a press car about four or five cars behind the President in his motorcade and, frankly, I was amazed at the large crowd that turned out along the entire length of the motorcade route and at the very enthusiastic reception that he got. As we followed him through Dallas in the motorcade I said, "At least they respect the President of the United States. He's got this town in the palm of his hand."

There had been a joke making the rounds before the visit. People were saying, "JFK is safe in Texas, because you-know-who is Vice President." Lyndon Johnson had been very unpopular in Dallas for several years. It's really not a good joke or a good thing to say, but

but I couldn't be... example, he said, "This seemed un-... brief and general... twelve-block zone, making their turn." I... except from Constitu-... blocks west of me... general... have placed more TV... But under the circum-... on the air. Here's one ex-... As soon as Washington... stores closed. We had... We worked right against... nce information. Monday... at the cathedral they'd have... CBS business manager in... d and rent formal attire on

g somewhat ill at ease, the... astic job. Their first job was... so well that most of the re-... ing it easy on us reporters... drums, band, horses' hooves... ised us to keep our commen-... picture and natural sound tell... suggest some talk if the net-... not be hurt by commentary... pool video shot, each network... to carry that pool shot or an-... supplementary cameras. But... ork camera positions that day... ge. All networks brought extra... rby cities... established in Washington, but... and suddenness. An inaugural... om the White House to the... plus all the distance through... e reason the funeral coverage... e during the civil-rights march... thing to the Kennedy funeral... overage of the inaugurals had... march was a departure from

you know how something like that will catch on and make the rounds.

We had a good view of the presidential limousine from our press car, and I was standing up in the open convertible to take pictures when the shooting occurred. The first shot actually sounded like a small explosion as it reverberated between the buildings. I said, "My God, not firecrackers!" and started looking for someone throwing firecrackers. By then our car was right beside the School Book Depository, and the second and third shots had the distinct sound of a rifle shot; but it was still impossible to tell where they came from. Sounds bounce around between the downtown buildings, and you can't tell where they come from even when you are right underneath the source as we were for the third shot. To me it sounded like a firecracker and two rifle shots, as we were coming toward the source. Men in the press buses farther back in the motorcade said all three sounded like firecrackers; they were getting the reverberations off all the buildings.

A man came forward, after the shooting, with blood on his cheek, and said something had hit him as the President was shot. The next day, Saturday, I was at the county jail in case they moved Oswald. I was bored just waiting there, so I asked one of the deputies if I had time to go across the street. He said I did. We work together that way. If he knows the prisoner is coming, he'll say, "Better stick around," or he will tell me, "You've got about an hour," and I know I can trust him. The press has very close relations with all of the law-enforcement agencies in Dallas.

I went across the street to the spot opposite the Depository where that man was standing. An officer showed me the mark on the curb where the bullet hit. I took pictures of that mark, but most people don't know what they are looking at. Unless you have seen a bullet hit concrete before, you don't know what kind of mark to look for. I knew the mark it leaves, and I knew it when I found it. Personally, I think his first shot went wild. Maybe the Warren Commission report will settle that point. I know now that one of the three shots went wild, but at the time we assumed that all three had hit—there were three wounds, two in the President and one in the Governor.

Bob Jackson of the *Times Herald*, who was riding in the car with me, pointed to the top of the Depository building and said, "I saw a rifle. I looked up where he was pointing and saw nothing. The car stopped, and we both leaped out. The thing that caught my eye was the railroad yards uphill from the Depository. People had dropped like flies on that hill—as if they were hit or heard bullets whizzing over their head. I got some good movie footage of that, which you probably saw on CBS.

The County Courthouse and jail is diagonally across the corner,

and the sheriff's deputies there noticed that same thing and were charging up that hill into the railroad tracks, so I went with them. Everyone was running. People were huddling over their children, others were running up the hill to the yards; it was real panic. It was complete confusion; you can't imagine the shock value of seeing the President of the United States shot in front of your own eyes.

Reporters are used to chasing police cars and fire trucks, watching a desperate killer shoot it out, or seeing people tumbling from a burning building. I've seen people killed before—but the shock of seeing the President of the United States gunned down almost immobilizes you. Reporters were doing things by instinct only. We were in a daze, and I think the policemen and deputies were also. After a few wild minutes we were all milling around in helpless confusion. I'm sure Oswald could easily have strolled out the front door and walked away.

Then we began drifting back toward the School Book Depository Building. I told a deputy I know that Jackson thought he saw a rifle there, and he went inside to look around. Several policemen had already gone in. I went across the street to the court house and telephoned CBS. A few minutes later the deputies scaled off the building, and not even the newsmen could get in or out.

About the time I got back to the studio I picked up a telephone and was told, "They've got the man who killed the cop, and they're taking him to city jail now." I didn't know anything about a policeman being shot, but I automatically picked up a camera and went to headquarters. There had been a rumor of a Secret Service agent killed, and it crossed my mind that maybe this was the man who did that.

I reached City Hall in time to film Oswald being brought in, and I rode up in the elevator with him. A police sergeant said, "We've got witnesses that saw him shoot Tippitt." The Dallas police always give the press a fair shake, despite anything you may have heard from the out-of-town correspondents. The police tell us whether or not a suspect is good for the charges, and we know how to play the story. But Oswald leaned around and looked straight at me, saying defensively, "I didn't kill anybody."

After the police had questioned Oswald for a few minutes, one of the policemen came out and told me he did not think there was a connection with the assassination. I had that film of Oswald being brought into the basement of City Hall—at about the same place he was later killed—so I took it back to the studio.

Then I got a telephone call from City Hall, and a policeman I know in homicide told me, "That guy works in the Depository building." Well, that was it. That made him a prime suspect. And we had saved the film I took of Oswald being brought into police headquarters,

because minutes after the President was shot we had issued an edict: "Don't throw away a foot of film." We kept that in effect throughout the weekend and never lost a thing. We saved every foot of film we shot, and we still have it, thousands of feet of film from that weekend. CBS flew in some film editors and film crews, and we kept our processor going continuously.

I've mentioned the good relations between the Dallas police and the Dallas press, and that hasn't changed any. Of course, if they had to do it over again, I'm sure they wouldn't show off Oswald for the press—but they didn't have any precedent to go on then. Police methods have changed a lot since the last assassination of a President of the United States. Police departments have public-relations sections now. There is no police brutality—none whatsoever—in Dallas, and they show prisoners to the press any time we ask for them. They don't put a man in a cell and throw away the key. They had to bring Oswald out and show him to the press to prove this wasn't being done. Imagine the pressure on the Dallas police to get that confession!

If Oswald had been smuggled to county jail without the press seeing him, there would have been all sorts of rumors. "Why can't we see him? What have you done to him?" the reporters would have asked. The press has a right to see and to report how prisoners are being treated. As for Jack Ruby slipping in with the press, that was just a fluke. He just happened to wander in at the right moment. I can tell you, as a police reporter who knows, that you can't bribe a Dallas policeman. There is no one on the take on this force. I think this is one of the finest police forces in the nation.

## Appendix J

DOYLE VINSON

*(Assistant to the director of television news at WBAP-TV in Fort Worth at the time of the assassination and at the time of this interview in Fort Worth, on June 30, 1964)*

MR. MAYO. What remote facilities did WBAP-TV have available to cover the presidential visit?

MR. VINSON. We have four radio-equipped power cars and one mobile