

'Death Left LBJ Ashen'

By SETH KANTOR

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 13—A congressman who was present at Parkland Hospital in Dallas immediately after President Kennedy's assassination spoke publicly for the first time today of "very personal things (he) saw and felt."

Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez, D-Tex., said he decided to speak out because of the "growing distortions about bad feelings displayed between Kennedy and

Johnson people"—a reference to William Manchester's book, "Death of a President," and other reports.

Gonzalez said he arrived at Parkland Hospital a few moments after President Kennedy had been carried in. He said he found Vice President Johnson leaning against a recess in the wall.

"He was ashen-faced. He had a pocket-size inhaler and

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LBJ the day President Kennedy died

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was drawing in on it through his nose. He was looking down, kind of hunched over. He was immobile. He appeared at that moment incapable of taking over the country," Gonzalez said.

He had been told to go to Johnson's assistance by Clifton Carter, a long-time aide of the vice president. Gonzalez said he had asked Carter if Johnson had been hurt and Carter replied: "No, it's his heart."

The congressman was in the fourth car in the presidential motorcade—the car behind Johnson and Sen. Ralph Yarborough, D-Tex., when he heard three shots "and then the whole earth spun and churned.

"The fact is," said Gonzalez, "there was shock and trauma and disbelief. It was not a time of reason or action on either

side. It was the Secret Service, which was running the country."

Gonzalez said he found Johnson in a room where a tall security man was shouting orders on the phone and saying, "I've got him here."

FOUND MRS. KENNEDY

No one could or would tell Gonzalez at first how badly the President had been hit. He said he wandered down a corridor and found Mrs. Kennedy sitting alone on a straight-backed chair, outside another closed door, "like a little girl in a stupor." Said Gonzalez:

"Her gloves were caked with blood. It was like drying mud. The door next to her was opened by somebody. I could see the soles of Kennedy's bare feet sticking out from under a sheet.

"I wept and put my arms around Mrs. Kennedy, asking if there was anything I could do. She didn't look up. Two of her aides were some distance away. They looked as if they were in a state of shock."

Johnson and his closest aides were led out of the hospital and Gonzalez said he was struck by the fact that "no longer were there Secret Service agents in this corridor. I thought of the words of the Spanish poet, Becquer: 'My God, how alone the dead remain.'"

"Power and all its attendants had left. I found a nurse and asked her to get Mrs. Kennedy some water.

"The nurse brought water in a cup. When Mrs. Kennedy finished it, she looked up wordlessly but with enormous gratitude in her eyes."