

Manchester Says Kennedy Guards Might Have

Evasive action by Secret Service agents, who seemed immobilized during "five terrible seconds," might have saved President Kennedy from the second and fatal shot fired by Lee Harvey Oswald, according to William Manchester.

In the second installment of "The Death of a President," appearing in the current issue of Look magazine, Mr. Manchester, author of the book, chronicles what he describes as the reactions of the Secret Service and the aberrant and often hysterical conduct of ranking officials in the first hour after the assassination.

Why, Mr. Manchester asks, were two middle-aged agents with slowing reflexes assigned to the posts closest to President Kennedy in the motorcade through Dallas on the day of the assassination, Nov. 22, 1963?

According to Mr. Manchester, Presidential guards were not required to take standardized tests to measure reflexes. Yet such was the tension and long hours of their work, the agents regarded themselves as old at 40. And tradition dictated that the agents nearest the President should be senior men.

Thus the driver of the Presidential limousine was 54 years old, and the man who sat beside the driver was 48.

"They were, 'the author contends' in a position to take evasive action after the first shot, but for five terrible seconds they were immobilized."

Finds Loyalty Divided

What Mr. Manchester calls the chaotic scene at Parkland Hospital in Dallas might have been avoided, he says, had the Secret Service thrown up a security screen. But the agents were leaderless and confused, he says. Some stayed with the dead President; some apparently thought that their loyalty belonged to the new President, Lyndon B. Johnson — "and the inevitable consequence was anarchy."

Others reacted oddly, Mr. Manchester wrote, citing the case of Maj. Gen. Ted Clifton, a combat veteran, who was the President's senior military aide. General Clifton first telephoned the White House to ask that his wife and the wife of a Presidential aide, Kenneth O'Donnell, be reassured that their husbands were unharmed. Then he asked the White House operator to switch him to the National Security Council to inquire about the possibility of a plot against the United States.

"The general's order of priorities was staggering," Mr. Manchester commented.

Balked Assassin

His second installment also relates:

¶How Mrs. John F. Kennedy made anguished attempts to conceal the mortal wounds of her husband from the eyes of Secret Service agents and attendants outside Parkland Hospital, and how she struggled with a nurse who tried to bar her from the operating room.

Accused in An Ad

¶How President Kennedy reacted hours before the assassination to a black-bordered advertisement in The Dallas News accusing him of responsibility for the imprisonment, starvation and persecution of thousands of Cubans, and hinting that he had made a secret deal with the Communist party of the United States.

¶How, after reading the advertisement, the President turned to his wife and said that "we're heading into nut country today." He also told her of a day dream about assassination after they had been jostled by a crowd the previous night. "Suppose," he

mused, "a man had a pistol in a briefcase."

¶How a young man saw Oswald about to fire from a lofty window in the Texas Book Depository along President Kennedy's parade route, but did not tell a nearby policeman.

About the events at Parkland Hospital, Mr. Manchester says that when the dying President arrived at the hospital, Mrs. Kennedy would not allow him to be lifted from the car and onto a stretcher until she had wrapped his head in the lining of a coat given her by a Secret Service agent. Inside, feeling there was a chance that the President might still be alive, she was allowed into the operating room.

Mr. Manchester also tells how J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, broke the news to Robert F. Kennedy, the President's brother, in Washington.

Mr. Kennedy, then United States Attorney General, was at home in Virginia when Mr. Hoover reached him by tele-

phone, and, the author says, heard the voice, "staccato, shrill, mechanical," say:

"I have news for you. The President's been shot."

At least four persons saw the shadowy figure of Oswald lurking in the window of the Depository Building just before the shooting, Mr. Manchester said. Then he adds:

"A youth named Arnold Rowland, who knew guns, had been watching from below with his wife since 12:14 P.M. He saw Oswald silhouetted in the window, holding what appeared to be a high-powered rifle mounted with a telescopic sight. One of Oswald's hands was on the stock; the other was on the barrel.

"A police officer stood 12 feet from the Rowlands, but it never occurred to Arnold to speak to him. Assuming that Oswald must be protecting the President, he said to his wife, 'Do you want to see a Secret Service agent?'

"Where, she asked.

"In that building there."

Not far away, according to Mr. Manchester, James Hosty, an agent in charge of an investigation of Oswald the Federal Bureau of Investigation was making, watched the Presidential motorcade go by, then stepped into a restaurant for lunch. He was there ten minutes later when Oswald fired the shots.

Saw Oswald Take Aim

Howard Brennan, a pipe fitter, was the nearest known eyewitness to Oswald, Mr. Manchester said. While sitting on the plaza 40 feet below Oswald, he glanced up and saw the "pinched face" of Oswald in the window frame. But he did not see the gun.

After the first shot, Mr. Brennan looked up again and saw Oswald "take deliberately aim" for the fatal shot.

Mr. Manchester revives a major controversy—the site of the President's wounds. While noting that he had not seen the autopsy X-rays and photographs, he says he has talked to three persons who have seen them. These three told him, Mr. Manchester says, that the first bullet "entered in the neck" of the President.

But the Warren Commission reported the autopsy found the wound "near the base of the back of President Kennedy's neck."

Some challengers contend it was much lower. The question is vital to the issue of whether or not there was more than one assassin.

From the positioning of the wound and the course of the bullet, the Warren Commission,

in its official report on the assassination, concluded that both shots had been fired from behind and above the President.

Mr. Manchester wrote that relations between Kennedy and Johnson partisans began to become abrasive soon after the assassination, and the schism had started among the Secret Service agents.

"The loyalists, mourning John Kennedy, could not adjust to Lyndon Johnson," he wrote. "Realists accepted the succession, sometimes with astonishing alacrity."

One agent made the change while President Kennedy was still alive, Mr. Manchester reported. He said that the agent, Emory Roberts, certain that the wounds were mortal, shouted to another agent:

"They got him. You and Bennett [another agent] take over Johnson as soon as we stop."

A spokesman for Look magazine said yesterday that lawyers were discussing action against The World Journal Tribune for abridgment of copyright.

The installment had been embargoed for release at 5 P. M. yesterday. But the World Journal Tribune devoted most of a page to it in its afternoon editions, contending that "the embargo was broken by Newsweek magazine which published an account of the installment along with an interview with Manchester in its current issue."

Mr. Manchester, according to The Daily News, is now a guest in a private home near Lyford Cay, a few miles from Nassau, on New Providence Island in the Bahamas. The News said that the area, which is visited by wealthy persons, was protected by private guards.

Before he left here Friday, Mr. Manchester told The New York Times that he would stay at a home owned by Gardner Cowles, the chairman of Cowles Communications.