

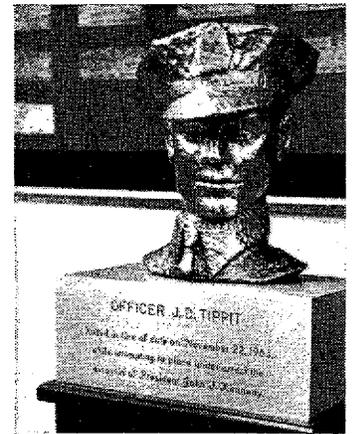


Tom Dilliard

Bad day in Big D: Some mourned Kennedy, others peered at the theater where Lee Oswald was captured



Jim Cochran



Newsweek photos by Tony Rollo

Faces and places: Robert Oswald, Judge Brown, Jack Ruby's club turned gym and a bust of slain officer Tippit

**THE ASSASSINATION:
Scene of the Crime**

Four years later, Big D is still trying to escape from the haunting shadow of the assassination. Dallas Mayor Erik Jonsson, the symbol of his city's determination to forget the past and look to the future, stoutly insisted last week that "there's no reason for us to apologize for anything." Then he gracefully laid a garland of red roses at the marker near the spot in Dallas's Dealey Plaza where John F. Kennedy was shot down on the morning of Nov. 22, 1963. Quoting from Lincoln, the balding, blue-suited mayor told a crowd of city councilmen, business leaders and mourning citizens: "It is for us the living . . . to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us . . ."

Under the leadership of Jonsson, who moved into City Hall just a few months after Kennedy was killed, Dallas has indeed been dedicating itself to the tasks ahead. In the process, the city has been thriving and is now engaged in launching a multimillion-dollar building program that will provide expanded airport, hotel and convention facilities. At the same time, many of the familiar faces associated with the assassination have faded. Jack Ruby, of course, is dead.

Jesse Curry, the police chief in whose custody Lee Harvey Oswald was slain, is now retired from the force. And Joe B. Brown, the district judge in whose courtroom Ruby was found guilty of murder, has been in ill health. But Big D's effort to eradicate the memory and stigma of the assassination has been about as successful as the unfinished memorial the city still plans to dedicate to the fallen President.

History-minded tourists seem determined to keep the memory verdant, and some local entrepreneurs are happy to accommodate them. Passengers between planes at Love Field have no difficulty finding a hack to take them for a fast spin around Dealey Plaza. "I'll bet I've taken 75 people there myself, maybe more," says cabbie R.L. Hatfield, 63. "They all want to see it and they like to hear me tell what happened that day."

Wax Works: With a bit more time, visitors can take in the Southwestern Historical Wax Museum at Fair Park, with lifelike representations of key assassination figures, from Oswald to Judge Sarah Hughes, who administered the oath to the new President. Museum operator W. Thomas Bolton recently paid \$300 for a suit once worn by Jack Ruby; eventually it will adorn a wax dummy of Ruby in the act of murdering Oswald. Not far

away, at 1026 Beckley Street, Mrs. A.C. Johnson still charges \$1 a head for a look at the austere 5-foot by 12-foot room she rented to Oswald during his last weeks.

No tour is complete without a swing past Jack Ruby's Carousel Club on Commerce Street, lately operated by the police department as a boxing gym for teen-agers; the Texas Schoolbook Depository Building, where Oswald knelt at a sixth-floor window; the spot where officer J.D. Tippit was shot down, and the Texas theater where Oswald was finally captured. One Depository employee insists he has never come to work without "somebody sticking a camera in my face." Roy Truly, manager of the textbook firm, has long barred the doors to the endless stream of curiosity seekers trying to make their way to Oswald's sixth-floor perch. "If we didn't, we'd never get any work done," he told NEWSWEEK's Hugh Aynesworth.

Oswald's widow, Marina, has been a post-assassination sideshow all by herself. Launched into an affluent life with \$70,000 in donations from sympathizers, she began selling pictures and personal stories to periodicals all over the world, generally at lofty prices. Otherwise Marina has managed to attract the attention of neighbors and occasionally the police

in a series of noisy squabbles with her present husband, Kenneth Porter, a tall Texan who married her after riding up to her house in suburban Richardson on a horse and introducing himself.

'Countdown': After their marriage, she bought Porter a seedy bar, then battled with him over his attentions to his barmaid. It took a justice of the peace to smooth things over. Five weeks ago Marina instituted a suit against the Federal government for \$500,000, which she claims is the commercial value of some of Oswald's personal effects seized by the Justice Department. She also is working on a book on her life with Oswald, and has agreed to star, as herself, in a locally produced film to be called, "Countdown in Dallas," billed as "the true story" of the assassination.

Matching Marina in entrepreneurial zeal is Oswald's mother, Marguerite. Living alone in a brick house in nearby Fort Worth, Mrs. Oswald, now 60, seems dedicated in equal parts to vindicating her son and merchandising his effects. Among the inventory items: several letters from Lee varying in price (according to length) from \$1,000 to \$5,000; his Marine shooting record, for \$5,000; a toy organ she claims he played as a child, for \$500, and a photo of Lee in Marine uniform for \$5,000. When a prospective customer complained of the high prices, Mrs. Oswald snapped, "Are you kidding? This is Lee Harvey Oswald!" For \$250, collectors can purchase a paperweight inscribed: "My son, Lee Harvey Oswald, even after his death has done more for his country than any other living human being."

Lee's brother, Robert, manager of a brick company in Wichita Falls, Texas, has been living there quietly with his wife and two children. He was Lee's closest friend and has steadfastly refused to exploit that connection for profit. Robert, who has lately written an essentially sympathetic book about Lee's formative years, is convinced of the Warren commission finding—that Oswald, acting alone, killed the President.

Marker: Dallas's plan for a Kennedy memorial dates to 1964, when a 25-man committee retained New York architect Philip Johnson to design a monument and a block-square plaza. Advised by Jacqueline Kennedy to come up with something "simple, modest and dignified," Johnson sketched designs for a white concrete and stone monument to be surrounded by live-oak trees. So far, nothing has materialized except a marble marker in Dealey Plaza, on which a tersely worded inscription describes the assassination and concludes: "The J.F.K. Memorial Plaza is nearby, bounded by Main, Record, Market and Commerce Streets."

But Dallas still owes the late President a monument. The project, hit by construction and financing delays, is about two years behind. Today, only a half-paved parking lot run by a one-armed man stands at the site Dallas has reserved to memorialize John F. Kennedy.