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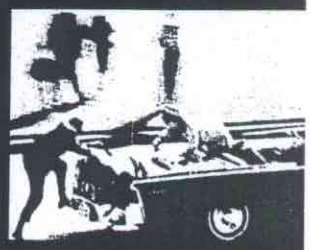
Magazine

For years after Nov. 22, 1963, I would wake in a cold sweat, convinced that something I had done had killed JFK.

By Elizabeth Forsling Harris



BETTMANN NEWSPHOTOS

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Solution to last week's puzzle on page 46

note relationship between Connally's & JFK's body re Single-bullet theory.

The Washington Post Magazine

LOOKING BACK *in* SORROW

FOR 25 YEARS, *the woman who planned the last day of John F. Kennedy's life has been silent. This is her story.*

BY ELIZABETH FORSLING HARRIS

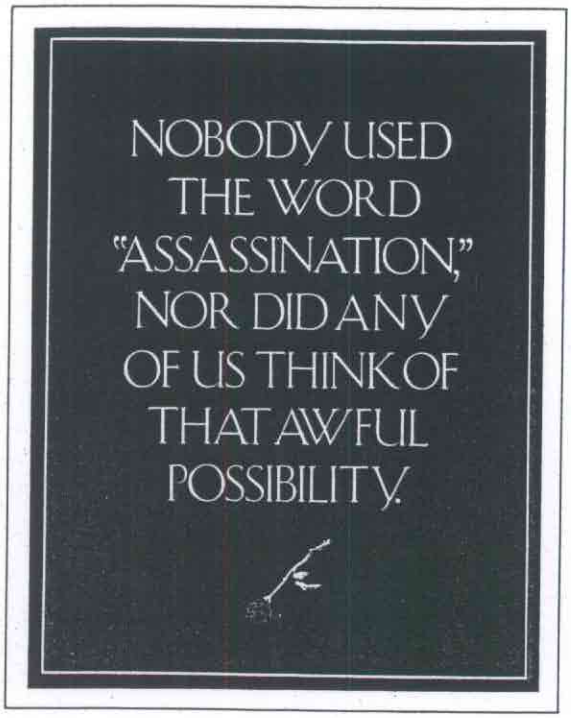
THE JUBILANT ARRIVAL
AT LOVE FIELD

She had nothing to do with the route (Secret Service did) or the D with bubble top (JFK's decision)

FOR YEARS AFTER NOV. 22, 1963, I WOULD WAKE in a cold sweat, convinced that something I had done, or had not done, had killed John F. Kennedy.

His was only supposed to be a three-hour stay in Dallas. But still, there were so many details for that brief visit—details that I personally was responsible for. And I would afterward wake in horror to think that his death was the result of something I had done, in the plans that were made, in the arrangements that were hammered out, in the schedule that was so carefully gone over, minute by minute. The bubble-top. The publicity. The route maps of his motorcade through the city. Everyone remembers where they were on that tragic day in history, but I was there and can still recall it now, in every detail.

DURING THE YEARS I LIVED IN DALLAS, I HAD COME TO KNOW John Kennedy well. He, on the other hand, did not know me at all. In 1956, I had worked in those frantic final hours at the convention to help him get the nomination for vice president over Estes Kefauver. Until 1960, I ran "Kennedy errands" for Democratic National Chairman Paul Butler, whose fervent but necessarily confidential aim was to secure the presidential nomination for Kennedy. In 1960, I helped to set up the Citizens for Kennedy/Johnson committee in Dallas County. In January 1961, I worked on the inaugural preparations and struggled to be sure that the five inaugural balls went off as scheduled.



In 1961, I went to work at the Peace Corps, where I met Bill Moyers. He had come to Washington from Texas as one of Sen. Lyndon Johnson's brightest staffers. But in 1961, he had somehow managed to extricate himself from Johnson's grasp and joined President Kennedy's perhaps most provocative program. He became deputy director, and I was the only ranking female in the hierarchy.

In 1963, I moved back to my home in Dallas with the intention of resuming a successful business career.

Moyers, only 29 but already a veteran of politics, reached me at home on the afternoon of November 13, 1963. He had just gotten back from the White House. He was excited and in a hurry. President Kennedy had asked him, indeed ordered him, to go to Texas and smooth the way for an upcoming trip to San Antonio, Houston, Fort Worth, Dallas and Austin. In just eight days, Air Force One would take off on the trip during which Kennedy intended to raise both votes and money for his 1964 presidential campaign. Would I help with the preparations in Dallas?

Like Moyers, I was familiar enough with Texas politics to want to avoid spurious encounters. The local political atmosphere created by the pending Kennedy visit was rancorous, a condition brought on by the infighting between the liberal and the conservative wings of the Texas Democratic Party. Most of the many people I knew in Dallas took their politics very seriously; I did not want to jeopardize my new line of work by unduly antagonizing some of my more conservative friends for what seemed to be a gratuitous political favor. So I refused Moyers. At first.

However, I did offer to give him a written rundown on the situation in Dallas pertinent to Kennedy's scheduled three-hour stay—a sort of Who's Who and What's What of the city. It took 17 typewritten pages to spell out the convoluted details.

The next day, Moyers flew down on the "mail plane," a government aircraft dispatched daily to take documents and mail to Vice President Johnson when he was in residence at his Texas ranch. Moyers stopped overnight in Dallas to pick up my memo and talk over the whole situation and then went on to Austin, the state capital, from which he would operate for the next seven days.

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY HAD only begun to emerge in Texas, and in 1963 the major political figures were Democratic: Gov. John Connally, conservative; Sen. Ralph Yarborough, liberal; and Vice President Johnson, officially neutral, but now, as Kennedy's man, with a loyalty unofficially suspect in both camps.

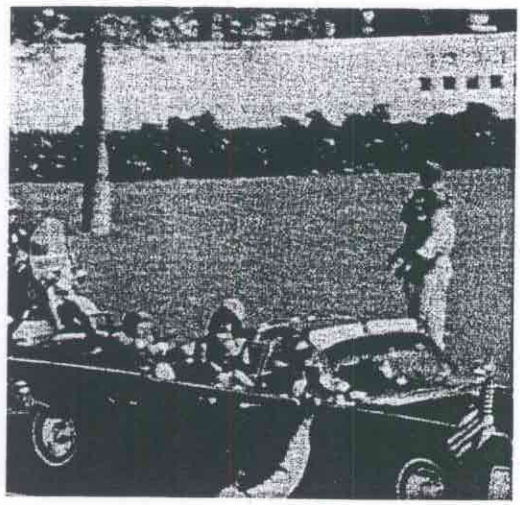
As senators, and even earlier, Johnson and Yarborough had been arch-enemies; Johnson's elevation to the vice presidency changed nothing. Connally and Yarborough were natural antagonists, given Connally's longtime service as Johnson's chief lieutenant, a status extended by Connally's boisterously declared conservative posture.

The only person who had been able to keep these three gladiators in some semblance of behavioral order was Sam Rayburn, speaker of the House, but Rayburn had died in 1961. His charges were on their own, scarcely the better for it.

By mid-November of 1963, the competition between the two factions was beginning to threaten the success of the Kennedy trip. Traditionally, when a president visits one of the 50 states, the terms of the visit are set by the White House, with details filled in by the local party leaders. Not necessarily, however, in Texas. Connally wanted the Kennedy trip run the Connally way. Kennedy had expressed a desire to be heard by as many people as possible who had voted against him in 1960 and seen by as

many as possible, no matter how they had voted. Connally was up for reelection himself in 1964, and the last thing he wanted was to be perceived as openly allied with John Kennedy. Particularly, he didn't want to be seen as parading Kennedy through Texas on a vote-getting expedition. Still, he didn't want to be seen without his president either.

So Connally came up with a plan to have it both ways. There would be, he suggested to Kennedy, "political" events. And then there would be "non-political" events. Austin, as the state capital, was the one city in which liberals and conservatives were accustomed to meeting together. It was Austin that Connally chose for the one "political" event—a fund-raiser, with the money from the sale of tickets to be split between the state organization and the Democratic National Committee. Elsewhere, the sponsors would be "non-political," and the tickets would be "invitations" handed out by the sponsor hosts of each event. Specifically, Connally planned for Kennedy to visit the School of Aerospace Medicine at Brooks Air Force Base near San Antonio on Nov. 21, where Kennedy would make a speech and dedicate six new buildings. In Houston, Kennedy would star at the testimonial dinner for Rep. Albert Thomas, whose support of Kennedy earned Houston what was to be known as the Johnson Space Center. On Friday, Nov. 22, the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce would host a breakfast. Afterward, the three-hour stop in Dallas would center on a luncheon sponsored by the Dallas Citizens' Council.



THE MOTORCADE FOLLOWS ITS WELL-PUBLICIZED ROUTE

On paper, it looked great. In every city except Austin, the sponsoring organizations were made up of Connally partisans. They were, therefore, the people who could be presumed to have voted *against* Kennedy. The only major change the White House made was to insist on a motorcade in every city. Kennedy wanted to see and be seen by as big a public as possible, and he would have Mrs. Kennedy in the car, seated beside him—the best attraction yet.

The vice president, meanwhile, did not cotton to Kennedy's coming to Texas in the first place. It was too easy for Kennedy to observe what little influence Johnson now had in his own state. Nor did he take kindly to Connally's hustling all the press attention. So he was holed up at his ranch, waiting to join the official party when it landed in San Antonio.

To top off the political squabbling, Yarborough was loudly refusing to ride in the motorcades with the vice president, the seat political protocol had dealt him; declaiming the injustice of cutting the flow of "non-political" invitations to his liberal supporters; protesting Connally's failure to invite his wife and him to the pre-dinner reception at the governor's mansion in Austin; and demanding to be seated at the head table for the dinner with Kennedy.

For his part, Connally was protesting the motorcades, notably the one in ultra-conservative, pro-Connally Dallas; claiming total innocence in regard to the "mix-up" in the distribution of tickets; regretting that his wife, Nellie, had refused to extend to Yarborough an invitation to the reception and asking just what was a man to do in a situation like that; readying himself with Mrs. Connally to escort the president and Mrs. Kennedy through the five Texas cities. Indeed, he was to cite the presence of the ladies as one of his chief objections to motorcades, notorious as the open cars were for mussing the ladies' hairdos.

AND WHAT OF MOYERS? BY THE TIME HE ARRIVED IN AUSTIN on Friday, Nov. 15, the Democratic liberals were in full throat. Surely it was they who had given Kennedy the 46,000-vote plurality by which he squeezed Texas into the electoral column. So how come they were virtually excluded from the distribution of tickets to the "non-political" events for "their" president?

Moyers called me again in Dallas on Saturday afternoon and asked if I would do him just one small favor. Could I, on Sunday morning, run down to see this one fellow whom Moyers assured me I knew better than anyone else, and try to get him to help a little on the ticket situation? Wouldn't take but a minute. But it surely would be of great help, to do that one little thing for the president.

The man Moyers wanted me to see was Sam Bloom. I knew him well. Tall, generous in girth and usually gentle of manner, Bloom ran the Bloom Advertising Agency. In the skillful hands of Sam's son, Robert, it has since grown into the largest independent agency in the United States. But in 1963, while it earned a living for the Bloom family, the agency was also Sam's means of playing a major role in the management of the city of Dallas.

Dallas was run by the Dallas Citizens' Council, a group organized by a bank president and described in the book *Dallas Public and Private* by Warren Leslie as "a collection of dollars represented by men." Membership was composed of 100 or more CEOs. Specifically excluded were proxies, scholars, doctors, clergymen, professors or others who had to ask permission to spend a corporate dollar.

At the time of Kennedy's visit, those in charge included Sam Bloom.

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What those men, or their predecessors, decided had enabled the council to do much to finance the city's improvements from airports to art museums. And acting through its subsidiary, the Citizens' Charter Association, they also nominated and financed most of the candidates for the City Council, which in turn elected the mayor.

Whenever Citizens' Council policies needed public enunciation, the Bloom Agency did the job. So it was that when Connally asked his friends to host a luncheon for President Kennedy, the Bloom agency undertook the arrangements—including the distribution of invitations.

This was the problem Moyers wanted me to discuss with Sam. The Dallas liberal Democrats were outraged at being short-changed on invitations; Yarborough was protesting from Washington, and the conservative media loved the story. At a minimum, the job was to dampen the din.

Bloom was not surprised to see me walk into his office, even on a Sunday morning. Ten years earlier, I had left New York for Dallas, a city in which I knew not a soul. I had had a successful career in New York, first as an editor for Newsweek and then as director of talent and creative programming at ABC television. I was sure finding work in Dallas was a mere matter of asking.

Hardly. The city had little interest in an expatriate New Yorker who was also a female looking to do a man's work. Sam Bloom, however, became a mentor. One of the directions in which he steered me was political. I was soon working on Yarborough's first gubernatorial campaign, then doing jobs for Johnson and Rayburn.

If Sam was not surprised to see me, he certainly was not happy when I told him my mission. "Goddam it," he yelled. "I'm sick and tired of those people in Washington sending one guy after another in here claiming they are working for the White House. They come in, look around and then disappear. All they want to do is put their noses in our business and get tickets. I'm sick of hearing about tickets. Now what do *you* want?"

At that moment, I changed my mind. I would spend the rest of that day and the 4½ days thereafter working to make a successful trip. To this day, I have rued that moment when I changed my mind and became ipso facto the political advance man for the Dallas leg of the trip.

SAM INTRODUCED ME TO THE MAJOR MEMBER OF THE PLANning team, the Secret Service advance man, Winston Lawson. In Dallas, as in all cities, Lawson's main resource was the local police department, headed by Chief Jesse Curry. Lawson had arrived in Dallas on November 8, and by the time we met he had done the preliminary work of indoctrinating the police department and host committee (via the ubiquitous Bloom), checking out the two possible luncheon sites and the alternative routes from the airport. He even had to arrange for the motorcade cars through a local dealer. All told, it was a heavy assignment for one man.

Sunday night, Lawson and I had dinner. He brought me up to speed on all details of the three hours Kennedy would be in Dallas on Friday. I learned that the next morning he would reexamine the two potential sites for the luncheon and send the details back to the White House for final selection. If it were to be the Trade Mart, the motorcade would follow the usual parade route from the airport through town. There was not time for Lawson to check each building along the route, nor was that expected.

I learned, too, at dinner that Kennedy disliked the bubble-top on the big blue Lincoln that was used for parades and flown in ahead as needed. At the slightest opportunity, he would order that the top be removed. (Not until this year did I learn that the top kept out only rain and wind. It was not designed to stop or even deflect a bullet.) And I smiled at the not-very-new news that the president liked to stop his motorcades along the route and get out to shake hands, particularly with children.

TEARS STREAMED DOWN THE FACE OF SECRET SERVICE AGENT WIN LAWSON AS THE PRESIDENT'S CORTEGE PASSED.

We also talked about the dark cloud of conservatism that hung over Dallas—specifically, the "Johnson episode" of November 1960 and the "Adlai Stevenson incident" a little more than a month earlier.

Less than a week before election day in 1960, vice presidential candidate Lyndon Johnson and his wife, Lady Bird, came to Dallas from a campaign appearance in Fort Worth. He was speaking at a luncheon in one downtown hotel and staying at another hotel across the street.

By coincidence, Republican women had staged a Tag Day in the same area. Turned out in fetching red and white uniforms, a number of young socialite women were at the same hotel corner, putting tags in the lapels of passing businessmen in return for a contribution to the Nixon/Lodge ticket.

The unexpected had occurred. Bruce Alger, a Republican candidate for Congress, had arrived at the same corner and, realizing that the Johnsons were on their way to the hotel, had grabbed a Republican placard and led the ladies there. All this noise and pulchritude attracted the boozy bums who hung out on a nearby Bowery-like street. They enthusiastically joined the crowd.

When Johnson undertook to walk Mrs. Johnson across the

street to the luncheon, I offered to get him a bullhorn to work his way through the crowd.

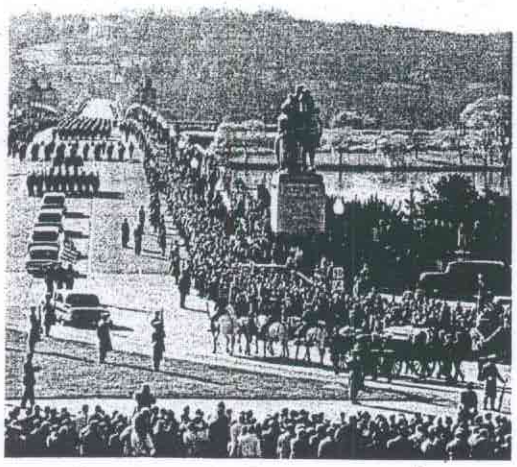
"No," he said. "I don't need a bullhorn to walk my lady across a Dallas street."

The Johnsons were severely jostled, and somewhere along the way, somebody spat on Mrs. Johnson.

When Johnson learned that the episode had been filmed by an NBC cameraman and would be used on the network news, he altered the line a little. For the four days remaining in the campaign down through the heart of Texas, the senator would blame Bruce Alger and Richard Nixon for making it impossible for "a man to walk his lady across a Dallas street without being spat upon."

There are a lot of people, including me, who think that episode and Johnson's adroit use of it earned much if not all of the 46,000-vote plurality. Alger won. But Nixon lost.

The second incident occurred in October 1963. U.N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson had come to Dallas to make a speech on United Nations Day. On the way out of the hall, a woman with an anti-U.N. placard pushed her way through a small but jeering crowd as Stevenson neared and the placard hit him. She would claim it was an accident. Stanley Marcus, the merchant prince of Neiman Marcus, and one of the few liberals on the Citizens' Council, was escorting Stevenson. The incident so unnerved him that he was moved to suggest that Kennedy cancel his trip. Stevenson suggested the same.



THE FUNERAL CORTEGE CROSSES MEMORIAL BRIDGE

The cumulative effect of these events and the attendant national media coverage was to make the city fathers sick with embarrassment, bestow the title of "Dallas Disgrace" on the conservative factions, horrify the liberals and put a nervous law enforcement force on the alert.

LAWSON, CHIEF CURRY, SAM BLOOM AND I WORRIED ABOUT another embarrassment on November 22. Using the files, Curry's men located all of the known conservative troublemakers in the Dallas area, and saw to it that each was told to stay at home on November 22—under police surveillance if not formal guard. The city pushed through a quick ordinance authorizing arrest for anyone threatening the president with a placard or a vocal disturbance. The purpose of this action was to prevent more "embarrassment." Nobody used the word "assassination," nor, I believe, did any of us ever think specifically of that awful possibility.

Bloom and his staff worked hard to gather statements from Dallas' leaders, admonishing the citizens to avoid further embarrassment to the city by either word or action. The two Dallas newspapers shared the task of publicizing the statements, adding their own editorial advice.

For my part, later in the week, I put up a stiff argument to Chief Curry's "Black Maria" plan. A Black Maria is a police department van used to haul prisoners between jails. Curry wanted to park one at every corner along the route where the motorcade would change direction. I was very concerned that the TV cameras would pick up the black vans, making it look as if Kennedy were so unpopular in Dallas he had to be guarded literally at every turn. It smelled to me of "police state," and I didn't want the president charged by some radical of either the right or left with invoking same. The Black Marias were not on the street that Friday.

On Tuesday, there was a meeting with the governor for a final review of his plans for Friday, Nov. 22. Sam Bloom came to report on his activities together with a representative from the Citizens' Council. Lawson was late getting there and missed the fireworks: Connally was still trying to cancel the Dallas motorcade. He was adamant that Kennedy be taken directly to the luncheon from the airport. Clearly he did not want to encourage the Dallas voters to be overexposed to the Kennedys and their charms.

Connally was so vociferous to me that I was moved to call Moyers who was in touch with Kenneth O'Donnell at the White House. I knew that O'Donnell, who was Kennedy's appointments secretary and overseer of political activities including the Texas trip, was releasing the route that day, and that he had, in fact, ordered that we have a motorcade. Still, Connally, whom I'd known for eight years or so, was a very impressive fellow, and Bloom and the Citizens' Council wanted to please him.

"The president is not coming down," O'Donnell told Moyers, "to be hidden under a bushel basket. Otherwise, we can do it from here by television."

That settled that.

There was still the matter of publicity. Although the route had been described in detail as early as November 15 by the Dallas Times Herald's well-informed Washington correspondent, I still wanted the two Dallas papers to run maps of the route. It was the best way, I thought, to encourage a large turnout to see the Kennedys. The maps ran on Thursday afternoon in the Herald and on Friday morning in the News.

I was pleased.

BETTMANN NEWSPHOTOS

DURING THE WEEK, I SPENT A GOOD DEAL OF TIME WITH Lawson, as we checked out the thousand details that would assure a safe and successful trip.

I had come to have enormous admiration for Lawson. At 35, he had had only five years' experience in the Secret Service. But his dedication, his thoroughness and his niceness made one feel that the president was in excellent hands.

The Secret Service manual dictates that the agents be ready to put their bodies between the threat of danger and the president. It is a unique job requirement. One knew that Lawson would not hesitate.

This fall, Win told me about an earlier trip he had planned for Kennedy, this one to Niagara Falls where Lawson had family who were invited to attend the event. As the president passed the Lawson relatives, the agent escorting Kennedy paused and said, "Mr. President, this is Lawson's family."

Kennedy smiled, shook hands and said, "Well, he must be doing a good job. Nobody's shot me yet."

IT WAS RAINING FRIDAY morning, November 22. A slow drizzle. That meant the bubble-top.

I drove to the airport, parked my car and went to a revamped Quonset hut at the airport near where Air Force One would land. The local welcoming party, including Mayor Earle Cabell and his wife, Elizabeth, were waiting there. Although the luncheon committee had flown in 5,000 yellow roses from California to decorate the Trade Mart, Mrs. Cabell boasted a bouquet of Texas red roses that she planned to give Mrs. Kennedy. Everybody in the hut seemed happy.

When I moved out on the tarmac, Lawson came up to me. He had neglected to get himself a little brown lapel pin that we had had made to identify those with close access to the presidential party, a routine procedure on trips like this. "Could I have yours?" he said. Because I was going in the back door of the Trade Mart, I wouldn't really need it.

Air Force One was starting its engines at the Fort Worth airport for the 30-mile flight to Dallas. Overhead, the clouds were breaking, and suddenly the sun shone through. Hurray, I said to Forrest Sorrels, the director of the regional Secret Service office. Let's get the bubble-top off.

It was years before I knew that Lawson had already given that order.

Air Force Two with Vice President and Mrs. Johnson and their party landed. I met the Johnsons and walked them over to where the Air Force One ramp was set up. The press plane was on the ground and unloading, and I moved over to say hello to some friends who were on it. I didn't show it, I thought, but I was as nervous as the mother of the bride.

And then, there it was, Air Force One, wheels down, touching the runway. Watching that sight when the president is aboard is a wonderful experience. I get tears in my eyes still, just seeing it on television. That day, my heart almost burst with pride.

There was a big crowd at the airport, far larger than we had anticipated, and the welcomers hung over the fence, screaming with glee as the smiling Kennedys moved down the ramp. The president and Mrs. Kennedy made a beeline for the fence. Ken O'Donnell, Dave Powers, the president's close friend and political factotum, and Lawrence O'Brien, then Kennedy's assistant for congressional liaison, had been scheduled to ride with me on the so-called VIP bus in the motorcade. But, frisky as young goats, they jumped into seats in the open Secret Service car that would tail the president as closely as possible. I frowned. I didn't like script changes. Malcolm Kilduff, the assistant press secretary, got in the pool reporters' car that followed the Secret Service car behind the president.

Then the two cars carrying the Texas congressmen swung around in front of my bus before we started. There was no point in fussing. Relax and enjoy the ride.

The Johnsons got in their car, where they were finally joined by Sen. Yarborough. The president himself had ordered Yarborough to-stop-acting-like-a-spoiled-child-and-get-in-the-car-with-Lyndon, or words to that effect. Yarborough was smiling and waving before the car started. The vice president was still glum. Maybe more so.

Riding with me were, among others, the president's doctor, Rear Adm. George Burkley; Kennedy's secretary, Evelyn Lincoln; Mrs. Kennedy's secretary, Mary Gallagher, and her press secretary, Pamela Turnure; U.S. Attorney Barefoot Sanders; Jack Valenti, acting as a walking tape recorder, who had been brought along from Houston by Johnson and equipped to record whatever the vice president had to say that day; Liz Carpenter, a close friend and longtime member of the Johnson staff; and Luther Holcombe, a Methodist minister who was to deliver the luncheon benediction.

Despite what seemed to me to be rampant confusion, we actually got away from the airport on time at 11:35. Lunch was set up for 12:30 at the Trade Mart, where nearly 2,000 people were beginning to arrive to find their seats.

continued on page 52

AT THE HOSPITAL, THE MAYOR REACHED OUT TO COMFORT ME. "DON'T WORRY. HE'LL RECOVER."

LOOKING BACK in SORROW

continued from page 30

The crowds were big, the downtown streets were packed and the Texans were warm and cheering and obviously just very glad to see the Kennedys.

My bus was too far behind the presidential car to hear the shots. But I saw the car speed up and assured Mrs. Lincoln, who seemed concerned, that they were just trying to make up the five minutes we were now behind time. Unlike the press buses, our bus pulled up to the back door of the Trade Mart, where I would take the guests through the kitchen to the seats that had been saved for us.

As we got to the door, a frazzled man pushed by us on the way out saying, "The president has been shot. The president has been shot."

Then we couldn't get in. I needed the brown lapel pin I had given to Win Lawson. The Dallas policeman on the door had been told to accept no other identification. Not even Mrs. Lincoln's White House pass.

What had that man meant? Shot? The policeman knew nothing. I feared that Mrs. Lincoln would collapse. Then I spotted a pay phone on the wall and called the city desk at the Dallas News. Yes, the president was being taken to Parkland Hospital.

Later I would learn that Dr. Burkley had immediately left, found a taxi and headed for Parkland. Where the others had gone I never quite knew, but I was left with Evelyn Lincoln, Mary Gallagher, Pamela Turnure, Liz Carpenter and Jack Valenti.

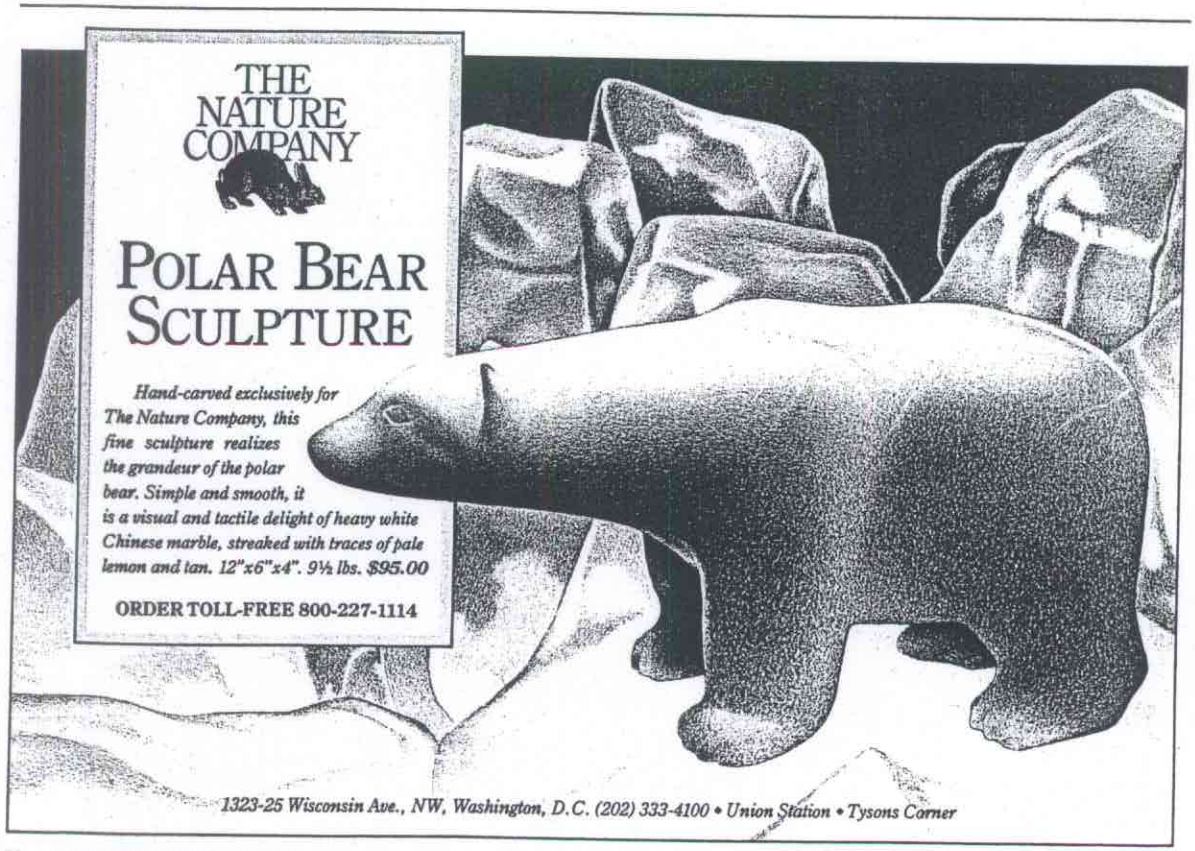
As a group we moved outside, automatically, blindly, toward the parking lot and the entrance to the highway. We had to find transportation. The next day my left arm was badly bruised. Only then did I realize that Liz had beat on me as hard as she could. "Do something. Do something," she kept saying.

Suddenly a Texas Ranger appeared, walking toward us. His name tag read "Goodfellow," I remember. He had his own car there. He would take us. The six of us. The other women sat in the back. I sat on Valenti's lap in the front, my head pressed against the windshield. Goodfellow's uniform got us through the blockades the police were setting up to manage the heavy traffic already moving toward Parkland. Nobody said anything. Not a word.

At Parkland, the blue Lincoln sat where it had stopped. The red roses were on the floor. The doors were open. Liz Carpenter and Jack Valenti disappeared into the building, gone to look for the Johnsons, I guessed. My concern was for the three women on the Kennedy staff. Mrs. Kennedy would need them.

I was not unfamiliar with Parkland, having been to a number of meetings with the director and the staff on the development of the medical complex of which it was the core. So I took the women up to the executive offices. In the halls, all was chaos. Hospital care had simply come to a stop. Doctors, nurses, patients, orderlies lined the halls. Scared. Curious. Very polite to us. Finally, I asked the women to sit down while I tried to find where the president was. Heading for the emergency area, I spotted Gen. Godfrey McHugh, the president's Air Force aide, a handsome man resplendent in his blue uniform. We returned to Mrs. Lincoln and Mrs. Kennedy's two staff women and together proceeded to the emergency suite where the occupants of the presidential and vice presidential cars and their Secret Service escorts were. Mayor Cabell was also in the suite.

Mrs. Kennedy was seated on a folding chair just outside Trauma Room 1, into which the best doctors at the hospital were crowding. Gov. Connally was in Trauma Room 2, but I have no recollec-



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tion at all where Mrs. Connally was. The Secret Service had hustled the Johnsons into a secluded area where the vice president could be heavily guarded. McHugh and I got three chairs and put them behind Mrs. Kennedy for Evelyn Lincoln, Mary Gallagher and Pamela Turnure. Mrs. Kennedy's pink suit was splashed with dried blood. She sat unmoving. She did not acknowledge the presence of the three women. I noticed that she seemed to be wearing printed gloves. How strange, it seemed to me, in one with such taste in clothes. And then I realized that they were white gloves, "printed" with a substance that even then I knew was the blood and gore from a dreadful wound. For the first time, I understood what the phrase "and then her heart froze" meant.

Dave Powers stood by Mrs. Kennedy, often with his hand resting gently on her shoulder.

Nobody said much. O'Donnell and O'Brien were simply out of it. They could not talk.

Loud, anguished sobs came from Yarborough. He was totally consumed with grief, and with something like fear. Nobody knew then just how badly the president had been hurt. But Yarborough seemed to feel there had been a transition. He and I were not very friendly, but I went over to him and pulled his head down on my shoulder, as one would a terrified child. I meant to ease his pain. "Tell him I'll do anything," he kept saying. "Tell him I'll do anything." I finally realized he meant Johnson. Yarborough's longtime political enemy had become—was it possible?—his president. I tried to assure him that John Kennedy was still living.

Win Lawson was in a supervisory room at a desk that overlooked the waiting area where we sat. He was a stricken man going about the work, whatever it was, that had to be done. He beckoned to me and asked if I would please find his luggage. He hated to bother me, but the bags had been checked to Washington on a 4 p.m. commercial flight. Win knew he would not be on that flight. Part of his job was to stay in Dallas and try to find the person who had committed this awful crime.

I handled it by phone. Everybody wanted to help. To do something. To do anything.

While I stood in the emergency area, waiting, I saw Dr. Kemp Clark come out of Trauma 1. A tall man, Clark was the chief neurologist at Parkland. I watched him walk over to Mrs. Kennedy, bend

down and say a few words. Nothing clicked in my head. Clark walked over to me. "How badly was he hurt?" I asked. "It was lethal," Clark said. Ordinarily, I know the meaning of the word lethal. Not then. "What does that mean?" I asked Clark. "It means the president is dead."

In my hands I was holding a pair of beige, cloth gloves, and I twisted them so hard I split the seams in both. Then I turned away and started to cry. Earle Cabell reached out to comfort me. "Don't cry," he said. "He'll recover." Which is how the mayor heard that the city and the country had lost their president. "It's a tragic day," Cabell said. "A tragic day—for Dallas and for the world."

Afterward, when the coffin had left the hospital, I helped the Texas congressional delegation get itself organized into cars and on the way to Washington on Air Force Two. Then I got back into my own car and found the VIP bus. As originally instructed, the driver had gone to the airport from the Trade Mart, running almost empty. There were still various briefcases, sweaters, coats, books belonging to the Washington VIPs. "Could you get these back to Washington?" I asked the American Airlines airport manager. Not only would he transport them, he said, but he would see that they were hand-delivered to each owner. Finally, I drove to the home of some close friends in Dallas and went into a state of shock from which I did not fully emerge for several days. Two months later, I gave up my apartment in Dallas and moved back to Washington.

EPILOGUE

Win Lawson and I met again in Washington this fall, 25 years later. Lawson is deeply loyal to the Secret Service, which, he feels, treated him with unspoken but great sensitivity. "They never transferred me out of Washington," he says. "And they knew [in 1963] how to treat me. Right after I got home, they kept me working. Not a day off. Even on the day of the funeral, I was detailed to the Memorial Bridge." Lawson stood there on duty with tears streaming down his face as the president's cortege passed.

He retired from the Secret Service in 1982 (to help care for a father with Alzheimer's disease). And although he has not forgotten Dallas, he doesn't like to talk about it. ■

Elizabeth Forsling Harris, formerly a TV executive and publisher, is now at work on a biography of Gloria Steinem.

COMING UP

Sunday, November 27:

A DIFFERENT DEAVER

What is it like to be the daughter of Michael Deaver—image maker, alcoholic and highest-ranking Reagan administration official to be convicted of a crime?

At 10, Amanda Deaver was uprooted from her California home, moved to Washington and rarely saw her father for the next several years. At 16, she took on the task of helping him get sober. Then came the ordeal of his indictment, conviction and sentencing for perjury.

In next week's cover story, the 18-year-old Brown University freshman, talks candidly and openly about her father, herself and her family's transformation.

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