

A15WX

(800) PMS BUDGET

THE ASSASSINATION RECALLED

BY HUGH MULLIGAN

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WASHINGTON, NOV. 24 (AP)-THE MOMENT OF ASSASSINATION IN DALLAS, 12:30 P.M. BY THE ELECTRIC CLOCK ON THE SCHOOL DEPOSITORY, CAME UPON THE PRINCIPALS IN THE MOTORCADE WITH A TERRIBLE SUDDENNESS THAT IS FORGED FOREVER IN THEIR MEMORIES.

MRS. JOHN F. KENNEDY WOULD NEVER FORGET THAT IT WAS HOT, "TERRIBLY HOT, JUST BLINDING US ALL," AND THAT AMID THE DIN THERE WAS A SOUND, LIKE MOTORCYCLES BACKFIRING.

"THERE IS ALWAYS NOISE IN A MOTORCADE, AND THERE ARE ALWAYS MOTORCYCLES BESIDE US, A LOT OF THEM BACKFIRING. SO I WAS LOOKING TO THE LEFT. I GUESS THERE WAS A NOISE, BUT IT DIDN'T SEEM LIKE ANY DIFFERENT NOISE REALLY BECAUSE THERE IS SO MUCH NOISE, MOTORCYCLES AND THINGS."

FOR A LONG TIME AFTERWARD, SHE WOULD TORTURE HERSELF WITH THE THOUGHT THAT IF SHE HAD BEEN LOOKING THE OTHER WAY WHEN SHE FIRST HEARD THAT NOISE THINGS MIGHT SOMEHOW HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT.

"I USED TO THINK IF ONLY I HAD BEEN LOOKING TO THE RIGHT I WOULD HAVE SEEN THE FIRST SHOT HIT HIM, THEN I COULD HAVE PULLED HIM DOWN, AND THEN THE SECOND SHOT WOULD NOT HAVE HIT HIM."

MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON, RIDING TWO CARS BEHIND, ALSO HEARD THE NOISE. SHE CONNECTED IT WITH THE TUMULTUOUS WELCOME BEING ACCORDED THE PRESIDENT. "THERE HAD BEEN SUCH A GALA AIR THAT I THOUGHT IT MUST BE FIRECRACKERS OR SOME SORT OF CELEBRATION."

A16WX

HER HUSBAND, SEATED NEXT TO HER, HEARD THE NOISE, TOO, AND LIKENED IT TO A "SHARP REPORT OR EXPLOSION."

MRS. JOHN B. CONNALLY, WIFE OF THE TEXAS GOVERNOR, HAD JUST FINISHED SAYING, "MR. PRESIDENT, YOU CAN'T SAY DALLAS DOESN'T LOVE YOU," WHEN SHE HEARD A NOISE. SHE DIDN'T KNOW QUITE WHAT TO MAKE OF IT, EXCEPT THAT IT WAS "FRIGHTENING" AND CAME "FROM THE RIGHT."

BUT GOV. CONNALLY, AN EXPERIENCED DEER HUNTER, KNEW AT ONCE WHAT THAT FRIGHTENING NOISE WAS.

"AT THE TIME I HEARD IT, I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS A FIRECRACKER OR A BLOWOUT OR ANYTHING ELSE. I THOUGHT IT WAS A RIFLESHOT." AND THE THOUGHT IMMEDIATELY CROSSED HIS MIND THAT "THIS IS AN ASSASSINA-

TION ATTEMPT."

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT IN THAT FATEFUL JOURNEY DOWN MAIN STREET AND AROUND THE CORNER INTO ELM IS RETOLD IN GREATER DETAIL THAN EVER IN THE COMPLETE 26 VOLUMES OF WARREN COMMISSION TESTIMONY RELEASED YESTERDAY BY THE WHITE HOUSE.

THE PRINCIPALS TELL THE STORY IN THEIR OWN WORDS, WORDS STILL WEIGHTED BY THE BURDEN OF LINGERING MELANCHOLY THAT TIME CAN LIGHTEN BUT NEVER LIFT.

MORE WX157PES

"SUDDENLY GOV. CONNALLY WAS YELLING, 'OH, NO, NO, NO,' MRS. KENNEDY TOLD COMMISSION INVESTIGATORS WHEN THEY CALLED AT HER GEORGETOWN HOME LAST SUMMER. "AND MY HUSBAND NEVER MADE ANY SOUND. SO I TURNED TO THE RIGHT. AND ALL I REMEMBER IS SEEING MY HUSBAND, HE HAD THIS SORT OF QUIZZICAL LOOK ON HIS FACE, AND HIS HAND WAS UP, IT MUST HAVE BEEN HIS LEFT HAND. AND JUST AS I TURNED AND LOOKED AT HIM, I COULD SEE A PIECE OF HIS SKULL AND I REMEMBER IT WAS FLESH COLORED. I REMEMBER THINKING HE JUST LOOKED AS IF HE HAD A SLIGHT HEADACHE. AND I JUST REMEMBER SEEING THAT. NO BLOOD OR ANYTHING.

"AND THEN HE SORT OF DID THIS (INDICATING), PUT HIS HAND TO HIS FOREHEAD AND FELL INTO MY LAP. AND THEN I JUST REMEMBER FALLING ON HIM AND SAYING, 'OH, NO, NO, NO,' I MEAN, 'OH, MY GOD, THEY HAVE SHOT MY HUSBAND,' AND 'I LOVE YOU JACK,' I REMEMBER I WAS SHOUTING. AND JUST BEING DOWN IN THE CAR WITH HIS HEAD ON MY LAP. AND IT JUST SEEMED AN ETERNITY."

AT THE CRACK OF THE FIRST SHOT, WHICH HE WAS CERTAIN CAME FROM THE RIGHT, CONNALLY TURNED INSTINCTIVELY IN THAT DIRECTION. FAILING TO SEE ANYTHING UNUSUAL AND UNABLE TO CATCH THE PRESIDENT IN THE CORNER OF HIS EYE, HE TURNED TO LOOK BACK OVER HIS LEFT SHOULDER.

"BUT I NEVER GOT THAT FAR IN MY TURN. . . THEN I FELT LIKE SOMEONE HAD HIT ME IN THE BACK."

(MORE)

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A25WX

WASHINGTON--SECOND ADD THE ASSASSINATION RECALLED (BY MULLIGAN) (A21WX) X X X IN THE BACK."

CONNALLY KNEW HE HAD BEEN SHOT "WHEN I JUST LOOKED DOWN AND I WAS COVERED WITH BLOOD, AND THE THOUGHT IMMEDIATELY PASSED THROUGH MY MIND THAT THERE WERE EITHER TWO OR THREE PEOPLE INVOLVED OR MORE IN THIS OR SOMEONE WAS SHOOTING WITH AN AUTOMATIC RIFLE."

MRS. CONNALLY, SEATED IN THE JUMP SEAT NEXT TO HIM, LOOKED OVER HER SHOULDER AT THE FIRST SHOT AND "SAW THE PRESIDENT AS HE HAD BOTH HANDS AT HIS NECK. HE MADE NO UTTERANCE. NO CRY. I SAW NO BLOOD. NO ANYTHING. IT WAS JUST SORT OF NOTHING, THE EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE, AND HE JUST SORT OF SLUMPED DOWN."

SHE RECALLED HER HUSBAND SAYING, "OH, NO, NO, NO," SHE TESTIFIED, "THEN THERE WAS A SECOND SHOT, AND IT HIT JOHN AND AS HE RECOILED TO THE RIGHT, JUST CRUMPLED LIKE A WOUNDED ANIMAL TO HIS RIGHT, HE SAID, 'MY GOD, THEY ARE GOING TO KILL US ALL.'"

STILL UNCONSCIOUS, THE GOVERNOR RECLINED IN HIS WIFE'S LAP, HIS EYES OPEN.

"AND THEN OF COURSE THE THIRD SHOT SOUNDED, AND I HEARD THE SHOT VERY CLEARLY. I HEARD IT HIT HIM. I HEARD THE SHOT HIT SOMETHING, AND I ASSUMED AGAIN--IT NEVER ENTERED MY MIND THAT IT HIT ANYBODY BUT THE PRESIDENT. I HEARD IT HIT. IT WAS A VERY LOUD NOISE, JUST THAT AUDIBLE, VERY CLEAR."

THEN THE HORROR OF IT ALL, THE GRISLY GROTESQUENESS OF A YOUNG, VIBRANT LIFE BEING SHATTERED, FLOODED THE LIMOUSINE.

WE226AESG

X X X THE LIMOUSINE.

"IMMEDIATELY," GOV. CONNALLY TESTIFIED IN UNSPARING DETAIL, "I COULD SEE ON MY CLOTHES, MY CLOTHING, I COULD SEE ON THE INTERIOR OF THE CAR, WHICH AS I RECALL WAS A VERY PALE BLUE, BRAIN TISSUE, WHICH I IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED, AND I RECALL VERY WELL ON MY TROUSERS THERE WAS ONE CHUNK OF BRAIN TISSUE AS BIG AS ALMOST MY THUMB, THUMBNAIL."

BEFORE HE LOST CONSCIOUSNESS, THE GOVERNOR HEARD MRS. KENNEDY SAY "THEY HAVE KILLED MY HUSBAND" AND, A LITTLE LATER, "I HAVE GOT HIS BRAINS IN MY HAND."

MRS. CONNALLY ALSO HEARD AND FELT THAT THIRD SHOT. "IT FELT LIKE SPENT BUCKSHOT FALLING ALL OVER US, AND THEN, OF COURSE, I TOO COULD SEE THAT IT WAS THE MATTER, BRAIN TISSUE, OR WHATEVER, JUST HUMAN MATTER ALL OVER THE CAR AND BOTH OF US."

MRS. KENNEDY HAD NO RECOLLECTION AFTERWARD OF CRAWLING OUT ON THE TRUNK OF THE LIMOUSINE. "THERE WERE PICTURES LATER OF ME CLIMBING OUT THE BACK BUT I DON'T REMEMBER THAT AT ALL."

SECRET SERVICE AGENT CLINTON HILL, WHO LEAPED ABOARD THE PRESIDENTIAL CAR TO KEEP MRS. KENNEDY FROM FALLING OFF, SAID HE THOUGHT SHE WAS REACHING FOR SOMETHING COMING OFF THE REAR TAIL OF THE CAR, WHEN SHE NOTICED THAT I WAS TRYING TO CLIMB ON THE CAR. SHE TURNED TOWARD ME AND I GRABBED HER AND PUT HZ BACK IN THE BACK SEAT,

AND I GRABBED HERNAND PUOIHHER YSXZQAZ

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AND I GRABBED HER AND PUT HER BACK IN THE BACK SEAT, CRAWLED UP ON TOP OF THE BACK SEAT AND LAY THERE."

HILL WAS UNABLE TO TELL THE COMMISSION WHAT MRS. KENNEDY MAY HAVE BEEN REACHING FOR. "I DO KNOW," HE TESTIFIED, "THAT THE NEXT DAY WE FOUND THE PORTION OF THE PRESIDENT'S HEAD. . . IT WAS FOUND IN THE STREET. IT WAS TURNED IN, I BELIEVE, BY A MEDICAL STUDENT."

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B46

TWO CARS BACK, SECRET SERVICE AGENT RUFUS YOUNGBLOOD HAD VAULTED OVER THE SEAT ON TOP OF VICE PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON, SHOUTING "GET DOWN."

"THE CAR ACCELERATED TERRIFICALLY FAST--FASTER AND FASTER," MRS. JOHNSON REMEMBERED. "THEN SUDDENLY I PUT ON THE BRAKES SO HARD THAT I WONDERED IF THEY WERE GOING TO MAKE IT AS WE WHEELED LEFT AND WENT AROUND THE CORNER. WE PULLED UP TO A BUILDING. I LOOKED UP AND SAW IT SAID 'HOSPITAL.' ONLY THEN DID I BELIEVE THAT THIS MIGHT BE WHAT IT WAS. (SEN. RALPH) YARBOROUGH KEPT ON SAYING IN AN EXCITED VOICE, "HAVE THEY SHOT THE PRESIDENT?" I SAID SOMETHING LIKE, "NO, IT CAN'T BE."

FOLLOWING THE CORDON OF AGENTS THAT RAPIDLY SURROUNDED HIM, JOHNSON HURRIED INTO THE BUILDING WITHOUT SEEING THE PRESIDENTIAL CAR PARKED AT THE DOOR. BUT MRS. JOHNSON "CAST ONE LAST LOOK OVER MY SHOULDER AND SAW, IN THE PRESIDENT'S CAR, A BUNDLE OF PINK, JUST LIKE A DRIFT OF BLOSSOMS, LYING ON THE BACK SEAT. I THINK IT WAS MRS. KENNEDY LYING OVER THE PRESIDENT'S BODY."

MRS. CONNALLY TOLD THE COMMISSION HOW THE FRENZIED ACTIVITY AROUND THE PRESIDENT'S LIMOUSINE INCREASED HER WIFELY CONCERN FOR THE

FATE OF HER HUSBAND:

"WE ARRIVED AT THE HOSPITAL AND SAT THERE WHAT SEEMED TO ME LIKE AN INTERMINABLE TIME, AND FROM WHAT I KNOW WAS JUST A FEW MINUTES, BUT THE THOUGHTS THAT WENT THROUGH MY MIND WERE HOW LONG MUST I SIT HERE WITH THIS DYING MAN IN MY ARMS WHILE EVERYBODY IS SWARMING OVER THE PRESIDENT WHOM I FELT VERY SURE WAS DEAD, AND JUST WHEN I THOUGHT I COULD SIT AND WAIT NO LONGER, JOHN JUST SORT OF HEAVED HIMSELF UP. HE DID NOT RISE UP IN THE CAR, HE JUST SORT OF HEAVED HIMSELF UP, AND THEN COLLAPSED DOWN INTO THE SEAT."

B47

AND WHILE THE SURGEONS BATTLED VALIANTLY BUT IN VAIN TO CONSERVE THE SPARK OF LIFE GLOWING SO FAINTLY IN THE PRESIDENT, THE SAME NAGGING THOUGHTS POSSESSED THE GOVERNOR'S WIFE.

"THERE WAS MUCH COMMOTION AND CONFUSION. THERE WERE LOTS OF WHAT I ASSUMED WERE SECRET SERVICE MEN RUSHING IN WITH MACHINEGUNS, I GUESS, OR TOMMY GUNS. I AM NOT REAL SURE, THEY WERE BIG ARMS OF SOME SORT. . . THERE WAS NO ONE WITH ME AND, OF COURSE, MY THOUGHTS THEN WERE LIKE ANY OTHER WOMAN, I WONDERED IF ALL THE DOCTORS WERE IN THE ROOM ON THE LEFT, AND THEY WERE NOT TAKING TOO GOOD CARE OF MY HUSBAND ON THE RIGHT.

"I SHOULDN'T HAVE WORRIED ABOUT THAT, SHOULD I? I KNEW NO ONE IN THE HOSPITAL AND I WAS ALONE. TWICE I GOT UP AND OPENED THE DOOR INTO THE EMERGENCY ROOM, AND I COULD HEAR JOHN AND SEE HIM MOVING AND I KNEW THEN HE WAS STILL ALIVE."

WHILE MRS. CONNALLY SUFFERED HER LONELY ORDEAL AT THE DOOR OF TRAUMA ROOM TWO, VICE PRESIDENT AND MRS. JOHNSON WAITED IN A ROOM ACROSS THE HALL WITH THE BLINDS DRAWN, WATCHING THE PEOPLE COME AND GO, LISTENING TO THE WHISPERED TALK OF HOW WIDESPREAD THE PLOT MIGHT BE, ALL THE TIME AWAITING NEWS OF THE PRESIDENT.

"EVERY FACE THAT CAME IN, YOU SEARCHED FOR THE ANSWERS YOU MUST KNOW," MRS. JOHNSON TOLD HER TAPE RECORDER IN A SESSION OF REMEMBRANCE THAT SHE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE COMMISSION. "I THINK THE FACE THAT I KEPT SEEING IT ON WAS THE FACE OF KENNY O'DONNELL, WHO LOVED HIM SO MUCH."

JOHNSON WANTED TO GO COMFORT MRS. KENNEDY, BUT AGENT YOUNGBLOOD WOULD ONLY ALLOW MRS. JOHNSON TO LEAVE THE ROOM.

"SUDDENLY," RECALLED MRS. JOHNSON, "I FOUND MYSELF FACE TO FACE WITH JACKIE IN A SMALL ROOM. I THINK IT WAS RIGHT OUTSIDE THE

OPERATING ROOM. YOU ALWAYS THINK OF HER--OR SOMEONE LIKE HER--AS BEING INSULATED, PROTECTED. SHE WAS QUITE ALONE. I DON'T THINK I EVER SAW ANYONE SO MUCH ALONE IN MY LIFE. I WENT UP TO HER, PUT MY ARMS AROUND HER, AND SAID SOMETHING TO HER. I'M SURE IT WAS SOMETHING LIKE, 'GOD, HELP US ALL,' BECAUSE MY FEELINGS FOR HER WERE TOO TUMULTUOUS TO PUT INTO WORDS."

B48

AND THEN O'DONNELL WAS TELLING JOHNSON, "HE'S GONE," AND ACTING PRESS SECRETARY MALCOLM KILDUFF WAS ADDRESSING JOHNSON WITH THE WORDS "MR. PRESIDENT."

"I FOUND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THIS HAD HAPPENED," JOHNSON RECALLED THE MOMENT. "THE WHOLE THING SEEMED UNREAL--UNBELIEVABLE. A FEW HOURS EARLIER, I HAD BREAKFAST WITH JOHN KENNEDY. HE WAS ALIVE, STRONG VIGOROUS. I COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT NOW HE WAS DEAD. I WAS SHOCKED AND SICKENED."

HURRYING TO LOVE FIELD IN AN UNMARKED POLICE CAR, MRS. JOHNSON FELT THE IMPACT OF HISTORY IN A FLEETING GLANCE OUT THE WINDOW. "I LOOKED UP AT A BUILDING AND THERE ALREADY WAS A FLAG AT HALF MAST. I THINK THAT IS WHEN THE ENORMITY OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED FIRST STRUCK ME."

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