

1963

Hootenannies, digit dialing, Mme. Nhu, Krebiozen, 007, the 5-cent stamp, Katanga, 'Fanny Hill,' 'Tom Jones' and Bobby Baker . . .

# Then

By William Manchester



Bill Russell, No. 6, Celtics' star.



Americans in Vietnam: 14,000 "advisers."



The Beatles: preparing to invade America.

Richard M. Nixon, then an attorney representing Pepsi-Cola, left Dallas, Tex., aboard American Airlines New York-bound Flight 82 at 9:05 A.M. on Nov. 22, 1963, thus missing President Kennedy's arrival there aboard Air Force One by about two-and-a-half hours. Nixon had spent the past two days at a Pepsi-Cola Bottlers Association meeting. He was just beginning to learn the ropes as a corporation lawyer. He had filed a petition for admission to the New York State bar only the previous Friday, and his name was not yet on his office door, because he would not become a full partner in the law firm of Mudge, Stern, Baldwin & Todd until Jan. 1, 1964.

Nixon's name was expected to remain there a long time. Earlier in the week during a televised interview Dwight Eisenhower had spoken of Nixon's chances in the next Presidential election, but his remark is chiefly memorable for its syntax. It was vintage Eisenhower: "Now, if there should be one of those deadlocks, I would think he would be one of the likely persons to be examined and approached, because he is, after all, a very knowledgeable and a very courageous type of fellow." Hardly anyone agreed with Ike. Certainly the American Broadcasting Company didn't. Not only had the network called a broadcast about him "The Political Obituary of Richard M. Nixon"; but the program, filmed the year before, had also featured an interview with, of all people, Alger Hiss. Two companies tried to cancel their advertising contracts with A.B.C. because of it, but F.C.C. Chairman Newton N. ("Wasteland") Minow turned them down with the cold observation that broadcasting must be free from censorship by "those few, fearful advertisers who seek to influence the professional judgment of broadcast newsmen." President Kennedy said he agreed. Those were halcyon days for effete snobs.

Aboard Flight 82 a stewardess routinely offered her distinguished passenger a selection of current periodicals, and if one could return in time from the mid-nineteen-seventies to that fateful Friday, one of the differences which would be noted in the American scene would be the wider choice of magazines, *Look*, *Life*, and *The Saturday Evening Post* then being alive, well, and on the stands. Nixon may well have picked *Time*, for he knew he would be in it. The

William Manchester, whose books include "The Death of a President" and "The Arms of Krupp," is working on a history of 20th-century America.

first news page carried an informal picture of him — he was 50 and looked a young 40 then — and in an accompanying interview he was quoted on the political consequences of the recent Saigon coup, in which President Ngo Dinh Diem had been murdered: "If this Viet war goes sour, Vietnam could be a hot issue next year. If all goes well, it won't be. It's strange to me, when we are fawning over Tito, catering to Kadar, accommodating Khrushchev, we don't even have the decency to express our sympathy to a family which was a real foe of Communism."

Barry Goldwater, who rarely fawned over Communists, was the front-runner for the 1964 Republican Presidential nomination, Nelson Rockefeller having diminished his chances by marrying Happy Murphy the previous May. In that third week of November, Goldwater had just scored a fresh triumph with one of his natural constituencies by telling a *Better Business Bureau* banquet in Chicago that the New Frontier had produced "1,026 days of wasted spending, wishful thinking, unwarranted intervention, wishful theories and waning confidence."

Each time the Arizona Senator tore into Kennedy, reporters asked the President to reply. "Not yet," he would say, grinning; "not yet," but plainly he relished the prospect of running against him. The week before, in the Cabinet Room, he had convened his first strategy meeting for next year's campaign. All the key polls of the Kennedy Presidency had been there: Bob Kennedy, Larry O'Brien, Ken O'Donnell, Ted Sorensen, John Bailey, Steve Smith and Dick Scammon. The President said he expected to bury Goldwater in a historic landslide and go on, as Theodore Roosevelt did, to a great second term.

Among his valuable campaigners this time would be the First Lady, who had returned on Oct. 17 from a Mediterranean cruise aboard Aristotle Onassis's yacht *Christina* with her sister, Lee Radziwill. The Secret Service hoped Mrs. Kennedy could persuade her husband to be more careful in crowds. Eschewing Secret Service advice the week before the Texas trip, Kennedy had ordered his driver to leave a motorcycle escort and detour through crowded downtown Manhattan. While the Presidential limousine was halted at a traffic light, a woman amateur photographer had darted up and fired a flashbulb at Kennedy's side of the car. A New York police official had told reporters, "She might well have been an assassin."

It was a year of technological innovations. Kodak introduced the Instamatic Camera and Polaroid brought out its color packs. Polyethylene appeared. Detroit's fall models

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# Then

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featured sleekly sloping rear windows — "fastbacks," they were called; the one on the Sting Ray was particularly dramatic. On July 1, 1963, the Post Office, while announcing an increase in first-class postage from four cents to five, sprang the Zip Code system on a stunned and resentful public. The triumph of the digits was about to move one step closer with the conversion of the White House telephone number from National 8-1414 to 456-1414. On the Bell System's master map the hatched areas indicating switchovers to direct-distance dialing were spreading like a vast cancer; DDD, which had been introduced in 1954, when 5.4 per cent of the country's telephones were equipped for it, reached 44.2 per cent of Bell subscribers in 1963. Students at liberal arts colleges displayed decals reading, "I Am a Human Being—Do Not

Fold, Spindle, or Mutilate."

The sale of Barbie dolls reached its initial peak in 1963, and Barbie, who had acquired a boy friend, Ken, two years earlier, was now joined by her "best friend," Midge. (Barbie's "black is beautiful" friend, Christie, would not appear in the Mattel sales line until 1968. In 1963 black beauty, like black power, was waiting to be discovered.) The question of just how life-like female dolls should be was sparking lively debates among toymakers. A considerable number of parents objected to Barbie's firm little breasts. The public attitude in such matters was still comparatively conservative. In the matter of premarital intercourse it still held that "Nice girls don't," although Gaele Greene, researching "Sex and the College Girl" in 1963, was finding that more and more nice girls did. (A memorable passage in Miss

Greene's book, starting at the time, described a sorority girl pretending to climb a wall in mock agony while crying out in frustration, "You don't know how long it's been since I got screwed.")

None of collegiate America's mothers had any idea how casually some of their daughters were accustomed to being bedded. Parents would later rise up in righteous indignation to protest coed dorms, only to reel back when confronted by the new facts of campus life. But in 1963 that belonged to the future. Playboy was then averaging 50 applications a week from young women whose aspiration was to appear on its gatefold in the altogether and who, in the judgment of the editors, were qualified to do so, yet even Playboy had to trim its sails somewhat to public opinion; for example, it did not yet dare show its playmates' pubic hair. (It did, however, create an uproar in 1963 with a topless photograph of a model who was an almost perfect double for the nation's First Lady.) Other editors were making horseback guesses about what

the public would tolerate, feeling their way and sometimes getting lost. In reviewing a film saucily called "An Affair of the Skin" that fall, Time noted that it "serves up a mannered little pastiche of urban infidelities." Time's comment was that "This brand of grown-up, contemporary sex probably won't shock an audience of contemporary American grown-ups," which was not the same thing as being sure. Hard-core pornography was neither chic nor legal: in November, 1963, a three-judge Manhattan court ruled that "Fanny Hill" was obscene and therefore forbidden reading matter. "While it is true that the book is well-written, such fact does not condone its indecency," the court found; "Firth, even if wrapped in the finest packaging, is still filthy." It is startling to reflect that Linda Lovelace, who would rocket to fame 10 years later as the superstar of "Deep Throat," was then a 12-year-old girl sucking lollypops in Bryan, Tex.

**A**MONG the names were Gloria Steinem, Kate

Millett and Germaine Greer. Betty Friedan's "The Feminine Mystique" had just been published, but Women's Lib was, so to speak, still in the uterus. "Nobody," reported that Nov. 22 issue of Time, "is more noisily dissatisfied these days than that symbol of stability—the 40-ish housewife with teen-age children and a reasonably successful husband," but by the audiometers of the early nineteen-seventies the noise was almost inaudible. The Seven College Conference, which had set up vocational workshops for college women "who are now ready for activity outside the home," had found 50 of them. None regarded males as porcine. The vocations were largely limited to education, library science, social work and—this was regarded as a breakthrough—public relations. Anne Cronin, the director of the conference, flatted questions about what men might think with the defensiveness bluestockings had shown since the fall of the Chafin sisters. "In only one or two cases," she told a newspaperman, "have husbands gotten stuffy about their wives' going back into careers. For the most

# Seovil.



## Dr. Kildare



Richard Chamberlain comforts Polly Bergen in November, 1963.

part, they're serious and understanding. We're not breaking up any homes that wouldn't break up anyway."

The fashions of the gentle sex were neither bold nor forward. There were no pants suits, not even for toiling airline stewardesses. Styles were set by Jacqueline Kennedy—the pillbox hat, the shoes with very pointed toes and very slender heels, the hair length just below the ears and softly curled or bouffant. Skirts were a little below the knee—anyone wearing a miniskirt would have been regarded, probably correctly, as a tart—and the waistless sheath was popular. It was all very feminine. Male supremacy was riding high. The author of a magazine profile of Dorothy Kilgallen, describing her race around the world as a journalistic stunt, was allowed to say: "Just like a woman, Dorothy came in late." In the summer of 1963 Ian Fleming's "The Spy Who Loved Me" appeared in paperback with this choice passage: "All women love semi-rape. They love to be taken. It was his sweet brutality against my bruised body that had made his act of love so piercingly wonderful. That

and the coinciding of nerves completely relaxed after the removal of tension and danger, the warmth of gratitude, and a woman's natural feelings for her hero. I had no regrets and no shame . . . all my life I would be grateful to him, for everything. And I would remember him forever as my image of a man."

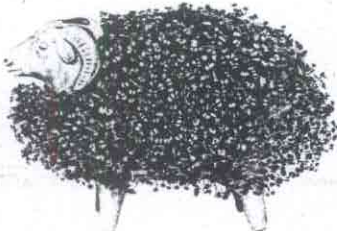
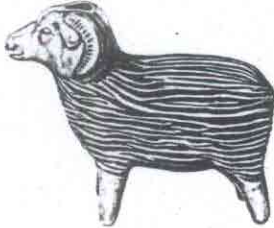
**F**OUR years had passed since President Clark Kerr of the University of California, lecturing on what he called the "multiversity," had said of students of the nineteen-sixties, "The employers are going to love this generation. . . . They are going to be easy to handle." The suspicion was growing that Kerr's prescience was less than breathtaking, though the dimensions of his error were still obscure. The New York Times Magazine carried a report on the campus mood that third week of November, 1963. In it, undergraduate editors generally found their fellow students to be detached, determined to succeed and concerned less with issues than with security and their personal lives. In their

hours of relaxation, Tarzan movies were the current thing. The University of Chicago was trying to revive football. Two Cornell fraternity teams had just played a 30-hour touch football game; the final score was 664-538. L.S.U. coeds had staged a "drawers raid" on a men's fraternity. Berkeley students, ever in the sexual vanguard, had asked the dispensary there to issue contraceptives. They weren't militant about it, however. The demand was negotiable and was in fact ignored.

Beards were just beginning to appear, though the view under the elms was nowhere as hairy as it would later be. Campus interest in men's hair styles was to a large extent limited to that of President Kennedy; President Edward D. Eddy Jr. of Chatham College said, "The college student couldn't help feeling some identification with a Commander in Chief who had to have a special haircut to look the part." In a poll, United States youth voted the Peace Corps the "most admired institution in America." (Richard Nixon said that Kennedy "proposed to send as America's repre-



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sentatives to other nations young men whom he calls volunteers" but who were really "trying to escape the draft.") There was even a certain intellectual distinction in acclaiming a President who was also a Pulitzer Prize winner, and whose virtues had been celebrated by Allen Tate, W. H. Auden, John Hersey, Robert Lowell, Jacques Maritain, Robert Frost, Carl Sandberg and John Steinbeck. "What a joy," said Steinbeck, "that literacy is no longer prima facie evidence of treason."

"Camelot" had ended its Broadway run in January, 1963. "Tom Jones" was awarded the Academy Award as the best picture of the year. Sidney Poitier was voted the best actor for his performance in "Lilies of the Field"; Patricia Neal for hers in "Hud." Films drawing big audiences in November, 1963 were "Mary, Mary" and "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World." Popular television shows were "Dr. Kildare," "Andy Griffith," "My Three Sons," "Perry Mason," "Hazel," "Lucy," "The Beverly Hillbillies" and "Twilight Zone." N.B.C.'s Monday movie scheduled for Nov. 25 — it would not be shown — was "Singing in the Rain."

That year was the high point of the Ajax White Knight and White Tornado commercials ("Cleans like a white tornado!"), according to Harry McMahan of Advertising Age. Piel's Beer was presenting "The Return of Bert and Harry." Maxwell House Instant Coffee offered "A Cup and a Half." The Chevrolet commercial had a car riding on the water of a Venice canal. Popular songs were "Go Away Little Girl," "Dominique," "If I Had a Hammer," "Blue Velvet" ("Bluer than velvet were her eyes") and two Peter, Paul and Mary hits: "Puff the Magic Dragon" ("A dragon lives forever, but not so little boys") and "Blowing in the Wind."

Best-selling fiction included Mary McCarthy's "The Group," Morris West's "The Shoes of the Fisherman," James Michener's "Caravans," and Helen MacInnes's "The Venetian Affair." Best-selling nonfiction titles were James Baldwin's "The Fire Next Time," Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring," from which the ecological movement may be said to date, and two books which would be affected by the events of the coming weekend, Jessica Mitford's "The American

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Way of Death" and Victor Lasky's "J.F.K.: The Man and the Myth." The first of these acquired historical significance because Robert Kennedy, who had read it, was guided by it in choosing a coffin for his brother's funeral. The Lasky book, which led the nonfiction best-seller lists, was a hatchet job and would be withdrawn from the book stores by its publisher. A work in progress was William Manchester's "The Arms of Krupp." The Krupps had been giving the author a hard time in Germany. He was reflecting that he supposed there was a literary controversy in every writer's life, and he was glad his was behind him.

In sports, Texas was ranked college football's number one. Darrell Royal's marvel that season was a shoeless field-goal kicker named Tony Crosby. The weekend before President Kennedy flew to Dallas, Crosby booted one 42 yards to beat T.C.U. Among the pros, Jimmy Brown of the Cleveland Browns was at the height of his remarkable powers. The New York Giants and the Chicago Bears were headed for a collision at the end of the National Football League season; Chicago would win the championship, 14 to 10. In the American Football League finale, the San Diego Chargers would take the Boston Patriots, 51 to 10. There was, of course, no Superbowl. In hockey the big noise was Gordie Howe of the Detroit Red Wings. Having played 1,132 games in which he had lost 12 teeth and sustained wounds requiring 300 stitches, Gordie scored his 545th goal against the Montreal Canadiens in November, 1963; it was a record. In basketball, Bob Cousy of the Boston Celtics had hung up his jock strap at the end of the 1962 season, and the Celtics were expected to be pushovers. But when Kennedy left the White House for the last time, the 1963 season was two months old and the Celtics had lost only one game—by one point. Center Bill Russell was the big (6 foot 10 inch) reason.

**A**MONG the places not in the news that year were Woodstock, Watts, East Village, Grant Park, Wounded Knee, People's Park, My Lai, Khe Sanh, Kent State, Biafra, Lincoln Park, Bangladesh, Attica, the Ho Chi Minh Trail, Chappaquiddick, Bimini, Botswana, Qatar and Watergate, though the Watergate office-and-apart-

ment complex was under construction near the State Department in Washington; President Kennedy's funeral procession would pass it. Haight-Ashbury was a drab working-class district in San Francisco. No one living in the Haight, as it would later be known, was then familiar with hippie terms like acid, freakout, superstar, mind-blowing, bumper, joints, munchies, turn on, tune in, rip off, drop out, communes, horse, crash pads, steam, zonked, love-in, be-in, share-in, flower power, trash, Panhandle Park, acid-American Dayglo art, bunch-punching, past-blasting, guerrilla theater, psychedelic Satanism and Christ vibes.

In 1963 Robert G. (Bobby) Baker, afoul of the law, resigned as secretary to the Senate majority.... Frank Sinatra Jr. told skeptical policemen that he had been kidnapped.... Nathan Leopold, who had served 33 years for the thrill killing of Bobby Franks, was freed from parole.... Gordon Cooper orbited the earth 22 times.... Elsa Maxwell was buried.... The Chogyal of Sikkim, the remote Himalayan kingdom, died in November and Hope Cooke (Sarah Lawrence '62), who had married the Crown Prince in March, became the Gyalmo of Sikkim.... pop art, op art, and hootenannies were all the rage in Manhattan.... in upper-middle-class excursions the expressions "U" and "non-U" were swiftly being beaten to death.... most middle-class men still wore felt hats.... Hondas sold for \$285 new.... half the adult population of the United States believed that World War III was just a matter of time.

The New York Times carried a dispatch from its London bureau about a "group of four male pop singers now highly popular in Great Britain and the cause of numerous teen-age riots." They were the Beatles. In November, 1963, they were on their way to the United States, preceded by recordings of their first three hits: "She Loves You," "I Want to Hold Your Hand," and "Standing There." Right-wing groups were warning patriotic young Americans to shut their ears. Presently Dean Noebel of the Christian Crusade would expose a "Commie-Beatle Pact" under the terms of which "the Communists have contrived an elaborate, calculating and scientific technique directed at rendering a generation of American youth useless through nerve-jamming, men-

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THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE/NOVEMBER 4, 1973

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tal deterioration and retardation."

A gang of Manhattan jewel robbers provided the most entertaining crime story of November 1963. Wearing Halloween masks, they seized \$3-million in valuables which was being transported in a 1951 Ford station wagon (at that time New York jewelers used old, inconspicuous cars and unarmed guards in mufti as a form of insurance against holdups). The thieves' caper worked beautifully until the gang's driver slipped behind the wheel of the station wagon and started the engine. The caper ended right there. The driver had never driven anything without an automatic transmission. The manual drive defeated him. He never got away from the curb.

The Students for a Democratic Society was slowly recruiting members after a meeting in June, 1962, when 45 idealistic youths met in an old United Auto Workers' camp at Port Huron, Mich., to discuss a 63-page manifesto written by Tom Hayden, a student at the University of Michigan. Hayden's manifesto was really quite mild. It called for "the establishment of a democracy of individual participation." There was nothing in it about smashing the windows of stores managed by pigs or blowing up buildings owned by pigs. Pigs, in fact, were unmentioned.

Mme. Ngo Dinh Nhu, the sharp-tongued sister-in-law of South Vietnam's President Ngo Dinh Diem, was visiting the United States in the autumn of 1963, denouncing President Kennedy for his insistence that American aid to Saigon be accompanied by Vietnamese reforms. Her tour was being sponsored by right-wing groups. On Nov. 1 it was rendered meaningless by the assassination of Diem and Nhu, and she left Los Angeles owing about \$1,000 at the Beverly Wilshire. Sympathy for her was tempered somewhat by her repeated references to the self-immolation of Buddhist monks as "barbecues." She liked the idea of them, she said, and she only wished that David Halberstam of The New York Times would put the torch to himself. Instead, Halberstam went on filing critical stories from Saigon.

The Vietnamese generals who had staged the coup, Halberstam said, wanted to see the American general there, Paul D. Harkins, replaced. But the Pentagon was confident that Harkins would

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fulfill his promises to beat the Vietcong. Any suspicion that the United States might be unable to find a military solution in Vietnam was dispelled by Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric in an address to the Business Council in Hot Springs, Va. The United States had such lethal power, Gilpatric said, that defiance of it would be an act of self-destruction.

Nicole Alphan, the wife of the French Ambassador, was on the cover of the Nov. 22 Time. Jimmy Hoffa was being indicted. Charles de Gaulle was vetoing Britain's entrance into the Common Market. Governor Ross Barnett was endorsing the findings of a grand jury which blamed the Federal Government for the recent disorders that had accompanied the admission of James Meredith, a black, to the state university in Oxford, Miss. Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, having fallen in love during the filming of "Cleopatra," were divesting themselves of their spouses and planning an early wedding. The "Mona Lisa" was in the United States heavily chaperoned.

**B**USINESS was booming. "The American economy has become so big," a European diplomat said, "that it is beyond the imagination to comprehend." United States editorial writers marveled at West Germany's *Wirtschaftswunder*, but a far greater economic miracle had been taking place

at home. A few figures suggest its scope. Approximately 90,000 Americans were now millionaires—there were only 27,000 in the early nineteen-fifties—and each year the figure was growing by 5,000. Since World War II, American investments abroad had leapt from \$12-billion to \$80-billion. The annual sales of a single corporation, General Motors, were \$17-billion, almost equal to a third of the *Bundesrepublik's* gross national product. The value of securities listed on the New York Stock Exchange had grown from \$46-billion to \$411-billion since the war. Wall Street's public-relations men spoke glowingly of a "people's capitalism," and with considerable justification; the stocks listed on the Big Board were held by some 20 million Americans.

Social prophets of the time regarded this as a blessing. Some, like John Kenneth Galbraith, thought that the swag should be distributed differently, but the assumption that affluence was benign was virtually unchallenged. Lenny Bruce was just an obscene comic one jump ahead of the law in 1963; Ralph Nader was an obscure lecturer in history and government at the University of Hartford. The New Left notion that the country was threatened, not by international Communism, but by technology and the sheer magnitude of American institutions—that the immensity of United States corporations and the Washington bureaucracy was mere obesity—lay



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quiet in the womb of time: The faith of liberals in big government was still strong. Since the arrival of Franklin Roosevelt at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue 30 years earlier, the presence of a Democrat in the White House had signified a willingness to tackle social problems with Federal programs. President Kennedy belonged to that tradition; liberals consequently commended him.

Business was not good for everyone, however. Across the street from the flyblown train depots of America the lights in the old, mansard-roofed city hotels were darkening. Over 4,000 of them had shut down completely since V-J Day. The travelers who bypassed them were staying instead at motels, which had been evolving from shabby prewar "tourist cabins" into lush caravansaries offering all the traditional services of hotels and a few new ones. Black-and-white television had become standard equipment in all but the grubbier motels (color TV was still a novelty), and the courts had ruled that it was a necessity for families on welfare.

**T**HERE were now 56.4 million television sets in the United States. That fact, combined with the discovery of 1960 census-takers that only 8.5 per cent of the population lacked radios, means that a communications system of unprecedented magnitude was ready to report any news flash of national importance. For a time in the early afternoon of Nov. 22 the source for all vital information would be two wire service reporters clutching commandeered telephones at Dallas's Parkland Memorial Hospital. An investigation conducted the following winter by the National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago found that by 1 P.M. Dallas time, a half-hour after the shooting, 68 per cent of all adults in the United States — over 75 million people — knew about it. Before the end of the afternoon 99.8 per cent knew.

On Sept. 2, 1963, the C.B.S. Evening News increased its nightly news show from 15 to 30 minutes and N.B.C. followed its example on Sept. 9, developments which were to have the most profound implications for the Vietnam war; to fill the extra time, networks would run nakedly realistic footage showing, among other things, American soldiers lopping off Vietcong ears and firing Vietnamese

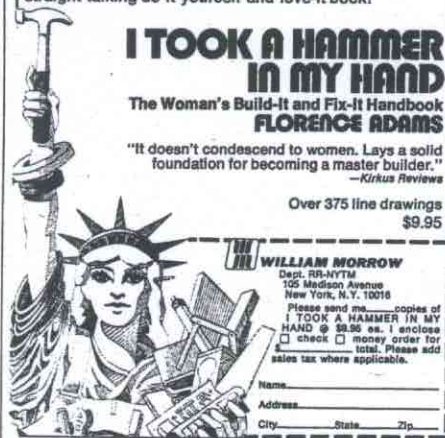
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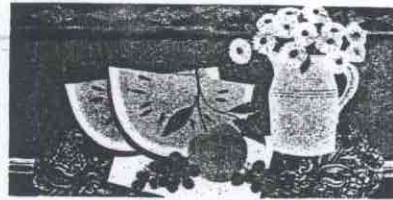


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Hampton, Malcolm X, George Lincoln Rockwell, and 45,865 young American men who would die violently in Vietnam during the next nine years.

**O**N Nov. 12, 1963, Mrs. John F. Kennedy played hostess to 2,900 underprivileged children on the White House lawn. It was her first official appearance since the death of baby Patrick the previous August, and while she supervised the distribution of 200 gallons of cocoa and 10,000 sugar cookies among her guests, a detachment of Scotland's Black Watch regiment strutted and skirled for them. Hearing the tunes and liking them, the President came out of his Oval Office to watch the performance. Ten days later she would remember his pleasure and ask them to play again, at his funeral.

Nearly every day now impressions were being imprinted on her memory, to be recalled, brooded over, relished, savored, or regretted after Dallas. The day before the Black Watch appearance before the children, the President took young John, not quite 3, to Veterans Day ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery. To the indignation of some who thought the occasion should be solemn, the little boy was allowed to toddle into the procession and disrupt it. His father was delighted, and while he beamed down at the child, cameramen put the scene on celluloid. There were those who thought Kennedy had brought the boy along with that in mind. Look was coming out with an exclusive spread of John Jr. pictures; it would have been like the President to stage something for photographers who would feel left out by it.

Among the admiring spectators at Arlington was Maj. Gen. Philip C. Wehle, commanding officer of the Military District of Washington. Twelve days later he would look down on Kennedy's body in the autopsy room at Bethesda Naval Hospital and recall A. E. Housman's lines in "To an Athlete Dying Young":

Today, the road all runners come,  
Shoulder-high we bring you home  
And set you at your threshold down,  
Townsmen of a stiltier town. . . .

Mrs. Kennedy had many recent recollections which would

put the tragedy in context; General Wehle had one. Most Americans hadn't any. The blow that fell in Dallas came to them out of nowhere. They didn't even know that the President was in Texas. His visit was only of local interest there; he had come down to make peace between two feuding Democrats, Senator Ralph Yarborough, the liberal, and Gov. John B. Connally Jr., the deviate. Non-Texans were unaware of the trip until the first incredible bulletin reached them with the news that he had been gunned down by a sniper while riding in a downtown motorcade.

**A**FTERWARD, Americans, giving a shape to their grief, reconstructed the events there. They came to know the grid of downtown Dallas Streets; the location of the Texas School Book Depository, from which the shots had come, and Parkland Memorial Hospital, to which the President and Governor Connally, who had also been wounded, had been rushed; and the identity of each figure in the tragedy and the part he had played. In time the country forgot its terrible ignorance in the first hours after the assassination and how they had learned about it.

Merriman Smith of U.P.I. had been riding in the press-pool car, four cars behind the Presidential limousine in the motorcade. Moments after the sound of the gunfire, at 1:30 P.M. Washington time—an hour earlier in Dallas—he dictated the first bulletin to his local bureau over the pool car's radiophone: "Three shots were fired at President Kennedy's motorcade in downtown Dallas." That went out on U.P.I. printers at 1:34, two minutes before the Presidential car reached the hospital. At 1:36 Don Gardiner of the A.B.C. radio network cut into local programs with it. At 1:40 C.B.S.-TV interrupted "As the World Turns," a soap opera; viewers beheld a distraught Walter Cronkite relaying Smith's report of the three shots and adding, "The first reports say that the President was 'seriously wounded.'" At 1:45 N.B.C.-TV scuttled another soap opera, "Bachelor Father," to switch to Chet Huntley. That put the three networks on the air with the news. They would remain there, with no interruptions for commercials, for three days and three nights, until

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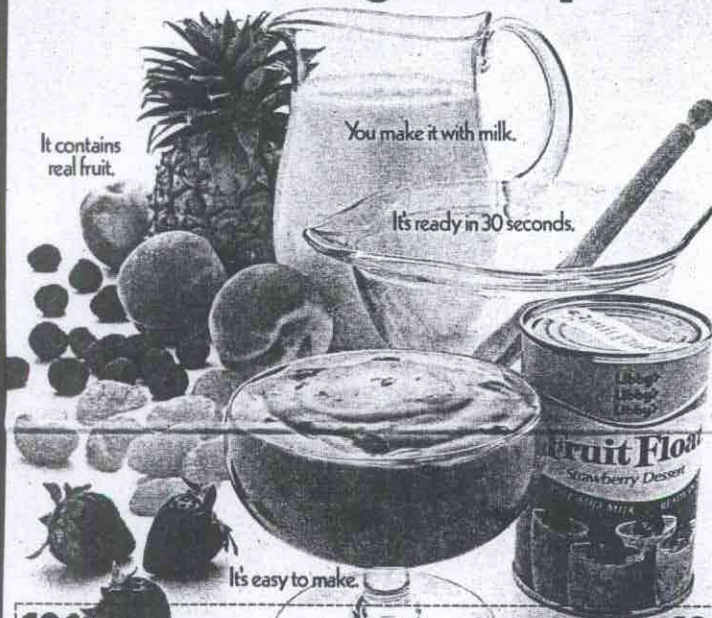
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the President had been buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

A minority first heard about the shooting from those early broadcasts and telecasts. One watcher in Fort Worth was Marguerite Oswald, the assassin's mother; she was tuned to WFAA-TV. In Irving, a Dallas suburb, her daughter-in-law Marina was another viewer. Elizabeth Pozen, the wife of a Government official, was listening to WGMS over her car radio in Washington. One of her passengers was Caroline Kennedy, who was going to spend the night with a Pozen child, and when Mrs. Pozen heard the announcer say . . . "shot in the head and his wife Jackie . . ." she instantly switched it off. But most people did not learn what had happened that directly. The news reached them third or fourth hand, from a passing stranger, or a telephone call, or a public address system, or a waiter in a restaurant—often from sources which were so unlikely that a common reaction was utter disbelief. To make sure that it was untrue, they gathered around transistor radios, car radios and television sets in bars—whatever was available—and there they learned that it was true after all.

At 2 P.M. Washington time Kennedy was pronounced dead. The announcement was delayed until Lyndon Johnson could get away from the hospital; in that first hour it was widely assumed that the gunman had been part of a larger conspiracy. The new President left for the airport at 2:26 P.M. Six minutes later U.P.I. quoted Father Oscar Huber, the Dallas priest who had celebrated the last rites for Kennedy, as saying, "He's dead, all right." Confirmation by the President's acting press secretary followed, and at 2:35 Washington time U.P.I. bells chimed on teletype machines around the world:

**FLASH**  
**PRESIDENT KENNEDY DEAD**  
**JT135FCS**

Meantime, attention had shifted to another part of Dallas. Lee Harvey Oswald, having left his rifle in his sniper's nest on the sixth floor of the book depository, had caught a bus outside, ridden in it for seven blocks, and then switched to a taxi. He stopped at his rooming house for a pistol. At 2:15 he committed his second murder in less than an hour, gunning down J. D. Tippit, a Dallas policeman who tried to question him. Oswald was seized 35 minutes later in a nearby movie theater. The homicide squad then learned that its new prisoner worked as a stockman in the book depository and was, in fact, the



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On Monday the coffin was taken on the casket to St. Matthew's Cathedral for a funeral mass and thence to Arlington. Delegates from 92 nations, led by Charles de Gaulle, were invited to attend the funeral. Delegates from 92 nations, led by Charles de Gaulle, were invited to attend the funeral. Delegates from 92 nations, led by Charles de Gaulle, were invited to attend the funeral.

The next three days passed in a blur. Saturday was accompanied by drizzling rains and high winds in the capital. The gray country would later remember it as a gap between Friday's assassination and the murder of the assassin on Sunday. The University of Chicago study indicated that the average adult spent 10 hours in front of his television set Saturday, but the watchers didn't learn much. The body remained in the East Room, Kennedy's family, his friends and senior members of the Government called to pay their respects there. On Sunday the coffin was carried up Pennsylvania Avenue on a horse-drawn caisson. The symbol of a fallen chief, the symbol of a fallen chief, the symbol of a fallen chief.

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MAY 1971

Gaulle, had come to participate in the funeral. Afterward they attended two receptions, one at the State Department and another, much smaller, at the White House; Mrs. Kennedy received them there. That was the end of it, though in a sense that weekend never ended; 10 years later men would still be trying to fathom the meaning of it. It had been the greatest simultaneous experience in the history of this or any other people. Long afterward Americans would tell one another how they first heard the news from Dallas, how they felt about the eternal flame Mrs. Kennedy had requested for the grave, and young John's saluting of his father's coffin, and the rest of it. David Brinkley concluded that the assassination was beyond understanding: "The events of those days don't fit, you can't place them anywhere, they don't go in the intellectual luggage of our time. It was too big, too sudden, too overwhelming, and it meant too much. It has to be separate and apart."

Nevertheless, people could not stop attempting to incorporate it in their lives. The most obvious approach was to name something after the President. Cape Canaveral was rechristened Cape Kennedy. Idlewild International Airport was renamed. The National Cultural Center was changed to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Treasury began minting 50 million Kennedy half-dollars—and couldn't keep them in circulation because they were being hoarded as souvenirs. In every part of the country, committees and councils were voting to honor the President by altering local maps. Presently Jacqueline Kennedy was wondering whether she would be driving "down a Kennedy parkway to a Kennedy airport to visit a Kennedy school." The impulse reached abroad. Canada had its Mount Kennedy—the first man to climb it was Robert Kennedy, by then United States Senator from New York—and the climax was reached when England set aside three acres of the historic meadow at Runnymede, where Magna Carta was signed, as a Kennedy shrine. In May, 1965, Queen Elizabeth presided at the ceremony, dedicating the tract to the President "whom in death my people still mourn and whom in life they loved." Mrs. Kennedy replied that it was "the deepest comfort to me to know that you share with me thoughts that lie too deep for tears."

The Kennedys retained their hold on the American imagination for about five years after Dallas. Then Robert Kennedy was assassinated in June, 1968, when many believed the Democratic Presidential nomination was within his grasp. That October, Jacqueline Kennedy remarried, ending her virtual canonization as a secular saint; the following summer Edward Kennedy, the surviving brother of the President, was damaged by the tragedy of Chappaquiddick.

Bit by bit the altars of worshipful Kennedy books in bookstores dimin-

ished; less and less was heard about J.F.K. charisma. Like the cornerstone of the book depository in Dallas, from which tourists chipped away souvenirs, the Kennedy legend was reduced and disfigured until, 10 years after the assassination, the new Kennedy books are sharply revisionist, biting comments on what some of the authors call Shamelet.

**Y**ET it is possible that Americans were truer to themselves then. During that long grieving weekend many of them expressed their anguish in ways that they later tried to forget. Congressman James Roosevelt, for example, proposed that John Kennedy be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously, and at the White House Hubert Humphrey stumbled from one White House policeman to another, wringing hands and embracing them. But politicians can do worse than display their emotions in public. If they were artless then, they were also guileless.

The hundreds of thousands of letters which Americans sent to Mrs. Kennedy then were often touching precisely because they were emotive and unashamedly demonstrative. To David Bell the fallen President was "a warrior-king"; to Natalie Hemingway "a dear god-father"; and John Steinbeck wrote the widow of "this man who was the best of his people" that "by his life, and his death, gave back the best of them for their own."

Buried in the bales of envelopes was another memorable handwritten letter which was found and answered long afterward:

Richard M. Nixon  
810 Fifth Avenue  
New York, N. Y. 10021

November 23

Dear Jackie,

In this tragic hour Pat and I want you to know that our thoughts and prayers are with you.

While the hand of fate made Jack and me political opponents I always cherished the fact that we were personal friends from the time we came to the Congress together in 1947. That friendship evidenced itself in many ways including the invitation we received to attend your wedding.

Nothing I could say now could add to the splendid tributes which have come from throughout the world to him.

But I want you to know that the nation will also be forever grateful for your service as First Lady. You brought to the White House charm, beauty and elegance as the official hostess for America, and the mistique [sic] of the young in heart which was uniquely yours made an indelible impression on the American consciousness.

If in the days ahead we could be helpful in any way we shall be honored to be at your command.

Sincerely,  
Dick Nixon