

When history repeats itself: The deaths of Lincoln, JFK

A special edition of Larry King's column for the 25th anniversary of JFK's death this week (Assassination museum, 9A):

The late columnist Jim Bishop was a very close friend of mine. He

knew and spent a lot of time with John Fitzgerald Kennedy. He shared many of those moments with me. His widow, Kelly, has now made available to me and our readers a wonderful piece of jour-

nalism written by her husband shortly after the assassination in Dallas in 1963. It was published in his syndicated column three weeks after the president's death. Coincidence? Consider this:



Abraham Lincoln

► He was in the fruitful middle years when the end came. Lincoln's heart's desire was to be known as the president who brought peace, at home as well as abroad. He did not live to achieve it.

► He liked the South, but the South did not like him. Between the two stood the American Negro. The 16th president tried to force the South to liberalize its policies toward the Negro, but the South was neither ready nor willing to do it.

► Mr. Lincoln had four children. Two were dead. In the company of little ones, he enjoyed shedding the weight and austerity of his high office. He enjoyed practical jokes, too.

► His first lady was fashionable, but restive in the White House. She liked poetry and painting, but not state dinners and the company of politicians. She fought to maintain a private family life.

► Mr. Lincoln enjoyed reading the Bible and could quote from the Old Testament as well as the New. His religious feelings were deep, but personal.

► His progress was often thwarted by his own party. Whatever support he had in the Congress came from a coalition of liberal groups. Mr. Lincoln had served in Congress after studying law and being admitted to the bar.

► In public, he displayed enormous patience, although in private he was irritated by opposition to his policies in the American press. He was also beset by job-seekers and those who stole his time.

► Mr. Lincoln was a spare eater who liked plain food. He was also an omnivorous reader who devoured newspapers and history books by the dozen. When he became president in 1861, one of those most worried about his safety was John Kennedy, New York police superintendent.

► Mrs. Lincoln used to warn government agents to be extra watchful when the president traveled. Once, she sent detectives to Baltimore to make certain that the city would be safe for the president.

► Lincoln thought of assassination, but always fatalistically. "I know no one could do it and escape alive," he said. "But if it is to be done, it is impossible to prevent it."

► When death came, it came on a Friday. The assassin was a misguided man with a gun. A bullet smashed through the back of the president's head. The killer was not supported by an organization. Mr. Lincoln was succeeded by a Southerner named Johnson. ...



John F. Kennedy

► He was in the fruitful middle years when the end came. Kennedy's heart's desire was to be known as the president who brought peace, at home as well as abroad. He did not live to achieve it.

► He liked the South, but the South did not like him. Between the two stood the American Negro. The 35th president tried to force the South to liberalize its policies toward the Negro, but the South was neither ready nor willing to do it.

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► His first lady was fashionable, but restive in the White House. She liked poetry and painting, but not state dinners and the company of politicians. She fought to maintain a private family life.

► Mr. Kennedy enjoyed reading the Bible and could quote from the Old Testament as well as the New. His religious feelings were deep, but personal.

► His progress was often thwarted by his own party. Whatever support he had in the Congress came from a coalition of liberal groups. Mr. Kennedy had served in Congress after studying law and graduating from Harvard University *cum laude*.

► In public, he displayed enormous patience, although in private he was irritated by the opposition to his policies in the American press. He was also beset by job-seekers and those who stole his time.

► Mr. Kennedy was a spare eater who liked plain food. He was also an omnivorous reader who devoured newspapers and history books by the dozen. When he became president, in 1961, one of those most worried about his safety was Evelyn Lincoln, his personal secretary.

► Mrs. Kennedy used to warn government agents whenever the president left his office, or whenever he traveled. She kept her office door ajar so that she could hear anyone enter or leave his office.

► Mr. Kennedy thought of assassination. Once, walking with Secret Service agents, he joked: "If anyone tries to get me," he whispered, "they're going to have to get you fellows first."

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