

Reflections on JFK's Assassination

250 Prominent
Americans
Remember
November 22, 1963



Edited by
John B. Jovich

In a special tribute to John Kennedy, 250 prominent Americans and personalities from around the world have come together to recall just where they were when they first heard the catastrophic news that President Kennedy had been killed. In this unique collection of memoirs, former presidents, journalists, and political figures join actors, entertainers, and sports legends to share their personal reactions to President Kennedy's death, and to reveal their hopes and fears on that fateful November day in 1963.

Excerpts from REFLECTIONS ON JFK'S ASSASSINATION:

Barry Goldwater: "I knew him as a close friend and I had really looked forward to running against him....I had no stomach for running against Lyndon Johnson....Jack and I talked about a campaign...travelling together...like politicians should do.... That would have been impossible with Lyndon Johnson and it was."

Jimmy Carter: "I walked into my warehouse to weigh a load of grain. I was told by a group of farmers that the President had been shot. I went outside, knelt on the steps, and began to pray. It was a grievous personal loss....I wept openly for the first time in 10 years - for the first time since the day my own father died."

Daniel Inouye: "I was in the area of the Senate chambers...when the bulletins from Dallas appeared....I realized that the presiding officer of the Senate was Senator Ted Kennedy. I immediately dispatched a page to tell Senator Kennedy to leave the rostrum for a matter of utmost emergency. It was then that Senator Kennedy learned of his brother's shooting."

Ray Gandolfi: "I was glued to the set absorbing one incredible detail after another. Oswald shoots Officer Tippitts, he's captured, Ruby kills him. It was like being hit repeatedly by Marvin Hagler....We lost a lot that day, but not our balance."

Tom Brokaw: "My immediate reaction was a mixture of personal grief and professional urgency. I had to get the story on the air."

John Houseman: "I remember drifting out onto Fifth Avenue where drivers sat frozen behind the wheels of their buses and taxis and pedestrians stared at one another or talked in bewildered whispers."

Betty White: "Four days before John F. Kennedy was assassinated, my father died. That whole week is a confused mixture of saying goodbye to two fine men. I loved them both in different ways, and appreciate the chance to say so."

**DOZENS OF
BOOKS HAVE
BEEN WRITTEN
ABOUT THE
EVENTS IN
DALLAS.**

**NOW THERE IS A
BOOK WHICH
RECORDS THE
REACTIONS OF 250
PROMINENT
AMERICANS AS
THEY RECOUNT
HOW THEY
LEARNED THE
HORRIFYING
NEWS THAT THE
PRESIDENT HAD
BEEN MURDERED.**

It was 12:30 P.M. CST on November 22, 1963 when President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. Word of that tragedy spread quickly throughout the world, and for anyone who heard that shocking news, that moment is frozen in time. Now, twenty-five years later, more than 250 prominent Americans recall—in their own words—their whereabouts when they heard the news, and their reactions to it. Taken together, these memoirs offer a unique historical record of how our nation reacted to the news that President Kennedy had been assassinated.

In Dallas, newsmen Robert MacNeil and Douglas Kiker remember their coverage of the story of the century, while Jim Wright, Larry O'Brien, and Jack Valenti recount the horror as the news spread through the presidential motorcade.

Back in Washington, Ted Kennedy was presiding in the Senate when Daniel Inouye summoned him from the rostrum to tell him of his brother's death. Government officials scrambled to get back to the capital. Barry Goldwater, already the Republican front-runner for 1964, was in the Midwest when word reached him, and he lamented the possibility of running against Lyndon Johnson.

Also in Washington, Charles Mathias recalls the services held for the fallen President. Spark Matsunaga fell to his knees in prayer, and Alexander Haig suspected Soviet involvement. Rush to Judgment author Mark Lane was returning from Court, and "I feared that ambitious Neanderthals... would imperil all of us who share this planet."

Orville Freeman, who was enroute to Tokyo with Dean Rusk when they received word that the President had been shot in the head, recalls thinking, "I have been shot in the head and came through it ok."

George Bush was speaking to a Kiwanis Club in Texas. Michael Dukakis was returning from lunch in Boston. Jimmy Carter was at this warehouse in Plains, and William Casey was in New York City. As Pat Robertson witnessed Jack Ruby shoot Lee Harvey Oswald, he felt that the expression on Oswald's face "reflected a group of conspirators, not just a lone gunman."

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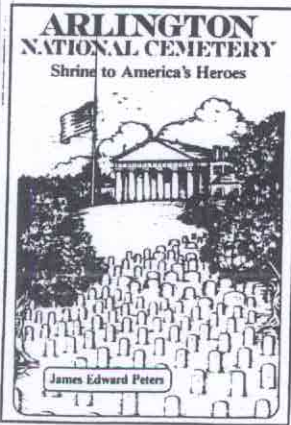
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