

# Team of 15 Doctors Strove to Save

## TELEPHONE CALL GAVE THE ALERT

Events in Emergency Room  
Reconstructed—Time of  
Death Fixed at 1 P.M.

The following account of events in Parkland Memorial Hospital, in Dallas on the day President Kennedy died, was written by Bryce Miller of United Press International.

DALLAS, Nov. 29—It now is possible to reconstruct in detail the events that took place in Parkland Memorial Hospital one week ago today shortly after President Kennedy was mortally wounded by an assassin's bullets.

The first call came to Parkland from the Dallas Police Department.

"The President has been shot. He is on the way to Parkland." Surgical teams sprang into action.

Parkland was one of the first university hospitals to adopt the "team system" in traumatic surgery.

The "team" of physicians "run in a pack." They are always together—work together, make hospital rounds together, relax together. Each man knows the other so well that when they see a patient, as a unit, they can go to work, almost independently, each in his own area, immediately.

Dr. Charles James Carrico, a resident in surgery, was in the emergency room when a Secret Service agent burst through the swinging doors. A second one, with a submachine gun cradled in his arms, was right on his heels.

The first agent asked for two portable hospital carts. He called them "stretchers." One for Gov. John B. Connally Jr., the other for the President.

The agent with the gun was so agitated, his face contorted with emotion, that hospital personnel were afraid that he might open fire at any minute.

"Everybody clear out of here," he shouted. Aubrey Rilke, an ambulance driver, and his assistant, Dennis McGuire, ducked behind a desk. Two student nurses scrambled to the floor.

A man in a business suit dashed in. The Secret Service agent caught him with an up-percut.

Slammed back against the gray tiled wall of the emergency ward, the man slowly slid down to the floor, unconscious. Seconds later, still dazed, he reached for his wallet.

"I've got to call J. Edgar Hoover," he said, showing his F.B.I. credentials.

In the emergency ward office, the Secret Service had already tied up all lines. It was nearly 10 minutes before the F.B.I. agent was able to get his call through to Washington.

### Johnson Walks In

In moments from the entry of the Secret Service agents the portable carts were wheeled into Emergency Operating Room 1. Mr. Connally was first. Then the President, with Mrs. Kennedy walking beside the cart, holding his head, her pink suit bloody.

Mr. Connally was wheeled into Room 2, an identical 15-by-10-foot room directly across the hall.

Vice President Johnson walked in, hand on chest. Senator Ralph W. Yarborough, who had been riding in the motorcade with him, was in tears.

The operating table in Room 1 had been shoved out of the way. The physicians were moving so swiftly that they did not want to take time to lift the President off the cart.

Dr. Carrico, the first man in the room, forced an endotracheal (breathing tube) down the President's windpipe as Dr. Malcolm Perry, an assistant professor of surgery, dashed in.

Dr. Perry decided further help in breathing was needed. The first bullet had opened the windpipe. Dr. Perry inserted a tube through the bullet hole.

Dr. Charles B. . . , assistant professor of surgery, arrived at this time. Mrs. Kennedy still was in the room. Dr. Baxter glanced at her and said:

"I believe you had better step outside."

There were five staff members hovering around Mr. Kennedy at the time. Whenever one made an observation, the others immediately agreed.

Mrs. Kennedy turned to a White House aide in the corridor and said:

"Call a priest."  
The aide relayed the message to Steve Landregan, assistant to C. J. Price, the hospital administrator.

Mr. Landregan immediately called the nearby Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church.

More doctors rushed to Mr. Kennedy's side. There were 15 in all. Besides Dr. Perry, Dr. Carrico and Dr. Baxter, there were Dr. William Kemp Clark, chairman of neurosurgery; Dr. Robert McClelland, assistant professor of surgery; Dr. M. T. Jenkins, chairman of anesthesiology; Dr. Fouad A. Bashour, associate professor of internal medicine; Dr. Adolph Giesecke, clinical associate in anesthesiology; Dr. Paul C. Peters, assistant professor of urology. Also Dr. Ronald C. Jones, senior resident in surgery; Dr. Charles Crenshaw, surgery resident; Dr. Gene Akin, anesthesi-

ology resident; Dr. Jackie H. Hunt, anesthesiology fellow; Dr. Don Curtis, oral surgery resident, and Dr. Kenneth Saltyer, surgery resident.

Dr. Carrico remembered having read that Mr. Kennedy suffered adrenal deficiency and immediately administered hydrocortisone.

Dr. Jones began a "cutdown" on Mr. Kennedy's left arm to insert a catheter—a device to force more blood into a vein and to keep the passage open. Dr. Curtis completed the same procedure on the left leg.

Lactated Ringer's solution (a crystalloid solution sometimes called white blood and used until whole blood can be obtained) was pumped in. In seconds, a technician from the blood bank arrived with Type O negative blood (universal donor) and it was started.

To feed the blood faster, hand pumps were used.

By now, the cart had been elevated at the foot to help the blood get back to the heart.

Then one of the doctors noticed a frothing of the blood in the neck wound.

"He's bubbling air," the doctor said.

This means a hole in the lung. Dr. Peters and Dr. Baxter immediately inserted a tube into the right upper part of the chest, just below the shoulder, to re-expand the lungs and to keep them from collapsing. Dr. Perry and Dr. Jones at the same time inserted a similar tube on the left.

Doctors and nurses raced in and out. Each time the operating room door opened, Mrs. Kennedy tried to look in.

"What is happening?" she would ask. "How is he?"

"It's Too Late, Mac"

Dr. Clark, the neurosurgeon, had run all the way from the medical school. He was one of the last of the team to arrive. He raced through the emergency room door not more than five minutes after the President was brought in.

Dr. Clark looked down at the President. The eyes were open, staring back, sightless.

"His eyes are fixed and dilated," Dr. Clark observed.

Any first-year medical student knows that this means that there is no hope for the patient.

Dr. Clark had a "torpedo" hooked up immediately to Mr. Kennedy. This is a small machine with a scope that shows a heartbeat in waves as a little green light travels from one side to another. The green light moved straight across with a hopelessly steady line.

Dr. Clark looked up at Dr. Perry.

"It's too late, Mac," he said.

But Dr. Perry grabbed a stool, placed his knee on it to give him leverage and began giving Mr. Kennedy closed-chest massage — using his fist

in a rocking, pressing motion over the breastbone to provide, if possible, a 60 to 70 a-minute beat. He and Dr. Clark took turns.

A more sensitive cardiachyroscope was brought in by Dr. Bashour. This was his machine. He specializes in cardiology. Before coming to the United States, he was head of cardiology at Beirut, Lebanon.

Electrodes from the machine were attached to Mr. Kennedy's left arm. But the green pinpoint of light on the scope did not waver the tiniest fraction of an inch.

Sheet Placed Over Kennedy

An attendant was standing by with two rods that sometimes can shock a faltering heart into beating. He put them away. The President was dead. He had been dead for minutes, probably before he got to the hospital.

Dr. Jenkins, monitoring the oxygen equipment, turned the valves off. The President was dressed only in his trousers, shorts and brace, for his ailing back.

Dr. Baxter got a fresh sheet. He and Dr. Jenkins tenderly pulled it across the body and up over the face. Mr. Kennedy's coat, shirt, undershirt and tie had been folded and put on one of the steel shelves lining the wall. The floor was littered with empty bottles, bandages, boxes that had contained sterile dressings, bits of tubing. At the foot of the cart, among the litter, were the President's shoes.

A doctor picked them up and placed them with his coat. "The priest is outside," someone said.

There was nothing more the physicians could do.

They opened the emergency room door. The priest, the Very Rev. Oscar L. Huber, was waiting.

Mrs. Kennedy stood up. Two White House aides stood on either side of her. She walked inside, toward the cart where her husband lay. The aides stayed outside.

At the foot of the cart, Mrs. Kennedy stopped. The President's feet were flush with the end of the cart, uncovered by the sheet that had been pulled over his face.

Mrs. Kennedy reached out, touched the right foot then bent down and kissed it. Then she walked along the cart and stood by the President's right shoulder.

Father Huber had walked in behind her. He did not notice her at first. He stopped beside her, glanced up, then stepped around her to the President's head.

The priest turned the sheet down.

Mrs. Kennedy bent over and kissed her husband's right cheek. Then she picked up his right hand, held it in both of hers, and pressed it to her left cheek

## Kennedy at the Hospital

resting it on her husband's chest her head on it, as the priest intoned, in Latin, the last rites. "If you are living," he said, "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Father Huber then dipped his thumb in holy oil and traced the sign of the cross on the President's forehead.

"Through this holy anointing may God forgive you whatever sins you have committed," the priest said.

Then the final blessing:

"By the faculty given to me by the Apostolic See, I grant to you a plenary indulgence and remission of all your sins and I bless you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

As soon as the priest left, the doctors walked from the operating room to the nurse's station on the ward. They gathered inside—Dr. Baxter, Dr. Clark, Dr. Perry and Dr. Jenkins.

It was nearly 1:10 P.M.

They had two things to decide quickly what time the President died, and who should sign the death certificate.

Dr. Clark was chosen to sign the certificate because it was believed that the President died of a neurological cause.

They arbitrarily decided the time of death should be 1 P.M. immediately after the priest had finished the last rite.

Minutes after the doctors came to their decisions, Mrs. Kennedy retired to the emergency room, removed her wedding ring and placed it on the President's finger.

Parkland hospital is a city-county medical complex on the northwest side of the city. It is one of the finest medical centers in the Southwest.

Adjacent to Parkland is the Southwestern Medical School, a branch of the University of Texas. Under terms of the charter, the medical school assumes the responsibility for providing medical care at the hospital. Thus, all hospital staff members also are members of the medical school faculty.

Parkland has the largest emergency facility in the county and serves as its primary emergency hospital.

"We're veterans of a lot of bad things but this really tore me up," one surgeon said.

"He was dead when he came through the emergency room doors. We did everything in the book although we all knew from the first minute there was nothing that could be done."