WHITE HOUSE DIARY ssassination Is Recalled By LADY BIRD JOHNSON

 $\langle l \rangle$ DALLAS, It all began so beautifully. After a Dallas. In the lead car were President to the floor, and said, "Get down." nally, a Secret Service car full of men, and then our car with Lyndon and me and Senator Ralph Yarborough.

(Pant One)

The streets were lined with people smiling, placards, confetti, people waving wondered if we were going to make it as from windows. One last happy moment I we wheeled left and went around the corhad was looking up and seeing Mary ner. We pulled up to a building. I looked Griffith leaning out of a window waving up and saw a sign "hospital." Only then at me. (Mary for many years had been in did I believe that this might be what it charge of altering the clothes which I pur-was. Senator Yarborough kept saying in chased at Neiman-Marcus.)

our way to the Trade Mart for the Presi- I said something like, "No, it can't be." dential luncheon, we were rounding a curve, going down a hill, and suddenly still the third car - Secret Service men. there was a sharp, loud report. It sounded began to pull, lead, guide, and hustle us like a shot. The sound seemed to me to out. I cast one last look over my shoulder come from a building on the right above and saw in the President's car a bundle of my shoulder. A moment passed, and then pink, just like a drift of blossoms, lying two more shots rang out in rapid succes- on the back seat. It was Mrs. Kennedy sion. There had been such a gala air lying over the President's body. about the day that I thought the noise

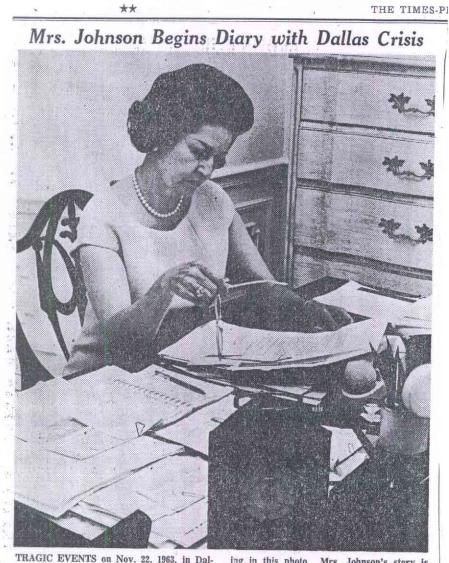
|must come from firecrackers --- part of the celebration. Then the Secret Service men were suddenly down in the lead car. Fri., Nov. 22, 1963 Over the car radio system, I heard "Let's get out of here!" and our Secret Service drizzle in the morning, the sun came out man, Rufus Youngblood, vaulted over the bright and clear. We were driving into front seat on top of Lyndon, threw him

FASTER AND FASTER

Senator Yarborough and I ducked our heads. The car accelerated terrifically - faster and faster. Then, suddenly, lots and lots of people - the children all the brakes were put on so hard that I an exalted voice, "Have they shot the Then, almost at the edge of town, on President? Have they shot the President?"

As we ground to a halt -we were

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TRAGIC EVENTS on Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas are the first recollections in Lady Bird Johnson's Diary, which she is pictured edit-

ing in this photo. Mrs. Johnson's story is being published daily in The Times-Picayune beginning with this installment.

Lyndon Remarkably Calm

remarkably calm and quiet.

He suggested that the presi-

field. He spoke of going back

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The Secret Service men dential plane ought to be moved to another part of the rushed us to the right, then to the left, and then onward into a quiet room in the hospital - a out to the plane in unmarked very small room. It was lined with white sheets, I believe.

black cars. Every face that came in, you searched for the PEOPLE CAME, WENT answer. I think the face I People came and went kept seeing the answer on Kenny O'Donnell, 'the Presi-dent's top aide, Congressman was the face of Kenny O'Donnell, who loved Presi-Homer Thornberry, Congressdent Kennedy so much. man Jack Brooks, Always there It was Lyndon who spoke of it was Rufe right there and other Secret Service agents - Emory first, although I knew I would Roberts, Jerry, Kivett, Lem not leave without doing it. He was something like "God, neip Johns, and Woody Taylor. Peo- said, "You had better try to see her were too tumultuous to put ple spoke of how widespread Jackie and Nellie." We didn't into words, this might be. There was talk know what had happened to about where we would go - to John. the plane, to our house, back to

Washington.

SO MUCH ALONE

began to lead me up one corridor and down another. Suddenly I found myself face to face with Jackie in a small hallway. I believe it was right outside the operating room. You always think of 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. 1 went up to her, put my arms around her, and said something to her. I'm sure it was something like "God, help

And then I went to see Nellie. There it was different, because Nellie and I have gone through I asked the Secret Service if I so many things together since Through it all Lyndon was could be taken to them. They 1938. I hugged her tight and we both cried and I said, "Nellie, John's going to be all right." And Nellie said, "Yes, John's going to be all right." Among her many other fine qualities, she is also strong.

I turned and went back to the d small white room where Lyndon e was. Mac Kilduff, the President's press man on this trip, and Kenny O'Donnell were coming and going. I think it was from Kenny's face that I first I knew the truth and from Kenh ny's voice that I first heard the words "The President is dead." Mr. Kilduff entered and said to

Lyndon, "Mr. President." HURRIED PLANS

It was decided that we would Ţ go immediately to the airport. Hurried plans were made about how we should get to the cars and who was to ride in which car. Our departure from the hospital and approach to the cars was one of the swiftest walks I have ever made.

We got in. Lyndon told the agents to stop the sirens. We drove along as fast as we could. I looked up at a building and there, already, was a flag at half-mast. I think that was when the enormity of what had happened first struck me.

When we got to the field, we entered Air Force One for the first time. There was a TV set on and the commentator was saying, "Lyndon B. Johnson, now President of the United States."

NEXT: The President lay in state. A gray day, suited to the sad occasion.

From the book, "A White House biory," by Lady Bird Johnson, pub-shed by Holt, Rinehart and Winston Copyright (c) 1970 by Cloudia T. Johnson. (Distributed by The New York Times Special Features, 1970.)

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