Budd Schudber

the run for the White House I was in Italy working on a novel by the shore of the legendary Lake of Como with snow-capped. Also standing sentinel around me. I felt safe, secluded, predictive. The London Times and the Paris Herald-Trihume and the Rome Messagglero brought the daily news to my reading room every day, so I knew shout the crisis in gold, the British refusel to admit Indians to their Island, and I was increasingly aware of the political quicksand L. B. J. had stumbled into their Island, and I was increasingly aware of the political quicksand L. B. J. had stumbled into their Island, and I was increasingly aware of the political quicksand L. B. J. had stumbled into their Island, and I was increasingly aware of the political quicksand L. B. J. had stumbled great their to be able to read about world issues without feeling a moral obligation to do something about them. If I may be excused a centreit, I thought that

after years of involvement I had earned a rest, a "working vacation," the luxury of getting up in the morning, kissing my wife, breathing the air, taking a walk, clearing the mind and then, "ah, sweet mystery of work."

That was my selfish state of mind when a cable from Bob Kennedy found me on the shore of that picture-postcard-blue Italian lake and called me back to reality. American reality. The cable said he "found himself in a struggle" and expressed the lope that I would be back in the States in time to enlist in his campaign. He expressed his appreciation for any help I might be able to render in getting his message across to "your people," My wife, Geraldine, and I smiled at that one, for Bob meant not Hollywood people or literary people or Jewish people but black people, the friends we had

made in Watts and other neglected communities in the course of establishing the Writers Workshop after the holocaust four years ago.

That evening I answered that I would be coming back shortly, ready to enlist in his army of volunteers. And I fired off this opening salvo to the director of the Watts Writers Workshop:

"You know, at the end of my dialog with Jimmy Baldwin I said I thought the whites had almost had

Baldwin I said I thought the whites had almost had it, that unless they could rip the racism out of their culture, out of their hearts, our country was on the road to violent division. However, I feel we have a last chance in Bobby Kennedy. I know that he honestly wants to get out of this damnable war that is bleeding us to death. I believe him when he says he wants to take those billions we are pouring down the Saigon drain and put them to work in our

ghettos, rebuilding them . . . if we can get Bobby in we have a last chance of doing something on a federal scale about the galling neglect we see in Watts. Yes, Bob seems to understand what we need for our cities, not just those billions, but ideas, imagination, and love. What Bob saw when he came to our workshop to meet the writers could be enlarged a thousaudfold in every single community. If we blunder on, if we cut back the services we should be expanding, if we just remain liberal, then you are right, then comes harmageddon. . . So, a long-winded nomination speech for Bobby Kemedy our last best hone of making it tooselest.

So, a long-winded nomination speech for Bobby Kemnedy, our last best hope of making it, together?' Lyndon's stunning abdication speech made me even more eager to work for what seemed to me that last, best hope. But Italy is securitive and we lingered, some days in Venice and more in Rome. We were enjoying the sculpture and the markets and the restaurants and the people when the sky fell down. Another Dallas! This time in Memphis. This time not the President or Medgar Evers the that messiah of Musclashpii out our Nobel prize when for peace aposite of black freedom that numbulates. Dr. Martin Luther Rus 27. Not again! Not make a posite of black freedom that numbulates. Dr. Martin Luther Rus 27. Not again! Not make the public number! Brow long Q. Signs and supplied the graceful Symbib lasts. The street of the first street of the stre

unreasonable. "O. K.," he agreed, "I personally think it's all a waste of time because any good black man or any real friend of the black man is going to be cut down sooner or later—like Jack Kennedy and Medgar Evers and Brother Malcolm But I can dig it. You go ahead with your meeting Well pass out the literature in the parking lot."

The rally ended tensely if peacefully Charles

and Martin Luther King, along with too many others al., and Martin Luther King, along with too many others murdered in the south in recent years, all shared a belief in the dignity of man and the eventual triumph of genuine democracy. And he prayed that Bob Kennedy, who stood up for Medgar and for Martin and for all the oppressed, would be able to bring this about thru the democratic process.

In the audience for that rally was my employe of many years, Mrs. Louise Carter. While I was scheduled to speak at several other gatherings that evening, Louise yent on to the Ambassador holed to stead, a large reception for Kennedy. Med morning also baid she had seen Dob Kennedy. In fact had the fact, but a state with all the cartains of the famous Conserver Complexity. But she said the lates had accompletely and passed of the famous the famous that the famous the famous that the famous that

Kennedy workers to try and find out how it was going. Around 6 p. m., Pete Hamill the writer came by with his younger brother and we drove to the Arnbassador. The Emhassy ballroom had an air of tentative gayety. Not too many had arrived yet but those who came early were optimistic. In a small roped-off section press officers Pierre Salinger and Frank Mankiewicz were working their desks, taking quick phone calls and jotting down meaningful hieroglyphics. Both thought it looked good for Bob, mentioning percentages that turned out to be slightly optimistic. "South Dakota is in and bigger than expected," Frank told us. His father, the gifted writer of "Citizen Kane," had worked for my old man and I remembered Frank as a child-editor putting out a surprisingly professional mimeographed newspaper with his brother Don. If Bob could make it to the White House it was believed that Frank would become his Pierre. For me that was a comforting thought. Bob knew where he was going and Frank was a fideal companion for that journey, cool but concerned, sind well-liently informed.

panion for that journey, cost but concerned, sind bedillantly informed.

Now the Embassy ballroom was coming to life. Prefly girts in mini skirts and Kennedy skimmers. Sarriest young men from the New Left Middle-aged doctors and lawyers and their socially minded wives. The liberals. A lot of black people. A smattering of Democratic press. Everybody very friendly, very upmeeling vicinity but more than victory, tasting hope. I talked with Pete Hamill about it as we waited for the night to begin. Pete was a Ramparts man, a

our cities apart. It would be black against white father against son . . . "a time of shame and America which again stains our land and every one of our lives." The quotes are from Beb Ken nedy's address on the assassination of Doctor King on the day after that calamity. sorrow . . . this mindless menace of vi

48 hours away, it seemed as if more violence might try to break up the meeting. He had a stack of leaflets attacking Kennedy along with Humphrey, McCarthy, Nixon—blue-eyed devils all. Our Kencommunity and with a critical primary less than nedy-Evers team had strong black support in this with his "troops." We were concerned that he might the chains of racism that were holding his people supporting Kennedy, saying he believed the senator at a Kennedy rally with Charles Evers, of black and deprived South Los Angeles, speaking June found us on Central avenue, the Main Street back, a black militant leader came into the hall was on the platform explaining his reasons for his martyred brother in Mississippi. nad a rare and possibly unique capacity to break picked up the standard fallen from the hands of wo months later, Sunday afternoon the 2d of While Evers who had

I wonder why he hasn't shown up yet?" With him, those crowds around the senator and trying to touch him, he seemed so unprotected—and with so many angry people walking the streets these days, it just according to Louise and her friend, was another Kennedy was late and if anything could be keeping him from the hotel. Both young men kept wandering young man, also slender and swarthy, carrying a violin case. And he also asked if they knew why ody was to meet his death two nights litter, I young men's knowledge of the arms and the way was dressed prompted her to eak him it he was; didn't look safe to me." me on the morning of June 3, "Later when I saw all up on the stage and looking behind the curtains. Said Louise Carter as she described her misgivings to asked: "Shouldn't he be here by now? Isn't be late? the rest of the crowd to see Kennedy. And he employe of the hotel rather than a griest. He said no, he was just a spectator who had come like all se of the area and the way.

The last balls below to a rest meer criter,"

contrary I knew him to be warm, humorous, and intensely human. "I know he attracts some of those people around him because of who he is." Warren had said. "But the truth is, he's fun to be with of those as he had enemies. I feel ... good - ... around him." That was the found him ruthless, cold, and calculating; on the way his friends felt about him. And he had as many misunderstood man in American life. I had never and who shared my feeling that he was the most zine, who had been on the campaign trail with Bob re Joined by Warren Rogers of Look maga-

I went over to the militant leader. I said Charies
Evers risked death from full-time rascists every
day of his life and had come a long way to plead
Bobby's cause. "Even if you don't agree, he deserves a respectful audience." The local black leader
nodded. He could be difficult but sometimes not

On primary election day I passed the time bying
to relax and rest up for what I thought would be a
long and eventful evening. It remilided me of the
way boxens specifically evening and overtical their days avaiting important
the function organizers of the hedge against the grape
contests. I turned on the radio the talevision news.

Called some friends who were guithe fance. Called

Priest, a Democratic office holder, a local black. The tailroom was filling up now and returns were beginning to come in so we decided to go upstairs to the Kennedy suite. There we found a kind of in America. Hings, or maybe only in a Kennedy America: astronaut John Gleim, Olympic champion impromptu party in progress, one of those "Only

## "A few steps behind us we heard firecracker pops and screaming."

leader, and a Hollywood glamer gard was Billed Kernolly. See address sational breast, liberal publication, and an experiment of the sational sational state of the sational sational

California. He said to was going drown to the ball room in the said to was going drown to the ball room in the said to was going drown to the ball room in the said to was going drown to the ball room in the said to the said to was going to the ball said to was going to the said to was going to be said to was going to the said to was going to be said to was going to the said to was going to was going to the said to was goin

He stopped me with a slow grin. "I know, you' ming to give me the thing about the black wo ad the chican."

pasy the victor on his way down to the ballroom.

In the Colomial room about 20 of us were vailing are the senatur. We watched the preliminaries on belevision as he was getting ready to come to the nicrophone. It was a feative moment and Warren thaught we should all have drinks in our hands to test the occasion. He was gene a few minutes and when he returned with the highballs it was also with the micromidin that Bob would shortcut thru the reving pantry that divided our smaller room from the ballroom. [For some reason the fact went unreported in antimal magazines, nor has it been revealed in the Sirhan trial which I attended in marbid faccination and, at times, dismay. To this keyman mind, it seems as if it may have some bacting on the crucial subject of premoditation. Did Stram simply attends bilindly into the serving pantry in search of outfor to care his "marrication," has been of gifted diffuse council would have the partry has march at outfor to care his "marrication," has been found in the hatel two nights before, as the base sample was both tracker of the search of the search of the hatel two nights before, the base sample of the search of the se

Upton Shedair to conservative Roman Reagan,
For Bob Econordy is laid been a campaign physically in more demanding than for the others, because that followers had no computation to the others, because that followers had no computation to the followers and to come the peak constitution in the case to peak constitution in the case to peak constitution in the case with the constitution with the constitution of the case with their love. And this decreased in white communities, in subspite, and is showlytown. No one clee in America was generating that intel of magnetism. But as we had learned to our source two months earlier to the day, a magnet for love is also months earlier to the day, a magnet for love is also

for a few minutes from the mounting festivities, I was standing on a balcony with NBC commentator Sandy Vanocur, chiding him lightly for his network's refusal "to concede." Sandy was a proud competitor and a personal friend of Bob's but network officialdom had set up a certain of caution between him and what he had hoped would be the first interview with the winner. We were talking about Bob and what we thought he could do to bind like to talk to me alone for a couple of minutes. My wife, Geraldine, asked if she might come along; it was a moment she would like to remember. up the grievous wounds that were bleeding the country when Warren Rogers joined us to say that Bob had asked him to find me-he had said he'd Bob had won a close but cleancut decision. Escaping Shortly after 11 o'clock CBS-TV announced that

In a modest bedroom with twin beds, Bob was sitting on the floor in a corner, with his knees drawn up, a favorite position that reminded me of visits both to his home and his office. He was smoking a small, slender cigar, the first time I had over seen him do so. He seemed markedly less jubilant than the rest of us. More tired, undoubtedly. And with

Jense Unruh, Big Daddy of California Democratis, came over to suggest that it was time to go down. Ever-practical Jense was probably thinking that it was nearing midnight and that Bob should be seen on TV in his winning posture by as many people as possible across the country. Bob rune in his fact slowly. There was no elation in him, certainly mone of the cockmess attributed to him by defractors. He seemed thoughtful, concerned, perhaps a triffe subdued. He said he'd like to pursue the arts corps idea. He said, "Stick around, let's talk later." I saided him where. He said after the talk in the

Colonial road to your property. He said he want for going to sold any format property. He said he want for going to sold any format property and the property of the property of the property of the property of the property. The property of the property of

Pete Hamili was directly in front of me and partly blacking my view so he description is clearer than nine, altho my impression confirms what he saw, "The somefalishth was standing there with one foot forward and his arm extended just like he was on a target range." [Note: This is what veteran reporter Hamili said as soon as we were able to regain any collectuce.] The narrow partry became a screaming bollam of pain, terror, rage: "Look out! Sanofablich! He's got a gun! He's shooting!"

State were propping and more than we know they were and firecreaters of popping balloom they consided before considering any some conflicting ways—some control of the crime; an arrange in an arrange such as appearing of the crime; an arrange in an arrange such and special such an understand and arrange such and special such an arrange such as are such as a such as 

shoulder. Jimmy Breslin, by New Yar, columnists

seemed a foot algore than on the year of the left will. We be found to work the left will be found to work the left w · particle day which seemed strange and foreboding, and his lips were moving but neither Peth, Booker, nor I were close enough to hear. I was vaguely aware of Geraldine and Warren Rogers near my right shoulder. Jimmy Breslin the New York columnist Bob was lying on his back? on champion, adject by George Plimpton, ebrated mock-athlete who now topind himself

tan; and yet sallow, "maybe from the Philippines..." "Because he was one of us," the young man said, berely hearing. "A black man with a white skin." If a brother ... We seen a ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... .... ..

array emotional human being within, able to take an point in the playing field, he is a paint on the playing field, he is a paint of the playing field, he is a paint of the playing field, he is a paint of the playing field in the playing field in the paint of the playing field in the playing field in the paint of the playing field in the paint of the playing field in the paint of the playing field in the playing f An hour passed Plimpton, still shaking, went to the hospital Half a dozen people who had seen it happen huddled together for warmth. Friends kneeded Rosey's mooselike neck and shoulders in an effort not so much to relieve his agony as to express silent, futile sympathy. After he had been back and forth and then fell back on the bed with his eyes closed. We were afraid he might be having a heart attack. A man-mountain on the outside, a sobbing for perhaps two hours, he rose, swayed

preceding. Yes, he was a large state of the state of the

cannuage's reception rooms that be was in an alcoholic stupor; unaware of where he was or wenter that he had squeezed the trigger within he emptided his revolver, firing into Bob Kennedy at point-blank range.

To buttress the "alcoholic wild beast" theory, a pychilarist set the defendant, in his cell, six onnees of gin in four Tom Colliness over a period of 16 minutes raid that where we had been to asting the cardinates health kes than an hour before "It was my fault," Rosey Grice was sobbing. "I should have been in front of him." We tried to console this said their alcohol-induced medical tests. Said one reporter at the trial: "As a psychilarist he makes a helluw bartender! One-ared-shall, ourses been thinking at the Ambassachy, we were turning to getting three-quarters of an ounce." So if Sitham was buying those Ambassachy. We were turning as the Ambassachy to the passed over a much large seried than a much large seried than a sithing that the trials was an atticle and those spaced over a much large seried than a stripming three current and those spaced over a much large seried than a stripming three trials are the strip and the spaced over a much large seried than a stripming three trials are the stripming three trials. The stripming three trials are the stripming trial trials. The stripming three trials are the stripming trials the stripming trials the stripming trials three trials are the stripming trials three trials are the stripming trials three trials are the stripming trials three trials. The stripming trials the stripming trials three trials are the stripming trials three tr

We stayed there until dawn, talking with fellow eyerimesses, fellow mourners, too numb and disputing to borne, and here another unanswered question is provoked. Maybe we have seen too many on the spot. You remember the line, "Nebody leave this room." In this case, one of the most catacrime movies where the case-hardened detective is

there were a number who had been close enough to Sirhan to have been able to hear what he might have said during those critical 27 minutes before the police arrived. He said very little, but he did speak a few sentences. Apparently he did say, "I did it for my country." Would it not have been better—nay, essential!—to get the fresh and immeseemed routine for investigators to return to the Kennedy suite and question all the people there? of them reporters, who had seen the gunning and the gunnan at close range. Would it not have the room. Upstairs were a dozen eyewitnesses, many stropic murders in American history, everybody left

key observers for many months, if ever. Nor did
the FBI. A good deal of telling evidence, some of
which might have affected the very nature of the
cast. was sever to have its day in court. that the local force, while not sinking to the depths of Dallas, hardly deserves an A rating for its police work in the Ambassador hotel that night. diate observations of these eyewitnesses, instead of getting around to many of them months later when memories have to be reconstructed?

Mayor Yorty likes to claim that Los Angeles has the most efficient police force this side of Scotland Yard. But failure to inspect Kennedy's own suite It is also true that they did not get around to some True, the computer at headquarters rapidly traced and to question the circle of friends who stayed on there for hours after the tragedy would indicate the murder weapon to Sirhan Bashira Sirhan. But

The Assass