

MAGAZINES

Where Was O'Donnell?

Each new *Look* installment of William Manchester's *The Death of a President* seems half familiar, because so many episodes have already been published, and half fascinating, because the reader looks for new or nearly forgotten details—and for discrepancies.

Installment No. 3 describes a seldom-reported scene at Parkland Memorial Hospital in which Kennedy aides argued and struggled to get J.F.K.'s coffin past Dallas County Medical Examiner Earl Rose. He kept insisting that Texas law required an autopsy before the body of a murdered man could be released. (Rose last week called the account "not consistent with events.")

The scene then shifts to the now familiar interior of Air Force One and what Manchester probably over-describes as the conflict between Johnson partisans and embittered Kennedy men accompanying their murdered President and his lady home to Washington. Once again there is that painful moment when Mrs. Kennedy walked into the presidential bedroom and found Lyndon Johnson reclining on the bed dictating to a secretary. Later in his narrative, Manchester introduces another vignette: Jackie, while keeping vigil beside her husband's coffin, had the first two drinks of Scotch in her life. It tasted like creosote to her, he says.

Johnson asked that Mrs. Kennedy stand beside him during the swearing-in to emphasize the continuity of the U.S. presidency. Jackie obliged, but Manchester emphasized that the gulf was now so wide that none of the photos taken of the ceremony by White House Photographer Cecil Stoughton showed "the presence of a single male Kennedy aide." Indeed, Manchester says that Mary Gallagher, Mrs. Kennedy's personal secretary, watched Kenneth O'Donnell "pacing the corridor like a

caged tiger, his hands clapped over his ears as though to block the oath."

Or was he? Last week the Boston Globe published a Page One picture showing O'Donnell standing at Jackie's left during the swearing-in. And Stoughton says that other photos he took, which Manchester never asked to see, showed that Kennedy aides, Larry O'Brien and Dave Powers, were also present. Mary Gallagher now says she does not recall telling the story as Manchester reported it. O'Donnell himself asserts that Manchester never asked him about it.

TV REPORTING

Men at War: A French View

The U.S. war in Viet Nam is a helicopter crashing at take-off. It is soldiers wolfing food in the drenching rain, a Viet Cong guerrilla surrendering. War is the American foot soldier splurging his pay on Saigon girls, the monotony of patrols, death in a field. But as coldly treated by France's official TV network, the war has been only a misbegotten adventure carried out by a nation too naive to learn from the superior experience of a wiser country.

Until now, that is. All these human vignettes, and many more, are part of a remarkable new 80-minute Viet Nam documentary. Titled *The Anderson Platoon*, the program suggested a greater understanding of what the U.S. is doing in Viet Nam than anything yet seen in France. "Politics don't interest me," says Producer Pierre Schoendoerffer. "I didn't want to modify anybody's opinion about the war, but only to show them how it was being fought."

An Alsatian, Schoendoerffer, 38, is one of France's leading war reporters. He was with the French troops at Dienbienphu, shared their fate in a Communist prisoner-of-war camp, won the Médaille Militaire. Last fall, for six weeks Schoendoerffer and two



ANDERSON PATROL SCENE
Just telling the how.

French assistants lived with the platoon of Negro West Point Lieutenant Joseph B. Anderson, 24, recording the days leading up to Operation Irving on the central coast of Viet Nam.

Schoendoerffer acts as narrator, but does not preach. The mere sight of a white soldier holding the hand of his Negro buddy who has been wounded tells of the brotherhood of battle without words. The mood is enhanced by rock 'n' roll and blues music. In one sequence, Nancy Sinatra sings *These Boots Are Made for Walkin'* as the platoon trudges through a swamp.

Schoendoerffer was deluged by complimentary phone calls after the showing of his documentary on the *Cinq colonnes à la une* program, France's leading news show. U.S. TV officials who have seen it consider *The Anderson Platoon* the best documentary of the war to date. It may soon be shown on a U.S. network.

NEWSPAPERS

Soviet Circulation Battle

U.S. newspapers would face ruin if they lost circulation the way leading Soviet dailies did last year. Izvestia, the government paper, was down 300,000 (to 7,500,000). Komsomolskaya Pravda, the journal of the Communist youth, was down 500,000 (to 6,300,000). Pravda, the official party mouthpiece, suffered the most spectacular drop of all; it was down 1,000,000 copies (to 6,000,000). But oddly enough, the decline is a healthy sign of sorts.

More for a Revisionist. Under the Stalinist system of centralized planning, newspapers were arbitrarily allocated newsprint and assigned press runs. Often the runs far exceeded the sales, but no matter: the State Committee on Publishing merely split the cost of unsold copies between distributors and the publishers. For the past two years, however, the government has been trying to make selected industries operate on a supply-and-demand basis. Applying this principle to the newspaper business, the government ordered that press runs be more closely matched to actual sales—hence the sudden circulation drop.

Under the new system, only publica-



JOHNSON TAKING PRESIDENTIAL OATH (O'DONNELL FAR RIGHT)

Not exactly a tiger in the corridor.