

FATEFUL DAY

JFK Quipped About His Death

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NEW YORK, Jan. 23 (UPI) — A grim-faced President Kennedy acted out his own assassination for his wife and an aide in their hotel room only two hours before the real one occurred.

"We're heading into nut country today," he warned Jacqueline Kennedy after they were shown a black bordered "welcome" advertisement in a Dallas newspaper accusing Mr. Kennedy of taking part in a communist conspiracy.

This ironic foretaste of tragedy was described in the second Look Magazine installment of William Manchester's book, "The Death of a President," published this week.

LBJ DAZED

The article also pictures President Johnson after the shooting as a slumped figure, dazed and fearful of a plot, while his wife, Ladybird, wrote in a notebook she carried to record her "never-to-be-forgotten moments."

Mr. Manchester is critical of the presidential Secret Service bodyguard on two counts: their immobility in the crucial seconds after the first, non-fatal, bullet struck Mr. Kennedy; and the conflicts and confusion created by "the allegiance of individual agents to a man, not an office."

Only hours earlier Mr. Kennedy had faced the fact that he could be an easy target for a determined attacker. This was in his hotel room in Fort Worth as he and Mrs. Kennedy waited for the flight to Dallas.

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Presidential aide Kenneth O'Donnell showed Mr. Kennedy the advertisement placed in the Dallas News by rightwing detractors. Under the heading, "Welcome, Mr. Kennedy to Dallas," the ad accused the President of responsibility for the imprisonment, starvation and persecution of "thousands of Cubans," said he was selling food to communist soldiers killing Americans in Vietnam and hinted he had reached a secret agreement with the communist party in the United States.

"He read each word," Mr. Manchester wrote. "His face was grim, and he handed it to Jackie. Her vivacity disappeared; she felt sick. The President shook his head. Slowly, he said to her, 'Oh, you know, we're going into nut country today.'"

Then, pacing about the room, Mr. Kennedy began to think about the possibility of an assassin's attack. He observed to his wife that the night before when they arrived at the hotel "would have been a hell of a night to assassinate a President."

"I mean it," he said. "There was the rain, and the night, and we were all getting jostled. Suppose a man had a pistol in a briefcase." He gestured vividly, pointing his rigid index finger at the wall and jerking his thumb twice to show the action of the hammer. "Then he could have dropped the gun

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