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Paul Crute, 34, walked out on a career in sales to start his one-hour assassination-replica tours.

TEXAS

Tourists take death ride

► It costs \$25, and comes with a realistic sound mimicking the assassin's rifle shot.

By Melissa Williams
ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS — For \$25, you too can sit in the back of an open-top limousine making its way through Dealey Plaza, hear the crack of rifle fire as you glide past the Texas School Book Depository and feel the car speed up as it roars through the underpass toward Parkland Memorial Hospital.

It's one of Dallas' newest tourist attractions built around the assassination of John F. Kennedy, and some say it's sick and exploitative. But that's not stopping visitors from taking the one-hour trip.

"All my daughter had to do was tell me about it on the phone and I said, 'Sign me up,'" said Janice Ritting, 55, of Tacoma, Wash.

The tour, thought up by Paul Crute, retraces the path of the presidential motorcade in a 1964 Lincoln restored to look like the 1963 model. Crute re-creates the moment with piped-in sound effects and radio broadcasts from the day the president was shot.

Crute, 34, gave up a career in

sales to start the tour after seeing tourists wandering the assassination site. He makes maybe three trips on weekdays and eight a day during the weekend.

"Being in touch with the fact that it is such an unhealed wound, that's kind of what motivated me to dream this up," he said.

"It's sick," said Chuck DiGiovanni, a tourist from Chicago. "Let's not relive it again. It was a terrible time."

Crute said no one who has taken the tour found it offensive. "I view it as history and there's nothing tasteless or tacky about history," he said.