

# Shooting of JFK<sup>9, 23</sup> revisited

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.

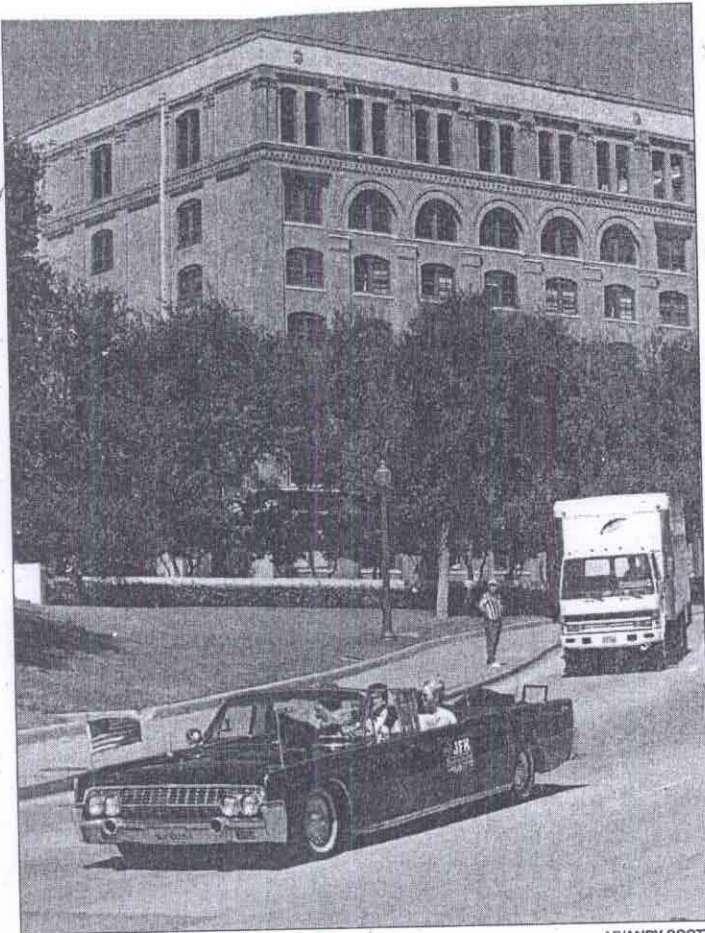
Crute, 34, gave up a career in sales to start the tour after seeing tourists wandering the assassination site. He makes maybe three trips on weekdays and eight a day during the weekend.

"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."

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.

As the tour began one day recently, Mrs. Ritting slid into the left rear seat, the place a pillbox-hatted Jackie Kennedy took. Mrs. Ritting's husband, Andy, took the



AP/ANDY SCOTT

Guide Paul Crute drives along Elm Street in Dallas and traces the route President John F. Kennedy's car followed the day he was assassinated.

right rear seat, resting his elbow on the door like Kennedy.

The taped sounds of cheering crowds ensued as the car proceeded from Love Field into downtown. Along the way, people pointed and stared. One man pointed his hand like a gun at the passengers.

The limo passed the former School Book Depository and headed downhill toward the underpass.

BAM! BAM! BAM-BAM-BAM!  
BAM!

Silence from the radio announcer for several confused seconds, then: "It appears as though something has happened in the motorcade route." The Rittings' limo flew down the freeway, goose bumps on Mrs. Ritting's bare arms.

Taped sirens screamed as Crute raced toward the hospital. At the Parkland emergency dock, the car stopped and the announcer described a priest giving Kennedy last rites. Mrs. Ritting held back tears.

"This is really special," she said. "I have mixed feelings about it. I wouldn't miss it for the world, but it's kind of eerie. I relived this because it affected me so much."