

2nd Kennedy Assassination Film Available

Footage Shows Only Known Shot of the Grassy Knoll Area on the Day of Slaying

By MIKE CRISSEY
Associated Press

DALLAS—The second most important footage of the assassination of John F. Kennedy has been made available to the public exactly 37 years after his presidency abruptly ended in a hail of bullets.

About 200 people crowded into the Texas Book Depository Building this week to watch the 24½-second film recorded Nov. 22, 1963, by Orville Nix Sr.

The footage is the only known motion picture of the assassination that also shows part of the grassy knoll, the area where speculation about a second gunman persists.

Filmed from the south curb of Houston Street and the northwest corner of Main Street, the footage contains three scenes: the motorcade entering Dealey Plaza, the last shot of the assassination in front of the grassy knoll, and the panic and confusion afterward.

The most well-known frames of the film show Jackie Kennedy climbing over the trunk of the presidential limousine, scrambling to pick up pieces of the president's shattered skull, and Secret Service agent Clint Hill climbing onto the trunk.

The Nix film is considered by historians and other experts to be the second most important piece of footage because it was filmed from the opposite angle of the Abraham Zapruder film and shows what was going on behind Zapruder in the grassy knoll. In Nix's film, Zapruder can be seen in a few frames.

Nix donated a first-generation copy and the copyright to the color home movie to the Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza. The 8mm camera is also on display at the museum.

"One of the things we hope for the Nix film is that as technology advances. . . . Hopefully we can find something," said Jeff West, executive director of the museum.

Nix's son, Orville Nix Jr., told viewers his father's film was largely happenstance and took so long to reach the public partly because the family wanted to keep its privacy.

"He loved that camera, he was always taking pictures of things and this was something that just happened," Nix said of his father, who

died in 1972. "It was a sad thing to see."

"Now, I want people to see and draw their own conclusions. It is part of history," he said.

At the time of the investigation, the FBI used the Nix film to study the assassination and the Warren Commission reproduced six frames. Portions of the film were used in Oliver Stone's 1991 movie "JFK."

Museum officials said the loca-

tion of the original film is unknown. United Press International purchased it in December 1963, but when UPI returned the copyright to the Nix family—along with several duplicates of the film—the original was missing.

The Nix images were included with footage by Tina Towner Barnes, who also filmed the motorcade, and Malcolm Couch, who rode behind the president as a pho-

tographer for Dallas TV station WFAA.

Some of those who attended the invitation-only screening said it gave them a firsthand glimpse of a tragedy many people remember but didn't witness.

"Many of us only had the radio to initially tell us about the event. The films gave me a different perspective of the assassination," said Mary Katherine Maddox, 65.

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About 200 people, including Orville Nix Jr., the recorder's son, watch film.