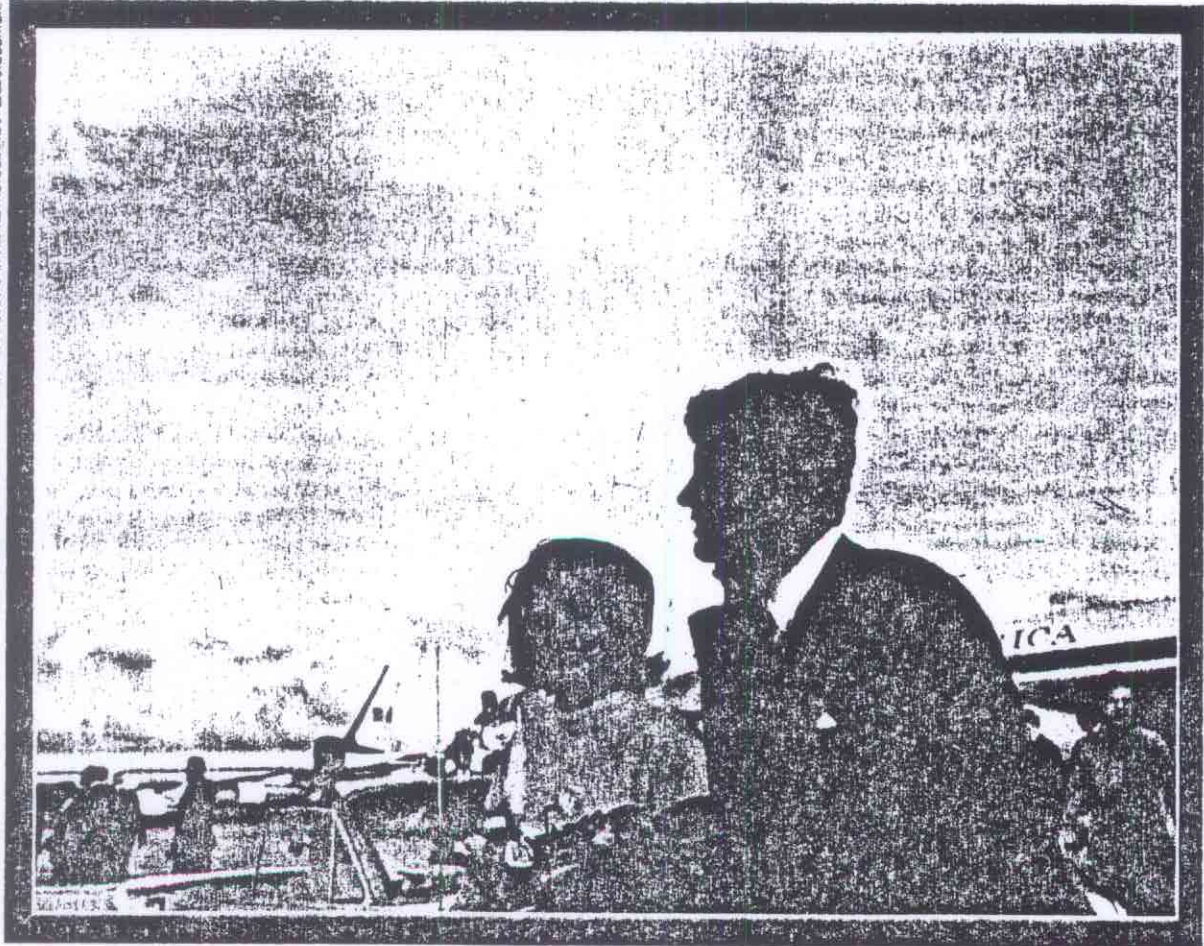
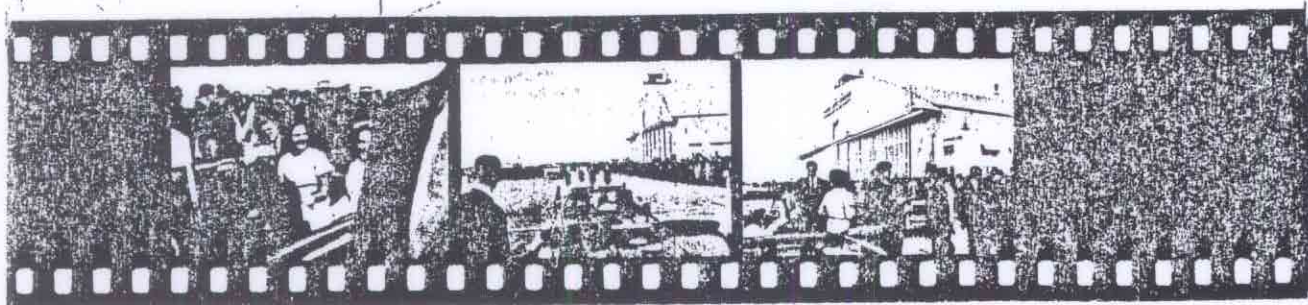


UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY, BOSTON, MASS. ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY CYCEL STOUGHTON.



The few days in Texas were meant to mend political fences. Here the Kennedys arrive in San Antonio, their first stop.



The President was met in San Antonio by Texas's Governor Connally and his wife (left). Together they flew to Houston.

It was a typical motorcade. Cecil W. Stoughton had been in many like it. A forty-three-year-old veteran of the Signal Corps, Captain Stoughton had so impressed John F. Kennedy with pictures of his inauguration that the new President, through his military aide, appointed him his official photographer. In the course of thirty-four months, Stoughton had made more than eight thousand photographs of Kennedy and his family. Beginning on November 21, during the President's much publicized autumn visit to shore up his political position in Texas, Stoughton recorded receptions at San Antonio, Brooks Medical Center, Kelly Field, and the Rice Hotel in Houston, and a testimonial dinner for Rep. Albert Thomas at the Houston Coliseum. The photographer mainly relied on two cameras: an Alpha Reflex and a 500 C Hasselblad. The Alpha was a 35-mm SLR, usually used with a wide-angle 35-mm or a 180-mm telephoto lens. But Stoughton preferred the other camera. "The Hasselblad was my tool, an extension of my

THE DAY KENNEDY WAS SHOT

by Richard B. Trask

A routine chore for JFK's official photographer became the most important assignment of his career. Much of his moving pictorial record appears here for the first time.

right arm. I used it every chance I got. It had interchangeable magazines. You would put black-and-white

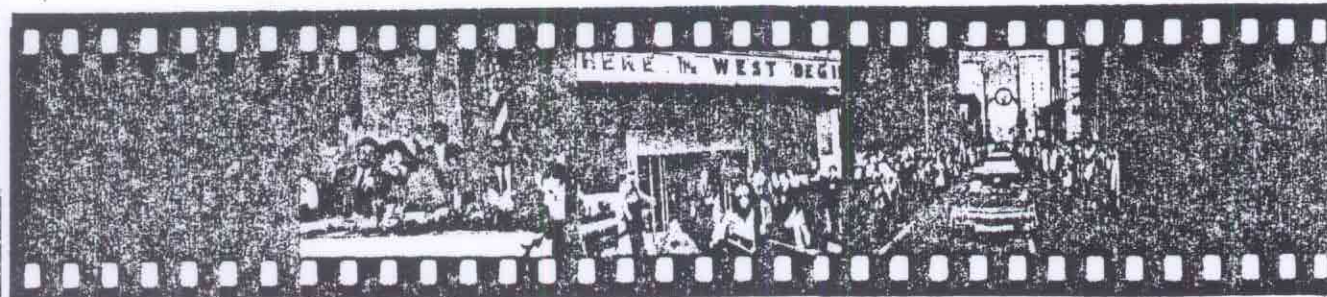
in one, color in one, transparency film in one."

The twenty-second of November, 1963, dawned driz-

zily. Stoughton's first assignment of the day was to record the President speaking to a soggy but enthusiastic Fort Worth crowd that had started gathering early to get a glimpse of the Kennedys. Stoughton decided the overcast morning would be suitable for black-and-white film, and because his Alpha Reflex was already loaded with fast Tri-X film from the events of the day before, he decided to finish off the roll.

Following the public rally, the President was scheduled to address a Chamber of Commerce breakfast inside the Hotel Texas. Stoughton positioned himself in the ballroom, now using his Hasselblad 500 C loaded with 120 color film. He recorded the President's arrival, introductions at the podium, and Mrs. Kennedy's late but grand arrival in a pink suit with matching pillbox hat.

Following a motorcade through Fort Worth, the President and his guests boarded Air Force One at Carswell Air Force Base for the short flight to Dallas. Stoughton, as usual, rode in the press plane, arriving first in order to record the landing of Air Force One, which descended



On November 22 the Kennedys attended a breakfast in Fort Worth (left and above), then they left for Dallas.

out of a now cloudless sky.

The press had expected a hostile atmosphere in conservative Dallas, but, says Stoughton, "At Love Field my pictures show dozens of flags, hand-painted welcome signs, a lot of warmth. I did not feel or see any hatred during the whole time we were there. It was just a beautiful reception, a bright, warm, sunny day and thousands of people cheering."

After the official greetings the President and First Lady veered toward the obviously friendly crowd on the opposite side of a chest-high chain-link fence. The Kennedys made their way along the barrier, touching the outstretched hands of delighted spectators.

Stoughton went to work: "I stood on the cement base of a lamp, about two feet high, and that gave me a chance to look down. They walked right by me—an arm's length away—and that was the last time I made a picture of them. They got into the car a couple of seconds after that and drove into town."

It was a few minutes before noon when the President's shiny blue Lincoln convertible began to move out

and the camera people scrambled for their vehicles. The pace was hectic yet routine. Stoughton sat in the back seat of a convertible with other photographers, then positioned himself for a better view on top of the trunk, which contained the convertible top. The photographers' silver 1964 Chevrolet Impala was the seventh vehicle following the President's car.

During this second motorcade of the day the crowds were six to eight deep as the cars traveled into the Dallas downtown business district. Having used up half his magazine at the airport, and planning to save the remainder of his roll for events at a scheduled luncheon speech at the Dallas Trade Mart, Stoughton shot only one picture during the motorcade.

Just after Stoughton's car had turned right at the old County Court House onto Commerce Street, he heard three very distinct, loud reports. "I said, 'Hey, Art [Art Rickerby, *Life* staff photographer], these Texans really know how to welcome a guy, don't they?' In my

mind I saw a guy on the roof in a ten-gallon hat with a six-shooter—bang bang! bang bang! That's what I thought. Then we rounded the corner and saw a lot of hectic police activity."

The car made a sharp left onto Elm Street past the red-brick Texas School Book Depository Building. "We realized something was amiss," says Stoughton, "as the cars ahead of us were gone. When we rolled to a stop just around the corner, [Frank] Cancellare [United Press International photographer] leaped out of the car and ran to take a picture of a family cowering on the grass. A White House photographer, Tom Atkins, was already there, shooting his 16-mm Arriflex, and instead of doing likewise, I slipped my 150-mm lens on the Hasselblad and shot one frame. . . ."

The last color picture Stoughton took in Dallas caught the four members of the Newman family, who had been watching the procession and had dropped to the ground when the shots sounded.

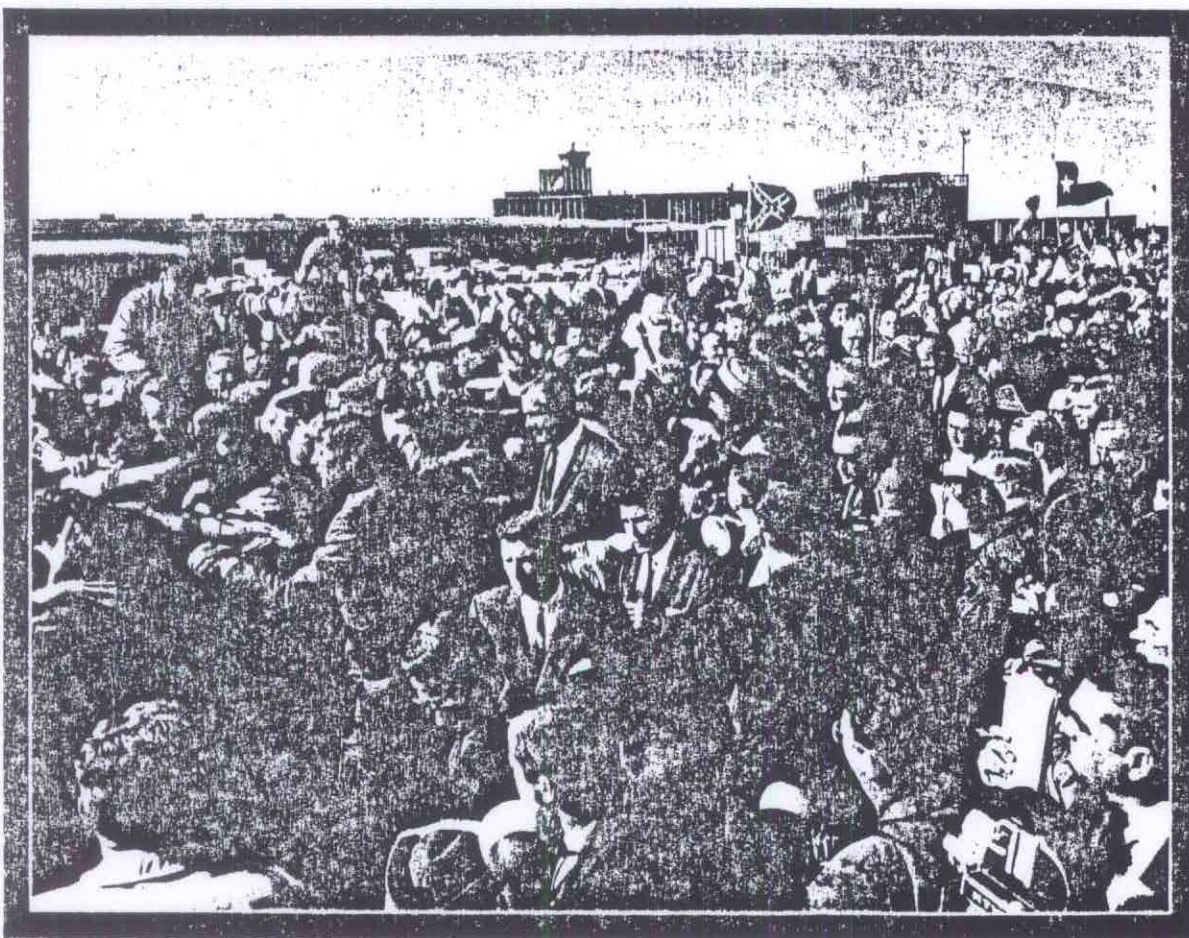
Stoughton had no time to take other pictures of the area. As soon as he realized

that the President's car was not nearby, he shouted to the driver, "Let's get the hell out of here."

They drove directly to the Trade Mart, knowing only that something highly unusual had occurred back at the plaza. Stoughton remembers people yelling toward the car as it sped through the Trade Mart, "He's at Parkland!" which meant nothing to Stoughton, but Clint Grant, a local photographer on board, said, "God, that's a hospital. Let's take off!" Stoughton's car arrived near Parkland's emergency entrance at about the same time as the other two camera cars. Grabbing his 35-mm camera, loaded with a fresh roll of Tri-X, Stoughton made two quick shots of the emergency entrance. Later he took two more pictures of the area, but from a different angle, showing agents putting the plastic bubble top and fabric cover over the convertible. In these photos the trunk is open and a metal bucket is on the ground next to the President's door. Stoughton recalls that a man was washing the seat "with a cloth and a bucket. There was blood all over the seat,

When they were an arm's length
away at the Dallas airport,
he made his last picture of them.

Contrary to warnings from the
President's staff and from
local politicians, the crowd at
Dallas airport was friendly.



and flower petals and stuff
on the floor." Stoughton en-
tered the hospital. By this
time he knew that the Presi-

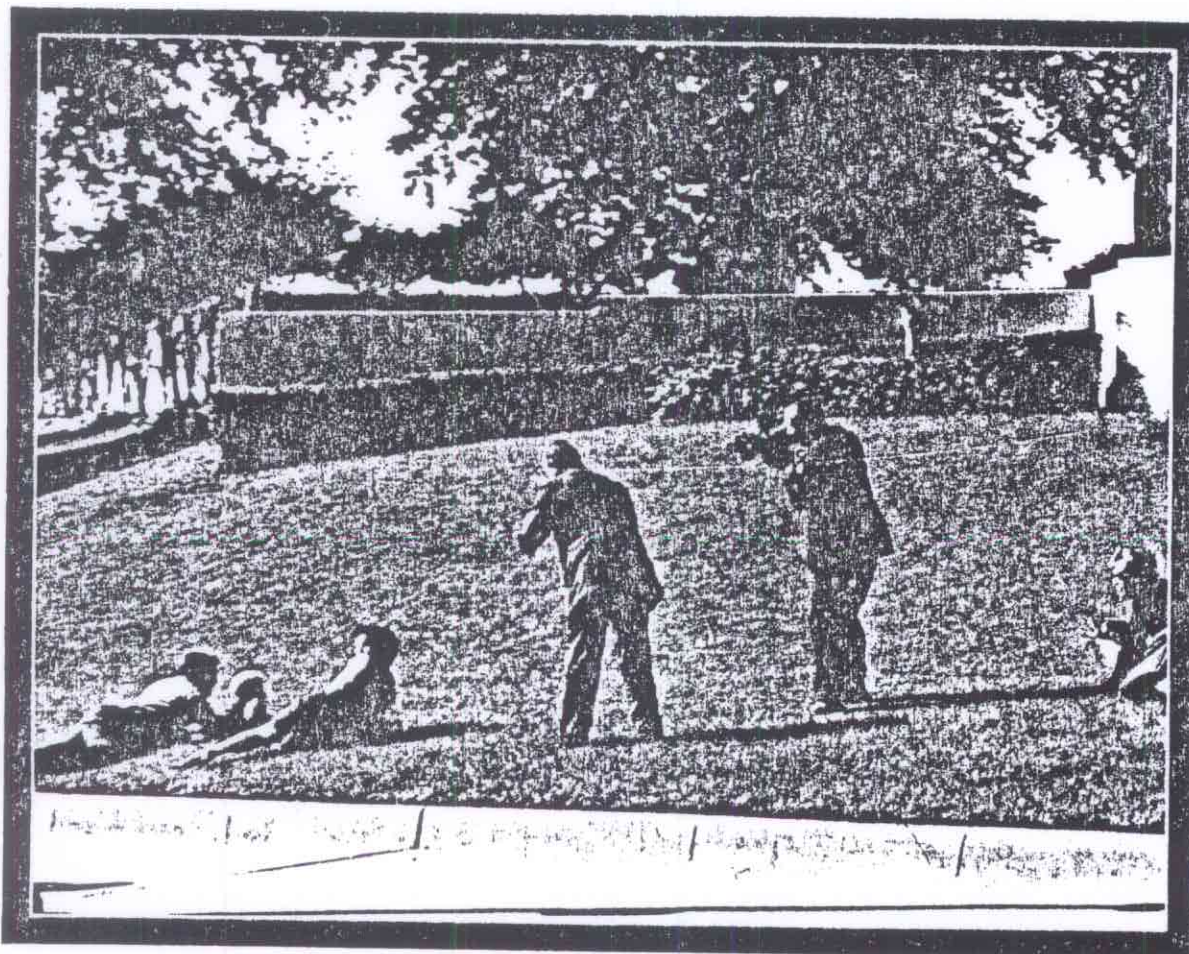
dent was seriously wounded.
Signal Corpsman Art Bales
"handed me a phone at a criti-
cal time when he had just

touched base with the White
House switchboard. He had
an open line and had to go
do something else, and he

asked me to hold this phone
and talk into it so that the op-
erator would not listen in,
find nobody there, and cut

He heard three shots and at first thought this must be some kind of Texas welcome.

The sounds of shooting brought these onlookers to the ground, the focus of several still unknowing photographers.

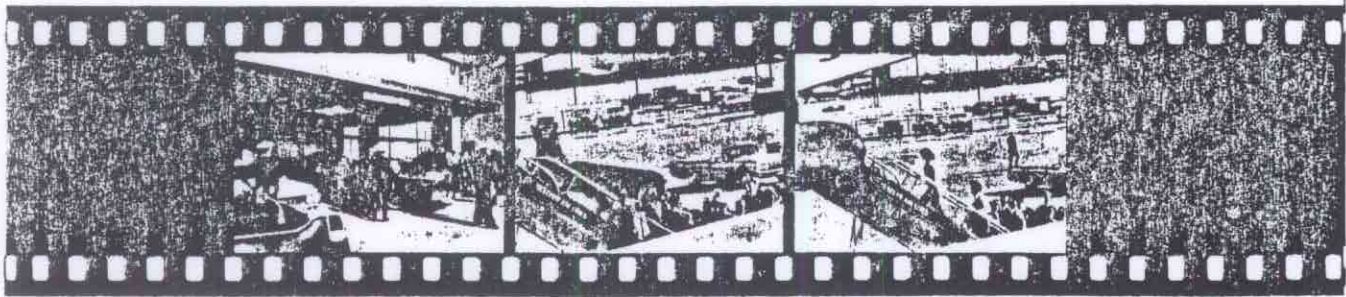


the connection. Just as he handed me the receiver, I saw Lyndon Johnson and Lady Bird pushing through

the 'out' door, and I asked, 'Where's he going?' and Bales said, 'The President is going to Washington.' I knew

then that Kennedy had expired, and I said, 'So am I,' and handed him back his phone."

Stoughton was not quick enough to catch a ride with the small, fast-departing entourage. Just after the John-



In the aftermath the car is scrubbed, the coffin is lifted aboard Air Force One, and the widow climbs the steps.

sons left, however, Thomas L. Johns, a vice-presidential Secret Service agent, arrived, having also missed their departure. Johns obtained a police car and driver, and with Stoughton and two Johnson aides, Cliff Carter and Jack Valenti, they made for Love Field. Stoughton remembers the ride as "hairy and fast." The driver did not know how to get to the plane and found himself on the opposite side of the tarmac. "Hell," shouted Johns, "we're on the wrong side of the airport! Let's shoot the runways." Leaving behind airport rules, common sense, and security dictates, they managed to reach their destination.

President Johnson had decided to travel back to Washington on board Air Force One, with its more sophisticated communications system, rather than on Air Force Two. But he did not want to depart until he had taken the oath of office and until the deceased President and his widow were also aboard. Back at Parkland, the assistant press secretary Malcolm Kilduff made the public announcement of the death of President Kennedy at 1:33 P.M. A Dallas undertaker ar-

rived at the hospital with a four-hundred-pound bronze casket into which the President's body was placed. The casket left the hospital in an ambulance-hearse at about five minutes after two.

His own shock had kept Stoughton from taking photographs of the confused and devastated staff inside Parkland's corridors. Aboard Air Force One, however, he saw the ambulance arriving, and from the forward port side of the Boeing 707 he made a series of ten shots with his 35-mm Alpha, finishing off the black-and-white roll he had begun at Parkland's emergency entrance.

The series of pictures begins with the ambulance's arrival near the rear gangway of Air Force One. In the next grouping of photographs, Stoughton captures agents struggling to get the almost six-hundred-pound load up the narrow metal gangway. Many hands attempt to help with the burden, while on the tarmac below, the military aides Chester V. ("Ted") Clifton, Jr., and Godfrey

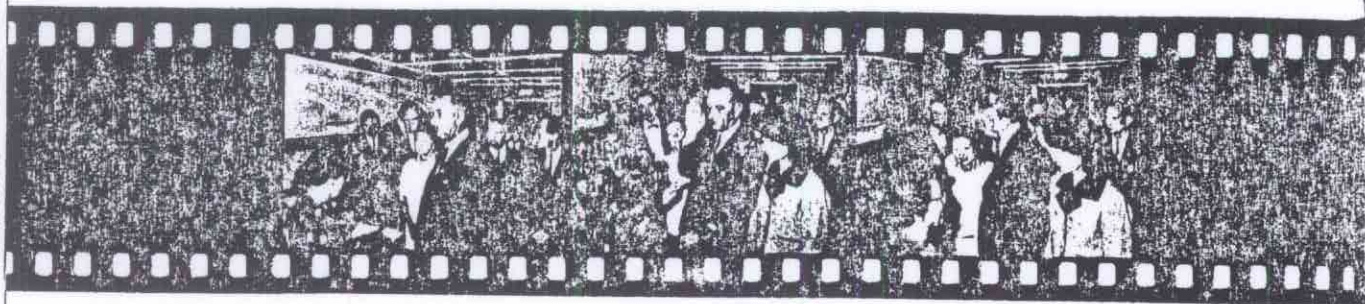
McHugh, Mrs. Kennedy, and members of the slain President's inner circle watch with stricken faces. A uniformed Dallas police officer a few paces behind the melancholy gathering is seen in three subsequent frames, taking off his hat and holding it to his heart in a private salute until the casket is aboard. The last three frames in the sequence follow the former First Lady walking up the steps, forlorn and disheveled, with blood on her skirt and stockings. Behind follow Larry O'Brien, Ken O'Donnell, and Dave Powers.

Stoughton reloaded his Alpha with Tri-X film and put a roll of 120 black-and-white film in his Hasselblad; he wanted fast film if he was called upon to make pictures of the swearing-in. Kilduff confirmed that the President wanted to record the ceremony. About fifteen minutes after President Kennedy's body was aboard, U.S. District Judge Sarah T. Hughes arrived to administer the oath. Stoughton suggested to Kilduff that they use the airplane Dictograph to record the swearing-in. The ceremony would take place in

the stateroom, which had the largest open space in the cabin. The approximately sixteen-foot-square compartment, however, was still much too small to accommodate everyone on the plane comfortably. Stoughton stepped up onto a sofa and flattened himself against the rear bulkhead of the space in order to get the best view of the proceedings.

Stoughton's cramped physical position was uncomfortable enough, but he also felt the greater strain of not wanting to muffle the most important assignment of his career. When President Johnson asked Stoughton how he wanted them, the photographer replied, "I'll put the judge so I'm looking over her shoulder, Mr. President." Upon learning that Mrs. Kennedy would be present, he suggested that she should be on one side of the President with Mrs. Johnson on the other. Stoughton began his picture series, using his Alpha with available cabin light. The first six pictures show Johnson as the focal point with others awkwardly waiting.

Switching to his Hasselblad, Stoughton began to



Lyndon B. Johnson is sworn
in aboard the presidential plane,
his wife at left and Jacqueline
Kennedy at right.

take another photo with his favorite camera, using an attached flash unit. "The first time I pushed the button, it didn't work, and I almost died. I had a little connector that was loose because of all the busting around, so I just pushed it in with my finger, and number two went off on schedule. I sprayed the cabin so I could get a picture of everybody there." Prints of the first two Hasselblad photos cover a larger area than the 35-mm prints and are much clearer in detail. Unlike the 35-mm prints, these flash shots fill in the scene with light. Judge Hughes can be seen holding a Catholic missal (believed at the time to be a Bible) for the swearing-in ceremony and a sheet of paper with the oath of office typed out on it.

Moments after Stoughton's eighth picture Mrs. Kennedy entered the compartment with O'Donnell. The former First Lady moved with O'Donnell and Powers nearby, to Johnson's left side. Stoughton had already seen the bloodstains on Mrs. Kennedy's skirt. He felt that photographing this in these historic pictures would be inappropriate, so he made

sure the camera would not reveal them.

At 2:38 P.M. Judge Hughes administered the oath. Malcolm Kilduff held up the microphone while Stoughton quickly squeezed off four shots with the Hasselblad and four with the Alpha. Except for the words of Johnson and the judge, Stoughton realized that the only noise in the cabin was the clicking of his camera shutter.

The ceremony was over within half a minute. The President ordered Air Force One back to Washington, and those remaining in Dallas left the plane, Stoughton among them. He would stay to have his unprocessed film developed and sent out via the wire services. When Kilduff handed Stoughton the Dictabelt recording of the oath of office, the captain felt that he had been made totally responsible for history's record of this momentous event. The visible continuity of the Republic had been accomplished. The government continued. And Stoughton was carrying the proof.

No one was allowed to enter or leave the airstrip until Air Force One took off. Just about the time the plane became airborne at 2:47 P.M., a press bus from Parkland arrived on the scene. The pool reporter Sid Davis, who had been aboard during the swearing-in, described the event to the other reporters who gathered around him. A nickel was flipped to see which bureau would process the undeveloped pictures. AP won the toss. After a dash to the Dallas Morning News Building, where the AP office was located, the film was handed over to a technician. Stoughton went into the darkroom with him. "Even though there was nothing I could do, I just wanted to be there when it came out. And when he held it up to the light, I could see some images, and then I breathed. I was turning blue up to that point."

One of the four Hasselblad prints of the oath-taking was chosen as the picture to send over the wire. It was agreed that the photo would not be sent out until a duplicate copy had been delivered to UPI for its distribution. Both wire services gave

Capt. Cecil Stoughton photo credit, and his picture was rapidly reproduced in newspapers and shown on television around the world.

The next few days blur in Stoughton's memory. "I was going all day Friday, Friday night, and shooting pictures at four o'clock in the morning. I went back home, changed clothes, and went back to the White House to cover Johnson's official meetings. Then came the lying in state in the East Room and the Capitol and the funeral. When we got to St. Matthew's on Monday, I was on the steps as they were carrying the casket. I could reach out and touch the flag, and I nearly collapsed at that point. But then I carried on, went to the cemetery, and shot everything there that I could. I must have been going just on nerves."

Stoughton stayed on at the White House until the summer of 1965. He later transferred to a Pentagon job, where he remained until his retirement from the Army in April 1967. He then became the chief photographer for the National Park Service. Stoughton retired from his long government career in

For the best vantage in the cramped cabin, Stoughton climbed onto a sofa near the rear.

Mrs. Kennedy stands with the new President after the oath of office. Later she went back to the cabin that held the coffin.



April 1973 and now lives in Florida. Regarding his nearly anonymous contribution to recording presidential

history on film, Stoughton commented, "The President knows I took them; I know I took them; my wife knows I

took them. I guess that's enough credit." ★

The town archivist in Dan-

vers, Massachusetts, Richard B. Trask is preparing a book on the photographic history of Kennedy's assassination.