

*James Renald*  
*July 21, 1977*

# Recreating the day Kennedy was shot

By LEONARD REED  
Staff Writer

A surrogate Lee Harvey Oswald stood motionless next to a county sheriff on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository. He watched a bespectacled Lorraine Greene walk near the window that opens onto Dealey Plaza and, slowly and deliberately, reconstruct for a jury what was alleged to have happened Nov. 22, 1963 — the day John F. Kennedy was shot to death.

It was the first day of downtown filming for an ABC-TV special, "The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald," and the first day since 1963 of open and active use of the depository building.

Trailers flanked the building at Houston and Elm Streets, hauling in the props, lighting equipment, wiring, special dressing rooms and makeup area needed to create on celluloid a day that never happened. Lee Harvey Oswald, of course, never went before a jury, and there was

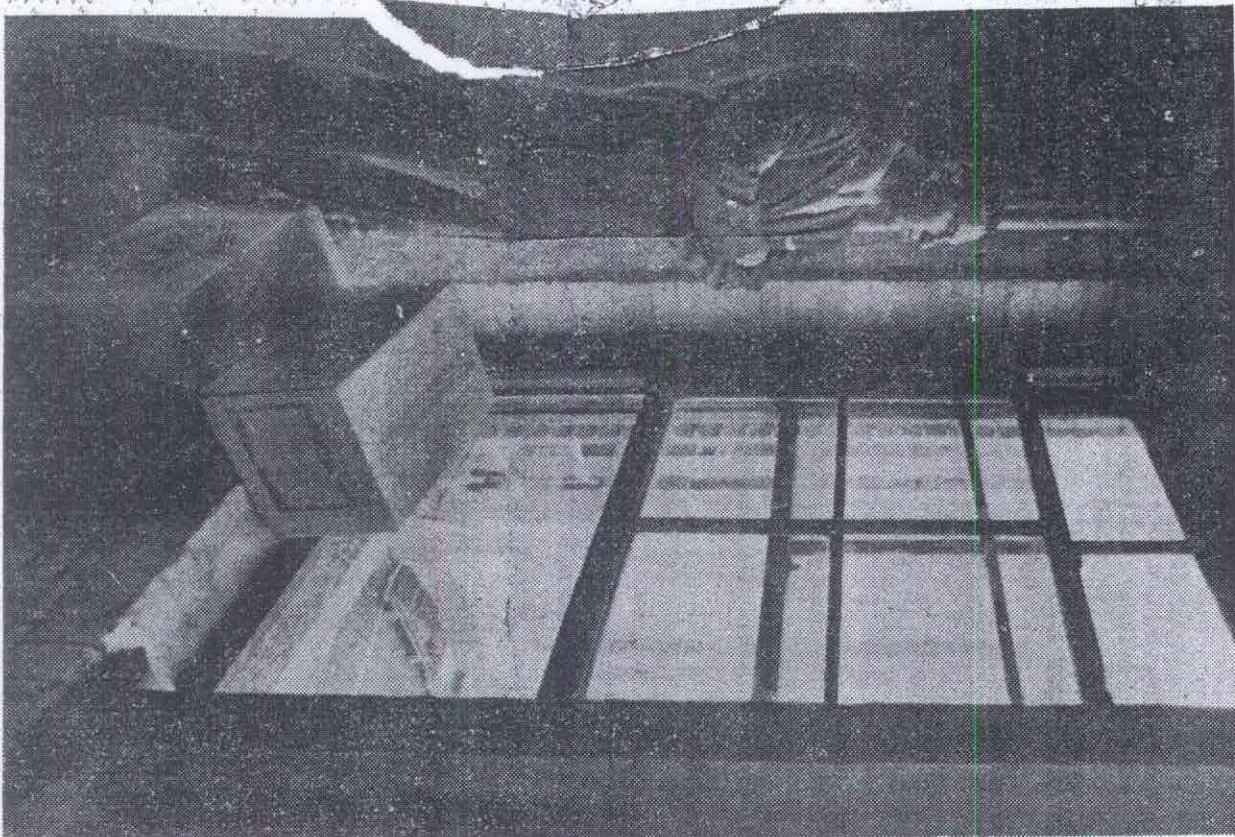
no jurors' visit to the scene of the crime.

Security was very tight Friday, and the production by Charles Fries Inc. was a closed set.

But drama/still made it to the street. The jury upstairs — central to the movie, which speculates on what might have happened had Oswald gone to trial — also watched two marksmen aim rifles from the windows Oswald was alleged to have fired from. As they acted out their roles in justice-before-the-camera, street-level passersby looked up, slowed in their tracks and whispered to each other while blocking the sun from their eyes. Others, undaunted by the drama, aimed Instamatics up at the window, and yelled, "Hey Lorraine!"

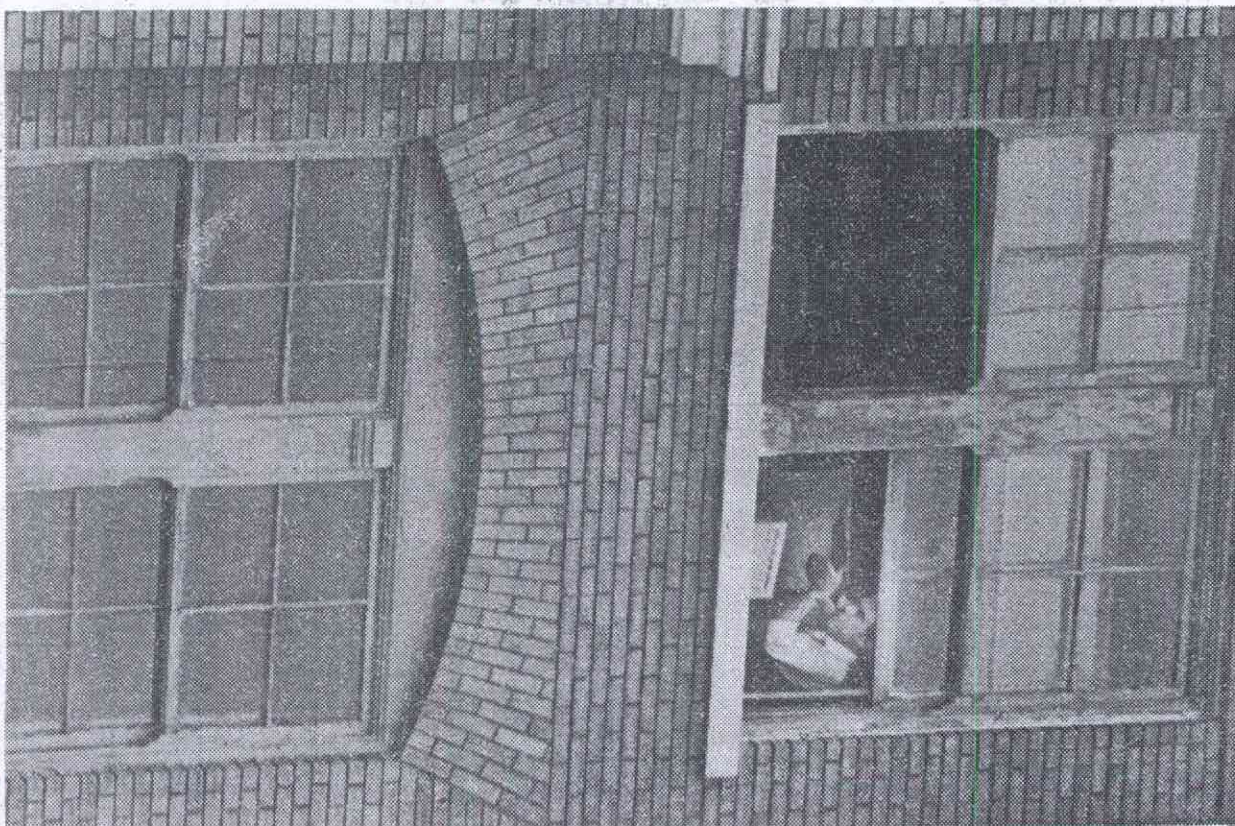
Greene wasn't interested. In between takes, he said the entire acting and production crews were submerged in a movie that's both historical and fictional. "I was deeply engaged on that day in 1963," he said, "and now it's here.

See MOOD on Page 8



*John Pleshette (Oswald) at book depository window*

— Staff Photo by Jay Dickman



*Marksman reconstructs shooting of President Kennedy*

— Staff Photo by John E. Hall

## Mood on sixth floor described as 'weird'

Continued from Page One

Now, right here.

"It's a fast rewind, and very powerful. You know, I brought with me a lot of personal feelings about what happened back then, but now, for the movie, I've got to stand back and create reasonable doubt about the guilt of Oswald."

Others said the tone on the sixth floor Friday was one of edginess: George Weiner, who plays Ben Gazzara's assistant on the prosecution team, said dryly, "It's weird."

As a special effects man walked by carrying a plaster head that will detonate when the jury watches a re-creation of Kennedy's motorcade, Weiner said, "I never thought I'd be looking out that window."

Indeed, every attempt to recreate the depository and Dealey Plaza of 1963 has been made, down to finest detail. Hundreds of empty cardboard boxes filled what was the vacant sixth floor, and more than 50 bricks — presumed stolen for odd souvenirs — were mortared back into place under the window that was considered Oswald's perch.

A massive overhead sign at lower Elm Street that directs motorists through the triple overpass was dismantled and trucked away Friday by the city's Traffic Department. NO STANDING signs were bolted onto lightposts by film crew members, described by one as being "just like those that were here 14 years ago."

Trees that have grown since the Kennedy assassination were pruned. And the film's coproducer, Richard Freed, could be seen scouting around what conspiracy theorists have referred to as the grassy knoll north of Dealey Plaza. He looked carefully at the line of sight to the sixth-floor window and ordered what trees were to be pruned.

In the back of one pickup truck lay reproduced posters that were likely held by protesters as Kennedy drove through Dallas in 1963. Beneath a head-and-shoulders shot of the President was the bold headline, "Wanted for Treason," but no affiliation was listed. Also stamped on them was "Warren Commission, Exhibit No. 996," but movie crew members declined to state their use.

Friday was a long day for the crew, which began rehearsal at 11 a.m. and broke for lunch at 5 p.m. Extras, like the SMU graduate student and the Denton High School physics teacher that appeared in the morning, sat around most of the day.

If the schedule of Fries Productions holds, John Pleshette, who plays Oswald, will be filmed today entering the Depository carrying a brown bag — in 1963 presumed to contain a rifle.

Sunday and Monday will be days for filming the Kennedy motorcade, during which more than four city blocks will be blocked off to motorists and pedestrians. Sunday's motorcade will be the actual film version of the assassination, and filming Monday will focus on a jury's recreation of the assassination. A pre-mortared dummy will ride Monday in the limousine before a viewing jury, as shots are fired from the Depository.

The security for Sunday and Monday's filming will be handled by off-duty Dallas police, who are hired by the filming company.