

Movie recreating JFK assassination

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DALLAS (AP) — For a few seconds, "Lee Harvey Oswald" leaned out a window of the Texas Schoolbook Depository Building.

The sight of actor John Pleshette, a high-powered rifle cradled in his shoulder, attracted the attention of hundreds of tourists who came to Dealey Plaza on Monday to watch the recreation of the Nov. 22, 1963, assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

The recreation is part of an ABC television movie, "The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald," a fictional tale of what might have happened had the man identified by the Warren Commission as Kennedy's sole assassin lived to stand trial. Oswald was shot to death by Dallas nightclub operator Jack Ruby two days after the assassination while he was being moved from the police department to the county jail.

Pleshette, who portrays Oswald, was not acting when he appeared at the window with the rifle but was watching the filming below. Earlier, a police marksman had "fired" the shots at the presidential limousine six floors below in a scene that was to be shown to the fictional jury.

On Sunday, the recreation of the shooting took place before hundreds of tourists. A cast of several hundred extras scattered and "panicked" as the shots were "fired" into the presidential motorcade.

"It was really haunting," said Pleshette.

Women wearing bobby-socks and men in thin ties fell over each other in mock hysteria under the direction of supervising producer Larry Schiller who shouted: "Bang. You hear it but don't have time to react."

"Bang. Now you go down running that way. You realize now it's not a backfire."

"Bang. The motorcade's moving now and you run as if to catch it."

A few in the crowd seemed perturbed. Fermin Garcia said the assassination should not have been recreated. "God would have wanted it that way."

Maevs Chapman of nearby Irving, one of the spectators, said: "When I saw the way she (Christine Rose, the actress playing Mrs. Kennedy) was dressed, and the President bareheaded, it gave you a stranger feeling. It brought tears."

Bob Etheridge, who plays the part of Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, recalled that on the day of the assassination, "I was watching the parade five minutes before it (the assassination) happened. I could have reached out and touched him (Kennedy). It's a real weird feeling to have seen the parade and then to see them recreate the assassination."

Some spectators pointed out that the movie makers were not very accurate in the description of the event, but Schiller said "We're here to recreate it emotionally ... We should not allow the enormity of the event to overshadow the simplicity of the act."