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23 NOV 1964

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EA39WX

U R G E N T

(300) SECOND NIGHT LEAD ASSASSINATION TESTIMONY

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, NOV. 23 (AP)-THE EMOTIONS AND TERROR OF A YEAR AGO IN DALLAS WERE DISCLOSED IN CHILLING DETAIL TODAY-- IN THE WORDS OF JACQUELINE KENNEDY, PRESIDENT JOHNSON, MRS. JOHNSON AND SCORES OF OTHERS.

"MY HUSBAND NEVER MADE A SOUND," RECALLED THE PRESIDENT'S YOUNG WIDOW OF THE INSTANT THE BULLETS STRUCK. "...HE HAS THIS SORT OF QUIZZICAL LOOK ON HIS FACE, AND HIS HAND WAS UP..."

TO LYNDON B. JOHNSON IT ALL HAD A NIGHTMARE SENSE OF THE "UNREAL, UNBELIEVEABLE."

AND TO MRS. JOHNSON THE MOST HEART-SEARING MOMENT THAT TRAGIC DAY--A YEAR AND A DAY AGO--WAS SEEING JACQUELINE KENNEDY, "THAT IMMACULATE WOMAN," WEARING GLOVES CAKED WITH HER HUSBAND'S BLOOD.

SHE TOLD MRS. KENNEDY, "YOU KNOW WE NEVER EVEN WANTED TO BE VICE PRESIDENT AND NOW, DEAR GOD, IT HAS COME TO THIS."

THE GRIM STORY OF NOV. 22, 1963, AND THE FOLLOWING EVENTS AS TOLD IN THE 26 VOLUMES OF TESTIMONY THE WARREN COMMISSION AMASSED IN PREPARING ITS RECENT REPORT ON KENNEDY'S ASSASSINATION WAS MADE PUBLIC TODAY.

A40WX

IT HAD BEEN SCHEDULED TO BE RELEASED NEXT MONDAY. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS GAINED ACCESS TO SOME OF THE VOLUMES, AND A FEW HOURS AFTER THE AP DISPATCHES WERE TRANSMITTED THE WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCED THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE AND PUBLIC SALE OF THE FULL TRANSCRIPT.

THE TRANSCRIPT SHOWS:

DESPITE URGINGS OF OFFICIALS AFRAID THE ASSASSINATION WAS PART OF A WIDESPREAD CONSPIRACY TO SHATTER THE GOVERNMENT, JOHNSON HELD UP THE PRESIDENTIAL PLANE IN DALLAS, SO THAT IT COULD RETURN TO WASHINGTON THE BODY OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE WIDOW STILL WEARING HER BLOOD-STAINED CLOTHES. A LADY OF "BRAVERY, NOBILITY AND DIGNITY," SAID JOHNSON OF MRS. KENNEDY.

GOV. JOHN CONNALLY OF TEXAS RECALLED LYING IN HIS WIFE'S LAP IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CAR AFTER BEING HIT BY ONE OF THE BULLETS. HE WONDERED IF HE WERE DYING. HE HEARD THE FINAL SHOT HIT KENNEDY AND "IT WAS A VERY LOUD NOISE."

MRS. CONNALLY REMEMBERED THE "FRIGHTENING NOISE" AND HEARING MRS. KENNEDY SAYING, "THEY HAVE KILLED MY HUSBAND AND I HAVE HIS BRAINS IN MY HAND."

FOR JACQUELINE, ETC 9TH GRAF A3WX

CZ347PES

A3WX

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EA3WX

(1,600) AMS BUDGET

NIGHT LEAD ASSASSINATION TESTIMONY (ROUNDUP)

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, NOV. 23 (AP)-THE ALMOST UNUTTERABLE EMOTIONS OF LYNDON B. JOHNSON, MRS. JOHNSON, JACQUELINE KENNEDY AND OTHERS IN THAT FATEFUL DALLAS CAVALCADE BECAME KNOWN IN MORE DETAIL TODAY-- SO FAR AS WORDS CAN EXPRESS THEM.

FOR EXAMPLE, LADY BIRD JOHNSON TOLD JACQUELINE KENNEDY:

"YOU KNOW WE NEVER EVEN WANTED TO BE VICE PRESIDENT AND NOW, DEAR GOD, IT HAS COME TO THIS."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS OBTAINED ACCESS TO SOME OF THE VOLUMES OF TESTIMONY THE WARREN COMMISSION AMASSED IN PREPARING ITS RECENT REPORT ON THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY IN DALLAS A YEAR AND A DAY AGO.

A FEW HOURS AFTER THE AP DISPATCHES WERE TRANSMITTED, THE WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCED THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF THE FULL TRANSCRIPT, WHICH RUNS TO 26 VOLUMES, PLUS MANY EXHIBITS.

PUBLIC RELEASE ORIGINALLY HAD BEEN SET FOR NEXT MONDAY, NOV. 30, WITH TRANSCRIPTS TO BE SOLD TO THE NEWS MEDIA ONLY ON WEDNESDAY OF THIS WEEK.

THE TRANSCRIPT SHOWS:

TO LYNDON B. JOHNSON THERE CAME A SENSE OF THE "UNREAL, UNBELIEVABLE." DESPITE URGINGS OF OFFICIALS AFRAID THERE MIGHT BE A WIDESPREAD CONSPIRACY TO DISJOINT THE WHOLE GOVERNMENT, JOHNSON HELD UP THE PRESIDENTIAL PLANE IN DALLAS, SO THAT IT COULD BRING BACK TO WASHINGTON THE BODY OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE WIDOW STILL WEARING HER BLOOD-STAINED CLOTHES. SHE WAS AND IS, JOHNSON SAID, A LADY OF "BRAVERY, NOBILITY AND DIGNITY."

TO MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON, THE MOST HEART-SEARING MOMENT OF THAT TRAGIC DAY CAME WHEN SHE SAW JACQUELINE--"THAT IMMACULATE WOMAN"--WEARING GLOVES CAKED WITH HER HUSBAND'S BLOOD.

TO JACQUELINE, IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE ASSASSINATION, THERE CAME A TORMENTING THOUGHT OF A MIGHT-HAVE-BEEN. SUPPOSE, SHE THOUGHT, THAT SHE HAD HAPPENED TO BE LOOKING AT HER HUSBAND WHEN THE FIRST BULLET STRUCK. SHE MIGHT HAVE PULLED HIM DOWN OUT OF THE PATH OF ANOTHER BULLET THAT TORE PART OF HIS SKULL AWAY.

A4WX

"I HEARD THESE TERRIBLE NOISES, YOU KNOW," SHE TOLD THE WARREN COMMISSION, "AND MY HUSBAND NEVER MADE ANY SOUND.

"SO I TURNED TO THE RIGHT (INSTEAD OF TO THE LEFT WHERE SHE HAD BEEN LOOKING) AND ALL I REMEMBER IS SEEING MY HUSBAND, HE HAD THIS SORT OF QUIZZICAL LOOK ON HIS FACE, AND HIS HAND WAS UP, IT MUST HAVE BEEN HIS LEFT HAND.

"AND JUST AS I TURNED AND LOOKED AT HIM, I COULD SEE A PIECE OF HIS SKULL AND I REMEMBER IT WAS FLESH-COLORED. I REMEMBER THINKING HE JUST LOOKED AS IF HE HAD A SLIGHT HEADACHE, AND I JUST REMEMBER SEEING THAT."

THEN HER HUSBAND FELL IN HER LAP AND SHE REMEMBERED A "SENSATION OF ENORMOUS SPEED" AS THE CAR SHOT AWAY TO THE HOSPITAL. BUT, AT TIMES, SHE EXPERIENCED A MERCIFUL BLACKOUT--SHE CANNOT REMEMBER, FOR EXAMPLE, CLIMBING OUT ON THE BACK OF THE CAR, AS PHOTOGRAPHS SHOW HER DOING.

THE FORMER FIRST LADY DESCRIBED HER HUSBAND'S WOUNDS--SO TERRIBLE THAT THE WARREN COMMISSION THOUGHT IT BEST NOT TO GO INTO DETAIL. "REFERENCE TO WOUNDS DELETED," THE TRANSCRIPT SAYS AT THIS POINT.

THE REPORT OF THE INVESTIGATION COMMISSION HEADED BY EARL WARREN, CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE UNITED STATES, CAME OUT SEPT. 27. ITS VERDICT WAS THAT LEE HARVEY OSWALD, ACTING WITHOUT ACCOMPLICES, MURDERED KENNEDY, AND THAT THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN OSWALD AND JACK RUBY, THE MAN WHO KILLED THE ASSASSIN.

THE MASSIVE REPORT WAS BASED ON MONTHS OF EVIDENCE-TAKING, AND IT WAS THE TRANSCRIPT OF THESE HEARINGS, STATEMENTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS THAT BECAME AVAILABLE TODAY. THOUGH CONTAINING NOTHING STARTLINGLY NEW, THE VOLUMES ARE EXPECTED TO BE A MINE OF INFORMATION FOR HISTORIANS.

A5WX

PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S ACCOUNT WAS IN THE FORM OF A STATEMENT GIVEN TO THE COMMISSION LAST JULY. HE WAS RIDING TWO CARS BEHIND THE PRESIDENTIAL CAR WHEN THE SHOTS RANG OUT AND, AS PREVIOUSLY RELATED, SECRET SERVICE AGENT RUFUS YOUNGBLOOD PUSHED HIM DOWN AND SAT ON HIM.

WHEN THE CAVALCADE REACHED THE HOSPITAL, THE SECRET SERVICE RUSHED THE VICE PRESIDENT INTO A ROOM. MRS. JOHNSON WENT OUT TO SEE MRS. KENNEDY, BUT AGENT YOUNGBLOOD TOLD JOHNSON THAT "I COULD NOT LEAVE THE ROOM AND I FOLLOWED HIS DIRECTIVE."

AT 1:30 P.M., JOHNSON LEARNED F

M KENNETH O'DONNELL, A KENNEDY ASSISTANT, THAT HE HAD SUCCEEDED TO THE PRESIDENCY.

"HE TOLD US THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD DIED," JOHNSON SAID. "I THINK HIS PRECISE WORDS WERE, 'HE'S GONE.'

"I FOUND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THIS HAD HAPPENED. THE WHOLE THING SEEMED UNREAL, UNBELIEVABLE. A FEW HOURS EARLIER I HAD BREAKFAST WITH JOHN KENNEDY; HE WAS ALIVE, STRONG VIGOROUS. I COULD NOT BELIEVE NOW THAT HE WAS DEAD. I WAS SHOCKED AND SICKENED."

O'DONNELL AND THE SECRET SERVICE TRIED TO PREVAIL ON JOHNSON TO LEAVE FOR WASHINGTON IMMEDIATELY. BUT WHEN HE LARNED THAT MRS. KENNEDY REFUSED TO LEAVE THE HOSPITAL WITHOUT HER HUSBAND'S BODY, JOHNSON DELAYED THE DEPARTURE OF THE BIG PRESIDENTIAL JET UNTIL THE BODY AND THE WIDOW WERE ABOARD.

THUS IT WAS, AS HE TOOK THE OATH ABOARD THE PLANE, MRS. KENNEDY STOOD BY HIS SIDE.

"I SHALL NEVER FORGET HER BRAVERY, NOBILITY AND GENTILITY," JOHNSON SAID.

SOON AFTER THE TRAGEDY, MRS. JOHNSON DICTATED HER IMPRESSIONS INTO A TAPE RECORDER, "PREMARILY AS A FORM OF THERAPY--TO HELP ME OVER THE SHOCK AND HORROR." SHE LATER SUPPLIED A TRANSCRIPT OF THE WARREN COMMISSION.

A6WX

SHE WAS RIDING WITH HER HUSBAND, TWO CARS BEHIND THE PRESIDENTIAL CAR, AND THOUGH SHE HEARD SOMETHING LIKE FIRECRACKERS, SHE DID NOT KNOW WHAT HAD HAPPENED UNTIL THE CAVALCADE PULLED UP TO A BUILDING MARKED "HOSPITAL."

SHE AND HER HUSBAND GOT OUT, AND THEN:

"I CAST ONE LAST LOOK OVER MY SHOULDER AND SAW, IN THE PRESIDENT'S CAR, A BUNDLE OF PINK, JUST LIKE A DRIFT OF BLOSSOMS, LYING ON THE

BACK SEAT. I THINK IT WAS MRS. KENNEDY, LYING OVER THE PRESIDENT'S BODY. . . ."

IN THE HOSPITAL, MRS. JOHNSON ENCOUNTERED MRS. KENNEDY IN A SMALL HALL, OUTSIDE THE OPERATING ROOM "I WENT UP TO HER, PUT MY ARMS AROUND HER AND SAID SOMETHING TO HER. I'M SURE IT WAS SOMETHING LIKE 'GOD, HELP US ALL.'"

WHEN IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD DIED, AND THE JOHNSONS WENT TO THE AIRPORT, MRS. JOHNSON RECALLED, "I LOOKED UP AT A BUILDING AND THERE ALREADY WAS A FLAG AT HALF-MAST. I THINK THAT IS WHEN THE ENORMITY OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED FIRST STRUCK ME..."

WHEN MRS. KENNEDY ARRIVED SHE, IN HER GRIEF, MADE THINGS AS EASY AS POSSIBLE FOR THE JOHNSONS, THE PRESENT FIRST LADY CONTINUED.

"SHE SAID THINGS LIKE, "OH LADY BIRD IT'S GOOD WE'VE ALWAYS LIKED YOU TWO SO MUCH."

MRS. KENNEDY GAVE HER TESTIMONY JUNE 7. IN IT SHE SAID THAT SHE HAD RECENTLY HEARD THAT ONE OF THE SHOTS, THE ONE WHICH WENT THROUGH THE PRESIDENT, ALSO WAS THE ONE THAT WOUNDED GOV. JOHN B. CONNALLY OF TEXAS.

ASKED WHETHER SHE COULD RECOLLECT HOW MANY SHOTS HAD BEEN FIRED, SHE SAID:

A7WX

"WELL, THERE MUST HAVE BEEN TWO BECAUSE THE ONE THAT MADE ME TURN AROUND WAS GOV. CONNALLY YELLING. AND IT USED TO CONFUSE ME BECAUSE FIRST I REMEMBERED THERE WERE THREE AND I USED TO THINK MY HUSBAND DIDN'T MAKE ANY SOUND WHEN HE WAS SHOT. AND GOV. CONNALLY SCREAMED.

"AND THEN I READ THE OTHER DAY THAT IT WAS THE SAME SHOT THAT HIT THEM BOTH. BUT I USED TO THINK THAT IF I ONLY HAD BEEN LOOKING TO THE RIGHT I WOULD HAVE SEEN THE FIRST SHOT HIT HIM, THEN I COULD HAVULTT

HIT THEM BOTH. BUT I USED TO THINK THAT IF I ONLY HAD BEEN LOOKING TO THE RIGHT I WOULD HAVE SEEN THE FIRST SHOT HIT HIM, THEN I COULD HAVE PULLED HIM DOWN AND THEN THE SECOND SHOT WOULD NOT HAVE HIT HIM."

THE WARREN COMMISSION CONCLUDED THAT THREE SHOTS WERE FIRED P ONE OF WHICH MISSED.

CONNALLY, WHO WAS GRAVELY WOUNDED BUT RECOVERED, TESTIFIED THAT WHEN HE HEARD THE FIRST SHOT, HE IDENTIFIED IT AS FROM A RIFLE. HE TURNED TO LOOK OVER HIS RIGHT SHOULDER, THEN TRIED TO TURN TO LOOK OVER HIS LEFT SHOULDER INTO THE BACK SEAT, WHERE THE KENNEDYS WERE.

"BUT I NEVER GOT THAT FAR IN MY TURN...AND THEN I FELT LIKE SOMEONE HAD HIT ME IN THE BACK." HE QUICKLY BECAME COVERED WITH BLOOD AND "THOUGHT THAT I HAD PROBABLY BEEN FATALLY HIT." HE DOUBLED UP AND MRS. CONNALLY PULLED HIM OVER TO HER LAP.

THEN A SHOT--CONNALLY CALLED IT THE THIRD ONE--INFLICTED THE FATAL WOUND ON KENNEDY.

"IMMEDIATELY I COULD SEE ON MY CLOTHES, MY CLOTHING, I COULD SEE ON THE INTERIOR OF THE CAR WHICH, AS I RECALL, WAS A PALE BLUE, BRAIN TISSUE, WHICH I IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED, AND I RECALL VERY WELL, ON MY TROUSERS THERE WAS ONE CHUNK OF BRAIN TISSUE AS BIG, ALMOST AS MY THUMB, MY THUMBNAIL."

AGWX

ASKED WHAT HE HEARD MRS. KENNEDY SAY, HE RELATED:

"I WOULD SAY IT WAS AFTER THE THIRD SHOT WHEN SHE SAID:

"THEY HAVE KILLED MY HUSBAND...SHE SAID, I HEARD HER SAY ONE TIME, 'I HAVE GOT HIS BRAINS IN MY HAND.'"

ANOTHER IN THE CAVALCADE, SEN. RALPH W. YARBOROUGH, D-TEX., SAID SECRET SERVICE AGENTS SEEMED TO REACT "VERY SLOWLY" AFTER THE SHOOTING, AND HE SAID THIS AMAZED HIM.

HE WAS IN THE THIRD CAR IN THE PROCESSION. DIRECTLY AHEAD WAS A CAR CARRYING EIGHT AGENTS.

"AFTER THE SHOOTING," YARBOROUGH SAID, "ONE OF THE SECRET SERVICE MEN SITTING DOWN IN THE CAR IN FRONT OF US PULLED OUT AN AUTOMATIC RIFLE OR WEAPON AND LOOKED BACKWARD. HOWEVER ALL OF THE SECRET SERVICE MEN SEEMED TO ME TO RESPOND VERY SLOWLY, WITH NO MORE THAN A PUZZLED LOOK.

THE WARREN COMMISSION SAID THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THE AGENTS "FAILED TO TAKE ANY ACTION IN DALLAS WITHIN THEIR POWER THAT WOULD HAVE AVERTED THE TRAGEDY."

THE SENATOR GAVE A VIVID DESCRIPTION OF AN AGENT LYING ACROSS THE BACK OF THE PRESIDENT'S CAR AS IT RACED TO THE HOSPITAL.

"HE BEAT THE BACK OF THE CAR WITH ONE HAND, HIS FACE CONTORTED BY GRIEF, ANGUISH AND DESPAIR."

SECRET SERVICE AGENT ROY H. KELLERMAN, WHO WAS RIDING BESIDE THE DRIVER OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CAR, SAID AT THE SOUND OF THE FIRST SHOT HE WHIRLED AROUND AND SAW KENNEDY WITH BOTH HANDS AT HIS THROAT.

"THAT WAS ENOUGH FOR ME TO VERIFY THAT THE MAN WAS HIT," HE SAID, "SO, IN THE SAME MOTION, I CAME (CQ) RIGHT BACK AND GRABBED THE SPEAKER AND SAID TO THE DRIVER, 'LET'S GET OUT OF HERE; WE ARE HIT! AND GRABBED THE MIKE AND I SAID (TO THE FORWARD CAR) 'WE ARE HIT! GET US TO THE HOSPITAL IMMEDIATELY.'"

HE SAID HE HAD COMPLETED THE TWO COMMANDS BEFORE THE SECOND AND THIRD SHOTS WERE FIRED. HE SAID THE DRIVER, AGENT WILLIAM R. GREER, STEPPED ON THE ACCELERATOR "AND WE JUST LITERALLY JUMPED OUT OF THE GODDAMN ROAD."

(MORE)

CZ/PE152PES

A46WX (ADD ASSN)

EIM

(1,000)

WASHINGTON FIRST ADD NIGHT LEAD ASSASSINATION TESTIMONY ROUNDUP  
(A3-8WX) X X X ROAD."

JOHNSON HAD LITTLE CHANCE TO SEE WHAT WAS GOING ON WHEN OSWALD'S SHOTS RIPPED INTO KENNEDY AND CONNALLY, TWO CARS AHEAD, BECAUSE A SECRET SERVICE AGENT HAD THROWN HIMSELF OVER THE THEN VICE PRESIDENT.

"I WAS STARTLED BY THE SHARP REPORT, OR EXPLOSION, BUT I HAD NO TIME TO SPECULATE AS TO ITS ORIGIN," SAID JOHNSON, "BECAUSE AGENT (RUFUS) YOUNGBLOOD TURNED IN A FLASH IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE FIRST EXPLOSION, HITTING ME ON THE SHOULDER, AND SHOUTED TO US ALL IN THE BACK SEAT TO GET DOWN. (MRS. JOHNSON AND TEXAS SEN. RALPH YARBOROUGH WERE WITH JOHNSON IN THE BACK SEAT.)

"I WAS PUSHED OVER BY AGENT YOUNGBLOOD. ALMOST IN THE SAME MOMENT IN WHICH HE HIT, OR PUSHED ME, HE VAULTED OVER THE BACK SEAT AND SAT ON ME. I WAS BENT OVER UNDER THE WEIGHT OF AGENT YOUNGBLOOD'S BODY TOWARD MRS. JOHNSON AND SEN. YARBOROUGH. I REMEMBER ATTEMPTING TO TURN MY HEAD TO MAKE SURE THAT MRS. JOHNSON HAD BENT DOWN. BOTH SHE AND SEN. YARBOROUGH HAD CROUCHED DOWN AT AGENT YOUNGBLOOD'S COMMAND."

WHEN THEY REACHED THE HOSPITAL A CORDON OF SECRET SERVICE AGENTS RUSHED THE VICE PRESIDENT INTO A ROOM AND PULLED DOWN THE SHADES. MRS. JOHNSON WENT TO SEE MRS. KENNEDY AND MRS. CONNALLY, JOHNSON RELATED, BUT YOUNGBLOOD "TOLD ME THAT I COULD NOT LEAVE THE ROOM AND I FOLLOWED HIS DIRECTIVE."

AT 1:20 P. M. JOHNSON HEARD THE WORDS THAT "SHOCKED AND SICKENED" HIM: JOHN F. KENNEDY WAS DEAD. A KENNEDY AIDE ADDRESSED HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME AS MR. PRESIDENT.

A47WX

ALTHOUGH HE WAS AWARE OF THE REASONS HE SHOULD RETURN TO WASHINGTON IMMEDIATELY, JOHNSON SAID "I WAS DETERMINED THAT WE WOULD NOT RETURN UNTIL MRS. KENNEDY WAS READY, AND THAT WE WOULD CARRY THE PRESIDENT'S BODY BACK WITH US IF SHE WANTED."

"I DID NOT WANT TO GO AND LEAVE MRS. KENNEDY IN THIS SITUATION," JOHNSON SAID. "I SAID SO, BUT I AGREED WE WOULD BOARD THE AIRPLANE AND WAIT UNTIL MRS. KENNEDY AND THE PRESIDENT'S BODY WERE BROUGHT ABOARD THE PLANE.

"IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONVEY AN ACCURATE IMPRESSION OF THE PERIOD OF TIME WE WERE IN THE HOSPITAL ROOM. I SUPPOSE WE WERE IN A STATE OF SHOCK AND THERE WAS NO TIME FOR THE SHOCK TO WEAR OFF SUFFICIENTLY SO THAT THE MAGNITUDE OF OUR PERSONAL LOSS OF THIS GREAT MAN AND GOOD FRIEND COULD EXPRESS ITSELF IN WORDS OR IN SURFACE FEELINGS.

"I SUPPOSE, ACTUALLY, THAT THE ONLY OUTLET FOR THE GRIEF THAT SHOCK HAD SUBMERGED WAS OUR SHARP, PAINFUL AND BITTER CONCERN AND SOLICITUDE FOR MRS. KENNEDY."

JOHNSON RELATED THAT WHEN HE AND HIS WIFE BOARDED THE PRESIDENTIAL PLANE THEY WERE SHOWN INTO THE PRIVATE QUARTERS.

"IT DIDN'T SEEM RIGHT FOR JOHN KENNEDY NOT TO BE THERE," HE SAID. "I TOLD SOMEONE WE PREFERRED FOR MRS. KENNEDY TO USE THESE QUARTERS."

JOHNSON THEN TOLD OF PLACING A SERIES OF TELEPHONE CALLS FROM THE AIRPLANE, INCLUDING ONE TO ROBERT F. KENNEDY, THE PRESIDENT'S BROTHER AND ATTORNEY GENERAL WHO WAS IN WASHINGTON.

"I KNEW HOW GRIEF-STRICKEN HE WAS AND I WANTED TO SAY SOMETHING THAT WOULD COMFORT HIM," JOHNSON SAID. "DESPITE HIS CHOCK, (

(MORE)

SR405 PES



A54WX

WASHINGTON--2ND ADD NIGHT LEAD ASSASSINATION TESTIMONY RDUP  
(A47WX) X X X X WASHINGTON.

"I KNEW HOW GRIEF-STRICKEN HE WAS AND I WANTED TO SAY SOMETHING THAT WOULD COMFORT HIM," JOHNSON SAID. "DESPITE HIS SHOCK, HE DISCUSSED THE PRACTICAL PROBLEMS AT HAND --PROBLEMS OF SPECIAL URGENCY BECAUSE WE DID NOT AT THAT TIME HAVE ANY INFORMATION AS TO THE MOTIVATION OF THE ASSASSINATION, OR ITS POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS.

"THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER OF WHETHER THE OATH OF OFFICE AS PRESIDENT SHOULD BE ADMINISTERED TO ME IMMEDIATELY OR AFTER WE RETURNED TO WASHINGTON, AND THAT HE WOULD CALL BACK.

"I THEREAFTER TALKED WITH MCGEORGE BUNDY AND WALTER JENKINS, BOTH OF WHOM URGED THAT THE RETURN TO WASHINGTON NOT BE DELAYED. I TOLD THEM I WAS WAITING FOR MRS. KENNEDY AND FOR THE PRESIDENT'S BODY TO BE PLACED ON THE PLANE AND WOULD NOT RETURN PRIOR TO THAT TIME.

"AS I REMEMBER, OUR CONVERSATION WAS INTERRUPTED TO ALLOW THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO COME BACK ON THE LINE. HE SAID THAT THE OATH SHOULD BE ADMINISTERED TO ME IMMEDIATELY, BEFORE TAKING OFF FOR WASHINGTON..."

JOHNSON SAID HE THOUGHT OF AN OLD FRIEND, U. S. DISTRICT JUDGE SARAH HUGHES, AND SHE WAS CALLED OUT TO THE AIRPORT TO ADMINISTER THE OATH.

WHILE WAITING FOR JUDGE HUGHES, THE PRESIDENT'S COFFIN ARRIVED, ACCOMPANIED BY MRS. KENNEDY.

"MRS. JOHNSON AND I SPOKE TO HER," JOHNSON SAID. "WE TRIED TO COMFORT HER, BUT OUR WORDS SEEMED INADEQUATE. SHE WENT INTO THE PRIVATE QUARTERS OF THE PLANE...."

"ABOUT A HALF HOUR LATER I ASKED SOMEONE TO FIND OUT IF MRS. KENNEDY WOULD STAND WITH US DURING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH. MRS. JOHNSON WENT BACK TO BE WITH HER. MRS. KENNEDY CAME AND STOOD WITH US DURING THE MOMENTS THAT THE OATH WAS BEING ADMINISTERED.

"I SHALL NEVER FORGET HER BRAVERY, NOBILITY AND DIGNITY." (CORRECT)

EA55WX

DURING THE FLIGHT BACK TO WASHINGTON, JOHNSON SAID HE TELEPHONED KENNEDY'S MOTHER, MRS. ROSE KENNEDY, AND MRS. CONNALLY, TRYING TO COMFORT THEM. HE ALSO INSTRUCTED THAT A GROUP OF CABINET OFFICERS WHO WERE EN ROUTE ACROSS THE PACIFIC TO A MEETING IN JAPAN BE ASKED TO TURN AROUND AND RETURN TO WASHINGTON.

"WHEN WE LANDED AT ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE I MADE A SHORT STATEMENT

TO THE PRESS, RADIO AND TELEVISION," JOHNSON SAID. "IN MY HEART I ASKED FOR GOD'S HELP THAT I SHOULD NOT PROVE UNWORTHY OF THE RESPONSIBILITY WHICH FATE HAD THRUST UPON ME."

MRS. JOHNSON, IN HER TAPE-RECORDED IMPRESSIONS, SAID THAT WHEN SHE ENCOUNTERED MRS. KENNEDY AT THE HOSPITAL "SHE WAS QUITE ALONE."

"YOU ALWAYS THINK OF HER --OR SOMEONE LIKE HER-- AS BEING INSULATED, PROTECTED," MRS. JOHNSON SAID. "...I DON'T THINK I EVER SAW ANYONE SO MUCH ALONE IN MY LIFE...MY FEELINGS FOR HER WERE TOO TUMULTUOUS TO PUT INTO WORDS."

LATER, IN THE AIRPLANE, MRS. JOHNSON SAID MRS. KENNEDY WAS "VERY COMPOSED" AS SHE STOOD WATCHING THE OATH BEING ADMINISTERED TO HER DEAD HUSBAND'S SUCCESSOR.

"I LOOKED AT HER," MRS. JOHNSON SAID. "MRS. KENNEDY'S DRESS WAS STAINED WITH BLOOD. HER RIGHT GLOVE WAS CAKED --THAT IMMACULATE WOMAN-- IT WAS CAKED WITH BLOOD, HER HUSBAND'S BLOOD. SHE ALWAYS WORE GLOVES LIKE SHE WAS USED TO THEM. I NEVER COULD.

"SOMEHOW THAT WAS ONE OF THE MOST POIGNANT SIGHTS, EXQUISITELY DRESSED AND CAKED IN BLOOD. I ASKED HER IF I COULDN'T GET SOMEONE TO HELP HER CHANGE, AND SHE SAID, 'OH, NO. PERHAPS LATER I'LL ASK MARY GALLAGHER (A SECRETARY), BUT NO RIGHT NOW.'"

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN AND COMMISSION COUNSEL J. LEE RANKIN WENT TO MRS. KENNEDY'S HOME, THEN IN THE GEORGETOWN SECTION OF WASHINGTON, TO TAKE HER TESTIMONY.

THE PRESIDENT'S WIDOW RECALLED SHE WAS LOOKING AWAY FROM HER HUSBAND WHEN THE FIRST SHOT CAME.

A56WX

"I GUESS THERE WAS A NOISE," SHE SAID, "BUT IT DIDN'T SEEM LIKE ANY DIFFERENT NOISE REALLY BECAUSE THERE IS SO MUCH NOISE, MOTORCYCLES AND THINGS. BUT SUDDENLY GOV. CONNALLY WAS YELLING, 'OH, NO, NO, NO.'..."

"I WAS LOOKING THIS WAY, TO THE LEFT, AND I HEARD THESE TERRIBLE NOISES, YOU KNOW. AND MY HUSBAND NEVER MADE ANY SOUND. SO I TURNED TO THE RIGHT AND ALL I REMEMBER IS SEEING MY HUSBAND, HE HAD THIS SORT OF QUIZZICAL LOOK ON HIS FACE. . ."

MRS. KENNEDY SAID THAT WHEN HER HUSBAND FELL INTO HER LAD SHE RECALLS "FALLING ON HIM AND SAYING 'OH, NO, NO, NO.' I MEAN, 'OH MY GOD, THEY HAVE SHOT MY HUSBAND.' AND 'I LOVE YOU, JACK,' I REMEMBER I WAS SHOUTING."

"IT JUST SEEMED AN ETERNITY," SHE SAID.

SR/CR434PES NM ASKD