

A140WX

23 NOV 1964
957 AESASSASSINATION--MRS. KENNEDY (850)

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, NOV. 23 (AP)-IN THE ANGUISHED AFTERMATH OF THE ASSASSINATION, PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY'S YOUNG WIDOW WAS DEEPLY TROUBLED FOR A TIME BY A THOUGHT THAT SHE MIGHT HAVE SAVED HIM.

IT OCCURRED TO HER THAT IF SHE HAD HAPPENED TO BE LOOKING AT HER HUSBAND WHEN THE ASSASSIN OPENED FIRE, SHE MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PULL HIM DOWN OUT OF THE PATH OF THE FATAL BULLET. HE WAS HIT TWICE, THE SECOND BULLET TAKING HIS LIFE.

EVIDENTLY SHE FINALLY REACHED THE CONCLUSION THAT THIS MIGHT-HAVE-BEEN COULD NOT REALLY HAVE HAPPENED, BECAUSE IN TELLING THE WARREN COMMISSION ABOUT IT SHE EMPLOYED THE PAST TENSE "I USED TO THINK."

MRS. KENNEDY GAVE HER TESTIMONY JUNE 5 AT WHAT WAS THEN HER GEORGETOWN HOME TO CHIEF JUSTICE EARL WARREN AND THE COUNSEL OF THE WARREN COMMISSION, J. LEE RANKIN. THE THEN ATTY. GEN. ROBERT F. KENNEDY WAS PRESENT.

THE TESTIMONY WAS INCLUDED IN THE VOLUMES OF EVIDENCE ON WHICH THE WARREN COMMISSION MADE ITS REPORT SEPT. 27. SOME OF THESE VOLUMES HAVE JUST BECOME AVAILABLE TO THE ASSOCIATED PRESS.

WHILE SEVERAL WITNESSES HAVE SPOKEN OF MRS. KENNEDY'S REMARKABLE SELF-CONTROL DURING THE TRAGIC NOV. 22 IN DALLAS, HER TESTIMONY DISCLOSED HOW DEEPLY SHE WAS STOCKED. SHE SAID, FOR EXAMPLE, SHE HAS NO RECOLLECTION OF CRAWLING TOWARD THE BACK OF THE PRESIDENTIAL AUTOMOBILE, AS PICTURES SHOW HER DOING.

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ESSENTIAL PORTIONS OF MRS. KENNEDY'S STATEMENT, AFTER SHE DESCRIBED THE BEGINNING OF THE MOTORCADE IN DALLAS:

MRS. KENNEDY: . . . "MRS. CONNALLY (WIFE OF GOV. JOHN B. CONNALLY OF TEXAS) SAID, 'WE WILL SOON BE THERE.' WE COULD SEE A TUNNEL IN FRONT OF US. EVERYTHING WAS REALLY SLOW THEN. AND I REMEMBERED THINKING IT WOULD BE SO COOL UNDER THAT TUNNEL. . ."

(THE CAR MOVED TOWARD THE OVERPASS.)

"THAT IS WHEN SHE (MRS. CONNALLY) SAID TO PRESIDENT KENNEDY, 'YOU CERTAINLY CAN'T SAY THAT THE PEOPLE OF DALLAS HAVEN'T GIVEN YOU A NICE WELCOME. . .'

"I THINK HE SAID--I DON'T KNOW IF I REMEMBER IT OR IF I HAVE READ IT--'NO, YOU CERTAINLY CAN'T,' OR SOMETHING. AND YOU KNOW THEN THE CAR WAS VERY SLOW AND THERE WEREN'T VERY MANY PEOPLE AROUND. . ."

"YOU KNOW, THERE IS ALWAYS NOISE IN A MOTORCADE AND THERE ARE ALWAYS MOTORCYCLES BESIDE US, A LOT OF THEM BACKFIRING. SO I WAS LOOKING TO THE LEFT. I GUESS THERE WAS A NOISE, BUT IT DIDN'T SEEM LIKE ANY DIFFERENT NOISE REALLY BECAUSE THERE IS SO MUCH NOISE, MOTORCYCLES AND THINGS. BUT THEN SUDDENLY GOV. CONNALLY WAS YELLING, 'OH, NO, NO, NO.'

RANKIN: "DID HE TURN TOWARD YOU?"

MRS. KENNEDY:

"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, 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.

NO BLOOD OR ANYTHING.

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"AND THEN HE SORT OF DID THIS (INDICATING), PUT HIS HAND TO HIS FOREHEAD AND FELL IN MY LAP.

"AND THEN I JUST REMEMBER 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. AND JUST BEING DOWN IN THE CAR WITH HIS HEAD IN MY LAP. AND IT JUST SEEMED AN ETERNITY.

"YOU KNOW, THERE WERE PICTURES LATER ON OF ME CLIMBING OUT THE BACK. BUT I DON'T REMEMBER THAT AT ALL."

RANKIN: "DO YOU REMEMBER MR. HILL (SECRET SERVICE AGENT CLINTON J. HILL) COMING TO TRY TO HELP YOU ON THE CAR?"

MRS. KENNEDY:

"I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING. I WAS JUST DOWN LIKE THAT.

"AND FINALLY I REMEMBER A VOICE BEHIND ME, OR SOMETHING, AND THEN I REMEMBER THE PEOPLE IN THE FRONT SEAT, OR SOMEBODY, FINALLY KNEW

"AND FINALLY I REMEMBER A VOICE BEHIND ME, OR SOMETHING, AND THEN I REMEMBER THE PEOPLE IN THE FRONT SEAT, OR SOMEBODY, FINALLY KNEW SOMETHING WAS WRONG, AND A VOICE YELLING, WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN MR. HILL, 'GET TO THE HOSPITAL,' OR MAYBE IT WAS MR. KELLERMAN (ROY H. KELLERMAN, SECRET SERVICE AGENT WHO WAS RIDING NEXT TO THE DRIVER), IN THE FRONT SEAT. BUT SOMEONE YELLING. I WAS JUST DOWN AND HOLDING HIM."

(AT THIS POINT IN THE TRANSCRIPT APPEAR THE WORDS "REFERENCE TO WOUNDS DELETED." THIS IS ONE OF THE VERY FEW OMISSIONS NOTED IN THE TRANSCRIPT.)

RANKIN:

"DO YOU HAVE ANY RECOLLECTION OF WHETHER THERE WERE ONE OR MORE SHOTS?"

MRS. KENNEDY:

"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.

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"AND THEN I READ THE OTHER DAY THAT IT WAS THE SAME SHOT THAT HIT THEM BOTH. BUT I USED TO THINK 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.

"BUT I HEARD GOV. CONNALLY YELLING AND THAT MADE ME TURN AROUND, AND AS I TURNED TO THE RIGHT MY HUSBAND WAS DOING THIS (INDICATING WITH HAND AT NECK). HE WAS RECEIVING A BULLET. AND THOSE ARE THE ONLY TWO I REMEMBER.

"AND I READ THERE WAS A THIRD SHOT. BUT I DON'T KNOW. JUST THOSE TWO. . . ."

"AND I WAS DOWN IN THE CAR AND EVERYTHING WAS YELLING TO GET TO THE HOSPITAL AND YOU COULD HEAR THEM ON THE RADIO, AND THEN SUDDENLY I REMEMBERED A SENSATION OF ENORMOUS SPEED, WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN WHEN WE TOOK OFF. . . ."

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