

(EDITORS: ON THIS THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY ARGUMENTS SURGE TO HIGH PITCH OVER THE DETAILS OF WHAT HAPPENED DURING THOSE TRAGIC SECONDS. AT THE SCENE WAS JACK BELL, VETERAN ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER, IN THE FOURTH CAR BEHIND THE PRESIDENT. HERE HE REMEMBERS WHAT HE SAW AND HEARD THAT NOVEMBER DAY IN DALLAS:)

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TRAGIC SECONDS

BY JACK BELL

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON, NOV. 22 (AP)-THREE YEARS AGO IN A SUNNY MIDDAY IN DALLAS I HEARD FROM THE FOURTH CAR IN A MOTORCADE THE SOUND OF THREE RIFLE SHOTS THAT KILLED A PRESIDENT AND WOUNDED A GOVERNOR.

THERE WAS THE SOUND OF THREE CADENCED SHOTS--NO MORE, NO FEWER.

AS OUR CAR BEARING FOUR NEWSMEN, A PRESIDENTIAL PRESS AIDE AND A DRIVER TURNED LEFT IN FRONT OF THE TEXAS SCHOOL BOOK DEPOSITORY, THE FIRST OF THESE RANG OUT.

THE SOUND CAME FROM ABOVE AND TO OUR RIGHT. IT ECHOED DOWN THE CANYON-LIKE BLOCK OF MODERATELY TALL BUILDINGS BEHIND US. I REMEMBER THINKING THAT SOME OVER-ENTHUSIASTIC DALLASITE MUST HAVE EXPLODED A CHERRY BOMB.

THEN THERE WAS A SECOND CRACK, UNMISTAKABLY THAT OF A BIG GAME RIFLE. IT WAS FOLLOWED IN ABOUT FIVE SECONDS BY A THIRD. THEN THERE WAS A MOMENT OF AWFUL SILENCE, BROKEN BY SHRILL CRIES AND SCREAMS.

PEOPLE SCURRIED TOWARD WHATEVER PROTECTION THEY COULD FIND. AS WE SCRAMBLED BACK INTO OUR CAR, THE MOTORCADE, WHICH HAD HALTED, WAS MOVING AGAIN.

UP AHEAD I SAW A MAN, LOOKING FEARFULLY BACK OVER HIS SHOULDER AT THE BOOK DEPOSITORY BUILDING, PUSH A WOMAN DOWN ON THE GRASSY KNOLL THAT LED TO AN OVERPASS AND THROW HIS BODY PROTECTIVELY OVER HERS.

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THE SOUNDS OF THE THREE SHOTS HAD COME FROM ABOVE AND TO THE RIGHT OF US. TO ONE WHO HAD BEEN FAMILIAR WITH SHOOTING RANGES, THEY SOUNDED LIKE THE CADENCED QUICK FIRE OF AN EXPERIENCED RIFLEMAN SQUEEZING OFF A SHOT, RELOADING BY BOLT ACTION, FIRING AGAIN AND A THIRD TIME.

ALL OF THE SOUNDS CAME FROM THE SAME AREA THE BOOK DEPOSITORY WHERE LEE HARVEY OSWALD HAD STATIONED HIMSELF.

IF OSWALD HAD AN ACCOMPLICE, HE MUST HAVE STOOD WITH HIM THERE. BUT THE SERIES OF SHOTS WAS SO EVENLY PACED IT SEEMED UNLIKELY THEY WERE FIRED BY MORE THAN ONE MAN. THERE WAS NO SOUND OF THE RAGGED SHOOTING THAT ALMOST ALWAYS RESULTS WHEN TWO OR MORE MEN ARE FIRING.

IF SOMEONE SHOT PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY OR GOV. JOHN CONNALLY FROM ANOTHER ANGLE--PERHAPS FROM THE FRONT AS HAS BEEN SUGGESTED IN SOME THEORIES--HE MUST HAVE USED A SILENCER. THEN THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE THAN THREE BULLETS.

WE IN THE FOURTH CAR COULD NOT SEE WHAT HAD HAPPENED IN THE ROSE-STREWN, NOW BLOOD-WASHED PRESIDENTIAL LIMOUSINE AS WE SPED MADLY ALONG A FREEWAY TRYING TO KEEP UP WITH THE PRESIDENTIAL CAR AS IT THUNDERED TOWARD PARKLAND MEMORIAL HOSPITAL. WE KNEW ONLY THAT THOSE THREE SHOTS HAD BEEN FIRED AND NOTHING OF THEIR EFFECT.

WE WOULD KNOW THAT ONLY WHEN DASHING UP TO THE HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ENTRANCE WE SAW THE PRESIDENT SPRAWLED FACE DOWN IN THE BACK SEAT OF THE LIMOUSINE, HIS FRESH GRAY SUIT HARDLY RUMPLED BUT WITH A THICK POOL OF BLOOD ON THE FLOOR.

TO THOSE WHO BUILD A CASE ON CLOUDY PHOTOGRAPHS TO CONTEND THERE WAS A SECOND ASSAILANT STATIONED AT SOME OTHER VANTAGE POINT, I SAY COME LISTEN TO THE SOUND OF THREE SHOTS FROM ABOVE AND TO THE RIGHT THAT WILL FOREVER RING IN MY EARS.

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