

Witness Describes the Events at the Hotel and on Ride to the Hospital

This article was written by Warren Rogers, chief of the Washington Bureau of LOOK Magazine. Mr. Rogers was present at the shooting of Senator Robert F. Kennedy and rode in the ambulance that took him to Central Receiving Hospital.

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LOS ANGELES, June 5—It sounded like firecrackers. Why is it that it always sounds like firecrackers? Other eyewitnesses reported five and six shots, but I heard only four—pop, a one second pause, and then pop, pop, pop.

I was in the small conference room with a couple of dozen other newsmen, waiting for Senator Robert Kennedy to come in for a question-and-answer session. He was in the nearby Embassy ballroom of the Ambassador Hotel, making his way through a narrow, cave-like kitchen corridor connecting the two rooms.

We were chatting, writer Budd Schulberg and his wife, Geraldine, and I. Minutes before, the three of us had been talking with Kennedy in the hotel's fifth-floor "Royal Suite," the Senator's headquarters.

'He's Shout He's Shout'
At the shots, my first thought was that firecrackers were a stupid, tasteless way to celebrate. The next second I was running through the doors. I banged into a wave of people, mostly young girls, screaming: "He's shout! He's shout! Get a doctor!" And then I stumbled into a tight knot of men, a half-dozen of them, twisted together like a freakish sideshow animal. As I fell, my cheek touched the cheek of a man at the center of the melee. An arm was around his neck. Another was around his head.

Protruding from the pack was an arm, straight out and grasped by five or six hands, and at the end of the arm was a fist wrapped around a snub-nosed revolver.

I noticed the hands were alternately black and white, and I thought of the famous photograph of black and white workmen's hands tugging a huge wrench in Edward Steichen's "Family of Man" collection. The men staggered to a stainless steel steam table. The arm was being pounded there. People were screaming, "Get the gun! Get the gun! Kill him! Don't kill him! Don't let him get away!" A man jumped up on the steam table and kicked at the gun. But the fist held.

I watched the incredible wrestling match. They pounded, scratched, tore and kicked the fist but still it held onto the gun. I studied the man. He seemed about five-six, swartly, with curly dark-brown hair and a rather handsome face. He weighed perhaps 150 pounds.

Hammerlock by Griet
Roosevelt Griet, the giant tackle for the Los Angeles Rams, had a hammerlock on him. Rafer Johnson, the former track star, was clawing for the pistol. Bill Barry, Kennedy's chief of security, was wrapped around him.

I jumped up on the steam table and knelt to watch. A man was shouting hysterically, "You filthy monster, you're going to die!" I told him to shut up. He looked surprised. But he shut up.

At last the fingers uncurled from the pistol and Rafer Johnson held it in his huge hand. The others, carrying the assailant spreadeagled, hustled him out through the swinging doors. There, on his back, his shirt

French Writer Recalls Kennedy Premonition

PARIS, June 6 (AP)—Robert F. Kennedy told him about two weeks ago that "sooner or later" he would be the victim of an assassination attempt.

Writing in Le Figaro, Mr. Gary recalled a conversation with Mr. Kennedy near Los Angeles. He quoted Mr. Kennedy as having said, in answer to a question about precautions against a possible attack:

"There is no way to protect a candidate during the electoral campaign. You must give yourself to the crowd and from then on you must take your chances. In any case you must have luck to be elected. President of the United States. You have it or you don't."

"I know that there will be an attempt on my life sooner or later. Not so much for political reasons, but through contagion, through emulation."

Guard Draws Pistol
Ethel Kennedy, astonishingly calm, knelt over her husband. She cooed to him softly. His jaw worked as if he were talking, or trying to. A uniformed hotel guard rushed into the crowd. He

pulled his pistol and looked wildly around. "Put that thing away," Bill Barry said softly. The guard did, and withdrew. Mrs. Kennedy pushed another guard who had bent over to lift the Senator. "Don't raise his head," she said. "Get a doctor."

A man took off his jacket and began fanning Kennedy. Others crowded in.

"Get back, all of you!" Mrs. Kennedy said. "Get out! Please get out! For God's sake, give him room to breathe!" Barry, his voice steady and low, edged the crowd away.

Two men, dressed like police officers but wearing "medical attendant" shoulder patches, wheeled a hospital stretcher. They moved quickly to the Senator. "Gently, gently," Mrs. Kennedy said. "Gently, gently," Barry said. They lifted him, more quickly than gently from the floor to the stretcher.

"Oh, no, no . . . don't," Kennedy cried. He grimaced with pain and then sank into unconsciousness.

We moved through the kitchen to a small service elevator. Barry kept telling the hospital attendants, "Gently, please, gently." But they changed their way through the kitchen.

In the elevator, the bigger of the two men began in a loud voice to give everybody instructions. "Please lower your voice," Mrs. Kennedy said. He kept right on. A woman (Mrs. James Whitaker) with us, infuriated, gave the attendant a slap across the mouth. Don't do that again, lady, or somebody will get a crushed heart!"

The elevator grew. The elevator alighted and we wheeled the stretcher down a loading ramp. It started to go at breakneck

speed. Barry said, louder this time, "Gently, gently . . . somebody grab that thing!" I was the closest. I reached out and slowed down the stretcher until we reached the waiting ambulance.

"Only Mrs. Kennedy rides with him," the attendant snarled. But the Senator's closest campaign aide, Fredrick G. Dutton, jumped in. They closed the doors, with Bill Barry struggling to get in. I grabbed Bill by the arm and said, "Get in the front, Bill!" I helped him in, and jumped in beside him.

Screech Away
We screeched away, siren wailing, red light flickering. Barry pleaded with the driver for a smooth ride. I looked back through the opening. Bob Kennedy lay flat first in the ambulance, his wife and Dutton bending over him. Ethel's eyes met mine and I tried, by some mental process, to reassure her.

She made a motion with a hand, running it quickly up and down her throat. It seemed to say, "He can't breathe." Dutton and I shouted at the attendant sitting at the rear. He reached over, produced a small, clear plastic breathing mask. Roughly, he stretched the elastic attached to it over Kennedy's head, scrapping across the bullet wound that gaped behind his right ear. Ethel shivered with horror.

the door to the emergency room. We wheeled Kennedy in, and stepped outside the glass door, leaving Ethel with her husband and six or eight doctors and nurses. One doctor jumped on a stool and began pressing Kennedy's bare chest, pushing hard and rhythmically. Oxygen was administered as the examination began.

Priest Tries to Get In
A Maryknoll priest and friend of the Kennedys, the Rev. James Mundell, arrived. He was not wearing a Roman collar. He was dressed in a navy blue blazer, gray slacks and a TV-blue oxford shirt, open at the neck, and no tie. "I'm a priest," he told the policeman. "Mrs. Kennedy wants me in there."

One officer gave him a left forearm blow across the chest, knocking him back. Ethel, who had tried to get Father Mundell in the ambulance and then signaled him to follow, rushed to the door. She pushed the policeman. He wheeled and hit her in the chest with a right forearm. Dutton demanded that the priest be allowed in. The officer relented, and Father Mundell was allowed to give Kennedy absolution. Another priest arrived later with Holy Oil and administered Extreme Unction, the last rites of the Roman Catholic Church.

Other Kennedy aides, were coming in — Pierre Salinger, Stephen Smith, Theodore R. Sorensen, Adam Walinsky, Richard Goodwin, among them. Salinger came to me. "How is he?" he asked. "In the head," I said. Salinger sagged. "Oh, no!" he cried. He put his head on my shoulder, lifted it quickly and walked away. He had been through it all before. It was all too familiar. But it gets no