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ADVANCE FOR PMS OF SATURDAY JAN. 14

SAN ANTONIO, TEX., JAN. 14 (AP)-REP. HENRY GONZALEZ, A FIGURE ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE 1963 TRAGEDY THAT CLAIMED THE LIFE OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY AND PROPELLED LYNDON JOHNSON INTO THE PRESIDENCY, REMEMBERS A HEAVY PLASTIC BAG AS THE ITEM THAT TOLD HIM KENNEDY WAS DEAD.

THE SAN ANTONIO DEMOCRAT RECALLED THE EVENTS OF NOV. 22, 1963, IN A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW YESTERDAY WITH THE ASSOCIATED PRESS.

GONZALEZ SAID AT FIRST HE THOUGHT JOHNSON HAD SUFFERED A HEART ATTACK. "HE LOOKED LIKE HE WAS IN A STATE OF SHOCK," GONZALEZ SAID, "HE JUST STOOD THERE, ASHEN-FACED, LOOKING AT THE FLOOR. HE NEVER LOOKED UP."

GONZALEZ HAD BEEN RIDING IN THE THIRD CAR BEHIND THE PRESIDENTIAL LIMOUSINE IN THE DALLAS MOTORCADE. HE WAS STILL UNAWARE OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED WHEN HIS CAR SQUEALED TO A STOP AT PARKLAND HOSPITAL.

"I SAW MRS. KENNEDY'S BOUQUET, AND THE ROSES WERE ALL COVERED WITH BLOOD IN THE CAR, AND I THOUGHT THAT MAYBE SHE HAD BEEN HURT."

GONZALEZ SAID A JOHNSON AIDE, CLIFF CARTER, SHARED HIS WORRIES ABOUT THEN-VICE PRESIDENT JOHNSON. HE SAID HE FIRST REALIZED THAT JOHNSON WAS ALL RIGHT WHEN REP. JACK BROOKS LED MRS. JOHNSON THROUGH THE ROOM AND SAID SHE WAS GOING TO SEE MRS. KENNEDY. GONZALEZ ASKED BROOKS WHO WAS HURT. "HE SAID THE PRESIDENT. I ASKED HIM IF HE THOUGHT IT WAS BAD, AND HE SAID HE WAS AFRAID SO," GONZALEZ SAID.

HE SAID A NURSE CAME INTO THE ROOM HOLDING TWO PAPER SACKS AND ASKED WHO WAS GOING TO SIGN FOR THEM. GONZALEZ DID. THE SACKS CONTAINED GOV. JOHN CONNALLY'S PERSONAL EFFECTS. THE GOVERNOR WAS WOUNDED IN THE MOTORCADE, RIDING IN THE SAME CAR WITH KENNEDY.

NEXT GONZALEZ WANDERED DOWN A HOSPITAL CORRIDOR NEAR TRAUMA ROOM ONE WHERE KENNEDY LAY DEAD, OR DYING. THERE HE SAW MRS. KENNEDY SITTING ALONE.

"SHE WAS IN A STUPIFIED STATE, JUST IMPASSIVE. HER GLOVES WERE ALL CAKED WITH BLOOD."

THEN GONZALEZ GOT A VIEW OF THE SLAIN PRESIDENT. "THE DOOR ACROSS THE CORRIDOR OPENED AND I SAW THE BAREFOOT SOLES OF THE PRESIDENT'S FEET STICKING OUT FROM UNDER THE WHITE SHEET THEY HAD OVER THE REST OF HIM," GONZALEZ SAID.

"THAT SHOOK ME UP PRETTY BAD FOR THE FIRST TIME. I WAS SORT OF IN SHOCK MYSELF." HE SAID HE STILL HAD THE "SILLY HOPE" THAT KENNEDY MIGHT BE SAVED.

GONZALEZ DENIED PUBLISHED STATEMENTS QUOTING HIM AS SAYING JOHNSON HAD APPEARED INCAPABLE OF TAKING OVER THE PRESIDENCY IN THE CRISIS FOLLOWING THE ASSASSINATION.

THE VOLUBLE SAN ANTONIOAN SAID HE REALIZED KENNEDY WAS DEAD WHEN HE SAW A NURSE CARRYING A "HEAVY PLASTIC BAG" GO INTO THE ROOM. "THAT'S WHEN I BEGAN TO SOB. I SUGGESTED THAT SOMEONE BRING MRS. KENNEDY A GLASS OF WATER."

MRS. KENNEDY, GONZALEZ RECALLS, WENT INTO THE ROOM. "SHE LEANED OVER THE LEFT SIDE OF THE BODY AND KISSED IT. SHE TOOK A RING OFF HER LEFT HAND, AND MY EYES WATERED SO BAD I COULDN'T SEE ANYMORE. I WALKED AWAY."

KENNEDY'S BODY WAS LOADED INTO AN AMBULANCE AND DRIVEN AWAY. GONZALEZ HELPED LOAD THE CASKET INTO THE AMBULANCE, HE SAID, AND STOOD CLUTCHING THE TWO BROWN PAPER BAGS.

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