

KENNEDY-SECRET SERVICE (250)

CULPEPER, VA., MARCH 29 (AP)-IF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY HAD HEEDED THE ADVICE OF THE U.S. SECRET SERVICE, A RETIRED ASSISTANT CHIEF OF THAT AGENCY SAID TODAY, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO PRESIDENTIAL ASSASSINATION IN DALLAS.

HARRY E. NEAL, WHO LIVES HERE IN RETIREMENT, DEFENDED THE SECRET SERVICE AGAINST WHAT HE TERMED STATEMENTS CRITICAL OF THE AGENCY IN WILLIAM MANCHESTER'S BOOK, "THE DEATH OF A PRESIDENT." "WHAT MR. MANCHESTER AND MOST OTHER PEOPLE OVERLOOK, OR DO NOT KNOW," SAID NEAL, "IS THAT THE SECRET SERVICE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO HAVE TWO AGENTS STANDING ON THE REAR CORNERS OF THE PRESIDENT'S CAR, AS HAD BEEN CUSTOMARY ON MANY PREVIOUS ASSIGNMENTS. MR. KENNEDY DID NOT WANT THEM THERE.

"IF THE AGENTS HAD BEEN PERMITTED TO RIDE ON THE BACK OF THE VEHICLE, IT IS ALMOST CERTAIN THAT ONE OF THEM WOULD HAVE OBSCURED PRESIDENT KENNEDY FROM THE LINE OF FIRE, IN WHICH EVENT IT IS LIKELY THAT NO SHOTS WOULD HAVE BEEN FIRED. IF THERE WERE SHOTS, THEY WOULD HAVE STRUCK THE AGENT, NOT THE PRESIDENT."

IN AN INTERVIEW WITH BILL DIEHL, MANAGING EDITOR OF THE CULPEPER STAR-EXPONENT, NEAL EXHIBITED AN ASSASSINATION RE-ENACTMENT PICTURE SHOWING THE KENNEDY POSITION ON THE CROSSHAIRS OF A GUNSIGHT.

WHEN HE SUPERIMPOSES A SCALED, CUT-OUT FIGURE OF AN AGENT ON THE BACK OF THE CAR, NEAL EXPLAINED, THE KENNEDY FIGURE IS COMPLETELY BLOCKED OUT.

NEAL, WHO SERVED IN THE SECRET SERVICE FROM 1926 TO 1957, TOOK ISSUE WITH CRITICS OF THE AGENCY ON WHETHER KENNEDY WAS ADEQUATELY PROTECTED BY SAYING: "PRESIDENT KENNEDY HIMSELF OFTEN DISREGARDED SECURITY PRECAUTIONS AND DELIBERATELY EXPOSED HIMSELF TO CROWDS OF SPECTATORS TO SHAKE HANDS WITH WELL-WISHERS. PRESIDENT JOHNSON FOLLOWS THE SAME PATTERN."

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