

EA156WX (AVS ADVS)

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21 NOV 1964
MONED NOV

(1,600) ADVANCE FOR AMS OF SUNDAY, NOV. 22; CAUTION, NOTE DATE. 16, 1051

EDITORS: IT WAS A DREARY MORNING A YEAR AGO AS THE NATION'S 35TH PRESIDENT MUSED ALOUD ABOUT THE TECHNIQUES OF ASSASSINATION. HOURS LATER HE WAS DEAD. ASSOCIATED PRESS WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT FRANK CORMIER, WHO COVERED JOHN F. KENNEDY'S ILL-FATED TRIP TO TEXAS, HERE RECALLS THE EVENTS THE LATE PRESIDENT'S FINAL DAY. IT IS ONE OF SEVERAL STORIES FOR USE IN CONNECTION WITH THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF KENNEDY'S ASSASSINATION.

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THE LAST DAY

BY FRANK CORMIER

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

(ADVANCE) WASHINGTON, NOV. 21 (AP)-THE WEATHER IN FORT WORTH, TEX., WAS DARK, DAMP AND FULL OF FOREBODING ON THE MORNING OF NOV. 22, 1963. PERHAPS FOR THAT REASON, JOHN F. KENNEDY'S THOUGHTS TURNED TO A MOST AWFUL, VIRTUALLY UNTHINKABLE SUBJECT.

KENNEDY, LOUNGING IN HIS SUITE AT THE OLD TEXAS HOTEL (CAPS T, H), TURNED TO KENNETH O'DONNELL, HIS FRIEND AND AIDE, AND, AS O'DONNELL LATER PARAPHRASED IT, SAID:

"IF ANYBODY REALLY WANTED TO SHOOT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, IT WAS NOT A VERY DIFFICULT JOB--ALL ONE HAD TO DO WAS GET A HIGH BUILDING WITH A TELESCOPIC RIFLE, AND THERE WAS NOTHING ANYBODY COULD DO TO DEFEND AGAINST SUCH AN ATTEMPT."

ABOUT TWO HOURS LATER AND 32 MILES AWAY, IN DALLAS, A FLOCK OF PIGEONS ROOSTING ON A SEVEN-STORY WAREHOUSE AND OFFICE BUILDING OF YELLOW BRICK, WHEELED INTO NOW-SUNNY SKIES--FRIGHTENED BY THE BRACK OF A RIFLE.

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FROM THIS TALL, DRAB BUILDING CALLED THE TEXAS SCHOOL BOOK DEPOSITORY, A MAN ARMED WITH A RIFLE AND TELESCOPIC SIGHT HAD ASSASSINATED THE 35TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND NOBODY HAD BEEN ABLE TO DEFEND AGAINST IT.

DEATH STRUCK WITHOUT WARNING AND, AS JOHN F. KENNEDY SLUMPED MORTALLY WOUNDED IN HIS OPEN-TOPPED LIMOUSINE--A SPECIALLY DESIGNED LUXURY VEHICLE THAT SYMBOLIZED, IN A SMALL WAY, THE POWER AND GRANDEUR OF THE PRESIDENCY--WIFE JACQUELINE REACHED FOR HIM AND CRIED:

"OH, MY GOD, THEY HAVE SHOT MY HUSBAND. I LOVE YOU, JACK." WITHIN MINUTES, A SORROWING NATION AND A SHOCKED WORLD ECHOED THAT PLAINTIVE CRY:

"OH, MY GOD."

ON THE MORNING OF NOV. 22, A LARGE AND BOISTROUS CROWD FILLED A ROPED-OFF PARKING LOT ACROSS FROM FORT WORTH'S TEXAS HOTEL, JR WAITING IN THE RAIN TO HEAR JACK KENNEDY.

AT 8:45 A.M., HE APPEARED, BAREHEADED AND SPURNING A PROFFERED UMBRELLA. THE CROWD YELLED BUT WAS DISAPPOINTED BECAUSE MRS. KENNEDY HAD REMAINED IN THE HOTEL WHERE THEY HAD SPENT THE NIGHT.

"MRS. KENNEDY IS ORGANIZING HERSELF," THE PRESIDENT EXPLAINED. "IT TAKES LONGER, BUT, OF COURSE, SHE LOOKS BETTER THAN WE DO WHEN SHE DOES IT."

EVERYONE SMILED.

INSIDE THE HOTEL, GUESTS AT A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BREAKFAST WAITED. THE PRESIDENT AND HIS VICE PRESIDENT, LYNDON B. JOHNSON, WENT THERE DIRECTLY FROM THE PARKING LOT. MRS. KENNEDY WAS THERE.

"TWO YEARS AGO," KENNEDY TOLD THE BREAKFASTERS, "I INTRODUCED MYSELF IN PARIS BY SAYING THAT I WAS THE MAN WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED MRS. KENNEDY TO PARIS. I AM GETTING SOMEWHAT THAT SAME SENSATION AS I TRAVEL AROUND TEXAS. NOBODY WONDERS WHAT LYNDON AND I WEAR."

EA158WX

SOMEONE AT THE BREAKFAST THOUGHT JACK KENNEDY OUGHT TO WEAR A TEXAS HAT, AND GAVE HIM ONE. ALWAYS SHY ABOUT POSING IN OUT-OF-CHARACTER COSTUME, KENNEDY DECLINED TO WEAR IT FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS.

COME TO THE WHITE HOUSE ON MONDAY, HE PROMISED, AND HE WOULD TRY IT ON.

THEN HE WENT UPSTAIRS AND, UNACCOUNTABLY, BEGAN PHILOSOPHIZING ABOUT THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF GIVING A PRESIDENT CERTAIN PROTECTION AGAINST ASSASSINATION.

A FEW MINUTES LATER, KENNEDY AND HIS PARTY DROVE TO THE AIRPORT, BOARDED BLUE-AND-SILVER AIR FORCE ONE, AND FLEW THE SHORT HOP TO DALLAS.

THE BIG JET LANDED AT LOVE FIELD AT 11:40 A.M.

ANOTHER NOISY CROWD WAS WAITING. THE PRESIDENT, AFTER SHAKING FREE OF OFFICIAL GREETERS, HEADED FOR A FENCE WHERE HUNDREDS OF HANDS WERE HELD OUT FOR HIM.

MRS. KENNEDY, STRIKING IN A PINK SUIT AND PILLBOX HAT, AND CARRYING RED ROSES, WENT TO THE FENCE, TOO, AND OFFERED HER HAND TO THE CROWD. IN A DAY OF TRAVEL THROUGH TEXAS, SHE HAD SHOWN HERSELF TO BE A WILLING AND WINNING CAMPAIGNER.

AT 11:50 A.M., THE KENNEDYS SETTLED BACK ON THE DEEP-CUSHIONED REAR SEAT OF THE PRESIDENT'S BUBBLETOP LIMOUSINE. BECAUSE SKIES WERE BRIGHT, THE CLEAR PLASTIC ROOF HAD BEEN REMOVED.

INTO THE JUMP SEAT AHEAD OF KENNEDY MOVED GOV. JOHN B. CONNALLY OF TEXAS. NELLIE CONNALLY, HIS WIFE, TOOK A SIMILAR POSITION AHEAD OF MRS. KENNEDY.

WILLIAM R. GREER, A SECRET SERVICE AGENT, WAS AT THE WHEEL. AGENT ROY KELLERMAN SHARED THE FRONT SEAT WITH GREER. IN FRONT OF HIM WAS A SMALL MICROPHONE THROUGH WHICH HE COULD MAKE INSTANT CONTACT WITH OTHER AGENTS AND WITH DALLAS POLICE OFFICIALS.

EA159WX

GREER AND KELLERMAN WERE SEPARATED FROM THE KENNEDYS AND THE CONNALLYS BY AN OPEN PARTITION, A PART OF THE ROOF THAT COULD NOT BE REMOVED, BETWEEN THE FRONT SEAT AND THE REAR COMPARTMENT.

SLOWLY, THE BIG LINCOLN MOVED AHEAD ON A 10-MILE JOURNEY TOWARD THE DALLAS TRADE MART, A BIG, MODERN BUILDING WHERE A LUNCHEON AUDIENCE AWAITED THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE. THE TRIP COULD HAVE BEEN MAPPED FOR FOUR MILES BUT A LONGER ROUTE WAS CHOSEN SO MORE PEOPLE COULD SEE THE PRESIDENT.

ALL ALONG THE WAY, HAPPY, ENTHUSIASTIC PEOPLE STOOD AND CHEERED THEIR ELECTED LEADER. ONLY OCCASIONALLY COULD KENNEDY GLIMPSE AN UNFRIENDLY SIGN--ONE, FOR INSTANCE, EXPRESSING ABSOLUTE CONTEMPT FOR HIS POLICIES BUT AVOWING GREAT RESPECT FOR HIS OFFICE.

"PLEASE SHAKE MY HAND," SAID ANOTHER SIGN. AND KENNEDY ORDERED THE LIMOUSINE STOPPED SO HE COULD DO JUST THAT.

FARTHER ALONG, SOME NUNS STOOD WITH THEIR PUPILS ALONG THE CURB IN FRONT OF A CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL. AGAIN KENNEDY MADE AN UNSCHEDULED STOP FOR MORE HANDSHAKING. THE SCHOOLGIRLS SQUEALED WITH DELIGHT AND MADE DERVISH-LIKE LEAPS INTO THE AIR.

APPROACHING DOWNTOWN DALLAS, THE CROWDS THICKENED. ALONG MAIN STREET, IN THE BUSINESS DISTRICT, THUNDEROUS SHOUTS CAME FROM A SEA OF PEOPLE STANDING 10 DEEP OR MORE ALONG BOTH SIDES.

THEN CAME A RIGHT-ANGLE TURN, FROM MAIN INTO HOUSTON STREET. OVERHEAD LOOMED THE DALLAS COUNTY CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING. PRISONERS PRESSED THEIR FACES AGAINST IRON BARS FAR OVERHEAD, BODIES RESTRAINED, ARMS DANGLING FREE IN GREETING.

AFTER ONE SHORT BLOCK, THE MOTORCADE TURNED LEFT AGAIN, DOWN THE SLOPING CURVE OF ELM STREET PAST THE TEXAS SCHOOL BOOK DEPOSITORY ON THE RIGHT, GRASSY DEALEY PLAZA ON THE LEFT.

A160W

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NELLIE CONNALLY TURNED TO FACE KENNEDY.

"MR. PRESIDENT," SHE SAID, "YOU CAN'T SAY DALLAS DOESN'T LOVE YOU."

"THAT," HE REPLIED, "IS VERY OBVIOUS."

DOWN ELM STREET, HEADING FOR A MULTI-LANED FREEWAY LEADING TO THE TRADE MART, THE PRESIDENTIAL CAR MOVED AT 11 MILES AN HOUR.

FROM A PARTIALLY OPENED WINDOW ON THE SIXTH FLOOR OF THE TEXTBOOK WAREHOUSE A RIFLE WAS THRUST FORWARD AND AIMED AT THE KENNEDY LIMOUSINE. THE HANDS OF A MASSIVE CLOCK ATOP THE BUILDING POINTED TO 12:30 P.M.

THE RIFLE CRACKED ONCE, THOSE BELOW HEARD AN ECHOING REPORT. A FIRE-CRACKER, SOME THOUGHT. A BACKFIRE, OTHERS BELIEVED.

JACK KENNEDY STIFFENED AND THREW BOTH HANDS TO HIS THROAT. MRS. KENNEDY TURNED AND SAW WHAT SHE INTERPRETED AS A QUIZZICAL LOOK PASS OVER HIS FACE.

TWO, POSSIBLY MORE, SHOTS FOLLOWED. ONE RIPPED OPEN THE PRESIDENT'S HEAD. HE SLUMPED TOWARD HIS WIFE, HIS FACE NOW EMPTY OF ALL EXPRESSION.

IT WAS THEN THAT JACQUELINE KENNEDY CRIED OUT, "OH, MY GOD, THEY HAVE SHOT MY HUSBAND. I LOVE YOU, JACK."

IN THE JUMP SEAT AHEAD, CONNALLY, SHOT THROUGH THE BODY, WRIST AND THIGH, TUMBLED INTO HIS WIFE'S ARMS MURMURING:

"OH, NO, NO, NO. MY GOD, THEY ARE GOING TO KILL US ALL."

AGENT KELLERMAN WHEELED AROUND IN THE FRONT SEAT, THEN SHOUTED AT DRIVER GREER:

"LET'S GET OUT OF HERE. WE ARE HIT."

GREER TRAPPED ON THE ACCELERATOR. KELLERMAN GRABBED THE MICROPHONE AND SNAPPED INSTRUCTIONS TO THE POLICE CAR LEADING THE MOTORCADE:

"WE ARE HIT. GET US TO THE HOSPITAL IMMEDIATELY."

MRS. KENNEDY, SECONDS EARLIER, HAD BEGUN CLAMBERING OUT OF THE BACK SEAT AND ONTO THE TRUNK DECK OF THE BIG CAR. FROM A SECRET SERVICE CONVERTIBLE DIRECTLY BEHIND, AGENT CLINTON J. HILL WAS SPRINTING TOWARD THE PRESIDENTIAL LIMOUSINE. HE GRABBED A HANDHOLD ON THE TRUNK JUST AS GREER HIT THE ACCELERATOR. HILL STUMBLED MOMENTARILY, THEN PULLED HIMSELF ONTO A FOOTSTAND BUILT INTO THE REAR BUMPER. HE CLIMBED OVER THE TRUNK AND, PUSHING MRS. KENNEDY BACK INTO THE SEAT, THREW HIS BODY OVER THE SEAT TO OFFER PROTECTION AGAINST ANY FURTHER SHOTS.

EA161WX

MRS. KENNEDY DOES NOT REMEMBER CLIMBING ONTO THE TRUNK OF THE CAR.

PARKLAND HOSPITAL WAS FOUR MILES AWAY. GREER PUSHED THE PRESIDENTIAL LIMOUSINE TO SPEEDS OF 70 AND 80 MILES AN HOUR IN A FUTILE RACE TO SAVE KENNEDY'S LIFE.

A TEAM OF DOCTORS WAS WAITING WHEN THE CAVALCADE ARRIVED AND THEY EMPLOYED THE MOST DESPERATE MEASURES IN AN EFFORT TO SUSTAIN THE FAINT SPARK OF LIFE IN THE PRESIDENT'S BODY.

WHILE THEY LABORED, LEE HARVEY OSWALD DRANK A COCA-COLA IN THE SCHOOL BOOK DEPOSITORY, PASSED SCRUTINY BY A DALLAS POLICEMAN, AND WENT INTO THE STREET--TO KILL AGAIN.

AT 1:36 P.M., AT PARKLAND, ACTING WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY MALCOLM KILDUFF STOOD BEFORE REPORTERS, EYES RED-RIMMED, AND ANNOUNCED IN A CHOKED VOICE:

"PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY DIED AT APPROXIMATELY 1 O'CLOCK CENTRAL STANDARD TIME TODAY HERE IN DALLAS. HE DIED OF A GUNSHOT WOUND IN THE BRAIN. I HAVE NO OTHER DETAILS REGARDING THE ASSASSINATION OF THE PRESIDENT."

SIXTY-TWO MINUTES LATER, LYNDON B. JOHNSON TOOK THE OATH AS 36TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

(END ADVANCE FOR AMS OF SUNDAY, NOV. 22; MOVED NOV. 16).

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