

# Allende's Wife Kept From Body

## Mexico City

The widow of Chilean President Salvador Allende said in an interview published here yesterday that she was not allowed to see the body of her husband, who allegedly killed himself in the coup that overthrew his Marxist government Tuesday.

Hortensia Bussi de Allende, in an interview with the Mexico City newspaper *Excelsior*, said:

"I asked to see him, to touch him, but they would not let me."

Mrs. Allende told *Excelsior* correspondent Manuel Mejido that she has decided to stay in Chile despite an offer of asylum in Mexico. She is currently staying at the Mexican Embassy in Santiago.

"I am grateful for the asylum but shall not abandon my country," Mrs. Allende said.

## BURIED

Mrs. Allende said her husband was buried in the family plot in the holiday resort of Vina Del Mar about 100 miles from Santiago, covered only by a sheet in a rough coffin. She was not allowed to see him without the sheet.

"President Allende was betrayed and deposed by a fascist coup," she said. "He was buried anonymously."

Mrs. Allende said the last time she saw her husband alive was during a dinner on Monday with several guests.

"Then I went to bed and

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on Tuesday at 7:40 a.m., a telephone call woke me up. It was Salvador. He told me, 'I am speaking from La Moneda (the presidential palace). The situation has become serious. The navy has mutinied. I am going to stay here.'"

President Allende told her to stay at the residence.

## MESSAGE

Mrs. Allende said she heard her husband's last message to the Chilean people on the radio.

By noon Tuesday, she had difficulty getting through by telephone to her husband's office and when she finally got through, police answered. His aides and secretaries had gone.

Around 11:30 a.m. a reconnaissance helicopter flew over the residence.

"The aerial bombardment began," she said. "The planes arrived, fired their rockets and returned to base to refuel. The residence was converted into a mass of smoke, the smell of powder and destruction."

She asked the guards not to fire against the army.

"But it was impossible to stop them once the bombing began. They fired back. Everything seemed unreal."

## CALLS

She made her last telephone calls to the presidential palace while cringing on the floor.

Mrs. Allende took the opportunity to slip out of the house while the planes were refuelling.

They went to a school behind the residence where the nuns helped them. She escaped with only the clothes she was wearing — an embroidered blouse, a coat, and pants.

She decided to make for the house of Felipe Herrera, a former president of the Interamerican Development Bank.

"Fortunately nobody followed us," she said. "We stayed there the whole day. I could not go out because the state of siege and curfew had been imposed. I stayed there without knowing what happened to my husband or my children."

"I think Salvador died between 2 and 4 p.m."

## WOUNDED

The following day she was told by telephone that her husband was in a military hospital, wounded.

"I went to the health center," Mrs. Allende said.

"But although I identified myself, the soldiers would not let me in."

She spoke to a general who told her, "I was a friend of Salvadore Allende. I express to you my sincerest sympathy."

She knew then that her husband was dead.

The general promised her a Jeep and an officer to accompany her to an air force base where she was told she should go. But another general later appeared and told her there were no vehicles or soldiers available to take her.

## PLANE

She decided to go in the small car of her nephew, Eduardo Grove Allende. At the air base, she was told that the body of her husband was on a military plane.

"Before boarding it I telephoned my daughter (Isabel) but she could not come with me because she did not have a safe conduct pass," she said.

"I boarded the plane," Mrs. Allende said. "Imagine what I saw—a coffin in the middle covered with an army blanket. Beside it, my other nephew, Patricio Lopez and Laura Allende — a sister of Salvador."

The plane took off for Vina Del Mar and landed at an air force base.

## SOLDERED

"They brought down Salvador," she said. "I asked to see him, touch him, but they would not let me. They told me the coffin had been soldered."

She followed the truck with the coffin in a car until reaching the cemetery of Santa Ines.

"The people looked at us strangely," she said. "They did not know what it was all about or who was in the cof-

fin. There were lots of soldiers and police — as if they expected a crowd at the burial."

"We walked in silence to the family crypt — the same place where we buried a month ago Ines Allende, a sister of Salvador who died of cancer," she said.

"I insisted again on seeing my husband. They would not allow me. But they lifted the lid of the coffin and I saw that he was wrapped in only a sheet. I did not know which was head or toes. I felt like crying."

Mrs. Allende asked again

to see her husband, without the sheet, but she was told this was impossible.

She told one of the officers with her, "Salvador Allende cannot be buried in such an anonymous manner. I want you at least to know the name of the person they are burying."

She went on, "I took some flowers from nearby and threw them into the grave as they were shovelling the earth."

"And I said, 'Here rests Salvador Allende, who is the president of the republic and who they did not even permit his family to accompany.'"

## RESIDENCE

Mrs. Allende asked to be taken to her husband's summer residence in Vina Del Mar.

"I was very humiliated," she said. "On boarding the plane, they searched me to make sure I would not commit suicide."

She added, "they already denied me a look at my husband. But after many consultations, they allowed me to go to the summer residence."

Mrs. Allende was surprised by what she found at the house. "They had taken away the carpets and the furniture," she said.

"I took some of my clothes and Salvador's. Then without eating, because I had no appetite, we returned to Quinteros to board the plane."

She said her daughter Beatriz, who is married to a Cuban diplomat, had to leave Chile.

"I could not even see her off," she said.

"I had just buried my husband and on the same day, I had to lose a daughter. I do not know when I shall see her again."

Reuters



*AP Wirephot*

MRS. SALVADOR ALLENDE  
**'I asked to see him, to touch him'**