

# The Day JFK Was Shot

By JIM BISHOP

12:30 P.M.: President Kennedy's death remained a secret to all except a select few, such as Jerry Behn, Secret Service man in the White House 1500 miles away. It was not known to Lyndon Johnson, 35 feet away.

A few minutes before, Kenneth O'Donnell had peered inside the cubicle in which Lyndon Johnson and Mrs. Johnson stayed on orders of the Secret Service, and said: "It looks bad. Perhaps fatal. I'll keep you informed." O'Donnell went back to Agent Clint Hill. "Order a casket," he whispered. "Find someplace nearby."

Steve Landrigan of the hospital staff gave Hill the name of a nearby undertaker. Vernon Oneal was telephoned: "This is the Secret Service calling from Parkland Hospital. Put the best casket you have in a coach and get here quickly." Mr. Oneal started to say he had a bronze casket for \$3900, but he was talking to a dead phone.

Outside Trauma One, O'Donnell, the Secret Service, and Mrs. Kennedy conferred. Malcolm Kilduff was assigned to announce the death, and asked what was the exact time. Mrs. Kennedy wanted this to come after the priest had given her husband conditional absolution.

Dr. Malcolm Perry was telephoned and asked if 1 p.m. would be all right. Yes, the death certificate would so state. An agent ordered the

*The Examiner today continues the third installment of its serialization of the new book, "The Day Kennedy Was Shot," by Jim Bishop.*

hospital administrator: "Don't let anybody know what time the President died. Security."

Word went from Jerry Behn's office at the White House to Secret Service Headquarters to Robert F. Kennedy before another phone rang and J. Edgar Hoover informed the Attorney General the President was "in critical condition."

Robert Kennedy said: "You may be interested to know that my brother is dead." Then he called his brother Ted and asked him to break the news to "mother and our sisters." It could not be told to the father: Joseph P. Kennedy was convalescing from an extensive cerebral hemorrhage.

When Malcolm Kilduff was admitted to the hideaway, Johnson was sitting on an ambulance cart, his legs dangling. Kilduff swallowed hard

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# How

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and said: "Mr. President . . ."

The tall Texan brought his head up sharply; Mrs. Johnson turned as she was about to sit, and held a hand against her mouth. This was the first time Lyndon Baines Johnson had been so addressed, the first time he knew he was the 36th President of the United States.

"Mr. President," Kilduff began again, I have to announce the death of President Kennedy to the press. Is it all right with you?"

Johnson hopped off the cart and jiggled a hand in his trouser pocket. "No, Mac," he said. "I think we had better get out of here and get back to the plane before you announce it. We don't know whether this is a worldwide conspiracy," Johnson said, quoting Emory Roberts and Clinton Hill, "whether they are after me as they were after President Kennedy."

## Thanks LBJ

Showing shock, Kilduff thanked the President and went back to discuss the matter with Roy Kellerman. Kellerman said he would feel better if they flew Johnson at once to the White House, where he could be given the utmost protection.

Air Force One was a sealed edifice with wings. It had new, highly sophisticated communications equipment, some of which was directly related to the Bagman and his nuclear-kickoff "football." Air Force Two, on which the Vice President had arrived, did not have this equipment.

The President asked Kenny O'Donnell, "How about Mrs. Kennedy?" O'Donnell responded, "She will not leave the hospital without the President."

Mrs. Johnson nodded approvingly when her husband said he would not go back without Mrs. Kennedy and

☆☆☆Wed., Nov. 27, 1968

# They Took

# JFK's Body -

# - No Autopsy

# Kennedys Curtail Thanksgiving

EXAMINER-CHICAGO DAILY NEWS

WASHINGTON — There will be only a partial family reunion of the Kennedy clan at Hyannis Port, Mass., Thanksgiving Day.

Sen. Edward Kennedy, the last surviving son, will be there with his wife, Joan, and their three children, Kara, Edward Jr. and Patrick. They have been spending most of their time in recent weeks in their new home in McLean, Va.

Mrs. Ethel Kennedy, widow of the late Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, who is expecting her 11th child in a few weeks, will remain at Hickory Hill, her home in McLean, with her children and close friends. Three of the children away at school, Kathleen, 17, Joseph, 16, and Robert Jr., 14, will be home for the holiday.

Joining them will be David, 13, Mary Courtney,

12, Michael, 10, Mary Kerry, 9, Christopher, 5, Maxwell, 3 and Douglas, 1.

Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and her two children, Caroline, 11, and John, 8, will spend the day with her new husband, Aristotle Onassis, at her country place in Far Hills, N.J.

Mrs. Eunice Kennedy Shriver and her husband, R. Sargent Shriver, the U.S. ambassador to France, will be in Paris.

At Hyannis Port, Joseph and Rose Kennedy will preside over a Thanksgiving dinner. In attendance besides the Edward Kennedys will be Mrs. Pat Lawford and her four children, Chris, Sidney, Victoria and Robin.

Also present will be Mrs. Jean Kennedy Smith, her husband, Stephen Smith, and their three children, Stephen Jr., William and Amanda, who live in New York City.

the body of her husband.

The Secret Service advised Johnson to get aboard Air Force One at once and take off for Washington. Johnson was shocked. He asked where Mrs. Kennedy and the casket would go. "Air Force Two," they said.

If the oath of office had occurred to the new President, he did not mention it, for the same reason he would not depart alone on Air Force One — it would be like a precipitous power grab. The Constitution of the United States is explicit: "Before he enter on the execution of his office, he

shall take the following oath of affirmation . . ."

## Another Car

Agent Lem Johns went out to requisition automobiles for the movement to Love Field, two miles away. The new President did not want to have his wife risk her life with him, so he ordered her to ride in another vehicle.

When the cars were ready the party went out. The President jumped into the back seat of the lead car, which had Chief of Police Jesse Curry as driver, and slouched low. Youngblood was beside him. Mrs. Johnson was shoved into the second car. Malcolm Kidduff hurried back to make arrangements for the death announcement.

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Vernon Oneal and two assistants rolled the 400-pound casket on a carriage down corridors to Trauma One. Mrs. Kennedy studied the gleaming bronze sides, convex lid and didn't flinch.

A plastic mattress cover was placed in the casket. Then the nude body of the President, covered with sheets, was lifted inside.

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When Lyndon Johnson got

aboard Air Force One, a TV set was the first sound he heard inside. A commentator said Kennedy had been pronounced dead; the shots came apparently from a school book building; the police had clues to the assassin and were looking for a suspect; Vice President Johnson had left Parkland Hospital but no one knew his whereabouts.

## Instructs Stewards

The President left the television set to instruct stewards to hold the private bedroom for Mrs. Kennedy's use. However, he quickly discovered there was no other place from which to telephone privately and he signaled the communications shack he would be using the bedroom phone. He wanted to convey his sympathies to Robert Kennedy; he also wanted to ask the Attorney General for a legal opinion on when to take the oath of office as President.

When news of the death had been flashed, the press demanded details. They asked the Parkland Hospital doctors who had attended the President to be summoned.

With four of the doctors facing them from the stage of the nurses' classroom, a hundred journalists with no time for tact fired questions. It was agreed they would be answered by Dr. Kemp Clark and Dr. Malcom Perry. Neither had experience in these matters; neither had turned the body of the President over to examine it for

wounds; neither had autopsy experience.

The doctors were to complain bitterly that they were misquoted or quoted out of context. In truth, they were incompetent to discuss the wounds because they had no knowledge of the crime, the scene of it, the trajectory of projectiles, or whether wounds could be called entrance or exit.

Outside of Trauma One, Roy Kellerman waited with the death certificate. A stranger approached Kellerman, introduced himself as Dr. Earl Rose, and said, "There has been a homicide. We will take the body for an autopsy."

## Enraged

At this moment, Dr. George Burkley, the President's physician approached, and Kellerman told him, "Doctor, this man is from some health unit in town. He tells me we can't remove this body." Burkley was instantly enraged. He shouted: "We are removing it!"

Rose shook his head nega-

tively. "This happened in Dallas County," he said. "Under the law, an autopsy must be performed." The shouting multiplied, with Kenny O'Donnell and Larry O'Brien joining in.

Rose went to telephone, and soon produced a judge, Theron Ward. Kellerman appealed meekly. "Your Honor, we're asking for a waiver here because—" Judge Ward said, "I can't help you out."

"You can't break the chain of evidence," Dr. Rose repeated with finality. "The autopsy will be performed here." "All right," said Kellerman. Out of the side of his eye, he had seen the door of Trauma One open, the casket being pushed into the corridor.

The medical examiner saw it. Jumped ahead of it, standing in the way, shouting: "We can't release it! Any violent death requires a post-mortem!" A policeman wearing a helmet and a revolver now stood with Rose and Judge Ward. The policeman said, "These people say you can't go."

### Reject Ultimatum

Secret Service men began to form in front of the casket and down the sides. The ultimatum had been rejected. William Greer, with the bags containing the President's clothing, walked through the cop and medical examiner. Dr. Rose stood his ground. So did the policeman.

Kellerman ran back and beckoned David Powers to bring Mrs. Kennedy out. She saw the casket ahead, watched it break bluntly through the blockers, and trotted along.

Kenny O'Donnell was not certain they were going to be able to steal the body of the President, and urged Vernon Oneal to hurry. The mortician asked if they were going to the mortuary. Secret Service men said yes! yes!

At the emergency overhang Roy Kellerman ordered Agent Andy Berger to take the wheel of the ambulance. Oneal wanted to know why he was not going to drive his hearse, and was told to stand aside. Mrs. Kennedy insisted

on being in the back "beside my husband." Doctor Burkley helped her in. Clint Hill joined them and secured the door.

### Instructions

Kellerman ran to tell O'Donnell and O'Brien to take the next car and, privately, head for Love Field. He got on the radio to tell agents at Love Field to let an ambulance and one following car through the fence, then lock up the place. Colonel Swindal was to be ready to take off at once.

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Then President Johnson received a phone call from Assistant Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach with the wording of the oath of office to be typed by a secretary. The President happened to look at the TV and hear an announcement that the Dallas Police Department had just arrested the suspected assassin.

Johnson thought of Federal Judge Sarah Hughes, a Kennedy appointee, got her on the phone, explained the situation, and offered to send Secret Service agents for her. The judge declined the escort, and promised to be there in ten minutes.

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An ambulance entered the airport, followed by two cars, all at high speed. A third car was stopped short of the fence by the lawmen. Vernon Oneal got out to protest. It was his ambulance. The President was in an Oneal casket. The Secret Service men told him the ambulance would be returned.

(Oneal was to send bills for \$3900 to the family and eventually receive a government agency check for \$3400.)

A rear door of Air Force One opened for Secret Service men to lift the casket inside.

### Flabbergasted

All the Kennedy people were taking places on the aircraft they had arrived on. Larry O'Brien looked up to see the President and Mrs.

Johnson coming down the aisle from the private stateroom. He was flabbergasted.

When the Johnsons moved over to the breakfast nook, Mrs. Kennedy looked up. There can be no doubt she was surprised to see them aboard this aircraft, not number two.

But she took Mrs. Johnson's hand in hers. "Oh, Lady Bird," she said. "It's good that we've always liked you two so much."

Mrs. Johnson began to weep again. "Oh, Mrs. Kennedy," she said. "You know we never even wanted to be Vice President and now, dear God, it's come to this."

The President summoned O'Donnell and O'Brien. "I talked to Bobby and Katzenbach," Johnson said. "They think I should be sworn in right here. Judge Hughes should be here any minute." They watched Captain Cecil Stoughton fixing up his cameras in the stateroom.

"I would like you fellows to stay, to stand shoulder to shoulder with me," Johnson said. The Kennedy assistants did not commit themselves.

When Judge Sarah Hughes was taken into Air Force One, the President grasped her hand and said, "Thank you for coming, judge. We'll be ready in a minute." He told Larry O'Brien someone should ask Mrs. Kennedy if she would stand beside him during the ceremony. The President said he would also need a Bible.

Mrs. Kennedy was inside a lavatory, alone. Whether she knew what was expected of her and was trying to avoid it, or whether the depression of spirit led to nausea, is uncertain.

O'Brien asked Evelyn Lincoln, Mr. Kennedy's personal secretary, to see if she could get Mrs. Kennedy's attention.

Looking around, O'Brien found a box with what he thought was a Bible. It was a missal — the prayers of the Roman Catholic Mass in both Latin and English. It was handed to the judge with the typed words of the oath.

Mrs. Kennedy stepped timidly into the room. The President grasped both her hands and whispered, "Thank you." He nodded for the ceremony to start. Mrs. Johnson was on one side of the President; Mrs. Kennedy, still in bloody gloves and garments, on the other, as he took the oath.

Some pushed forward to give him a hearty handshake. President Johnson turned a stern expression on them; the bud of conviviality was crushed. Chief of Police

Curry took Judge Sarah Hughes by the arm to leave with her.

"God bless you, little lady," he said to Mrs. Kennedy, "but you ought to go back and lie down." Mrs. Kennedy summoned a smile. "No thanks," she said. "I'm fine."

The President said: "Let's get airborne."

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TOMORROW: Jim Bishop continues arresting details of events in Dallas and on the plane.