

The Day JFK Was Shot

The Examiner today continues the fourth installment of its exclusive serial condensation of the book the Kennedys asked author and columnist Jim Bishop not to write, "The Day Kennedy Was Shot."

By JIM BISHOP

2:30 p.m.: Colonel James Swindal's First Officer filed a flight plan asking for 25,000 feet out of Lov Field, Dallas. The flight control tower handoffs would be at Fort Worth Center; Little Rock, Arkansas; Nashville, Tennessee; and Charleston, West Virginia.

Estimated time of arrival at Andrews Air Force Base, Washington, D.C., would be 1803 local time. The plane received an "all clear," and Swindal moved the throttle.

Air Force One rumbled down the strip at 2:47 p.m., jostling the casket as Mrs. Kennedy sat watching it, and shaking the shoulders of Lyndon Johnson as he resumed telephoning after being sworn in.

—Turn to Page 6, Col. 1

Ins were Out now.

The widow had retreated from what had been the Kennedy private bedroom to the aft galley. There were only two seats there. She sat on one, Kenneth O'Donnell sat on the other. Dr. George Burkley, McHugh and O'Brien stood near the casket.

Antidote to Grief

The Gaelic antidote to grief is whiskey. O'Donnell, turning toward Mrs. Kennedy, said: "I'm going to have a hell of a stiff drink. I think you should too."

Mrs. Kennedy's reply was audible: "What will I have?"

O'Donnell said he'd make her a Scotch. She thought about it. "I've never had a Scotch in my life." O'Donnell moved on to call a steward. The forlorn face looked up at him. "Now is as good a time

Page 6—S.F. Examiner ☆☆☆R Thurs., Nov. 28, 1968

People on the Plane Split Into Two Hostile Camps

—From Page 1

The people on Air Force One gravitated into two groups. The Johnson people sat forward, the Kennedy group aft. Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy, Kenneth O'Donnell, Lawrence O'Brien, David Powers, Brig. Gen. Godfrey McHugh behaved as though Johnson had no right to the President's stateroom, or to assume Presidential authority preemptorily.

For two hours and twelve minutes, they were like hostile camps. They used messengers to walk the corridor with whispered wishes. The alchemy of the hours had transmuted the grief of the Kennedy group to rancor. The assassination was more than a deep personal loss; it was a fall from power. The

to start as any," she said.

The plane became a 600-mile-an air tavern. Passengers were in no mood to listen to the whine of the jets. They turned to whiskey. In some, it loosened more tears; in others, it shored the dam of emotions.

The President supped two bowls of steaming vegetable soup. Mrs. Johnson saw the small packages of crackers were salted and, knowing that her husband was on a salt-free diet, munched them herself.

As short, fat glasses of scotch and rye and bourbon were emptied, busy stewards were told: "Do it again, please."

Whiskey does not dull shock and sorrow; but it can make it bearable. It did not close the breach between the two separate camps aboard. Mrs.

Kennedy was not made silent. At one time, she looked up at Clint Hill, the Secret Service agent assigned to her. "What will happen to you, now?" she said, and burst into tears. He looked down, a law officer in control of his emotions.

Stares at Casket

Concentrating again on the bronze box, Mrs. Kennedy thought of Abraham Lincoln. He, too, had had his Johnson; he, too, had died on a Friday; he, too, had been sitting with his wife when shot in the back of the head. His death had given over the affairs of the nation to a Southerner who was politically alienated from the men who were at Lincoln's side in the government.

Mrs. Kennedy ordered another drink.

The dreadful news that flashed, resounded and reverberated through Washington did not induce outward panic. Throngs went about their business. Shops, offices, bureaus continued to function as though the body politic itself was not numb in mind. On this one afternoon, there was no government. The executive branch was momentarily headless; vital members of the Cabinet were airborne over the Pacific.

Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Secretary of Treasury C. Douglas Dillon, Robert McNamara, the all-powerful secretary of Defense, Secretary of Commerce Luther Hodges, Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, and McGeorge Bundy, Presidential

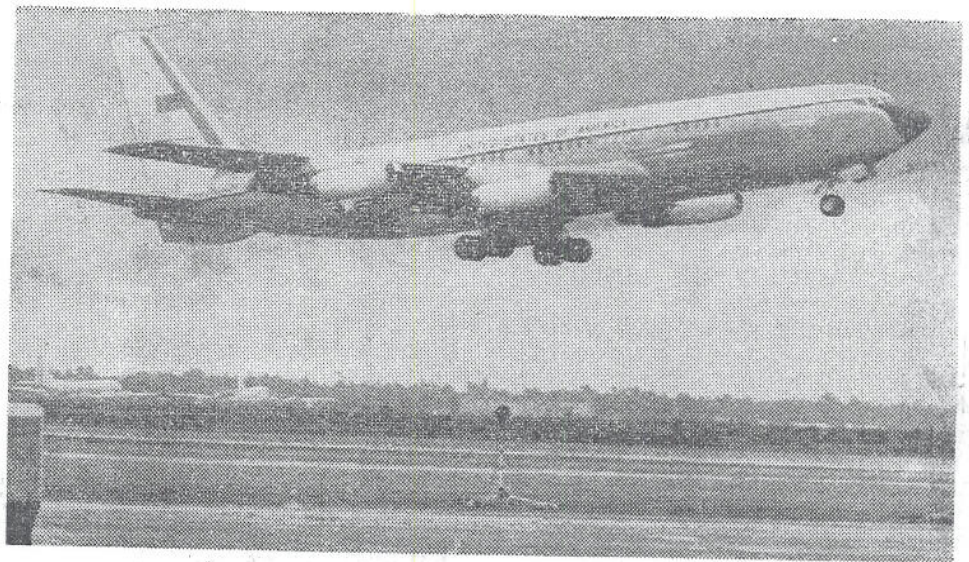
adviser on foreign affairs, had been sent by Kennedy to Hawaii and Japan for conferences on the Far Eastern situation.

Honolulu Meeting

At Honolulu there had been a meeting with General Harkins, commander in Vietnam, and Ambassador Lodge. McNamara and Bundy were returning from this meeting, and the others were enroute to Japan when overtaken by messages that flashed in code and plain English around the world, creating false alerts, tensing alien military muscles, causing lights to burn in embassies and legations everywhere.

A member of the Cabinet asked the rhetorical question: "Whose finger is at the ready on the nuclear missile button?" And did not want to believe the only answer.

A short time before this



This was President Kennedy's personal jet plane

day, a TV interviewer had asked pedestrians in a city: "Who is Lyndon Johnson?" Some merely said: "The name is familiar." To some that name was a blank. The name of John McCormack would have been even more of a mystery to them.

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Two men went up an elevator to the sixth floor of the old Washington Hotel and knocked at the door. The Speaker of the House of Representatives, John McCormack, responded. They introduced themselves as Secret Service men who were starting a day and night guard over him.

McCormack Brusque

The Speaker refused to admit the two men. It was not necessary for them to tell him he was next in line to the Presidency. He was brusque: he and Mrs. McCormack were averse to living under the eyes of the Secret Service. He would not have these men accompany him in an automobile or stand over Mrs. McCormack in the shops. "Please," he said firmly, "get out of the hall."

A block away, in the White House, Maude Shaw, the Kennedy children's English nanny, sat in a room on the second floor waiting for Caroline and John Kennedy to awaken from afternoon naps. A Secret Service agent, Robert Foster, came to break the news to her.

The facts did not lend themselves to tact or gentility. "The President is dead," he said. He nodded toward the children's rooms. "We have to get them out of the White House by six o'clock. Mrs. Kennedy is flying back and doesn't want the children around." Miss Shaw was given no time for shock. Foster helped her to pack. "Where are we going?" she asked.

Foster's orders had been to

get the Kennedy children out of the White House at once. To where? He looked at Miss Shaw for answer. She thought of the proper retreat: their maternal grandmother's house in Georgetown. Their mother had taken them to "Grandmere's" house many times. It would not be "strange." Maude Shaw phoned Mrs. Hugh Auchincloss, whose sobs delayed the response: "Bring them over. Bring them over to me."

The grandmother fought for control of her emotions, until she could say, "Miss Shaw there is something I would like you to do, and I know my daughter would too. You should be the one to

break the news to the children—at least to Caroline."

Tells Caroline

Maude Shaw relapsed in shock. "Oh, no," she said loudly. "Please don't ask me to do that." But she yielded to persuasion and made half a promise. She would tell Caroline.

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Downstairs, two employes were at President Kennedy's office to remove some of his keepsakes. It was incredible that anyone could have issued such a callous order, but the mementos were being moved abruptly.

The President's alter ego, Ted Sorensen, sat in an office nearby, his world in collapse. He had written, in collaboration with the then Senator John Kennedy, a book called "Profiles in Courage."

Sorensen — an incisive phrase-maker — had written many of the speeches Mr. Kennedy had delivered. The President had drunk deeply from the semantic genius of the quiet man, but there had been no public accolade of

Sorensen. He was the Man in the Back Room, the man who could make mundane matters sound lofty and idealistic. Now there was only one decision to make. Asked if he would go to the airport: "If the others go," he said, "I will go."

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President Johnson now had phrase-makers of his own to help. Two experienced aides, Bill Moyers and Jack Valenti, had reacted to the news at Dallas by rushing to Air Force One.

Elizabeth Carpenter, Mrs. Johnson's secretary, had also come aboard, and the President had "Liz" working on a short statement to be read by Johnson on arrival at Washington. He kept Valenti and Moyers in the stateroom venturing thoughts that he should do this or not do that.

Eloquent

Johnson was seldom more eloquent, or more halting, than when he phoned John Kennedy's mother. "I wish to God there was something I could do," he said.

Rose Kennedy did not lose composure. She thanked the President for his thoughtfulness in calling. Mrs. Johnson took the phone to say, "Oh, Mrs. Kennedy, we must all realize how fortunate the country was to have your son as long as it did."

Rose Kennedy did not ask Mrs. Johnson to switch her to Jacqueline Kennedy, who was sitting 50 feet behind the Johnsons. Nor did Mrs. John F. Kennedy phone her mother-in-law.

Four months after the assassination, I sat with Rose and Joe Kennedy at their home in Palm Beach. Mrs. Kennedy said: "I have not heard from 'Mrs. Kennedy' since the funeral."

Johnson noticed the two press pool reporters, Charles Roberts of Newsweek and Merriman Smith of UPI, writing stories of the plane trip and stopped between them to whisper that he wanted all of the Kennedy White House staff and all of the Kennedy Cabinet to remain on with the Johnson Administration. This, of course, was the first big pronouncement of the new Administration.

The President, hopeful that Mrs. Kennedy might by now have composed herself, sought expression of her wishes. Several times he sent Malcolm Kilduff to her, with-

sary to take the President to a hospital before he goes to the White House." "Why?" she said, sharply.

out response.

Dr. Burkley, waiting until Mrs. Kennedy was alone, said: "It's going to be neces-

Burkley answered, "The doctors must remove the bullet. The authorities must know the type. It is evidence." he thus avoided use of the word autopsy, which

entails evisceration and removal of organs. She asked where the bullet could be removed. "For security reasons it should be a military hospital," he said.

"Bethesda," she chose. The admiral went forward to the communications shack to alert the naval hospital. He

returned to ask Mrs. Kennedy to "freshen up" before the plane landed. "No," she said adamantly. "I want them to see what they've done."

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TOMORROW: Jim Bishop continues his account of the historic events aboard Air Force One, in Dallas, and in Washington, in the fateful hours.



This was the scene inside Air Force One moments after LBJ was sworn in. At left, Jackie Kennedy,

back to camera, is consoled by Rep. Albert Thomas of Texas. Lady Bird and LBJ are in center foreground.