

A136WX (ADV)

CAR. II

21 NOV 1964  
ADVANCE

MOVED 16 NOV.  
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ADVANCE FOR PMS OF SATURDAY, NOV. 21--EDITORS: NOTE DATE  
A SHINING LIGHT GOES OUT

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EDITOR'S NOTE--ON THAT FATEFUL DAY IN DALLAS, JACK BELL WAS RIDING  
IN THE PRESIDENTIAL MOTORCADE--FOUR CARS BEHIND PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S  
LIMOUSINE. BELL, VETERAN POLITICAL WRITER AND CHIEF OF THE AP'S SENATE  
STAFF, RECALLS THE TRAGEDY OF LAST NOV. 22.

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BY JACK BELL

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

(ADVANCE) WASHINGTON, NOV. 21 (AP)--IT STILL IS A BAD DREAM THAT  
COULDN'T HAPPEN IN REAL LIFE. BUT IT DID ON THAT DAY OF NOV. 22, 1963,  
WHEN A VIBRANT YOUNG PRESIDENT WAS MURDERED.

IT HAD RAINED IN FORT WORTH, TEX., THAT MORNING. WHEN I PEERED  
OUT THE WINDOW OF MY HOTEL ROOM I SAW THAT DESPITE THE DRIZZLE, A  
CROWD ALREADY HAD GATHERED IN A PARKING LOT ACROSS THE STREET WHERE  
PRESIDENT KENNEDY WAS SCHEDULED FOR A BRIEF APPEARANCE.

BY THE TIME THE SMILING PRESIDENT STEPPED OUT OF AN ELEVATOR IN THE  
CROWDED LOBBY TWO HOURS LATER, THE SUN HAD BROKEN THROUGH. FLANKED  
BY VICE PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON AND GOV. JOHN B. CONNALLY OF TEXAS,  
THE PRESIDENT WALKED ACROSS THE STREET, SPOKE BRIEFLY.

IN A HIGH GOOD HUMOR HE EXPLAINED TO THE FRIENDLY CROWD THAT MRS.  
KENNEDY WASN'T WITH HIM BECAUSE SHE STILL WAS MAKING PREPARATIONS FOR A  
BREAKFAST APPEARANCE SCHEDULED FOR THEM IN THE HOTEL.

"IT TAKES A LITTLE LONGER, BUT SHE LOOKS SO MUCH BETTER THAN WE DO,"  
HE SAID WITH A GRIN.

AFTER THE BREAKFAST MEETING, AT WHICH KENNEDY PRAISED THE CONTRO-  
VERSIAL TFX WARPLANE TO BE BUILT IN FORT WORTH, THE PRESIDENT AND HIS  
WIFE MADE THEIR WAY THROUGH THE APPLAUDING CROWDS TO THE WHITE HOUSE  
LIMOUSINE FROM WHICH THE BUBBLE TOP HAD BEEN REMOVED.

THE PRESIDENTIAL MOTORCADE WOUND THROUGH STREETS BANKED WITH CITI-  
ZENS WHO CHEERED AND CLAPPED AS THE HANDSOME YOUNG PRESIDENT AND HIS  
BEAUTIFUL WIFE

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BEAUBTEFUL WIFE



BEAUTIFUL WIFE RODE BY. THE STORY WAS THE SAME AS IT HAD BEEN THE DAY BEFORE IN SAN ANTONIO AND HOUSTON. TEXANS LIKED THE KENNEDYS AND WERE SHOWING IT.

WHEN AIR FORCE ONE LANDED AT DALLAS' LOVE FIELD A FEW MINUTES LATER, MRS. KENNEDY, WEARING A FUCHSIA-COLORED SUIT, WAS PRESENTED WITH A BOUQUET OF RED ROSES. SHE JOINED THE PRESIDENT IN A HANDSHAKING WALK ALONG A FENCE WHICH HELD BACK AN ENTHUSIASTIC CROWD.

THEN THE MOTORCADE WAS OFF, HEADING FOR DOWNTOWN DALLAS. THERE THE CROWDS FILLED THE STREETS, PRESSING IN SO CLOSELY MOTORCYCLE POLICE HAD DIFFICULTY CLEARING A LANE FOR THE OPEN CAR FROM WHICH THE PRESIDENT AND HIS WIFE WERE SMILING AND WAVING.

DALLAS HAD SHOWN WITH ITS WARM WELCOME ON THAT SUNNY MIDDAY THAT IT ADMIRERD THE MAN WHO HAD BEEN ELECTED BY A WHISKER AND WHO HAD TRIED TO "GET THE COUNTRY MOVING" IN HIS FIRST 1,000 DAYS.

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AS THE MOTORCADE MADE A RIGHT TURN OFF THE PACKED STREET, SUDDENLY THE TUMULT DIED AND THERE WERE ONLY A FEW WAVING SPECTATORS. AHEAD, WE RODE TOWARD A LEFT TURN INTO A STREET WHICH LED TO AN UNDERPASS. NEARBY WAS A BUILDING WITH A SIGN WHICH READ: "TEXAS SCHOOL BOOK DEPOSITORY."

THE PRESIDENT'S AUTO, FOUR CARS AHEAD, ALREADY HAD MADE THE TURN TOWARD THE UNDERPASS AND WE HAD JUST COMPLETED IT WHEN THERE WAS A LOUD REPORT. MY FIRST THOUGHT WAS: THOSE TEXANS, NOW THEY'RE SHOOTING OFF GIANT FIRECRACKERS.

THEN CAME TWO MORE REPORTS, PACED POSSIBLY FIVE SECONDS APART. THEY HAD THE OMINOUS SOUND OF A RIFLE CRACK. THE PRESIDENT'S CAR HAD STOPPED. WE REPORTERS RIDING "POOL" SCRAMBLED TO GET OUT TO RUN AHEAD.

BUT AT ALMOST THAT INSTANT, A SECRET SERVICE MAN, RIDING IN THE FRONT SEAT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL LIMOUSINE STOOD UP, PHONE IN HAND AND WAVED THE PRECEDING POLICE CRUISER ON.

SITTING ON THE EDGE OF OUR SEATS, WE SCREAMED AT OUR DRIVER, "GET GOING. GET GOING. KEEP UP WITH THAT CAR."

IN THAT NUMBED MOMENT WE ALL SENSED THAT SOMETHING HORRIBLE MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED. BUT WE HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING EXACTLY WHAT AS WE THUNDERED ALONG A FREEWAY AT TOP SPEED IN PURSUIT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CAR. EVERYBODY IN THE PRESIDENT'S CAR SEEMED TO BE DOWN, BUT THAT WOULD BE PRESCRIBED PROCEDURE IN ESCAPING ANY DANGER ZONE.

WE CAREENED AROUND A TURN AND ROARED INTO THE DRIVEWAY OF PARKLAND HOSPITAL. WHEN WE SCREECHED TO A STOP I SAW, AS I SCRAMBLED OUT OF THE "POOL" CAR, MRS. KENNEDY WEEPING, TRYING TO HOLD HER HUSBAND'S HEAD UP.

MRS. CONNALLY WAS SUPPORTING THE GOVERNOR WHO SAT SLUMPED IN A JUMP SEAT, HIS HEAD ROLLED BACK, HIS SUIT AND SHIRT FRONT COVERED WITH BLOOD. BY THE TIME I HAD SPRINTED UP TO THE PRESIDENTIAL LIMOUSINE, SECRET SERVICE MEN WERE HELPING MRS. KENNEDY AWAY. HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS WERE SLIPPING CONNALLY ONTO A STRETCHER.

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WHEN I REACHED THE CAR, THERE WAS THE PRESIDENT SPRAWLED ON HIS FACE IN THE REAR SEAT. THERE WAS A POOL OF BLOOD ON THE FLOOR. THREE TWISTED AND TORN RED ROSES LAY IN IT.

"IS HE DEAD?" I ASKED A SECRET SERVICE MAN WHO STOOD ON GUARD.

"I DON'T KNOW BUT I DON'T THINK SO," HE REPLIED.

AS I RUSHED FOR A TELEPHONE, VICE PRESIDENT JOHNSON WAS BEING ESCORTED UP A CORRIDOR TO A RICLE NEAR THE RECEIVING DESK.

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AT THE DESK I FOUND A PHONE, GOT THE AP BUREAU ON THE LINE AND SHOUTED; "THE PRESIDENT'S BEEN SHOT." A PHOTOGRAPHER ON THE SCENE OF THE ASSASSINATION ALREADY HAD PHONED AN EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNT BUT I Poured OUT ALL OF THE INFORMATION I HAD COLLECTED.

THEN BEGAN THE AGONIZING WAIT FOR SOME OFFICIAL WORD ON THE PRESIDENT'S CONDITION. SOME CONGRESS MEMBERS, WHITE HOUSE STAFFERS AND EVEN THE PRIEST WHO HAD BEEN IN THE EMERGENCY ROOM WITH HIM WERE NOT SURE.

THERE WAS A REPORT JOHNSON HAD BEEN SHOT AND ONE THAT HE HAD A HEART ATTACK. WHEN MRS. JOHNSON CAME OUT OF THE EMERGENCY ROOM, ACCOMPANIED BY SECRET SERVICE MEN, I JUMPED IN FRONT OF THEM AND ASKED,

"IS LYNDON ALL RIGHT?"

"YES," SHE REPLIED. HER EYES WERE WET WITH TEARS.

"IS THE PRESIDENT DEAD?" I ASKED.

ONE OF THE SECRET SERVICE MEN SPUN ME BACKWARD AS SHE WENT ON WITHOUT ANSWERING.

A FEW MINUTES LATER MALCOLM KILDUFF, ACTING PRESS SECRETARY, RUSHED OUT YELLING, "FOLLOW ME, I'VE GOT AN ANNOUNCEMENT."

AS WE RACED AFTER HIM, WE KNEW THE PRESIDENT MUST BE DEAD BUT STILL CLUNG TO HOPE. IT DIED WITH THE FINALITY OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

A SHINING LIGHT HAD GONE OUT.

(END ADVANCE FOR PMS OF SATURDAY, NOV. 21--SENT NOV. 13)

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