

The Kennedy Mystique

Face Altered After Dallas

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Associated Press

"O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee . . ." the priest said, for him and for us, in the hotel kitchen in Los Angeles.

"O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee . . ." the priest said, for him and for us, in Trauma Room, One in Dallas.

Whose was the offense. Whose was it not?

Again the same searing structure of events. Four days then, four days now, yet another nightmare in the American dream. Again the same remorseless rhythm of events. Cheering crowds on a note of triumph. And the guns go off.

One kills a President named Kennedy, who had been a senator, and the other kills a senator named Kennedy, who might have been President.

LOCKED TOGETHER

Four days in 1968, four days in 1963. Two events, two men now locked together into history by name and style and purpose and by the manner of their coming and the manner of their going.

Both came to their last place for political reasons.

John Kennedy wanted to be president, he said, because that was the "ultimate center of action" to affect his time.

Robert Kennedy wanted to be president, he said, because in the presidency, more than any other place, "changes can be made in the direction of the country."

People everywhere, in the screaming, leaping crowds they both attracted, noted the similarities in the two

brothers. The elan, of youth, money, motion, confidence, style. The Kennedy mystique, it was called. And between them, the same sense of irony, self-deprecating humor, aversion to pomposity.

Robert Kennedy exhibited less detachment and poise. He used humor more but laughed less and that led you to notice his eyes, and in those eyes was the big difference between the two men in the years that one lived and the other didn't. In those blue eyes and on that taut angular face of Robert Kennedy there was a look of infinite sadness, of terrible hurt, and people who knew him said it wasn't there before Dallas.

CAESARIAN VIEW

Robert Kennedy believed with Julius Caesar that death, a necessary end, would come when it would come and did not fear it. Kennedy, a man who climbed mountains, skied, canoed in rapids and played a hard game of touch football, was asked recently if he enjoyed physical risk. He said it was "part of a man's life." About two weeks ago, he remarked to the French writer, Romain Gary:

"There is no way to protect a candidate during the campaign. You must give yourself to the crowd and from

Mourning in Sausalito

Although weekends are their biggest days, about three-fourths of the merchants of Sausalito will be closed tomorrow in memory of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

The closing is supported by the Sausalito Chamber of Commerce as part of President Johnson's proclaimed day of mourning.

then on you must take your chances.

"I know that there will be an attempt on my life sooner or later. Not so much for political reasons but through contagion."

At the start of the last week of his life, Robert Kennedy was giving himself to the crowd at Oxnard, standing on the seat of a convertible as it inched through mobbed streets. Someone shouted, "That guy has a gun!" An aide raced back to the convertible and cried to the senator, "Get down! Get down! Get down!" The gun, wrestled from the man's hands, proved to be a toy. Robert Kennedy did not know that. But he did not get down.

At seven minutes after midnight, June 5, 1968, Robert Kennedy was very much up on his feet and up in spirit. The returns showed him ahead of Sen. McCarthy by a

percentage point, 44 to 43, but Los Angeles County was just beginning to roll in heavily for Kennedy.

ODD ROUTE

Robert Kennedy, his wife, Ethel, and a few aides took the freight elevator down to the kitchen, just behind the ornate Embassy Room, where 2000 supporters awaited his triumphant entry. The route was odd. Typical Kennedy style was not to slip in the back way. Typical Kennedy style was to plunge straight through the crowd, through the clutching and tearing and wild adoration. But that would have meant delay and the people had been waiting long enough. He decided he would make his speech and leave by the kitchen, too. Robert Kennedy restated again his goals and his beliefs in his intense way. As he had begun, he ended on a buoyant note. "So my thanks to all of you and on to Chicago and let's win there," he said.

Then he stepped down from the podium. At 12:16 a.m., Robert Kennedy followed a procession of aides and friends out the rear door of the Embassy Room into the kitchen. Robert Kennedy stretched across a long steel work table to accept the reaching hands of the kitchen crew and he was smiling when the bullets hit.

Robert Kennedy made no outcry. He fell backward to the floor and in one awful moment the world had gone mad again and screams and curses filled the kitchen.