

## Johnson Guard's Act Was Reflex

Washington, D. C. — UPI —

The secret service agent who shielded President Johnson with his body during the assassination of President Kennedy said Wednesday that he really had no inkling of what was happening at the time.

"I did not recognize the first shot as a shot," agent Rufus W. Youngblood said. "It could have been a firecracker, a bomb or a shot. I only recognized it as an abnormal sound."

But that was all that was needed to stir reflex actions in the well trained agent when President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas last Friday.

In the Dallas motorcade, there was only one car between Mr. Johnson's and Mr. Kennedy's.

When the shots were fired, Youngblood, a lithe 6 footer, reached over the seat and grabbed the shoulder of the vice-president, who was sitting behind him.

He shoved Mr. Johnson to the floor while yelling to Mrs. Johnson and Senator Ralph Yarborough (Dem., Tex.) to "get down."

Although everyone responded to his first yell, Youngblood said he recalled repeating it several times.

"I believe that at the same time I was coming over the back of the seat," Youngblood said. "I leaned my body over Mr. Johnson and told the driver to step on it. By this time we were evacuating, so to speak."

Youngblood had special praise for the driver, Herschel Jacks, Texas highway patrolman.

"He did a real good job," Youngblood said of Jacks. "I was talking to him all the time I was leaning over Mr. John-



WEDNESDAY, NOV. 27, 1963. President Lyndon Johnson delivered his first message to a joint session of congress. In

the background were Representative McCormack and Senator Carl Hayden, president pro tem of the senate.

—UPI Telephotos

son. He wasn't talking, but he was responding."

Youngblood said that having shielded Mr. Johnson with his body, he and everyone else in the car remained in the same position — below the window line of the car — until they reached Parkland hospital, where Mr. Kennedy had been taken.

Mr. Johnson wrote a special letter to Youngblood's superior, James Rowley, secret service

chief, to call attention to Youngblood's "valiant" action.

"Upon hearing the first shot, Mr. Youngblood instantly vaulted across the front seat of my car, pushed me to the floor and shielded my body with his own body, ready to sacrifice his life for mine," Johnson said.

Youngblood said he felt he reacted to a combination of sight and sound.

"I heard three explosions but I think the quick, unusual

movements in the president's (Kennedy) car also made me react," Youngblood said. "I'm not sure I reacted on the first shot, between the first and the second or on the second."

"I had no idea where the shots had come from. I didn't even know what they were at the time. But I saw the quick unusual movements up ahead and saw someone on the turtle (trunk lid) of that car up there and I knew that an emergency existed."