

Black Day For Nation Recapped By Reporter

EDITOR'S NOTE: Merriman Smith, UPI White House reporter since 1941, was on the scene in Dallas Friday when President Kennedy was assassinated. Smith was in the motorcade not far from Kennedy when the shooting took place. He followed the President's car to the hospital and the death. He was there for the swearing-in of President Johnson in an Air Force jet and came on back to Washington aboard the aircraft bearing the new President and the body of the slain Kennedy. He was the only news agency reporter on the aircraft.

By MERRIMAN SMITH
UPI White House Reporter

WASHINGTON (UPI)—It was a balmy, sunny noon as we motored through downtown Dallas behind President Kennedy. The procession cleared the center of the business district and turned into a handsome highway that wound through what appeared to be a park.

I was riding in the so-called White House press "pool" car, a telephone company vehicle equipped with a mobile radio-telephone. I was in the front seat between a driver from the telephone company and Malcolm Kilduff, acting White House press secretary for the President's Texas tour. Three other pool reporters were wedged into the back seat.

Suddenly we heard loud cracks. The first sounded as if it might have been a large firecracker. But the second and third blasts were unmistakable. Gunfire.

The President's car, possibly as much as 150 or 200 yards ahead, seemed to falter briefly. We saw a flurry of activity in the Secret Service follow-up car behind the Chief Executive's bubble-top limousine.

Fourth in line was the car bearing Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson. Behind that, another follow-up car bearing agents assigned to the vice-president's protection. We were behind that car.

Our car stood still for probably only a few seconds, but it seemed like a lifetime. One sees history explode before one's eyes and for even the most trained observer, there is a limit to what one can comprehend.

I looked ahead at the President's car but could not see him or his companion, Gov. John B. Connally of Texas. Both men had been riding on the right side of the bubble-top limousine from Washington. I thought I saw a flash of pink which would have been Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy.

Everybody in our car began shouting at the driver to pull up closer to the President's car. But at this moment, we saw the big bubble-top and a motorcycle escort roar away at high speed.

We screamed at our driver, "get going, get going." We careened around the Johnson car and its escort and set out down the highway, barely able to keep in sight of the President's car and the accompanying Secret Service follow-up car.

Then saw hospital. They vanished around a curve. When we cleared the same curve we could see where we were heading — Parkland Hospital, a large brick structure to the left of the arterial highway. We skidded around a sharp left turn and spilled out of the pool car as it entered the hospital driveway.

I ran to the side of the bubble-top. The President was face down on the back seat. Mrs. Kennedy made a cradle of her arms around the President's head and bent over him as if she were whispering to him.

Gov. Connally was on his back on the floor of the car, his head and shoulders resting in the arms of his wife, Nellie, who kept shaking her head and shaking with dry sobs. Blood oozed from the front of the governor's suit. I could not see the President's wound. But I could see blood spattered around the interior of the rear seat and a dark stain spreading down the right side of the President's dark gray suit.

Radioed first report. From the telephone car, I had radioed the Dallas bureau of UPI that three shots had been fired at the Kennedy motorcade. Seeing the bloody scene in the rear of the car at

the hospital entrance, I knew I had to get to a telephone immediately. Clint Hill, the Secret Service agent in charge of the detail assigned to Mrs. Kennedy, was leaning over into the rear of the car.

"How badly was he hit, Clint?" I asked. "He's dead," Hill replied curtly.

I have no further clear memory of the scene in the driveway. I recall a babble of anxious voices, tense voices — "Where in hell are the stretchers... get a doctor out here... he's on the way... come on easy there." And from somewhere, nervous sobbing.

I raced down a short stretch of sidewalk into a hospital corridor. The first thing I spotted was a small clerical office, more of a booth than an office. Inside, a bespectacled man stood shuffling what appeared to be hospital forms. At a wicket much like a bank teller's cage, I spotted a telephone on the shelf.

"How do you get outside?" I gasped. "This President has been hurt and this is an emergency call."

"Dial nine," he said, shoving the phone toward me. Dictated Fast Bulletin. It took two tries before I successfully dialed the Dallas UPI number. Quickly I dictated a bulletin saying the President had been seriously, perhaps fatally, injured by an assassin's bullets while driving through the streets of Dallas.

Litters bearing the President and the governor rolled by me as I dictated, but my back to the hallway and I didn't see them until they were at the entrance of the emergency room about 75 or 100 feet away.

I knew they had passed, however, from the horrified expression that suddenly spread over the face of the man behind the wicket.

Outside the door of the emergency room, I watched a swift and confused panorama sweep before me. Kilduff of the White House press staff raced up and down the hall. Police captains barked at each other, "clear this area."

Two priests hurried in behind a Secret Service agent, their narrow purple stoles rolled up tightly in their hands. A police lieutenant ran down the hall with a large carton of blood for the transfusions. A doctor came in and said he was responding to a call for "all neurosurgeons."

Given Last Sacrament. The priests came out and said the President had received the Last Sacrament of the Roman Catholic Church. They said he was still alive, but not conscious.

Kilduff and Wayne Hawks of the White House staff ran by me, shouting that Kilduff would make a statement shortly in the so-called nurses room a floor above and at the far end of the hospital.

I threw down the phone and sped after them. We reached the door of the conference room and there were loud cries of "cuius!" Fighting to keep his emotions under control, Kilduff said "President John Fitzgerald Kennedy died at approximately one o'clock."

I raced into a nearby office. The telephone switchboard at the hospital was hopelessly jammed. I spotted Virginia Payette, wife of UPI's Southwestern Division manager and a veteran reporter in her own right. I told her to try getting through on pay telephones on the floor above.

Frustrated by the inability to get through the hospital switchboard, I appealed to a nurse. She led me through a maze of corridors and back stairways to another floor and a lone pay booth. I got the Dallas office. Virginia had gotten through before me.

Selected for Pool. I ran back through the hospital to the conference room where Jiggs Fauver of the White House transportation staff grabbed me and said Kilduff wanted a pool of three men immediately to fly back to Washington on Air Force One, the presidential aircraft.

"He wants you downstairs, and he wants you right now," Fauver said. Charles Roberts of Newsweek magazine, Sid Davis of Westinghouse broadcasting and I implored a police officer to take us to the airport in his squad car.

As we piled out of the car about 200 yards from the presidential aircraft, Kilduff spotted us and motioned for us to hurry. We trotted to him and he said the plane could take two pool men to Washington; that Johnson was about to take the oath of office aboard the plane and would take off immediately thereafter.

Makes First Statement. As the flight progressed, Johnson came up to the table where Roberts and I were trying to record the history we had just witnessed.

"I'm going to make a short statement in a few minutes and give you copies of it," he said. "Then when I get on the ground I'll do it over again." It was the first public utterance of the new Chief Executive, brief and moving.

"This is a sad time for all people. We have suffered a loss that cannot be weighed. For me it is a deep personal tragedy. I know the world shares the sorrow that Mrs. Kennedy and her family bear. I will do my best. That is all I can do. I ask for your help—and God's."

When the plane was about 45 minutes from Washington, the new President got on a special radio-telephone and placed a call to Mrs. Rose Kennedy, the late President's mother.

"I wish to God there was something I could do," he told her, "I just wanted you to know that."

Then Mrs. Johnson wanted to talk to the elder Mrs. Kennedy. Gives Love And Prayers. "We feel like the heart has been cut out of us," Mrs. Johnson said. She broke down for a moment and began to sob. Recovering in a few seconds, she added, "our love and our prayers are with you."

Toll Is High In Tragic Ohio Blaze

NORWALK (UPI) — Sixty-five elderly men and women perished in a rural rest home fire today in the worst fire in this country since 95 persons died in a Chicago school fire in 1958.

State Fire Marshal Fred Rice said there were 86 residents and three employees in the Golden Age Nursing Home 10 miles from here and "65 didn't get out."

Rice, after an on-the-spot inspection with Gov. James A. Rhodes, confirmed that three employees and only 21 of the elderly residents, many of them invalids, escaped from the one-story building which quickly became an inferno as winds whipped through the structure.

The tragedy was the second disastrous rest home fire in the United States this week. On Monday, 26 elderly persons died in a fire at the Surfside Hotel in Atlantic City, N.J., a resort hotel used as a convalescent home in the off-season.

School Fire Worse

The Chicago school fire on Dec. 1, 1958, claimed 95 lives. The tragedy, however, was far from the worst in Ohio's history, three fires each having claimed more than 100 lives. A fire at the Ohio Penitentiary on April 21, 1930, killed 320.

"This is the most devastating thing I have ever seen," the governor said as he looked at the smoldering ruins which disclosed an occasional charred skull and piece of human flesh.

Rhodes ordered all assistance at the state's command made available and then flew to Washington to join other officials in paying their respects to the slain President Kennedy this afternoon.

Rhodes ordered a complete investigation of the tragedy by the Highway Patrol under Capt. A. B. Cook.

Patrolman Left Wife, 3 Young; No Insurance

DALLAS (UPI) — The other man killed by gunfire in Dallas Friday was a city policeman who left a wife and three children—and no life insurance.

He was Patrolman J.D. Tippitt, 39, an 11-year veteran of the force. He was shot and killed trying to apprehend the man accused of assassinating President Kennedy.

A spokesman said Dallas police are not covered by a city insurance policy, but Mrs. Tippitt will receive some money from the police retirement fund.

The dead policeman's children are Charles Allen, 3, Brenda Kay, 10, and Curtiss Glenn, 4.

DC Demo Head Says All U. S. Suffers Loss

Dr. Jason Boe of Reedsport, chairman of the Douglas County Democratic Central Committee, urged each citizen to reflect deeply during this period of mourning for the President.

"This is not a time for hasty and heedless recriminations and expressions of hostility," he said. "In the death of the President, every American, regardless of his political beliefs or concepts, regardless of his political principles or policies, has suffered a tragic loss."

"President Kennedy's death, however, need not, must not and will not represent the death of democracy," he said. "The danger in this moment lies in our not rising above our own feelings of loss and frustration."

"This is the time that we the people must rise above our petty grievances and firmly grasp the basic principals of democracy. We cannot allow the assassin's deed to prevail. The free world will not then be free. Fear must not replace reason. Intimidation dare not replace the free form of social and political debate. We dare not by our natural impulses to anger, indignation and revenge, risk losing the freedoms set forth by the founding fathers of our nation and exemplified by the life and death of John F. Kennedy."

Business On Agenda Of Fullerton PTA

The Fullerton IV PTA will hold its regular meeting at the school Monday at 7:30 p.m. According to Mrs. Gene Rushton, publicity chairman, many important items of business are on the agenda and all patrons are urged to attend.

Reports on the recent PTA rummage sale will be given and a committee will be formed to take care of details in connection with the PTA college scholarship annually awarded in the spring. A tentative date will be set for a dinner to be held for parents and teachers and there will be discussion regarding a school carnival.

All persons attending will receive a copy of the year book, recently compiled and assembled by Mrs. Stanley Herrmann. Refreshments will be served at the close of the meeting.

DANCE IS CANCELED

The dance and buffet supper for Knights of Columbus, wives and guests, scheduled to be held at 9 o'clock tonight at the Roseburg Country Club, has been canceled because of the death of President Kennedy.

Steve Ferche, grand knight, said today that the dance may be re-scheduled at a later date.



SENATOR SPEAKS — Sen. Walter Pearson of Portland told members of the Western Oregon Livestock Association Friday that state basic school support should be cut. He is shown above with two other tax panelists, George J. Annala of Portland, left, and Loren J. Smith of Corvallis, center. (News-Review photo)

Sales Tax Not Complete Answer To State Problem

The sales tax isn't the panacea many people think it might be in solving the state's money problems.

This was the conclusion drawn by two tax experts in a Western Oregon Livestock Association convention in Roseburg Friday. But the association decided it would help anyway, so it drafted a resolution favoring a sales tax.

The resolution called for invocation of the tax as an offset to property and income taxes.

The experts were Sen. Walter Pearson of Portland and George Annala, manager of Oregon Tax Research. Pearson insisted that one of the answers was to cut back on the basic school support fund and change the structure of control of it.

Annala felt that closer control over state expenditures deserved consideration before a sales tax is adopted. The third member of the panel, Loren J. Smith, chairman of a Benton County Agriculture Tax Committee, however, left the conclusion that a sales tax was good to more equitably distribute taxation.

In other action during the convention, Myron Harper of Salem was elected president. His city will host next year's convention. Other officers elected were Bob Reed of Warrenton, vice president; Al Oliver, Corvallis, treasurer; and Dean Frischknecht, secretary.

Tiller Man Jailed For Firing Pistol

A 39-year-old Tiller man was arrested by Roseburg city police Friday afternoon on a charge of discharging firearms in the city limits.

Police said Jack Harry Lehnher of Tiller was lodged in the city jail after he was arrested following a complaint of a gun being fired in a vehicle at a drive in restaurant on W. Harvard Boulevard. Police said Lehnher told them the gun, a .22 caliber automatic, had gone off accidentally, hit the jockey box of the vehicle and had gone out through the floorboards.

Ralph Ellison Reynolds, 27, of 1297 W. Ellen St., Roseburg, who was also in the vehicle when police arrived, was arrested on a charge of being drunk in a public place.

City police reported the recovery of a stolen car Friday afternoon. The car, stolen from Eugene Thursday, was discovered abandoned near the intersection of SE Woodward Avenue and SE Mill Street by city police. Later in the day, Mrs. J. V. Short, of 1356 SE Lane Avenue, reported her car had been stolen from the downtown area.

Religion Study Seen In Free Film Showing

The Douglas County Library Adult Film Department will show a 60-minute film called "Four Religions" Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in the library. The film showing is free.

Commentators Arnold Toyne and James Beveridge present a study of four religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity—pointing out their similarities and differences.

STOCK EXCHANGE CLOSED

NEW YORK (UPI) — The New York Stock Exchange will be closed Monday, Nov. 25 in observance of the death of President Kennedy.

The American Stock Exchange said it will also be closed on Monday in tribute to the late President.

FAMILY DECLINES FLOWERS

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The family of slain President John F. Kennedy asked that anyone wishing to send flowers to the White House or to the funeral instead donate to charity an equivalent amount of money.

Mrs. Workman Interjects Lighter Note At Session

In what could have forgivably been a "flag at half mast" speech in the light of the tragic news of President Kennedy's death Friday, renowned Scotsburg author Gladys Workman rose to the occasion and interjected briefly a brighter note into the day of some 65 women attending a luncheon in connection with the convention of the Western Oregon Livestock Association.

The luncheon, a special event for wives of association members, and their guests, was held at noon Friday in the Indian Room of the Umpqua Hotel. Mrs. Marion Krebs was mistress of ceremonies.

Dates Mixed Up. Mrs. Workman flew from Los Angeles especially for the occasion. She began a half-hour speech by telling the story of how she "almost didn't get here."

In what has become known as typical "Workman" style, she told how she wouldn't have been here at all if she had remembered "who to call to say she wasn't coming." Enlarging on this incident Mrs. Workman said she had, as usual, according to her account, gotten her dates mixed and was planning to arrive here to give her speech on Nov. 24. A last-minute reminder by her tour manager forced her to catch a plane in such a hurry she left a "special new dress" hanging in the closet of a Los Angeles hotel. Mrs. Workman was scheduled to return to Los Angeles to continue a speaking tour immediately.

Developing a theme picked from one of her anecdotes, she said it was a good idea never to go to bed at night without having made at least one person happy during the day. What followed was a demonstration of how a highly-developed sense of the ridiculous can draw amusing happenings into the life of a much-demanded speaker in her travels from coast to coast.

Mrs. Workman as revealed in her stories, has blazed a trail of fun from New York to California.

Pancakes Removed

In closing, she told a story from her latest book about a man involved with others in a collision with a garbage truck and, because of pancakes plastered over his eyes, thought he was blind and begged to be "let

Klamath Falls Man Held On Murder Count

KLAMATH FALLS (UPI) — Eugene Beierle, 48, was being held on a charge of first degree murder at the city jail here today.

Beierle was arrested after the fatal shooting of his wife, Gloria, 23, at their home here early Friday.

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Roseburg Church of Christ
formerly meeting at 311 W. Harvard

TEMPORARY LOCATION
Dorm Auditorium
DOUGLAS CO. FAIRGROUNDS—Roseburg
Watch for New Bldg. on W. Garden Valley Rd.

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST
1124 S.E. Douglas Avenue

will hold a
THANKSGIVING DAY SERVICE
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28 at 11 A.M.
Subject: "THANKSGIVING"
The Nursery will be open for small children.
ALL ARE WELCOME