

Eyewitnesses Describe Scene of Assassination

Sounds of Shooting Brought Cars to Halt — Motorcade Sped Kennedy to Hospital

Following is a description of the assassination of President Kennedy yesterday, written by Jack Bell of The Associated Press, who witnessed the shooting from the fourth car behind the President:

DALLAS, Nov. 22 (AP)—There was a loud bang as though a giant firecracker had exploded in the caverns between the tall buildings we were just leaving behind us.

In quick succession there were two other loud reports.

The ominous sound of these dismissed from the minds of us riding in the reporters' "pool" car the fleeting idea that some Texan was adding a bit of noise to the cheering welcome Dallas had given John F. Kennedy.

The reports sounded like rifle shots.

The man in front of me screamed, "My God, they're shooting at the President!"

Our driver braked the car sharply and we swung the doors open to leap out. Suddenly the procession, which had halted, shot forward again.

In the flash of that instant, a little tableau was enacted in front of a colonnade toward which the velvety green grass swelled upward to a small park near the top of an underpass for which we had been headed.

Cars Speed Ahead

A man was pushing a woman dressed in a bright orange to the ground and seemed to be falling protectively over her. A photographer, scrambling on all fours toward the crest of the rise, held a camera trained in their direction.

As my eye swept the buildings to the right, where the shots—if they really were shots; and it seemed unbelievable—might have come, I saw no significant sign of activity.

Four cars ahead, in the President's Continental limousine, a man in the front seat rose for a moment. He seemed to have a telephone in hand as he waved to a police cruiser ahead to go on.

The Presidential car leaped ahead and those following it attained breakneck speed as the caravan roared through the underpass and on to a broad freeway, police sirens whining shrilly. These sirens had been silenced by Presidential order throughout Mr. Kennedy's Texas trip.

Up to the highway we thundered, careening around a turn into the Parkland Hospital and screeching to a stop at the emergency entrance.

As we piled out of our car, I saw Mrs. Kennedy, weeping, trying to hold her husband's head up. Mrs. John Connally was helping hold up the Governor of Texas.

President in Back Seat

Mr. Connally's suit front was splattered with blood, his head rolling backward.

By the time I had covered the distance to the Presidential car, Secret Service men were helping Mrs. Kennedy away. Hospital attendants were aiding Mr. and Mrs. Connally.

For an instant I stopped and stared into the back seat. There, face down, stretched out at full length, lay the President, motionless.

His natty business suit seemed hardly ruffled. But there was blood on the floor.

"Is he dead?" I asked a Secret Service man.

"I don't know," he said, "but I don't think so."

I ran for a telephone.

A few minutes later I was back for more information.

The President and Mr. Connally had been moved into an emergency operating room. Vice President Johnson, Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Kennedy had been escorted into the hospital.

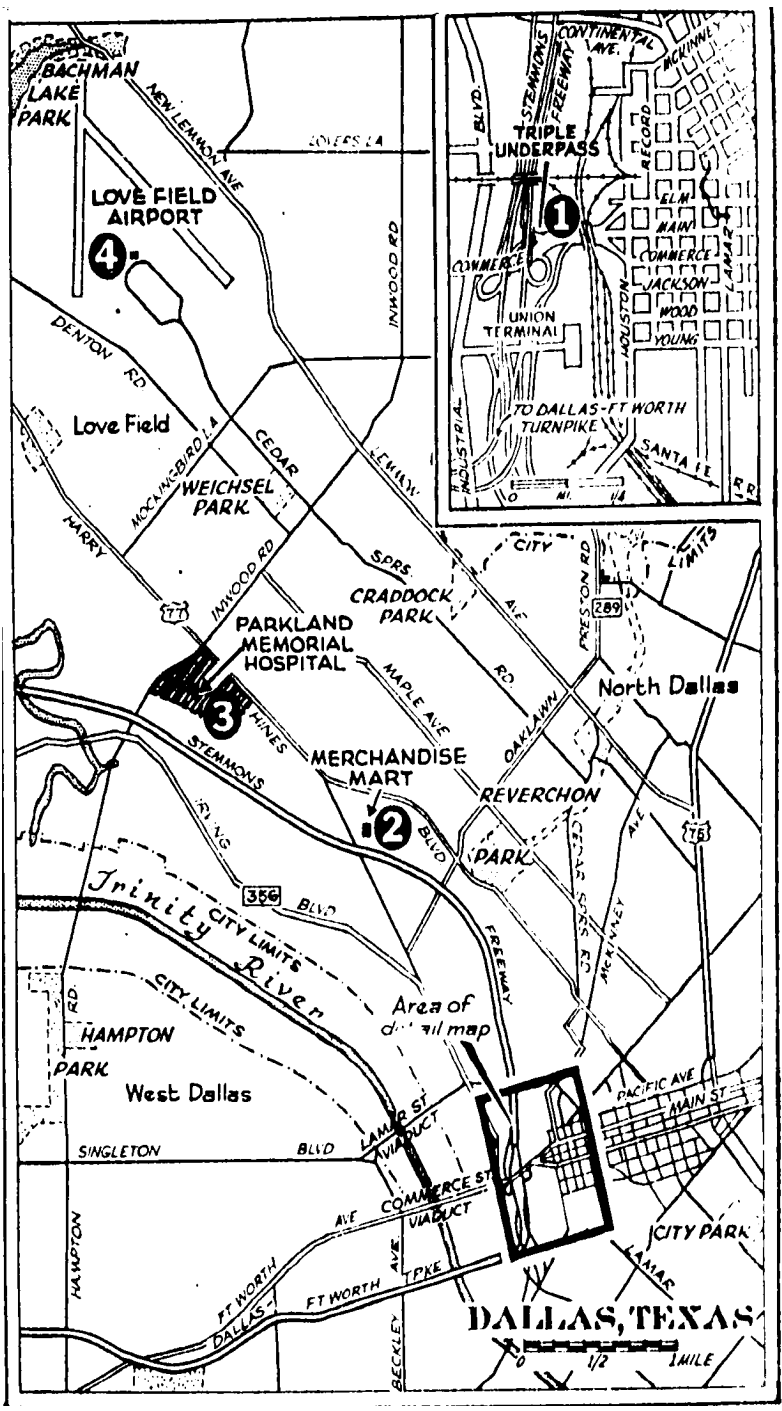
The shiny White House automobile, a manufacturers' dream, stood untouched. It had been flown 1,500 miles from Washington only to become the death vehicle of the President, to whom it was designed to give maximum protection.

Two Hats on Seat

On the front seat floor lay the soft felt hat the President often carried but seldom wore. Beside it in mute comradeship was the wide-brimmed, light-colored Texas-styled hat that Mr. Connally wore.

In the wide area between the seats, now cleared of its jump seats, three twisted and torn roses lay in a pool of blood on the floor. Beside them was a tattered bouquet of asters.

It all seemed so unreal. This was the conveyance for what had been in the nature of tri-



The New York Times Nov. 23, 1963
ASSASSINATION: President Kennedy was shot at triple underpass (1) in Dallas. He was en route to Merchandise Mart (2) where he was scheduled to speak. He was taken to Parkland Hospital (3), where he was pronounced dead. At Love Field (4), his body was flown back to Washington and Lyndon Johnson took oath of office as President.

umph for Mr. Kennedy and the First Lady, who had been smiling, shaking hands and filled with happiness at a day of meeting the folks in the streets, the airports and the hotels.

Ironically, if their reception in Texas had not been so warm, precautions might have been taken to raise the shatter-proof side glasses, even though the top of the convertible was down. Such protection might have saved the President.

But Dallas, where the President's policies had raised a storm of conservative protests, had been warm in its welcome to the handsome, bronzed President and his pretty, chic wife.

The Presidential party appeared to be chatting gaily among themselves after they had left the crowds of downtown Dallas behind and their caravan had swung into a quiet area where admirers had not chosen to stand.

But there the assassin took his stand.

His three well-aimed shots plunged America and the world into grief.

10 Feet From President

TORONTO, Nov. 22 (Canadian Press)—A man from suburban Willowdale who was only 10 feet away when President Kennedy was assassinated today said he first thought the gunfire was the sound of firecrackers.

Norman Similas, 34 years old, told The Star in a telephone conversation that he had been in Dallas on business. He was taking pictures of the motorcade when he saw the President slump to the floor, he said.

Here is his story:

"I was in Dallas on a convention and I decided to snap a picture of the President as the motorcade rolled by.

"The crowds had thinned out just past an overpass near the Trade Mart, so I had a good position when the motorcade came by at about 8 miles an hour.

"Then I suddenly heard a sharp crack. The first thing that came to my mind was that someone was setting off firecrackers. I turned away from the President's car and looked back to where the noise seemed to come from.

Agent Draws Gun

"Then somebody - - I don't know who it was—yelled: 'The President's been shot.'

"I swung back to look at the car. A Secret Service man ran up with his gun drawn. A policeman beside me drew his revolver and his eyes searched the crowd.

"Then another shot rang out and a third almost immediately on top of it.

"I was still staring at the car. The Secret Service man opened the car door and I saw the President slumped down to the floor and falling toward the pavement.

"Jackie Kennedy was sitting on the left side of the car and

Governor Connally on the President's right.

"I could see a hole in the President's left temple and his head and hair were bathed in blood.

"The agent looked in and gasped: 'Oh, my God, he's dead.'"