

# The Texas Observer

NOV. 29, 1963

A Journal of Free Voices

A Window to The South

25c

## THE LAST VOYAGE OF MR. KENNEDY

Come now on the last voyage of Mr. Kennedy.

The members of the party were the President, his wife, and the Vice-President; ten members of the President's staff, Kenneth O'Donnell, David Powers, Lawrence O'Brien, Gen. Chester Clifton, Malcolm Kilduff, George Burkley, Mrs. Evelyn Lincoln, Miss Pamela Turnure, Miss Christian Camp, and Mrs. Mary Gallagher; and seventeen members of Congress, Sen. Ralph Yarborough and Cong. Jack Brooks, Ray Roberts, Olin Teague, Albert Thomas, Homer Thornberry, Jim Wright, Graham

Purcell, John Young, Joe Kilgore, Walter Rogers, George Mahon, Henry Gonzalez, O. C. Fisher, Lindley Beckworth, Wright Patman, and Clark Thompson, of Texas.

Fifty-eight members of the national press accompanied the party from Washington, and ten members of the press joined the party in Texas. They flew in three majestic jets, two for the party, one for the press. The President traveled in one of the jets, and the Vice-President in another, for they are not permitted to fly in the same plane at the same time.

building of the center, great ribbons of blue and white crepe paper curving fan-like out from under it into another wood superstructure, wrapped in blue crepe and apparently just decorative. On the roof of the building two Air Force sentinels, one a white man, and one a Negro man, stood easily against the horizon of the afternoon and looked out over the crowd.

A wind was kicking up his bushy forelock as Kennedy delivered his speech, varying from the text so that he would not have to read it too closely. It was the style we have all heard many times, words that somehow were shaped in the way they sounded by the hard corners of his jaws. He stood at a rostrum between two betasseled flags, the American, and I guess the presidential, and in front of him and the dignitaries, high over us all on a silver flag pole, another and larger American flag snapped in the smart fall breeze.

It was not an important speech, something to get through, really, and the Vice-President gazed off to his right, absorbed in his thoughts. Gov. Connally, too, seemed not to be listening, absorbed in thought; Sen. Yarborough, seated behind Kennedy to the right side, kept his gaze on the back of the President's head, and was smiling steadily.

The President said in San Antonio:

"For more than three years I have spoken about the New Frontier. This is not a partisan term, and it is not the exclusive property of Republicans or Democrats. It refers, instead, to this nation's place in history, to the fact that we do stand on the edge of a great new era, with both crisis and opportunity, an era to be characterized by achievement and by challenge. It is an era which calls for action and for the best efforts of all those who would test the unknown, and the uncertain in phases of human endeavor. It is the time for pathfinders and pioneers."

Telling, extemporaneously, of his having seen, the preceding Saturday, the new Saturn C-1 rocket booster, the largest in the world, at Cape Canaveral, Kennedy said:

"I think the United States should be a leader. A country as rich and powerful as

## San Antonio

In San Antonio, the first stop, Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy came from the plane followed by Cong. Gonzalez of San Antonio and others. Kennedy, in a light royal blue suit, looked thinner than I ever remember him, extremely fit, and happy to be where he found himself as he moved down the long reception line, shaking hands and nodding his head readily as he smiled and chatted. The graceful Mrs. Kennedy, a stewardess told reporters impatient to learn how to describe her, outfit, wore a white wool boucle two-piece suit with a black tie belt, and a black cloche hat.

The motorcade had to stop when children in front of a school in Alamo Heights ran forward to the car carrying the Kennedys and Governor and Mrs. John Connally, who rode together in all the motorcades of the visit to Texas. We came to halts again in front of a Catholic school and an insurance association on Broadway, as children and grown-ups, running and calling out, waving American flags and running holding hands, broke their lines on the curbs and formed moiling human wedges converging on the car. Those who got near stretched out their hands to touch the President's.

The way into town was a long way, and people were spaced sparsely on the route, but in the downtown they were mobbed on the streets, and confetti fluttered down from the buildings high overhead. Passing

through town, proceeding south toward the Aero-Space Medical Health Center at Brooks A.F.B., the motorcade was stopped twice again, and old Brackenridge High School's student body turned out by the side of the road; they are mostly Latin-American children, and a few Anglos and Negroes, and they cheered tumultuously as the Kennedys passed.

Except for the pool reporters, who travel close to the President's car and who represent the other press, we in the press party saw all this from inside two air-conditioned buses. We learned that on the flight down, the President had chatted on the plane for about two hours with the members of the congressional delegation who flew from Washington with him, Yarborough, Kilgore, Teague, Mahon, Young and Gonzalez.

As the motorcade rounded the turn into the space medicine center, we saw a small group of Negroes holding signs. They were separated from the route by a police car. As we briskly wheeled by, I could just make out that one of the signs said "GI Families are Segregated in San Antonio."

**K**ENNEDY made a speech on the value of the work that is done at the center. A large crowd had gathered before a wooden superstructure on which the presidential party were arrayed. Behind the party, towering over it, was the Air Force seal affixed to the facade of the



this which bears so many burdens and responsibilities, which has so many opportunities, should be second to none."

It will not be easy, he said. "There will be setbacks and frustrations, disappointments. There will be, as there always are, pressures in this country to do less in this area as in so many others, and temptations to do something else that is perhaps easier. But . . . The conquest of space must and will go ahead. That much we know. That much we can say with confidence and conviction.

"Frank O'Connor, the Irish writer, tells in one of his books how, as a boy, he and his friends would make their way across the countryside and when they came to an

orchard wall that seemed too high and too doubtful to try and too difficult to permit their voyage to continue, they took off their hats and tossed them over the wall—and then they had no choice but to follow them. This nation has tossed its cap over the wall of space, and we have no choice but to follow it."

Reporters' typewriters were clicking rapidly at the press desks beside the platform during the President's speech. They were writing, for wiring off to their editors before they had to get back on the plane, stories not of the speech, but of the Texas Democrats' inter-party conflict, which was eclipsing the other events of the visit in the news stories of the day.

## Houston

**WE** FLEW QUICKLY over to Houston in the afternoon; the press landed first. There was a goodly crowd, and a band all garbed in bright red, tumping away. From the presidential plane there emerged the Kennedys, the Connallys, the Yarboroughs, and Cong. Thomas of Houston, who was to be honored that night at a dinner. "Hail to the Chief," the band played out.

His left forearm held easily to the middle button of his coat, which he fingered as to twirl it; his hair blowing up a wild lock, and his somehow slightly amused flashing grin coming on and on, Kennedy moved gracefully down the reception line, patting a man on an arm, talking a moment to Cong. Casey, moving along. As Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy turned away from the formal reception line, some fellow approached them and extended his hand to Mrs. Kennedy, who took it. Thomas and the Kennedys, Johnsons, Connallys, and Yarboroughs lined up before the cameramen, who were roped into a compound, and they flash-popped and whirled to their excitements and satisfactions. As Thomas guided the President away, he patted him on the back. This was the scene.

I believe it was in the bus on the way into Houston when Thomas Wicker of the New York Times, I think it was, remarked that the President is not one of your politicians who takes politics so seriously; he is gay about it, and enjoys every minute of it.

The ride in, I saw, sitting on a wall, about a dozen little girls in uniforms, each of them doing her part in holding up a long banner the length of them, "Troop 1381." A boy with an American flag. GIs in fatigues standing at attention.

A truck was parked alongside the route, "Watch Kennedy Stamp Out Your Business." Along the expressway two young boys, perhaps eleven or twelve, each held Confederate flags, and one the sign, "Texas Belongs to the South," and the other the

sign, "Khrushchev, Kennedy, and King." Reporters the other side of the bus said they saw an airplane aloft with a streamer, "Coexistence Is Surrender."

Although it was the dinner hour, downtown was jammed. It seems to me that more Negroes were in the crowds in Houston than in any of the other cities on this trip. I remember intense faces of Negroes, a matronly Negro woman comes back to my memory for no reason I can identify, except that she seemed so tense, and leaning forward in her body.

The three Houston papers provided, for the visiting press, a sumptuous buffet in the Rice in a banquet room on the second floor off the lobby, with two bars, one at each end of the buffet table that extended the length of the room, and those of us who did not have to file that night, and I guess, perhaps, a wee number of the rest

of us, had a drink or so, and dinner. We heard that the President had dinner with a group of about ten important, wealthy Houston citizens, and for all I know some intrepid reporter found out their names, and it has been printed; but I do not know, and if I had read it I would not put it in, because I have not wanted to put anything down in this that I did not see or hear myself.

Don Yarborough, the Houston lawyer whose prospective candidacy for governor had been exciting much curiosity and comment among members of the national press during the day, appeared in the second floor lobby, and I was questioning him, when Mike Ethridge came up to us.

Ethridge is a staunch loyal Democrat in Houston, and he is often seen carrying signs at political gatherings and Democratic conventions. He likes to carry the message himself, in his own hands. He took from his pocket two sheets of note-size stationery, embossed in the color of gold with the Air Force seal and the words, "Aboard Air Force One." Someone had given them to him, and a third sheet, which he was giving to someone else; he separated the two sheets and gave one to Yarborough and one to me. I did not think much of it at the time, but do now.

Don Yarborough moved on into the press buffet room and talked to various reporters. During the day, at San Antonio and again here, Sen. Yarborough had twice refused to accede to the wishes of Secret Service men who had tried to guide him into a car with the Vice-President, and he had told a pool reporter, who passed it on to the press, that his friends should not take offense that Connally had not invited him to the Mansion for the reception for the President; that harmony was needed to

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give the President a great welcome; and besides, the governor was governmentally uneducated, so what else could you expect from him? These were the kinds of subjects greatly titillating and agitating the press this evening. It was the general consensus that the President would not risk his prestige, or the possibly untoward political effects on his chances in Texas next year, by undertaking to promote a quid pro quo, Sen. Yarborough's renomination without substantially mounted opposition, in exchange for Gov. Connally's. Nevertheless, speculation among knowledgeable people had already begun that such a "peace" was desired by certain political advisers close to the President; but that it would have to include the Vice President turning over complete patronage in Texas to Sen. Yarborough, because the arguments that the benefits of such a deal to Mr. Kennedy's chances of carrying Texas were not clear enough, or persuasive enough, for the Senator to be expected, as a party matter, to go along. This was the context of Don Yarborough's drop-in on the press room, the bold kind of act without the likes of which he would not be a figure in Texas politics at all; and it was the context in which Sen. Yarborough told me that evening, in an interview, that he would not, under any circumstances, participate in any deal having to do with another man running for governor, that he did not believe in such deals, and he was sure the President would never suggest such a thing to him, and that no politician had; although the press had. Now, of course, these matters seem like events far away, faded memories of another place and time, so much so that in my wish to hurry past them, I do not even paragraph.

**T**HE KENNEDYS AND JOHNSONS stopped in for a few minutes, before the dinner for Cong. Thomas, at a dance in the Rice being given by the League of United Latin-American Citizens. Mrs. Kennedy wore a black cotton velvet suit for the evening, with diamond earrings and pearls.

Kennedy recalled Franklin Roosevelt's good neighbor policy on this, the last night of his life. He said that North and South Americans are not only neighbors, but are also friends and associates, with "a common commitment to freedom, to equality of opportunity, to show that equality can be the handmaiden of prosperity."

Then, "in order that my words may be even clearer," he said, he introduced Mrs. Kennedy, who said some nice things in her soft, breathy voice in Spanish; a Spanish that some of us agreed was more Castilian than the kind of Spanish we hear down here, and that on this account was difficult to understand, not only among those of us who know little of the language, but also among some of the Latin-Americans around me. But that did not matter, nor dampen the "Viva!"s for her.

Johnson then made a very brief speech, indeed, just two sentences, that anything he said would be anti-climatic after Mrs. Kennedy's remarks, and that "We are very

proud and very happy" to have the Kennedys there that night.

At the coliseum, the "Cuba Student Directorate" had lined up about 30 people across the street from where cars turned into the coliseum drive, and they were chanting and holding signs. Some of the signs said:

"The Cuban Revolution Was Not Beaten in Habana Only." "Cuba Yes Russia No." "Alpha 66 II Front MRP Directoria." "Cuba is a Cancer Are We Going to Operate." "To Fight for the Freedom of Cuba is a Cuban's Right."

Some of the demonstrators called out slogans in heavy Cuban accents. They took up a chant that, for some confused reason ironically, suggests the civil rights movement in the South: "We want our freedom."

In the midst of the demonstrators there were two odd variations, one emotionally consonant, another contrary. A boy, (one wonders if he might have been one of the two on the expressway,) held up the slogan, "Kennedy, Khrushchev, King," and there was also a Confederate flag and a sign, "Ban the Brothers." And then, right in the middle of all this, shifting his weight slightly from foot to foot, a flicker of a smile playing at his lips as the photographers milled around in the street popping flashes at them all, there was one old man, holding up above his head a small sign that said, "Welcome Kennedy."

**C**ONG. THOMAS said to the crowd gathered in banquet to honor him, "Our city will continue to grow and grow and grow because you will make it grow." They gave Kennedy a hat-waving, noisy welcome, rebel yells sounding out against the background of "Hail to the Chief."

Kennedy's speech recited statistics on Houston's importance and progress, and he said things a President would be expected to say about a congressman of his party who was being honored.

In the light of subsequent revelations that the White House had been advised against the President's trip to Texas at this time, and that he had himself made the decision to ride in a motorcade in Dallas, one cannot help wondering what ran through the President's mind as he said:

"When I read the report that Congressman Thomas was thinking of resigning, I called him up on the phone and asked him to stay as long as I stayed. I didn't know how long that would be, but I wanted him to stay. . . ."

"The presidency has been called a good many names, and presidents have been also, but no president can do anything without the help of friends. . . ."

The reference to not knowing how long he'd be President was, of course, a jest. Kennedy was characteristically Bostonian, speaking of "Pennsylvanier Avenue," and characteristically witty this evening. In fact, while stressing the country's pursuit of primacy in space, he turned a slip into a score with swift wit and cleverness. He said:

" . . . next month . . . the United States of America fires the largest booster in the history of the world into space for the first time giving us the lead, fires the largest payroll—payload—into space giving us the lead."

There was a double-take, and laughter, in the crowd. The President said quickly:

"—It will be the largest payroll, too." The recovery was appreciated in the crowd. Then he said further: "And who should know that better than Houston. We put a little of it right in here."

This worked out to be such a gainful political reference in this city, whose merchants have been benefited and workers more fully engaged because of the N.A.S.A. space center near here, that a veteran White House reporter said he thought the President had made the slip intentionally to set up the ingenious recovery.

Welded into Kennedys celebration of Cong. Thomas was the President's last public statement of the domestic problems ahead of the United States. He said:

"There were in 1936, [when Albert Thomas went to the House,] as there are today, those who are opposed to growth and change, who prefer to defy them, who look back instead of forward . . . we dare not look back now, if 27 years from now, in the year 1990 a new generation of Americans is to say that we, too, looked forward.

"In 1990, for example, this nation will need three times as much electric power as it has today, four times as much water, and that is why we are developing the Canadian River and the San Angelo, and the Columbus Bend, and other Texas river projects, and seeking at Freeport to find an economical way to get fresh water from salt, and building anti-pollution plants throughout this state and nation, in a new and expanded program. In 1990 the need for national and state parks and recreation areas will triple, reaching a total very nearly the size of Indiana. That is why we are creating Padre Island Seashore, and adding refuge.

"In 1990 your sons, daughters, grandsons and grandchildren will be applying to the colleges of this state in a number three times what they do today. Our airports will serve five times as many passenger miles. We will need housing for a hundred million more people, and many times more doctors and engineers, and technicians, than we are presently producing. . . ."

"In 1990 the age of space will be entering its second phase, and our hopes in it to preserve the peace, to make sure that in this great new sea, as on earth, the United States is second to none. And that is why I salute Albert Thomas and those Texans who you sent to Washington in his time and since then, who recognize the needs and the trends today in the '60's so that when some meet here in 1990 they will look back on what we did and say that we made the right and wise decisions. 'Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions,' the Bible tells us; and 'where there is no vision, the people perish'."



# Fort Worth

THE PRESIDENTIAL ENTourage left Houston then and flew to Fort Worth, where the President spent his last night, in the Texas Hotel.

It was raining a little in the morning. The President had been scheduled only for a breakfast speech to the city's chamber of commerce, but at the last minute a public speech had been announced, at the parking lot across Eighth Street from the hotel. The time was given as 8:45, before breakfast; changed to after the breakfast; but then rescheduled for 8:45, with the explanation that the President did not want to make people miss work to hear him.

On the tops of all the buildings around the parking lot at 8:45, many men in yellow slickers patrolled, watching the windows of buildings across from them and the crowds below. During the speechmaking, yellow-slickered police kept traffic moving on the streets adjacent to the parking lot; one officer became furious with a Negro driving a car who had stopped to gaze at the scene, and was stalling a line of traffic. Fiercely blasting his whistle, he moved the obstructor on.

At the outer edges of the crowd a youth supported another on his shoulders, for him to see; a natty fellow braced a folding metal chair against a parking meter, to stand on and see from; mothers and fathers held up their children to see over the crowd and catch a glimpse of the President.

The public address system was lousy, and I could not make out what was said. From the text released by the White House press secretary, (upon others of which I have also relied in this,) I see that he was in high spirits, despite the rain.

"There are no faint hearts in Fort Worth, and I appreciate your being here this morning," he began the next to the last speech of his life. "Mrs. Kennedy is organizing herself. It takes longer, but, of course, she looks better than we do when she does it."

He briefly called for U.S. strength militarily, as through the TFX fighter to be built in Fort Worth, to which he referred; for leadership in space; and for the people's participating in rising prosperity, giving the U.S. strength economically.

"And in the final analysis, that strength depends upon the willingness of the citizens of the United States to assume burdens of citizenship. I know one place where they are, here in this rain, in Fort Worth, in Texas, in the United States. We are going forward."

With that Kennedy moved off the improvised dais and shook hands among the people for quite a little while. Sen. Don Kennard, Fort Worth, waiting for him to go back into the hotel, laughed and said something to the effect that, "He's really a hand-shaker, isn't he?" As the President—dragging along ahead and behind re-

porters, cameramen, and his entourage—crossed the street toward the hotel, he suddenly turned and walked up to a member of the Tarrant County Sheriff's Posse, mounted on a steed along with other possemen, and reached his hand up to shake the rider's, who was surprised and gratified. Then, through a tunnel opened through a dense pack of people in the hotel lobby, the President withdrew, and the press went upstairs to the breakfast.

KENNEDY CAME into the breakfast hall in Fort Worth smiling broadly and was given a clamorous welcome.

The Texas Boys Choir sang "The Eyes of Texas." Everyone rose; Kennedy with a smile.

Raymond Buck, president of the chamber of commerce, introduced those at the head table. There were a number of rising ovations. When that was done, Buck leaned over to Kennedy, and they seemed to confer. Then Buck said, "And now an event that I know all of you have been waiting for."

Mrs. Kennedy entered in a strawberry pink dress and hat of matching color. Her reception, too, was clamorous.

Buck introduced Kennedy as "our great, courageous, and brilliant leader of the world's strongest nation." He told Kennedy, "Our hearts and arms are open to you."

The President rose from his last meal to make his last speech.

"I know now why everyone in Texas, Fort Worth, is so thin, having gotten up and down about nine times. This is what you do every morning," he began.

"Two years ago, I introduced myself in Paris by saying that I was the man who had accompanied Mrs. Kennedy to Paris. I am getting somewhat the same sensation as I travel around Texas. Nobody wonders what Lyndon and I wear."

The crowd was enchanted. Again, as he wended his way gracefully through a speech, he was the Boston gentleman come to Texas, speaking of the "drawring board" and "Californier."

The theme of the speech was military preparedness, with stress on Fort Worth's role in it. Marion Hicks, vice-president of General Dynamics in Fort Worth, which got the TFX contract, sat at the head table, on the side of the podium other than the side where the President had been seated. When Kennedy mentioned TFX, he joked quickly—"I am glad that there was a table separating Mr. Hicks and myself."

His good spirits kept bobbing up from the weightiest contexts: "Texas as a whole, and Fort Worth bear particular responsibility for this national defense effort, for military procurement in this state totals near \$1¼ million, fifth largest among all the states of the union. There are more military personnel on active duty in this state than any in the nation, save one—and it is not Massachusetts—any in the

nation save one, with a combined military-civilian defense payroll of well over a billion dollars," he said.

But he was not jesting as he recited increases in military spending in the last three years—increases in Polaris submarines, Minute Man missiles, strategic bombers and missiles, nuclear weapons, tactical nuclear forces, tactical fighter wings, combat-ready Army divisions, strategic airlift capabilities, and special counter-insurgency forces in South Vietnam.

"I hope those who want a stronger America and place it on some signs will also place those figures next to it," he said.

"This is not an easy effort. This requires sacrifices by the people of the United States. But this is a very dangerous and uncertain world," he said.

Speaking off the cuff now, Kennedy reflected how this country had lived in isolation, yet now, 18 years after the war, maintains alliances all over the world.

"I don't think we are fatigued or tired. We would like to live as we once lived. But history will not permit it," he said. "We are still the keystone in the arch of freedom, and I think we will continue to do as we have done in our past, our duty..."

In the retrospect it may have been his opinions like these that had more to do with what now lay ahead of him than those of his opinions that are currently controversial among the people.

"Although we know that you don't wear a hat," Buck told him at the conclusion of his speech, "we couldn't let you leave Fort Worth without some protection against the rain." He broke out a Texas hat and gave it to Kennedy.

The question was implicit. There was a little gap in things while people waited. Then the President got up and said, "I'll put it on at the White House and you can photograph it there."

Buck gave the name of the company that provided the hat and added, "That hat protects you against your local enemies."

Connally held a press conference before the party left for Dallas. We will go into it more later; but here was the gist of the governor's remarks. He declined to comment on Sen. Yarborough's blast at him the preceding day. He asked the national reporters, especially, to realize that the rifts in the Texas party in the primary are different from rifts in November. He said Democrats would unite for Kennedy in November. He seemed reconciled to primary contests at the state level next May. He did not think the in-fighting here would affect Kennedy's chances to carry Texas at all.

We noticed that this morning, as we set off for the airport in the motorcade, Sen. Yarborough had joined Vice President Johnson and Mrs. Johnson in one car. The morning papers had been full of reports of Yarborough's refusals to do so, the day before. Somehow, proper approaches had been made, and there was now this showing of harmony.

The crowds in downtown Fort Worth and on the roads to the airport were light. The three planes took off for Dallas.



# And Finally to the City of Dallas . . .

Everyone has read so much now, and seen so much on television, I believe the right thing for me to do is to tell you what I saw in Dallas, this dreadful day.

As the President's group deplaned at Love Field, civic officials, led by Mayor and Mrs. Earle Cabell, gave Mrs. Kennedy, bedecked in her strawberry dress, some red roses. They gave Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Connally some yellow roses.

After he had greeted the official well-comers, Kennedy came upon Rev. Baxton Bryant, pushing before him in a wheelchair an old loyal Democrat, Annie S. Dunbar, 85, and accompanied by a few others.

Bryant, a liberal Democrat who had wired the President the grass roots Democrats would have a delegation there to meet him, (as we had set forth in stories written, and all discarded,) introduced himself to Kennedy, who said "Glad to see you," kind of half-laughing knowingly, and Bryant introduced Annie Dunbar to him, and some others.

The President walked over toward the medium-sized crowd gathered to meet him. There were no hostile posters, but one large Confederate flag was held high above the crowd at the airport as the President moved along the crowd from person to person, smiling and shaking hands and chatting. I find in my notebook at this point, "Kennedy is showing he's not afraid."

Cong. Gonzalez said later that he had had misgivings about the President's trip to Dallas, and that he and his colleagues were discussing, on the plane from Fort Worth to Dallas, a full-page ad in the Dallas News that morning on the Kennedys. This ad in effect alleged that the Kennedys are soft on communists, or worse.

The congressmen kidded some about taking precautions for their safety in Dallas, Gonzalez said. As he got off the plane, Gonzalez recalled, he had said, "Well, I'm taking my risks.—I haven't got my steel vest yet."

Lined along the curbs on the way downtown were children, working girls in their twenties, working men in helmets, young executives in suits, come to see the President. They were nondescript and various; they were the people in persons.

A tiny Negro boy carried a sign, "Hooray for JFK." So did a tiny white girl. A few besuited older men held themselves stiffly at attention. Many of the people, smiling or squinting in the cool North Texas sunlight, were absorbed in the power and glory of the moment; in this, their touch with the fabulous, in the midst of their daily and daily thwarted lives.

Now and then I noticed a braced stance, a pipe that was being puffed too rapidly, brows knitted in frowns.

I had taken a seat in the very back of the second press bus. Like many Texans, I had worried about the President's visit in Dallas. I had said to myself, in whatever

a premonition is, "He will not get through this without something happening to him." For Dallas is the place of the ugly Stevenson scene, of political hates, and of people who believe that liberals, like Mr. Kennedy, are helping or conspiring with the communists. I find in my notes along the parade route the observation, "In many thousands of minds there must be an unspoken admiration of courage." I meant, of Kennedy's.

The people on the curbs on the way into Dallas were lined up fairly closely. They were mostly whites, here and there a concentration of Negro children. There was a very large turnout as we passed Texas Instruments. I saw two little white girls, one holding a flagpole, and the other the end of the large American flag.

The people were ten and twenty and even thirty deep in the heart of the city. They seemed calm and relaxed as the press buses passed them. People watched from roofs, confetti flew, altogether it was a friendly turnout in holiday spirit. Police were stationed every halfblock downtown; motorcycles at intersections.

Now we were through the thick of the crowds, and at the foot of Main Street, the motorcade had begun to wind around onto Elm Street, out of sight from the press buses following.

**W**HAT HAPPENED?" a reporter called out inside the bus ahead of me.

Through the windows we saw people breaking and running down Elm Street in the direction of the underpass, and running to the railing of the arch at the foot of the downtown section and leaping out of our sight onto the grass beyond and below.

I was not aware of any pause in the motorcade. We rounded the bend onto Elm Street and passed a scene I cannot clearly remember. My notes say, "Speeding down the slope toward the expressway, people breaking across the street in front of the police. Up the grassy slope." We were already speeding toward the underpass; I had seen a scene of scurrying confusion, of people running across the street and up the slope.

On the other side of the underpass, a motorcycle policeman was rough-riding across sere grass to the trestle for the railroad tracks that cross the underpass. He brought his cycle to a halt and leapt from it and was running up the base of the trestle when I lost sight of him.

We speculated someone might have dropped something onto the motorcade from the overpass. I saw an airplane above the area and wondered if it might have been dropping something. Strangely, then, as we sped along the Industrial Boulevard, I believe it is, toward the Trade Mart, the matter fell out of my mind, or deep into it. All I remember is how fast we were going, and that there were not any people on the

curbs of the traffic islands. I thought maybe they had heard we would be going fast.

The first words I heard as I got off the bus were, "He's been shot." A reporter lady with a German accent.

James Vachule, reporter for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, said, "I heard the shots, several. At the triple underpass."

This is what my notes, converted from the abbreviations, say:

"He is not there. He was rushed to the hospital.

"Perhaps fatally. At the hospital.

"Shot in the head?"

"Kennedy? Who do you find out from?"

In the alarm and confusion, the reporters were full of doubt, and some were a little panicky. No one wanted to say what he was not sure of. Reporters had their editors on the phone and nothing definite to tell them.

Outside, in the trade mart, about 2,400 persons were having their lunch, awaiting the President's arrival. I learned later the rumor had begun to run among them, but no one believed it.

I went from reporters at telephones who did not know and asked me frantically what I knew—I went on a run to a group of four or five who were gathered around M. W. Stevenson, chief of the criminal investigation division of the Dallas police.

"The President was hit, that's our information at present." He had been taken to Parkland. How badly hurt? "No, sir, I do not know."

And so we knew, and a dozen or so of us ran, heedless of an order to slow down, along the side of the banquet hall, and piled into someone's station wagon, and the horn blaring all the way, raced to Parkland Hospital.

**D**ALLAS became a stricken city, full of shame and horror.

In the hospital I heard people who work there saying, "Connally, too." "It's a shame, I don't care who it is." No one knew who was alive or who was dead.

At the emergency entrance, Sen. Ralph Yarborough, terribly shaken, gave the first eye-witness account that I heard. He had been in the third car, with the Vice-President and Mrs. Johnson; removed from the President's car by the one filled with Secret Service men.

"I heard three loud explosions, like a deer rifle," he said. "You could smell powder all the way here. I thought it was rifle shots. Sound to me like rifle shots. . . ."

"After the second shot, the Secret Service man had us to lie over so we wouldn't project over the seat. He said, 'get down, get down, get down.' The shooting had ended."

Kennedy and Connally had been carried in. "I decline to describe their condition,"



# To a Bend Near the Triple Underpass

Yarborough said. "They were shot. It is too horrible to describe. They were seriously hurt."

"Mrs. Kennedy walked in."

After the shooting, he said, "They took off immediately for the hospital at a very fast rate, very fast. We knew that something was terribly wrong, because they took off as fast as they could."

Where had the President been hit? "I can't tell you where."

"The Secret Service immediately surrounded the Vice President and Mrs. Johnson and took them away," Yarborough said.

Now surrounded by a mob of reporters and cameramen, Yarborough said, "Gentlemen, this is too horrible to describe. You'll have to ask the doctors. The injury was very grave to both of them. This is a deed of horror. This is indescribable."

"I saw the Secret Service man on the first car beating the car with his fist. I knew something was terribly wrong. It was in frustration and anger and despair and horror. He would hit his fist in horror and anguish."

Had he seen any motion in the car? "Absolutely none."

The senator, as he said this, was cast down, and gazing at the ground.

Reporters pressed him to go over it again. At one point in this ordeal, he drifted off somewhere as he talked, back to the scene of it happening, trying to remember.

"There was a slight pause between the shots," he said very quietly, and as though wind was blowing through his voice. "'Bang' . . . a pause of two or three seconds . . . 'bang.' . . . And then a longer pause before the third one."

Because I had reached Yarborough first before many of the reporters came up, I then told a group of them what he had said from the first. This was a common scene

the rest of the day, reporters sharing what they had learned with their colleagues.

Inside the hospital all was in chaos. Reporters trying to make phone calls found that all the hospital phones had gone dead. I chased across a street to find a phone in a filling station to call a paper I was working with. While I was standing in the storeroom where the phone was, waiting to get through, I heard it announced on the radio, "The President is dead."

I TOLD the editor and rushed back to the hospital. I first believed and comprehended that he was dead when I heard Doug Kiker of the New York Herald-Tribune swearing bitterly and passionately, "Goddam the sonsabitches." Yes, he was dead.

But who had announced it? In the press room that had been improvised out of a classroom, no one seemed to know. Then it was that Hugh Sidey of Time came in and, his voice failing with emotion, told the assembled press that two Catholic priests had told him and another reporter or so that the priests had given the President the last rites.

"Is he dead?" a reporter had asked them. "He is dead, all right," one of the priests replied. "Did you give him last rites?" "Yes, we gave him last rites." The priests would give them no more information.

All there was to do then was to see the story unfold, and to realize and to see others as they realized.

Malcolm Kilduff, assistant White House press secretary, gave the press its first formal notification about 1:30. He came into the classroom and stood on the dais before the bright green blackboard, his voice, too, vibrating from his feelings.

"President John F. Kennedy—" he began.

"Hold it," called out a cameraman.

"President John F. Kennedy died at approximately 1 o'clock Central Standard Time today here in Dallas. He died of a gunshot wound in the brain. I have no other details regarding the assassination of the President. Mrs. Kennedy was not hit. Governor Connally was hit. The Vice President was not hit."

Had President Johnson taken the oath of office? "No. He has left." On that, Kilduff would say no more. As Kilduff lit a cigarette the flame of his lighter quivered violently.

Kennedy was not known to say a word after he was shot, Kilduff said. Later Julian Read, an aide to Gov. Connally, told the press of his conversations with Mrs. Connally, and she had not heard him say anything. Then it was the press received its first version of what Mrs. Connally Sunday told the press, that she had just turned to the President and said to him, "Well, Mr. President, you can't say Dallas doesn't love you," and he was shot.

From time to time others came into the press room with more information. Gov. Connally's condition was serious, but hopeful. Bill Stinson, an aide to the governor, told us he asked Connally at the hospital, "What happened?" "I don't know," he had replied. "Where did they get you?" "I think they shot me in the back. They got the President, too," Connally told him. Had Connally reported that the President had said anything after the shootings? "No—No. No," Stinson said.

Mrs. Connally had communicated the information that upon the first shot, the governor had turned toward the President, who was immediately behind him, and then was immediately hit himself. Doctors indicated that Connally's turning toward the President probably saved his life, because it turned his body in such a way that the bullet that went completely through him did not hit vital organs.

AFTER A TIME, a group of the national press started for the emergency entrance. They were to go on to Washington with the body on behalf of the rest of the press. As we passed a tall man in a suit, he was gesturing toward a room and saying, "Yes, everything's gone, everything's gone, out the back way."

At the emergency entrance, Sen. Yarborough prepared to go to the airport to return to Washington in a second plane. His eyes were red from crying.

"This is a tragedy to all mankind," he said. He wiped his eyes of tears.

Mayor Earle Cabell, a tory Democrat who a few hours before might have been expected to deal with Sen. Yarborough with a slight aloofness, said to him urgently, "What can I do for you?" Nothing else meant anything, and we were all each others' brothers.

Cong. Gonzalez rode to the airport with Sen. Yarborough. Shortly many members of the press followed in the buses, most of them to fly back to Washington.

There, at the airport, we learned that at 2:39, Judge Sarah T. Hughes had given the oath of office to President Lyndon B. Johnson. The details were given to us by a pool reporter, Sid Davis of Westinghouse Broadcasting. I shall not soon forget the picture in my mind, that man standing on the trunk of a white car, his figure etched against the blue, blue Texas sky, all of us massed around him at his knees as he told us what had happened in that crowded compartment in Air Force One, and what else had happened here at the airport.

John F. Kennedy had arrived at the Dallas airport at 11:35 that morning. Three hours and a few minutes later, his body was flown to Washington. R.D.

## On Dallas

*A note to our readers:*

*I worked in Dallas from the time of President Kennedy's arrival there through late Saturday night. This is now Monday afternoon, and as soon as this issue is out, I am returning to Dallas. It would be possible for me to write a lot about Dallas and the assassination now, but it is late on deadline, and I should prefer to wait until I have worked there longer. Next issue our readers may expect reports from there.*

*I would say briefly now, that if a city has a conscience, Dallas is searching its conscience now; that people there are trying to find words and purpose for their shame, or to deny it in suspicion that their fears have come to pass. A stricken city, confused, frightened, condemned the nation over, Dallas is now its own problem, and many of its people very well know it.*  
—Ed.