THE LAST VOYAGE OF MR. KENNEDY

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 finally, who rode together in all the

Kiddell, John Young, Joe Kilgore, Walter Rogers, George Mahon, Henry Gonzalez, D. 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.

K E N N E D Y 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 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 banded 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
WE FLEW QUICKLY over to Houston in the afternoon; the press landed first. There was a goody crowd, and a band all garbed in bright red, tumbling away. From the presidential plane there emerged the Kennedys, then Connally, the Yarboughs, 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 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 Yarbroughs lined up before the cameramen, who were roped into a compound, and they flash-popped and whirred to their heart's content.

Don Yarborough moved on into the press floor lobby, and I was questioning him, because this is a journal of free voices, and in publishing them the editor does not necessarily imply that he agrees with them, because this is a journal of free voices. None of the other people who are associated with the enterprise shares this responsibility with him. Writers are responsible for their own work, but not for anything they have not themselves written, and in publishing them the editor shares no responsibility for what he agrees with them.

The three Houston papers provided, for the visiting press, a sumptuous buffet in the Rice in a banquet room on the second floor of 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 signs to the visitors 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 have the Vice-President and the Governor together.

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A Window to the South

November 29, 1963

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The Observer solicits articles, essays, and creative works of the shorter forms having to do in various ways with this area. The pay depends as present it is token. Please enclose return postage. Unsigned articles are the editor's.

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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 tantalizing 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 quick pro quo, Sen. Yarborough’s renomination without substantially mounted opposition, in excitement over 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. 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.

THE 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 velvet gown 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 Spaniard 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 MP Directory.” “Cuba is a Cancer Are We Going to Operate.” “To Fight for the Freedom of Cuba is a Cuban’s Right.”

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, Krushchev, King,” and there was also a Confederate flag and a sign, “Burn Kennedy.”

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.”

CONG. THOMAS said to the crowd gathered in banquet to honor him, “Our city will continue to 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 “Pennsylvanian 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 approved by 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 Kennedy’s 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 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 will 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.”

November 29, 1963
Fort Worth

The Presidential En- 
tourage 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 obstruction 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 it was raining a little in the morning.

It was raining a little in the morning.

The theme of the speech was military preparedness, with stress on Fort Worth's role in it. Major 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.

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, go back in 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-
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 welcome, Kennedy came upon Rev. Baxter 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 charting; 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 bearded men held themselves stiffly at attention. Many of the people, smiling or squatting 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 beinguffed 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 turning of the 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. 

“WHAT 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 some 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. 

“Where? Dallas.” 

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 horns blaring all the way, raced to Parkland Hospital. 

DALLAS 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 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.” 

November 29, 1963 5
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 read the doctors. I don't want the autopsies to be done. That will be another problem."

"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 P.M. He came into the classroom and stood on the stage before the bright green blackboard, his voice, too, vibrating from his feelings.


"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 said, "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," 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 other's brothers."

Cong. Gonzalez rode to the airport with Sen. Yarborough. Shortly many members of the press followed in the bus, 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 and into 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 want to 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, frightenmented, the nation over, Dallas is now its own problem, and many of its people very well know it. —Ed.