The Assassination of JFK:
The Killing that Changed Presidential Security Forever

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“Here is a bulletin from CBS News: In Dallas, Texas, 3 shots were fired at President Kennedy’s motorcade in downtown Dallas. The first reports say, President Kennedy had been seriously wounded by the shooter.”¹ On November 22nd, it was a normal day and normal television broadcasts were on. On CBS, the show, “As the World Turns” was on. Just as the show was airing, it was interrupted by a CBS News bulletin announcing that the president had been shot. Following that bulletin, came another with images of the incident. After that, came the dreaded announcement that the president had passed away from the wound injuries. The nation was taken by storm by the news as it was released. Students had been sent home, offices closed, and the country became positioned by radios to hear for more news. The nation grieved the loss of the president. What resulted in the following years, changed the presidential security for generations to come. The tragedy of John F. Kennedy being shot and killed by Lee Harvey Oswald in downtown Dallas shaped presidential security forever. In 1963, President Kennedy's tour of Texas meant to lessen tensions in the Civil Rights movement turned tragic when he was gunned down in a Dallas parade. The triumph to come was presidential security rising and the assassination of John F. Kennedy would be the hopefully the last killing of the president since 1963.

¹ Morning, CBS Sunday, director. YouTube. YouTube, YouTube, YouTube, 17 Nov. 2013, www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PXORQE5-CY.
John F. Kennedy’s Politics

John F. Kennedy’s political background started back in 1945 when he decided to run for the 80th congress, representing Massachusetts. He would be elected in 1946 at the age of 29. He was able to be re-elected two more times after that. Kennedy had a strong appreciation for politics and was very interested in foreign policy. He hoped to protect democracy in the country by finding hidden communists. Kennedy was concerned about worldwide spread of communism. John F. Kennedy hoped to be president and his tactics to be elected started well before the election of 1960. His opponent, Richard Nixon, was more politically experienced but Kennedy’s young age drew the attention of voters. Kennedy would become not only the youngest president to be elected but also the first Catholic to go into office. People assumed that he would run for re-election, but it wasn’t officially announced. Before he could announce his re-election, he needed to calm tensions in the south. Many people were not happy with Kennedy’s steps towards Civil Rights, so he planned a tour in Texas to bring excitement to people and make them not mad at him. He was prepared for people to not be very welcoming, but he had no worries about his physical safety. ²

The Assassination

On November 22nd, 1963, John F. Kennedy was scheduled to be in a motorcade parade. The city of Dallas was so excited that they had the 11-mile route posted in the Dallas Herald.

Times. During the parade, 3 shots rang out at the vehicle the president was in. “It was just complete chaos, because people didn’t know where to run. Nobody knew where the shots were coming from, nobody knew who’d been hit, if anybody. Nobody knew where to run to protect themselves.” Said eyewitness, Hugh Aynsworth. ³

The president had been shot and his body had fallen over onto the first lady. The first lady, Jacqueline Kennedy, climbed to the back of the car to pull a Secret Service agent into the back to help. The car rushed to Parkland Memorial Hospital, just minutes away from where they were. Police and press followed the car to the hospital, but some people stayed back to hunt for the sniper. Doris Nelson, Nurse at Parkland Memorial Hospital- “the operator told me the president had been shot. I thought she was joking and asked her what else was new. But then, from the tone of her voice, I knew she wasn’t kidding. She said the president’s motorcade was on its way to the hospital.” ⁴

The president was pronounced dead at 1 pm. Walter Cronkite, CBS news anchor: “From Dallas Texas, the flash, apparently official: President Kennedy died at 1:00 p.m., central standard time, 2 p.m. eastern standard time—some 38 minutes ago.” ⁵

**Catching the Killer**

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While the doctors were attempting to save the president, many police started to investigate who shot John F. Kennedy. Few witnesses saw a rifle drawn in a window of the Texas School book Depository. The structure was 7 levels high and the building played as a warehouse—a great location for a sniper. Witnesses stories convinced the police to search the building. On the sixth floor, officers found the snipers resting place, along with three empty bullet shells. Further searching helped discover the hidden rifle. Lee Harvey Oswald was suspected to have shot an officer and JFK. Oswald would be arrested 30 minutes after the second shooting. Later, his wife would confess to the police that he owned a rifle. While he was being transferred from the city jail to the county jail, he was killed by Jack Ruby who was a night club owner. Tom Pettit, NBC reporter: “He’s been shot! He’s been shot! He’s been shot! Lee Oswald has been shot! There’s a man with a gun. There's absolute panic, absolute panic here in the basement of the Dallas police headquarters. Detectives have their guns drawn. Oswald has been shot.”

A Nation Forced to Move Forward


Following the news of President Kennedy’s death and shooting, across the country, schools and businesses everywhere shut doors and children went home. On Air Force One, the presidential plane, Judge Sarah T. Hughes swore Lyndon Johnson in to become president using a bible from John F. Kennedy’s sleeping quarters. Late into that Friday night, the president’s body was brought back to Washington D.C. The body was taken in for an autopsy and burial preparation. Pierre Salinger, White House press secretary wrote a witnessing statement: “Mrs. Kennedy walked forward slowly and knelt by the casket in silent prayer. She then leaned forward and kissed the casket and slowly walked out of the door of the East Room.” Later, on the 23rd, the body was taken to Capitol Hill to lie in state in the Rotunda. The next day, the casket was available for public viewing. About 250,000 people were able to view the body within the Rotunda while thousands more stayed together outside. Roger Mudd, CBS News- “... without surcease, mourning Americans have moved through this Rotunda, first in two rows, single file on each side, at the rate of perhaps six thousand an hour; ... the line which formed here ... is estimated by police at five hundred thousand.”

**Protection of the First Family After the Killing**

Jaqueline Kennedy and her kids received Secret Service protection even after John Kennedy was killed. Jaqueline had protection for the rest of her live and the kids had protection until they were 16. Secret Service will do this unless the family declines the protection.

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especially useful for when the presidents are trying to get back to their normal life. The former presidents will never fully have a normal life but with the Secret Service, they are able to live a protected life after being in office.

**Laws Put in Place for Future Presidents**

A little under two years after the assassination of the former president, laws were passed to protect the future presidents. Law makers decided to make a new law called Law 89-141. The law makes it clear that any citizens or foreign visitors are not allowed to kill, abduct, conspiracy, hurt or attempt to abduct or kill the president or vice president of America.11 With these protections, it’s not only helpful for prosecuting people that have acted in these manners, but also helps provide more security for the president and vice president. Without these laws, there would be no saying what would happen today.

**Changes to the Presidential Car**

The car that President Kennedy was assassinated in was a 1961 Lincoln Continental 4 door convertible. People called the car he rode in, the “death car” after the obvious death of the president.12 The car was formally nicknamed X-100, used as code with the Secret Service. After the former president was killed, the presidential limo was turned in as evidence. After the

car was inspected and done being used as evidence, it was renovated. Many items were added
to the car to make the structure safer. Ford added non-removable roof panels and played as
transparent armor. The windows also became heavy-duty bullet proof along with the
windshield and armor was implanted into the car. Since the assassination, the presidential limo
has never been designed without a permeant roof. The X-100 was retired in early 1977. 13 Even
now, presidents rarely go publicly driving in the presidential limo. The presidents typically
publicly drive when there is a special occasion like the inauguration. 14

Additions to the Secret Service

Two years after the assassination, the Secret Service created a division dedicated to
solely collaborating with local law enforcement of where the president is going to be. With
that, they communicate threats that they have heard and what to be looking out for. This is
typically used when the president having a speech, rally or other event where they make an
appearance. 15

13 “President Kennedy Limousine Research.” The Henry Ford,

Dwyer, Devin. “5 Ways JFK’s Assassination Changed Secret Service.” ABC News,
Laws for Others

Years after the assassination, the laws that were put in place to protect the president and vice president, were extended to foreign visitors and members of congress. On the campaign trail of John F. Kennedy’s brother, Robert Kennedy, he was shot and assassinated. Officials realized that the members of Congress like Robert Kennedy, should have the same protections as the president and vice president. These protections include, not being able to kill, abduct, conspiracy, hurt or attempt to kill or abduct members of Congress. After an attack on the Israeli Olympic team in Munich, Germany, the United States wanted to extend the same protections to foreign guests while in the country. Those protections remain the same as the rights for members of Congress, the president and vice president.16

More Secret Service

There are more Secret Service agents today than there were when Kennedy was in office. When Kennedy was in office, there were only 179 agents. Today, there are over 5,000 agents all together and thousands in their own departments to keep the president safe. There are 3,200 special agents, 1,300 Uniformed Division officers, and more than 2,000 other technical, professional and administrative support personnel.17

The importance of the JFK assassination should be remembered by generations all over the country. John F. Kennedy had started as a young politician that held potential for many people. He was the first Catholic in presidential office and attracted young voters. He was shot on November 22nd of 1963 and buried on November 25th of 1963. His alleged shooter was Lee Harvey Oswald, who was shot on November 24th, 1963. While the president's casket was resting in the Capitol, it drew hundreds of thousands of people out to give their respect to the former president. The First Family was protected for the rest of their lives along with all the other First Families to come. A law was passed to make sure no president could be conspired about, kidnapped, killed or attempted to be killed or kidnapped. Later, the protections for the president would be offered for foreign guests, members of congress and other officials. The presidential limo received many changes to the make and design so it would become much more secure. Finally, the Secret Service expanded and grew with its protections for the president. The tragedy of John F. Kennedy being shot and killed by Lee Harvey Oswald in downtown Dallas shaped presidential security forever. In 1963, President Kennedy's tour of Texas meant to lessen tensions in the Civil Rights movement turned tragic when he was gunned down in a Dallas parade. The triumph to come was presidential security rising and the assassination of John F. Kennedy would be the hopefully the last killing of the president since 1963.
Appendix A

Appendix B

Appendix C

Appendix D

Appendix E

Appendix F
