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NEW YORK TIMES  
BESTSELLING AUTHORS  
OF *KILLING LINCOLN*

**BILL O'REILLY**

— & MARTIN DUGARD —

**Killing Kennedy**

**The End of Camelot**

# 24



NOVEMBER 22, 1963

TEXAS SCHOOL BOOK DEPOSITORY, DALLAS

9:45 A.M.

Crowds of eager Dallas residents stand on the curb in front of the Texas School Book Depository. The president won't pass by for three hours, but they've come early to get a good spot. Best of all, it looks like the sun might come out. Maybe they'll get a glimpse of John F. Kennedy and Jackie after all.

Lee Harvey Oswald peers out a first-floor window of the depository building, assessing the president's route by where the crowds stand. He can clearly see the corner of Elm and Houston, where John Kennedy's limousine will make a slow left turn. This is important to Oswald. He's selected a spot on the depository's sixth floor as his sniper's roost. The floor is dimly lit by bare 60-watt lightbulbs and is currently under renovation, and thus empty. Stacks of book boxes near the window overlooking Elm and Houston will form a natural hiding place, allowing Oswald to poke his rifle outside and sight the motorcade as it makes that deliberate turn. The marksman in Lee Harvey Oswald knows that

he'll have time for two shots, maybe even three if he works the bolt quickly enough.

But one should be all he needs.



Air Force One crabs into the wind as Colonel Jim Swindal eases her down onto the runway at Dallas's Love Field. John Kennedy is ecstatic. Peering out the windows of his airplane, he sees that the weather has turned sunny and warm and that yet another large Texas crowd is waiting to greet him. "This trip is turning out to be terrific," he happily confides to Kenny O'Donnell. "Here we are in Dallas and it looks like everything in Texas will turn out to be fine for us!"

Police cars circle the field, and officers are even stationed on rooftops. But these are the only ominous sights at the airport. For the estimated welcoming party of two thousand are overjoyed to see Air Force One touch down, marking the first time a president has visited Dallas since 1948. Grown men stand on their tiptoes to see over the throngs in front of them. Airport personnel leave their desks inside the terminal and jostle into position near the chain-link fence separating the runway from the parking lot. The U.S. Air Force C-130 carrying the president's armored limousine lands and opens its cargo ramp. The bubble top remains on board the plane. The convertible top is completely down. A local television newsman, who is covering the spectacle live on air, enthusiastically reports that the bubble top is nowhere in evidence and that people will be able to see the president and First Lady "in the flesh." The reporter also reminds his audience that the president will be returning to Love Field between "2:15 and 2:30" to depart for Austin.

Lyndon Johnson and his wife, Lady Bird, await the president on the tarmac, as they have on every leg of the Texas trip. The vice president's job is to stand at the bottom of the ramp and greet the president. Johnson is not happy about this assignment, but he puts on a good face as Jackie emerges from the rear door of the plane, radiant in the pink Chanel suit with the matching pillbox hat. Two steps behind, and seen in person for the first time by the people of Dallas, comes John Kennedy.

"I can see his suntan from here!" the local TV reporter gushes.

The official plan is for JFK to head straight for his limousine to join the motorcade, but instead he breaks off and heads into the crowd. Not content with merely shaking a few hands, the president pushes deep into the throng, dragging Jackie along with him. The two of them remain surrounded by this wall of people for more than a full minute, much to the crowd's delight. Then the president and First Lady reemerge, only to wade deep into another section of crowd.

"Boy, this is something," enthuses the local reporter. "This is a bonus for the people who have waited here!"

The president and First Lady shake hands for what seems like an eternity to their very nervous Secret Service detail. "Kennedy is showing he is not afraid," Ronnie Dugger of the *Texas Observer* writes in his notebook.

Finally, John and Jackie Kennedy make their way to the presidential limousine. Awaiting them are Governor John Connally and his wife, Nellie. There are three rows of seats in the vehicle. Up front is the driver, fifty-four-year-old Bill Greer. To his right sits Roy Kellerman, like Greer, a longtime Secret Service agent. Special Agent Kellerman has served on the White House detail since the early days of World War II and has protected presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, and now Kennedy.

JFK sits in the backseat, on the right-hand side, patting his hair into place after his foray into the crowd. Jackie sits to his left. The First Lady was handed a bouquet of red roses upon landing in Dallas, and these now rest on the seat between her and the president.

Governor Connally sits directly in front of the president, in the middle row, known as jump seats. Connally takes off his ten-gallon hat so that the crowds can see him. Nellie sits in front of Jackie and right behind the driver, Special Agent Greer.

As the motorcade leaves Love Field at 11:55 A.M., the presidential limousine—Secret Service code name SS-100-X—is the second car in line, flanked on either side by four motorcycle escorts.

Up front is an advance car filled with local police and Secret Ser-

vice, among them Dallas police chief Jesse Curry and Secret Service special agent Winston Lawson.

Behind John Kennedy's vehicle is a follow-up convertible code-named Halfback. Kennedy's two main members of the Irish Mafia, Dave Powers and Kenny O'Donnell, sit here, surrounded by Secret Service agents heavily armed with handguns and automatic weapons. Clint Hill, head of the First Lady's Secret Service detail, stands on the left running board of Halfback. Special agents Bill McIntyre, John Ready, and Paul Landis also man the running boards.

Car four is a convertible limousine that has been rented locally for the vice president. Even as the vehicles pull away from Love Field, it is obvious that LBJ is angry and pouting. While every other politician in the motorcade is waving to the crowds, he stares straight forward, unsmiling.

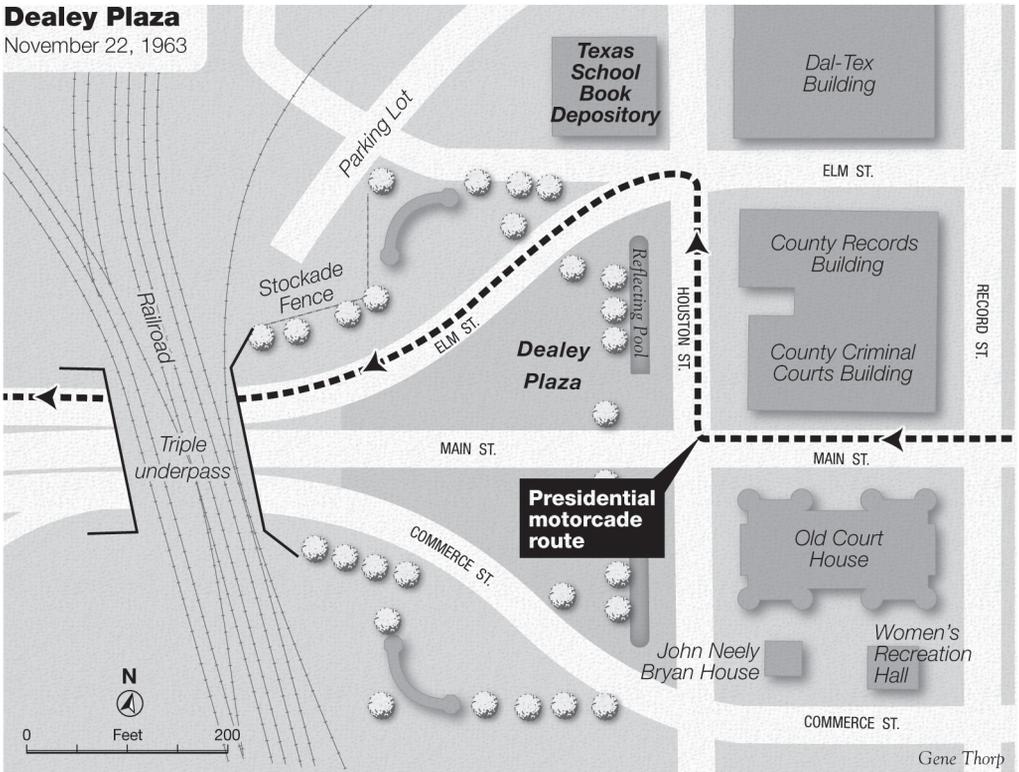
Bringing up the rear is car five, code-named Varsity and filled with a Texas state policeman and four Secret Service agents.

Way up at the front of the motorcade, driving several car lengths in front of SS-100-X, Dallas police chief Jesse Curry is committed to making the president's visit as incident-free as possible. The fifty-year-old chief is a lifetime law enforcement officer. In addition to working his way up through the ranks of the Dallas police, he has augmented his knowledge by attending the FBI Academy. Curry has been involved in almost every aspect of the planning for John Kennedy's visit and is dedicating 350 men—a full third of his force—to lining the motorcade route, handling security for the president's airport arrival, and policing the crowd at the Trade Mart speech.

However, Curry has chosen not to position any men in the vicinity of Dealey Plaza, thinking that the main crowd-control issues will take place prior to that destination. Once the motorcade turns from Houston Street and onto Elm, it goes under an overpass, turns right onto Stemmons Freeway, and through a relatively uncrowded area to the Trade Mart. Better to focus his officers on the busiest thoroughfares along the route, rather than waste them in a place where few people will be standing.

**Dealey Plaza**

November 22, 1963



Curry has also ordered his men to face toward the street, rather than toward the crowd, thinking it wouldn't hurt for them to see the man they're protecting as a reward for the many long hours they will be on their feet. This ignores the example of New York City, where policemen stand facing *away* from the street, so they can better help the Secret Service protect the president by scanning the city's many windows for signs of a sniper's rifle.

But it doesn't matter during the motorcade's first easy miles. There is so little to do and so few people to see that a bored Jackie puts on her sunglasses and begins waving at billboards for fun. The white-collar workers along Lemmon Avenue are few in number and unexcited. They'd rather enjoy their lunch break from the IBM factory.

At the exact same moment, it's also lunchtime at the Texas School Book Depository. Most of Lee Harvey Oswald's coworkers have left the building, hoping to get a glimpse of the president.

Just down the block, FBI special agent James Hosty has forgotten all about investigating Lee Harvey Oswald and is just trying to make sure he gets a look at his hero, President Kennedy.

Lee Harvey Oswald didn't bring a lunch to work today. And he doesn't plan on eating. Instead, he moves a pile of boxes into position on the grimy sixth floor of the depository building, fashioning a well-concealed shooting nest.

At 12:24 P.M., nearly thirty minutes into the motorcade, the president's car passes Special Agent James Hosty on the corner of Main Street and Field. The G-man gets his wish and sees Kennedy in the flesh, before spinning back around and walking into the Alamo Grill for lunch.

At 12:28 the motorcade enters a seedy downtown neighborhood. Straight ahead, the beautiful green grass of Dealey Plaza is clearly visible. The Secret Service agents are stunned by the reception the president is now receiving, with people everywhere cheering and applauding.

At 12:29 the motorcade makes the crucial sharp right-hand turn onto Houston Street. From high above, in his sixth-floor sniper's lair, Lee Harvey Oswald sees John F. Kennedy in person for the first time. He quickly sights the Mannlicher-Carcano, taking aim through his scope as the motorcade skirts the edge of Dealey Plaza.

The crowds here are still large and enthusiastic, despite Chief Curry's prediction that they would have thinned by this point. The people shout for Jackie and the president to look their way. As per agreement, JFK waves at the people standing in front of buildings on the right side of the road, while Jackie waves at those standing along grassy Dealey Plaza, to their left. This ensures that no voter goes without a wave.

The motorcade is just five minutes away from the Trade Mart, where Kennedy will make his speech. Almost there.

Inside the presidential limousine, Nellie Connally stops waving long enough to look over her right shoulder and smile at John Kennedy. "You sure can't say that Dallas doesn't love you, Mr. President."

Ironically, at that very moment, if JFK had looked up to the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository, he would have seen a rifle barrel sticking out of an open window, pointed directly at his head.

But Kennedy doesn't look up.

Nor does the Secret Service.

It is 12:30 P.M. The time has come for Special Agent Bill Greer to steer SS-100-X through the sweeping 120-degree left turn from Houston and onto Elm.



Most people live their lives as if the end were always years away. They measure their days in love, laughter, accomplishment, and loss. There are moments of sunshine and storm. There are schedules, phone calls, careers, anxieties, joys, exotic trips, favorite foods, romance, shame, and hunger. A person can be defined by clothing, the smell of his breath, the way she combs her hair, the shape of his torso, or even the company she keeps.

All over the world, children love their parents and yearn for love in return. They revel in the touch of parental hands on their faces. And even on the worst of days, each person has dreams about the future—dreams that sometimes come true.

Such is life.

Yet life can end in less time than it takes to draw one breath.