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THE END OF CAMELOT: AN EXAMINATION OF THE PRESIDENCY OF JOHN F.
KENNEDY IN 1963

A thesis
presented to
the faculty of the Department of History
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Masters of Arts in History

by
Christina Paige Jones
May 2001

Dr. Elwood Watson, Chair
Dr. Stephen Fritz
Dr. Dale Schmitt

Keywords: John F. Kennedy, Civil Rights, Vietnam War

ABSTRACT

THE END OF CAMELOT: AN EXAMINATION OF THE PRESIDENCY OF JOHN F.

KENNEDY IN 1963

by

Christina Paige Jones

This thesis addresses events and issues that occurred in 1963, how President Kennedy responded to them, and what followed after Kennedy's assassination. This thesis was created by using books published about Kennedy, articles from magazines, documents, telegrams, speeches, and Internet sources. What has been disclosed is that many of the legends attributed to Kennedy simply are not true. In examining this thesis, the reader will understand what Kennedy's political interests were and the impact of his Presidency on future generations.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father and my mother, Carroll and Diane Jones. Because of their unconditional support, encouragement, and help, I was able to achieve my dreams.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Elwood Watson for chairing my thesis and for providing me with advice and support for my work. I would also like to thank Dr. Stephen Fritz and Dr. Dale Schmitt for reading my thesis and for their suggestions. Lastly, I would like to thank the Department of History for awarding me an assistantship and for giving me the opportunity to study at East Tennessee State University.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: AMERICA IN 1963

The 1960s were a time of radical change in the attitudes and mores of American society. However, those changes had not fully come to fruition in 1963. In fact, society remained fairly traditional and rooted in the idea of the American dream. This was reflected in what Americans did, watched, and listened to. After 1963, and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas on November 22, all of the conventions and attitudes of society changed. For one brief year, America remained loyal to itself and in the promise of a greater future to come. After 1963, America, and indeed the entire world, would never be the same again.

Some of the changes that occurred in 1963 reflected advances in science and in medicine. For the first time, touch-tone telephones were introduced by AT&T, replacing the standard rotary ones. In medicine, Dr. Michael DeBakey became the first surgeon to use an artificial heart, making it possible for safer heart surgery to be performed.¹ By 1963, there were signs of changes that would become more prominent as the 1960s progressed. That year, Betty Friedan published her book entitled The Feminine

¹"The Boomer Years: The Events of 1963,"
<<http://www.bbhq.com/cgi-bin/boomeryr.pl?63>>.

Mystique. Eventually, Friedan's work would help to create a women's rights movement and spawned various organizations committed to the goal of equality for women.²

Despite those changes and advancements, American pop culture remained fairly light hearted and carefree. This was especially true in what Americans watched and listened to. The Best Motion Picture that year was "Tom Jones," a comedy starring Albert Finney and Susannah York.³ Other films that came out that year were "Cleopatra," starring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, and "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World," a madcap comedy, starring virtually every legend in the field, including Mickey Rooney, Milton Berle, and Jonathan Winters.

In music, tastes ran somewhere between traditional standards and rock-n-roll. The Beatles were rising in popularity in Great Britain but had not yet made their impact on America. This would occur the following year when they launched the British Invasion, forever changing the sound of rock music. However, teenagers in 1963 listened to such songs as "It's Judy's Turn to Cry," by Leslie Gore and "My Boyfriend's Back," by the Angels.⁴

One of the biggest fads that year was surfing, and a new

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴"Music by the Month: August, 1963,"
<<http://www.bbhq.com/cgi-bin/mmarch.pl?863>>.

style of music and created to reflect its popularity. Surfing hits in the summer of 1963 included such classics as "Wipeout," by the Sufaris, and "Surf City," by Jan & Dean.⁵ In addition, teenagers also introduced a new dance craze called the Monkey.⁶ Adult and contemporary music came from the folk group Peter, Paul, and Mary, with their cover of Bob Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind." Listeners were also treated to quirky songs such as "Hello Muddah, Hello Faddah," by Allen Sherman, "Tie Me Kangaroo Down, Sport," by Rolf Harris, and "Danke Shoen," by Wayne Newton.⁷ These songs reflected the spirit and nature of the times and of the tastes of American society, in general.

The year 1963 was an interesting one for Americans. Events that happened that year, particularly in the political spectrum, would grow and develop more fully as years went on. In addition, 1963 would be the last year for true loyalty. Cracks that began to appear in 1963 in areas such as Civil Rights and Vietnam widened dramatically after the year ended. Loyalties in society changed, and divisions began to appear among its citizens, particularly between blacks and whites, and the younger and older generations. Therefore, 1963 was truly the last year of

⁵Ibid.

⁶"Music By the Month: September, 1963,"
<<http://www.bbhq.com/cgi-bin/mmarch.pl?963>>.

⁷"Music By the Month: August, 1963"

innocence for the American people. After the death of President Kennedy in Dallas, that innocence was shattered, and American society would never be the same again.

CHAPTER 2

BEHIND CAMELOT: THE KENNEDY FAMILY IN 1963

The Kennedy family had a profound impact upon the American public during their tenure in the White House. America had been led for most of the twentieth-century by Presidents who were old and not very energetic. The Kennedy family, however, changed all that. When John and Jacqueline Kennedy entered the White House in January 1961, they were 43 and 31 years old, respectively. They also were parents to two young children, Caroline, age three, and John Jr., born a few weeks after his father's election. The American public soon became fixated on the new First Family. Over the next two years, everything the Kennedys did or said became news for a public that was interested in their private lives. After President Kennedy was assassinated in November 1963, they would continue to embrace his widow and children. Over the thousand days the Kennedys were in the White House, they brought with them a sense of grace, youth, style, and vigor that would leave an indelible impression on society.

John Kennedy had first met Jacqueline Bouvier in May 1951, when they were both invited to a dinner party by friends Charles and Martha Bartlett. Kennedy was instantly taken by Jackie's beauty and intelligence. She was equally interested in the handsome Congressman from Massachusetts. However, there was one

aspect that connected the two. Both Jack Kennedy and Jacqueline Bouvier had lonely, difficult childhoods. Kennedy's parents were often away from home for long periods of time while he was growing up. Jackie's parents had divorced when she was a young girl, and she became "caught in a tug-of-war between parents hellbent on destroying each other." As a result, Jackie found that the only way she could escape the turmoil was "in solitary pursuits like reading or horseback riding."⁸ Jack and Jackie recognized the loneliness each had suffered, and it drew them together. After the dinner party ended, Jack escorted Jackie to her car. As he was asking her for a drink, "Josie, the Bartlett's fox terrier, leapt into the open door of her black Mercury and onto a man sitting in the backseat."⁹ The man in Jackie's car was one of her ex-boyfriends. Jack Kennedy responded to this by turning "back to the Bartletts' house and Jackie sped off alone."¹⁰

In 1952, Jackie was hired by the Washington Times-Herald and soon became its Inquiring Photographer. She was also engaged to a young investment banker named John Husted. Husted's family had

⁸Christopher Andersen, Jack and Jackie: Portrait of an American Marriage (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1996), 87.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., 88.

been friends with Jackie's mother, Janet, and her stepfather, Hugh Auchincloss.¹¹ After a short courtship, the two had become engaged in December 1951. However, Jackie soon had second thoughts. Even her friends thought that the pair was ill matched. Charles Bartlett thought Husted "was nice, but somewhat lackluster." As a result, he and his wife decided to re-introduce Jackie to John Kennedy.¹²

The two were once again invited to dinner, and again, they connected. Jack soon asked Jackie for a date. The two saw little of each other, however, until after Jack was elected to the Senate in 1952. After that, Jack spent more time dating Jackie. As Jackie later described, "It was a spasmodic courtship . . . He'd call me up from some oyster bar . . . with a great clinking of coins, to ask me out to the movies the following Wednesday in Washington . . . He was not the candy-and-flowers type, so every now and then he'd give me a book."¹³ Soon, Jackie broke off her engagement to Husted, leaving her free to date Kennedy. They carried on their courtship in private, keeping their affection for each other out of the public eye. Kennedy's friend, Red Fay, remarked, "When he wanted to put his arm around

¹¹Ibid., 89.

¹²Ibid., 90.

¹³John Fitzgerald Kennedy . . . As We Remember Him (New York: Columbia Records, 1965), 64.

her and kiss her, well he didn't want to do it in front of me . . . he didn't want to make a display of it."¹⁴

One key factor to the relationship that attracted Jackie was Jack's money. Chuck Spaulding, a family friend, later remarked that Jackie, "was a gracious, wonderful woman . . . But she wouldn't have given Jack a second look if he hadn't had the money."¹⁵ By 1953, Jack was worth an estimated \$10 million dollars and the Kennedy family fortune was around \$400 million.¹⁶ In the meantime, Jack's father, Joe, began to pressure his son to marry, if he was to ever have hopes of becoming President. By May 1953, Jack finally decided that Jackie would make an ideal wife for him.¹⁷ Jackie accepted his proposal of marriage, and the wedding date was set for September 12, 1953.

Jackie first became acquainted with her future in-laws in the summer of 1952. When she arrived at Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, she became subjected to "an almost merciless hazing, the Kennedy's rites of passage."¹⁸ Jack's sisters, Eunice, Patricia, and Jean, found Jackie not up to their

¹⁴quoted in Andersen, Jack and Jackie, 100.

¹⁵Ibid., 105.

¹⁶Ibid., 106.

¹⁷Ibid., 108.

¹⁸Lawrence Lemer, The Kennedy Women: The Saga of an American Family (New York: Ivy Books, 1994), 452.

standards as to what a Kennedy wife should be. They were openly hostile towards her, and "dubbed (her) 'the Deb,' mimicked her childlike voice . . . and led her on to the turf for a football game where she could be blocked into oblivion."¹⁹ Eventually, during one of those games, Jackie broke her ankle and vowed never to play football again. For the most part, she was taken aback by this energetic family. As she later observed, "These Kennedys were the most generous and philanthropic of people and the most niggardly and selfish. They were the most outgoing and gregarious and the most withdrawn and insular. They were the most spiritual and yet full of the most worldly cynicism."²⁰

Jackie also had problems with her future mother-in-law, Rose. While Rose appreciated Jackie's sense of style and her Catholic upbringing, the two women were completely opposite in terms of their morals and their behavior.²¹ In fact, ". . . the two women had little in common except their devotion to Jack."²² Rose Kennedy, in her autobiography, claimed that she and Jackie got along well. As she stated, "I had so many things to do, so many interests, that I couldn't have found the time to make a nuisance of myself to my daughters-or sons-in-law even if I had

¹⁹Ibid., 453.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., 452.

²²Ibid.

been so disposed."²³ Jackie, in the same memoir, painted a rosy picture about her mother-in-law. She claimed Rose "bent over backwards *not* to interfere. If she gave a suggestion, it was in the sweetest way."²⁴

However, this rosy picture was not always apparent in the beginning. Rose had trouble with Jackie's independent nature, and her inability to conform to the family structure.²⁵ Jackie, at first, saw Rose Kennedy as a weak figure within the Kennedy household. In fact, Jackie "failed . . . to appreciate the indomitable will that had allowed Rose to survive and even to triumph through so much sorrow and pain." Eventually, however, ". . . the two women came to understand the true measure of each other's strengths."²⁶

The one Kennedy Jackie got along with was her father-in-law, Joe. Joe appreciated Jackie's need to maintain her own identity, and her ability to stand up to him. As she later said, "He never got angry with me for talking straight to him, on the contrary, he seemed to enjoy it."²⁷ Unlike Rose, Joe admired Jackie's

²³Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, Times to Remember (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1974), 353-4.

²⁴Ibid., 354.

²⁵Doris Kerns Goodwin, The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 891.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷quoted in Goodwin, The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys, 891.

independent nature. He believed she would be the ideal wife for Jack, and would help him in his quest for the White House.

On September 12, 1953, John Kennedy and Jacqueline Bouvier were married at St. Mary's Church in Newport, Rhode Island. Jackie, at first, found being a politician's wife a hard life to get adjusted to. Jack would often be gone, leaving Jackie at home alone. She responded to these absences by going "to the world of things--to furnishings and clothes, constantly decorating one room or another in an almost obsessive fashion."²⁸ Jack, for the most part, could not understand the emotional pain Jackie was suffering. In addition, he continued his womanizing ways. This too created strain in the marriage. As John Kennedy's friend, Lem Billings said, ". . . she never suspected the depth of Jack's need for other women. Nor was she prepared for the humiliation she would suffer when she found herself stranded at parties while Jack would suddenly disappear with some pretty young girl."²⁹ Jackie eventually would come to accept Jack's affairs, but she did not like it. Throughout their marriage, ". . . she let him know that she was perfectly aware of what he was doing, and even where."³⁰ While Kennedy's womanizing

²⁸Ibid., 892.

²⁹quoted in Edward Klein, All Too Human: The Love Story of Jack and Jackie Kennedy (New York: Pocket Books, 1996), 183.

³⁰Lester David, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis: A Portrait of Her Private Years (New York: St. Martin's Paperbacks, 1994), 49.

was painful at times to endure, Jackie learned to make the best of it.

In 1954, Jack underwent surgery to repair damage he had suffered when he injured his back during WWII. The surgery was extremely risky. Called a double spinal fusion, doctors would operated on Kennedy's back in two stages, a lumbosacral fusion and a sacroiliac fusion.³¹ Kennedy was advised to undergo two separate operations, but he refused. One serious complication to the surgery was the fact that Jack was suffering from Addison's Disease. The disease significantly lowered his resistance to infection and many doctors believed Kennedy would not survive the surgery.³² However, Jack decided that the risk of dying was worth the possibility of being crippled in the future, and he gave the go ahead to have both surgeries done at the same time.

It appeared, at first, that the operation had been performed successfully. But soon a staph infection developed, and Jack lapsed into a coma.³³ It was feared that Kennedy would soon die. As a result, the Last Rites of the Church were performed. Eventually, Kennedy came out of the coma and was on the path towards recovery. Throughout this time, Jackie remained at Jack's bedside constantly, dressing his wound, and trying her

³¹Klein, All Too Human, 185.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid., 186.

best to comfort him. A year later, Kennedy underwent a second spinal operation. This time the operation was more successful, although Kennedy would remain in pain for the rest of his life. With his near death experience behind him, Kennedy concentrated upon his political career.

While Jack was going through his recovery from the first back surgery, Jackie was attempting to start a family. However, this proved to be a difficult task. In 1955, Jackie suffered a miscarriage. The next year, she became pregnant again. This time, however, Jack was in the running for becoming Adlai Stevenson's running mate in the upcoming Presidential election. Stevenson left the choice of his running mate to the delegates. Jack needed Jackie's support to help gain votes. Doctors, however, had warned Jackie to avoid stressful situations for the sake of having children. They "told her that if she remained so highstrung she might have trouble bearing children."³⁴ Jackie ignored the doctors advice and attended the convention with Jack. In August, Jack lost the nomination to Estes Kefauver. Afterwards, he decided to go on a cruise in the Mediterranean with his brother Ted, George Smathers, and Torby Macdonald.³⁵

Although Jackie did not like the idea of Jack's going off on a cruise while she was so close to her due date, she did not

³⁴quoted in Klein, All Too Human, 197.

³⁵Ibid., 209.

force Jack to stay. On August 23, 1956, while she was staying at her mother's house in Newport, Rhode Island, Jackie started hemorrhaging and was taken to the hospital.³⁶ She immediately was taken to the delivery room and underwent an emergency Caesarean section. Jackie delivered a baby girl who was stillborn. Jackie lost a lot of blood during the ordeal and was unconscious for over a day. When she awoke, her brother-in-law, Bobby, was at her side. Jackie was informed that her baby had died, and that Jack still had not been notified. Jack was still on his yacht in the Mediterranean and did not return to Jackie's bedside until nearly a week later. The event nearly destroyed the marriage. Later on, rumors would circulate that Joe Kennedy had offered Jackie vast amounts of money to remain married to Jack. From most accounts, the rumors seem to be false. It would take Jack and Jackie time to patch up their marriage, but by 1957 things seemed to be back on a smoother course.

On November 27, 1957, Jackie was safely delivered of a baby girl, who weighed seven-pounds, two-ounces. Her delighted parents named her Caroline Bouvier Kennedy.³⁷ For Jack, who had "ultimately blamed himself for his wife's previous failures,"

³⁶Ibid., 212.

³⁷Ibid., 235.

Caroline's birth left him, "relieved and reassured."³⁸ Jackie, too, was relieved. She now began to feel a part of the Kennedy family, who had begun to wonder about her capability to have children. Jackie felt that Caroline's birth gave her increased confidence in tackling the role as wife to an up and coming politician.³⁹

In 1960, Jackie found out she was pregnant for the fourth time. Jack was running for President that year, and it would be essential for her to take some part in the campaign in order to gain support and votes in November. Although her pregnancy was often difficult, Jackie did do some campaigning, particularly in New York. After the Democratic Convention that summer, Jackie stayed home and rested. On November 8, 1960, John Kennedy was elected President of the United States by a slim majority of votes. The next day, Kennedy told reporters at the Hyannis Armory "that he and his wife were preparing 'for a new administration and a new baby.'"⁴⁰

Seventeen days later, Jackie went into premature labor and was rushed to Georgetown University Hospital.⁴¹ Jack, who had

³⁸C. Davis Heymann, A Woman Named Jackie (New York: A Signet Book, 1989), 201.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Lemer, The Kennedy Women, 534.

⁴¹David, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, 45.

just landed in Palm Beach with members of his staff, received word of Jackie's condition and immediately flew back to Washington. While he was still in the air, Jack was told that Jackie had been safely delivered of a six-pound, three ounce baby boy. The premature baby, who had a slight breathing problem, was placed in an incubator. Jackie, for the most part, was left weakened by the experience. It would be several months before both she and her baby, who was named John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Jr., would be healthy. However, John Jr.'s birth made him the first "baby to be born to a President-elect and his wife."⁴²

After the Kennedys moved into the White House, the American public soon became fascinated with this young couple and their two little children. However, Jackie became fiercely determined not to allow the public's devotion to damage her children. She wanted them to grow up as normally as possible, a difficult feat given the circumstances they were raised under. As a mother, Jackie was not "the typical American mother," the press thought her to be.⁴³ While Jackie did devote much of her time and energy to seeing that Caroline and John were taken care of, she brought them up in a world of wealth and prestige. As Chief Usher to the White House, J.B. West later wrote, "She did want to shield

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³J.B. West, Upstairs at the White House: My Life With the First Ladies (New York: Warner Paperback Library, 1973), 249.

Caroline and John from public curiosity, from the pomp and pomposity of White House life. And yet there were always nannies and nurses, chauffeurs and clowns, and a butler who served hamburger on a silver tray."⁴⁴

In her quest in to insure her children's privacy, Jackie could become quite fanatical. Often staff members would find her circling the grounds of the White House. Then, she would come back and report to them areas where photographers could take pictures of her children. J.B. West, after one such briefing, remarked, "If Mrs. Kennedy had her way, . . . the White House would be surrounded by high brick walls and a moat with crocodiles."⁴⁵

Although Jackie tried to shield the amount of public exposure her children received, their pictures frequently appeared in various magazines and newspapers. However, as West points out, Jackie was the one who directed what media attention the children received.⁴⁶ She made sure that all photographs or stories about her children leaving the White House had to meet with her approval first. As West states, "She knew that she had to give the press something on her children, or else they would hound her to pieces or write articles that she didn't want. And

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid., 255.

⁴⁶Ibid., 256.

so she would think up little stories, or agree to certain photographs, and filter them to the press."⁴⁷

While Jackie tried to shield her children from the public, Jack went to great lengths to make sure the public could see his children. He knew that he had to satisfy the public's curiosity about them. Often, while Jackie was away on a trip, he would have photographers come to the White House and take pictures of Caroline and John, Jr. But while most people thought the pictures were part of a plan to boost President Kennedy politically, and were staged to show a happy family, the truth was that the President loved his children.⁴⁸ He would often take two-year-old John to work with him and let his son play under his desk. He would also take his son on helicopter rides, promising him that he would buy a real plane when John grew up.⁴⁹ Jack would also allow Caroline to come and watch public ceremonies and to meet important leaders and figures. Sometimes, Caroline would burst into the Cabinet Room, and her father would pick her up and set her on his lap.⁵⁰ The children had a playground built for them on the White House lawn, near the President's office. They

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ralph G. Martin, A Hero For Our Time: An Intimate Story of the Kennedy Years (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1983), 484.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid., 485.

also had a menagerie of pets for them to play with. Caroline even had her own Nursery School set up inside the White House. The American public could not get enough of the Kennedy children. They, too, embodied the youth and energy of the Kennedy Administration.

Some authors have speculated that by 1963 the Kennedy marriage was simply a hoax, and that the only thing that kept them together was their love for the children. John Kennedy's sexual escapades in the White House would come to light in later years and have now become legendary. However, it is highly questionable as to how Jack's affairs affected his marriage to Jackie. Ralph Martin, in his book A Hero for Our Time, claimed that Kennedy would have never left his children, and that he knew Jackie could divorce him if she wanted to. Jack also knew, as Martin points out, that Jackie was the star in the public's eye, not he.⁵¹ In addition, author C. Davis Heymann, in his book A Woman Named Jackie, quoted sources close to the couple as saying that the marriage, by 1963, was simply one of convenience.⁵² However, these accusations were not entirely true.

Although Jackie could not stand Jack's affairs, she, nevertheless, learned to accept his behavior. Many authors, associates, and friends claim that the Kennedys still loved each

⁵¹Ibid., 446.

⁵²Heymann, A Woman Named Jackie, 390.

other and had learned to live with each other's faults. As Kennedy friend, George Smathers, states, "There is no doubt that she was crazy about him, and there is no doubt that he loved her."⁵³ J. B. West points out that Jack and Jackie were "not yet . . . close as they might have been, but I think they were getting there." West also points out that the relationship between the two was not formal, but neither was it openly affectionate.⁵⁴ While Jack Kennedy no doubt did have affairs while he was in the White House and elsewhere, these did not affect the love Jack and Jackie had for one another. In fact, by the fall of 1963, the Kennedys would become closer than they had ever been.

In the spring of 1963, an announcement was made to the press that Jackie was expecting a baby in August. As a result of her pregnancy, Jackie decided to curtail her activities as First Lady. Her last public duty before she gave birth was a state dinner honoring the Duchess of Luxembourg.⁵⁵ After that, she left to rest and relax at the Kennedy home on Squaw Island. Jack, who knew well of Jackie's difficulties in having children, agreed to the move.

Other members of the Kennedy family were also expecting

⁵³quoted in Andersen, Jack and Jackie, 314.

⁵⁴West, Upstairs at the White House, 266.

⁵⁵Martin, A Hero For Our Time, 488.

children in 1963. In addition to Jackie, Ted's wife, Joan, was expecting her third child, and Bobby's wife, Ethel, was expecting her ninth. Everywhere around the Kennedy compound, there seemed to be this feeling of life renewing itself. At the beginning of 1963, there were twenty grandchildren, eight of whom were Bobby and Ethel's.⁵⁶ Everybody in the compound was excited over the new additions to the family. However, Joan Kennedy soon miscarried, and Jackie spent more time on Squaw Island relaxing and trying not to risk the life of her baby.

Throughout her pregnancy, Jackie read, painted, and relaxed.⁵⁷ She also made plans for decorating the nursery at the White House and for her activities following the birth. Jackie even "asked if a vibrating-belt weight machine could be installed for her in the White House exercise room."⁵⁸ The house on Squaw Island provided Jackie with more privacy than she would have found staying on the Kennedy compound, and she could find the time to rest and prepare for the baby's arrival. However, while she was deeply concerned over her health and that of her baby, Jackie still continued some risky habits. Jackie had always been somewhat of a heavy smoker, and she continued smoking throughout her pregnancy. Although this was a period before the Surgeon

⁵⁶Klein, All Too Human, 330.

⁵⁷Andersen, Jack and Jackie, 350.

⁵⁸Ibid., 351.

General's warnings about smoking were known to the public, they, nevertheless, were "well aware that smoking caused low birth weight."⁵⁹ It is questionable as to whether or not Jackie knew about this. However, it is very likely she did know, but, because she was so heavily addicted, and "given the stresses arrayed against her," she could not stop.⁶⁰

Another habit Jackie continued was even more serious. It would be several decades before the public knew of Jack and Jackie's involvement with Dr. Max Jacobson. Called "Dr. Feelgood," Jacobson injected his patients with a combination of various types of amphetamines. Jackie, "convinced herself that Max Jacobson's pills and 'vitamin' injections were harmless pick-me-ups." As a result, she "continued to unknowingly ingest Dr. Feelgood's amphetamine cocktails throughout her pregnancy."⁶¹ The combination of the two serious habits would ultimately take its toll on Jackie's pregnancy.

On August 7, 1963, at 11:00 a.m., Jackie felt a "premonitory" pain as she was taking her children to a horseback riding lesson. She immediately headed back towards the house on

⁵⁹Ibid., 348.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

Squaw Island.⁶² Jackie's doctor, Dr. John Walsh, was called and told to be ready. Jackie, in the meantime, was taken to a helicopter where she would be flown to Otis Air Force Base. After she arrived, Jackie "was taken to the base hospital's operating suite . . . recently redone for just this emergency."⁶³

At 11:56 a.m., President Kennedy was notified that Jackie went into premature labor. He boarded the first plane he could find available and flew to be at Jackie's side. While Kennedy was in the air, Jackie was delivered, by Caesarian section, at 12:52 p.m., of a baby boy. The tiny infant weighed 4-pounds, 10 ½-ounces. Mrs. Kennedy was given a transfusion, and soon she was doing better.⁶⁴ Jack reached Otis Air Force Base Hospital at around 1:30 p.m. and went straight to Jackie's bedside. At first, reports indicated that the baby was doing well. However, it soon became apparent that there was a serious problem with the baby's breathing.

The baby was soon diagnosed as suffering from hyaline-membrane disease. This disease, which is common among premature infants, affected the baby's ability to take air in and out of his lungs. A doctor later described the onset of the disease.

⁶²"With a New Kind of Loneliness," Newsweek, 19 August 1963, 17.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.

As he stated:

The infants who have the disease are usually normal at birth, but within minutes or hours after birth they start to have labored respiration and therefore poor oxygen supply to the body. The disease usually increases in severity over the first 24-48 hours after birth, but then it either leads to death within 72 hours, or gradual recovery.⁶⁵

The baby, who was baptized Patrick Bouvier, was immediately placed in an incubator and the long vigil for his parents began.

Shortly after Patrick was placed in the incubator, it was decided that he should be moved to the Children's Hospital Medical Center. Before he was moved, Jack decided to take Patrick to Jackie's room.⁶⁶ She was then notified of her son's condition. Jackie "was disturbed but not distressed" about Patrick's illness. The baby was soon wheeled out, and, at 5:52 p.m., he was taken by ambulance to the Children's Hospital.⁶⁷

The next day, Jack was informed that Patrick's condition was worsening. He immediately went to see his son. The baby was placed "in a 31-foot-long pressure chamber in hopes it would force feed him enough oxygen."⁶⁸ Jack put on a white surgical gown and watched his son through a window in the side. A room was set up for him "just above the basement where the chamber was

⁶⁵"A Baby Specialist Explains the Fatal Illness," U.S. News & World Report, 19 August 1963, 8.

⁶⁶"With a New Kind," 17.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid., 18.

located."⁶⁹ Shortly after 2:00 a.m., the President was notified that the baby began to take a turn for the worse. At 4:04 a.m., Patrick Bouvier Kennedy died.⁷⁰ He was only forty hours old.

The death of Patrick deeply affected Jack and Jackie. Jack, in particular, was grief stricken. Within hours after Patrick's death, he was back at Jackie's bedside to comfort her. Jackie, who had already been told that Patrick had died, later told Jack, "There's only one thing I could not bear now--if I ever lost you."⁷¹ Later, these words would come back to haunt Jackie when Jack was killed a few months later.

Patrick's funeral was held a few days later. Jackie was in the hospital, still recovering from his birth. However, she wanted Patrick's coffin to be covered in flowers.⁷² Cardinal Cushing performed the ceremony to a small gathering of friends and family. After he finished, "Jack stepped forward and placed the St. Christopher medal Jackie had given him on their wedding day into the casket."⁷³ Those close to the President were amazed by his reaction. Jack, who had never been emotional about most things, was completely inconsolable. At one point, when the

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹quoted in Andersen, Jack and Jackie, 353.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid.

mourners were leaving the church, Jack put his arms around the casket.⁷⁴ Later, when Patrick's coffin was lowered in the small grave at Holyhood Cemetery, near Brookline, Massachusetts, Jack touched his casket and said, "Goodbye . . . It's awfully lonely down there."⁷⁵

Patrick's death brought Jack and Jackie closer to each other. Jack seemed, for the first time in his marriage, to want to make Jackie happy and to support her. As writer Teddy White later said, "There had always been this wall between them, but their shared grief tore that wall down. At long last, they were truly coming closer together."⁷⁶ Unfortunately, this newfound closeness would come to an end in November.

On September 12, 1963, the Kennedys celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary. Jack gave Jackie a catalog from dealer J.J. Klejman and told her to pick out any item she wanted. Jackie chose a coiled serpent bracelet.⁷⁷ Her present to Jack was a scrapbook with pictures of the creation of the Rose Garden and a new St. Christopher's Medal. Friends who watched the celebration noticed the new closeness between them. As Ben Bradlee said, Jackie "greeted JFK with by far the most affectionate embrace we

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid., 354.

⁷⁷Ibid., 355.

had ever seen them give each other . . . they are the most remote and independent people, so when their emotions do surface it is especially moving."⁷⁸ Despite their outward signs of affection, however, Jack and Jackie were still grief stricken.

Trying to help her sister with her grief, Lee Radziwill, asked Jackie to come aboard Aristotle Onassis's yacht Christina to rest and relax. However, "Onassis was hardly the ideal shipmate for the wife of an American president, particularly one facing a tough reelection campaign."⁷⁹ Also, what few knew was that Onassis and Radziwill were having an affair. In fact, rumors were circulating that Radziwill was planning to divorce her husband so she could marry Onassis.⁸⁰ This, if it became reality, could have severely hurt President Kennedy's chances to be re-elected.

At first, for this reason, Jack decided that Jackie should not go on the trip. However, after feeling that the trip could help Jackie recover from Patrick's death, he changed his mind. The one condition he had was that Jackie be accompanied by Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., and his wife, Suzanne, so that the public would not be offended.⁸¹ Jackie enjoyed her time aboard

⁷⁸Ibid., 354.

⁷⁹Ibid., 355.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid., 356.

Onassis's yacht, and Onassis joined her in her ventures in the Mediterranean. At one point, she was photographed in a bikini, shocking the American public.⁸² Jack hated the photographs and tried to get Jackie to come home. However, Jackie remained on the yacht awhile longer.

When Jackie finally decided to return to America, Onassis presented her with a ruby and diamond necklace, infuriating her sister, Lee, and sparking rumors of an affair.⁸³ Whether or not the rumors are true is still in doubt. However, when Jackie arrived back in Washington, Jack took "the opportunity to play on Jackie's guilt."⁸⁴ He asked her to accompany him to Texas in November. Although she was advised by her doctors not to go because she was still recovering physically from Patrick's birth, Jackie told Jack she would go to Texas with him.⁸⁵ On November 21, 1963, Jack and Jackie left the White House together for the flight to Texas. As they left, Jackie's hairdresser, Kenneth would later recall that, "They look marvelously happy together, as happy and close as I've ever seen them."⁸⁶ That was the last time Jack and Jackie would be seen together in Washington. By

⁸²Klein, All Too Human, 337.

⁸³Ibid., 338.

⁸⁴Ibid., 341.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid., 342.

the next day, the President would be assassinated in Dallas.

Despite rumors to the contrary, it appears that the marriage of John and Jacqueline Kennedy was very strong by the end of 1963. While their relationship was not as idyllic as the public thought it to be at the time, it was far from being a total sham, either. Although the couple had had their problems, especially with Jack's infidelities, they had managed to overcome them. By the end of 1963, Jack and Jackie had learned how to acquiesce to each other, and to try to make each other happy. What is truly sad is that, just when they had reached a new level of closeness in their married life, Jack was assassinated. For decades, people have debated what might have happened had Jack not been killed in Dallas. However, it seems likely that the Kennedy marriage would have remained intact, and that Jack and Jackie would have tried to have another child. Unfortunately, because of an assassin's bullets, this would never happen.

CHAPTER 3

KENNEDY AND CIVIL RIGHTS

The year 1963 was a monumental one for the Civil Rights Movement. Several events would take place that would not only show the struggle between black and white Americans but would display President Kennedy's feelings on the subject. Kennedy, before he was elected President, had never dealt with the issue on a national scale before. In fact, growing up in an extremely wealthy Boston family, Kennedy had never really witnessed relations between blacks and whites. When Kennedy entered the White House, he had to deal with racial issues on a grand scale. He was urged by Civil Rights leaders to take an active stand against racism and discrimination. However, this was a role he was hesitant to assume. While he was greatly concerned about the issue, Kennedy frequently delayed, for political reasons, in taking any decisive action to ease racial tensions in the South. Therefore, 1963 would challenge Kennedy's views on Civil Rights as a feeling of restlessness, particularly in Birmingham, Alabama, was taking place.

In April 1963, Birmingham, Alabama, was a city marked by segregation and prejudice. In fact, the town was so prejudiced that it appeared to be "in a Rip Van Winkle slumber." Birmingham, it seemed, was a town in which most white citizens

followed their own set of rules and ignored such pieces of civil rights legislation as the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments to the Constitution and the decision reached in the case of Brown V. Board of Education.¹ Accordingly, they treated blacks as second class citizens. Blacks were relegated to their own sections of the town, and it was made clear that they were to remain there. They were educated in segregated schools, forced to worship in separate churches, ordered to use separate water fountains and restrooms, and denied the right to eat at restaurants that served whites.² Blacks were also discriminated against in the job market and in voting. They were relegated to low quality, poor paying jobs, with little chance towards advancement.³ In the polling places, blacks were forced to pass various forms of tests in order to vote, and, in many cases, were "discouraged" from doing so.

In addition to prejudice and discrimination, blacks in Birmingham also had to deal with the threat of psychological and physical abuse by whites. Throughout the city, prejudiced whites taunted, attacked, and, in some cases killed blacks without any

¹Martin Luther King, Jr., Why We Can't Wait (New York: Penguin Group, 1964), 47.

²Ibid., 48.

³Ibid., 49.

signs of remorse for their actions.⁴ Many were lynched; their corpses left to rot where they were killed. Even black churches were not safe from destruction. Many were destroyed or bombed by local whites.⁵ When action was taken by blacks to find out who was responsible for such hate crimes, the majority of their cases were either given lip service or simply tossed aside. In Birmingham, it seemed, whites were protected by the law, while blacks were punished by it.

One of the leading figures who invoked violence against blacks was Birmingham's Commissioner of Public Safety, Eugene "Bull" Connor. Connor was a known racist who boasted that he knew "how to handle the Negro and keep him in his 'place.'" He would not tolerate any form of disturbance from blacks, and would put them in jail for the slightest infraction.⁶ Connor, for the most part, showed hostility towards the blacks in their struggle for civil rights and towards any attempts made by the federal government to intercede on their behalf.⁷ This contempt for the black population of Birmingham would soon come to the forefront, when blacks began protesting in the spring of 1963.

In early 1962, Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, founder of the

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (A.C.H.R.), staged a series of boycotts against businessmen in Birmingham. He, along with members of the A.C.H.R. and students from Miles College, helped to gather together blacks in Birmingham to boycott stores that displayed jim-crow signs. They also boycotted stores that employed blacks in menial jobs, those that failed to give blacks a promotion, and those that refused to serve blacks at lunch counters.⁸ The result of the boycotts was a dramatic decline in business. This was the first step towards a radical change that would take place the following year.

By May 1962, at a board meeting of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (S.C.L.C.) and the A.C.H.R., an idea was developed towards creating a protest movement in Birmingham. After the meeting was concluded, rumors began to spread throughout the city over the possibility of a protest. In fact, stories supporting these rumors appeared in local newspapers.⁹ One of the major results of the rumors was a change of attitude on the part of white merchants. They realized that something needed to be done in order to avoid a massive protest.¹⁰ It seemed, for the time being, that blacks had opened the door towards equality and freedom in Birmingham.

⁸Ibid., 51-2.

⁹Ibid., 52.

¹⁰Ibid.

By September 1962, the situation in Birmingham changed. Once the convention had ended, the merchants reverted to their old, traditional ways. The leaders of the A.C.H.R. and S.C.L.C. realized that, because their demands for equality were not met, they had no alternative but to stage a massive demonstration called "Project C." The "C" stood "for Birmingham's 'Confrontation' with the fight for justice and morality in race relations."¹¹ The main focus of the demonstration would be on businesses in the city. Blacks knew that, by boycotting these businesses, sales and profits would greatly drop.¹² The leaders of the A.C.H.R. and S.C.L.C. decided to stage their protests around Easter. The Easter holiday was "the second biggest shopping period of the year."¹³ However, before the leaders could decide upon a definite date, they had to wait for the outcome of the city elections.

On March 5, 1963, there was no winner in the race for mayor. A run-off was held between the two leading candidates, Albert Boutwell and Bull Connor.¹⁴ This disrupted plans for a demonstration. Local civil rights leaders knew that, if they had proceeded with their protest, Connor would have used it to his

¹¹Ibid., 54.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., 55.

¹⁴Ibid., 56.

advantage. Connor would have told the white voters that, if they voted for him, he would see that the laws supporting segregation would be enforced.¹⁵ As a result, Connor could have garnered white, racist support and possibly have won the election. The leaders decided that, in order to prevent this from occurring, they would wait until after the run-off on April 22 before they would hold their demonstration.

On April 3, 1963, Albert Boutwell won the run-off election and was elected Mayor of Birmingham. Although Boutwell was thought to favor racial harmony in the city, he was still an avid supporter of segregation. As senator and lieutenant governor, he had been the principal author of Alabama's Pupil Placement Law.¹⁶ The leaders of the A.C.H.R. and S.C.L.C. realized that although nothing would be gained in their struggle for equality, Boutwell was still a far better choice for Mayor than Bull Connor.

Connor responded to the news of Boutwell's election by stating that, as a city commissioner, he could not be legally removed from office until 1965.¹⁷ If he went to court and won, then he would stay in office. If he lost, Connor's term would

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., 59.

¹⁷Ibid., 60.

expire on April 15.¹⁸ For the leaders of the protest, this would be of little consequence. Either outcome meant that Bull Connor's presence would be felt when the protest began.

On April 3, the protest movement started. The first wave of demonstrations were sit-ins at lunch counters.¹⁹ When the protestors refused to leave the premises, they were arrested. The goal of these sit-ins was to create a gradual build-up towards the more dramatic protests that were to follow. On April 4, the protest leaders held a mass meeting at which it was decided that Shuttlesworth, King, and Reverend Ralph Abernathy would ask for volunteers to participate.²⁰ These volunteers were told not to bring any weapons to the demonstrations. They were also urged not to retaliate when the police employed violent measures upon them.²¹ As King would tell them:

We needed no weapons--not so much as a toothpick . . . we possessed the most formidable weapon of all--the conviction that we were right. We had the protection of our knowledge that we were more concerned about realizing our righteous aims than about saving our skins.²²

Sessions were soon developed to train the volunteers in how to deal with the verbal and physical abuse that would come. They

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., 61.

²¹Ibid., 62.

²²Ibid.

were "to resist without bitterness; to be cursed and not reply; to be beaten and not hit back."²³ Those who were not demonstrating would perform jobs such as running errands, making phone calls, and typing.

On April 6, the next wave of the demonstrations began. The focus of this second wave was a march to City Hall. The hand-picked protesters marched in an orderly fashion.²⁴ As they approached City Hall, the protesters remained silent as the leaders of the demonstration refused to obey Connor's order to leave.²⁵ As a result, forty-two demonstrators were arrested and taken to waiting paddy wagons. Lines of blacks along the street watched the events and began "lustily applauding their jailbound heroes."²⁶ The result of this demonstration was that the movement began to gain force, and would soon garner national attention.

On April 10, the Birmingham city government issued a court injunction against the protesters, demanding that they "cease (their) activities until (their) right to demonstrate had been argued in court."²⁷ Two days later, the protest leaders

²³Ibid., 63.

²⁴Ibid., 68.

²⁵Ibid., 68-69.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., 71.

responded by disobeying the court order. This decision perplexed many who opposed the demonstrations, and they did not know how to respond.²⁸ King went before the media to discuss what they were going to do next. He began by "pointing out that we are not anarchists advocating lawlessness." Instead, he and other leaders disobeyed the injunction because "the courts of Alabama had misused the judicial process in order to perpetuate injustice and segregation."²⁹ After King made his statement to the press, he and Ralph Abernathy decided that Good Friday would be the day when they would submit themselves to be arrested.

Early Thursday morning, King and his aides were told that they were banned from future protests.³⁰ In addition, they were also told by the bondsman, who provided money for the demonstrators to make bail, that "his financial funds were insufficient."³¹ For King and his aides, this meant that they could not risk going to jail. Without money to post bail, King and his aides, along with other protesters, would have to remain in jail for an indefinite period. King debated over the issue of whether or not to continue the protest. If he did not protest, there was no guarantee as to when he and the other demonstrators

²⁸Ibid., 71.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰"Connor and King," Newsweek, 22 April 1963, 28.

³¹King, Why We Can't Wait, 71.

would be released.³² Finally, King decided that he had no other choice but to protest.

On Good Friday, King and Abernathy, dressed in working clothes, began to march through the streets of Birmingham with nearly three hundred protesters following them. Soon, the number of demonstrators reached 1000.³³ As the protesters began to cross from Seventeenth Street onto Fifth Avenue, a police motorcycle stopped in front of them.³⁴ King and Abernathy reacted by falling to their knees in a non-violent gesture. Connor then gave the order to arrest them. The policemen lifted them up off the ground and arrested them and 52 others.³⁵ When the paddy wagons arrived at the jail, King and Abernathy were separated from each other. Soon, they would be placed in solitary confinement.³⁶

On April 13, Wyatt Tee Walker, an executive assistant to Reverend King, sent a telegram to President Kennedy. In it he stated:

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Rev. Ralph B. Abernathy are presently confined in the Birmingham City Jail. Both were arrested . . . in violation of the constitutional

³²Ibid.

³³"Connor and King," 28.

³⁴Ibid., 33.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶King, Why We Can't Wait, 74.

guarantees of the first and fourteenth amendments . . . We submit that these two distinguished Americans are political prisoners and not criminals. We ask that you use the influence of your high office to persuade the city officials of Birmingham to afford at least a modicum of human treatment.³⁷

King and Abernathy would remain in solitary confinement for twenty-four hours. Neither suffered physical abuse from their jailers. However, King was denied permission to call his wife, or to visit with his lawyers during this time.³⁸ Mrs. King called the President on Monday to find out how her husband was. Robert Kennedy called her back, and she informed him that King was in solitary confinement. The Attorney General assured her that her husband would not be ill treated. A short time later, President Kennedy called Mrs. King and told her he would look into the situation. As a result, Rev. King was notified that he could call his wife, and the conditions within the jail changed for him.³⁹ King would later express his gratitude to President Kennedy for allaying his wife's concerns. He sent a telegram to Kennedy on April 16.

I am deeply grateful to you for taking the time out of your Easter weekend to telephone my wife concerning the Birmingham situation. Your encouraging words and thoughtful concern gave her renewed strength to face the difficult moments through which we are now passing. Such moral

³⁷Wyatt Tee Walker, "Telegram to President Kennedy," <http://www.jfklibrary.org/images/cr_doc32.jpg>, 13 April 1963.

³⁸King, Why We Can't Wait, 74.

³⁹Ibid., 74-75.

support greatly enhances our humble efforts to make the American Dream a reality.⁴⁰

In addition, King soon received word from his lawyer, Clarence B. Jones, that Harry Belafonte raised fifty thousand dollars for his use in the demonstrations.⁴¹ Although King was still in jail, his spirits were raised considerably.

While King was in jail, he responded to a statement made by eight clergymen from Alabama, criticizing the timeliness and wisdom of the protests. In what would later be titled the "Letter From Birmingham Jail," King defended the decision to hold the demonstrations. As he stated, "I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Alabama."⁴² He also questioned why the clergymen supported the police for maintaining order. As he pointed out, "I doubt that you would have so warmly commended the police force if you had seen its dogs sinking their teeth into unarmed, nonviolent Negroes."⁴³ He continued by stating, "I doubt that you would so quickly commend the policemen if you were to observe their ugly and inhumane treatment of Negroes here in the city jail."⁴⁴ Finally, King

⁴⁰Martin Luther King, Jr., "Telegram to President Kennedy," <http://www.jfklibrary.org/images/cr_doc33.jpg>, 16.

⁴¹King, Why We Can't Wait, 75.

⁴²Ibid., 77.

⁴³Ibid., 93.

⁴⁴Ibid.

concluded the "Letter" by stating his goal in conducting the protests. It was his hope that "the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched communities . . ." ⁴⁵ When it was released, the "Letter" would reach a wide audience, chronicling the nature of the Birmingham protests and King's hope for the future.

After being jailed for eight days, King and Abernathy were released. King now decided that the time had come to allow children and teen-agers to get involved in the protests. The plan, called "D" Day, was to take place on May 2. That day, teen-agers and children as young as six marched from the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church into downtown Birmingham. They "clapped and sang excitedly" as they made their way into the heart of the city. ⁴⁶ When they encountered Connor and his men, the order was given by Connor to arrest them. This did little to break the children's spirit. In fact, ". . . they scampered almost merrily into patrol wagons." ⁴⁷

The next day, a new group of demonstrators left King's church chanting "We Want Freedom." ⁴⁸ Connor and his men urged

⁴⁵Ibid., 95.

⁴⁶"Dogs, Kids, & Clubs," Time, 10 May 1963, 19.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid.

the white spectators to back up, then met the demonstrators. After this first group gave up their signs, they were followed "first by teen-agers, then--in increasing numbers--adults." The⁴⁹ protesters were warned to disperse or else fire hoses would be used. When they ignored the police's warning, the hoses blasted into them.⁵⁰ Soon, the police had the water pressure increased. As a result, "Children fell, and lay there bleeding."⁵¹ Pretty soon, the protest stopped.

However, a group of blacks watching what was going on began to taunt Connor and his men. They soon started throwing rocks at the police. Connor became infuriated and responded by issuing the use of dogs to handle the protesters. When the dogs came out, many of the blacks began to retreat. This delighted Connor, who called out, "Look at 'em run . . . I want 'em (whites in the crowd) to see the dogs work. Look at those niggers run."⁵²

Some blacks responded by holding their ground. Many came up to the dogs barking back at them. Soon, hundreds of blacks, not from King's camp, began to retaliate. Connor ordered that the water hoses be used again, which made the situation worse. More

⁴⁹"Birmingham, U.S.A.: 'Look at Them Run,'" Newsweek, 13 May 1963, 28.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹"Dogs, Kids & Clubs," 19.

⁵²Ibid.

blacks began to gather, "some carrying beer bottles, guns and knives."⁵³ In response, James Bevel, a worker for Rev. King, offered a negotiation deal to the police. If the police would call off their tactics for crowd dispersal, he would try to persuade the crowd to go home.⁵⁴ The tactic worked, and many people dispersed from the area.

By May 4, newspapers and television news programs became filled with scenes from the previous day's events. Meanwhile, James Farmer sent a telegram to President Kennedy informing him of the situation there and requesting action. He stated that because of the Birmingham police used violent measures towards the protesters, the federal government should be sent to defend their rights.⁵⁵ When action was not forthcoming, Farmer dispatched a second telegram. In it, he criticized Kennedy's hesitancy to take action, stating:

Even if guns of Alabama succeed in quelling non-violent struggle in Birmingham it will rise up in place after place until such time as the President of the United States overcomes his fear of speaking out and decides to act forcefully to secure freedom of Negro Americans. Politics have too long ruled the acts of government on behalf of civil rights . . . I urge you to do more than watch and wait while Americans struggle against armed might of tyranny in

⁵³"Birmingham, U.S.A.," 28.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵James Farmer, "Telegram to President Kennedy," <http://www.jfklibrary.org/images/cr_doc41.jpg>, 3 May 1963.

Alabama.⁵⁶

Finally, under extreme pressure, the Kennedy Administration responded. On May 4, Robert Kennedy sent Burke Marshall, the chief civil rights assistant, to try to bring about negotiations. His job was not to propose a solution, but "to represent the President in the negotiations."⁵⁷ What Marshall did was to be a mediator in establishing communications between the leaders of the protest movement and the leaders in the city economic power structure. Soon, meetings were held with the Senior Citizens Committee.⁵⁸ These meetings would help bring about a high-level negotiation that ultimately put an end to the demonstration.

Before this happened, though, more violence erupted in Birmingham. Some blacks, who were not part of King's group, began to attack Connor and his men with bottles and rocks. Connor responded by authorizing the use of power water hoses. As a result, "Fred Shuttlesworth was hurled by a blast of water against the side of a building."⁵⁹ Injured by the water, he was taken to the hospital. Connor responded to the news by stating, "I wish he'd been carried away in a hearse" instead of an

⁵⁶James Farmer, "Telegram to President Kennedy," <http://www.jfklibrary.org/images/cr_doc42.jpg>, 8 May 1963.

⁵⁷King, Why We Can't Wait, 103.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid., 104.

ambulance.⁶⁰ The city police began to demand that state troopers be brought in.

On May 7, the white businessmen of Birmingham met with the Senior Citizens Committee to hammer out a solution to the boycotts and demonstrations. When they left for lunch, they encountered several thousand blacks who were protesting. By this time, however, "The jails were so full that the police could only arrest a handful."⁶¹ As a result, the businessmen decided to work out an agreement with local civil rights leaders. The black leaders soon "became convinced that they were negotiating in good faith."⁶² Because of this, they declared a one day truce to be held.

On May 8, President Kennedy held a press conference to discuss the affairs of the nation. In his opening statement, he addressed the situation in Birmingham. Kennedy stated that he "would use all available means to protect human rights and uphold the law of the land."⁶³ After discussing what was being done to resolve the conflict, he spoke about the long term impact of the demonstrations. As he stated:

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid., 105.

⁶³John F. Kennedy, The Kennedy Presidential Press Conferences (New York: Earl M. Coleman Enterprises, Inc., 1978), 496.

We can hope that tensions will ease and that this case history . . . will remind every State, every community, and every citizen how urgent it is that all bars to equal opportunity . . . be removed as promptly as possible.⁶⁴

He concluded his remarks on the Birmingham demonstrations by proposing ways of handling the damage that resulted from such situations. He said, ". . . it seems to me that the best way to prevent that kind of damage . . . is to . . . take steps to provide equal treatment to all of our citizens."⁶⁵

On May 10, a negotiated settlement was reached between the white business owners and the black leaders. According to this agreement, business owners would guarantee certain privileges to blacks, the first privilege being the desegregation of lunch counters, rest rooms, and drinking fountains, within ninety days after signing. Secondly, there was the call for the end of discrimination in hiring and promoting blacks. In addition, there would be "the immediate appointment of a committee of business, . . . to implement an area-wide program for the . . . employment of Negroes in job categories previously denied to them." The third stipulation required that "official cooperation with the movement's legal representatives in working out the release of all jailed persons on bond or on their personal recognizance." Finally, the negotiators asked for better

⁶⁴Ibid., 497.

⁶⁵Ibid.

communications to be established between blacks and whites in order to prevent future protests.⁶⁶ When these stipulations were finalized, the details were released to the public.

When news of the negotiated settlement was released to the public, it set off a wide range of protest in the city. Governor George Wallace, as well as the city government, rejected the settlement.⁶⁷ On Saturday, May 11, a car drove past the home of Rev. A.D. King, brother of Martin Luther King, Jr., and two dynamite bombs were thrown out. As a result, "One blew a hole in the yard. The other crumbled a corner of the roof, and blew out the living-room wall."⁶⁸ Luckily, King and his family were not injured by the blasts.

Meanwhile, four white men threw two more bombs from a car at the Gaston Motel, where Martin Luther King, Jr. had established his command post.⁶⁹ One bomb exploded through a registration office wall below King's room. The other destroyed a trailer nearby.⁷⁰ Fortunately, King was home in Atlanta at the time. King would later comment that the timing of the bombings occurred when "Birmingham's bars closed on Saturday midnight." As a

⁶⁶King, Why We Can't Wait, 105-6.

⁶⁷"Explosion in Alabama," Newsweek, 20 May 1963, 25.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid.

result, thousands of drunken blacks began to gather in the street, none of whom were familiar with King's methods.⁷¹ When the bombings occurred, these blacks took to the streets, and more demonstrations broke out.

The crowd of blacks gathering in Birmingham soon began to resemble a mob. They remained started throwing rocks at the police and anybody who came near them.⁷² Policemen were attacked and many were forced to leave the area. Soon, "Reinforcements swarmed in with police dogs."⁷³ However, this provoked the crowd even further, and the police finally took away the dogs. Police then tried to regain control in a peaceful fashion. However, fires soon broke out, and when fire trucks came with their hoses, more riots erupted.⁷⁴ As a result, thirty-five state troopers, armed with guns and billie clubs stormed into the area, hitting and shoving demonstrators as they went.⁷⁵ The troopers then joined deputies gathered at the entrance to the Gaston Motel. Together they "charged a crowd gathered in entrance, billies and guns flailing." By 4:30 a.m., they had the situation under

⁷¹Martin Luther King, Jr., A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr. (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1986), 359.

⁷²"Explosion in Alabama," 25.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid., 26.

⁷⁵Ibid.

control, and the crowd dispersed.⁷⁶

As a result of the violence that erupted, President Kennedy ordered that Federal Troops be sent into Alabama. Governor George Wallace called Kennedy's action "military dictatorship," and "announced on May 15 that he would file a suit in federal court to get the troops out."⁷⁷ However, Kennedy responded to Wallace's threats by stating that, according to what was guaranteed by the United States Code, he had every right to do so. According to this Code, "The President . . . shall take such measures as he considers necessary to suppress, in a State, any insurrection, domestic violence, unlawful combination, or conspiracy."⁷⁸ Although Kennedy had the troops stationed near Montgomery and Anniston, he let Wallace know that he would send them into Birmingham if these events continued.⁷⁹ As a result, the protests halted.

On May 20, news was released that a thousand students who had been arrested during earlier demonstrations had been suspended or expelled by the Birmingham Board of Education.⁸⁰

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷"After Birmingham Riots--Troubles Linger On," U.S. News & World Report, 27 May 1963, 40.

⁷⁸"U.S. Troops in Alabama--Governor, President, and the Law," U.S. News & World Report, 27 May 1963, 41.

⁷⁹"After Birmingham Riots," 41.

⁸⁰King, Why We Can't Wait, 109.

King rushed back into Birmingham to try "to persuade the leaders that we must not fall into the trap," caused by this action.⁸¹ Instead, they took the case before the courts. On May 22, the federal district judge upheld the decision made by the Board of Education. However, Judge Elbert P. Tuttle, of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, "not only reversed the decision of the district judge but strongly condemned the Board of Education for its action."⁸² Tuttle's ruling stated that students should not be punished for exercising their constitutional rights. Upon hearing this decision, blacks celebrated their victory. Another victory would come the next day. Bull Connor and his police commissioners were voted out of office by the Alabama Supreme Court.⁸³

In the weeks following the demonstrations, questions arose concerning what had been accomplished. One month after the events in Birmingham, no blacks had been hired for new and better paying jobs, and lunch counters remained segregated.⁸⁴ In addition, the boycotts severely hurt businesses, and there was fear that future boycotts could erupt from angry whites, if

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid., 108.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴"After Birmingham Riots: Who Has Gained?" U.S. News & World Report, 17 June 1963, 46.

blacks got their privileges. Birmingham itself was forever scarred, and its reputation as a prejudiced and divided city hurt its chances of attracting outside business.⁸⁵ Black and white relations were more strained one month after the protests than they were before they started.⁸⁶ However, King remained optimistic that change would come. As he stated, "The system to which they (segregationists) have been committed lies on its deathbed." The only thing King wondered was "how costly they make the funeral."⁸⁷

King, despite all the turmoil and struggle that was created by the demonstrations, believed that a new society would be created where blacks and whites could live together as equals. He hoped that the prejudice that marked Birmingham's past would give way to better relations amongst its citizens in the future.⁸⁸ He believed that, overall, a turning point was reached in Birmingham. The riots, King explained, made Birmingham realize it had a conscience.⁸⁹

A few months after the Birmingham protests, on June 11, 1963, President Kennedy addressed the nation on the issue of

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷King, Why We Can't Wait, 109.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid.

civil rights. The speech reflected his views on the subject and his hopes for the future. As he stated:

I hope that every American, regardless of where he lives, will stop and examine his conscience about this . . . This nation was founded by men of many nations and backgrounds. It was founded on the principle that all men are created equal, and that the rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened.⁹⁰

Kennedy then commented on his plans towards creating effective civil rights legislation. However, he pointed out that more than legislation was needed. Kennedy believed that, in order for civil rights legislation to be effective, the American people needed to take an initiative towards ending discrimination, as well.⁹¹ Kennedy concluded his speech by addressing why America needed a Civil Rights Bill, emphasizing:

This is one country. It has to become one country because all of us and all the people who came here had an equal chance to develop their talents. We cannot say to 10 percent of the population that you can't have that right; that your children cannot have the chance to develop whatever talents they have; that the only way that they are going to get their rights is to go into the streets and demonstrate. I think we owe them and we owe ourselves a better country than that.⁹²

Kennedy's hopes for civil rights, however, failed to convert some Southerners. Just a few hours after Kennedy's speech, Civil

⁹⁰John F. Kennedy, "Radio and Television Report to the American People on Civil Rights, The White House, June 11, 1963," <<http://www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary/j061163.htm>>, 11 June 1963.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Ibid.

Rights activist, Medgar Evers, was shot and killed in his driveway in Jackson, Mississippi. Evers, who was the NAACP's field secretary for Mississippi, had just returned from a meeting.⁹³ As Evers got out of his car, carrying a bundle of T shirts for demonstrators, he was shot once in the back. The explosive power of the shot was so great that the "bullet tore into Evers' back, plowed through his body, pierced a window and a wall in the house, and came to rest beneath a watermelon on a kitchen counter."⁹⁴ Evers' wife, Myrlie, and their three children, who had been waiting up for him, ran outside after they heard the shot. As Myrlie Evers later commented:

When I jerked open the front door, he had staggered from the car to the steps with his keys in his hand, trying to come home. He fell face downward and there was blood everywhere--everywhere. I screamed and screamed . . . The children ran out of the house and surrounded me, and they kept crying, "Daddy, get up, please get up."⁹⁵

Neighbors arrived and took Evers to the hospital, where he died at 1:14 a.m.⁹⁶

The reaction to the death of Evers was one of shock and horror. The Governor of Mississippi, Ross Barnett, a known

⁹³Myrlie Evers, "He Said He Wouldn't Mind Dying--If . . ." Life, 28 June 1963, 36.

⁹⁴"Life & Death in Jackson," Time, 21 June 1963, 17.

⁹⁵Evers, "He Said," 37.

⁹⁶"End and a Beginning," Newsweek, 24 June 1963, 33.

segregationist, "denounced this 'apparently dastardly act.'" ⁹⁷ Blacks in Mississippi and across the nation went out into the streets to protest. On the day of Evers' funeral, while mourners were walking behind the casket, ". . . a small group of Negroes began to sing . . . And then the mob was off, racing towards the downtown section of the city." Policemen responded by going into the crowd, beating and arresting several of them.⁹⁸ Finally, the protest ended. Evers' casket was then taken to Arlington National Cemetery for interment. However, once the funeral ended, the protests continued. President Kennedy responded by again addressing the nation, urging for peace. As he said, "A great change is at hand, . . . our task, our obligation is to make that revolution, that change, peaceful and constructive for all."⁹⁹

By the summer of 1963, in a response to events in the struggle for civil rights, the decision was made for a massive march to be held in Washington, D.C., at the Lincoln Memorial. The date for the march was set for August 28. As news of the upcoming march was received, television crews and journalists from around the world came to record the event. Fearing possible riots, police and troops were instructed to be ready to maintain

⁹⁷"Life & Death," 18.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹quoted in "End and a Beginning," 34.

order.¹⁰⁰ In addition, problems arose over how to house, feed, and transport the marchers. In the end, Negro families were asked to allow some of the marchers to stay in their homes. In addition, churches were to be used to solve the housing problem. The marchers were asked by the promoters to bring their own lunches and money. Also, toilets and first aid stations were provided, along with ambulances in case they were needed. The problem of providing adequate drinking water was solved by spouts that were attached to fire hydrants.¹⁰¹ To transport the protesters, trains, buses, and planes were hired.

The cost for the march was staggering. In fact, the total cost for taxpayers in Washington, D.C. was estimated to be \$100,000.¹⁰² In addition to local costs, those organizing the march also had to spend money on various items needed for the march. These included "leaflets, radio equipment for the marshals, \$16,000 for a public-address system" as well as transportation fees.¹⁰³

Various organizations lent their support for the march. These included the NAACP, CORE, S.C.L.C., SNCC, the Urban League,

¹⁰⁰"Organizing the March,"
<<http://www.angelfire.com/pa/marchonwashington/organizing.html>>.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Ibid.

and the Negro American Labor Committee.¹⁰⁴ In addition to these groups, the A.C.L.U. also threw in its support. In a news release issued on August 14, 1963, they proclaimed "the August 28 Washington, D.C., civil rights demonstration 'as an historic occasion in which the combined voices of thousands of Americans will be heard on the most vital question facing our nation."¹⁰⁵ Finally, after preparations ended, the march was ready to begin. On August 28, 1963, the march to the Lincoln Memorial began. The numbers who attended the march exceeded all expectations. In short, 250,000 people, black as well as white, participated.¹⁰⁶ As they gathered in front of the Memorial, the event was telecasted throughout the nation and reported worldwide.

At the Lincoln Memorial, there were two key speeches given. The first one was delivered by John Lewis. The speech was an attack on legislative measures and political leaders' views towards civil rights. Lewis, in particular, attacked President Kennedy's proposed Civil Rights Bill. As he stated:

In good conscience, we cannot support the Administration's civil rights bill, for it is too little, and too late. There's not one thing in the bill that will protect our people from police brutality. The voting section of the bill will not help the thousands of citizens who want to

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵American Civil Liberties Union, News Release, 14 August 1963.

¹⁰⁶"250,000 Make History in Huge Washington March," Southern Christian Leadership Conference Newsletter, September 1963, 1.

vote . . . The bill will not protect young children and old women from police dogs and fire hoses for engaging in peaceful demonstrations.¹⁰⁷

Lewis concluded his address by stating the impact of the Civil Rights Movement, and of the march itself, on American society.

The revolution is at hand, and we must free ourselves of the chains of political and economic slavery . . . Listen Mr. Kennedy, listen Mr. Congressman, listen fellow citizens--the black masses are on the march for jobs and freedom, and we must say to the politicians that there won't be a "cooling-off period . . ." The next time we march, we won't march on Washington, but will march through the South, through the Heart of Dixie, the way Sherman did--nonviolently. We will make the action of the past few months look petty. And I say to you, WAKE UP AMERICA!¹⁰⁸

The second address, delivered by Martin Luther King, Jr., would be the most memorable event of the entire march. King's speech reflected upon the history of blacks in America and on his hope for the future. King first focused on the injustices blacks received from the earliest days of the American Republic.

When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring the sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check which has come back marked "insufficient funds. . ." We refuse to believe that these are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of

¹⁰⁷John Lewis, "John Lewis, Address at the March on Washington (1963)," <http://longman.awl.com/history/primarysource_27_3.htm>, 1963.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

this nation. So we have come to cash this check--a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.¹⁰⁹

King then concluded his address with what would be called his "I Have a Dream" passage. This passage reflected King's hopes for not only those who had gathered in front of him that day, but for future generations. In it, King said:

I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal . . ." When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual "Free at last! free at last! thank God almighty, we are free at last!"¹¹⁰

King's speech at the Lincoln Memorial was received enthusiastically by the people in the audience and would go down in history as one of his greatest as well as one of the best American speeches ever delivered.

After the march ended, President Kennedy delivered a message stating his feelings about its impact.

One cannot help but be impressed with the deep fervor and the quiet dignity that characterizes the thousands who have gathered in the nation's capital from across the country to

¹⁰⁹Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream,"
<<http://www.angel>

¹¹⁰"Full Text of Dr. King's Washington Address," Southern Christian Leadership Conference Newsletter, September 1963, 5,8.

demonstrate their faith and confidence in our Democratic form of government.¹¹¹

Other people joined Kennedy's sentiment about what was accomplished. Many people characterized the march as a turning point in the Civil Rights Movement. To them, ". . . there seemed little doubt that at last the door would now be opened, although the welcome might yet be only a trifle lukewarm."¹¹² However, the mood of Washington that summer would not last.

By September, tensions in Birmingham were still strained. Schools throughout the city were finally desegregated, but there were ongoing threats that violence would erupt. During the first week of the new school year, little happened to the black students.¹¹³ On Sunday morning, September 15, 1963, however, all of that changed. At 10:22 a.m., a bomb exploded inside the 16th Street Baptist Church. The explosion was so great, in fact, that "great chunks of stone shot through parked cars. The blast shattered the windshield of a passing car, (and) knocked the driver unconscious."¹¹⁴ The blast also damaged nearby buildings.

¹¹¹"What JFK Said About March," Southern Christian Leadership Conference Newsletter, September 1963, 2.

¹¹²Ed Clayton, "A 'Dream' Spun in Washington Gives Nation a New Tomorrow," Southern Christian Leadership Conference Newsletter, September 1963, 9.

¹¹³"Birmingham: 'My God, You're Not Even Safe in Church,'" Newsweek, 30 September 1963, 20.

¹¹⁴"Sunday School Bombing," Time, 27 September 1963, 17.

While stunned church members and others were clearing the rubble, they discovered the bodies of four young girls. The girls had been in the restroom when the bomb exploded.¹¹⁵ One girl had been decapitated by the blast and another had a hole in the back of her head.¹¹⁶

When the police arrived to investigate the bombing, blacks began to pelt them with stones. The police retaliated by "firing shotguns over the heads of the crowd."¹¹⁷ At one point, a group of black teenagers started throwing rocks at passing cars driven by whites. When they were ordered by the police to stop, one of them, Johnny Robinson, started running. In response, ". . . a cop killed him with a blast of buckshot."¹¹⁸ Unfortunately, this death would not be the last one that day.

Miles away from the church, two young white boys, riding a motorcycle covered with stickers of the Confederate flag, confronted two black youths on a bicycle. One of the white boys "pulled out a pistol, (and) fired twice." One of the black boys, Virgil Ware, was killed.¹¹⁹ The two white boys were later arrested and questioned about why they killed Ware. The boys

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶"Birmingham: 'My God,'" 21.

¹¹⁷"Sunday School Bombing," 17.

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹"Birmingham: 'My God,'" 21.

told the police that they did not know who Ware was, nor did they explain why they killed him.¹²⁰

Throughout the night, episodes of violence continued to occur. These ranged from arson to stonings. At one point, two more blacks were wounded by gunfire¹²¹ By the time Sunday ended, six people were dead, many more were injured, and the damage to the city of Birmingham itself was widespread.

Mayor Albert Boutwell responded to the violence by asking Governor George Wallace to send assistance. Wallace sent "tough, head-knocking Col. Al Lingo and a company of state troopers to the city."¹²² This did little to ease the tension in Birmingham, however. Reaction to Sunday's events came from all across the nation. President Kennedy, who was shocked by the news, "pinned the responsibility on Wallace without naming him."¹²³ Martin Luther King, Jr. sent Kennedy a telegram urging him to respond. As he stated:

I am convinced that unless some steps are taken by the federal government to restore a sense of confidence in the protection of life, limb and property . . . we shall see the worst racial holocaust this nation has ever seen . . . The nation and Birmingham needs your commitment to use everything within your constitutional power to enforce the

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Ibid., 22.

¹²³Ibid.

desegregation orders of the courts.¹²⁴

To maintain control in Birmingham, "A force of 1,400 armed men, including city and county police and 300 State patrolmen-- with Alabama National Guard units standing by" were employed.¹²⁵ In the meantime, President Kennedy decided to meet with Martin Luther King and other leaders four days after the bombing to discuss the problems in Birmingham. As a result of the meeting, Kennedy appointed Earl H. Blaik and Kenneth Royall to a committee to help settle racial tensions in Birmingham.¹²⁶ However, some blacks saw this as a sign that President Kennedy was not totally committed to civil rights. As author James Baldwin noted, ". . . the appointment of a committee was 'an insult to the Negro race.'"¹²⁷ Kennedy responded to the criticism, and to the violence in general, when he addressed the U.N. General Assembly. Kennedy "put the bombings in a world context . . . urging the organization (U.N.) to safeguard all human rights."¹²⁸

The F.B.I. was authorized to investigate the bombing, in

¹²⁴Martin Luther King, Jr., "Telegram to President Kennedy," <http://www.jfklibrary.org/images/cr_doc36-1.jpg>, 15 September 1963.

¹²⁵"Birmingham After the Bombing," U.S. News & World Report, 30 September 1963, 39.

¹²⁶Ibid., 40.

¹²⁷"Birmingham: 'My God,'" 22.

¹²⁸Ibid., 23.

cooperation with the Birmingham police. Birmingham, which acquired the nickname "Bombingham," had fifty unsolved cases before the church bombing in September. The F.B.I. swore that they would find the bombers. They described their efforts as "the most rigorous manhunt since John Dillinger was bagged."¹²⁹ Still in a city as racially divided as Birmingham, finding perpetrators of hate crimes would always prove to be a difficult, if not near impossible feat. By the end of 1963, things began to cool down, but the tension and violence felt during that year would remain for several years to come.

President Kennedy's true feelings towards the Civil Rights Movement are difficult to determine. It seems likely, however, that Kennedy responded to the struggle only when he was pressured to do so. While he was concerned about the violence that erupted in the South, Kennedy often remained distant and, at times, seemed unwilling to give his full support for the movement. Although Kennedy issued a proposal for civil rights legislation to end discrimination, it seems clear that the movement was not his first priority. So the legend of Kennedy as crusader for civil rights is not really true.

Although there were moments of great inspiration and accomplishment achieved for the Civil Rights Movement in 1963, there were also several moments that revealed the dark side of

¹²⁹Ibid.

human nature. Americans throughout history have been willing to eradicate injustices worldwide. However, they have never fully eradicated the injustices found in their own country. America, by the early 1960s, became a nation where only certain individuals could succeed. Although the majority of the population believed in the Declaration of Independence, that all men are created equal, it seems that this concept only applied to white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants. What is truly sad, is that America today, to some degree, still harbors this notion. The lesson to be learned from the events of 1963 is that America needs to be a nation where freedom, equality, and respect are given to all citizens. Once this has been achieved, then we can finally call this nation the "United" States of America.

CHAPTER 4

KENNEDY AND COMMUNISM: THE BERLIN WALL, THE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY AND VIETNAM

John F. Kennedy faced three major issues concerning Communism in 1963, the Berlin Wall, Vietnam, and relations with the Soviet Union. Each one tested Kennedy's resolve to establish a lasting peace and to end Communist involvement. While his speech at the Berlin Wall and the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty would become highlights of his administration, the situation in Vietnam would remain a topic of much debate. Some people have speculated that America's involvement in Vietnam would have ended had he not been assassinated. However, others believe that Kennedy had no intention of withdrawing and that his main goal was to eradicate Communist forces. Whatever Kennedy's views were on Vietnam and/or Communism, his policies towards these issues would have a lasting impact on future generations.

One of the first issues Kennedy dealt with was the situation in Berlin. In 1961, the Berlin Wall was created to divide the city and to prevent people from the Communist East into going to the democratic West. In June 1963, Kennedy decided to go to Berlin to address the citizens on this issue. On his arrival on June 26, Kennedy received a very warm, enthusiastic reception. As author Richard H. Rovere observed, "In the squares in which he spoke, every cobblestone was occupied by a human foot . . . It

has been said that better than 60 percent of West Berlin's two and a third million people were in the streets."¹ Kennedy, upon his arrival in Berlin, was moved by the sight of the Wall itself. As Rovere points out, "The President was overcome with raw political emotion here in Berlin. One would not have thought that his first sight of the Wall would add much to his sense of its outrageous reality."² With these thoughts in mind, Kennedy delivered his speech at the Rudolph Wilde Platz in West Berlin. As he stated:

There are many people in the world who really don't understand, or say they don't, what is the great issue between the free world and the Communist world. Let them come to Berlin. There are some who say that communism is the wave of the future. Let them come to Berlin. And there are some who say in Europe and elsewhere we can work with the Communists. Let them come to Berlin. And there are even a few who say that it is true that communism is an evil system, but it permits us to make economic progress. *Lass' sie nach Berlin kommen.* Let them come to Berlin.³

Kennedy concluded his speech by addressing his hope for Berlin's future. As he stated:

Freedom is indivisible, and when one man is enslaved, all are not free. When all are free, then we can look forward to that day when this city will be joined as one . . . All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and, therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words,

¹quoted in John Fitzgerald Kennedy . . . As We Remember Him (New York: Columbia Records, 1965), 199.

²Ibid., 200.

³John F. Kennedy, "Remarks in the Rudolph Wilde Platz, West Berlin, June 26, 1963," <<http://www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary/j062663.htm>>, 26 June 1963.

*"Ich bin ein Berliner."*⁴

Kennedy's speech was received enthusiastically by the German people and would become one of the highlights of his administration and an example of Kennedy's effort towards achieving world peace.

One of the greatest issues Kennedy faced throughout his administration was Vietnam. By 1963, the situation there seemed to be at a crossroads. In fact, ". . . the Kennedy Administration reached the painful conclusion that the war could not be won unless the Diem regime were broadened and liberalized-or replaced by a reform-minded government."⁵ However, what Kennedy planned to do about the war remains in question today. Some people believed that Kennedy would withdraw all military advisors by 1965. Conspiracy theorists would use a memorandum, issued the day before Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas concerning troop withdrawal at the end of 1963, as a basis to their claim that Kennedy was killed in order to allow the war in Vietnam to continue. However, other people believe that Kennedy was deeply involved in Vietnam, and that he had no intention of withdrawing early. Some even believe that the tarnish Lyndon Johnson received about Vietnam would have been placed on John Kennedy had he lived.

⁴Ibid.

⁵John Galloway, ed., The Kennedys & Vietnam (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1971), 37.

In 1963, the Diem regime was facing one of its greatest crises. Early that year, Buddhists began protesting against the Diem family, who were Catholic, and the government itself, over the way they had been treated. As a result, "Police and troops fired on marchers, killing several persons and creating the first martyrs of a protest movement that was to become increasingly political in its aims."⁶ This intensification would soon reach dramatic proportions. When their needs were not met, Buddhist priests and nuns sat out in the streets, poured gasoline on themselves, and set themselves on fire.⁷ The images of these protest and deaths soon reached the American public and President Kennedy.

To these images would come even more violence. On August 21, "Saigon authorities, . . . charging that Buddhist leaders were acting as tools of the Communists . . . used military force to seize and occupy the country's major pagodas and arrest large numbers of priests and student demonstrators." In addition, martial law was imposed throughout the country.⁸ The action of Diem and the Vietnamese government against the Buddhists created outrage in the United States, and questions arose over what would happen there next. As a result of the use of force by the

⁶Ibid., 39.

⁷Ibid., 40.

⁸Ibid.

government, "The U.S. State Department . . . denounced the armed action . . . as a reversal of the Diem government's promise to the U.S. to reconcile its differences with the Buddhists."⁹

Diem later on would discuss the reasons why the government attacked the Buddhist protestors. He believed the protestors were part of a larger campaign by the Communists to take over the country. As Diem would later claim, ". . . the episode that touched off the whole campaign was the result of the tossing of a Communist bomb into a crowd."¹⁰ Diem also believed the Communists were trying to draw sympathy towards their cause. Diem told the world that ". . . the Government has documentary proof that Communist terrorists have instructions to kill Buddhist demonstrators and blame it on the government."¹¹ Because of this, Diem felt he had no alternative but to dissolve the protests any way he could. However, the Buddhist episode would leave lingering doubts in the United States over the motivation of Diem and his government in repelling communist forces.

While many in the United States questioned Diem's motives in Vietnam, they also wondered what Kennedy himself would do.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰"What Diem Thinks About the War in Vietnam," U.S. News & World Report, 19 August 1963, 47.

¹¹Ibid.

Throughout 1963, Kennedy repeatedly made claims that there would be no withdrawal of American advisors. He believed that to do so would allow Communist forces supported from China to dominate all of Southeast Asia. In a press conference on July 17, Kennedy stated, "We are not going to withdraw from that effort. In my opinion, for us to withdraw from that effort would mean a collapse not only of South Viet-Nam, but Southeast Asia. So we are going to stay there."¹² In addition, on both September 2 and 9, Kennedy went on television to state his views on the situation in Vietnam and to answer questions on troop withdrawal. As he told Walter Cronkite:

I don't think that unless a greater effort is made by the Government to win popular support that the war can be won out there. In the final analysis, it is their war. They are the ones who have to win it or lose it. We can help them, we can give them equipment, we can send our men out there as advisers, but they have to win it--the people of Viet-Nam--against the Communists.¹³

Despite this hint that he would limit American involvement, Kennedy also responded to the people who were arguing for troop withdrawal. As he stated, "I don't agree with those who say we should withdraw. That would be a great mistake."¹⁴

¹²John F. Kennedy, The Kennedy Presidential Press Conferences (New York: Earl M. Coleman Enterprises, Inc., 1978), 525.

¹³"President Kennedy's Television Interviews on Vietnam, September 2 and 9, 1963," <<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/kentv.htm>>, 2 and 9 September 1963.

¹⁴Ibid.

In his television interview with Chet Huntley and David Brinkley, Kennedy again defended his position on troop withdrawal. When he was asked by Chet Huntley about reducing aid to South Vietnam, Kennedy said, "I don't think that would be helpful at this time. If you reduce your aid, it is possible you could have some effect upon the government structure there."¹⁵ David Brinkley pressed the point by asking Kennedy about his view on the "domino-theory" in Southeast Asia. Kennedy told Brinkley that he believed that the implications of the domino-theory were very possible because "China is so large . . . that if South Viet-Nam went, it would not only give them an improved geographic position . . . but would also give the impression that the wave of the future in Southeast Asia was China and the Communists."¹⁶ At the end of the interview, Kennedy again stated his viewpoints on the situation in Vietnam, and growing U.S. protests. Kennedy said:

What I am concerned about is that Americans will get impatient and say, because they don't like events in Southeast Asia or they don't like the Government in Saigon, that we should withdraw. That only makes it easy for the Communists. I think we should stay.¹⁷

On September 12, Kennedy further emphasized in a press conference what the United States' position was in Vietnam. He

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

said, "In some ways I think the Vietnamese people and ourselves agree: we want the war to be won, the Communists to be contained, and the Americans to go home."¹⁸ However, Kennedy also made it perfectly clear that the main goal in Vietnam was to defeat the Communists. Despite claims by some historians and scholars that Kennedy had sought a possible withdrawal of American forces in Vietnam, evidence published over the years on the subject does not support this.

On October 2, 1963, a statement was issued by the White House concerning U.S. involvement in Vietnam. This statement would be misinterpreted by conspiracy theorists and historians as a sign that Kennedy was disheartened by what was going on there, and that he was going to withdraw troops. However, the statement disclosed no such information. The statement was issued in five points, discussing the state of the country and Vietnamese troops, and on America's aim in Vietnam. Point 3, however, contained the truth about possible U.S. withdrawal. As it stated:

Secretary McNamara and General Taylor reported their judgement that the major part of the U.S. military task can be completed by the end of 1965, although there may be a continuing requirement for a limited number of U.S. training personnel. They reported that by the end of this year, the U.S. program for training Vietnamese should have progressed to the point where 1,000 U.S. military personnel

¹⁸Kennedy, The Kennedy Presidential, 555.

assigned to South Viet-Nam can be withdrawn.¹⁹

According to this statement, if, and only if Vietnamese troops were capable of defending themselves against Communist forces, would the United States ever consider withdrawing its support.

On October 11, 1963, National Security Action Memorandum No. 263 was created. Within the document is a statement concerning possible troop withdrawal. As the memorandum states, "The President . . . directed that no formal announcement be made of the implementation of plans to withdraw 1,000 U.S. military personnel by the end of 1963."²⁰ However, the memorandum continued by discussing what steps should be taken in Vietnam. The main objective was that the U.S. should "assist the people and Government of that country (Vietnam) to win their contest against the externally directed and supported Communist conspiracy." Furthermore, the Kennedy Administration noted, "The objectives of the United States with respect to the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel remain as stated in the White House statement of October 2, 1963."²¹ Again, only when the situation

¹⁹"U.S. Policy on Vietnam: White House Statement, October 2, 1963," <<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/state63.htm>>, 2 October 1963.

²⁰"National Security Action Memorandum No. 263," <<http://www.jfklibrary.org/images/nsam263.jpg>>, 11 October 1963.

²¹"Vietnam War: The Documents-14, National Security Action Memorandum 263," <<http://www.mcadams.posc.mu.edu/viet14.htm>>, 11 October 1963.

in Vietnam was at a point where the Vietnamese troops could help defend themselves was withdrawal possible. However, the United States would still continue to be an active participant in events taking place there.

On November 21, 1963, one day before President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, a draft of National Security Action Memorandum No. 273 was issued. The document was basically a revised draft of Memorandum No. 263, and contained virtually the same objectives as the previous document.²² On November 26, 1963, just four days after Kennedy was assassinated, the final draft of No. 273 was established. The final draft differs from the original draft on two points, a rewording about unifying American support in Vietnam and a layout of what should be done if events in Vietnam intensified.²³ Some conspiracy theorists and scholars pointed out that in No. 273's final draft, there was no mention of troop withdrawal. However, in close analysis of the document, the viewpoint remained the same as in all previous Kennedy memorandums. Lyndon Johnson, therefore, intended to abide by the same policy concerning troop withdrawal as was

²²"Vietnam War: The Documents-15, National Security Action Memorandum 273--Draft," <<http://www.mcadams.posc.mu.edu/viet15.htm>>, 21 November 1963.

²³"Vietnam War: The Documents-16, National Security Action Memorandum 273," <<http://www.mcadams.posc.mu.edu/viet16.htm>>, 26 November 1963.

issued on October 2.²⁴ No changes were made to reverse Kennedy's decision.

Attorney General Robert Kennedy, in an interview with John B. Martin in 1964, also supported this notion that John Kennedy was not planning a total withdrawal of support from Vietnam. When asked whether or not a withdrawal was considered, Robert Kennedy replied there was none.²⁵ He also said that the main purpose of sending advisers to Vietnam was "to try to get the Vietnamese to fight for themselves, because we couldn't win the war for them. They had to win the war for themselves."²⁶ These statements echoed those issued by his brother in his September 1963 television interviews. Robert Kennedy, however, does shed some light upon the relationship between the Kennedy Administration and President Diem. Kennedy pointed out that Diem created great difficulties by not allowing concessions to be made.²⁷ Kennedy stated that, overall, "Nobody liked Diem particularly, but how to get rid of him and get somebody that would continue the war, not split the country in two . . . That

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵"Was Kennedy Planning to Pull Out of Vietnam?," <<http://mcadams.posc.mu.edu/vietnam.htm>>, 30 April 1964.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

was the great problem."²⁸ However, the Diem problem, if not that of Vietnam, would be eliminated.

On November 1, 1963, President Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, were forced by anti-regime military conspirators to flee from their palace. According to the official report, ". . . coup leaders tried to persuade the President and his brother to give up."²⁹ However, they refused, and the leaders of the coup attacked the Presidential palace. Diem and his brother managed to escape, disguised as priests. Later, "They spent the night in the home of a Chinese businessman, then attended services at a Chinese Catholic church." After they attended the service, "an Army vehicle was waiting."³⁰

According to the official accounts, Nhu refused to enter the vehicle and got into an argument with one of the soldiers. Soon, ". . . the brothers struggled with a soldier over a pistol."³¹ The soldier, according to this report, grew nervous and shot them to death. The official ruling, as reported, "A spokesman for the

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹"Diem and Nhu--How They Died," U.S. News & World Report, 18 November 1963, 7.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

new Government . . . terms their deaths 'accidental suicide.'"³² However, many people would soon question this ruling due to the suspicious nature of the deaths themselves.

Photographs of the brothers in death showed that suicide was not possible. In fact, "Both are still wearing the Roman Catholic priests' robes . . . , their faces are bloodied and bruised, Nhu's hands tied behind his back."³³ Due to the photographic evidence, many people questioned the official version of the deaths. After close analysis of the events leading up to the assassinations, it seems more likely that the brothers "were taken to Joint General Staff Headquarters." After Diem refused to resign from office, "and Nhu started cursing . . . one of the generals pulled his gun and shot them."³⁴ Whatever the true events were, after the deaths of Diem and Nhu, the situation in Vietnam changed.

When Kennedy received word of Diem and Nhu's assassination, he was surprised. While he knew a coup was probably inevitable, he did not expect it to end quite so violently. In fact, the only way the coup could have been avoided would have been "by aggressive American intervention against the army on behalf of Diem and the Nhus. This course few Americans in Saigon or

³²Ibid.

³³"The Bodies," Time, 6 December 1963, 42.

³⁴Ibid.

Washington were willing to recommend."³⁵ So, the coup against a government allied with the United States, of which the President had knowledge, was allowed to take place. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., recalled seeing Kennedy's reaction to the news of Diem's death. As he stated, "I had not seen him so depressed since the Bay of Pigs."³⁶ In addition, he realized that Diem and Nhu were murdered and did not believe the reports that it was suicide. Kennedy said that because Diem was Catholic, ". . . he would (not) have taken this way out." In addition, Kennedy believed that, because "Diem had fought for his country for twenty years . . . it should not have ended like this."³⁷ The murder of Diem and Nhu would change the outcome of the Vietnam War, as a new government took over. Within a matter of a few weeks, Kennedy's assassination would also change the situation in Vietnam, and a new President, Lyndon B. Johnson, would be left to carry on the policies set forth by the Kennedy Administration.

Another great issue Kennedy faced in his struggle against Communism was in the creation and signing of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. This treaty took two years to be created. President Kennedy had met with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev at Vienna in

³⁵Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1965), 909.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid., 910.

1961, but the talks led to nothing significant. In 1962, tensions between the two were at the breaking point over the Cuban Missile Crisis. After the crisis was resolved, Kennedy was more determined than ever to have a treaty passed, so the testing of nuclear weapons by the two superpowers could be decreased, and that other nations could also join, in the hopes of obtaining a measure of world peace.

On June 10, 1963, Kennedy delivered a commencement address at the American University in Washington, D.C. In his address, Kennedy brought up the subject of the nuclear arms race and his hopes for peace between the United States and the Soviet Union, so that the possibility of nuclear annihilation would be greatly decreased. Kennedy outlined what this peace should be. As he stated, "Genuine peace must be the product of many nations, the sum of many acts. It must be dynamic, not static, changing to meet the challenge of each new generation. For peace is a process--a way of solving problems."³⁸ Kennedy also discussed the issue of creating the test ban treaty, and what it would accomplish. In addition, he pointed out the flaws of such a treaty. Kennedy noted:

No treaty, however much it may be to the advantage of all, however tightly it may be worded, can provide absolute security against the risks of deception and evasion. But it can--if it is sufficiently effective in its enforcement and if it is sufficiently in the interests of its signers--offer

³⁸John Fitzgerald Kennedy, 193.

far more security and far fewer risks than an unabated, uncontrolled, unpredictable arms race.³⁹

Finally, Kennedy spoke about why the test ban treaty and better relations with the Soviet Union were so important. As he said, ". . . in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal."⁴⁰ After Kennedy finished his address, Jerome Wiesner, special assistant on science and technology, pointed out "that Chairman Khrushchev had said it was the best speech ever made by an American President. We were hopeful that this would finally mean real progress on a nuclear test ban treaty."⁴¹ Shortly after Kennedy's speech, Khrushchev agreed to meet with members of Kennedy's cabinet to discuss the creation of the treaty.

On July 4, 1963, after ten days of debate, the test ban treaty was signed in Moscow by representatives from the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union.⁴² Two days later, Kennedy went on television to discuss the outline of the treaty. Kennedy pointed out that the treaty was a limited one, because it allowed underground testing to continue. However, he noted that

³⁹Ibid., 195.

⁴⁰Ibid., 194.

⁴¹Ibid., 195.

⁴²Ibid., 212.

the treaty "will prohibit the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and all others who sign it, from engaging in the atmospheric tests which have so alarmed mankind."⁴³ While Kennedy pointed out that the treaty was a start towards achieving peace among the nations of the world, it also was not foolproof. As he stated, "It will not resolve all conflicts, or cause the Communists to forego their ambitions, or eliminate the dangers of war." Instead, the treaty would be "an important first step--a step towards peace--a step towards reason--a step away from war."⁴⁴

After the treaty was signed and sent to the Senate for ratification, many people began to wonder why Khrushchev agreed to its conditions. In 1963, the United States had a far greater number of nuclear weapons than the Soviet Union. In fact, the U.S. totals in various types of bombs, warheads, and tactical weapons was ten times that of the Soviet Union, 50,000 to 5,000.⁴⁵ However, the Soviet Union did have more high-yield weapons and were ahead in anti-missile weapon production.

⁴³John F. Kennedy, "Radio and Television Address to the American People on the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, The White House, July 16, 1963," <http://www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary/jfk_test_ban_speech.html>, 26 July 1963.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵"With a Test Ban . . . Who's Ahead," U.S. News & World Report, 12 August 1963, 21.

Despite claims that the U.S. would take the advantage in the nuclear arms race, the treaty would be of greater benefit to the Soviet Union. By allowing underground testing to continue, "Russia will be able to continue work in the field where she lags most."⁴⁶

Another motivating factor for Khrushchev was the deteriorating Soviet relationship with China. In the 1950's Khrushchev "had denounced Stalin at the Twentieth Party Congress and put down the Hungarian uprising."⁴⁷ As a result, Khrushchev had to have the support of the Chinese in his attempt to take over the government. Once this was achieved, in 1957, ". . . at a meeting of bloc-country leaders in Moscow, Mao Tse-tung was led to believe that he had been accepted as a co-leader of World Communism."⁴⁸ In addition, for their help, the Chinese were promised nuclear weapons. However, by 1960, relations between the two countries had deteriorated. The reason for this deterioration was because ". . . the Soviet promise of atomic sharing had been defaulted." In addition, "Soviet technicians were withdrawn from China, and trade shrank."⁴⁹ Many people

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Kenneth Crawford, "Khrushchev's Reason," Newsweek, 2 September 1963, 32.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

believe that this was one of the central reasons why Khrushchev agreed to sign the treaty. So great was the threat of possible nuclear attack by the Chinese, that "He was unwilling to fight an all-out cold war on two fronts."⁵⁰ Khrushchev could not risk a possible attack by the United States and China, so he decided to agree to the terms of the test ban treaty.

The nuclear test ban treaty was sent to the Senate for voting. The treaty was questioned for about a week. In addition, members of Kennedy's cabinet were called to answer questions. These members included "the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the heads of the Atomic Energy Commission, and of the Joint Chiefs of Staff."⁵¹ Each member supported the treaty as being highly beneficial. Indeed, "To a man, quite candidly, the witnesses admitted there were indeed some risks involved." However, ". . . to a man, quite firmly, they insisted that the potential benefits to the U.S., and to all mankind, outweighed the risks by far."⁵² After they finished answering questions, the Senate opposition to the treaty seemed to decrease. In fact, "Resistance from the senators was light, apparently because most of them shared the hope that the pattern

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹"The Big Guns Speak on the Test Ban," Newsweek, 26 August 1963, 17.

⁵²Ibid.

of history might be changing."⁵³ With most of the opposition to the treaty eradicated, it appeared as if the treaty would soon be passed.

On September 20, 1963, Kennedy addressed the 18th General Assembly of the United Nations. The address summarized Kennedy's hopes for the treaty. As he stated:

A test ban treaty is a milestone--but it is not the millennium. We have not been released from our obligations--we have been given an opportunity. And if we fail to make the most of this moment and this momentum--if we convert our new-found hopes and understandings into new walls and weapons of hostility-- . . . then the indictment of posterity will rightly point its finger at us all. But if we can stretch this pause into a period of cooperation . . . then surely this first small step can be the start of a long and fruitful journey.⁵⁴

Kennedy then summed up his hope for a continued relationship with the Soviet Union. He noted, ". . . the Soviet Union and the United States, together with allies, can achieve further agreements--agreements which spring from our mutual interest in avoiding mutual destruction."⁵⁵ After Kennedy made his address to the United Nations, he had to wait to see if the treaty would become official.

Finally, on October 7, 1963, Kennedy signed the treaty. The

⁵³Ibid., 18.

⁵⁴John F. Kennedy, "Address Before the 18th General Assembly of the United Nations, New York, September 20, 1963," <<http://www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary/j092063.htm>>, 20 September 1963.

⁵⁵Ibid.

President met with several members of the cabinet and Senate in the Treaty Room of the White House. There, "He used sixteen pens in signing his name to the test ban treaty ratification, handing them out as souvenirs." After that, Kennedy "picked up a seventeenth pen, dipped it in ink, and drew a firm line under his signature," keeping the pen as his own souvenir.⁵⁶ The signing of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was one of the greatest accomplishments of Kennedy administration. While the treaty did not totally ban all nuclear testing, it was a step towards peace and an attempt to avoid possible nuclear annihilation in the event of a future war.

John Kennedy's stand on Communism was one of the central aspects of his administration. Kennedy, as well as his predecessor Eisenhower, were heavily involved in the Cold War and Vietnam. Throughout his years in the White House, Kennedy was faced with many challenges in these areas, including the building of the Berlin Wall, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the struggles in Vietnam. By 1963, things seemed to be getting better, especially in Kennedy's relations to Berlin's citizens, and with Nikita Khrushchev. However, the situation in Vietnam was still a huge issue at the time of Kennedy's assassination in November. Despite rumors to the contrary, Kennedy was heavily committed to

⁵⁶Kenneth P. O'Donnell, David F. Powers, and Joe McCarthy, "Johnny We Hardly Knew Ye": Memories of John Fitzgerald Kennedy (New York: Pocket Books, 1973), 441.

supporting President Diem and his regime in any way he could. In fact, his policy in Vietnam summed up his attitude towards communism in general. While Kennedy was aware communism could not be stopped entirely, he was willing to do whatever he could to prevent its spread into countries with a vested interest in the United States. Kennedy's actions in Berlin, in Vietnam, and in the signing of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, supported this theory.

CHAPTER 5

THE END OF CAMELOT: THE ASSASSINATION AND FUNERAL OF JOHN F. KENNEDY

The assassination and funeral of President John F. Kennedy was one of the key events of the 1960s. Kennedy's death marked a turning point in society and helped to shatter the innocence of the American people. Young people, who felt confident that Kennedy would bring an end to the war in Vietnam, and would also bring forth a better America through his New Frontier policies, had their confidence shattered after he was killed. As the rest of the decade showed in an escalation in violence in the cities and in Vietnam, more young people went out to protest. Soon, divisions would be created between the youth of America and the older generation. While not a direct cause of the violence and division in America, President Kennedy's death changed the viewpoint of many in American society. The assassination and funeral of President John F. Kennedy left a lasting impact on the world and forever changed the mood of American society.

President John F. Kennedy left for Texas on November 21, 1963. The reason Kennedy went to Texas was to heal rifts among the top leaders of the Democratic Party, not to gain support for the 1964 election. The reason for the split among the Democrats came from the actions of three people. The first was Vice-

President Johnson, who still was having trouble adjusting as Kennedy's second in command. The second person was Texas Governor John Connally, a conservative, who had gained political support from Vice-President Johnson. The third person was Senator Ralph Yarborough, a liberal, who had supported Kennedy for the Democratic nomination in the 1960 primaries, gaining the hatred of Lyndon Johnson. Yarborough believed that, as a result of his earlier support for Kennedy, in the upcoming election, Johnson and Connally would try to have him voted out of office.¹ There were also rumors circulating that President Kennedy was trying to have Lyndon Johnson dropped from the ticket as Vice-President in 1964. Kennedy, however, needed Johnson's help in running against Barry Goldwater in the upcoming election. He believed that by going to Texas he would "use the presidential authority to help the Vice-President bring the warring Texans together."² With the ugly business of bringing the Democratic Party together on his shoulders, Kennedy left for Texas.

The Texas trip was to be spread over four days. On November 21, the President was to visit San Antonio, Houston, and Fort

¹Steve Blow and Sam Attlessey, "The Tenor of the Times," in Osborne, Bill, ed., The Day J.F.K. Died: Thirty Years Later: The Event That Changed a Generation (Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel, 1993), 6.

²Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House (Greenwich: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1965), 930.

Worth. The next day, November 22, Kennedy would leave Fort Worth, after making a speech there, and then proceed to Dallas for a motorcade through the city and a luncheon, and then travel to Austin, where the Kennedys would stay at the L.B.J. Ranch. Accompanying the President was his wife, Jacqueline, making her first appearance on a political trip since the 1960 election. She had just recently begun making public appearances, following the death of her son, Patrick, in August. Mrs. Kennedy was regarded by those in the Kennedy circle as a valuable political asset. It was hoped that Mrs. Kennedy would ease the friction in Texas and would attract support for the President and the Democratic Party.

The first day of the trip, Thursday, November 21, 1963, started out shaky. Yarborough refused to ride in the same car with Vice-President Johnson.³ However, by the next day, most of the tension between the two was resolved. Mrs. Kennedy received a warm reception from the crowds. The President's mood was elevated by the time they reached Fort Worth to spend the night. The following morning, President Kennedy greeted a crowd in a parking lot outside his hotel. The sky was gray, and it was raining. Still, the crowd was enthusiastic. Someone, noticing that Mrs. Kennedy was absent, asked the President where she was.

³Blow and Attlesey, "The Tenor," 6.

Kennedy replied, "Mrs. Kennedy is organizing herself. It takes longer, but, of course, she looks better than we do when she does it."⁴ After giving a speech and greeting the crowd, Kennedy went back inside the hotel.⁵

Later that morning, the President went to a breakfast at the Chamber of Commerce. Mrs. Kennedy arrived late, dressed in a pink suit and pillbox hat. The crowd stood up and applauded her. Noticing the crowd's reaction, Kennedy remarked that he was ". . . the man who had accompanied Mrs. Kennedy to Paris. I'm getting somewhat that same sensation as I travel around Texas. Nobody wonders what Lyndon and I wear."⁶ After giving his speech to the crowd in Fort Worth, the Kennedy party traveled to the airport for the flight to Dallas.

In Dallas, an ad appeared that morning in The Dallas Morning News. The headline of the advertisement read "'Welcome Mr. Kennedy to Dallas.'"⁷ However, the advertisement was not friendly. Instead, it attacked President Kennedy on matters of foreign policy. On reading the advertisement earlier that

⁴Jim Bishop, The Day Kennedy Was Shot: An Uncensored Minute-By-Minute Account of November 22, 1963 (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), 53-54.

⁵Ibid., 55.

⁶United Press International, Four Days: The Historical Record of the Death of President Kennedy (American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., 1964), 9.

⁷Bishop, The Day Kennedy, 21.

morning, President Kennedy remarked, "'We're really in nut country now.'" The people in Dallas who opposed Kennedy also issued handbills with profiles of President Kennedy on them and the words "WANTED for TREASON."⁸ Vice-President Johnson and U.N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson had both previously received hostile receptions from the Dallas crowds. Stevenson, in fact, was struck on the head by a woman holding a placard a month before President Kennedy's visit.⁹ There was fear in the Kennedy circle of what the mood of the Dallas crowd would be during the motorcade.

The President's plane landed at Love Field at 11:39 a.m., C.S.T.¹⁰ Kennedy's mood was elevated because he had heard that Senator Yarborough would ride in the same car with Vice-President Johnson. The crowds outside seemed very friendly. President and Mrs. Kennedy were greeted by the Mayor and his wife and the Johnsons. Mrs. Kennedy received a bouquet of red roses. The Kennedys then moved towards the fence to greet the crowds there. A few people had placards that were unfriendly, but most people were enthusiastic. The Kennedys, after greeting the crowd, moved towards the limousine. The Kennedys sat in the back seat, with Mrs. Kennedy's roses in between them. The Connallys sat in the

⁸Ibid., 22.

⁹Blow and Attlesey, "The Tenor," 8.

¹⁰Bishop, The Day Kennedy, 107.

jump seat in front of the Kennedys. At approximately 11:50 a.m., the motorcade began.¹¹

The Presidential motorcade traveled along several residential streets before it reached the main part of the city. The President stopped the motorcade twice. The first time was for a young girl who held a sign saying, "Mr. President, will you please stop and shake hands with me?"¹² The President got out and shook hands with the children in the crowd. The second time the President stopped the car was for a nun with some small children. This time, Kennedy remained in the car while he greeted the group.¹³ The motorcade then moved to the heart of Dallas. The people along Main Street seemed to be enthusiastic, and no signs of hostility could be seen. The motorcade made the turn from Main Street onto Houston. The crowds were beginning to thin out by this time. At this point, Mrs. Connally turned towards President Kennedy and said, "Mr. Kennedy, you can't say that Dallas doesn't love you."¹⁴ The President made no response. The motorcade then turned from Houston Street onto Elm Street, passing the Texas School Book Depository, and proceeded into

¹¹United Press International, Four Days, 13.

¹²Bill Osborne, ed., The Day J.F.K. Died: Thirty Years Later: The Events that Changed a Generation (Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel, 1993), 16.

¹³Bishop, The Day Kennedy, 132-33.

¹⁴Osborne, The Day J.F.K. Died, 17.

Dealy Plaza.

At about 12:30 p.m., three shots were fired at President Kennedy's motorcade. According to the Warren Commission, which later investigated the assassination, the first shot hit President Kennedy in the back of the neck, exiting from the front and then hitting Governor Connally in the back, below his right armpit. The bullet then moved through Connally's chest and wrist and landed in his left thigh. The second shot stuck President Kennedy in the back of his head, creating a fatal wound.¹⁵ A third shot missed the car entirely, striking a curb on the south side of Main Street, and causing fragments to hit a bystander, James Tague, on the cheek.¹⁶ Jacqueline Kennedy, upon seeing the fatal shot hit her husband, jumped up and climbed out onto the trunk of the car. Her Secret Service Agent, Clint Hill, climbed onto the trunk and pushed Mrs. Kennedy back into her seat. The Presidential car then rapidly accelerated towards Parkland Hospital.

In the Vice-President's car, Johnson's Secret Service Agent, Rufus Youngblood, pushed Johnson down to the floorboard, telling him to stay down.¹⁷ Further back, in the press car, United Press

¹⁵A Concise Compendium of The Warren Commission Report on the Assassination of John F. Kennedy, (Popular Library, 1964), 136.

¹⁶Ibid., 165-66.

¹⁷William Manchester, The Death of a President: November 20-November 25, 1963 (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1967), 166.

International correspondent, Merriman Smith, issued a bulletin to the Dallas U.P.I. bureau. At 12:34, the first news of the assassination flashed across the wire stating, "THREE SHOTS WERE FIRED AT PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S MOTORCADE TODAY IN DOWNTOWN DALLAS."¹⁸ Two minutes later, the Presidential car arrived at Parkland Memorial Hospital. Smith ran up to the car and asked Clint Hill about President Kennedy's condition. Hill told Smith that he believed President was dead.¹⁹ Smith raced inside the hospital and sent a flash to the Dallas U.P.I. bureau. The flash said, "KENNEDY SERIOUSLY WOUNDED. PERHAPS SERIOUSLY. PERHAPS FATALLY BY ASSASSINS BULLET."²⁰

As the news of the shooting flashed around the world, President Kennedy and Governor Connally were taken into the two emergency rooms. Governor Connally had received a serious wound to his chest, but it was not fatal. At the time of Kennedy's arrival, the President was still alive but unconscious. The doctors worked in vain to keep the President alive, but at 1:00 p.m., President Kennedy was pronounced dead. Mrs. Kennedy, who had crept inside the emergency room, went up to her husband and placed her wedding ring on his finger and kissed him. A priest arrived and performed the Last Rites of the Catholic Church. The

¹⁸United Press International, Four Days, 22.

¹⁹Manchester, The Death of a President, 168.

²⁰United Press International, Four Days, 22.

soon-to-be new President and his wife were then taken back to Air Force One. After Vice-President Johnson left, the news of President Kennedy's death was announced.

In Dallas, the news of President Kennedy's death shocked everyone. Television carried live broadcasts from the hospital and the Trade Mart. People and reporters outside the hospital were crying at the news. The Mayor of Dallas ". . . beat his fists against a wall, roaring 'Not in Dallas! Not in Dallas!'"²¹ People who were at the Trade Mart, where the President was to have given his speech, were at first worried over his late arrival. Then, as the people were informed that the President had been killed, many stood weeping, while others said a silent prayer. The news of the death of President Kennedy made Dallas and the nation come to a halt, and focus soon shifted on finding out who was responsible.

The scene around the Texas School Book Depository was one of mass confusion as local police were notified that the shots came from there. After searching the area, police found a rifle and three spent shells. Following a thorough search, they learned that one of the employees, Lee Harvey Oswald, had left the building. Oswald was an ex-Marine with Communist leanings. In 1959, he moved to Moscow and tried to renounce his citizenship. Failing to do so, Oswald was then allowed to re-enter the country

²¹Bishop, The Day Kennedy, 169.

with his Russian wife. Oswald then moved to New Orleans, where he gained some notoriety by being filmed passing out Pro-Castro leaflets.²² In late 1963, Oswald moved to Dallas, where he got a job working for the Texas School Book Depository.

After he left the Texas School Book Depository on the afternoon of November 22, Oswald returned to his room, in a boarding house where he had been staying and left with a pistol. Around 1:16 p.m., Oswald was spotted by several witnesses in the act of killing Dallas police officer J.D. Tippit. Tippit, after receiving the reports of Oswald's description on his radio, had stopped Oswald to question him. Oswald then took out his pistol and shot him.²³ Police soon spread reports that they were on the hunt for Oswald to arrest him for the murders of President John F. Kennedy and J.D. Tippit.

Oswald was then spotted roaming around the Texas Theater. He entered the movie house without buying a ticket. After being notified by the owner, the police arrived and went down to where Oswald was sitting. Oswald jumped up and said, "Well, it's all over now." He reached for his pistol, and a scuffle broke out. Oswald was placed under arrest and was taken out of the theater.²⁴ Soon the word spread around the country and the world

²²United Press International, Four Days, 65.

²³Osborne, The Day J.F.K. Died, 25.

²⁴Ibid., 27.

that Lee Harvey Oswald was the man responsible for the murders of the President and officer J.D. Tippit.

The news of President Kennedy's death spread quickly around the nation and the world. The day Kennedy died was a Friday. Many people were at work. Others were on their lunch breaks. Children across the country were in school. The first people who learned the news were either at home or had their radios on. Housewives watching soap operas on CBS found their program interrupted by Walter Cronkite, who came on the air and announced that President Kennedy was shot.²⁵ A short time later, Cronkite broke down as he reported that President Kennedy was dead. In later years, many Americans could still remember where they were and what they were doing when they heard the news that President Kennedy was killed in Dallas.

In the major cities of the U.S., all business and activity seemed to stop. In New York City, the whole city appeared to have shut down. Times Square "slowed to as near a halt as it ever comes."²⁶ In Washington, normal congressional activities came to a halt as word spread of President Kennedy's death. House Speaker John McCormack said, "'My God, what are we coming

²⁵Bishop, The Day Kennedy, 170.

²⁶The New York Times, 23 November 1963, quoted in Page One: Major Events 1920-1976 as Presented in the New York Times (New York: Arno Press, 1976), 1.

to?"²⁷ On top of the White House, the flag was lowered to half-staff. Cities across America did likewise. The general mood among the people was shock and dismay. A chaplain in the Senate remarked, "'We gaze at a vacant place against the sky, as the President of the Republic goes down like a giant cedar.'"²⁸ All across the country, people stopped what they were doing and either listened to, or watched events, as they unfolded, on their televisions and radios.

In Dallas, after White House staff members scuffled with hospital executives over autopsy rights, President Kennedy's casket was placed in a hearse for the trip back to Love Field. Mrs. Kennedy, still wearing her bloodstained suit, rode with the slain President in the back of the hearse. At 2:15 p.m., C.S.T., the hearse arrived at Love Field, and Mrs. Kennedy and other staff members boarded Air Force One.²⁹ Already on board were Vice-President Johnson, his wife, and his staff. Also on board was U.S. District Judge Sarah T. Hughes, who was called by the Vice-President to perform the swearing in ceremony. At 2:38 p.m., Lyndon Baines Johnson was sworn in as the 36th President. By his side were his wife, Lady Bird, and Mrs. Kennedy, wearing

²⁷United Press International, Four Days, 26.

²⁸Ibid., 26.

²⁹Osborne, The Day J.F.K. Died, 29.

her bloodstained outfit.³⁰ Johnson's first act as President was to order Air Force One's immediate departure. At 2:47 p.m., Air Force One left Love Field for the flight back to Andrews Air Force Base outside Washington, D.C.³¹

Air Force One arrived at Andrews Air Force Base shortly before 5 p.m., C.S.T. Attorney General Robert Kennedy boarded the plane.³² Robert Kennedy entered a lift with Jacqueline Kennedy and his brother's casket, along with other members of the Kennedy staff. The slain President's casket was lowered to a waiting ambulance. After the casket was loaded onto the ambulance by Kennedy staff members, Mrs. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Brig. Gen. Godfrey McHugh sat in the back with the casket. At 5:10 p.m., the ambulance left for Bethesda Naval Hospital for the autopsy.³³ After the Kennedy party left, President and Mrs. Johnson departed from Air Force One. The new President made his first address to the nation. Johnson said:

This is a sad time for all people. We have suffered a loss that cannot be weighed. For me it is a deep personal tragedy. I know the world shares the sorrow that Mrs. Kennedy and her family bear. I will do my best. That is all I can do. I ask for your help--and God's.³⁴

³⁰United Press International, Four Days, 35.

³¹Ibid., 33.

³²Osborne, The Day J.F.K. Died, 33.

³³Ibid., 34.

³⁴Ibid.

President and Mrs. Johnson then boarded a helicopter for the flight to the White House. Following the autopsy, the Kennedy family arrived, in the ambulance carrying the President's body, at 3:34 a.m.³⁵ President Kennedy was finally home.

Saturday, November 23, 1963, dawned gray and raining in Washington. People gathered outside the gates of the White House, numbed by the previous day's events. In the White House itself, President Kennedy's belongings were beginning to be moved out. The President's flag-draped casket laid in state in the East Room. The decorations in the East Room, at the request of Mrs. Kennedy, were similar to those when President Abraham Lincoln had lain there nearly one hundred years before. At 10:30 a.m., E.S.T., the Kennedys held a private Mass there, with only the President's family, close friends, and associates attending.³⁶ After the Mass, four honor guards remained to watch the casket.

President Johnson went ahead with the affairs of the presidency and the nation. He met with the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of War, then spoke with former Presidents Truman and Eisenhower, and several congressional leaders.³⁷ Johnson also took the time to write a proclamation. In it, Johnson

³⁵Ibid., 39.

³⁶United Press International, Four Days, 45.

³⁷Ibid., 43.

stated that “. . . Monday next, November 25, the day of the funeral service of President Kennedy, to be a day of national mourning throughout the United States.”³⁸ President Johnson also made it clear that he would continue the goals of the Kennedy Administration. While the new administration promised to keep President Kennedy’s programs alive, most Americans still reflected on the youth and vitality of their fallen leader. President Johnson had had a heart attack in 1955. The next man in the line for succession, Speaker of the House John McCormack, was seventy-one. The second in line for succession, Carl Hayden, was eighty-six.³⁹ To most Americans, the fragility of these men caused them to remember how vigorous and energetic John Kennedy was.

The mood in Dallas was one of anger and shock that such a violent act could have occurred in their city. Many people went down to Dealy Plaza to place flowers on the site where President Kennedy had been shot. One of the tributes was a single flower, with a white ribbon tied around it. A note on the flower was written in red crayon and said, “I’m sorry Caroline and John John. Forgive us. A 9-year-old Dallas girl.”⁴⁰ People all

³⁸Ibid., 53.

³⁹Ibid., 54.

⁴⁰H.D. Quigg, “Town in Torment,” quoted in United Press International, Four Days: The Historical Record of the Death of a President (American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., 1964), 60.

throughout the city felt as if they were personally responsible for President Kennedy's death. Joe Dealy, whose grandfather the city had named the plaza after, expressed the mood of Dallas well. He told a reporter, "We are a tormented town."⁴¹ Dallas, for many days to come, would be subjected to criticism from the nation and the world for the events that happened there.

Elsewhere in Dallas, police were questioning Lee Harvey Oswald in connection with the murders. Oswald continued to claim his innocence. Meanwhile, ballistics experts found Oswald's prints on the murder weapon; an order, in Oswald's handwriting, for the purchase of the rifle; and tests for gunpowder on Oswald's hand that proved positive.⁴² The case against Oswald seemed, to most people, to show his guilt. By the end of the day, Dallas police, after finishing their interrogation, began making preparations for Oswald's transfer to the county jail on Sunday.

Around the world, the news of the assassination stunned everyone. The Prime Minister of Great Britain, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, knelt with others in prayer at Westminster Abbey. Flags in London flew at half-staff. One of Britain's most popular satirical programs, That Was the Week That Was, broadcasted a serious program on Saturday. David Frost, one of the actors in

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²United Press International, Four Days, 63.

the program, said:

The reason why the shock was so great . . . was because it was the most unexpected piece of news one could possibly image . . . that Kennedy should go, well, we just didn't believe in assassination any more, not in the civilized world anyway.⁴³

The attitude of Britain reflected that of the entire world.

In other parts of the world, people mourned the loss of President Kennedy. To them, President Kennedy was a symbol of hope for a better society, and a friend who cared about what was going on. In Berlin, where President Kennedy had delivered his "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech, demonstrators went out marching in the streets carrying torches. Berlin also dedicated a new street to Kennedy, named the John F. Kennedy Platz. In Tokyo, Buddhist priests prayed before Kennedy's picture. In Paris, families sat glued to their television sets. In Moscow, despite the tension between the two, Premier Khrushchev was stunned by the death of President Kennedy. Everywhere, prayers and messages of sympathy were bestowed on the Kennedy family and the United States.⁴⁴ President Kennedy's death was not only a national tragedy, but a deeply felt global loss. These were the moods prevalent on Saturday, November 23.

On Sunday, November 24, the casket bearing the body of President John F. Kennedy was placed onto a caisson for the ride

⁴³Ibid., 66.

⁴⁴Ibid., 48-49.

to the Capitol's Rotunda. Watching the casket as it was placed onto the caisson, was Jacqueline Kennedy and her children, Caroline and John Jr. Mrs. Kennedy was dressed in a black dress with a black lace mantilla. The children were dressed in matching blue coats, white anklets, and red shoes. While they watched the casket, ". . . there was an eerie silence. It was broken only by the occasional sound of hoofs of restless gray horses."⁴⁵ Then, Mrs. Kennedy, the children, and Robert Kennedy entered a limousine with the President and Mrs. Johnson. At 1:08 p.m., C.S.T., the procession to the Rotunda began.⁴⁶

While viewers were watching the funeral procession on television, networks switched to show Lee Harvey Oswald being transferred to the Dallas County jail. Just as Oswald was being lead past reporters, towards the police van, Jack Ruby, a Dallas nightclub owner, jumped out of the crowd armed with a pistol. As stunned viewers watched, Ruby ran up to Oswald, shoved his pistol in Oswald's side, and pulled the trigger. Police immediately wrestled Ruby to the ground. Ironically, Oswald was also taken to Parkland Hospital. At 2:07 p.m., E.S.T., almost exactly two days after Kennedy had died, Lee Harvey Oswald was pronounced dead. As the New York Times would later report, "The incident

⁴⁵The New York Times, 25 November 1963, quoted in Page One: Major Events 1920-1976 as Presented in the New York Times (New York: Arno Press, 1976), 1.

⁴⁶Osborne, The Day J.F.K. Died, 58.

marked the first time in 15 years of television around the globe that a real life homicide had occurred in front of live cameras."⁴⁷ Ruby, who had a deep love for President and Mrs. Kennedy, later said that he killed Oswald because ". . . it was a feeling I had for our beloved President and Mrs. Kennedy that he (Oswald) was insignificant to what my purpose was."⁴⁸ As people sat stunned by what they had just witnessed, many wondered what else would happen. Fortunately, no more acts of violence would occur during the remainder of the funeral.

Footage then switched back to the funeral procession. John F. Kennedy's body arrived at the steps of the Rotunda, and Mrs. Kennedy and her children marched behind it. Many people marveled at Jacqueline Kennedy's strength. So far, she had never cried. As a family friend said, "In public, she seemed completely composed. She is the kind of woman whose grief is private."⁴⁹ Mrs. Kennedy then took her children's hands and followed her husband's casket up the steps. All the time, she stared at the casket as it moved up the steps.⁵⁰ The President's body was

⁴⁷The New York Times, 25 November 1963, quoted in Page One, 1.

⁴⁸Osborne, The Day J.F.K. Died, 56.

⁴⁹Bill Davidson, "A Profile in Family Courage," The Saturday Evening Post, 14 December 1963, 32d.

⁵⁰Dora Jane Hamblin, "Mrs. Kennedy's Decisions Shaped All the Solemn Pageantry," Life, 6 December 1963, 48.

taken to the center of the Rotunda, where it would lie in state for the night. Around the room were the President's family, close friends, Kennedy staff members, and other dignitaries. Three people delivered eulogies at the service. The third eulogy was directed at Mrs. Kennedy, and was delivered by Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana. In it, Mansfield spoke the words, "There was a sound of laughter; in a moment it was no more. And so she took a ring from her finger and placed it in his hands."⁵¹ After the eulogies were delivered, Mrs. Kennedy and Caroline walked slowly towards the casket. Jacqueline Kennedy ". . . touched it with her fingertips, knelt, and kissed it,"⁵² while Caroline ". . . reached under it (the flag) to touch her father's coffin."⁵³ Then, Mrs. Kennedy and her daughter walked back. No one watching that day would ever forget the image of Jacqueline Kennedy and her daughter, Caroline, at President Kennedy's casket.

Mrs. Kennedy and Caroline rejoined John Jr., who had been taken out of the Rotunda because he was too noisy and active. John carried with him two flags, "one, . . . to entertain him, and he asked for the other one 'for my Daddy.'"⁵⁴ The three then

⁵¹United Press International, Four Days, 130.

⁵²The New York Times, 25 November 1963, quoted in Page One, 1.

⁵³United Press International, Four Days, 83.

⁵⁴Hamblin, "Mrs. Kennedy's Decisions," 49.

walked down the steps of the Rotunda to a waiting limousine. Throughout the rest of the afternoon and night, people walked past the President's casket. As they walked by the casket, ". . . almost the only sounds were the shuffle of feet and the quiet voices of policemen urging the people to 'keep moving, keep moving right along.'"⁵⁵ At about 9 p.m., Mrs. Kennedy, accompanied by Robert Kennedy, appeared. She went up to the casket ". . . knelt beside it for a few moments, (and) again touched the flag with her lips." After greeting a few people in the crowd, Mrs. Kennedy and Robert Kennedy went back to their car.⁵⁶ The rest of the night, people continued to file past the casket. The events of Sunday, November 24, were drawing to a close.

By Monday morning, the doors to the Rotunda were finally closed. It was later estimated that nearly 250,000 people had filed past President Kennedy's coffin the night before. Mrs. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Edward Kennedy walked up the steps and spent a few minutes at the casket praying. Then, military body bearers carried the casket and placed it onto the caisson.⁵⁷ The caisson traveled back to the White House for the last time.

⁵⁵The New York Times, 25 November 1963, quoted in Page One, 1.

⁵⁶Hamblin, "Mrs. Kennedy's Decisions," 49.

⁵⁷Osborne, The Day J.F.K. Died, 70.

Mrs. Kennedy, Robert, and Edward stepped out of their limousine and made their places behind the casket. Behind them were President and Mrs. Johnson, along with several world leaders and representatives. They began to march behind the casket as it rode past the White House on its journey to St. Matthew's Cathedral. There was serious concern over the safety of the leaders marching. Police officials had to provide ". . . the same protection as if (they) were here alone on a state visit.'"⁵⁸ Fortunately, no violent acts occurred.

As millions of people watched worldwide, President Kennedy's casket moved towards the cathedral. Muffled drum rolls could be heard, and people lined on the street wept. An uneasy riderless horse walked behind the casket, its stirrups and boots reversed in the symbol of a fallen leader. Behind the casket, Jacqueline Kennedy walked with Robert and Edward Kennedy. She kept composed behind her veil and never faltered. At 11:35 a.m., the casket arrived at St. Matthew's Cathedral.⁵⁹ After a Mass was performed, the casket was taken out of the cathedral, and the band played Hail to the Chief. As the band played, Mrs. Kennedy bent down and whispered to her son. John, who turned three-years-old that day, straightened himself and raised his right

⁵⁸The Washington Post, 24 November 1963, A4.

⁵⁹Osborne, The Day J.F.K. Died, 72.

hand in salute to his father.⁶⁰ No one who watched that day ever forgot the image of John F. Kennedy, Jr. saluting his father's casket, and he would remain dear to the hearts of the American people.

The funeral procession then began to travel to Arlington Cemetery. As the casket was being carried to the burial site, fifty fighter jets flew over, the last jet flying in the missing man formation. Air Force One followed, dipping its wings in a final tribute as it passed. A priest then performed a special blessing, and Taps was played. After a twenty-one gun salute was fired, the flag on President Kennedy's casket was folded and given to Mrs. Kennedy. She then leaned forward to light an eternal flame, in honor of her husband's words at his inauguration of the passing of the torch to the next generation of Americans.⁶¹ Robert and Edward Kennedy also bent forward to light the flame. After receiving condolences, Jacqueline Kennedy turned towards Robert Kennedy, and they walked away from the grave site.

The same day that President Kennedy was buried, two funerals were held in Dallas. Officer J.D. Tippit, Oswald's other victim, was buried with honors. Earlier, Jacqueline Kennedy took time from planning President Kennedy's funeral to write a letter of

⁶⁰Ibid., 74.

⁶¹United Press International, Four Days, 142.

condolence to Mrs. Tippit. In another cemetery, Lee Harvey Oswald was buried. The only people who attended Oswald's funeral were his wife, Marina, and their two daughters, his mother and brother. Oswald was buried a despised man, to be forgotten by everyone. Even though there has been speculation over Oswald's guilt in the assassination of the President, the evidence collected seems to point directly to him. As of this date, Lee Harvey Oswald was the man responsible for the death of President Kennedy.

Jack Ruby, Lee Harvey Oswald's assassin, was put on trial in March 1964. His trial lasted eight days and was covered by nearly two hundred reporters from around the world.⁶² The trial took place in Dallas. Ruby's lawyer, Melvin Belli decided not to put Ruby on the stand. Belli tried to prove that Ruby was mentally unstable, but Joe B. Brown, the presiding judge, did not believe the argument. Brown found Ruby guilty of murder and sentenced him to death.⁶³

Eventually, Ruby's other defense attorneys got the sentence overturned. They argued that Judge Brown refused their request to hold the trial in another city. Ruby served his sentence in the Dallas County Jail. However, by this time, he had grown virtually insane. On December 9, 1966, Ruby was taken to

⁶²Osborne, The Day J.F.K. Died, 99.

⁶³Ibid.

Parkland Memorial Hospital, believed to be suffering from pneumonia. Instead, doctors found that Ruby had cancer of the lymph gland. Jack Ruby died a short time later, on January 3, 1967.

Jack Ruby failed to gain what he had hoped to achieve when he shot Oswald. Instead of being proclaimed an American hero, for ridding the world of an assassin, he was criticized for interfering with the process of justice. Jack Ruby's decision to kill Oswald denied people the chance to put Lee Harvey Oswald on trial for the murder of President Kennedy. The world was never given the opportunity to learn if Oswald really had killed President Kennedy, and, if he did, the reasons why. As a result of Jack Ruby's impulsive act, the questions people had concerning the assassination would never be fully answered.

President Kennedy would be memorialized in many parts of the world. In Boston, the John F. Kennedy Library was built to honor Kennedy's life. The site of the space center in Florida was renamed Cape Kennedy, for awhile, to honor the goals President Kennedy had set for NASA, particularly in putting a man on the moon. Schools and ships were named after him. Statues were built in his likeness. People everywhere sought to honor what President Kennedy had stood for and to make sure that his memory would be preserved for future generations.

Dallas has also created a memorial to President Kennedy. In

1990, the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository was transformed into a museum. The museum is organized and maintained by the Dallas County Historical Foundation and attracts between 1,200 to 2,500 tourists daily.⁶⁴ Tourists can visit the sniper's perch, encased in glass, with boxes arranged as they might have been on November 22, 1963. People can also view footage of President Kennedy's life and death, see the Zapruder film, and hear Walter Cronkite's announcement of the President's death.⁶⁵ There is also a place where people can watch footage of the funeral and sign a memory book.⁶⁶ The museum on the sixth floor helps tourists from around the world find the answers to the questions they have concerning the assassination. The museum is also a place where people can reflect on what happened there that horrible day, and, in the end, obtain the closure they have been seeking.

The death of President John F. Kennedy had a profound effect on the people of the world. Young people saw Kennedy as a symbol of hope for a better society. President Kennedy's death shattered that dream. As one mother said to her son, "'I wished I could wake up and find the Kennedy tragedy a horrible dream.'"

⁶⁴Ibid, 109.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid., 111.

The boy replied, "'I would give my life to bring him back.'"⁶⁷ Many people all over the world felt the same. Soon, divisions would appear between the young and the old, and the days when John Kennedy was in the White House became an untouchable memory. Violence would escalate in the streets between blacks and whites, and the younger and older generations. The fighting in Vietnam intensified, and thousands of young men would die before the war finally ended in the 1970s. The death of John F. Kennedy marked a turning point in America and the world. No longer would people live quite so innocently again. The assassination and funeral of President John F. Kennedy forever changed the outlook of lives in America and around the world and shattered the dreams of many people.

⁶⁷A John F. Kennedy Memorial (New York: MacFadden-Bartell Corporation, 1964), 41.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: THE LEGACY OF JOHN F. KENNEDY

The death of John F. Kennedy helped to cement the legend of Camelot in the public's eyes. John Kennedy, in the years following his death, became idolized and revered. Kennedy's flaws and failures as President were temporarily forgotten, and he was looked upon favorably by the American people. Although Kennedy's flaws would be exposed in later years, particularly in the area of his infidelities, he still remains popular today. Years after Kennedy's death, many people wondered who would come and carry on the legend of Camelot.

It seemed, at first, as if the most logical successor would be Kennedy's brother, Robert. As Robert Kennedy rose to power in the Senate in the late 1960s, many people started to feel that he was going to recapture the White House. In 1968, Kennedy announced he was running for President, and many people saw him as the likely choice for the Democratic nomination and, possibly, the Presidency. However, that changed when Kennedy was assassinated in Los Angeles, after winning the California Primary against Eugene McCarthy, in June. Tensions soon erupted, especially when the Democratic Convention was held later that summer in Chicago, allowing the Republican to regain the White House with their candidate, Richard Nixon.

After Robert Kennedy's death, the American people turned its gaze to the last Kennedy brother, Ted. Many people felt that, with Kennedy's experience as Senator and being part of the Kennedy myth, Ted would win back the White House for the Democrats. However, all chances for Ted Kennedy to ever become President disappeared after 1969. That summer, Kennedy drove his car off a bridge at Chappaquidick and failed to rescue his companion, Mary Jo Kopechne. Although Kennedy would later protest that he had tried to save Kopechne, his image in the public was tainted forever. This became evident when Kennedy failed to receive the nomination of the Democratic Party in 1980.

The public soon focused its attention on John Kennedy, Jr. as a possible successor to his father. This was especially true after Kennedy introduced his uncle, Ted, at the Democratic Convention in 1988. However, when asked about whether or not he would run for office, Kennedy remained evasive. For years, Kennedy's name was thrown in as a candidate for various offices, but Kennedy remained out of the political arena, focusing instead on publishing a magazine called George. In 1999, while flying to a family wedding, Kennedy, his wife, Carolyn, and his sister-in-law, Lauren Bessette, were killed when their plane crashed into the ocean off Martha's Vineyard. The tragic death of John Kennedy, Jr. made him a legend, much like his father's death did 36 years earlier.

It seems that, for the time being, there is no one who could recapture the myth and legend of Camelot. In the meantime, John F. Kennedy has been honored in many ways. Various public landmarks have been renamed for him, including the JFK Airport and, for a time, the Space Center in Florida. Buildings have been erected, honoring his life and his pursuits, as well as those of his wife, Jacqueline. These include the Kennedy Library in Boston, Massachusetts, and the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts. Ships and schools were named for him. Books and magazines were published chronicling all aspects of his life. Films were made, the most recent being "Thirteen Days," concerning the Cuban Missile Crisis, and "JFK," the controversial film about Kennedy's assassination by Oliver Stone. In this way, Kennedy has not been forgotten, and his legend continues to grow to this day.

Nearly forty years after his death, John Kennedy is best remembered for his energy, wit, youth, and eloquence. Along with his wife Jacqueline, he evoked a more modern and glamorous style, changing forever the image of the White House and the Presidency. Although Kennedy's accomplishments as President are debatable, many Americans still hold him in high regard. To them, Kennedy was a symbol of what a President should look and sound like. Therefore, John F. Kennedy's greatest legacy as President stemmed not from what he had accomplished but from the image he had created.

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 Walters State Community College, Morristown,
 Tennessee; General, A.S., 1997
 Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City,
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 Library and Placement Services, 1995-1997.
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