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GRIEF IS TRAGIC AND UNFORGETTABLE

Thousands Pass Flag-Draped Coffin In Great Rotunda of U.S. Capitol

WASHINGTON (AP) — The mournful beat of muffled drums . . . the slow clip clop of the horse caisson moving down Pennsylvania Avenue . . . Caroline and John pressing their faces against the back window of the slow rolling limousine . . . The silent staring masses shuffling past the flag draped coffin in the great rotunda of the Capitol . . .

Tragic and unforgettable, these images of grief shimmer in the air Monday as the nation observes a day of solemn mourning to mark the funeral of its assassinated leader, John F. Kennedy.

DOWN AN AVENUE of stifled sobs and open tears, he had passed Sunday on his final journey from the White House to the Capitol, retracing in reverse the route he traveled on the occasion of his triumphant inaugural less than three years before.

A crowd of 300 000 packed tight to the building line along the famous street, doffed their caps and bowed their heads as the black-draped caisson, pulled by six white horses and led by a seventh, rolled in stately procession along the mile-long route.

JUST BEHIND PRANCED the grim specter of the riderless horse, symbol of the slain warrior, with its pair of empty cavalry boots reversed in the stirrups and a saber in a silver scabbard swinging from its saddle. Led by a military man, the dark bay horse was Mrs. Kennedy's Sardar.

Next came a single sailor carrying the personal flag of [illegible] marched an honor guard composed of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the commandants of the Marine Corps and Coast Guard, clergymen of the three major faiths, and a company of Navy enlisted men, who marched in memory of the young Navy lieutenant and war hero who became their commander in chief.

But even as the drums echoed down the long canyon of public buildings and the pavement resounded with the tread of the 100-paces-to-the-minute cadence, the grieving onlookers were shaken anew. Another development in the incredible assassination story added to their sense of incredulity and frustration.

THE CAISSON HAD just passed down the curving White House drive under an archway of cupped flags held by servicemen, when word was flashed that Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused assassin, had been shot as he was being transferred to the county jail in Dallas. Those with transistor radios heard it first and quickly spread the news down the line.

By the time the funeral cortege was entering the Capitol grounds, the transistors crackled with the news that Oswald had died. A murmur of surprise rippled through the throng on the Capitol lawn, followed quickly by anxious shushing as the procession hove into view.

Perched on top of monuments, peering down from rooftops, clustered in the bare branches of the trees like so many huge starlings, [illegible] students [illegible] crowd on its own began forming itself into a long line, waiting its turn to move into the rotunda and file past the flag-draped coffin.

IT WAS THE SAME spontaniety of affection that had caused thousands to break through the police barriers and join in line behind the funeral cortege as it moved down Pennsylvania Avenue. No one had arranged such an impromptu mass march; nothing like it had ever happened before at a presidential funeral.

Similarly unrehearsed and equally as moving were the actions of a little girl in a blue dress, name unknown, who dashed into the street as the funeral cortege approached the Justice Department building and strewed a dozen long stemmed roses in the path of the oncoming caisson.

ALL THROUGH THE night people came to the Capitol. With slow steps and solemn faces they filed past the bier.

They stood in line, shuffling slowly forward, for seven or more hours in order to spend a minute or two staring at the casket of their fallen leader.

Some crossed themselves as they walked by, some dabbed at their eyes with sodden handkerchiefs, most stared with long unwavering gazes, their faces soft, their eyes sad.

No one spoke. The only words heard were in the orders of the police keeping the lines moving. But filling the vast space of the rotunda was the slap, scuttle and click of shoes on the big square stones of the floor.

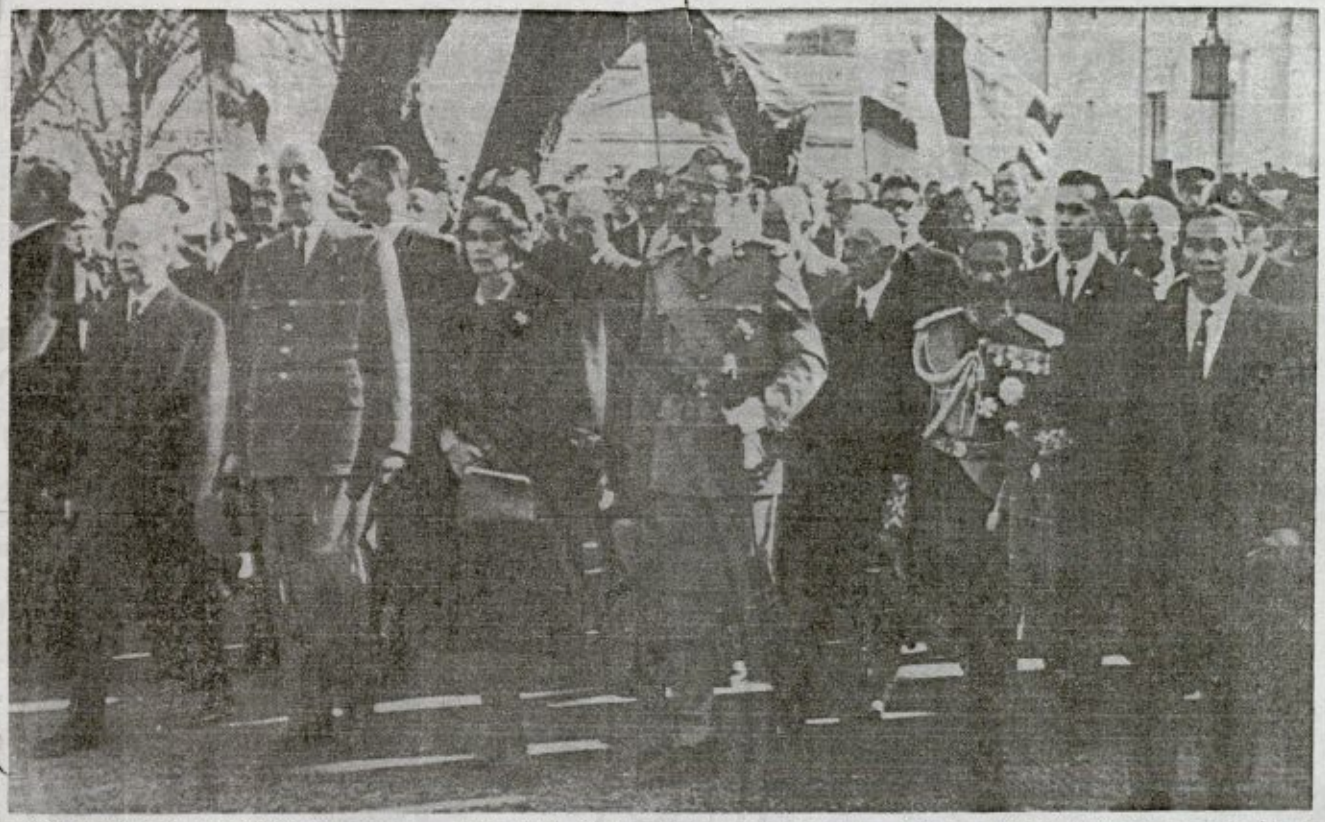
AT TIMES, the line extended nine miles into the night, meaning a nine-hour wait for those lined up. At 4:30 a.m. police estimated the line wound for five miles.

Besides fatigue, the waiting throng bore the discomfort of biting cold as the temperature dropped sharply throughout the night. Even [illegible] midnight, a large number of small children among the family group [illegible] by. Some had [illegible] entire [illegible] had known how long it would take. Of course, they replied. "He was our president."

PRESIDENT'S BODY BORNE TO CAPITOL—A horse-drawn caisson bearing the body of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy is borne to the Capitol to lie in the grounds of the Executive Mansion. In the background is the White House as the cortege moves from the mournful roll of muffled drums. [illegible] beside the caisson walked a military guard to [illegible] photo)

BEREAVED FAMILY—Mrs. John F. Kennedy stands at a White House entrance with her children, 3-year-old John Jr., and Caroline, before joining the procession in which her husband's body was borne from the Executive Mansion to the Capitol.—(AP Wirephoto)

JACKIE RECEIVES FLAG—Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy, her face veiled, is handed the American flag which covered the casket bearing her husband, the late President Knnedy, to its final resting place in Arlington National Cemetery.



WORLD LEADERS IN PROCESSION—World leaders walk in the Kennedy funeral procession as it leaves the White House. From left, front row, Heinrich Lubke, West German president; French President Charles De Gaulle; Queen Frederika of Greece; King Baudouin of Belgium; Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia; and President Diosdado Macapagal of the Philippines.—(AP Wirephotos)

A LIGHT BURNS AT A FINAL SALUTE—Light from an eternal light was lighted at the grave of President Kennedy in Arlington National Cemetery as an officer salutes the casket in its final resting place.

HEADS FUNERAL PROCESSION — Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy and two brothers-in-law head the procession as the body of the slain president is borne from the White House to St. Matthews Church. At left is Attorney General Robert Kennedy and on right is Sen. Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts.