argue precisely where credit or blame lay, in which administration, for which chapter of events. New Dealers could argue that the national highway system was first traced out under Roosevelt, but Republicans could argue that Eisenhower transformed the plan from paper to concrete. Democrats could argue that Kennedy first launched the nation into space; but Republicans could argue that the ballistic missile program began under Eisenhower and Americans walked on the moon under Nixon. Until the spring of 1963, then, the Kennedy legislation flowed in this stream, nuanced only here and there by his instincts or his mandarinate.

There was, for example:

• Housing. Neither Eisenhower nor anyone else probably ever thought of his Highway Act as being the single most important act to influence housing in the postwar generation. The fact that it was so became apparent only much later. Yet on housing per se, Eisenhower among Republicans was a "liberal." He began by authorizing loans for 35,000 public housing units in 1954, jumped that to 45,000 public housing units in 1955, dribbled a sizable $200 million into college housing (on a federal loan program), took Harry Truman's urban renewal program of 1949 and pumped another $500 million into that. No system of legislation is, however, as complicated as legislation on public housing, and Kennedy, apparently, was bored by it. He contented himself simply by adding budgetary zeros to the dominant housing thinking that had begun with Truman and continued through Eisenhower and which he fertilized: with over one billion dollars more for college housing, with an added two billion dollars for urban renewal and planning, and thus, down the line. One can detect a Kennedy deflection, a gatekeeper's signal, only in a single Executive Order, No. 11063, not cleared with Congress, which banned discrimination by race in housing built, bought or financed with federal assistance of any kind. A President's Committee on Equal Opportunity in Housing was set up to establish and oversee enforcement, a forerunner of the institution of the New Orthodoxy.

• Or, for example, the Kennedy legislation on health.

Some of the first nodules of American thinking on public medicine had been visible in the bud by 1947 under Harry Truman—federal funding for fellowships, training, medical research, hospital construction. Eisenhower's speed-up in the development of medical services for Americans followed hard on the Truman initiatives. He raised health concern to an executive policy level in his establishment of the Health, Education and Welfare Department. But Ike explored

further ground. In 1958 he authorized a national conference on the problems of the aging, and by 1960, sent his men before the House Ways and Means Committee to use for the first time the word "Medicare," which, ultimately, would become a program that would cost the government half as much as the entire U.S. Air Force. Ike's "Medicare" proposal was rejected by Congress; so, too, was Kennedy's when he offered it in different form. There was nothing revolutionary about Kennedy health programs. Eisenhower in his eight years raised federal health appropriations from $221 million to $840 million in 1960; in his three years, Kennedy raised the federal health budget from $1 billion to $1.6 billion in 1963. But one can detect almost no turning in purpose—nothing except the old Republican/Democratic difference in which the Republicans promise to increase spending more slowly and the Democrats promise to increase spending more quickly. If one scrutinizes the record closely, one can detect a tiny blip of concern that must be personally Kennedy's—a first six-million-dollar appropriation in 1963, to be stretched over three years, for research into the education of handicapped children, an area of grief in his family's life, as it is in the lives of hundreds of thousands of other American families.

For all the rest of domestic policy—whether in education, space, environment, roads, urban affairs—the course of American life as decided by agreement of President and Congress was a continuum from Truman through Eisenhower through Kennedy until the beginning of 1963.

And then John F. Kennedy presented to Congress two bills, the first on tax reform, the second on civil rights, which became, respectively, the Tax Reform Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 under Lyndon Johnson. They were really Kennedy's acts, however, and in the adventure of watching Kennedy become President in history as well as in name and in law, they were as important as his campaign for election. The first, the revenue reforms, reflected his full absorption of the thinking of the new mandarin scholars. The second, the civil rights bill, reflected the shouting in the streets. In submitting both to the consent of Congress in 1963, he best showed what he had now learned of the purposeful use of power.

The revenue proposals of 1963 came first, in January. Even had it stood alone, the revenue bill would have signaled a revolution in thinking. Basically, all governments—monarchies, tyrannies, democracies and republics—rest on taxes, which is the charge demanded of

people by their rulers for safety and "civilization." But whether in Rome or Peking, in America or Switzerland, the inner arguments all revolve on who should pay how much of the cost for this "civilization." In the American Republic both historic parties believe that taxes should encourage "growth," as well as support "services," and all promise more for everybody at every election. They split over an historic distinction—Republicans believe the best way to encourage growth is by tax policies that encourage investment; Democrats believe that the best way to encourage growth is by tax policies that encourage consumption. Until the time of Kennedy, both these divergent philosophies bowed to the "theology of the budget," which held out for generations the mirage that someday, sometime, the revenues of government would equal the costs it must bear. The tax legislation proposed by John F. Kennedy finally, and forever, threw away the "theology of the budget," and accepted a budget which was more like a compass indicating government directions than a bookkeeping balance sheet of income and outgo. Moreover, so said the scholar mandarins, who now, for the first time, replaced the businessmen accountants as the chief influence on budgeteering, the conjunction of the times invited a policy that was irresistible for this political, games-playing President. After being deciphered from the hieroglyphics of specific proposals, their advice held simply that now was a good time to cut taxes for everybody.

The original Kennedy revenue formula was a marvelous and still fragrant compost of conservative and liberal thinking on taxes. Rich and poor alike would benefit. The only reasonable modern proposal on capital gains taxes was included, a proposal recognizing both the ravages of inflation and the greed of speculation. The maximum tax on true capital gains would be 19.5 percent! But simultaneously, short-term speculators and options holders would be deprived of capital gains shelter. Kennedy's was still a good bill as it was ground up, chewed, examined and amended in the constitutional way. As finally passed by Congress, it cut taxes for the very poor to encourage consumption (no couple who made less than four thousand dollars a year would have to pay any taxes). It cut taxes for the very rich from 91 percent to 77 percent, with further cuts down to 70 percent in following years. The bill cut taxes for both corporations and their workingmen: withholding taxes from workingmen's pay checks were cut from 18 percent to 14 percent; corporation taxes were cut by giving a tax credit (i.e., real cash) to companies that put new investments into industry.

Kennedy's revenue proposals slipped the leash on budgetary dogmas and a hundred years of Puritan ethics applied to money: budgets need not balance! Miraculously, the proposals, once passed a year later, worked better than could possibly have been anticipated. Whether it was in their encouragement to investment or their encouragement to consumption, or both, the mandarins had come up with the most successful formula since scholars had translated Einstein's $E=mc^2$ into Hiroshima. It was a spectacular success; its very success enticed the quantifiers and scholar economists to think that they might, at any time, apply their other formulas to reality with equal success. This added up to later tragedy. But at the time, the thinking of the tax bill was the most successful demonstration of cool thinking applied to hot issues yet, and thus revolutionary. Had it not been overshadowed by the second of the great Kennedy bills, the civil rights bill of 1963, it would have marked Kennedy's peak in domestic affairs.

But the civil rights bill was so large it overshadowed all else. Moving the bill to national consideration, Kennedy passed from his personal pose as gamesman and his political role as gatekeeper to the grand posture invited by the American Presidency—that of the man who presides, in fact as well as in theory, over the management and meshing of the great affairs of state. Only in his management of the missile crisis did Kennedy so fully play the President as in the civil rights bill—and the civil rights bill would affect American life longer and more deeply.

The authors of the civil rights bill of 1963 are anonymous—black people, street people, young people, moral people. But whoever the authors, its publisher was John F. Kennedy. He could take the story from the streets and publish it as vital national policy.

This ability to contrast what the streets say with what history tells us is not particularly difficult in the story of black and white in America. What is difficult is to face openly the depths of indignation or to respond reasonably to the excesses of hate and fear, white and black, that intertwine in American life. One may start with indignation either at the black chieftains of Africa who sold their own people away as animals, or at the white slave traders who bought black captives for transshipment as beasts. The politics of black and white can begin with the story of Nat Turner's rebellion in 1831, or with the Plessy-Ferguson decision of 1896, which gave up half the victory of the Civil War to the South by accepting the "separate but equal" doctrine. For John Kennedy, rising black indignation had paralleled

his own rise in national politics. The year-long bus strike that began on December 5, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, had nicked one of the edges of racism when Kennedy, then a junior senator, was ill and in bed. Autherine Lucy had made her protest in 1956. There is no record of a Kennedy position. His campaign of 1960 had been accompanied by obbligatos from the student lunch-counter sit-ins in the South. He had given his support to Martin Luther King in October of that year. Yet he was still uncommitted and perplexed about blacks. He had said to me during the campaign—and I agreed—that there is no group more difficult to understand in America than the blacks, because no group shows a larger difference of culture between leaders and led.

Kennedy's election had not stilled black indignation, which was deeper than any single personality, either black or white, could control. So, as President, he had faced successively the crises of the Freedom Buses of 1961; of Ole Miss and the confrontation with Governor Ross Barnett of Mississippi in 1962; and then finally, climactically, the battles of Birmingham, Alabama, out of which came the Civil Rights Act of 1963–1964.

Birmingham, Alabama, then a city of some 360,000 people, of whom 140,000 were black, was generally recognized as one of the two meanest cities in the South—the other being Jackson, Mississippi. It was a violent, race-hating city in which blacks lived then almost as fearfully as whites now live in Newark, New Jersey. In the six years prior to the climax of 1963, Birmingham had seen fifty old-fashioned cross-burnings and eighteen racial bomb blasts. And it was this city that Martin Luther King had chosen in the fall of 1962 to break wide open. "I contended," King later told me, "that Birmingham was pivotal. That we had to go there. . . . If we could break through the barriers in Birmingham—if Birmingham went—all the South would go the same way."

The Birmingham drama had begun in best Shavian, not Shakespearian, fashion—with trivia as subject of protest. Blacks were not allowed to sit down at the same lunch counters as whites, even in the department stores which thrived by their patronage. Nor could blacks use the same water fountains or toilets in those stores, if they could use any at all. Black picketing of these Birmingham stores, in this meanest city, began in April of 1963, with the simple insistence of a few black volunteers that they be served their coffee and rolls at the same counter as whites in the stores where they traded. Arrests followed, forty protesters a day, for three days; then 125 arrests; then 100 more. On Good Friday, April 12, 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr., himself led a

parade of black protest that moved no more than eight blocks before he was arrested and jailed. He was once again released on Kennedy's personal intervention; but now he proposed to mobilize students for the protest. Robert Kennedy telephoned King to plead against the use of children in politics; but King was firm, and said that no matter what happened to them, it was no worse than segregation. And so, at the beginning of May, students and young children began to fill Birmingham's jails, until the jails would hold no more, and the primitive police chief of Birmingham, Eugene ("Bull") Connor, decided that he had to take more violent action. Martin Luther King described it as "the day the jails were full with no place to put any more." Then television took over and drama became national politics.

The Birmingham riots were made for television, and the sight television brought the nation was unprecedented: official violence, naked in the streets. Bull Connor's police brought their dogs, and television showed the dogs reaching up to snap at the flesh of women's thighs. Since the police could hold no more black protesters in jail, they tried to disperse protesters in the streets with fire hoses whose high-pressure streams could peel bark from trees; and the hoses thrashed and flailed at women and children, whipping up ladies' skirts in flaring visible obscenity. They ducked behind trees, and the hoses reached after them. Then one evening, as the black demonstrators stood in rank and the dogs snapped, they broke into song with "We Shall Overcome." What had been private shameful relations between Birmingham's blacks and whites became, as Martin Luther King had planned, a national horror spread across the land by television. Kennedy was quoted as saying that the civil rights movement should thank God for Bull Connor—he had helped it as much as Abraham Lincoln.*

Television carried the shock waves of the confrontation from Birmingham across the nation, and the farther the ripples, the more

* Television was just reaching its political cruising speed in 1963, and Bull Connor, the villain of Birmingham, provided a figure of drama on which the cameras could focus. The impact of the Black Revolution on America would have been prodigious all of itself; the rivalries and internal politics of the television world accelerated the impact.

CBS was then fighting desperately to recapture its audience lead in news and public affairs from the NBC team of Chet Huntley-David Brinkley. I was in an advisory capacity at CBS and we would have done anything, within the ethics of television, to outdo NBC. Birmingham gave us an opportunity and, under stalwart leadership, CBS's reporting out of Birmingham was superb, heartbreaking, stirring. Bull Connor was an essential ingredient in the drama our television cameras were carving from the news. Thus it gave all of us immense satisfaction when, a year later, with the battle won, Connor was harassed, cuffed and chased from the floor of the Democratic convention at Atlantic City—and could find no other refuge into which to dart but the CBS enclosure on the floor, where our deftest surgeon of words, Mike Wallace, interviewed the trapped man and shamed him.

they increased in strength. Black people, hitherto isolated, found each other. "You got to understand," said a thoughtful Mississippi cotton planter to me, "that every one of those Negroes on my land has a television set in his shack, and he sits there in the evening and watches." The shock waves went farther than the Mississippi Delta. In May and June 1963, American politics burst into the streets, where they would periodically erupt through the end of the decade and into the early years of the seventies. Television had brought politics there, but the indignation behind the politics had been waiting for public recognition. The country sputtered: the National Guard was called out in Cambridge, Maryland; in Jacksonville, Florida, the police cleared street demonstrations with tear gas; violence was reported in Memphis, Tennessee; in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Charlottesville, Virginia. Then the troubles spread north while television hailed each black protest as if the enemy were Bull Connor and Jefferson Davis. Blacks sat in or rioted in Sacramento, in Detroit, in New York, in Philadelphia, in Chicago. In the ten weeks following the Birmingham uprising, the Department of Justice counted 758 demonstrations across the nation, and the arrest of 13,786 demonstrators in seventy-five cities of the Southern states alone. These initial demonstrations were, of course, still led by the nonviolent leaders of the Martin Luther King philosophy. Nationwide killing, gunfire and carnival looting were not to develop until later. Indeed, one can say, if one looks for history, barbarism did not develop at that moment because John F. Kennedy caught the rhythm of events, rode with the rhythm, and moved rhythm and indignation from the streets to the concourse of talk, and thus to the place where Congress makes laws.

It is in this last law-making episode that Kennedy, I believe, touched history closest, and as a man who had, finally, learned the art of government in the new world of communications.

Kennedy's sense of timing in this new world of instantaneous transmissions, of television drama, of cycles of intellectual fashion, was superb. There he sat in the spring of 1963 with bloodshed always imminent; there he sat in the presence of an intractable and messianic Martin Luther King, who had the kindling courage of martyrdom within him—and who was also morally right. Yet Kennedy, as President, sat without a law to let him act, to reach and correct what so ate at King's vitals: the humiliation of the black. Accident now, in June of 1963, provided the springboard for action, and national television was there to broadcast the jump. George Wallace, then governor of Alabama, had decided personally to bar black students from the University of Alabama's summer session at Tuscaloosa. Kennedy,

privately informed that Wallace wanted not a showdown but a show of pictorial significance, promptly federalized the Alabama National Guard and sent them, guns ready, to force the governor to admit black students to his state's university because federal law demanded it. In 1957, Ike had used the 101st Airborne Division of the U.S. Army in Little Rock; in 1962, Kennedy himself had used some sixteen thousand troops of the 82nd and 11th Airborne Divisions and the Second Infantry of the U.S. Army at Old Miss; now he used only Alabama's own men, its own National Guard, called to the colors for the occasion. There was no resistance. Wallace gave up.

But a President can (or should) use force only within the rule of law. And the most demeaning of the humiliations which at that time were bringing blacks to surge in the streets were beyond the reach of any law.

What to do?

That evening, having vanquished George Wallace by their prearranged show of force, the President took to the air to make ready the way for the new civil rights bill he would introduce the next week in Congress. It was one of the half-dozen best speeches of an eloquent career in politics.

Like all good speeches, it bore a single message—the need of new laws for a new time. The message concerned the American people, and how the laws must stretch over our diverse origins. The old code read that for every wrong perpetrated against the law, the law itself provides a remedy. But no law covered the humiliations in dignity that blacks suffered not only in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, but all across the South; and thus, since no laws governed, there was no remedy. What Kennedy was about to propose was an entirely new jump in the jurisprudence of civil rights. Such a bill had been under preparation by a handful of men in Robert Kennedy's Justice Department for several weeks. They had come to realize that no government could any longer safeguard tranquillity if no law gave government authority to remedy the human as well as the legal grievances of black against white. To abolish discrimination, which was real and vicious, law—and marshals of the law—would have to go where no laws ever went before.

There was, to be earthy, the "pee-pee question," sanitized in Congressional debate as the problem of "public accommodations." The "pee-pee question" was, however, tragic, not comic. As one black witness before Congress quietly explained it: what if you are black and driving down a road in the South and your little girl must go pee-pee. How can you tell a little girl she can't use the toilet at the next gas

station because she is black and that most gas stations reserve their restroom facilities for whites only. This is an intolerable private agony; but no law, at that time, could remedy it. Just so, no law touched segregation at lunch counters, in hotels, in boardinghouses, at movie theaters or supermarkets. Equal but separate rights for the blacks had been sanctioned by the Plessy-Ferguson decision in 1896; segregation had been officially hammered into federal practice and federal facilities by no less a liberal than Woodrow Wilson. Law had begun to reach out to shelter blacks once more only with Eisenhower's Civil Rights Act of 1957. But that act had reached only to public, not into private, life; it had emphasized the strengthening of the Supreme Court's school decision of 1954 and the general validity of voting rights for black and white alike. Eisenhower's act had succeeded moderately: schools were being draggingly integrated; Southern blacks were being slowly admitted to voting (400,000 black registrants in the ten years between 1952 and 1962). Kennedy's legislation proposed to go much farther, and since it was a point where history turned, we must examine it briefly now, so that later we may trace from it the Jurisprudence of Equal Opportunity that would color all the politics of the 1970s.

The civil rights bill put before Congress by John F. Kennedy on June 19, 1963, eight days after Alabama's young men were mobilized to put down Alabama's governor, floated on the indignation of the nation at what television had shown it. But the bill was immensely more complicated than the emotions that floated it. Up until that time, almost all postwar black progress had come either from the Supreme Court or by Executive Order of a President. (A prototype of Executive Order was Truman's abolishing segregation in the armed forces in 1948, issued to amplify the Selective Service Act of that year.) The first postwar bill voted into an act of Congress to protect black rights under law was Eisenhower's in 1957—but that bill restrained itself to public, governmental, official activities only. The U.S. Government, said that bill, must not discriminate by race.

The Kennedy civil rights bill of 1963 carried the concept of "discrimination" light-years forward. Not only must government not discriminate, it said; neither must private groups, offering public accommodations or services, discriminate.

The civil rights bill of 1963, enacted as the Civil Rights Law of 1964, was thus revolutionary, by John F. Kennedy's own decision. It not only strengthened the ability of the federal government to oversee voting rights everywhere in the country, but it went on. It made the

federal government's Department of Justice the sword and paladin of black rights everywhere—with the right to prosecute local governments that discriminated, the duty to institute suits against local government where schools were not properly balanced for race. It subordinated the distribution of federal money to federal interpretations of racial justice—i.e., no federal funds would be given to any state, town, jurisdiction or county that was found to discriminate against blacks. Since the South was, then, the most favored regional beneficiary of federal funds, it meant no locality in the South could use federal funds, taxed from the North, to build schools, hospitals, museums or swimming pools that blacks could not use.

And then, critically, most importantly, finally, the law guaranteed all blacks access to all accommodations newly defined as "public." Blacks must not be excluded from schools, colleges, hotels, motels, restaurants, sports arenas, theaters, whether managed by governments, or conglomerates, or the hypothetical "Mrs. Murphy," owner of a hypothetical boardinghouse. If Mrs. Murphy had six or more rooms to rent in her boardinghouse, she could not exclude anyone who knocked to enter, whether he was an itinerant black carpenter, a black preacher, black tourist or black mystery.

The Civil Rights Act of 1963–1964 moved the United States into an area of life that neither it nor any other government of modern times had tried to penetrate before. "Equal Justice Under Law" was a dogma of American life as much accepted in the observance as any dogma can hope to be. But now, by this new act, equal justice under a passive law would scarcely be enough. By this new law, the federal government propelled its Department of Justice out into the states, cities, communities, to discover injustice and bring it into court. No longer need the federal government wait for the NAACP to come before the bar to plead for justice; it must outdo the black leadership with its own new definitions of racial malefactions. The Attorney General would be entitled and enjoined to scourge the South wherever, from statistical inference, it would be reasonably believed that blacks were being denied their right to vote. Abruptly, the cry of twenty years of liberals for a "fair employment practices" act became old-fashioned. The new law demanded "equal employment opportunity," and for enforcement set up an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Whoever, even remotely, did any business with the federal government would, eventually, fall under the police power of this office. The government had already opened what it could of governmental function—army, bureaucracy, welfare, schools, univer-

sities. Now it would open private places—private centers of study, hitherto closed; every restaurant, toilet or motel along any highway construed as falling under the Interstate Commerce authority of the federal government. If a university accepted a federal research grant, or if a magazine accepted an Army advertisement for recruits, it would become a federal contractor, subject to scrutiny that would grow and grow in the next fifteen years to a tangle of inexplicable complexities, thicketed with no less than eighteen overlapping bureaucratic agencies.

Of all the great events in domestic history since the war, the Law of Unintended Consequences might later claim this Kennedy legislation as one of its finest demonstration pieces. A new jurisprudence was opening up, not intending to but nonetheless destined to establish new special privileges. Not only blacks, but also, successively, Asian Americans, Indian Americans, Hispanic Americans, Aleut Americans, would all soon, under the new Jurisprudence of Civil Rights, be able to claim special, compensatory rights. And then, as the new Jurisprudence of Civil Rights developed over the years, it could, and would, increasingly be invoked by women, youth, prisoners, gay people of both sexes. A law intended to unify would divide Americans by categories. And government would be summoned to intrude as authority into areas previously left to community law or custom to decide.

No departure of the Kennedy administration, neither the tax bill, nor the confrontation with Khrushchev in the missile crisis, surpasses in importance the reach of the Civil Rights Act of 1963–1964. Even in 1963 I thought the Civil Rights Act, as proposed by Kennedy, a beautiful piece of historic law-making. But all would depend on its execution. What might derive from it, I was only just beginning dimly to discern. I wish there had been time to talk with him about it.

What might have happened had John F. Kennedy lived to preside as the Jurisprudence of Civil Rights took hold and developed into the Jurisprudence of Life-Styles can only be a guess.

But I think he would have moved more slowly—and explored the terrain just conquered more cautiously before rushing on to occupy more. I had rejoined the Time-Life family in 1962 and spent the fall months of 1963 working for *Life* magazine on a nationwide survey of the big cities. What did the civil rights bill mean to the cities if it passed? Could this bill, proposed to meet conditions in the small-town South, offer remedy to Northern cities where blacks were so conspicuously swelling in number? The tone of my story was completely

jarring in the happy, hopeful fall of 1963. RACIAL COLLISION IN THE BIG CITIES, the story was headed, as the correspondent, Theodore H. White, warned that matters might go to bloodshed and riot unless the laws were wisely, cautiously and fairly implemented. The flip-page headlines read: RUSHING TO A SHOWDOWN THAT NO LAW CAN CHART . . . NEITHER WHITES NOR NEGROES WILL LOOK THE GRIM FACTS SQUARELY IN THE FACE . . . WITHIN TWO DECADES, NEGROES MAY BE IN THE MAJORITY IN MOST OF THE LARGEST U.S. CITIES . . . TO THE FRUSTRATED NEGRO LEADER, THE WHITES BECOME A CONSPIRACY, and then, announcing the next part of the series, *Life* promised that White would hold forth soon on NEGRO DEMANDS—ARE THEY REALISTIC?

Life gave the story enormous space, but space at the back of the magazine so as not to detract from the effervescence that was so much more characteristic of the Kennedy time. The issue caught a moment. It opened with a marvelous story on Broadway, which was all a-tinsel that fall with glitter and success. A young new playwright, Neil Simon, had opened a hit called *Barefoot in the Park*. He would become the most successful playwright since George Bernard Shaw, but *Life* shared the story of his triumph with Simon's new young male lead, Robert Redford; with a new and beautiful actress, Elizabeth Ashley; and the new young director, Mike Nichols. It was a sprightly issue for sprightly times: new toys for the children at Christmas, new make-up protector masks for fashionable ladies. The advertising offered food specialties that ran literally from soup to nuts, as well as whiskey, the new stereos, electric ranges, shampoos—and automobiles. The automobiles fairly screeched off the page, "Zavoooom!," boasting their acceleration and power under the hood; energy shortages were inconceivable with gasoline at thirty cents a gallon.

The date on the cover of the issue read November 22, 1963, and it fairly reflected the end of one decade and the beginning of the next. Most of the magazine was happiness-packed, but mine was not the only somber note in the issue. On the page opposite the advertisement for Pontiac's new LeMans hardtop was an editorial of ominous portent. It was entitled PRESS THE WAR IN VIETNAM. *Life* (and Harry Luce) could scarcely restrain their enthusiasm for the recent overthrow of Diem and Nhu ("the stain on the coup," they called Diem's assassination) and urged, "Now is the time to pour on more coal." But aside from this exhortation at the front of the magazine to lay it on in Vietnam, and my doom-saying on future black riots at the end of the issue, the magazine reflected the carefree happiness of a Thanksgiving time when all was going well. *Life* magazine's great editor, Edward K.

Thompson, gave it a touch of history for echo by beginning one of those series in which he, a country boy, could indulge his yearning for color, pageantry and self-improvement all at once. George Hunt, the managing editor, had decided to precede my frightening piece on the blacks in the cities with the first part of this series of nostalgic fluff—Europe at peace in 1913, half a century before, as La Belle Époque and the Golden Yesterday both vanished. *Life* had inserted a fold-out centerpiece, with a painting it had commissioned, of the 1910 funeral of Edward VII, showing all the panoply of a century gone to legend. Kings and Kaiser followed on foot behind a riderless black horse. And in the custom honored since the death of Genghis Khan, the leader's horse paced behind the coffin, saddle empty, riding boots reversed in the stirrups. It was all so long ago. But by its next issue, *Life* would have the riderless horse prancing through Washington in real life.

The moments of history that crease the memory are rare, but come more frequently in our time than a hundred years ago because communications are instant. A triad of memories marks my generation: the strike at Pearl Harbor; the death of Franklin Roosevelt; the killing of John F. Kennedy. Each of us could write his own history of our time if we could but recall not *where* we were, which all remember, but what we *thought* when those accidents changed our world.

I was beginning the campaign of 1964. I was lunching with an old war-correspondent acquaintance, James Shepley, at that time assistant publisher of *Life,* since risen to president of Time Incorporated. Since he had been so close to Richard Nixon in 1960, and had so contemptuously broken with him later, I was trying to find out from Shepley what he knew, or did not know, about Eisenhower's scheduled weekend in New York. Eisenhower was rumored to be joining a secret cabal to find a candidate other than Rockefeller to stop Barry Goldwater's public pursuit of the 1964 Republican nomination. Whether Shepley knew of the conclave or not, I do not recall. I remember only a waiter leaning over us and saying, "Mr. Shepley, the radio says Kennedy has been shot." We both rose, paying no bill; by journalistic instinct we homed on the news ticker in *Time*'s office; read the clatter and chatter as researchers, reporters, editors, all likewise interrupted at lunch, began to crowd the room; and the ticker then spat out its final bulletin. It was Friday afternoon, *Life*'s closing day, and the presses were about to roll—all seven million copies of the magazine. Shepley and I dashed to the office of George Hunt, the managing editor of *Life,* just as he swung back from lunch, peeling off

his coat with the same flourish as a matador twirling a cape. Before giving Hunt a chance to speak, I yelled, "This is my story." And Hunt, a former marine commander, said, "O.K. Get going now—to Dallas." There was no time for reflection, and I passed the hat, for covering a story needs cash; everyone in the room peeled off bills until I had almost three hundred dollars, and I rushed out, en route to Dallas. On the way to the airport I told the cab to pause, ran into my house to drag out clothes, typewriter and shaving kit, and, pointing the driver to Idlewild Airport, begged him to speed. But the cab's blaring radio was now announcing that Kennedy's body was being taken to the Dallas airport, thence to be flown to Washington, and I ordered the cab to get to the La Guardia-Washington shuttle. I would intercept the President at homecoming. In Washington, I pressed dollars into the hands of a bewildered cabdriver, hired him for the night, and made my way out to Andrews Air Force Base, which is the private landing pad for all Presidents.

I did not know what I might see there, or whether a conspiracy was afoot, or whether the Virginia Military District was cordoned off—but I felt that since I had attended so many trips of this graceful man for so long, I should be there for his last arrival in Washington. So all the rest of the evening, and the next day and the day after, was spectacle, as the surrender of the Japanese aboard the *Missouri* had been spectacle. All through those days the scenes tumbled before the eye, and I was filing them to New York, desperately, as a newsman does when history breaks raw in pieces before him and he does not know which fragment to pursue. Except that this time, unlike the time of the surrender, I was crying as I wrote, and only now does any sequence unfold, or any meaning come from what I saw and reported.

There were the fragments I jotted in my notebook, little fragments first: the cabdriver saying, "I sure hated to see that man go," then dodging through airport traffic; then suddenly, on the parkway out to Andrews, I saw the embankments flecked with youngsters: teenagers sitting in their white shirts and pretty dresses on the brown fall grass, called out to watch the cortege pass by radio's incessant tapping of the news, and all of them silent, knees bent under their chins, waiting, waiting. Then Andrews Base itself: guards on the perimeter, guards on the interior, guards about the airstrip, grim Air Force Police with white caps and black-holstered pistols; helicopters dropping down, roaring, red lights winking from rotor staff, white belly lights

making a cone of light below, the sound of hand-held radios turned down low, muttering. Then, above the tin sound of radio, the live patter of broadcasters talking into their microphones as the television cameras assembled, and the technicians, with then unnoticed virtuosity, made visual-relay hookups from the field to the pickup points of the national net; and in the spreading light of television, slowly, I watched them arrive.

I had been long enough in politics now to know most of these people at sight, some only by name, some by call of friendship, but it is strange, now in recollection, how they grouped. The old ones huddled with the old, the young ones with the young, as at any family funeral. Among the old ones towered tallest Averell Harriman, now a bit stooped—but he had, after all, been part of government since Franklin Roosevelt's time. Around him clustered Everett Dirksen, his hair wispy and windblown, and Mike Mansfield, Arthur Goldberg and Hubert Humphrey, who, finally, joined the older men. The younger men stood in their own group apart—Sorensen, Schlesinger, Bundy, Franklin Roosevelt, Jr., Ralph Dungan, Angier Biddle Duke, others. All were quiet; no one spoke except for the newswomen assigned to this particular stakeout. In the eyes of the networks then, women were of no great importance, and thus, by perversity, were assigned to interview these men in their grief. A half-moon had now burnished its way through the evening mists, the lights of the television producers were spreading, they had just made their microwave relay connections to Washington—when, in all this, the blue-and-white airplane of the President, *Air Force One,* came gliding in soundlessly. The pilot had landed downwind, cut the plane's engines and let it roll silently into its proper place of arrival, almost precisely in proper camera focus for the entire nation.

I can remember no one breaking ranks from the edge of the little group that represented what there was of the United States Government at the field. There was no one to give them orders, except within the plane. Only the Air Force ground personnel moved to the opening plane. The others stood and swayed, for in the United States no one calls: "The King is dead—Long live the King."

First the rear door of the plane opened and through the darkness appeared the red-bronze coffin, carried by the bearers, O'Donnell, O'Brien, Powers, to the crane lift, which lowered it to the ground. Then Jacqueline Kennedy, her raspberry-colored suit still smeared and stiff with blood, appeared, helped by Robert Kennedy into the gray Navy ambulance that carried the coffin. And then that was away, with

its red beacon light unwinking; and still no one moved to follow it, for the leader was now about to appear, a new President, for the first time, before them and the entire nation.

Lyndon Johnson emerged from the front door of *Air Force One*. And after a few words into the cameras, Johnson was up and away by helicopter. McGeorge Bundy, a man with a command presence, had arranged for the transfer. It was he who, by telephone, had been urging the new President back from Texas from the moment of Kennedy's death, and it was Bundy who had coordinated with McNamara the scene at Andrews Air Force Base. Johnson had instructed Bundy that he wanted only cabinet officers to meet him at the airport to confer. But half the cabinet of the United States was, at that moment, winging back from the mid-Pacific to join him. Johnson needed to know whether any problem rose overseas that he must meet that night. Bundy and McNamara jointly urged in the confusion that a third man, George Ball, Under Secretary of State, be asked to join them in the helicopter. So when they lifted off the field, the helicopter lights winking red from its rotor staff and sweeping white from its underbelly, these four were the government of the United States facing the world if conspiracy had made confrontation necessary. According to Bundy, Johnson asked the little trio in the President's helicopter, the men who should know, whether there was anything they felt he must decide that night. McNamara said no. Then Ball said no. Then Bundy said no. Kennedy had left the nation in a rather impressive defense posture; no one would tempt America's retaliation in a moment of weakness.

I watched the helicopter take off, scuttling through the air, as helicopters do, to the White House, and do not remember how I moved from there. I followed out to the hospital where they had taken Kennedy; saw Mrs. Kennedy for a moment, still bloodstained, and so numb of expression I could not bring myself to speak to her, and then made my way through the streets toward the White House. There at the gates, as the autumn leaves blew down Pennsylvania Avenue, people strolled silently, mostly young couples, in a *paseo* of mourning; the fountains played; and the upstairs chambers were lit. It must have been well on to midnight when I remember approaching the gate, preceded by a young man who declared he was the Assistant Attorney General and "I have a proclamation and memorandum for Mr. Johnson to sign." The guard checked him by phone, then corrected him: "The President is expecting you." The gate clicked open, the young man passed; I passed, too, showing my credentials; and there,

inside the White House, were none but weeping people. I retreated from the grieving and wandered late at night to knock on the door of Averell Harriman's home, feeling I knew him now, after so many years, well enough to ask shelter. He took me in, then and for the next three days, and through his house, from morning until dark, revolved one of the many wakes of John F. Kennedy's friends.

I would slip out of the house to pick for fragments of the story, and then dart back in to sit and watch on television to find out what was really happening. Television had finally come of age politically that fall with the half-hour television news shows that were to change the dynamics of American politics. But the full, final acceptance of television as the nation's supreme forum was earned only by its performance over the assassination weekend. And for those of us of the older reporting crafts, to be in Washington then, that weekend, was to live through not only bereavement but bewilderment. Sitting with friends in Harriman's parlor and watching the tube was to be in touch with reality, to be part of the national grief. But to slip out, to do one's reportorial duty, to ask the questions that must be asked, was a chore, for television tugged one back, irresistibly, to emotional participation. Television observed the nation with countless cameras, forty-four camera eyes in Washington alone. The splendid reportorial staffs of all three networks surpassed themselves.

Thus, now, as I review my notes, it is difficult to know which of them I took from the tube in Averell Harriman's house, and which I took from observation or conversation at the White House and elsewhere. I know I bowed before the coffin and paid respects as I filed by, with family friends, in the black-draped East Room, where the candles burned; I know I listened to the chanting, and I remember the smell of incense in the cathedral at the funeral services. I know I rode in the funeral cortege and helped persuade Averell Harriman to wear his high silk hat, for this was ceremony and the throng watching the cortege craved ceremony. I know I watched in the dusk at the burial in Arlington Cemetery as Cardinal Cushing prayed in his dry and rusting Irish-lilted Boston voice, and blessed the taper with which the widow lit the flame that would burn over his resting place. But almost everything else I wrote, and that others wrote, came from the spectacle of television; and the spectacle of television, so splendid, unifying and steadying a force that weekend, made John F. Kennedy's burial a tribal ceremony and made the man into a myth. With that myth politics would grapple for years to come.

More than any other President since Lincoln, John F. Kennedy

has become myth. The greatest President in the stretch between them was, of course, Franklin D. Roosevelt; but it was difficult to make myth of Franklin Roosevelt, the country squire, the friendly judge, the approachable politician, the father figure. Roosevelt was a great man because he understood his times, and because almost always, at the historic intersections, he took the fork in the road that proved to be correct. He was so right and so strong, it was sport to challenge him. But Kennedy was cut off at the promise, not after the performance, and so it was left to television and his widow, Jacqueline, to frame the man as legend. For four days, as never before in history, an entire nation was invited into the sorrow and private mourning of the family of its chief. The nation, almost as much as his family, must have craved for some end to the ceremonies, some stop to the open ache. What it needed was a last word, and this Jacqueline Kennedy provided.

Quite inadvertently, I was her instrument in labeling the myth, because she was concerned about history and wanted me to help him be remembered—and so, after a long night's talk, she urged my using the word "Camelot" to describe it all. And her message was his message—that one man, by trying, may change it all. Whether this is myth or truth I still debate.

It happened this way:

On the weekend of the assassination I had held *Life* magazine open long hours beyond its closing time at enormous expense in order to write the story as it should be written. I stayed in Washington until the funeral on Monday, then came back to New York, sleepless and sad, to await my mother, who was to join us for Thanksgiving.

I left the house the morning after Thanksgiving to visit my dentist, and was taken from the dentist's chair by a telephone call from my mother saying that Jackie Kennedy was calling and needed me. It seemed like an outer ripple of the instabilities that rock a time of crisis, but I came home immediately to find my mother, then quite old, alone in the house and absolutely unable to describe the tangle of calls that had come in—from the Secret Service, from Hyannisport, from Washington. Making a call back to Hyannisport, I found myself talking to Jacqueline Kennedy, who said there was something that she wanted *Life* magazine to say to the country, and I must do it. She would send a Secret Service car to bring me to Hyannisport. I called Thompson of *Life* and asked him to hold its run. I called the Secret Service, and was curtly informed that Mrs. Kennedy was no longer the

President's wife, and she could give them no orders for cars. They were crisp. I called and learned I could rent no plane because a storm hovered over Cape Cod. I telephoned my brother, then chief of the weather service of the United States, who said that no planes would land or take off in New England that night because it was either an old-fashioned northeaster or a full-scale hurricane blowing up on that cape we both knew from boyhood. I hung up on him and went to give his report to our mother—at which point it became quite apparent that she, unused to this kind of excitement, was having a heart attack. This complicated the problem, for if the widow of my friend needed me and my mother needed me, what should I do? Nancy made that decision; she called our family doctor, Harold Rifkin, and he said he would come now, immediately, holiday weekend or not, and preside at my mother's bedside; but that I must go to comfort the President's widow.

In a rented limousine, with a strange chauffeur, in a driving rainstorm, I made my way back to New England. The driver stopped now and then at gasoline stations, so I could telephone to New York, find how my mother was doing, learn she was stable. Then finally I told the chauffeur to gun the car into Hyannisport.

It was now quite late on Friday, November 29, a week after the assassination. Once more I had asked *Life* magazine to hold its presses open as it had the week before. Without hesitation, the editors had agreed to my suggestion. They would hold until I found out what Jacqueline Kennedy wanted to say to the nation. But since it cost thirty thousand dollars an hour overtime on Saturdays at the printing plants for me to hold up *Life*, they hoped I could let them know soon whether there was a story there. At that sum per hour; desperately worried about my mother; still unstabilized by the emotions of the assassination, I entered the Kennedy home in Hyannisport very briskly.

It was obvious, instantly, that my brisk mood was wrong. She had been trying to escape for days. No single human being has ever endured more public attention, more of the camera-watching, the camera-angling, the microphones intruding, the tears caught glistening, the children's hands curling in her own, than she had in the telecasts of the assassination and the ceremonies. She had performed as people rarely do, flawlessly, superbly. I know now she wanted to cry, and she could not. She had fled from Washington and the squeeze of observation to Hyannisport, to be away from it all. But still with her, in the room when I entered, were the good-willed comforters: Dave

Powers, the family friend; "Chuck" Spalding, Jack's classmate at school; Pat Lawford, the President's sister; and Franklin Roosevelt, Jr.—who, curiously, was the only one who noticed my need to call New York to find out how my mother was faring.

She did not want anyone there when she talked to me. So they left. They, too, had been sleepless for too long, and knew I was a "friendly." I sat down on a small sofa, looked at her, the journalistic imperative forcing reportage almost automatically into my notes: "... composure... . beautiful... dressed in black trim slacks, beige pullover sweater... eyes wider than pools... calm voice..." And then she began to talk.

A talk with Mary Todd Lincoln a week after Lincoln's assassination would not have been nearly as compelling, for Jacqueline Kennedy was a superior wife, a superior person, and wise. But as she began to talk, I realized that I was going to hear more than I wanted to—that she regarded me, and had summoned me, as a friend who also happened to be a journalist, rather than a journalist who could make precise in print what was unclear in her mind. I had brought a tape recorder, but I left it unopened, and sat and listened, for she was faced with a problem, and she wanted to share it with me as both friend and reporter. She was without tears; drained, white of face.

Then, in the most lucid possible manner, she was making a plea that was both unreal and unnecessary. She had asked me to Hyannisport, she said, because she wanted me to make certain that Jack was not forgotten in history. The thought that it was up to me to make American history remember John F. Kennedy was so unanticipated that my pencil stuttered over the notes. Then I realized that there was so much that this woman—who regarded me as one of Kennedy's "scholar" friends rather than an "Irish" or "swinging" friend—wanted to say that if indeed I was a friend (as I still feel myself to be), my first duty was to let this sad, wan lady talk out her grief. And let *Life*'s presses wait for whenever I could get back to them.

What bothered her was history.

Over the telephone, before I had undertaken to come to Hyannisport, she had angrily commented on several of the journalists who by now were writing the follow-up stories, assessing the President, just dead, by his achievements. She wanted me to rescue Jack from all these "bitter people" who were going to write about him in history. She did not want Jack left to the historians.

Well, then, I said, concerned for her sorrow, tell me about it.

At this, then, there poured out several streams of thought which

mingled for hours. There was the broken narrative, the personal unwinding from the horror, the tale of the killing. Then there was the history part of it. And parts too personal for mention in any book but one of her own.

My notes run in patches and ups-and-downs, for Jacqueline Kennedy, that night, talked first of her personal anguish, then of what she thought history might have to say of her husband, and then wandered from his childhood to Dallas, trying always to make clear to me that I should make clear to the people how much magic there had been in John F. Kennedy's time. She thought her husband was truly a man of magic, which is a lovely thought in any wife. But since magic is so difficult to capture in any conversation, I must rearrange the sequence of my notes, which, as so often happens, reflect the jagged jumping of phrase to thought to another thought rather than the story she sought to tell and the message she wanted to give.

We talked for a few moments aimlessly and then the scene took over, as if controlling her.

". . . there'd been the biggest motorcade from the airport. Hot. Wild. Like Mexico and Vienna. The sun was so strong in our faces. I couldn't put on sunglasses. . . . Then we saw this tunnel ahead, I thought it would be cool in the tunnel, I thought if you were on the left the sun wouldn't get into your eyes. . . .

"They were gunning the motorcycles. There were these little backfires. There was one noise like that. I thought it was a backfire. Then next I saw Connally grabbing his arms and saying no, no, no, no, no, with his fist beating. Then Jack turned and I turned. All I remember was a blue-gray building up ahead. Then Jack turned back so neatly, his last expression was so neat . . . you know that wonderful expression he had when they'd ask him a question about one of the ten million pieces they have in a rocket, just before he'd answer. He looked puzzled, then he slumped forward. He was holding out his hand. . . . I could see a piece of his skull coming off. It was flesh-colored, not white—he was holding out his hand. . . . I can see this perfectly clean piece detaching itself from his head. Then he slumped in my lap, his blood and his brains were in my lap. . . . Then Clint Hill [the Secret Service man], he loved us, he made my life so easy, he was the first man in the car. . . . We all lay down in the car. . . . And I kept saying, Jack, Jack, Jack, and someone was yelling he's dead, he's dead. All the ride to the hospital I kept bending over him, saying Jack, Jack, can you hear me, I love you, Jack. I kept holding the top of his head down, trying to keep the brains in."

She remembered, as I sat paralyzed, the pink-rose ridges on the inside of the skull, and how from here on down (she made a gesture just above her forehead) "his head was so beautiful. I tried to hold the top of his head down, maybe I could keep it in . . . but I knew he was dead." It was all told tearlessly, her wide eyes not even seeing me, a recitative to herself.

Then, as I now pick my way through the notes, she described how, when they came to the hospital, they tried to keep her from him, "these big Texas interns kept saying, Mrs. Kennedy, you come with us, they wanted to take me away from him. . . . They kept trying to get me, they kept trying to grab me. . . . But I said I'm not leaving. . . ." The narrative continued, as she lived the horror of the hour. "Dave Powers came running to me at the hospital crying when he saw me, my legs, my hands were covered with his brains. . . . When Dave saw this he burst out weeping. . . . I remember this narrow corridor, I said I'm not going to leave him, I'm not going to leave him. . . . I was standing outside in the corridor . . . ten minutes later this big policeman brought me a chair."

Dr. Burkley (Rear Admiral George G. Burkley, U.S. Navy, personal physician to the President) came out and saw her and insisted she needed a sedative. She countered that she had to be in that room when he died. Burkley took up her cause, brought her into the operating room, insisting "it's her prerogative, it's her prerogative." Dr. Malcolm Perry (the operating surgeon) wanted her out. She remembered him as a very tall, bald man. But she said, "It's my husband, his blood, his brains, are all over me."

Then it was over. The hunt for the priest. The priest entered to give extreme unction. Then they pulled the sheet up: ". . . There was a sheet over Jack, his foot was sticking out of the sheet, whiter than the sheet. I took his foot and kissed it. Then I pulled back the sheet. His mouth was so *beautiful* . . . his eyes were open. They found his hand under the sheet, and I held his hand all the time the priest was saying extreme unction." By this time, or slightly earlier, her gloves had stiffened with his blood and she gave one of her hands to "this policeman," and he pulled the glove off. Then: ". . . the ring was all bloodstained . . . so I put the ring on Jack's finger . . . and then I kissed his hand . . . and then I asked Kenny, do you think it was right . . . and Kenny said you leave it where it is . . . and he brought me the ring back [later] from the Bethesda Hospital. . . ."

Interspersed with the memories, spoken so softly, in the particular whispering intimacy of Jacqueline Kennedy's voice, was constantly this effort to make the statement—the statement she had asked me to

come and hear. It would stutter out over and over again with an introductory: "History! . . . History . . . it's what those bitter old men write," or just: "History . . ." But that was what she wanted to talk about; so, thus, I pull together here fragments of disjointed notes; and as I run the notes through my retrieval of memory for meaning, her message was quite simple:

She believed, and John F. Kennedy shared the belief, that history belongs to heroes; and heroes must not be forgotten. We talked from eight-thirty until almost midnight, and it was only after she had rid herself of the blood scene that she tracked clearly what she wanted to say:

". . . But there's this one thing I wanted to say. . . . I'm so ashamed of myself. . . . When Jack quoted something, it was usually classical . . . no, don't protect me now. . . . I kept saying to Bobby, I've got to talk to somebody, I've got to see somebody, I want to say this one thing, it's been almost an obsession with me, all I keep thinking of is this line from a musical comedy, it's been an obsession with me.

". . . At night before we'd go to sleep . . . we had an old Victrola. Jack liked to play some records. His back hurt, the floor was so cold. I'd get out of bed at night and play it for him, when it was so cold getting out of bed . . . on a Victrola ten years old—and the song he loved most came at the very end of this record, the last side of *Camelot*, sad *Camelot:* . . . 'Don't let it be forgot, that once there was a spot, for one brief shining moment that was known as Camelot.'

". . . There'll never be another Camelot again. . . .

"Do you know what I think of history? . . . When something is written down, does that make it history? The things they say! . . . For a while I thought history was something that bitter old men wrote. But Jack loved history so. . . . No one'll ever know everything about Jack. But . . . history made Jack what he was . . . this lonely, little sick boy . . . scarlet fever . . . this little boy sick so much of the time, reading in bed, reading history . . . reading the Knights of the Round Table . . . and he just liked that last song.

"Then I thought, for Jack history was full of heroes. And if it made him this way, if it made him see the heroes, maybe other little boys will see. Men are such a combination of good and bad. . . . He was such a simple man. But he was so complex, too. Jack had this hero idea of history, the idealistic view, but then he had that other side, the pragmatic side. His friends were his old friends; he loved his Irish Mafia.

"History! " And now she reverted to the assassination scene again, as she did all through the conversation, which had swung between

history and death. "... Everybody kept saying to me to put a cold towel around my head and wipe the blood off [she was now recollecting the scene and picture of the swearing in of Lyndon Johnson on *Air Force One* at Love Field, as the dead President lay aft]. ... I saw myself in the mirror, my whole face spattered with blood and hair. I wiped it off with Kleenex. History! I thought, no one really wants me there. Then one second later I thought, why did I wash the blood off? I should have left it there, let them see what they've done. If I'd just had the blood and caked hair when they took the picture ... Then later I said to Bobby, What's the line between history and drama?"

At some point in the conversation she had said to me, "Caroline asked me what kind of prayer should I say? And I told her, 'Either Please, God, take care of Daddy, or Please, God, be nice to Daddy.' "

What she was saying to me now was: Please, History, be kind to John F. Kennedy. Or, as she said over and over again, don't leave him to the bitter old men to write about.

Out of all this, then, being both a reporter and a friend, I tried to write the story for which *Life*'s editors were waiting in New York. I typed in haste and inner turmoil in a servant's room and a Secret Service man, who had been sleepless for days, burst in on me and snarled, "For Christ's sake, we need some sleep here." But I went on; and in forty-five minutes brought out the story she was waiting for, her message that Americans must not forget this man, or this moment we styled "Camelot."

Life was waiting, and at 2 A.M. I tried to dictate the story from the wall-hung telephone in the Kennedy kitchen. She came in while I was dictating the story to two of my favorite editors, Ralph Graves and David Maness, who, as good editors, despite a ballooning overtime printing bill, were nonetheless trying to edit and change phrases as I dictated. Maness observed that maybe I had too much of "Camelot" in the dispatch. Mrs. Kennedy had come in at that moment, having penciled over her copy of the story with her changes; she overheard the editor trying to edit me, who had already so heavily edited her. She shook her head. She *wanted* Camelot to top the story. Camelot, heroes, fairy tales, legends, were what history was all about. Maness caught the tone in my reply as I insisted this had to be done as Camelot. Catching my stress, he said, "Hey, is she listening to this now with you?" I muffled the phone from her, went on dictating, and Maness let the story run.

So the epitaph on the Kennedy administration became Camelot—a magic moment in American history, when gallant men danced with

beautiful women, when great deeds were done, when artists, writers and poets met at the White House, and the barbarians beyond the walls held back.

Which, of course, is a misreading of history. The magic Camelot of John F. Kennedy never existed. Instead, there began in Kennedy's time an effort of government to bring reason to bear on facts which were becoming almost too complicated for human minds to grasp. No Merlins advised John F. Kennedy, no Galahads won high place in his service. The knights of his round table were able, tough, ambitious men, capable of kindness, also capable of error, but as a group more often right than wrong and astonishingly incorruptible. What made them a group and established their companionship was their leader. Of them all, Kennedy was the toughest, the most intelligent, the most attractive—and inside, the least romantic. He was a realistic dealer in men, a master of games who understood the importance of ideas. He assumed his responsibilities fully. He advanced the cause of America at home and abroad. But he also posed for the first time the great question of the sixties and seventies: What kind of people are we Americans? What do we want to become?

For twenty-five years, from the day of my graduation and departure for China, I had been fascinated by the relationship of the Leader to Power, of the State to Force, of the Concept to Politics—and most recently of the Hero to his Circumstances. I had given unquestioning loyalties to all too many men, as one does when one is young, and I would give guarded affection to several more in years to come. But I would never again, after Kennedy, see any man as a hero. A passage of my own life had closed with a passage in American politics.

EPILOGUE

OUTWARD BOUND

The storyteller was unaware of passing a divide as he left the Kennedy compound that night. It was still raining as he reached the main highway to New York, and there he was on familiar ground. Except for the sadness and the personal ache, all seemed as it had been before. He did not know then that he and everyone else in America had, that week, passed through an invisible membrane of time which divided one era from another; and that Jacqueline Kennedy's farewell to Camelot was farewell to an America never to be recaptured.

Even less did he know that he himself was outward bound once more—as definitely set away from his most recent past as he had been set away from his traditional past when he left Boston after the great hurricane of 1938, twenty-five years earlier. Now in the drizzle of this waning blizzard he tried to sleep, and dozed fitfully until the gray dawn showed him he was coming into New York. His mother had survived the night; she would be up and around again in a few weeks. So he must be up and off immediately to Washington and then on the campaign trail of 1964, with neither pause nor reflection.

This next leg of his journey would last fifteen years and carry him away from all his certainties to questions he could then, in 1963, neither define nor expect to have to ask.

That week of the Divide, however, he had been quite certain of both questions and answers. If he had been awakened from his doze that night on the road, he would have ribboned off an almost perfect specimen of American liberal thinking from the standard spool. All the proper words and ideas would have come out in the right order, without hesitation. And had he been asked to summarize what he had learned of the American experience at home and abroad, he

would have answered, doubtless, with the mothering cliché of the time: that America was that unique country whose political faith could be summed up as Opportunity.

Opportunity was just as much the north point on his political compass as he was a personal examplar of how Opportunity was supposed to work in America. He had, for example, first traveled this route between Massachusetts and Manhattan as an adolescent hitch-hiker. Later, he had learned how to hustle a ticket: In Depression days, a round-trip fare between Boston and New York cost only two dollars for the forty-eight-hour weekend; and if you were smart enough to buy an unused stub from a one-way traveler, at either Boston's South Station or New York's Grand Central, you could make the trip for fifty cents each way. Now the Opportunity that had lured his father to America seventy-two years before had rented him a limousine and chauffeur, given him status, recognition, access to the great, and a comfortable brownstone house in New York to return to. That same Opportunity had taken his youngest brother from the same house on Erie Street, through the same Boston Latin School, the same Harvard, over these same roads down to Washington, where he was now director of the U.S. Weather Service, monitoring this blizzard, and about to become the chief environmental scientist of the United States, responsible for surveillance of air, oceans, inland waters, coastal zones, hurricanes, whales, porpoises, and God knows what else. His other brother, still in Boston, edited textbooks in American history. It was appropriate that this road was numbered U.S. 1. This same coastal road had carried John Adams down from Boston to New York to Philadelphia to attend the First Continental Congress in 1774 as a young man of thirty-nine; it later carried the same Adams down to a new capital named Washington, D.C., as President of the United States at age sixty-one. And from Washington, D.C., somewhere down the road, stretched all those promises and opportunities White and his brothers and countless others, including all the Adamses, had enjoyed.

In White's thinking, Opportunity was what set American history off from the history of all other lands. The frontier had been Opportunity. The American school system was Opportunity. The enterprise system was Opportunity. He could not conceive then that this American faith, Opportunity, was about to tangle itself in the same contradictions as caused the French Revolution to make Liberty a synonym for Terror, the Chinese Revolution to make Liberation a synonym for Conquest.

To that first tenet of his then political faith he would at this time have added as the second tenet a belief in heroes, and the conviction that great men could move affairs for the good.

Heroes were not necessarily part of the faith of all American liberals; the Marxist wing of American liberalism, to which he had leaned when he was young, held that the dialectic of history made personalities unimportant. Such "liberals" believed that Marx's "locomotive of history" moved on preset rails to a predestined end. The engineer might slow or speed the pace but could not deviate from the track. Exposure to events had forced White to abandon the myths of Marxism completely. In twenty-five years of reporting, he had met so many definitely *good* men in places of high or critical power, he simply could not ignore the importance of heroes in history. Whatever the entries on the balance of violence, his net judgment was that Chou En-lai was a man who had done more good than harm. And there was no doubt that, against all odds, Jean Monnet, Pierre Bertaux, Konrad Adenauer and others he had known in postwar Europe had well served the cause of liberty and humankind. And then there were the Americans. Starting with Joseph Stilwell, following on with Paul Hoffman, David Bruce, Averell Harriman, countless others, his memory was crowded with the recollection of men who had used power, used it well, made a difference in the lives of other people. You could not understand history if you did not include such men as a critical ingredient.

All nations, of course, had their heroes, but there seemed to be something distinctive about American heroes, just as there was something distinctive about American history. Perhaps that was because an American hero was to be remembered not as other heroes, for his conquests, but for the degree by which he enlarged Opportunity.

The distinctive line of American hero had begun well before Abraham Lincoln, with Jefferson, but Lincoln was the greatest of the saints in the American faith of Opportunity. Lincoln had not only freed the slaves; he had opened land to moneyless homesteaders; he had passed laws to endow colleges with land grants and open them to all youngsters who sought learning as Opportunity; he had called into being a National Academy of Sciences, which opened government by a wee crack to the learning of wise men; he had given millions of acres to railroad men to open the West. He was hallowed as the victorious War President, but his monuments in the faith of Opportunity were prodigious. So, too, were those of the first

Roosevelt, the second Roosevelt and Harry Truman.

So, too, John F. Kennedy.

Much would be written or whispered later about John Kennedy which would either amuse or sadden those who thought Camelot had been for real. What was later written about Kennedy and women bothered White but little. He knew that Kennedy loved his wife—but that Kennedy, the politician, exuded that musk odor of power which acts as an aphrodisiac to many women. White was reasonably sure that only three Presidential candidates he had ever met had denied themselves the pleasures invited by that aphrodisiac—Harry Truman, George Romney and Jimmy Carter. He was reasonably sure that all the others he had met had, at one time or another, on the campaign trail, accepted casual partners. The noise, the shrieking, the excitement of crowds, and then the power, the silent pickup and delivery in limousines, set the glands alive in women as in men. What was far more important in assessing Kennedy was the demerit history would have to mark against him for failing to tighten control over those instruments of Presidential power which had already passed beyond the law and would go further. What would later be revealed of the American intelligence services should have engaged Kennedy's intervention; and did not receive it. Such revelations, however, would come only far down the road and White would have to grapple with them only much later.

But the balance was already struck in his mind as he rode home to New York that night, and would not change. Kennedy had done so much good, had so enlarged opportunity that he qualified in the line of American greatness. Kennedy had let slip so many old restraints, invited so many new kinds of people into the arena of American power, that the power system would have to adjust to accommodate them—party system, information system, industrial system, administrative system. America would begin to be a different kind of nation shortly after John F. Kennedy's death, and because of him.

In the imaginary conversation about history he might have had with a questioner that night on that road from Massachusetts down to Manhattan, he would have added many other dogmas of the liberal catechism. But he would have left out a critical ingredient: Accident.

Not until many years later would the storyteller appreciate the importance of accident. Yet if you believed in heroes, then this belief

led you to a contemplation of accident—because accident, raising the hero to attention or striking him down, could deflect history itself. That week the accident of assassination had led to just such a deflection. It would not be apparent for some time, but the locomotive had slipped its brakes. It seemed to be going in the same direction, but it careened ahead with a runaway good will and power to a point where the tracks disappeared over the horizon.

That entire November week had been a blur for White, but one scene would grow sharper over the years, and would acquire the stark outlines he would later describe as the Scene of the Accident.

Five days before this drive down the road, on the Sunday after the killing, he had been in Washington. The television cameras had been trained on the catafalque of Kennedy in the rotunda of the Capitol, but Lyndon Johnson had slipped away from the camera eye to speed by back street to the White House. There he would preside over a conference that had been called by Kennedy to discuss America's future course in Vietnam; 16,732 Americans were already engaged "unofficially" in war there. The brother dictators, Diem and Nhu, had been murdered three weeks before. Now Johnson, having moved up the scheduled date of the meeting, presided over the council Kennedy had invited: the Secretaries of Defense and State, McNamara and Rusk; National Security Adviser Bundy and CIA Director McCone; Ambassador to Vietnam Henry Cabot Lodge; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maxwell Taylor, and several others. Should they go on in Vietnam or not?

White remembered waiting in the lobby of the White House for the answer; and remembered Pierre Salinger, the spokesman, climbing on a table, his eyes red-rimmed from weeping, to give a briefing. Most questions were about the ceremonies of Kennedy's funeral. The room was crowded; it smelled of the trench coats of reporters, still moist from the previous day's drenching rain; all were tired, drained emotionally. Someone thought, as if mechanically, to ask Salinger: What did they just decide to do about Vietnam in there? Salinger, too, was tired, and put his hand behind his ear as if to hear the question better. He had just said that Lyndon Johnson's policy was to continue John Kennedy's policy. Then he answered, as if in disbelief at the question, that of course we would go on. There would be no change in Kennedy's policies, at home as abroad—in Vietnam as in everything else. Johnson would carry on.

The answer, however I may misremember the words, was authentic to the spirit of the day. And reflected a classic accident.

White later tried for a long time to find out what, indeed, lay in Kennedy's mind in that critical week, his last—whether Kennedy indeed would have gone on to full-scale war in Vietnam or not. Much later, he was assured by Kenny O'Donnell, who knew Kennedy's inner thinking as substantially as anyone but Robert Kennedy and Ted Sorensen, that Kennedy meant *not* to go on. According to O'Donnell, Kennedy had just pledged to Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield not only the immediate withdrawal of one thousand of the sixteen thousand American troops then in Vietnam, but the withdrawal of *all* of them after the 1964 election. When O'Donnell asked Kennedy how he meant to do that, Kennedy had quipped, "Easy. Put a government in there that will ask us to leave."

If that had been Kennedy's intention—and White had no reason to doubt O'Donnell's word—then the accident of assassination had led on to the death of fifty thousand American men and more than a million Vietnamese! Kennedy, as President, had been free to maintain or reverse course. Lyndon Johnson, just installed by the accident of assassination to preside over this council, could not, politically, repudiate the apparent course of the dead President, who lay still unburied in the rotunda.

But there was more than that to the effect of accident. Accident could affect more than a single deed or a series of deeds. It was, for example, more than the accidental linking of a hemophiliac prince, a neurotic mother, a mad monk, a weakling emperor, that brought down Czarist Russia. It was the consequent breakdown in Russia of the central switchboard of governing ideas, the discontinuity of thinking. In American history, for certain, the tragedy of Abraham Lincoln's assassination lay in the disconnection of his governing ideas from the political process which was then churning with new movement. The erratic course that power took when the radical Republicans of Congress and the greedy Republicans of business made an alliance to give America the excesses both of reconstruction and of industrialization was not *entirely* accidental. The forces were there, forces of greed and forces of ideals. But the accident of Lincoln's death freed them both to rush on to excess. The yoking ideas had been cut apart.

So, too, with the assassination of John F. Kennedy. So much vitality, so much prosperity, so much education, so much sheer military power, had built up in the America of the 1950s and 1960s that the country invited outreach, exploration, experimentation. A surplus of energy, learning, appetite, made all things seem possible.

But ideas and programs still had to be sequenced, meshed together and pushed through Congress to law and action. In the American system, control of that agenda of proposal, legislation and action lies with the President. Whether he recognizes it or not, a candidate's campaign has been an exercise in fitting ideas to the times. As President, he is supposed to pull them together. And if the elected President is removed by accident, then something can snap—coherent control of ideas over events and the agenda of events. Kennedy was to be replaced as President by a man of boundless power appetite and reckless historical ambition, who simply did not understand ideas. With unwitting good will, he would plunge America into a new war in Asia, and hasten the decay of the nation's great cities. That President would in turn be succeeded by a man of equal historical ambition who did not understand the central idea of America itself, a President who would elevate the petty malice of all men in power to policy—and thus to crime. It would be eleven more years before accident would bring back a President whose character the storyteller could trust, and several more years before another President would offer America a set of ideas that had some internal coherence, however violently debatable.

If the larger ingredients of the storyteller's thinking about history seemed certainties on that drive home in 1963, the most certain of them would have been unspoken, almost unrecognized—his assumption of American Goodness and Virtue.

All his reporting up to that time had, finally, convinced him that America, however much she might err, worked Good around the world.

Yet the years to come would shake the storyteller's conviction—not because America ceased to seek to do Good but because the Good that Americans increasingly sought would encase itself in an absolutism of spirit that led from self-righteousness on to brutality. He was about to see virtuous scholars and planners threaten or wipe out the communities of America's great cities; and observe selfless men plunge America into the most gainless of wars, wasting the youth of two nations. The questioning of America's purpose, of America's virtues, of America's faith in Opportunity would boil out into the streets and politics of the nation in what, in his later reporting, he would call the Storm Decade. But the storyteller himself would first come to recognize his own fear of American Virtue and Good Will only in 1976 when, as if stumbling over his own mistakes, he returned to visit his hometown, Boston.

No city in America has been more sharply transformed in its outer face and political dialogue than Boston. From the russet-red city of patricians and bigots of his youth to the glowing and vibrant central city of today, with its dazzling architecture of plazas and skyscrapers, the old Hub has been transformed. But the elderly poor fear Boston. White families leave Boston. The rich, the young, the learned and the oppressed congregate there. Boston is a city where, finally, Virtue is proclaimed triumphant on the hills and even the thieves have learned to talk publicly like saints.

In was in Boston, thus, quite appropriately, at the beginning of the campaign for the Presidency in 1976, that the storyteller found himself in February of that year rubbed, personally, against what thirty years of triumphant and ascendant Good Will had done to the neighborhood of his youth.

It happened this way:

George Wallace, a racist candidate, was particularly strong in South Boston, and so White had decided to spend an afternoon there to measure the Wallace strength in the coming Massachusetts primary. It took very little reporting to find out how much fear and hatred ran all through these neat old wooden homes of working-class Irish; so on impulse, White asked his cabdriver to take him from South Boston to Erie Street in Dorchester, to see the house in which he himself had been born. The driver, a student, turned, asked if White knew the neighborhood, then said he'd have to ask for ten dollars more to go there because it was so dangerous.

It irritated White to pay ten dollars over the meter to go back to his birthplace. But as they penetrated the neighborhood, he began to understand. He had seen this kind of desolation in other American cities—the blank places, the burned-out hulks, the boarded windows, the caries of the inner urban community. But this had been home. Frightened at being fearful of the streets where he had once courted girls and played hit-the-ball, he nonetheless went on. The Christopher Gibson School, where Miss Fuller had taught him American history, had been burned out only a few years earlier. No one could account for the fire; or how the school was vandalized. The city had razed it; and at the top of Morse Street, where the school had once been, stretched a blank, empty parking lot. The little Hebrew school on Bradshaw Street, where he had first learned and then taught the language of the Bible, had also been vandalized. It, too, had been razed to the ground, the site covered with blacktop paving.

He guided the driver around the corner to Erie Street. The old

trees had vanished. He knew the chestnut trees of New England had gone in the blight, but all the others, the oaks and elms and maples, had been slashed away here, too. Those few shops still standing in the small marketplace were boarded up and shuttered. Empty lots and tumble-down near-ruins flanked the silent street where gardens once grew and mothers strolled with babies. The driver had speeded up on this desolate street and had overshot the mark, when White realized he had passed his own house. He asked the driver to back up. And there it was—a derelict of a house, with a tin number plate saying "74" on the doorpost. It *was* 74 Erie Street, standing by itself, the neighboring houses on either side and behind long since torn down. But it took minutes for the leaning shanty to restructure itself in mind's eye and conform with the memory of the little crimson house of childhood with its beautiful New England garden. The old steps to the porch were rotting and twisted; the house itself was askew; on the upstairs floor where his grandmother had reigned as tyrant, the windows were either smashed, open to the wind or boarded up. Four bells with names attached indicated that four families now lived on the bottom floor, which had once housed David White and his family. He could see that his mother's bedroom, in which he had been born, was still intact and inhabited. But its windows looked out not on a flower garden but on a junkyard, with three wrecked cars and two trees which might be either alive or dead. No shrubs showed, no flower tubs were left.

White was peering over the wire-mesh fence of what had been the garden of his birthplace when several black children materialized, yelling, "Hey, man, what y'doing?" Then followed a dignified but scowling black man, who challenged, "What you doing here, man?" When White said he had been born in this house sixty years before, the man in coveralls responded belligerently, "You putting me on, man?" White told him about the cherry tree, the day lilies, the garden, the tulips, as they all had been. Gradually the man's suspicion faded; they exchanged names and telephone numbers. The owner of the shanty was this man's brother; if White wanted, he should telephone and they'd let him visit inside. The black man offered the information that there was still a pear tree in back and the old grapevine had still been there when they'd moved in several years before. Beyond that, there was no connection of this place with time past, or home with recollection.

Then White left the street which once, on summer nights, had been fragrant with the odor of baking bagels and on summer days

loud with the sound of boys playing knuckle games with the shiny golden chestnuts that came from Wolcott Street. It was gone, all gone. The Opportunity America had given him to leave this street had somehow left it a plague street, full of fearful black people in an America that did not understand itself. He knew it was the last time he would see the house itself. Next time he returned, if he ever did, it would certainly be gone—gone the way of the Christopher Gibson School and the Beth-El School. It would be demolished, burned down for the insurance money or paved over in some urban renewal project.

The next morning White was up and out of reverie and coursing through the campaign of 1976 with candidate Morris Udall. Congressman Udall was the last emissary of the yearning and hopeful sixties to the politics of the seventies, and that day he was going to campaign in White's old neighborhood. Udall stopped first at Eliot Square. As a boy, White had delivered groceries from his uncle's store in the square to the lace-curtain Irish and modest Protestant families of that sedate neighborhood. But the square now was reminiscent of Essen or Berlin—wiped out, as the South Bronx of New York City was wiped out. Some federal program had built a concrete-and-brick blockhouse pharmacy on old Eliot Square. The local poverty specialists explained to the candidate how only the federal government could provide pharmacies on this ancient and historic square. But when White had been a delivery boy, forty-five years earlier, there had been several prosperous and thriving little pharmacies on this same square, serving the Irish and Yankee families of the neighborhood. Now only government could erect and fortify a pharmacy which would not be raided by the under-Goths for drugs or sacked by vandals as the buildings roundabout were sacked. The "poverticians" so proud of this federal pharmacy they had erected knew no history; they had no historic memory of Eliot Square as it was when it was safe, and corner pharmacies could send little boys safely to deliver prescriptions to neighbors' homes at night. The program people proudly displayed to the candidate their pharmacy and explained its interconnections with Medicaid and Medicare. The candidate listened as all watched a file of very old and tottering white ladies, led by a beautiful and understanding young black social worker, entering the drugstore. She told them they must each keep one hand on the shoulder of the lady ahead as they lined up for their medicines. The government provided the medicine, and their guide; and the guide took them back to their old

folks' home. But there was no community any longer.

The rest of that morning had prodded White to further speculation. From Eliot Square, Mr. Udall drove with his following entourage to Egleston Square, then to Blue Hill Avenue, down which the candidate sped, never seeing the side streets, where the decay gnawed its way through block after block. The candidate stopped, after three miles of high-speed cavalcade, at a typical urban borderline barrier of high tension, a spot in Boston called Mattapan Square. There the fleeing whites and the advancing blacks still mingled—the most genteel of the blacks, the most forlorn of the whites. It was a "photo opportunity." The good and conscientious candidate from Arizona, aspiring to be President over an urban America, spoke briefly. Someone of his local staff had misled Udall to believe that he was seeing a pastoral of urban harmony, although, indeed, he was seeing a way station on the route of flight from disaster. He praised this tranquil "community" which proved that integration could work, invoked brotherhood, peace and the need of the federal government to do more, and then his campaign sped off to the pure white suburbs in the liberal belt that now surrounds inner Boston. The liberal belt gave Udall his only victories in the Massachusetts primary. The fearful whites of South Boston voted for George Wallace; the fearful blacks of White's native Dorchester voted for Jimmy Carter; everyone else voted for Henry Jackson. Jackson carried Massachusetts. But White knew that no federal program, nor any federal promise, could restore the tranquillity and quiet of the streets of his boyhood. And that this campaign would not seriously affect how Americans lived.

Now, in the second year of the Presidency of James Earl Carter, the storyteller could look back and study his own surprise. He was coming to the end of a book entirely different from the one he had meant to write and had promised his friends and readers.

His grand scheme, way back then in the days before Kennedy, had been to write one book every four years about how a President is made. And thus, if he exercised that scheme every election year from 1960 to 1980, he would place on the shelves six books covering a quarter of a century of American politics.

Now he could not; and it was probably that week spent on the Massachusetts primary in 1976 more than anything else that had derailed the grand scheme. No one had planned the desolation of his birthplace. Indeed, every bit of goodness in national, state and

Boston politics had been mobilized against this kind of desolation, as well as countless millions of dollars—and had failed. The storyteller had been trying to fit the story to vote totals. Yet there had to be some other connection between purpose and power in America than the mechanics of elections, some more reasonable way of passing judgment on good intentions than simply by counting votes.

As the campaign of 1976 wore on, the storyteller had applied himself to both the roadwork and the homework of the contest; chased the candidates, attended the debates, trudged in the primaries, pushed at the rallies, pontificated on television on election night. But when it was over and the time came to write it down, he found that what had been happening in America could no longer be carved up into arbitrary four-year chunks, packaged in Presidential elections. This time, in 1976, the Americans had chosen a President whose good will and morality could not be questioned—but whether he could control the forces of good will, or check their absolutism, or guide them through their clashes and controversies to compromises of common sense, was entirely unclear.

It would take much time to see the meaning and perspective of the 1976 campaign for the American Presidency; and he would be able to tell that and the story of 1980 only after he had established for himself, as well as for his readers, his credentials of experience. He had begun that way as soon as the election was over, but what he had achieved, he realized, was a story of the sights, sounds, persons and episodes he had witnessed as he had been whipped around in the slipstream of American power. Accident had drawn him into that slipstream as one of its chroniclers; he had seen American power peak at the moment of victory in Asia; seen it used with majesty to save liberties and people in postwar Europe; then followed it home to find out where the power came from, and found the trail led to politics.

Thus it was quite obvious to the storyteller long before it could have become apparent to the reader that he would need two books to tell this story. The first book, which is this, would have to tell how he had seen American power used. The second would necessarily have to go back in time and overlap, because it would be about how men reach for power, which means politics. In politics it is not the way things really are that counts, but the way they appear to be. Control of appearance and communications varies from country to country, as do their politics. In America this kind of control had been changing before Kennedy, would change even more quickly after

the assassination. Thus, what was about to happen in American politics would be so dramatic that it made an entirely different story.

The moment of break between the two stories had to be the killing of John F. Kennedy, the moment he marked for himself as the "Divide," or the "Discontinuity." Until that moment he had believed that it was only Opportunity, as a faith, that pre-eminently distinguished American politics from the politics of other countries. With Kennedy's passage, it was retrospectively clear that the old English political culture had lost control over the other peoples who had filled America's vast spaces and clotted cities. The polyglot peoples of America had no common heritage but only ideas to bind them together. Power at Kennedy's death still lay in the established order. But politics would reshuffle those who controlled the power; and a changing culture would change those who controlled politics. The happy, tranquil decade that had run from 1954 to 1963 was about to give way to the Storm Decade of the sixties, which ran from 1963 to 1974. And all the contending groups under the surface of the old political culture would emerge, claiming special privilege under the banner of Opportunity.

What would be really at issue was whether America would be transformed, in the name of Opportunity, simply into a Place, a gathering of discretely defined and entitled groups, interests and heritages; or whether it could continue to be a nation, where all heritages joined under the same roof-ideas of communities within government. The revolution of the Storm Decade and its aftermath would be a testing of whether the old ideas that had made America a nation could stretch far enough to keep it one; and whether a new culture could nourish a political system as strong and successful as the one that was passing away.

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