Lady Bird Johnson made a tape recording of her recollections of the president’s assassination two or three days after the event. We join her story as the motorcade leaves the airport:

"It all began so beautifully. After a drizzle in the morning, the sun came out bright and beautiful. We were going into Dallas. In the lead car, President and Mrs. Kennedy, John and Nellie, and then a Secret Service car full of men, and then our car – Lyndon and me and Senator Yarborough.

The streets were lined with people.- lots and lots of people – the children were all smiling, placards, confetti, people waving from windows. One last happy moment I had was looking up and seeing Mary Griffith leaning out of a window and waving at me.

Then, almost at the edge of town, on our way to the Trade Mart where we were going to have the luncheon, we were rounding a curve, going down a hill and suddenly there was a sharp, loud report – a shot.

It seemed to me to come from the right above my shoulder from a building. Then a moment and then two more shots in rapid succession. There had been such a gala air that I thought it must be firecrackers or some kind of celebration.

Then the lead car, the Secret Service men were suddenly down. I heard over the radio system ‘Let’s get out of here, ‘ and our man who was with us, Ruf Youngblood, I believe it was, vaulted over the front seat on top of Lyndon, threw him to the floor and said, ‘Get down.’ Senator Yarborough and I ducked our heads.

The car accelerated terrifically fast – faster and faster. Then suddenly they put on the brakes so hard I wondered if we were going to make it as we wheeled left and went around the corner. We pulled up to a building. I looked up and saw it said ‘Hospital.’ Only then did I believe that this might be what it was. Yarborough kept saying in an excited voice, ‘Have they shot the President?’ I said something like, ‘No, it can’t be.’

As we ground to a halt – we were still in the third car – Secret Service men began to pull, lead, guide and hustle us out. I cast one last look over my shoulder and saw, in the President’s car, a bundle of pink just like a drift of blossoms, lying on the back seat. I think it was Mrs. Kennedy lying over the President’s body.

They led us to the right, the left and onward into a quiet room in the hospital - - a very small room. It was lined with white sheets, I believe.

People came and went – Kenny O’Donnell, Congressman Thornberry, Congressman Jack Brooks. Always there was Ruf right there, Emory Roberts, Jerry Kivett, Lem Johns and Woody Taylor. There was talk about where we would go – back to Washington, to the plane, to our house. People spoke of how wide-spread this may be. Through it all, Lyndon was remarkably calm and quiet. Every face that came in, you searched for the answers you must know. I think the face I kept seeing it on was the face of Kenny O’Donnell who loved him so much.

It was Lyndon, as usual, who thought of it first. Although I wasn’t going to leave without doing it. He said, ‘You had better try to see if you can see Jackie and Nellie.’ We didn’t know what had happened to John. I asked the Secret Service men if I could be taken to them. They began to lead me up one corridor, back stairs and down another. Suddenly I found myself face to face with Jackie in a small hall. I think it was right outside the operating room. You always think of her – or someone like her, as being insulated, protected – she was quite alone.I don’t think I ever saw anyone so much alone in my life.

I went up to her, put my arms around her and said something to her. I’m sure it was something like, ‘God, help us all,’ because my feelings for her were too tumultuous to put into words.

And then I went to see Nellie. There it was different, because Nellie and I have been through so many things together since 1938. I hugged her tight and we both cried and I said, ‘Nellie, its going to be all right.‘ And Nellie said, ‘Yes, John’s going to be alright.’ Among her many other qualities, she is also tough."

References:   
   Lady Bird Johnson’s remembrance of the assassination is located in the National Archives, NLLBJ-D2440-7a; Manchester, William, The Death of a President (1967); United States Warren Commission, Report of the President’s Commission on the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy (1964).