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WITHDRAWAL SHEET

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Collection: CABINET AFFAIRS, WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF:
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File Folder: Assassination Attempt on Pres. 3/30/81 OA ~~9620~~ ⁸⁹⁷⁸

Date: April 16, 1999

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
1. memo	William Casey to James Baker, re events in Situation Room on 3/30/81 (p 1, photocopied onto page with 4/20/81 note from Craig Fuller) 1p R 6/12/00 NLS F97-098/2 #1	4/10/81	P3, F3
2. memo	complete copy of the memo described under item 1 (w/notations), 2p R " " #2	4/10/81	P3, F3

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P-1 National security classified information [(a)(1) of the PRA].
- P-2 Relating to appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA].
- P-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA].
- P-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA].
- P-5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA].
- P-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA].

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- F-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA].
- F-2 Release could disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA].
- F-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA].
- F-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA].
- F-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA].
- F-7 Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA].
- F-8 Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA].
- F-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA].

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

4/20/81

TO: ~~Dick Darman~~

FROM: CRAIG L. FULLER

() FYI

() Comment

What happened to
your report? I'd
be interested in
Cabinet member
remarks.

*not done yet!
You'll have one of the
first drafts -
even before the
w. Post!*

For Craig Fuller

of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

10 April 1981

A. Baker III
Assistant

DECLASSIFIED

MLS E97-09812#

BY MSA NARA DATE 6/12/00

on Room on

at 2:40 p.m. on Monday, 30 March,
been shot at but he had not been
from the scene of the shooting safely
called and asked me to come over to the Situation Room at the White House
right away. I left immediately. It took about twenty minutes to get across
the river and reach the Situation Room. There I learned that the President
had been taken to George Washington Hospital. I learned also that Jim Brady
had been hit in the head and that a Secret Service man and a Washington
policeman had been hit and were in the hospital.

2. When I arrived, the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, the
Secretary of Defense, Dick Allen, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the
Counsellor to the President were there. The Attorney General reported the
assailant's name and said that he came from Evergreen, Colorado. I called
John McMahon, CIA's Deputy Director for Operations, to ask that a name check
be made on John W. Hinckley, Evergreen, Colorado, and asked that any indication
of follow-up activities or reaction to the shooting that came in from our
forces around the world be phoned in to me in the Situation Room. We informed
the Secret Service that CIA had no information on Hinckley. In addition, CIA
sent a flash message worldwide asking for any information that might bear on
the assassination attempt. Responses were passed immediately to the Secret
Service and FBI unevaluated. The Secretary of State was the senior Cabinet
officer present and functioned as chairman and sought to maintain order in
the discussion. This seemed to be by common consent. He and Jim Baker at
the hospital were the contact points between the Cabinet and the developments
at the hospital.

3. The Secretary of Defense consulted with those gathered in the
Situation Room as to what should be done about putting our military forces
on alert and took responsibility for any steps that were called for in that
respect. Notification of the families of the victims, arranging for their

The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D. C. 20505

10 April 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable James A. Baker III
Chief of Staff and Assistant
to the President

FROM: William J. Casey

SUBJECT: Events in the Situation Room on
30 March 1981

F97098/2#2

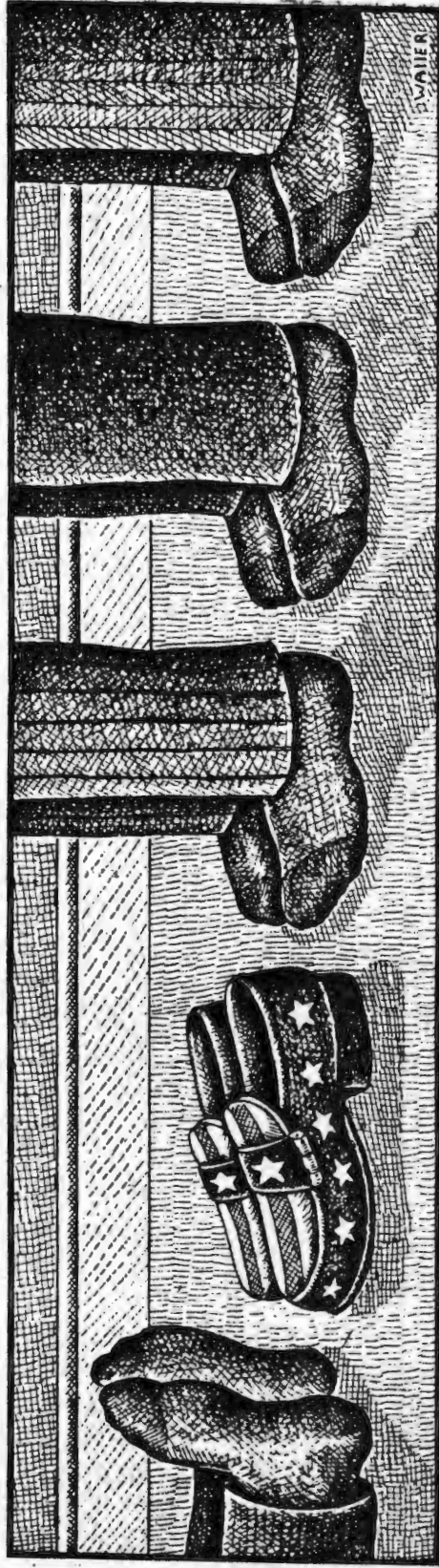
msj

S/12/81

1. I was called out of a meeting at 2:40 p.m. on Monday, 30 March, to be informed that the President had been shot at but he had not been hit, and that he had been taken away from the scene of the shooting safely but that three other men had been hurt. Almost immediately, Dick Allen called and asked me to come over to the Situation Room at the White House right away. I left immediately. It took about twenty minutes to get across the river and reach the Situation Room. There I learned that the President had been taken to George Washington Hospital. I learned also that Jim Brady had been hit in the head and that a Secret Service man and a Washington policeman had been hit and were in the hospital.

2. When I arrived, the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Defense, Dick Allen, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Counsellor to the President were there. The Attorney General reported the assailant's name and said that he came from Evergreen, Colorado. I called John McMahon, CIA's Deputy Director for Operations, to ask that a name check be made on John W. Hinckley, Evergreen, Colorado, and asked that any indication of follow-up activities or reaction to the shooting that came in from our forces around the world be phoned in to me in the Situation Room. We informed the Secret Service that CIA had no information on Hinckley. In addition, CIA sent a flash message worldwide asking for any information that might bear on the assassination attempt. Responses were passed immediately to the Secret Service and FBI unevaluated. The Secretary of State was the senior Cabinet officer present and functioned as chairman and sought to maintain order in the discussion. This seemed to be by common consent. He and Jim Baker at the hospital were the contact points between the Cabinet and the developments at the hospital.

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Charles Waller

We Can't Be Crippled Abroad, Even for a Few Hours

Thank God, President Reagan and his men have been spared. We are, in light of our continuing opposition to hand gun control, a luckier nation than we deserve to be.

But, putting gun control aside, there is a grave problem which requires immediate attention.

This problem is the absence of a carefully considered and articulated foreign affairs command authority to function in the event of temporary disability of a president.

We have such an authority with respect to the military. This authority, derived from the president's constitutional designation as commander in chief of the armed forces and the National Security Act of 1947, authorizes the president in advance of an emergency to delegate authority over the military, when he is unable to act, to the vice president, the secretary of defense and to our field commanders, in this order.

Arthur Goldberg is former associate justice of the Supreme Court, U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations, ambassador at large and secretary of labor.

We lack a comparable authority in a foreign affairs crisis.

True, Vice President Bush has been designated as our crisis manager, whatever that term means. But, this designation contemplates a president able to act, to give policy directives and to supervise their implementation. In other words, a chief executive to whom the manager is subordinate and must account.

If the president is unable to perform these functions, there is a lacuna in foreign policy decision making.

True also, we have the 25th Amendment to the Constitution. This amendment, in substance, provides that when a president, temporarily or permanently, is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the vice president and a majority of the Cabinet shall designate the vice president to be acting president. The amendment also makes provisions for the president to resume his office when he is able to do so.

This amendment could have been invoked in the terrible case of the shooting of President Reagan. It was

not invoked, presumably because the White House staff and cabinet officers conceived that the determination of a temporary presidential disability would cause panic here and abroad.

I disagree. It is simply inconceivable that the president can exercise executive authority in a foreign affairs crisis, such as the possibility of an imminent invasion in Poland, while undergoing major surgery requiring a general anesthetic and sedative pain medication for some days thereafter.

It would appear to me that such a situation is more likely to arouse concern than the uncertainty of who is in command and the credibility gap about the president's capacity to make major decisions under the given circumstances.

My apprehension, in this regard, is shared by the American people and by our allies and adversaries alike. Whatever their views, they do not fail to understand the impact of a major operation.

Almost all governmental problems can, without serious consequences, await the president's recovery from a temporary disability.

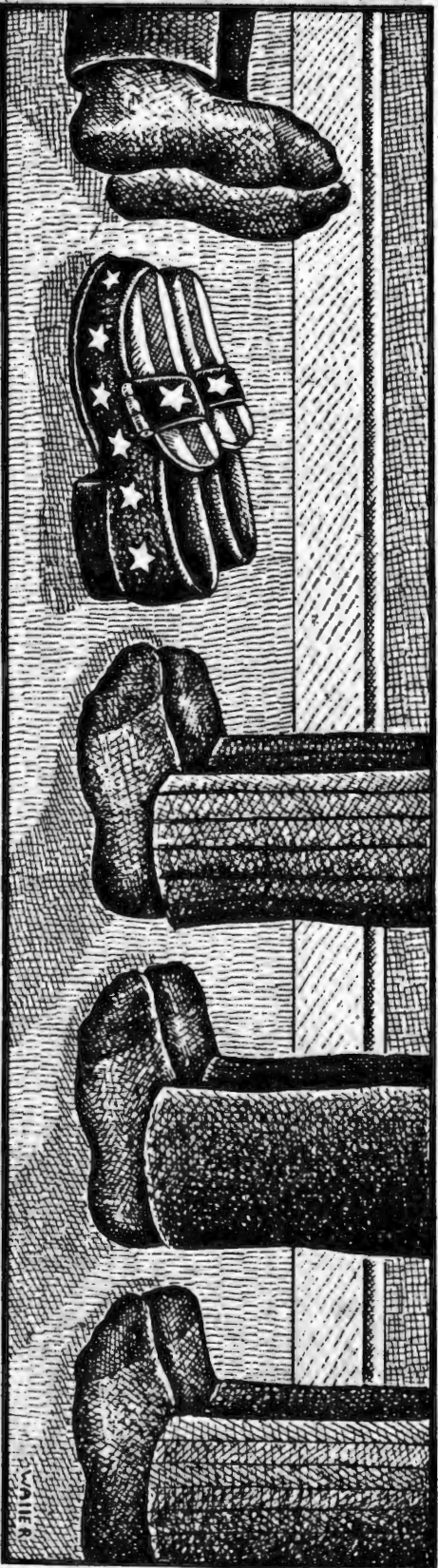
ity. But some cannot. Had the Soviets invaded Poland while President Reagan was under general anesthesia or under medication for some days thereafter, the unresolved question is who, in the executive branch, would be authorized to order the appropriate response, on our own, or better still, in concert with our allies.

I am confident that contingency papers exist. But, since we cannot be sure of the exact nature of the final action by the Soviets and their Warsaw Pact allies, our response must be tailored to what they may do. Time may be of the essence. And only a fully alert president or a similarly alert and expressly-delegated surrogate is in a position to issue the necessary policy directions.

We have, it would appear, ruled out military intervention in Poland. But there are a variety of other measures in our non-military arsenal, some short-range, others long range. Whatever the measures, it is of utmost importance that Soviet intervention, if it occurs, be met with an immediate response. And if we are to

Comment

ARTHUR J. GOLDBERG



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See WE, A-14

THE WASHINGTON STAR Sunday, April 12, 1981

We Can't Act Crippled, Even for a Few Hours

Continued from A-11
ave the imperative concerted action by our allies, they must know and be consulted about what we propose to do.

Happily, President Reagan's disability seems under control and the president appears to be able to react to whatever may appear in Poland or elsewhere. But in light of our experience in the recent past, realism requires that we provide for the future.

Even if we are able to escape further assassination attempts, presidents, like the rest of us, may be subject to disabilities requiring major operations or treatment, with attendant consequences. We have only to recall what happened to President Eisenhower during his tenure.

We can muddle through, as we now have done. Better still, we can avoid some of the confusion which occurred at the White House upon being advised of the horror of March 30. And we can reassure our people and our allies and put our adversaries on notice that we have adopted appropriate measures to enable us to cope with military and foreign policy emergencies in the event of a presidential disability.

Some Proposals
Given the reluctance to invoke the 25th Amendment, even for a limited

period during a president's temporary disability, I venture to make the following proposals:

- Presumably, we have made provisions for military emergencies by the Military Command Authority. Parenthetically, I can see no good reason why we, the public, should not be given more details about how this will operate so that we can make an informed judgment as to whether the authority is adequate, inadequate or excessive to meet such emergencies. Of course, certain military planning should remain classified. But we are entitled to know more than that the Military Command Authority runs from the president to the vice president, to the secretary of defense and ultimately to our field commanders - presumably, although not stated, through the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Foreign Affairs Command Authority which I envisage and propose would follow the same pattern, although in the case of foreign policy, the constitutional base is the president's power to direct our foreign affairs.

- The Foreign Affairs Command Authority would run from the president, to the vice president, the secretary of state and then other involved executive departments and the bureaucracy.
- It also seems to me that in both

cases, that of the Military Command Authority and of the proposed Foreign Affairs Command Authority, some form of congressional consultation or review is essential to prevent overreaching or abuse.

In the 25th Amendment a formal vote of Congress is required under certain circumstances. A less formal procedure, e.g., consultation with the leadership of both parties, may well be the appropriate measure in the case of the temporary disability of a president with respect to which the amendment is not invoked.

Announced in Advance

Further, it is essential for the sake of public confidence that any arrangement of this sort be made public in advance of any foreign policy crisis occurring during a presidential disability. And certainly, in light of President Reagan's welcome recovery, it should not apply in present circumstances even if untoward events take place in Poland. Also, the authorization of a Foreign Affairs Command Authority should be as detailed and as public as possible.

A Foreign Affairs Command Authority publicly promulgated to function during a future presidential temporary disability which is conceived not to warrant invocation of the 25th Amendment, it seems to me, would minimize confusion by those in authority as to who is minding the store and appreciably avoid panic here and abroad.

Finally, there is no possible justification for not resorting to the 25th Amendment where a president, as in the case of President Wilson, suffers

SZEP



AFTER REAGAN AND BUSH COMES HAIG

a permanent disability preventing him from discharging his constitutional duties and responsibilities for a prolonged period of time.

In these parlous times, the functions of our chief executive should, of necessity, temporarily be delegated to his second in command in the case of a transient but disabling impairment. It is dangerous that the event of and during such impairment, no such delegation is made in advance and public authorization either through invocation of the 25th Amendment or by some other appropriate means.

We Can't Act Crippled, Even for a Few Hours

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Continued from A-11
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The Boston Globe

SZEP

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The Day of the Jackal in Washington

By Lou Cannon

Washington Post Staff Writer

It began as an ordinary spring day in Washington: light showers, the usual lines of tourists at the White House, a routine speech by the president.

Then, gunfire. For six hours the nation watched and wondered. Would the president live? Would he survive and be disabled? Would the nation be plunged into constitutional crisis?

It was 2:24 p.m. Monday, March 31. Michael K. Deaver wasn't supposed to be at the Washington Hilton. He was supposed to be

back in the White House working on the president's schedule. But it was a busy day at the office for chief of staff James A. Baker III, and Deaver, his deputy, had volunteered to go in his place with President Reagan when he addressed the Building Trades Council.

No one noticed the gunman before the firing began. No one particularly saw him, or knew he was there. On the sidewalk outside the lower entrance to the Washington Hilton, a Secret Service agent gave the routine radio signal that all was clear.

It was 2:25 p.m. Deaver will never forget what happened next.

"The president and I were walking out together," he recalls. "The press started asking their usual questions. I turned and

moved [James S.] Brady up because he was the press secretary. I took three steps, then the first shot went over my right shoulder. I knew what it was. I ducked down, with the help of a shove from a Washington policeman, who also was dropping to the ground. I smelled the powder. I never saw the gunman."

Secret Service agent Jerry Parr, head of the presidential detail, never saw the gunman, either. The gunman was shielded by the crowd.

Secret Service agents had looked over this crowd, as they always do. It is not easy to spot a concealed gunman in a friendly crowd. Thirty seconds before the president arrived at the hotel, Parr had received a favorable situation report.

"Rawhide follow to Rawhide advance," he said, using the code word for the president. "Situation report?"

"Situation negative," the advance agent replied.

The quiet ended in the rapid fire of a handgun and screams from the crowd. Within nine seconds six shots had been fired in rapid succession at the presidential party.

One shot hit Secret Service agent Timothy J. McCarthy, who thrust himself between President Reagan and the gunman, in the stomach.

One shot hit District police officer Thomas K. Delahanty in the neck.

One shot, although no one knew it immediately, bounced off the armored limousine and hit Reagan in the chest, penetrating his left lung. Yet another hit a window in a building across the street and fragmented.

And one shot, the shot that did the most damage, struck White House press secretary Brady over the left eye, penetrating his brain. Brady fell, with blood gushing from his head. An advance man, Rick Ahearn, put a white handkerchief under Brady's head. It quickly turned red with blood.

In a matter of seconds Parr had shoved Reagan into the limousine and pulled the door shut. He commanded the driver, Drew Unrue, to pull away, and the presidential limousine sped from the scene. A staff control car, with Deaver inside, followed.

"You son-of-a-bitch, you broke my rib," Reagan said to Parr inside the limousine. He was joking, but he was hurting from the blow.

Later in the week the president would tell Deaver that he hadn't realized he had been hit by a bullet but that he certainly knew he had been hit.

"It was a blow like I never felt," Reagan said. "It was like someone hitting me with a hammer as hard as they could."

Parr, not knowing that the president had been shot, originally ordered the limousine to return to the White House. But when he saw Reagan coughing blood, the bright-red oxygenated blood that comes from the lung, he and the president thought a rib had been broken by the protective shove. Parr told Unrue to drive to George Washington University Hospital instead of the White House. He radioed the control car and told Deaver where he was going.

At the Hospital

At the shooting scene, agents had overwhelmed a young blond man later identified as John Warnock Hinckley Jr. They piled him into a police car and took him away.

Before the limousine reached the hospital, nurses had cleared space in the resuscitation bay for the shooting victims. A first radio message has told them there has been a shooting and that "some men" have been hurt. A second message informed them that one was the president of the United States.

At 2:35 p.m. the limousine arrived at George Washington. Reagan was feeling pain in his chest and was having difficulty breathing. As he got out of the car, D.C. paramedic Roberto Hernandez recognized the limousine. On inaugural day he had been assigned to the ambulance that followed the new president around Washington.

"I literally froze," Hernandez said afterward. "I didn't believe what I was actually seeing. I noticed he looked very pale and he had an apprehensive look about him . . . The stare in his eyes was like he was in a slight daze."

Reagan got out of the car. He walked to the emergency room, his face drawn, Parr's arm around him. Incredibly, no one had thought to order a stretcher to be ready for him. When the president entered the emergency room, he fell to one knee.

"I can't breathe," he said.

For a moment the workers in the resuscitation bay were stunned. "Is that who I think it is?" a nurse asked. Then they sprang into action. Hernandez removed Reagan's shoes, socks and pants while his partner Eric Simmons cut off his shirt.

"All I could think of was Parkland," Deaver said, referring to the Dallas hospital where John F. Kennedy was taken.

But Deaver, a short, quiet, patient man who knows Reagan better than anyone on the White House staff and was treated like a son by him, was busy with other matters. Cool and collected, Deaver found a telephone bay outside the emergency ward and called the White House. He reached Margaret Tutwiler, the secretary to chief of staff Baker.

"Keep this line open, Margaret," he said. "There's been a shooting, and the president's hurt. We don't think he was hit, but he may have broken a rib."

At the White House

At the White House they already knew about the shooting. But they did not know much about what had happened or that the president had been shot.

Baker had been working in his office through the morning. At 1 p.m. he went to the White House mess to eat his usual lunch: a tunafish salad sandwich and buttermilk. Brady and his deputy, Larry Speakes, were finishing their lunch as Baker and Tutwiler arrived. They exchanged pleasantries, and Brady said he was going to the Hilton for Reagan's speech.

The first word at the White House that something had gone wrong came in a telephone call from David Prospero, an assistant press secretary. He was at the scene where the shots were fired, and he saw Brady go down.

Prospero rushed into the hotel and grabbed the first telephone he found. It was a charge phone, so he gave the operator the White House press office number and billed the call to his home telephone.

"Get me Larry. It's an emergency," he said into the telephone.

Speakes was just coming out of a meeting with other White House aides in the Roosevelt Room on the automobile regulation package that is to be announced this week. Betsy Strong, a press aide, ran up and told him Prospero was calling. He picked up the phone of Kathy Ahern, Brady's secretary.

"The president has been shot at and Brady has been hit," Prospero said.

"Thanks," Speakes replied, and hung up. From the look on his face the others in the room knew it was a crisis.

"I don't know what it looked like, but it hit pretty hard," Speakes said.

Ahern began to weep.

White House staff director David R. Gergen was coming out of the same meeting Speakes had attended. The first instinct of both was to walk out on the colonade and watch the motorcade return, which they expected momentarily. Instead, Speakes telephoned Jack Warner of the Secret Service. Warner knew something had happened, but did not have the details.

Gergen ran down the corridor to Baker's office with the news. He burst into the office, almost knocking down Tutwiler, who had her back against the door.

Gergen went to find White House counselor Edwin Meese III, the president's top aide, who was with his deputy, Craig Fuller. They already knew. Baker ran down to the Secret Service command post in the basement to find out what had happened. It was about 2:35 p.m., the time of Reagan's arrival at the hospital.

At the Hotel

Back at the Hilton, the ambulances had borne away the wounded men, leaving behind the remnants of the shooting: an umbrella, a dropped briefcase, the bloody sidewalk grate where Brady fell.

Prospero, knowing that the presidential limousine had started out for the White House, mistakenly believed the president had arrived there, and so informed the press. One eyewitness, Ramon Flores, attempted to convince

skeptical reporters that Reagan had been hit. He shrugged his shoulders when they did not believe him.

At the Hospital

Within minutes at George Washington the resuscitation area was crowded with members of the trauma team and Secret Service agents. As Dr. Dennis O'Leary related later, a nurse trying to take Reagan's blood pressure could not hear through the stethoscope because of the din and had to take it by feeling the pulse in Reagan's arm. It was only about 75 — low enough to signal that the president was in danger of shock.

Quickly, trauma team members inserted an intravenous tube and began running fluid into the president's veins. They took blood samples to measure the blood oxygen content and to match Reagan's blood for a transfusion. Meanwhile, they called for O-negative blood, the type that can be given to anyone. Reagan's blood type is O-positive.

Dr. Joseph M. Giardano, the surgeon who heads the trauma team, was among the first to respond to the page, and he saw Reagan within five minutes of his arrival. By then, the president's blood pressure had risen to 100, but he was coughing up blood, his breathing was fast and labored, and the surgeons had discovered the slit-like wound under his left arm.

Giardano said that the likelihood of a collapsed lung and the danger that Reagan might be bleeding from his heart or a major blood vessel made it necessary to insert a chest tube at once.

Outside - the resuscitation bay, Deaver and aide David Fisher kept the telephone lines open to the White House. Deaver had Nancy Reagan called immediately. He also asked Tutwiler to tell his secretary to call his wife, Carolyn, and tell her that he was unharmed, but Deaver's secretary, Shirley Moore, had already done so.

Meanwhile, Brady and McCarthy had arrived at the hospital, and Delahanty had been taken to Washington Hospital Center. Brady looked bad and his blood pressure was dangerously high. To the paramedics, McCarthy looked best of all.

"Are you still with us?" a fellow agent asked him. "Oh, yes," McCarthy quickly replied.

At 2:36 p.m. Mrs. Reagan arrived at the hospital. She wanted to see her husband immediately, but was told by Deaver that she could not. When she did get to see him, he greeted her

with a line that may become a classic: "Honey, I forgot to duck."

At the White House

At the White House, events moved swiftly. Tutwiler had left the first White House line open for Deaver, then she rounded up Baker, Meese, Gergen, Speakes and communications director Frank Ursomarso, who were in a hall beyond the Oval Office. She told them Deaver was on the telephone.

Baker went into his office and took one phone. Meese picked up the other phone on the same line. Baker was at his desk. Deaver told them that the president had been shot.

"Shit," said Meese.

"Oh, Jesus," said Baker.

Both men moved swiftly to do what was necessary. They agreed that the vice president had to be called, and that the Cabinet should assemble in the White House Situation Room.

Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. had called, and Baker called him back.

"It's very important how we handle this world-wide," Haig told Baker, who agreed.

Treasury Secretary Donald T. Regan was the first Cabinet officer to reach Baker's office. Treasury is the boss of the Secret Service, and Regan had been told of the incident within two minutes of its occurrence. Regan was on a long distance call from Los Angeles when the call came, and he hung up and went immediately by car across the street to the White House.

At the hospital, Deaver put White House physician Daniel Ruge on the open line, and Baker took notes on what Ruge told him: "He [the president] has received a chest wound in the left chest. He is in stable condition. The blood pressure and pulse is okay. He is alert and fighting. Next stop could be the operating room. You ought to get right over here."

Haig arrived. Later, at the State Department, a spokesman announced that Baker and Meese had left the White House by the time Haig got there. It was an incorrect announcement. Regan, Baker and Tutwiler all remember that Haig arrived just before Baker and Meese left the office.

They talked briefly, and Meese and Baker agreed that Haig would be the "contact point" at the White House while they were at the hospital. No one said anything about anyone being "in control." But there was a brief discussion of the 25th Amendment, providing for presidential succession, because no one knew how badly

Reagan was hurt. Bush would be back by the time they knew, everyone agreed.

Meese told Tutwiler to get them a car. "I'll handle it," Regan said. He directed an agent to get them a siren-equipped Secret Service car so they could speed through traffic to the hospital. Speakes and Lyn Nofziger were with Meese and Baker.

Nofziger is a longtime Reagan aide who proved a composed man in the day's crisis. He offered to help because "Brady is out of commission," and everyone was happy to have him. He and Speakes are old adversaries, but they buried their differences on that bloody day.

Haig, Regan, Gergen and intergovernmental relations aide Rich Williamson went down to the Situation Room in the White House basement.

At the hospital Deaver alternated his time between Nancy Reagan and the telephones. The grim mood was lightened on one occasion when a hospital clerk with a green form in his hand ran around trying to get some information on the patient. "Who is he?" the clerk wanted to know.

"R-e-a-g-a-n," Deaver spelled out.

"You are kidding," the clerk said.

"I'm not kidding," said Deaver.

Meanwhile, Dr. Neofytos T. Tsangaris, the hospital's acting chief of staff, had been summoned from a meeting by a brief announcement: "The president of the United States is in the emergency room." Tsangaris said he quickly realized that three separate operating rooms, one for each shooting victim, must be readied at once with nurses, technicians and equipment.

It was now 3:20 p.m. and Reagan was being prepared for surgery. He had an oxygen mask over his face when Baker saw him, but winked at his chief of staff.

At 3:30 p.m., approximately 45 minutes after he was brought to the hospital, he was wheeled to the operating room. His bleeding had slowed somewhat, and he had received a transfusion of five units of blood.

"Please tell me you're Republicans," he joked to the masked surgical team surrounding him.

After that, according to operating room technician Michael Borowski, who helped with instruments during the operation, the president was quiet.

"I saw Reagan looking around at everybody busy doing their thing . . ." he recalled later. "I just kind of took his hand. He had sort of tears in his eyes . . . He really had this look of appreciation on his face. That's what really touched me."

The first part of the operation required a tiny incision below the navel. Into the incision Giordano inserted about a quart of salt solution to determine whether any bullets had penetrated the abdominal cavity and caused bleeding there. When sucked out again, the fluid was clear, indicating no abdominal injuries.

A report was given to Baker and Deaver outside the operating room. Nancy Reagan was told the good news, and tears came to her eyes.

Borowski said Reagan was then turned on his right side and redraped for the more major operation, the thoracotomy. Assisted by Dr. Kathleen Cheyney, Dr. Benjamin L. Aaron cut a six-inch incision through the skin parallel with the ribs, extending horizontally from below the left arm toward the center of the chest. Then he used retractors to spread the ribs apart.

Aaron said he could feel splintering of the seventh rib where the bullet had nicked it and ricocheted into the chest. Outside the left lung, he found a large blood clot, and, after he removed it, he could see where the bullet had entered the lung. Quickly, he examined the heart and the major vessels nearby. They were untouched. All the bleeding was coming from the smaller vessels within the torn lung.

"We began to feel around for the bullet . . . and to our chagrin we could not find that bullet within the lung," he said later. Aaron ordered an X-ray taken on the operating table. The bullet was visible, embedded in a portion of the left lung just behind the heart and "flattened almost as thin as a dime," he said.

At last Aaron felt the bullet and pulled it out. Then he removed some of the dead lung tissue, inserted a drain into the bullet's track, and closed the incisions. The president had been in the operating room for 3½ hours, and apparently was out of danger. With a breathing tube in his throat, and still on a respirator, the president was taken to the recovery room.

There had been anxious moments for Nancy Reagan during this operation, moments she spent in a small private office the hospital made available to her and in the chapel, where she met Sarah Brady, whose husband had been erroneously declared dead in mid-afternoon reports on all three television networks.

For 53 minutes after the shooting not much was known at the White House press office. It wasn't until 3:18 p.m. that communications director Ursomarso stood on veteran press aide Connie Gerrard's chair in the upper press office to tell a packed crowd of reporters that Reagan had been shot.

Every television set was turned on as staff and reporters watched replay after replay. The room was full of people who work with Brady every day, and the replays, particularly those in slow motion, made all who were present think that his chances for survival were slight.

Some aides wept for their fallen press secretary. It was pouring rain outside now, and correspondents who usually would have broadcast from the White House lawn stood on chairs in the briefing room to get above the heads of their milling colleagues and talked to fill air time.

At 3:37 p.m. Gergen appeared in the crowded briefing room.

"Good afternoon," he said. "This is to confirm the statements made at George Washington hospital that the president was shot once in the left side this afternoon as he left the hotel. His condition is stable.

"A decision is now being made whether or not to operate to remove the bullet. The White House and the vice president are in communication. And the vice president is now en route to Washington."

On Air Force Two

Going to Washington had not been George Bush's plan. On a day of routine politicking, he had slipped into his blue, Eisenhower-style official flight jacket, buckled his seatbelt and settled back for a moment of relaxation as his plane took off from Fort Worth at 2:41 p.m. EST for a short hop to Austin.

Behind him was a speech to cattle-men and the dedication of the former Hotel Texas as a national monument — it was the hotel where John F. Kennedy had spent his last night before that fatal trip to Dallas. Ahead, in Austin, awaited an address to the Texas Legislature and a news conference.

Air Force Two was still climbing, a couple of minutes later, when Edward Pollard, head of the vice president's Secret Service detail, took an urgent message from the Fort Worth office. He was told of the assassination attempt, and was told that the president had not been hit. And he also was informed, incorrectly, that two Secret Service agents were down. Pollard immediately relayed this message to Bush.

Bush nodded quietly and began talking of the possibility of shortening his Austin stopover. The telephone line flashed again. This time it was Bush's press secretary, Peter Teeley, with a message identical to the one Pollard had given.

The vice president's chief legislation aide, Robert V. Thompson, rushed back to the VIP section in mid-plane and announced to the assembled Bush aides and three Texas congressmen that an attempt had been made on the president's life.

Up front, at 3:04 p.m., Haig telephoned Bush. There is no secure tele-

phone line to Air Force Two, and Haig was guarded in his communication. He also had a very poor connection.

"I think you should come directly back to Washington," Haig said. "There's been an incident." He also told Bush that he would be sending him a message over the coded Telex machine that is the only secure channel of communications between Air Force Two and the ground.

Bush hung up and turned to his aides. "We are going directly back to Washington," he said. "I just spoke to Haig." It was a quarter of an hour later before he learned what had happened.

"Mr. Vice President, in the incident you will have heard about by now, the president was struck in the back," the Telex from Haig said. "Medical authorities are deciding now whether or not to operate. Recommend you return to D.C. at earliest possible moment."

Quickly, the word was passed through the plane. House Majority Leader Jim Wright (D-Tex.) walked into the front cabin, and Bush turned to him and said, "Why in the world would anybody shoot a man like Ronald Reagan?"

Air Force Two did not have enough fuel on board to make it to Washington nonstop, so the plane landed in Austin as scheduled, but only for refueling. Bush stayed on board, sipping on a diet cola and saying very little.

At the White House

At the White House, Cabinet members and other high White House officials assembled in the Situation Room: Attorney General William French Smith, Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger, Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis, National Security Council staff director Richard V. Allen, domestic adviser Martin Anderson, CIA Director William J. Casey, counsel Fred Fielding. Hours later, Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige would arrive.

There were so many people rushing back and forth that Allen tried to close the door to the Situation Room to keep some of the staff members out. Allen put a tape recorder on the table in the center of the room along with another that was already there.

Some knew they were talking for posterity, but others didn't even notice the recorders. What the men in the Situation Room wanted to know were three things: how badly was the president hit? Was the shooting a conspiracy or an individual act? Would Brady survive?

While first reports from the hospital seemed to be positive, everyone in the Situation Room was aware that the president was 70 years old and faced major surgery. They were trying to prepare for every contingency.

Smith and Fielding briefed the Cabinet members on constitutional succession and on the 25th Amendment, which spells out the procedures for the vice president's assuming office in case of presidential disability. The review was brief, because the Cabinet members spent much of the time on the telephone and, like millions of other Americans, before the television set.

Of those in the Situation Room, Smith knew Reagan best. He is Reagan's long-time attorney, a charter member of the "kitchen cabinet" and a close friend. He also has jurisdiction over the FBI, and was on the telephone immediately, checking on Hinckley.

The readout from the FBI showed that the suspect carried psychiatrists' cards in his pocket, which convinced them that he probably was acting on his own.

Smith was outwardly calm, but his thoughts, like Deaver's, went back to the day John F. Kennedy was shot and the pall it cast over the nation. He was relieved to hear that Reagan was trying out one-liners on the doctors, knowing, as he would say later, "that this was a sign of normalcy."

Weinberger had been told by his secretary that he was wanted at the Situation Room. At first, he couldn't find a car, and thought of taking a taxi, but CIA Deputy Director Bobby Inman was visiting him, and he offered to take the defense secretary to the White House.

When Weinberger arrived, Haig was making telephone calls on the only secure phone in the Situation Room. Weinberger stepped outside to call Gen. David Jones, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They discussed the combat-readiness of American forces, and Weinberger, after receiving unspecified classified information on a little white slip of paper, directed Jones to order "a little higher state of readiness," but one that was short of a full alert.

Other Cabinet members were making similar determinations in their areas of responsibility.

Regan told Treasury Undersecretary for Monetary Affairs Beryl Sprinkel to tell the Federal Reserve that the dollar should be supported on foreign exchange markets. Afterward, Regan described his action as "a normal procedure that has been done before" when some crisis threatens the dollar's value.

The order meant that the Federal Reserve bought dollars with other currencies, though not in massive amounts.

The attention of the officials in the Situation Room then turned to the

television set, which showed Speakes in the press room fending off questions. He hadn't been told much, and some of the questions concerned possible emergency actions the nation was taking in the crisis. He was asked the key question of whether the U.S. military had been placed on higher readiness.

"Not that I'm aware of," Speakes replied.

His response drew criticism from both Weinberger and Haig, but the secretary of state was especially agitated. He said that "the next time someone opens their yap" they had better make sure that what they are saying is true. Weinberger then left the room to make a telephone call.

"We've got a problem, and it's now," Haig said, turning to Allen. "We had better go upstairs and get this straightened out."

Haig and Allen double-timed upstairs to the press room, which the secretary of state, who had undergone open-heart surgery, later thought might have accounted for his subsequent shaky appearance on television. He reached the briefing podium at 4:14 p.m.

In a voice cracking with emotion, he told the nation and the world: "I just wanted to touch upon a few matters associated with today's tragedy. First, as you know, we are in close touch with the vice president, who is returning to Washington . . . We have informed our friends abroad of the situation, the president's condition, as we know it [is] stable, now undergoing surgery. And there are absolutely no alert measures at this time that we're contemplating."

Haig was then asked who was making decisions for the government at the time, and responded, "Constitutionally, gentlemen, you have the president, the vice president and the secretary of state, in that order, and should the president decide he wants to transfer the helm to the vice president, he will do so. He has not done that. As of now, I am in control here, in the White House, pending return of the vice president and in close touch with him. If something came up, I would check with him, of course."

Haig's appearance astounded Baker and Meese, who were watching at the hospital. And it flabbergasted Haig's colleagues in the Situation Room, none of whom had been consulted before he left on his self-appointed mission.

"What's Al doing up there?" asked Lewis.

Weinberger, returning from his telephone call to Jones, looked up and saw Haig on the screen and asked, "Why are they running that old tape of Al Haig?"

"It's not a tape, he was told. Haig's up there."

"He can't be, he was right here," said Weinberger, still disbelieving. As he watched, Haig told reporters in the briefing room that no change in military alert procedures was contemplated.

Weinberger knew that this was untrue because he had just ordered the increased state of readiness, but had done so without telling Haig.

When Haig returned to the briefing room, Weinberger was waiting. In a dramatic moment of angry but controlled confrontation, Weinberger demanded that Haig explain why he had said what he had in the briefing room. The two men kept their voices down, but their differences were clear and sharp. Despite Haig's announcement, Weinberger told him, he had increased the readiness of American military forces.

"That's just what I said we weren't doing," Haig said.

"I didn't know you were going up there," Weinberger replied, adding that he didn't think it "was appropriate" for Haig to be going before the television cameras in the manner he had done. For good measure, he also said that Haig had misstated the order of presidential succession, prompting Haig to respond: "You should read the Constitution."

Afterward, both Haig and Weinberger would try to minimize the exchange, which lasted only a few minutes. Haig responded to criticisms of his appearance by saying that he was winded from running up the stairs.

"I may have been quivery, but I've been through 50 times worse than that," he said.

At the Hospital

At the hospital, Haig's impromptu briefing was one of the bad moments for the watching White House aides.

An even worse one came in the press room when the television networks incorrectly announced Brady's death. Some aides were furious. Others wept silently as they continued to work.

Baker, however, knew better than the networks. He had just had a report that Brady was holding his own, and he called the Situation Room and told them to disregard the report. Hospital interns who heard the reports asked the surgeon operating on Brady if he hadn't heard that his patient was dead.

At about 4:30 p.m. former president Richard M. Nixon called the hospital, asking for Nancy Reagan. She was unable to come to the telephone, but Baker did.

"Please convey my concern that I know is shared by all Americans," Nixon said.

At 5:20 p.m. the bullet was removed from the president and the

medical reports were positive. Baker called the Situation Room and told them they didn't have to worry themselves any more with the 25th Amendment.

Meese called the vice president, whose plane was still an hour out of Washington.

Cradling the phone in his cabin after he received the news, Bush turned to his aides and said, "The bullet's been removed. The operation was a success. The president is fine."

It was now agreed at the hospital that the president's top aides should split up. And it was also agreed that any further briefings on the president's condition should be by the doctors, even though this meant keeping the press waiting for another hour.

Deaver and Nofziger, whose experience was an asset in White House press relations, remained at the hospital, where Nofziger related the first of the Reagan jokes in surgery. Meese

went to the vice president's residence to brief Bush upon his arrival.

Meese met Bush at the residence, and together they rode in an armored limousine back to the White House. Meese had sent a helicopter for the vice president to Andrews Air Force Base, and a Bush aide had suggested that the chopper fly directly to the White House.

"No, I don't want to do that," Bush said. "Only the president flies onto the South Lawn."

It was 7 p.m. when Bush arrived in the Situation Room. In rapid-fire order Allen ticked off an agenda that had been discussed previously: the president's health, an update on the world intelligence situation, the status of U.S. military forces, the status of what the press and public had been told, the status of information given privately to members of Congress, the outlines of the statement which had been drafted for Bush, the question of whether it was appropriate for Bush to visit Reagan at the hospital, information about Mrs. Reagan and the family, the cancellation of Bush's planned trip to Geneva and an update on the next day's schedule, which Bush would fulfill.

At 7:30 p.m., with Brady still fighting for his life, Dr. Dennis O'Leary, clinical dean of George Washington, briefed the press.

At 8:45 p.m., Meese, Baker and Weinberger met in Baker's office for a drink and a discussion of the next day.

At about this time, Nancy Reagan left the hospital with their son, Ron, and his wife, Doria. In a corridor, she encountered the parents of the wounded Secret Service agent, and said gratefully that their son had saved her husband's life. McCarthy's father sobbed. Then, on the ground floor, she met Brady's mother, Dorothy.

"Hi, Nancy," said Mrs. Brady, in a manner that was strikingly composed, "We are just praying for both of them."

Nofziger remained at the hospital to brief reporters on Brady. At 9:30 p.m. he gave the first relatively optimistic report on Brady's condition.

At 8:50 p.m. the president, with the anesthesia worn off, scribbled a note to his doctors in the recovery room.

"All in all, I'd rather be in Philadelphia," it said, in the words of a famous movie line by W.C. Fields.

Everyone laughed. When the message was relayed to the Situation Room, Smith said, "I know he's going to be all right."

At 3 a.m. Tuesday, the tubes in Reagan's mouth were removed. The president's first words were about his assailant.

"Boy, what's *his* beef?" Reagan asked.



American Nightmare

And yet it goes on, and on, and on . . . Why?

—Robert F. Kennedy on the murder of Martin Luther King, 1968

Suddenly, like a nightmare in instant replay, it was going on again: the faceless, rootless loner with a pistol and a lunatic mission washed up within shooting distance of the American Presidency and the American dream. Yet again, television screens burned with the sickening imagery of assassination—Ronald Reagan walking and waving through a misty Washington rain, a Saturday-night special pop-popping bullets out of a crowd, the bodies of White House press secretary James Brady and two lawmen blown hurt and bleeding to the sidewalk, the Secret Service slamming a stunned and wounded President into his limousine and racing against death to a hospital. The news this time was good for Reagan and the others, and the omens for their recovery were favorable. The most grievous wound of all was struck to the soul of a nation—the discovery that its public life is not yet safe from the fantasies of madmen or the shadow of the gun.

'I Forgot to Duck': Whatever saving grace could be found in the carnage on T Street owed mainly to Reagan himself, grinning like the Sundance Kid into the face of death, and to the extraordinary resilience of the government he had inherited only 70 days before. The President walked into George Washington University Hospital on his own with his blood oozing away, an undetonated explosive bullet in his chest and his fighting spirit very much intact. "I forgot to duck," he kidded going into two hours of surgery. "All in all, I'd rather be in Philadelphia," he kidded again coming out. His sang-froid spread to his colleagues, gathered in the White House Situation Room to install Vice President George Bush as acting President had the need arisen. It did not. Reagan resumed some semblance of command within eighteen hours—and the government, in the insistent word of the White House, "did not skip a beat."

Yet the mere fact of the *attempt* by an overprivileged underachiever named John W. Hinckley Jr. was evidence enough that the eighteen-year death trip begun with the assassination of John F. Kennedy cannot yet be counted over. Hinckley, like most of his forebears in the American past, was the agent of no discernible cause larger than his own dementia—a Valium-dulled stew of rock songs, Nazi scriptures and an unrequited passion for the teen-age movie star Jodie Foster. But he is as well the child of the bloodiest generation in the history of America's public life and popular culture. JFK fell into the bull's-eye when Hinckley was 8, Malcolm X when he was 9, King when he was 12, Bobby when he was 13, George Wallace when he was 16, Gerald Ford when he was 20, Vernon Jordan and John Lennon when he was 25. He saved cuttings on some of them, and on their assailants, and read them to mean that murdering Reagan would be regarded—even honored—as a "historical deed."

He was wrong, of course; the disturbing lesson of the attempt on Reagan was not that Americans condone or encourage public violence but that they have grown numb to it. Hinckley did have his admirers in isolated pockets—the seventh-graders in Tulsa who cheered this TV shooting as they had J. R.'s on "Dallas" a year ago and the occasional callers to radio phone-in shows asserting that Reagan got what he deserved. What was more disquieting was the widespread that's-life acquiescence with which

many more Americans received the news and switched channels to something else, once the initial vertigo wore off and the medical bulletins turned favorable. "Nobody was shocked," said Frank Mankiewicz, the old Kennedy hand who now heads National Public Radio. "Suddenly, it goes with the territory. Everybody knows what presidents do: they run for office, they push bills through Congress, they make speeches—and they get shot at."

The swift return to what Reagan might call normalcy was due at least as much to his own iron-horse example, shaking off his wounds and his post-op pain as if he were 50 instead of 70 and chafing for his return to the White House as early as this week. "We could all say, 'Boy, that was a close one,'" said Jack Casey, a Detroit political consultant. "The President signaled to us that life goes on." For a day likely to live as long as his Presidency, he was the Duke defending the Alamo, Teddy Roosevelt taking a slug in the chest en route to a speech and waving away help until he had finished. His approval rating in an ABC News/Washington Post poll bounced 11 points, overnight, to 73 per cent. "General Patton or George Gipp couldn't have done it better," a Pittsburgh political scientist said. "He'll have an image of an almost mythic hero about him now."

He will need those resources and more in the weeks ahead, running the government from a sickbed through a particularly difficult passage. An Administration accustomed to running on delegated authority seemed to tick on nicely enough without him. But the crisis in Poland was heating dangerously near to what Reagan's men considered the flash point (page 62), with the President still in the hospital and his Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, freshly bruised by his rattled behavior in the first hours after the shooting. The Reagan economic package, moreover, was at a delicate moment of gestation. The

Senate voted during the week to cut the budget deeper, by \$2.8 billion, than Reagan had asked, and the Urban League's Jordan—himself scarred by sniper fire—pronounced it "no time to argue with a President." "Maybe the congressmen will feel sorry for me and pass my tax bill," Reagan told a visitor; still, he was champing to get back to work lest his program falter without him.

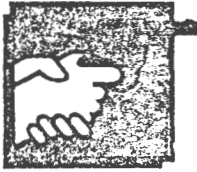
The Wrong Track: The less tangible danger was that John Hinckley had shot up more than a President and his retinue—that his .22-caliber Röhm RG-14 had wounded the American spirit as well as at a moment when it had seemed so promisingly on the mend. In surveys by Reagan's polltaker Richard Wirthlin, public support for the view that the nation has somehow "gotten off on the wrong track" had dwindled sharply, from 77 per cent last June to 47 per cent only a fortnight ago. But the attempt on Reagan's life brought home how fragile that spirit is and how resigned Americans have become to periodic armed assaults on it. It has become a given that the open society cannot surely identify the dangerous men and women in its midst, or keep them from moving about at will, or even prevent them from buying weapons meant only for murder. With Reagan's wounding, Congress rang with impassioned cries for tightened gun control—and defeated whispers that, however popular, it will not pass.

To do nothing at all is to surrender to the possibility that the attempt on Reagan was not the last—that the shadow of the gun has become a deadly fact of American life. "Does anybody know what the guy's beef was?" Reagan mused, puzzling with the rest of the nation over the scrambled shards of John Hinckley's life. The real nightmare for America was that it didn't matter—that any crowd anywhere may conceal a tuned-out loser with a pistol in his pocket and a grievance to avenge in blood.

PETER GOLDMAN

Instant replay: A pistol spat bullets, a stunned and wounded President was slammed into his car—and, beyond a line of fallen bodies, lawmen pinned Hinckley to the wall

© Sebastiao Salgado Jr.—Magnum



Reagan's Close Call

The cylinder spun, the hammer clicked and the little, snub-nosed revolver sprayed its chaos. Michael Deaver, deputy White House chief of staff, cringed like a man who had just felt death whistle past his neck. Press secretary James Brady pitched face down on the sidewalk, blood trickling through a grating. Policeman Thomas Delahanty spun around and then collapsed, a bullet in his neck, his hat flying through the air. One slug caught Secret Service agent Timothy McCarthy in the chest, lifting and dropping him in a limp bundle on the pavement. Another punched a tiny hole in the left side of the President of the United States, who was pushed into his car by agent Jerry Parr and sped away so fast that at first even Ronald Reagan didn't know he had been shot.

The day before the shooting, 25-year-old John Warnock Hinckley Jr., a child of the right gone wrong, arrived at the Greyhound Bus Terminal in Washington—just five long blocks from the White House. For a few moments Hinckley leaned on a pole in the terminal; then he sat down in a blue plastic chair. At about 12:15 p.m. he got into line at the terminal's Burger King. "A Whopper, cheese, no onions, and an order of onion rings," he snapped at waitress Linda Ross, slamming a \$5 bill down on the counter. When the waitress asked if the order was to go, he snarled, "I said it was for here." He grabbed his change and tray, retreated to a far corner and wolfed down the food. At 1 p.m. he made his way to the Park Central Hotel on Eighteenth Street, two blocks from the White House and less than one block from Secret Service headquarters. He paid \$42 for one night's rent on room 312, which had twin beds, ivory wallpaper, a brown carpet and a color TV. He went out again, then hunkered down for the night—and his grim appointment the next day with Ronald Reagan.

While Hinckley cruised the porn district four blocks from the White House, the President was spending a quiet evening in the family quarters at the White House. Next morning he got up, showered, put on a blue suit and tucked a white handkerchief neatly in his pocket. At 8:45 he entered the Oval Office for the day's first briefing with his top aides—White House chief of staff James Baker, deputy chief of staff Michael Deaver and White House

Nancy and a convalescing President: 'Hon-ey, I forgot to duck'

counselor Edwin Meese. Richard Allen, the national-security adviser, went over the morning cables. Then his top Congressional lobbyist, Max Friedersdorf, gave him the morning line on Congress. The rest of the day looked to contain nothing more exciting than a meeting with David Rockefeller of Chase Manhattan Bank and dinner with a few Cabinet officers.

Two blocks away, Hinckley got up, dressed and left the hotel. Outside, it was raining. Hinckley went to Kay's Sandwich Shoppe down the street from the Old Executive Office Building, sat on a stool and began to eat his breakfast. Back at room 312, the maid came in. She found Hinck-



John Ficara—NEWSWEEK

Hinckley under arrest: A 'historical deed' for love

ley's clothes packed neatly in a suitcase, a little travel alarm clock and a TV guide—little more. Not long afterward, Hinckley returned. He sat down to compose a love letter to someone he had never met: Jodie Foster, an 18-year-old movie starlet who played a teen-age prostitute in the 1976 film "Taxi Driver" (box, page 35). "There is a definite possibility that I will be killed in my attempt to get Reagan," he wrote. "Jodie, I'm asking you to please look into your heart and at least give me the chance with this historical deed to gain your respect and love." The signature was equally inflamed: "I love you forever—John Hinckley."

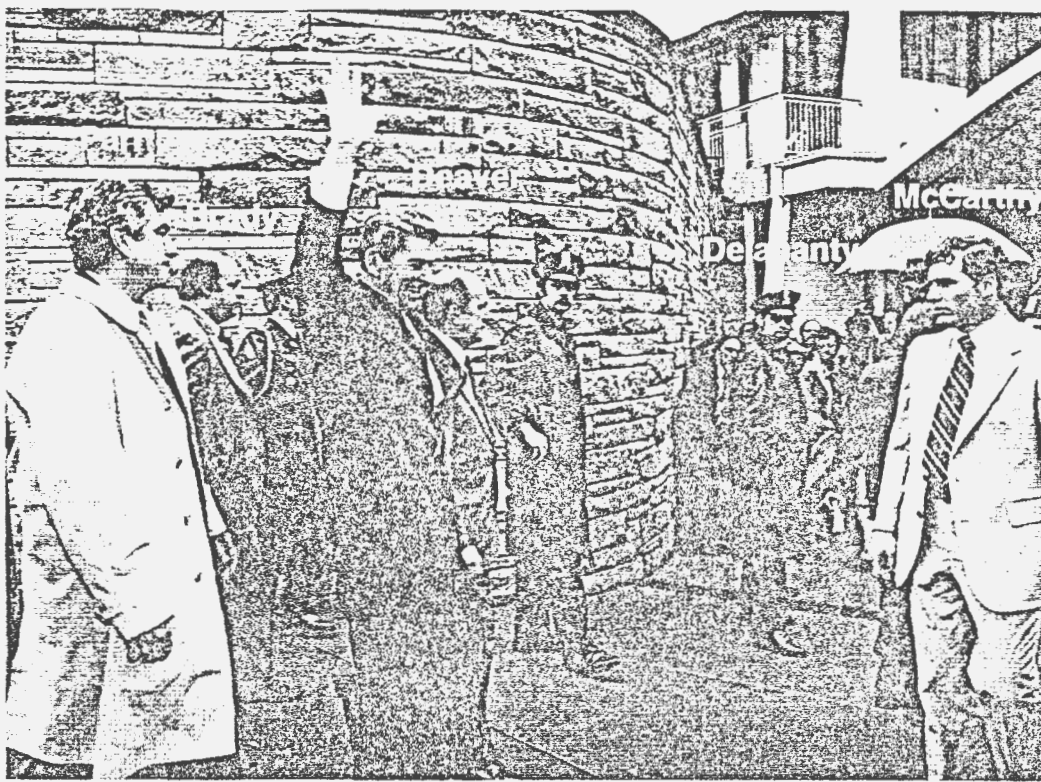
The letter was dated 12:45 p.m. At 1:30, Secretary of Labor Raymond Donovan arrived at the White House to escort Reagan

to the Washington Hilton Hotel for a speech to 3,500 AFL-CIO union delegates. The two politicians, self-made men of Irish roots and humor, spent the five-minute drive reminiscing about the 1980 New Jersey primary, in which Donovan had played a crucial role for Reagan. Donovan told the President an old New Jersey joke about a local pol demoted to superintendent of Municipal Weights and Measures. After his first day, reporters asked him, "Sir, how many ounces in a pound?" "Hey," he protested. "Give a guy a chance to learn his duties." The President's limousine parked outside the hotel's VIP entrance and Reagan strode in. He worked a reception line, huddled with Donovan, Deaver and Brady in a VIP "holding room." Then he walked into the ballroom and gave a conventional little speech that ranged from his budget cuts to the work ethic to violent crime.

Fidgets: Hinckley got ready to make his move. Sometime after 1:15, when a room maid knocked and found him still in his room, he set off for the Washington Hilton. When he arrived, he took up a position in front of the curving stone wall that runs from the VIP entrance. "He was very fidgety, agitated," recalled Mike Dodson, a Pinkerton man working in the Agency for International Development across the street who noticed Hinckley as he waited for the President to emerge from the hotel. Reporters and cameramen, also waiting for Reagan, took up stations behind a red-velvet rope. The Secret Service did not screen the press crowd despite the fact that bystanders had made their way into it. A police lieutenant reportedly studied Hinckley for a while—but then looked away.

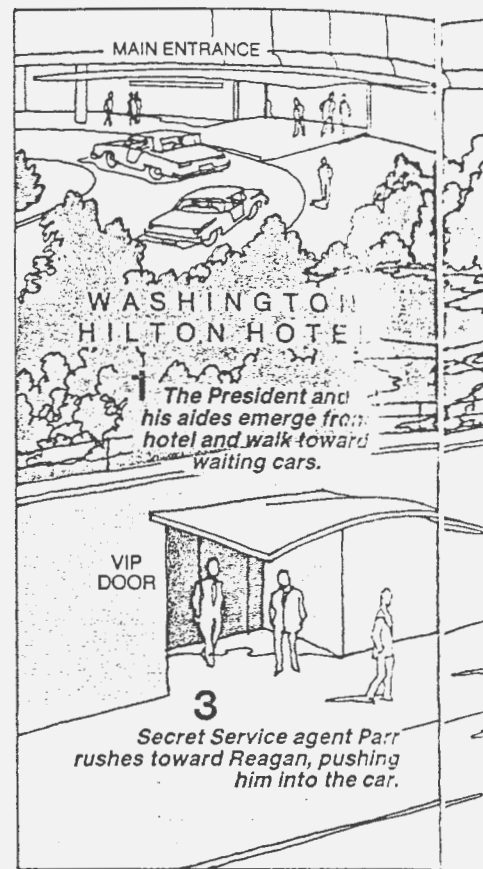
The leaky security upset Reagan's White House advance men. Rocky Kuonen pulled out a piece of paper and scribbled a diagram, reminding himself to sanitize the press cordon of bystanders before Reagan's next public stop. The precaution came too late. At 2:25 the President emerged from the VIP entrance into a misty rain. For convenience, his limousine was not parked directly in front of the entrance but 25 feet away so the motorcade could avoid the hotel's curving driveway and a circuitous exit as it pulled away.

As the Presidential party came out, Brady and Deaver swung left, headed for the staff car. Then Reagan stepped forward. Hoping to get in one quick question, Michael Putzel, an AP reporter, shouted, "Mr. President, Mr. President." The President smiled and raised his left arm in a cheery



Michael Evans—The White House

Moments before the shooting: The gunman is blocked from view by Officer Delahanty



wave. At that moment, Hinckley whipped out his gun, dropped to a crouch, took up a cop's professional, double-hand grip and opened fire. Reagan froze and went pale. "It was like looking at a person who has seen death reflected in his eyes," said Mickey Crowe, 24, a trembling demonstrator who had come to protest Reagan's pro-nuclear-energy stance. "All I can remember is his expression. It was like a guy saying: 'I'm in a moment of helplessness'."

Shield: Within two seconds, Hinckley emptied his gun, firing six shots in all. The little revolver made a deceptively innocent popping sound. "Firecrackers," thought Kuonen, who had seen heavier fire in Vietnam. At the first pop, Parr, 50, head of the White House Secret Service detail, reached forward and grabbed the startled President. Doubling Reagan over to reduce his target profile, Parr then hunched over him as a human shield and slammed him to the floor of the limousine. Even so, one of Hinckley's shots, caroming off the car's armor, tore a hole in Reagan's suit, pierced his body, traveled several inches down his side, bounced off a rib, punctured his left lung and came to rest just 3 inches from his heart. He felt nothing at first. "The car pulled out with the President looking back," said William Middleton, an architect who was standing nearby. "I think it was just the people standing in front of him that saved him."

As the President's motorcade roared down Connecticut Avenue, the radio ("Horsepower") in room W-16, the Secret Service command post at the White House, crackled to life. "Shots fired," reported an agent in "Halfback," the President's

follow-up limousine. "'Rawhide' returning to 'Crown,'" he added, signaling that Reagan was on his way back to the White House. "Rawhide not hurt, repeat, not hurt," Parr said a few seconds later. In the President's car, Reagan felt his side gingerly. He was having trouble breathing. "It felt like a hammer hit me," Reagan later described the sensation. He began to cough up red blood and agent Parr recognized it as oxygenated blood from the lungs. He directed the driver to change course. Grabbing the car radio, Parr said "'Horsepower.' Parr. Going to George Washington University Hospital. Notify hospital Rawhide en route."

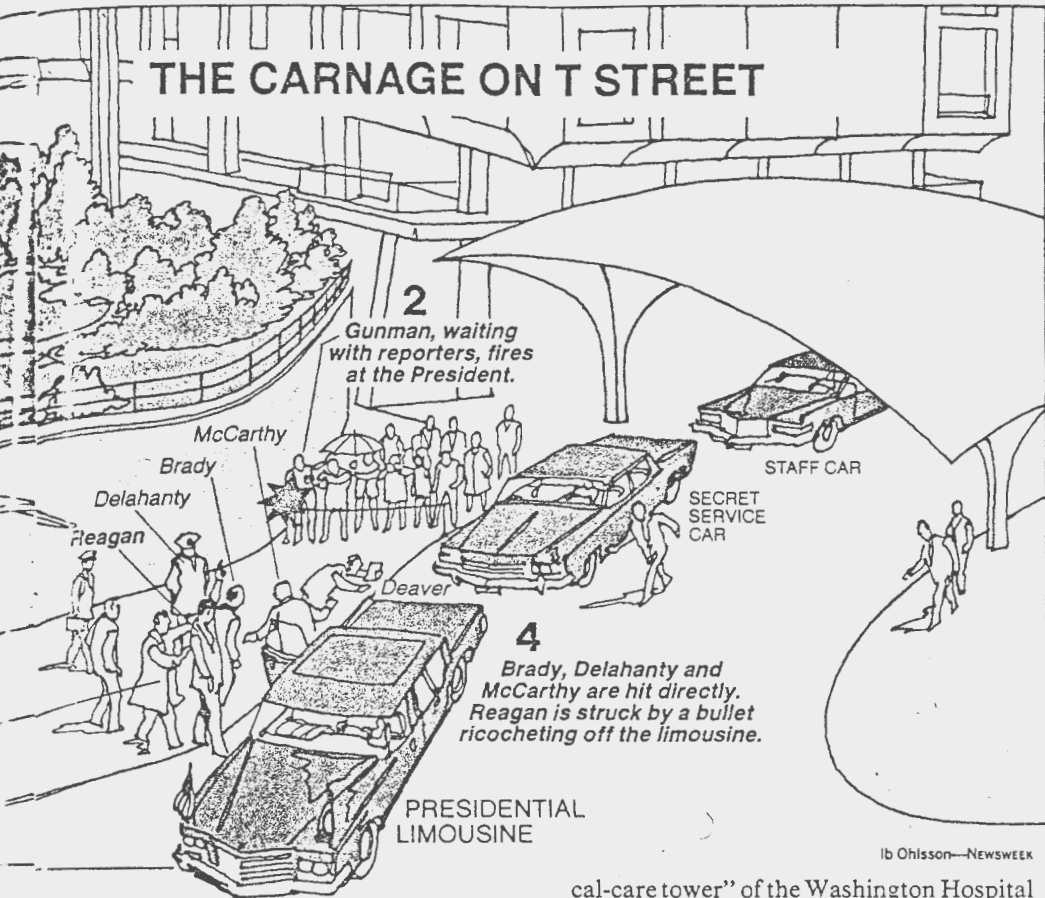
From a window in a building across the street from the Washington Hilton, Wilma Criviski watched as the President's motorcade screeched away, leaving the bodies of three men on the ground. Rushing to a front office, she grabbed a phone, dialed 911 and cried to the emergency dispatcher: "We need an ambulance at the Washington Hilton Hotel; people have been shot in the street." Brady was face down, bleeding into a steel grating and tended to by a Secret Service agent who laid his gun to rest next to Brady's wounded head. Delahanty, a policeman who normally works a different beat but was assigned to Reagan because his guard dog Kirk was sick that day, also lay on the ground groaning in agony. Agent McCarthy lay silent.

The smell of burnt powder filled the air. Alfred Antonucci, 68, a burly, 5-foot 2-inch union representative from Cleveland, tackled Hinckley. Police, hotel security guards and Secret Service men brandishing their weapons also piled on. "There were

eight or nine people leaping on this one guy," said Dan Coffey, a mortgage agent. "It seemed like forever before they got him under control." After several minutes of struggling, the officers clapped handcuffs on Hinckley, pulled his coat up over his head as a makeshift straitjacket and hustled him off to metropolitan police headquarters. Three ambulances arrived and hauled away Brady, Delahanty and McCarthy. Looking at the bloody bandages left on the sidewalk, Garnet Chapin, 32, a Reagan advance man during the 1980 campaign who was in town to apply for a job at the Interior Department, said with a groan, "I know it's impossible to completely protect him... I was with him from Philly to Flint. Now I'm in Washington and I see this." Tears welled in his eyes. "Damn, damn," he cursed softly.

'Code Room': Within a few minutes the President's motorcade screamed into the emergency entrance of George Washington University Hospital, twelve blocks from the Washington Hilton Hotel. As two Secret Service agents hovered close by, Reagan got out, walked about 15 yards to the emergency room, then staggered and was grabbed by the agents. "His eyes rolled upward and his knees started to buckle," said Roberto Hernandez, 26, a paramedic. "I thought he was having a heart attack. I thought we were losing him." Hernandez took the President by the feet, and the agents hoisted him gently under the arms and carried him—faint but still conscious—to the "code room," a 10- by 20-foot space where the worst emergency cases are treated. "Let's get some oxygen on him," yelled a doctor as the hospital's trauma team

THE CARNAGE ON T STREET



lb Ohlsson—NEWSWEEK

swung into action (page 45). Hernandez leaned over Reagan and whispered "They'll take care of you, Mr. President."

Another ambulance wailed up to the emergency room and Brady was wheeled into the room next to Reagan. A curtain was drawn between them. A few seconds later a third ambulance pulled up with McCarthy. (Delahanty was taken to the "criti-

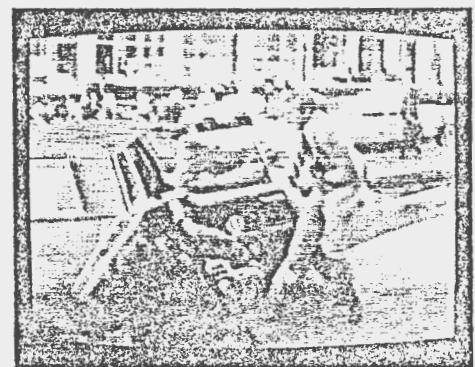
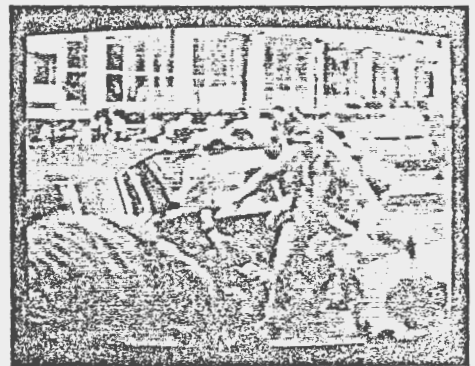
cal-care tower" of the Washington Hospital Center.) McCarthy was lying on his side, clutching his abdomen. "Are you still with us?" asked a colleague. "Oh yeah, I'm still with you," McCarthy said with a grimace. In Chicago, McCarthy's mother and sister flicked on their TV, saw the first tapes of the shooting, and wept. When Hinckley began shooting, McCarthy had stepped into the line of fire, perhaps saving Reagan's life. "He knew the job had risks," said his

Six shots: Parr shoves Reagan into limo, McCarthy is hit and Deaver (below) ducks

Dirck Halstead



SPECIAL REPORT



Photos by Sheldon Fielman (cameraman)—NBC TV News



Dirck Halstead

After the President's escape: Uzi-toting agent guards Hinckley as others attend Brady

father, Norman, a Chicago cop. "He knew the dangers."

Meanwhile, from the Washington Hilton lobby, David Prosperi, 27, a White House press aide left behind by the retreating Presidential motorcade, flashed the word of the shooting to the White House. Mistakenly, he told deputy press secretary Larry Speakes that Reagan had not been hit. Speakes bolted into the hallway outside the press office, collared Presidential assistant David Gergen and delivered the news of the shooting. "Oh my God," Gergen thought. "Not again." The two men raced along the colonnade by the Rose Garden to the South Lawn. Seeing that Reagan's motorcade had failed to return, they ran into Baker's West Wing office. "Do you know what's happened?" Gergen blurted out. "Somebody's tried to shoot the President—and Brady's been hit."

'Oh, Gosh': Baker made a dash for the Secret Service command post. When Meese was alerted, he "went totally white," said an aide. A few minutes later Deaver called from the hospital with a garbled report: Brady and a Secret Service agent had been shot, but the President had only a bruised rib. Scribbling a "Do not hang up" sign on a sheet of paper, White House aides attached it to the phone and kept the line open to the hospital. (It took 40 minutes to install secure White House communications to the hospital.) Five minutes later Deaver was back with a grimmer report: "It looks like the President has been nicked," he said; a D.C. cop had been

gunned down; Brady's wound was to the brain. Suddenly, Deaver gasped. "Oh, gosh, here they come," he said, as Brady was wheeled by on a stretcher. "It doesn't look good for Jim," Deaver said quietly.

Baker's immediate problem was to determine whether Reagan had been incapacitated—and whether to transfer Presidential power to Vice President George Bush under the terms of the 25th Amendment. Baker asked Deaver to put Dr. Daniel Ruge, Reagan's personal physician, on the phone. Ruge reported that the President had a small bullet puncture in his chest and had lost 3 or 4 pints of blood; he called his condition "stable." Just then, one of Baker's other phones rang. Secretary of State Alexander Haig was on the line. Baker told him Reagan had been hit. "You know it's important how we handle this as far as the world is concerned," Haig said. "I quite agree with you," Baker replied. Before taking any action, however, Baker and Meese wanted to go to the hospital. At Deaver's suggestion, the two worried aides went first to the White House family quarters to persuade Nancy Reagan not to go to the hospital. "A lot of people had been shot: there was a lot of blood," said an aide. "It was his view that it wasn't the best place for her to be."

They were too late. Returning from a lunch in Georgetown, the First Lady had learned of the shooting from her chief of staff and a Secret Service agent. She immediately rushed to the hospital. She did not know that her husband had been shot.



© Sebastiao Salgado Jr.—Magnum

Evidence: An agent holds the attacker's gun

"He's all right, he's all right," she cried as she jumped from her car and sprinted to the emergency room. A Secret Service agent told her otherwise. "He's taken a bullet—but he's all right," the agent said. "Honey, I forgot to duck," Reagan told her. She leaned over and kissed him. As the President's bed was wheeled into the operating room, the doctors gently stopped the First Lady from entering. Looking up, Reagan caught a glimpse of Meese, Deaver and Baker. "Who's minding the store?" he said with a wink as the orderlies wheeled him into surgery. Looking up at the surgeons, Reagan quipped, "I hope you're all Republicans." "Today, everyone's a Republican," one doctor rejoined.

Rumors: Reassured by the preliminary guess of the doctors that Reagan's prognosis was good, Baker, Deaver and Meese saw no immediate need to invoke the 25th Amendment. But for a time it looked like no one was minding the store very coherently. Back at the White House, the stripped-down staff wallowed in rumors. It took nearly an hour before White House communications director Frank Ursomarso announced that Reagan had been shot. There was weeping when all three networks broadcast a false report that Brady had died. Speakes finally emerged and crushed the rumor. "There was a lack of precise information to say the least," says Treasury Secretary Donald Regan, the first Cabinet officer to arrive on scene.

The Administration began to pull itself

SPECIAL REPORT

together. Haig, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, Attorney General William French Smith and CIA chief William Casey all rushed to the White House. The President's men gathered in the basement Situation Room (code name: Cement Mixer). Meese and Baker left word before they went to the hospital that Haig, as the senior Cabinet officer, should run the Situation Room, overseeing such duties as assembling the entire Cabinet should it be necessary to invoke the 25th Amendment later. Says Baker, "We did everything we had to do to take action if action was required."

Alert: Even so, Haig managed to stumble into one stinging set of nettles. As he was sitting in the Situation Room, he glanced up at the television and heard a reporter ask deputy press secretary Speakes whether U.S. military forces had been put on alert. "Not that I'm aware," Speakes replied. Haig feared that the press might misinterpret the vague report. "Come on, come with me," he told national-security adviser Allen. Without telling anyone where he was going, Haig took Allen in tow, raced up a flight of stairs and stalked into the White House press room.

For a take-charge leader, Haig made a rather clumsy entrance. Unannounced, sweating heavily from the run upstairs, his voice quavering, he announced that the appropriate Cabinet officials were in the Situation Room, that Vice President Bush was aware of the crisis, that U.S. allies had been notified as well and that no military alert was on. Down in the Situation Room, Wein-



Dirck Halstead

An ambulance for Brady: Miraculous progress after the networks pronounced him dead

berger looked up absently at the television set and asked, "What's that old tape of Al running for?" He had no idea that Haig was upstairs on live TV.

But Haig got his facts wrong—and overstepped his authority. When a reporter asked who was making the decisions for the White House he replied: "Constitutionally, gentlemen, you have the President, the Vice President and the Secretary of

State in that order, and should the President decide he wants to transfer the helm to the Vice President, he will do so. I am in control here in the White House pending the return of the Vice President. If something came up, I would check with him, of course."

In fact, the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate follow the President and Vice President

Hinckley's Last Love Letter

Dear Jodie:

There is a definite possibility that I will be killed in my attempt to get Reagan. It is for this very reason that I am writing you this letter now.

As you well know by now, I love you very much. The past seven months I have left you dozens of poems, letters and messages in the faint hope you would develop an interest in me.

Although we talked on the phone a couple of times, I never had the nerve to simply approach you and introduce myself. Besides my shyness, I honestly did not wish to bother you . . . I know the many messages left at your door and in your mailbox were a nuisance, but I felt it was the most painless way for me to express my love to you.

I feel very good about the fact you at least know my name and how I feel about you. And by hanging around your dormitory I've come to realize that I'm the topic of more than a little conver-

sation, however full of ridicule it may be. At least you know that I'll always love you.

Jodie, I would abandon this idea of getting Reagan in a second if I could only win your heart and live out the rest of my life with you, whether it be in total obscurity or whatever. I will admit to you that the reason I'm going ahead with this attempt now is because I just cannot wait any longer to impress you. I've got to do something now to make you understand in no uncertain terms that I am doing all of this for your sake. By sacrificing my freedom and possibly my life I hope to change your mind about me. This letter is being written an hour before I leave for the Hilton Hotel.

Jodie, I'm asking you to please look into your heart and at least give me the chance with this historical deed to gain your respect and love.

I love you forever.

(signed) John Hinckley



Steve Schapiro—Transworld

Foster as a prostitute in 'Taxi Driver'



Larry Downing—NEWSWEEK



James Knowles—Sipa-Black Star

Baker, Meese and Deaver watch Bush on the air: 'The President has emerged with flying colors'

in the legal order of succession. And it is Weinberger, not Haig, who is in charge of the emergency military commands in the absence of Reagan and Bush. To make matters worse, Weinberger had just called Gen. David Jones, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to order a low-level increase in military readiness on the ground that no one knew whether the attack on the President had been an isolated incident or a conspiracy. When Haig returned and asked everyone to make sure that their actions squared with his statement, Weinberger refused to rescind his order, making it clear that he thought Haig was overstepping his authority. "You better read your Constitution," Haig snapped. There was a sharp exchange—Weinberger's office later denied leaked details—and finally the flap blew over. A few hours later the readiness order was lifted.

Reassurance: During that time the White House press corps grumbled angrily over the chaos around them. Finally, a senior Administration hand took aside a reporter friend and asked wily, "What should we be doing that we aren't doing?" "Continuity of government," the reporter snapped. "Get someone out here to reassure everyone." That role fell first to Dr. Dennis S. O'Leary, the articulate and unflappable dean of Clinical Affairs and public spokesman for the hospital, who reported that Reagan had "sailed through" surgery.

Bush also emerged as a calming force. At the time of the shooting, he was in Ft. Worth, Texas, where he had spoken to a convention of cattlemen. He was bound for Austin to address a joint session of the state leg-

islature. As Bush's plane took off, special agent Ed Pollard told a Bush aide, "There has been an attempt on the President and two agents are down." At that moment, the plane started to climb, and Bush didn't get the word until the pilot leveled off. "Two Secret Service men are down," Bush said. "Don't you know how awful he [Pollard] must feel?"

A few minutes later Haig phoned, telling Bush to return to Washington and that a coded teletype message was on its way to Bush's plane. The television in the plane was tuned to ABC, and at 3:11 p.m. the Vice President of the United States, like millions of other shocked Americans, first learned that Reagan, too, had been shot. At 3:19, the coded message arrived confirming the news.

The Vice President's plane (code name: *Treasureship*) landed in Austin at 3:25 to refuel for the flight to Washington. House Majority Leader James Wright flew back with the Vice President. Bush invited

Haig briefing the press: 'Read your Constitution'

Courtesy NBC TV News



Wright to the forward compartment to talk. "He conducted himself in an atmosphere of total calm," Wright said later. He told Bush a story about Vice President Harry Truman on the day that Franklin D. Roosevelt died. Truman was with House Speaker Sam Rayburn when he was summoned to the White House. "Harry, you must be President now," Rayburn said. "Sam, I can't do it," Truman replied. "Mr. President," Rayburn said evenly, "You've got to do it." The plane landed and taxied into a hangar for security. Before Bush boarded the chopper, a Secret Service agent handed him a bullet-resistant raincoat.

Allies: Landing on the grounds of the Naval Observatory, the Vice President's official quarters, Bush found Meese waiting to escort him to the White House. Bush went directly to the Situation Room. Everyone there stood up as he walked in, and he sat down at the head of the conference table. "All right, bring me up to date," he said. "How is the President?" He was briefed on Reagan's condition and the messages Haig had sent to U.S. allies. Weinberger reviewed the military situation, reporting that there had been no unusual military movements warranting a U.S. response.

The meeting was low key, calm. Once or twice Bush propped his feet on the table as he talked. The briefing over, he left to address the networks. The President "has emerged from this experience with flying colors and with most optimistic prospects for a complete recovery," he said. "I can reassure this nation and the watching world that the American Government is functioning fully and effectively." The Vice President then left to pay

SPECIAL REPORT

a call on Nancy Reagan. She had spent the hours during Reagan's operation with Jim Brady's wife, Sarah, and Timothy McCarthy's wife, Carolyn, in an office on the second floor of George Washington University Hospital. She also prayed in the chapel. Four hours after the shooting, Reagan was wheeled into the recovery room, draped in a bright orange blanket. He stayed there until 6:15 the next morning.

'Progress Notes': Reagan's performance in the recovery room may have been his finest starring role. He had a tube in his throat and couldn't talk easily. He called for a clipboard, and on a pad of pink paper he began to dash off "progress notes." "I'd like to do this scene again—starting at the hotel," he wrote, convulsing the nurses and staff. For a time, he fell into a fitful sleep. Waking, he grabbed the pad and wrote, "I'm still alive aren't I?" Around midnight he once again reached for his writing gear and scribbled, "Winston Churchill said there is no more exhilarating feeling than being shot without result." At 1:30, in a sardonic reference to his respirator, he wrote, "Send me to L.A. where I can see the air I'm breathing." At 2:20, he passed a note to his round-the-clock nurses that said, "If I knew I had such talent for this, I'd have tried it sooner."

At 3 a.m., the doctors took the tube out of the President's throat, and he could finally talk.

"How long will it take to heal?" he asked one of the nurses.

"Ten days to two weeks," she replied.

"I always heal fast," he said.

"Keep up the good work," she told him.

"You mean this may happen several more times?" he asked in mock dismay.

Then the President turned serious. "I heard three or four rounds," he said. "Did anybody else get hit?" There was an awkward silence. David Fischer, the President's personal aide, had instructed them not to let on about the seriousness of Brady's wound or the suffering of McCarthy and Delahanty, explaining that Reagan had very intense feelings about the people around him and would be deeply upset—and perhaps set back in his recovery—by the bad news. Through the night the doctors respected the advice—and evaded the President's questions.

Through the day of the shooting and all through the night, the President's family and friends murmured prayers and rallied round him. "I was almost sure that something like this would happen; it's about time the courts decide the fun is over," said the President's brother, Neil Reagan, 72. The President's son Ron, 22, flew in from Lincoln, Neb., where

he was dancing with the Joffrey II Ballet. An Air Force jet brought Maureen, 39, Michael, 35, and Patti, 28, in from California. Billy Graham arrived; so did Frank Sinatra, who paid a quiet call on the First Lady at the White House to avoid publicity. Queen Elizabeth and the Pope sent comforting words—as did Leonid Brezhnev and Fidel Castro.

Early the next morning, Reagan redeemed the faith of his men, who had decided against invoking the 25th Amendment. Around 6:45 a.m., Meese, Deaver and Baker found the President propped up in bed, brushing his teeth. "I should have known I wasn't going to avoid a staff meeting," he said, adding to Deaver, the keeper of his time, "I've really screwed up the schedule." When the three counselors assured him soberly that the business of government was going on as usual, Reagan fixed them with a Western eye and said, "What makes you think I'd be happy about that?"

Signature: The President still had an intravenous needle in his right arm and tubes in his nose; but he seemed eager to get back to work. The aides had brought along a bill restricting Federal price supports for dairy products. It represented Reagan's first real legislative victory. When they asked gingerly if he wanted to sign it, he said, "Would I ever?"

Using his breakfast tray for a table, he scrawled a wobbly signature and sent the bill on its way. Later that morning, when Maureen dropped by, Reagan promised her that he would fly to California in three weeks for her wedding, then visit President José López Portillo of Mexico. Maybe, said the doctor, adding that the President wouldn't be anywhere near a horse for two months. Vetoing the sawbones, Reagan grinned at his daughter and held up a finger for one month.

The good vibrations were broken shortly after noon when Dr. Ruge came in to the President's comfortable, \$234-a-day room. The First Lady and aides had refused to give Reagan a newspaper because they didn't want him to read about Brady's con-



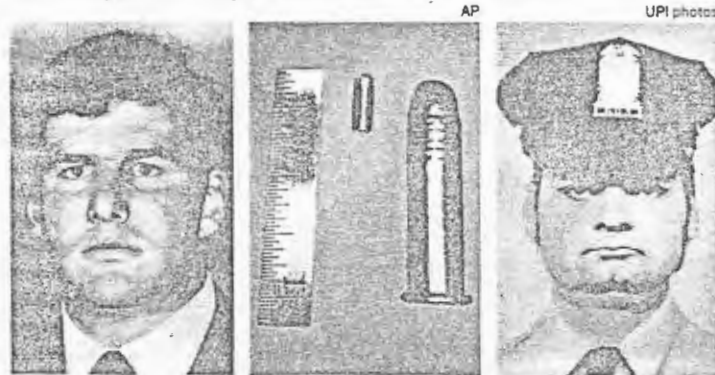
Dr. O'Leary: Reassuring an anxious nation

dition. As gently as he could, Ruge finally filled him in. "Oh, damn. Oh, damn," Reagan blurted, his eyes filling with tears. "Did it go into the brain?" Told that the bullet had indeed pierced Brady's brain, Reagan said, "Oh, dear, what's the prognosis?" The doctor told him that Brady might be partially paralyzed. "We've got to pray," Reagan said. When told about McCarthy and Delahanty, he said quietly, "That means four bullets hit. Good Lord."

Telegrams: As Reagan settled down to his convalescence, the First Lady bravely kept up her outward composure, but she was suffering deeply. While she had worried constantly about Reagan's safety when he was governor of California, she had hoped that his massive electoral popularity last

November would somehow help protect him. For the first three days she slept little. Between catnaps she would wake, write in her diary and nibble fruit; but she lost several pounds. She brought her husband a picture of them kissing at the Inauguration so he wouldn't "forget what I looked like." During the day she set up shop in a room next to the President's. She was surrounded by boxes containing thousands of telegrams. She comforted other friends who

McCarthy, Delahanty: A bullet called the Devastator



SPECIAL REPORT

phoned, and winnowed through get-well gifts for items to cheer the President. Perhaps the most successful was a giant horse head made of chrysanthemums—with a mane of jelly beans.

Reagan improved steadily: progressing from Jell-O to chicken soup, carrot sticks and homemade coconut ice cream, his favorite. But even as the atmosphere started to brighten, the FBI placed an urgent call to the doctors treating Delahanty. The FBI lab had determined that Hinckley had been firing particularly vicious exploding bullets called Devastators that fragmented, on impact. FBI technicians warned that the slug lodged in Delahanty's neck near his spinal cord might still contain a live charge and explode. Delahanty's physicians had intended to leave it in place, avoiding an operation that might injure his spinal nerves and paralyze him. They explained the new danger to Delahanty and he agreed to an operation. A volunteer team of neurosurgeons, avoiding the hot cauterizing instruments normally used—for fear of setting off the Devastator—succeeded in extracting the slug, and the crisis passed.

Letters: As the days wore on, the President made a remarkably swift recovery, set back only by a temporary fever. The First Lady brought him his slippers and robe and he did some walking: 50 yards or so at first. The last hospital tubes were removed, and the White House allowed a first, postoperative photograph. After his first full eight hours of sleep, Reagan got back to matters of state. He received a National Security Council briefing. Haig gave him a preflight rundown on his trip to the Middle East, and Reagan dictated letters

for Haig to carry to Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Weinberger briefed Reagan on his trip this week to a NATO meeting in Europe on nuclear policy. It was business-almost-as-usual—under very trying circumstances (page 39).

The suffering of Brady, Delahanty and McCarthy cast a pall over what might have been a happy ending to the crisis. But the others also began to improve. By the end of the week, when a doctor asked Brady what he did for a living, he said, "I answer questions." And when the doctor asked for whom, the fallen press secretary replied quickly, "For anyone who asks them." Informed of the progress of the others, Reagan said, "Oh that's great news, just great news, especially about Jim," then broke up callers by quipping, "We'll have to get four bedpans and have a reunion." Later he was visited by McCarthy. "When your children come, tell them that their father put himself between me and that guy," Reagan told the wounded agent. "I'm proud that there are guys around here to take those kinds of jobs."

While the victims were mending, the FBI was attending to Hinckley. The day of the shooting, a ten-car police motorcade hustled him from D.C. police headquarters to the FBI's Washington field office on the Anacostia River called Buzzards Point. While the G-men interrogated him, lawyers at the office of Charles F. C. Ruff, U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, began to draw up the charges against him. The goal of the prosecutors was to present evidence showing that Hinckley had attempted to kill Reagan, not just wound him. The distinction was important. The maximum penalty for simply assaulting the President is \$10,000 and ten years in jail;

the penalty for attempted murder is life imprisonment. Hinckley was also charged for shooting agent McCarthy, another Federal crime, and he could still be indicted for assaulting Brady and Delahanty.

Around 10:30 on the day of the shooting, the Feds brought Hinckley to a Federal court for a bail hearing. Security was tight. Court stenographers, lawyers, employees and even the cleaning women all had to pass through a metal detector. FBI director William Webster sat in the courtroom ("It was on my watch," he said). Federal magistrate Arthur L. Burnett explained Hinckley's rights to him and asked if he understood the charges against him. "Yes, sir," Hinckley said softly, showing no emotion. Did he have a job? "No, sir." Any dependents? "No, sir." Could he pay \$1,000 as a down payment or retainer to a lawyer? "No, sir." So the judge appointed two court lawyers to represent him.

Rocky's Pawn Shop: Ruff argued that Hinckley was a drifter who should be held without bail. "This is not a man with a clean record," he said. The previous October, Ruff said, Hinckley had been arrested at the airport in Nashville, Tenn., for packing two .22-caliber handguns and a .38 revolver. Jimmy Carter was in town that day at Opryland, but no one had drawn any connections; he was fined \$50 and his guns were confiscated. Just four days later in Dallas he had bought two more .22-caliber Saturday-night specials at Rocky's Pawn Shop on East Elm Street—not far from where John F. Kennedy was shot. Later in Denver, Hinckley had purchased a new .38. Not long afterward he had set off on a three-day cross-country bus trip that had brought him to Washington—and his deadly appointment with the President.

The outline of Hinckley's odyssey was enough for the judge. He agreed to hold him temporarily without bail (to do so permanently might have violated the suspect's constitutional rights). Hinckley was led away and taken to the brig at the U.S. Marine Corps base in Quantico, Va., where he was clapped into a 6- by 10-foot cell under round-the-clock guard. Later, his father hired the respected Washington law firm of Williams & Connolly to represent him.

The immediate question was whether Hinckley was mentally competent to stand trial. A psychiatrist from Washington's Department of Human Resources examined him and tentatively found him fit to stand trial. A magistrate ordered a more thorough examination. Then Hinckley, wearing a bulletproof vest, was flown by helicopter to the Federal Correctional Institution near Durham, N.C., where he was put in isolation for his own protection while he undergoes psychiatric evaluation. It was likely to be a long time before he stands trial. But Hinckley, the glum wanderer who had never amounted to much, had already found his niche.

TOM MATHEWS and the Washington bureau

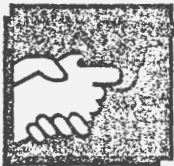
Tears and anger: The President's brother, Neil, daughter Maureen





Karl Schumacher—The White House

Bush runs a Cabinet meeting from the Vice President's chair: A carefully concerted campaign to demonstrate 'business as usual'



Who's Minding the Store

Amid the gaiety of his 70th birthday party at the White House in February, Ronald Reagan suddenly leaned over to Barbara Bush to ask "a very personal question" about the Vice President. "Is George happy with his job?" Reagan asked. "I just want to be sure he's doing enough. If the awful-awful should happen, George should know everything." Reagan's concern seemed particularly prophetic last week as George Bush moved confidently to assume many of the wounded President's official obligations—presiding over Cabinet meetings, promoting the Reagan budget, posing with foreign dignitaries. But in a concerted campaign of gestures and interviews, Bush and White House aides insisted that Reagan himself remains in control and that throughout the Administration it is very much "business as usual."

Although controversy still swirled around Secretary of State Alexander Haig (page 40), the Administration was running fairly smoothly, largely because of Reagan's longstanding style of leadership—more 9-to-5 board chairman than chief operating officer. Daily business is directed by Reagan's three top aides—White House counselor Edwin Meese III, chief of staff James A. Baker III and deputy chief of staff Michael K. Deaver. "All the critical aspects of government remain the same," says one senior staffer. Says another: "If we have to have a decision, that's when we go over [to see Reagan]. But a President is not called on to make a decision every day."

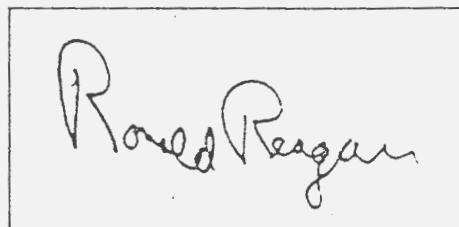
Reagan is kept informed on the most serious matters. He received at least one

visit a day from Meese, Baker and Deaver (usually together) last week and got a written briefing every morning as well from national-security adviser Richard V. Allen. He also received a series of "summary decision memos"—short reports on policy meetings he was not able to attend—and a daily log of Congressional activities. At

Bush pinch-hits for the President, but Reagan's three top aides remain firmly in control of things.

the George Washington University Hospital, Reagan's suite became the heart of a ten-room White House annex. Special communications gear was installed, and Reagan's longtime personal secretary, Helene von Damm, set up a desk for the duration of his stay. Less than fourteen hours after his surgery, Reagan signed in wobbly script a bill to block an increase in dairy

Convalescent bill-signing: No auto-pen



price supports. He also approved a number of Presidential appointments during the week and an Executive order slashing duty-free imports. "Anything of consequence is going to him," says a senior staffer.

Milkshake Crisis: Bush picked up the President's public duties tactfully and smoothly, combining much of Reagan's daily schedule with his own and canceling all out-of-town trips (although he did plan to fill in for the President at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama this week). Bush received a daily national-security briefing at the White House from the NSC's Allen, presided over several Cabinet meetings and did not hesitate to order additional staff work. He met with Congressional leaders and made a personal trip to Capitol Hill to talk up the Reagan budget (page 72)—a subject he pressed as well with 40 visiting labor leaders. Bush also met with Polish Deputy Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Jagielski and announced the Administration's decision to provide new aid to crisis-torn Poland (page 62). His new schedule caused only one minor problem—a digestive *crise* after Bush bolted down some pepperoni pizza and a milkshake for dinner late one night. "I didn't sleep too well," he laughed the next day.

Bush is careful to clear things with Meese and Baker. "I want to do what I can—I want to do it through you," the President told Reagan's senior aide the morning after the shooting, a retained his deferential posture the week. "On anything one Reagan man," the ways says, "We'd better a

SPECIAL REPORT

the President'." Bush tried to avoid any inadvertent self-aggrandizement; he ran Cabinet meetings from the Vice President's seat, conducted business in the Vice President's offices and even posed with Poland's Jagielski so as to avoid having the White House loom up symbolically behind him.

For all the deft coping, Reagan's condition did cause some delays in the affairs of state. A number of military appointments were postponed, as were several previously scheduled briefing sessions for Reagan. The President's men even suspended use of the

"auto-pen" that automatically signs routine letters, notes and photographs in Reagan's hand. The White House also delayed the scheduled announcement by Reagan of a regulatory relief package for the nation's ailing auto industry—and of a "briefing mission" to Tokyo, headed by U.S. Trade Representative William E. Brock, aimed at cutting Japanese auto imports.

Friction? At the weekend there was a report of "discord" between the two top White House staffers. At first they laughed—"You'll be surprised to learn we have friction," Baker told Meese—but they were also disturbed by the report, particu-

larly because of the trouble with Haig. White House sources insist there has been no friction among the Big Three—Meese, Baker and Deaver. "If any one of them has a strong view on anything, the other two go along," said one insider. "Their desire to cooperate is so extreme that the only question they ever ask is, 'What's best for the President?'" During his convalescence, more than ever, Ronald Reagan must rely on that kind of dedication to keep his Administration running smoothly.

DAVID M. ALPERN with THOMAS M. DeFRANK,
ELEANOR CLIFT and JAMES DOYLE
in Washington

'I Am In Control Here'

With the President undergoing surgery and the Vice President rushing back from Texas, Ronald Reagan's Cabinet assembled in the situation room of the White House. Suddenly, Alexander Haig bolted from the room. "What's he doing?" asked startled aides. "Where's he going?" A few minutes later Haig was on nationwide television, his voice quavering, his face ashen. "I am in control here..." he proclaimed. But he clearly wasn't—and once again he had plunged himself into conflict with his own Administration colleagues. This time Haig's embarrassing performance threatened to undercut his authority abroad as he embarked on his first foreign mission to the Middle East. The gaffe also raised a new round of doubts about Haig's coolness under fire and heightened speculation that he could not long survive as Secretary of State.

Even Haig's friends were taken aback by the televised discomfiture of the four-star general who had steered Richard Nixon through his last crisis. "I've never seen him like that before," said a State Department colleague who has known Haig for years. "He was cracking emotionally." In Congressional cloakrooms even his Republican allies complained about Haig's four-minute torrent of what one called "dingbat" misstatements on the Presidential succession and the state of military readiness. "I can understand his perception of the need to reassure," said Democratic Sen. Joseph Biden, a persistent Haig critic. "But the Secretary's action had an entirely opposite effect."

'Contact Point': As the devastating reviews poured in, the Administration moved to limit the damage to its senior Cabinet officer. Reports of White House dismay over Haig's performance were "honest-to-God baloney," chief of staff James Baker told NEWSWEEK flatly. Other White House aides who earlier had sniped at Haig went out of their way to praise him as an effective "contact point" during the first hour of the crisis. As a Nixon White House veteran, Haig was the Cabinet officer most familiar with situation-room procedures. "He was the only guy who knew what to do, who knew where the

phones were," says a source who was present. "He was the only guy who knew how to talk to the Vice President's plane."

Another top aide speculated that Haig had rushed on camera before pausing to collect himself. "The unsteadiness of his television performance didn't match the steadiness of his performance downstairs," he insisted. One reason for Haig's I'm-in-charge bluster, according to partisans, was to send a pointed message to the Soviet Union, which was massing troops on the Polish border. "He wanted it known our guard was still up," says a sympathetic official.

Credibility: Still, the we-love-Al chorus seemed rather strained. Some officials conceded that the campaign was not so much an endorsement of Haig's behavior as an urgent attempt to boost his credibility. "It was important to send a message to the Hill," says a White House topsider. "There's been a certain amount of chatter up there. This man has been gouged in public." As Haig departed for the Middle East, the White House felt it necessary to take the extraordinary step of publicly endorsing its chief architect of foreign policy. "The Secretary of State leaves today in the full colors as Secretary of State," emphasized a spokesman—"and with the full confidence of the President."

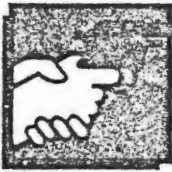
But this may not be enough to assuage the doubts of Haig's foreign hosts. An official of the United Arab Emirates told the Associated Press that Haig "should not expect much from us until we are sure the Washington leadership is no longer disunited." In Washington, Haig's future in the Reagan Administration seems uncertain. "I just hope he now understands how we work," sighs one senior official. "It's a gentlemanly give-and-take, not confrontational." State Department officials worry that, if the pragmatic Haig steps down, American foreign policy will be dominated by White House political coordinator Lyn Nofziger, Sen. Jesse Helms and other theologians of the right. Even Haig's close aides rate his chances for keeping his job at less than even. Haig's first venture abroad had thus become a mission not only to shore up America's standing in the Middle East, but also to salvage his own eroding position at home.

STEVEN STRASSER with ELEANOR
CLIFT, THOMAS M. DeFRANK,
HOWARD FINEMAN and JOHN
WALCOTT in Washington

'Everything's fine, Chief—in fact, we've just been doing some papering in the Cabinet Room'

© 1981 Herblock in The Washington Post





What the Doctors Did

"I can't breathe," whispered Ronald Reagan. He was sweating and gray-faced, sagging toward the floor as he walked into the emergency room and was lifted onto a wheeled table. Quick hands began stripping off his clothes. "We don't think he's hit," said a Secret Service man. "We think he broke a rib when we pushed him against the car." But a doctor had already spotted the bullet hole in the President's suit jacket—and the medical team at George Washington University Hospital that was to save the lives of the President and his press secretary was already well into its practiced routine.

The President was exhibiting early symptoms of shock. Though alert, Reagan was gasping for air and sweating, and his blood pressure had dropped. Paged on the hospital's speakers, Dr. Joseph M. Giordano, head of the trauma team, hurried to the emergency room, where Reagan's blood pressure quickly recovered after he lay down. The doctor gave the President a local anesthetic and then inserted a tube into the lung cavity just beneath the bullet hole under his left arm. Other physicians and technicians drew blood samples, hooked up an oxygen mask and intravenous tubes to monitor blood gases and administer blood, and inserted a catheter to measure urine flow. On a chest X-ray, the bullet showed up as a white spot in the lower lobe of the left lung. It had torn a 3-inch furrow through the lung, deflating it as it went. But the physicians couldn't be sure whether they had spotted the entire bullet or whether fragments had broken off and struck organs in the abdominal cavity. Further X-rays of the abdomen reassured them.

Meanwhile, the President continued to bleed steadily through the tube in his chest. Quickly, the trauma team set up more

than a dozen units of blood and prepared for transfusion. Although Reagan is type O-positive, at first they used O-negative, which can be given to anyone regardless of his blood type, and later used O-positive to replace the 2½ quarts lost from the time of injury. In many such gunshot wounds, the lung reinflates and the bleeding stops when the chest tube is inserted, and the bullet can be left where it is without any risk. But Reagan continued to bleed.

"What are we doing, Joe?" asked Dr. Sol Edelstein, chief of the emergency room. "Are we headed to ICU or are we headed to OR?" Edelstein wanted to know whether intensive care would be enough, or if an

anesthetic thiopental sodium and then passed a tube down his throat so that a respirator could aid his breathing. Then they put him to sleep with nitrous oxide administered through a mask. "We will follow routine trauma protocol," Giordano announced to his colleagues.

The first order of business was peritoneal lavage, a procedure to double-check for injuries in the abdominal cavity. Giordano made a small incision under the navel and pumped a clear liquid into the abdomen. The liquid that drained back out seemed free of blood, showing that no organs had been damaged. But to make sure, the fluid was sent to the lab for analysis. After 45 minutes Giordano turned his patient over to the thoracic surgeons, Aaron and Dr. Katherine Chaney.

Incision: The President was turned on his right side with his arms taped in front of him. The team removed the chest tube to get more room and then made a 6-inch incision, from under the left nipple to the left side. The President's ribs were spread apart by a metal retractor and, wearing a lamp on his forehead, Aaron peered into the chest. He first removed a large clot of blood and then began searching for the bullet. The surgeon determined that neither the heart nor the aorta, the body's main artery, had sustained any injury. But failing to find the bullet, he ordered another X-ray—a side view of the chest. After half an hour Aaron found the "Devastator" explosive slug, removed it with a probe and handed it to a Secret Service agent, who carried it away in a metal cup. It had failed to explode on impact, but was flattened to the size and shape of a dime, suggesting that it had ricocheted off the Presidential limousine before striking Reagan.

Aaron then sutured the tear in the lung, removed the retractor and closed the

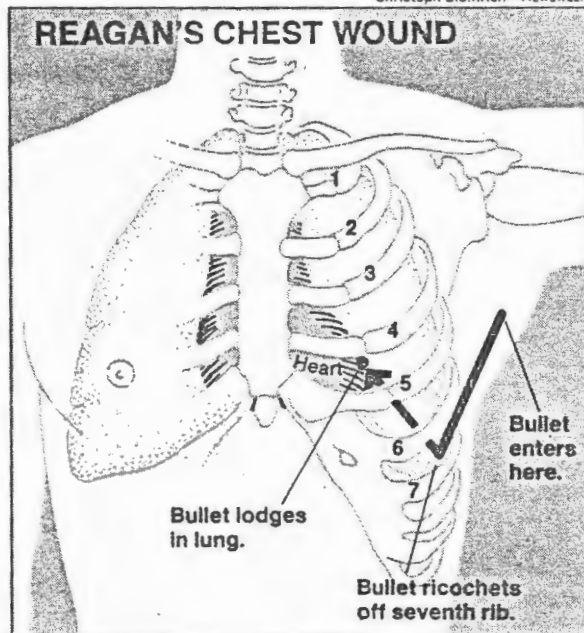
How the surgeons treated Reagan's wounded chest and James Brady's injured brain.

operation was urgent. Surgeon Benjamin Aaron, 47, decided to operate. As the team prepared for the 200-foot journey to the "heart room," fully equipped for major chest and heart surgery, Edelstein cautioned the technicians: "We are going slow, slow, slow." The President was propped at a 30-degree angle on the wheeled cart, or gurney, awake and talking to his wife and aides as he passed; his vital signs were still "rock stable," a doctor said later, and there was no need to risk anyone stumbling over one of the tubes threaded into him.

In the operating room, the team gave the President an intravenous dose of the

Christoph Blumrich—NEWSWEEK

Aaron: Searching for the bullet



Giordano: Routine trauma protocol

Photos by Leif Skoogfors—Woodfin Camp & Assoc.



chest incision. During the operation, Reagan was given another quart of blood. "Skin to skin," the surgery had taken two hours. But before Reagan was taken to the recovery room, the team spent another hour scrubbing off the orange povidone-iodine disinfectant that covered the chest area, dressing the wounds and waiting for the anesthesia to wear off.

The President's first hours in the recovery room were uncomfortable. "He felt like he couldn't breathe," said one physician. Analysis of his blood showed that he wasn't assimilating quite enough oxygen at first, and he continued on the respirator for eight and a half hours. At the time, he was unaware that press secretary James Brady was lying in critical condition just the other side of a cloth screen.

Brady was by far the most seriously injured in the assassination attempt. He had arrived at the hospital in a fire-department ambulance three minutes after Reagan and was wheeled to the same trauma room. "I saw the bullet wound in his forehead. It was over the left eye," said paramedic Roberto Hernandez. "He was moving his arms and legs, but to no purpose. He was sort of like squirming." In the emergency room, Brady was met by a neurosurgical resident and an anesthesiologist. His blood pressure was a very high 240 over 160. He was moving his right limbs restlessly and he seemed to be mumbling. He was given an anesthetic and a tube was placed in his windpipe to assist breathing.

Fragments: The bullet entered Brady's head over the left eye and passed through a small portion of the left frontal lobe of the brain without causing much damage. But it did break up somewhere inside the skull; the fragments passed mostly through the right frontal lobe, causing severe bleeding and tissue damage. The largest piece of the bullet came to rest in the parietal lobe at the rear of the brain behind the right ear, with smaller fragments around it. At first, the outlook was bleak. A cross-sectional X-ray taken in the emergency room looked, in the words of one physician, like a "disaster."

Brady was immediately taken to the operating room, where his head was shaved in preparation for surgery that was to last more than six hours. Neurosurgeon Dr. Arthur Kobrine tried to be optimistic. When he heard that the media had reported that the press secretary was already dead, Kobrine replied, "Somebody ought to tell me and the patient." An ophthalmologist was called in to deal with swelling and a clot in the left eye, and he made several incisions to drain blood and relieve pressure. Then Kobrine moved in to explore the injury and remove all of the damaged

brain tissue, along with the bullet and bone fragments.

Kobrine made a "bicornal" incision across the top of Brady's head from ear to ear. Next, he drilled a number of holes in the skull and removed a "large window" of bone. Then he took out bone splinters and bullet fragments from the left frontal lobe, where he found the damage "not too extensive." On the right side of Brady's brain, Kobrine suctioned out a large blood clot. He found "brisk bleeding" from the anterior and middle cerebral arteries, which had been severed. When the bleeding was brought under control, Brady's blood pressure dropped to a normal range. Finally, Kobrine removed the damaged tissue, fragments and the main bullet fragment. The surgeon estimated that Brady lost 20 per

cent of the tissue in the right hemisphere. Kobrine replaced the flap of skull and inserted temporary drains between the bone and skin.

The day after surgery, Brady showed hopeful signs. He was conscious, his pupils responded to light and he was able to move the right side of his body in response to commands from doctors. Later, he could even toss a cotton ball to his wife, Sarah, with his right hand. And when a doctor held up three fingers, Brady said, "Three." Following surgery, Brady was put on antibiotics to prevent infection, and given steroids and a drug called mannitol to reduce the swelling of the brain.

'Fine': Kobrine reported that he was making an "extraordinary recovery." By the weekend, he was off the critical list, and out of intensive care. The press secretary was speaking short sentences. He told the surgeon, "I'm feeling fine," and when a telephone started to ring he said, "Somebody answer the phone." Brady was able to move his right arm and leg normally, but showed little movement on the left. Though it is too early to speculate, Kobrine predicted that left motor function will improve significantly if there are no further complications. Moreover, since the "dominant" left side of the brain was harmed only slightly, the surgeon said there was a good chance that Brady has suffered little or no intellectual impairment. However, he suspects that "spatial orientation," governed by the right side of the brain, may have been affected, and since the olfactory tracts in the right hemisphere were destroyed, the gourmet Brady has probably lost his sense of taste and smell.

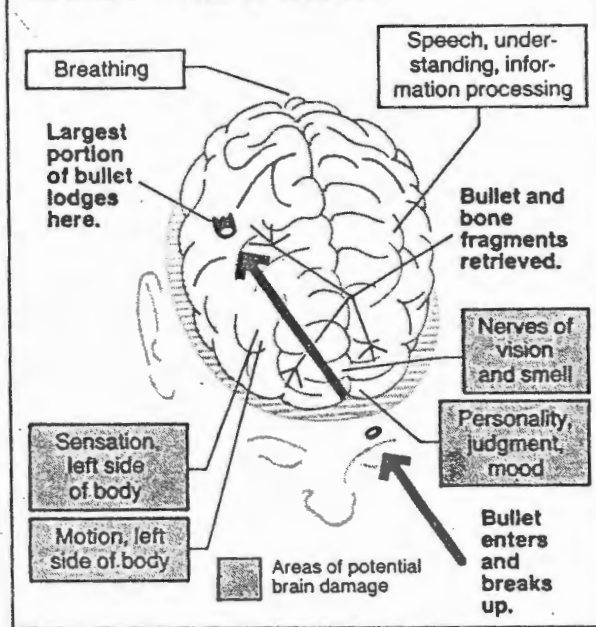
President Reagan, however, was making a speedy recovery last week. He was receiving cough therapy to

prevent fluid from accumulating in his lungs and occasional administrations of oxygen through a plastic tube under his nose. He was also eating heartily and walking in his hospital corridor. The only cause for concern came late in the week when Reagan's temperature rose to 102. However, after some fluctuations it dropped to normal. There was a brief scare that toxic amounts of lead azide—the explosive used in the bullet—might have leached into the President's body, but this was discounted

by experts. Throughout the President's ordeal, doctors were impressed by his good condition and youthful physiology. "It's a good lesson," said the hospital's spokesman, Dr. Dennis O'Leary, "that age itself is not an ultimate measure of an individual's stamina, health and capability."

MATT CLARK with MARY HAGER and DAVID C. MARTIN in Washington and bureau reports

BRADY'S HEAD INJURY



Christoph Blumrich—NEWSWEEK

Drawing shows bullet's path through the brain

cent of the tissue in the right hemisphere. Kobrine replaced the flap of skull and inserted temporary drains between the bone and skin.

In two crucial respects, Brady can be considered lucky. He had been hit by a small-caliber bullet of low velocity, minimizing the damage usually caused by the shock waves and the sheer mass of a larger slug. And nearly all the left side of the brain had apparently been spared. In most people, the left side is the brain's information-processing center and controls the faculties of speech, writing and comprehension. The motor areas of the left side also control movement on the right side of the body. Fortunately, the shock of the bullet and the swelling from the injury had not affected the brain stem,



Kobrine: Optimistic

The Day of the Jackal in Washington

By Lou Cannon

Washington Post Staff Writer

It began as an ordinary spring day in Washington: light showers, the usual lines of tourists at the White House, a routine speech by the president.

Then, gunfire. For six hours the nation watched and wondered. Would the president live? Would he survive and be disabled? Would the nation be plunged into constitutional crisis?

It was 2:24 p.m. Monday, March 31. Michael K. Deaver wasn't supposed to be at the Washington Hilton. He was supposed to be

back in the White House working on the president's schedule. But it was a busy day at the office for chief of staff James A. Baker III, and Deaver, his deputy, had volunteered to go in his place with President Reagan when he addressed the Building Trades Council.

No one noticed the gunman before the firing began. No one particularly saw him, or

"Situation negative," the advance agent replied.

The quiet ended in the rapid fire of a handgun and screams from the crowd. Within nine seconds six shots had been fired in rapid succession at the presidential party.

One shot hit Secret Service agent Timothy J. McCarthy, who thrust himself between President Reagan and the gunman, in the stomach.

One shot hit District police officer Thomas K. Delahanty in the neck.

One shot, although no one knew it immediately, bounced off the armored limousine and hit Reagan in the chest, penetrating his left lung. Yet another hit a window in a building across the street and fragmented.

And one shot, the shot that did the most damage, struck White House press secretary Brady over the left eye, penetrating his brain. Brady fell, with blood gushing from his head. An advance man, Rick Ahern, put a white handkerchief under Brady's head. It quickly turned red with blood.

In a matter of seconds Parr had shoved Reagan into the limousine and pulled the door shut. He commanded the driver, Drew Unrue, to pull away, and the presidential limousine sped from the scene. A staff control car, with Deaver inside, followed.

"You son-of-a-bitch, you broke my rib," Reagan said to Parr inside the limousine. He was joking, but he was hurting from the blow.

Later in the week the president would tell Deaver that he hadn't realized he had been hit by a bullet but that he certainly knew he had been hit.

"It was a blow like I never felt," Reagan said. "It was like someone hitting me with a hammer as hard as they could."

Parr, not knowing that the president had been shot, originally ordered the limousine to return to the White House. But when he saw Reagan coughing blood, the bright-red oxygenated blood that comes from the lung, he and the president thought a rib had been broken by the protective shove. Parr told Unrue to drive to George Washington University Hospital instead of the White House. He radioed the control car and told Deaver where he was going.

At the Hospital

At the shooting scene, agents had overwhelmed a young blond man later identified as John Warnock Hinckley Jr. They piled him into a police car and took him away.

Before the limousine reached the hospital, nurses had cleared space in the resuscitation bay for the shooting victims. A first radio message has told them there has been a shooting and that "some men" have been hurt. A second message informed them that one was the president of the United States.

At 2:35 p.m. the limousine arrived at George Washington. Reagan was feeling pain in his chest and was having difficulty breathing. As he got out of the car, D.C. paramedic Roberto Hernandez recognized the limousine. On inaugural day he had been assigned to the ambulance that followed the new president around Washington.

"I literally froze," Hernandez said afterward. "I didn't believe what I was actually seeing. I noticed he looked very pale and he had an apprehensive look about him . . . The stare in his eyes was like he was in a slight daze."

Reagan got out of the car. He walked to the emergency room, his face drawn, Parr's arm around him. Incredibly, no one had thought to order a stretcher to be ready for him. When the president entered the emergency room, he fell to one knee.

"I can't breathe," he said.

For a moment the workers in the resuscitation bay were stunned. "Is that who I think it is?" a nurse asked. Then they sprang into action. Hernandez removed Reagan's shoes, socks and pants while his partner Eric Simmons cut off his shirt.

"All I could think of was Parkland," Deaver said, referring to the Dallas hospital where John F. Kennedy was taken.

But Deaver, a short, quiet, patient man who knows Reagan better than anyone on the White House staff and was treated like a son by him, was busy with other matters. Cool and collected, Deaver found a telephone bay outside the emergency ward and called the White House. He reached Margaret Tutwiler, the secretary to chief of staff Baker.

"Keep this line open, Margaret," he said. "There's been a shooting, and the president's hurt. We don't think he was hit, but he may have broken a

ing out
the press started ask-
ial questions. I turned and

the presidential detail, never saw the gunman, either. The gunman was shielded by the crowd.

Secret Service agents had looked over this crowd, as they always do. It is not easy to spot a concealed gunman in a friendly crowd. Thirty seconds before the president arrived at the hotel, Parr had received a favorable situation report.

"Rawhide follow to Rawhide advance," he said, using the code word for the president. "Situation report?"

At the White House

At the White House they already knew about the shooting. But they did not know much about what had happened or that the president had been shot.

Baker had been working in his office through the morning. At 1 p.m. he went to the White House mess to eat his usual lunch: a tunafish salad sandwich and buttermilk. Brady and his deputy, Larry Speakes, were finishing their lunch as Baker and Tutwiler arrived. They exchanged pleas-

ures, and Brady said he was going to the Hilton for Reagan's speech.

The first word at the White House that something had gone wrong came in a telephone call from David Proseri, an assistant press secretary. He was at the scene where the shots were fired, and he saw Brady go down.

Proseri rushed into the hotel and grabbed the first telephone he found. It was a charge phone, so he gave the operator the White House press office number and billed the call to his home telephone.

"Get me Larry. It's an emergency," he said into the telephone.

Speakes was just coming out of a meeting with other White House aides in the Roosevelt Room on the automobile regulation package that is to be announced this week. Betsy Strong, a press aide, ran up and told him Proseri was calling. He picked up the phone of Kathy Ahern, Brady's secretary.

"The president has been shot at and Brady has been hit," Proseri said.

"Thanks," Speakes replied, and hung up. From the look on his face the others in the room knew it was a crisis.

"I don't know what it looked like, but it hit pretty hard," Speakes said.

Ahern began to weep.

White House staff director David R. Gergen was coming out of the same meeting Speakes had attended. The first instinct of both was to walk out on the colonade and watch the motorcade return, which they expected momentarily. Instead, Speakes telephoned Jack Warner of the Secret Service. Warner knew something had happened, but did not have the details.

Gergen ran down the corridor to Baker's office with the news. He burst into the office, almost knocking down Tutwiler, who had her back against the door.

Gergen went to find White House counselor Edwin Meese III, the president's top aide, who was with his deputy, Craig Fuller. They already knew. Baker ran down to the Secret Service command post in the basement to find out what had happened. It was about 2:35 p.m., the time of Reagan's arrival at the hospital.

At the Hotel

Back at the Hilton, the ambulances had borne away the wounded men, leaving behind the remnants of the shooting: an umbrella, a dropped briefcase, the bloody sidewalk grate where Brady fell.

Proseri, knowing that the presidential limousine had started out for the White House, mistakenly believed the president had arrived there, and so informed the press. One eyewitness, Ramon Flores, attempted to convince

skeptical reporters that Reagan had been hit. He shrugged his shoulders when they did not believe him.

At the Hospital

Within minutes at George Washington the resuscitation area was crowded with members of the trauma team and Secret Service agents. As Dr. Dennis O'Leary related later, a nurse trying to take Reagan's blood pressure could not hear through the stethoscope because of the din and had to take it by feeling the pulse in Reagan's arm. It was only about 75 — low enough to signal that the president was in danger of shock.

Quickly, trauma team members inserted an intravenous tube and began running fluid into the president's veins. They took blood samples to measure the blood oxygen content and to match Reagan's blood for a transfusion. Meanwhile, they called for O-negative blood, the type that can be given to anyone. Reagan's blood type is O-positive.

Dr. Joseph M. Giardano, the surgeon who heads the trauma team, was among the first to respond to the page, and he saw Reagan within five minutes of his arrival. By then, the president's blood pressure had risen to 100, but he was coughing up blood, his breathing was fast and labored, and the surgeons had discovered the slit-like wound under his left arm.

Giardano said that the likelihood of a collapsed lung and the danger that Reagan might be bleeding from his heart or a major blood vessel made it necessary to insert a chest tube at once.

Outside the resuscitation bay, Deaver and aide David Fisher kept the telephone lines open to the White House. Deaver had Nancy Reagan called immediately. He also asked Tutwiler to tell his secretary to call his wife, Carolyn, and tell her that he was unharmed, but Deaver's secretary, Shirley Moore, had already done so.

Meanwhile, Brady and McCarthy had arrived at the hospital, and Delahanty had been taken to Washington Hospital Center. Brady looked bad and his blood pressure was dangerously high. To the paramedics, McCarthy looked best of all.

"Are you still with us?" a fellow agent asked him. "Oh, yes," McCarthy quickly replied.

At 2:36 p.m. Mrs. Reagan arrived at the hospital. She wanted to see her husband immediately, but was told by Deaver that she could not. When she did get to see him, he greeted her

with a line that may become a classic: "Honey, I forgot to duck."

At the White House

At the White House, events moved swiftly. Tutwiler had left the first White House line open for Deaver, then she rounded up Baker, Meese, Gergen, Speakes and communications director Frank Ursomarso, who were in a hall beyond the Oval Office. She told them Deaver was on the telephone.

Baker went into his office and took one phone. Meese picked up the other phone on the same line. Baker was at his desk. Deaver told them that the president had been shot.

"Shit," said Meese.

"Oh, Jesus," said Baker.

Both men moved swiftly to do what was necessary. They agreed that the vice president had to be called, and that the Cabinet should assemble in the White House Situation Room.

Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. had called, and Baker called him back.

"It's very important how we handle this world-wide," Haig told Baker, who agreed.

Treasury Secretary Donald T. Regan was the first Cabinet officer to reach Baker's office. Treasury is the boss of the Secret Service, and Regan had been told of the incident within two minutes of its occurrence. Regan was on a long distance call from Los Angeles when the call came, and he hung up and went immediately by car across the street to the White House.

At the hospital, Deaver put White House physician Daniel Ruge on the open line, and Baker took notes on what Ruge told him: "He [the president] has received a chest wound in the left chest. He is in stable condition. The blood pressure and pulse is okay. He is alert and fighting. Next stop could be the operating room. You ought to get right over here."

Haig arrived. Later, at the State Department, a spokesman announced that Baker and Meese had left the White House by the time Haig got there. It was an incorrect announcement. Regan, Baker and Tutwiler all remember that Haig arrived just before Baker and Meese left the office.

They talked briefly, and Meese and Baker agreed that Haig would be the "contact point" at the White House while they were at the hospital. No one said anything about anyone being "in control." But there was a brief discussion of the 25th Amendment, providing for presidential succession, because no one knew how badly

Reagan was hurt. Bush would be back by the time they knew, everyone agreed.

Meese told Tutwiler to get them a car. "I'll handle it," Regan said. He directed an agent to get them a siren-equipped Secret Service car so they could speed through traffic to the hospital. Speakes and Lyn Nofziger were with Meese and Baker.

Nofziger is a longtime Reagan aide who proved a composed man in the day's crisis. He offered to help because "Brady is out of commission," and everyone was happy to have him. He and Speakes are old adversaries, but they buried their differences on that bloody day.

Haig, Regan, Gergen and intergovernmental relations aide Rich Williamson went down to the Situation Room in the White House basement.

At the hospital Deaver alternated his time between Nancy Reagan and the telephones. The grim mood was lightened on one occasion when a hospital clerk with a green form in his hand ran around trying to get some information on the patient. "Who is he?" the clerk wanted to know.

"R-e-a-g-a-n," Deaver spelled out.

"You are kidding," the clerk said.

"I'm not kidding," said Deaver.

Meanwhile, Dr. Neofytos T. Tsangaris, the hospital's acting chief of staff, had been summoned from a meeting by a brief announcement: "The president of the United States is in the emergency room." Tsangaris said he quickly realized that three separate operating rooms, one for each shooting victim, must be readied at once with nurses, technicians and equipment.

It was now 3:20 p.m. and Reagan was being prepared for surgery. He had an oxygen mask over his face when Baker saw him, but winked at his chief of staff.

At 3:30 p.m., approximately 45 minutes after he was brought to the hospital, he was wheeled to the operating room. His bleeding had slowed somewhat, and he had received a transfusion of five units of blood.

"Please tell me you're Republicans," he joked to the masked surgical team surrounding him.

After that, according to operating room technician Michael Borowski, who helped with instruments during the operation, the president was quiet. "I saw Reagan looking around at everybody busy doing their thing . . .," he recalled later. "I just kind of took his hand. He had sort of tears in his eyes . . . He really had this look of appreciation on his face. That's what really touched me."

The first part of the operation required a tiny incision below the navel. Into the incision Giordano inserted about a quart of salt solution to determine whether any bullets had penetrated the abdominal cavity and caused bleeding there. When sucked out again, the fluid was clear, indicating no abdominal injuries.

A report was given to Baker and Deaver outside the operating room. Nancy Reagan was told the good news, and tears came to her eyes.

Borowski said Reagan was then turned on his right side and redraped for the more major operation, the toracotomy. Assisted by Dr. Kathleen Cheyney, Dr. Benjamin L. Aaron cut a six-inch incision through the skin parallel with the ribs, extending horizontally from below the left arm toward the center of the chest. Then he used retractors to spread the ribs apart.

Aaron said he could feel splintering of the seventh rib where the bullet had nicked it and ricocheted into the chest. Outside the left lung, he found a large blood clot, and, after he removed it, he could see where the bullet had entered the lung. Quickly, he examined the heart and the major vessels nearby. They were untouched. All the bleeding was coming from the smaller vessels within the torn lung.

"We began to feel around for the bullet . . . and to our chagrin we could not find that bullet within the lung," he said later. Aaron ordered an X-ray taken on the operating table. The bullet was visible, embedded in a portion of the left lung just behind the heart and "flattened almost as thin as a dime," he said.

At last Aaron felt the bullet and pulled it out. Then he removed some of the dead lung tissue, inserted a drain into the bullet's track, and closed the incisions. The president had been in the operating room for 3½ hours, and apparently was out of danger. With a breathing tube in his throat, and still on a respirator, the president was taken to the recovery room.

There had been anxious moments for Nancy Reagan during this operation, moments she spent in a small private office the hospital made available to her and in the chapel, where she met Sarah Brady, whose husband had been erroneously declared dead in mid-afternoon reports on all three television networks.

For 53 minutes after the shooting not much was known at the White House press office. It wasn't until 3:18 p.m. that communications director Ursomarsso stood on veteran press aide Connie Gerrard's chair in the upper press office to tell a packed crowd of reporters that Reagan had been shot.

Every television set was turned on as staff and reporters watched replay after replay. The room was full of people who work with Brady every day, and the replays, particularly those in slow motion, made all who were present think that his chances for survival were slight.

Some aides wept for their fallen press secretary. It was pouring rain outside now, and correspondents who usually would have broadcast from the White House lawn stood on chairs in the briefing room to get above the heads of their milling colleagues and talked to fill air time.

At 3:37 p.m. Gergen appeared in the crowded briefing room.

"Good afternoon," he said. "This is to confirm the statements made at George Washington hospital that the president was shot once in the left side this afternoon as he left the hotel. His condition is stable.

"A decision is now being made whether or not to operate to remove the bullet. The White House and the vice president are in communication. And the vice president is now en route to Washington."

On Air Force Two

Going to Washington had not been George Bush's plan. On a day of routine politicking, he had slipped into his blue, Eisenhower-style official flight jacket, buckled his seatbelt and settled back for a moment of relaxation as his plane took off from Fort Worth at 2:41 p.m. EST for a short hop to Austin.

Behind him was a speech to cattlemen and the dedication of the former Hotel Texas as a national monument — it was the hotel where John F. Kennedy had spent his last night before that fatal trip to Dallas. Ahead, in Austin, awaited an address to the Texas Legislature and a news conference.

Air Force Two was still climbing, a couple of minutes later, when Edward Pollard, head of the vice president's Secret Service detail, took an urgent message from the Fort Worth office. He was told of the assassination attempt, and was told that the president had not been hit. And he also was informed, incorrectly, that two Secret Service agents were down. Pollard immediately relayed this message to Bush.

Bush nodded quietly and began talking of the possibility of shortening his Austin stopover. The telephone line flashed again. This time it was Bush's press secretary, Peter Teeley, with a message identical to the one Pollard had given.

The vice president's chief legislation aide, Robert V. Thompson, rushed back to the VIP section in mid-plane and announced to the assembled Bush aides and three Texas congressmen that an attempt had been made on the president's life.

Up front, at 3:04 p.m., Haig telephoned Bush. There is no secure tele-

phone line to Air Force Two, and Haig was guarded in his communication. He also had a very poor connection.

"I think you should come directly back to Washington," Haig said. "There's been an incident." He also told Bush that he would be sending him a message over the coded Telex machine that is the only secure channel of communications between Air Force Two and the ground.

Bush hung up and turned to his aides. "We are going directly back to Washington," he said. "I just spoke to Haig." It was a quarter of an hour later before he learned what had happened.

"Mr. Vice President, in the incident you will have heard about by now, the president was struck in the back," the Telex from Haig said. "Medical authorities are deciding now whether or not to operate. Recommend you return to D.C. at earliest possible moment."

Quickly, the word was passed through the plane. House Majority Leader Jim Wright (D-Tex.) walked into the front cabin, and Bush turned to him and said, "Why in the world would anybody shoot a man like Ronald Reagan?"

Air Force Two did not have enough fuel on board to make it to Washington nonstop, so the plane landed in Austin as scheduled, but only for refueling. Bush stayed on board, sipping on a diet cola and saying very little.

At the White House

At the White House, Cabinet members and other high White House officials assembled in the Situation Room: Attorney General William French Smith, Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger, Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis, National Security Council staff director Richard V. Allen, domestic adviser Martin Anderson, CIA Director William J. Casey, counsel Fred Fielding. Hours later, Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige would arrive.

There were so many people rushing back and forth that Allen tried to close the door to the Situation Room to keep some of the staff members out. Allen put a tape recorder on the table in the center of the room along with another that was already there.

Some knew they were talking for posterity, but others didn't even notice the recorders. What the men in the Situation Room wanted to know were three things: how badly was the president hit? Was the shooting a conspiracy or an individual act? Would Brady survive?

While first reports from the hospital seemed to be positive, everyone in the Situation Room was aware that the president was 70 years old and faced major surgery. They were trying to prepare for every contingency.

Smith and Fielding briefed the Cabinet members on constitutional succession and on the 25th Amendment, which spells out the procedures for the vice president's assuming office in case of presidential disability. The review was brief, because the Cabinet members spent much of the time on the telephone and, like millions of other Americans, before the television set.

Of those in the Situation Room, Smith knew Reagan best. He is Reagan's long-time attorney, a charter member of the "kitchen cabinet" and a close friend. He also has jurisdiction over the FBI, and was on the telephone immediately, checking on Hinckley.

The readout from the FBI showed that the suspect carried psychiatrists' cards in his pocket, which convinced them that he probably was acting on his own.

Smith was outwardly calm, but his thoughts, like Deaver's, went back to the day John F. Kennedy was shot and the pall it cast over the nation. He was relieved to hear that Reagan was trying out one-liners on the doctors, knowing, as he would say later, "that this was a sign of normalcy."

Weinberger had been told by his secretary that he was wanted at the Situation Room. At first, he couldn't find a car, and thought of taking a taxi, but CIA Deputy Director Bobby Inman was visiting him, and he offered to take the defense secretary to the White House.

When Weinberger arrived, Haig was making telephone calls on the only secure phone in the Situation Room. Weinberger stepped outside to call Gen. David Jones, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They discussed the combat-readiness of American forces, and Weinberger, after receiving unspecified classified information on a little white slip of paper, directed Jones to order "a little higher state of readiness," but one that was short of a full alert.

Other Cabinet members were making similar determinations in their areas of responsibility.

Regan told Treasury Undersecretary for Monetary Affairs Beryl Sprinkel to tell the Federal Reserve that the dollar should be supported on foreign exchange markets. Afterward, Regan described his action as "a normal procedure that has been done before" when some crisis threatens the dollar's value.

The order meant that the Federal Reserve bought dollars with other currencies, though not in massive amounts.

The attention of the officials in the Situation Room then turned to the

television set, which showed Speakes in the press room fending off questions. He hadn't been told much, and some of the questions concerned possible emergency actions the nation was taking in the crisis. He was asked the key question of whether the U.S. military had been placed on higher readiness.

"Not that I'm aware of," Speakes replied.

His response drew criticism from both Weinberger and Haig, but the secretary of state was especially agitated. He said that "the next time someone opens their yap" they had better make sure that what they are saying is true. Weinberger then left the room to make a telephone call.

"We've got a problem, and it's now," Haig said, turning to Allen. "We had better go upstairs and get this straightened out."

Haig and Allen double-timed upstairs to the press room, which the secretary of state, who had undergone open-heart surgery, later thought might have accounted for his subsequent shaky appearance on television. He reached the briefing podium at 4:14 p.m.

In a voice cracking with emotion, he told the nation and the world: "I just wanted to touch upon a few matters associated with today's tragedy. First, as you know, we are in close touch with the vice president, who is returning to Washington . . . We have informed our friends abroad of the situation, the president's condition, as we know it [is] stable, now undergoing surgery. And there are absolutely no alert measures at this time that we're contemplating."

Haig was then asked who was making decisions for the government at the time, and responded, "Constitutionally, gentlemen, you have the president, the vice president and the secretary of state, in that order, and should the president decide he wants to transfer the helm to the vice president, he will do so. He has not done that. As of now, I am in control here, in the White House, pending return of the vice president and in close touch with him. If something came up, I would check with him, of course."

Haig's appearance astounded Baker and Meese, who were watching at the hospital. And it flabbergasted Haig's colleagues in the Situation Room, none of whom had been consulted before he left on his self-appointed mission.

"What's Al doing up there?" asked Lewis.

Weinberger, returning from his telephone call to Jones, looked up and saw Haig on the screen and asked, "Why are they running that old tape of Al Haig?"

It's not a tape, he was told. Haig's up there.

"He can't be, he was right here," said Weinberger, still disbelieving. As he watched, Haig told reporters in the briefing room that no change in military alert procedures was contemplated.

Weinberger knew that this was untrue because he had just ordered the increased state of readiness, but had done so without telling Haig.

When Haig returned to the briefing room, Weinberger was waiting. In a dramatic moment of angry but controlled confrontation, Weinberger demanded that Haig explain why he had said what he had in the briefing room. The two men kept their voices down, but their differences were clear and sharp. Despite Haig's announcement, Weinberger told him, he had increased the readiness of American military forces.

"That's just what I said we weren't doing," Haig said.

"I didn't know you were going up there," Weinberger replied, adding that he didn't think it "was appropriate" for Haig to be going before the television cameras in the manner he had done. For good measure, he also said that Haig had misstated the order of presidential succession, prompting Haig to respond: "You should read the Constitution."

Afterward, both Haig and Weinberger would try to minimize the exchange, which lasted only a few minutes. Haig responded to criticisms of his appearance by saying that he was winded from running up the stairs.

"I may have been quivery, but I've been through 50 times worse than that," he said.

At the Hospital

At the hospital, Haig's impromptu briefing was one of the bad moments for the watching White House aides. An even worse one came in the press room when the television networks incorrectly announced Brady's death. Some aides were furious. Others wept silently as they continued to work.

Baker, however, knew better than the networks. He had just had a report that Brady was holding his own, and he called the Situation Room and told them to disregard the report. Hospital interns who heard the reports asked the surgeon operating on Brady if he hadn't heard that his patient was dead.

At about 4:30 p.m. former president Richard M. Nixon called the hospital, asking for Nancy Reagan. She was unable to come to the telephone, but Baker did.

"Please convey my concern that I know is shared by all Americans," Nixon said.

At 5:20 p.m. the bullet was removed from the president and the

medical reports were positive. Baker called the Situation Room and told them they didn't have to worry themselves any more with the 25th Amendment.

Meese called the vice president, whose plane was still an hour out of Washington.

Cradling the phone in his cabin after he received the news, Bush turned to his aides and said, "The bullet's been removed. The operation was a success. The president is fine."

It was now agreed at the hospital that the president's top aides should split up. And it was also agreed that any further briefings on the president's condition should be by the doctors, even though this meant keeping the press waiting for another hour.

Deaver and Nofziger, whose experience was an asset in White House press relations, remained at the hospital, where Nofziger related the first of the Reagan jokes in surgery. Meese

went to the vice president's residence to brief Bush upon his arrival.

Meese met Bush at the residence, and together they rode in an armored limousine back to the White House. Meese had sent a helicopter for the vice president to Andrews Air Force Base, and a Bush aide had suggested that the chopper fly directly to the White House.

"No, I don't want to do that," Bush said. "Only the president flies onto the South Lawn."

It was 7 p.m. when Bush arrived in the Situation Room. In rapid-fire order Allen ticked off an agenda that had been discussed previously: the president's health, an update on the world intelligence situation, the status of U.S. military forces, the status of what the press and public had been told, the status of information given privately to members of Congress, the outlines of the statement which had been drafted for Bush, the question of whether it was appropriate for Bush to visit Reagan at the hospital, information about Mrs. Reagan and the family, the cancellation of Bush's planned trip to Geneva and an update on the next day's schedule, which Bush would fulfill.

At 7:30 p.m., with Brady still fighting for his life, Dr. Dennis O'Leary, clinical dean of George Washington, briefed the press.

At 8:45 p.m., Meese, Baker and Weinberger met in Baker's office for a drink and a discussion of the next day.

At about this time, Nancy Reagan left the hospital with their son, Ron, and his wife, Doria. In a corridor, she encountered the parents of the wounded Secret Service agent, and said gratefully that their son had saved her husband's life. McCarthy's father sobbed. Then, on the ground floor, she met Brady's mother, Dorothy.

"Hi, Nancy," said Mrs. Brady, in a manner that was strikingly composed, "We are just praying for both of them."

Nofziger remained at the hospital to brief reporters on Brady. At 9:30 p.m. he gave the first relatively optimistic report on Brady's condition.

At 8:50 p.m. the president, with the anesthesia worn off, scribbled a note to his doctors in the recovery room.

"All in all, I'd rather be in Philadelphia," it said, in the words of a famous movie line by W.C. Fields.

Everyone laughed. When the message was relayed to the Situation Room, Smith said, "I know he's going to be all right."

At 3 a.m. Tuesday, the tubes in Reagan's mouth were removed. The president's first words were about his assailant.

"Boy, what's *his* beef?" Reagan asked.

The Day of the Jackal in Washington

By Lou Cannon

Washington Post Staff Writer

It began as an ordinary spring day in Washington: light showers, the usual lines of tourists at the White House, a routine speech by the president.

Then, gunfire. For six hours the nation watched and wondered. Would the president live? Would he survive and be disabled? Would the nation be plunged into constitutional crisis?

It was 2:24 p.m. Monday, March 31. Michael K. Deaver wasn't supposed to be at the Washington Hilton. He was supposed to be

back in the White House working on the president's schedule. But it was a busy day at the office for chief of staff James A. Baker III, and Deaver, his deputy, had volunteered to go in his place with President Reagan when he addressed the Building Trades Council.

No one noticed the gunman before the firing began. No one particularly saw him, or knew he was there. On the sidewalk outside the lower entrance to the Washington Hilton, a Secret Service agent gave the routine radio signal that all was clear.

It was 2:25 p.m. Deaver will never forget what happened next.

"The president and I were walking out together," he recalls. "The press started asking their usual questions. I turned and

moved [James S.] Brady up because he was the press secretary. I took three steps, then the first shot went over my right shoulder. I knew what it was. I ducked down, with the help of a shove from a Washington policeman, who also was dropping to the ground. I smelled the powder. I never saw the gunman."

Secret Service agent Jerry Parr, head of the presidential detail, never saw the gunman, either. The gunman was shielded by the crowd.

Secret Service agents had looked over this crowd, as they always do. It is not easy to spot a concealed gunman in a friendly crowd. Thirty seconds before the president arrived at the hotel, Parr had received a favorable situation report.

"Rawhide follow to Rawhide advance," he said, using the code word for the president. "Situation report?"

"Situation negative," the advance agent replied.

The quiet ended in the rapid fire of a handgun and screams from the crowd. Within nine seconds six shots had been fired in rapid succession at the presidential party.

One shot hit Secret Service agent Timothy J. McCarthy, who thrust himself between President Reagan and the gunman, in the stomach.

One shot hit District police officer Thomas K. Delahanty in the neck.

One shot, although no one knew it immediately, bounced off the armored limousine and hit Reagan in the chest, penetrating his left lung. Yet another hit a window in a building across the street and fragmented.

And one shot, the shot that did the most damage, struck White House press secretary Brady over the left eye, penetrating his brain. Brady fell, with blood gushing from his head. An advance man, Rick Ahearn, put a white handkerchief under Brady's head. It quickly turned red with blood.

In a matter of seconds Parr had shoved Reagan into the limousine and pulled the door shut. He commanded the driver, Drew Unrue, to pull away, and the presidential limousine sped from the scene. A staff control car, with Deaver inside, followed.

"You son-of-a-bitch, you broke my rib," Reagan said to Parr inside the limousine. He was joking, but he was hurting from the blow.

Later in the week the president would tell Deaver that he hadn't realized he had been hit by a bullet but that he certainly knew he had been hit.

"It was a blow like I never felt," Reagan said. "It was like someone hitting me with a hammer as hard as they could."

Parr, not knowing that the president had been shot, originally ordered the limousine to return to the White House. But when he saw Reagan coughing blood, the bright-red oxygenated blood that comes from the lung, he and the president thought a rib had been broken by the protective shove. Parr told Unrue to drive to George Washington University Hospital instead of the White House. He radioed the control car and told Deaver where he was going.

At the Hospital

At the shooting scene, agents had overwhelmed a young blond man later identified as John Warnock Hinckley Jr. They piled him into a police car and took him away.

Before the limousine reached the hospital, nurses had cleared space in the resuscitation bay for the shooting victims. A first radio message has told them there has been a shooting and that "some men" have been hurt. A second message informed them that one was the president of the United States.

At 2:35 p.m. the limousine arrived at George Washington. Reagan was feeling pain in his chest and was having difficulty breathing. As he got out of the car, D.C. paramedic Roberto Hernandez recognized the limousine. On inaugural day he had been assigned to the ambulance that followed the new president around Washington.

"I literally froze," Hernandez said afterward. "I didn't believe what I was actually seeing. I noticed he looked very pale and he had an apprehensive look about him . . . The stare in his eyes was like he was in a slight daze."

Reagan got out of the car. He walked to the emergency room, his face drawn, Parr's arm around him. Incredibly, no one had thought to order a stretcher to be ready for him. When the president entered the emergency room, he fell to one knee.

"I can't breathe," he said.

For a moment the workers in the resuscitation bay were stunned. "Is that who I think it is?" a nurse asked. Then they sprang into action. Hernandez removed Reagan's shoes, socks and pants while his partner Eric Simmons cut off his shirt.

"All I could think of was Parkland," Deaver said, referring to the Dallas hospital where John F. Kennedy was taken.

But Deaver, a short, quiet, patient man who knows Reagan better than anyone on the White House staff and was treated like a son by him, was busy with other matters. Cool and collected, Deaver found a telephone bay outside the emergency ward and called the White House. He reached Margaret Tutwiler, the secretary to chief of staff Baker.

"Keep this line open, Margaret," he said. "There's been a shooting, and the president's hurt. We don't think he was hit, but he may have broken a rib."

At the White House

At the White House they already knew about the shooting. But they did not know much about what had happened or that the president had been shot.

Baker had been working in his office through the morning. At 1 p.m. he went to the White House mess to eat his usual lunch: a tunafish salad sandwich and buttermilk. Brady and his deputy, Larry Speakes, were finishing their lunch as Baker and Tutwiler arrived. They exchanged pleasantries, and Brady said he was going to the Hilton for Reagan's speech.

The first word at the White House that something had gone wrong came in a telephone call from David Prospero, an assistant press secretary. He was at the scene where the shots were fired, and he saw Brady go down.

Prospero rushed into the hotel and grabbed the first telephone he found. It was a charge phone, so he gave the operator the White House press office number and billed the call to his home telephone.

"Get me Larry. It's an emergency," he said into the telephone.

Speakes was just coming out of a meeting with other White House aides in the Roosevelt Room on the automobile regulation package that is to be announced this week. Betsy Strong, a press aide, ran up and told him Prospero was calling. He picked up the phone of Kathy Ahern, Brady's secretary.

"The president has been shot at and Brady has been hit," Prospero said.

"Thanks," Speakes replied, and hung up. From the look on his face the others in the room knew it was a crisis.

"I don't know what it looked like, but it hit pretty hard," Speakes said.

Ahern began to weep.

White House staff director David R. Gergen was coming out of the same meeting Speakes had attended. The first instinct of both was to walk out on the colonade and watch the motorcade return, which they expected momentarily. Instead, Speakes telephoned Jack Warner of the Secret Service. Warner knew something had happened, but did not have the details.

Gergen ran down the corridor to Baker's office with the news. He burst into the office, almost knocking down Tutwiler, who had her back against the door.

Gergen went to find White House counselor Edwin Meese III, the president's top aide, who was with his deputy, Craig Fuller. They already knew. Baker ran down to the Secret Service command post in the basement to find out what had happened. It was about 2:35 p.m., the time of Reagan's arrival at the hospital.

At the Hotel

Back at the Hilton, the ambulances had borne away the wounded men, leaving behind the remnants of the shooting: an umbrella, a dropped briefcase, the bloody sidewalk grate where Brady fell.

Prospero, knowing that the presidential limousine had started out for the White House, mistakenly believed the president had arrived there, and so informed the press. One eyewitness, Ramon Flores, attempted to convince

skeptical reporters that Reagan had been hit. He shrugged his shoulders when they did not believe him.

At the Hospital

Within minutes at George Washington the resuscitation area was crowded with members of the trauma team and Secret Service agents. As Dr. Dennis O'Leary related later, a nurse trying to take Reagan's blood pressure could not hear through the stethoscope because of the din and had to take it by feeling the pulse in Reagan's arm. It was only about 75 — low enough to signal that the president was in danger of shock.

Quickly, trauma team members inserted an intravenous tube and began running fluid into the president's veins. They took blood samples to measure the blood oxygen content and to match Reagan's blood for a transfusion. Meanwhile, they called for O-negative blood, the type that can be given to anyone. Reagan's blood type is O-positive.

Dr. Joseph M. Giardano, the surgeon who heads the trauma team, was among the first to respond to the page, and he saw Reagan within five minutes of his arrival. By then, the president's blood pressure had risen to 100, but he was coughing up blood, his breathing was fast and labored, and the surgeons had discovered the slit-like wound under his left arm.

Giardano said that the likelihood of a collapsed lung and the danger that Reagan might be bleeding from his heart or a major blood vessel made it necessary to insert a chest tube at once.

Outside - the resuscitation bay, Deaver and aide David Fisher kept the telephone lines open to the White House. Deaver had Nancy Reagan called immediately. He also asked Tutwiler to tell his secretary to call his wife, Carolyn, and tell her that he was unharmed, but Deaver's secretary, Shirley Moore, had already done so.

Meanwhile, Brady and McCarthy had arrived at the hospital, and Delahanty had been taken to Washington Hospital Center. Brady looked bad and his blood pressure was dangerously high. To the paramedics, McCarthy looked best of all.

"Are you still with us?" a fellow agent asked him. "Oh, yes," McCarthy quickly replied.

At 2:36 p.m. Mrs. Reagan arrived at the hospital. She wanted to see her husband immediately, but was told by Deaver that she could not. When she did get to see him, he greeted her

with a line that may become a classic: "Honey, I forgot to duck."

At the White House

At the White House, events moved swiftly. Tutwiler had left the first White House line open for Deaver, then she rounded up Baker, Meese, Gergen, Speakes and communications director Frank Ursomarso, who were in a hall beyond the Oval Office. She told them Deaver was on the telephone.

Baker went into his office and took one phone. Meese picked up the other phone on the same line. Baker was at his desk. Deaver told them that the president had been shot.

"Shit," said Meese.

"Oh, Jesus," said Baker.

Both men moved swiftly to do what was necessary. They agreed that the vice president had to be called, and that the Cabinet should assemble in the White House Situation Room.

Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. had called, and Baker called him back.

"It's very important how we handle this world-wide," Haig told Baker, who agreed.

Treasury Secretary Donald T. Regan was the first Cabinet officer to reach Baker's office. Treasury is the boss of the Secret Service, and Regan had been told of the incident within two minutes of its occurrence. Regan was on a long distance call from Los Angeles when the call came, and he hung up and went immediately by car across the street to the White House.

At the hospital, Deaver put White House physician Daniel Ruge on the open line, and Baker took notes on what Ruge told him: "He [the president] has received a chest wound in the left chest. He is in stable condition. The blood pressure and pulse is okay. He is alert and fighting. Next stop could be the operating room. You ought to get right over here."

Haig arrived. Later, at the State Department, a spokesman announced that Baker and Meese had left the White House by the time Haig got there. It was an incorrect announcement. Regan, Baker and Tutwiler all remember that Haig arrived just before Baker and Meese left the office.

They talked briefly, and Meese and Baker agreed that Haig would be the "contact point" at the White House while they were at the hospital. No one said anything about anyone being "in control." But there was a brief discussion of the 25th Amendment, providing for presidential succession, because no one knew how badly

Reagan was hurt. Bush would be back by the time they knew, everyone agreed.

Meese told Tutwiler to get them a car. "I'll handle it," Regan said. He directed an agent to get them a siren-equipped Secret Service car so they could speed through traffic to the hospital. Speakes and Lyn Nofziger were with Meese and Baker.

Nofziger is a longtime Reagan aide who proved a composed man in the day's crisis. He offered to help because "Brady is out of commission," and everyone was happy to have him. He and Speakes are old adversaries, but they buried their differences on that bloody day.

Haig, Regan, Gergen and intergovernmental relations aide Rich Williamson went down to the Situation Room in the White House basement.

At the hospital Deaver alternated his time between Nancy Reagan and the telephones. The grim mood was lightened on one occasion when a hospital clerk with a green form in his hand ran around trying to get some information on the patient. "Who is he?" the clerk wanted to know.

"R-e-a-g-a-n," Deaver spelled out.

"You are kidding," the clerk said.

"I'm not kidding," said Deaver.

Meanwhile, Dr. Neofytos T. Tsangaris, the hospital's acting chief of staff, had been summoned from a meeting by a brief announcement: "The president of the United States is in the emergency room." Tsangaris said he quickly realized that three separate operating rooms, one for each shooting victim, must be readied at once with nurses, technicians and equipment.

It was now 3:20 p.m. and Reagan was being prepared for surgery. He had an oxygen mask over his face when Baker saw him, but winked at his chief of staff.

At 3:30 p.m., approximately 45 minutes after he was been brought to the hospital, he was wheeled to the operating room. His bleeding had slowed somewhat, and he had received a transfusion of five units of blood.

"Please tell me you're Republicans," he joked to the masked surgical team surrounding him.

After that, according to operating room technician Michael Borowski, who helped with instruments during the operation, the president was quiet.

"I saw Reagan looking around at everybody busy doing their thing..." he recalled later. "I just kind of took his hand. He had sort of tears in his eyes... He really had this look of appreciation on his face. That's what really touched me."

The first part of the operation required a tiny incision below the navel. Into the incision Giordano inserted about a quart of salt solution to determine whether any bullets had penetrated the abdominal cavity and caused bleeding there. When sucked out again, the fluid was clear, indicating no abdominal injuries.

A report was given to Baker and Deaver outside the operating room. Nancy Reagan was told the good news, and tears came to her eyes.

Borowski said Reagan was then turned on his right side and redraped for the more major operation, the toracotomy. Assisted by Dr. Kathleen Cheyney, Dr. Benjamin L. Aaron cut a six-inch incision through the skin parallel with the ribs, extending horizontally from below the left arm toward the center of the chest. Then he used retractors to spread the ribs apart.

Aaron said he could feel splintering of the seventh rib where the bullet had nicked it and ricocheted into the chest. Outside the left lung, he found a large blood clot, and, after he removed it, he could see where the bullet had entered the lung. Quickly, he examined the heart and the major vessels nearby. They were untouched. All the bleeding was coming from the smaller vessels within the torn lung.

"We began to feel around for the bullet... and to our chagrin we could not find that bullet within the lung," he said later. Aaron ordered an X-ray taken on the operating table. The bullet was visible, embedded in a portion of the left lung just behind the heart and "flattened almost as thin as a dime," he said.

At last Aaron felt the bullet and pulled it out. Then he removed some of the dead lung tissue, inserted a drain into the bullet's track, and closed the incisions. The president had been in the operating room for 3½ hours, and apparently was out of danger. With a breathing tube in his throat, and still on a respirator, the president was taken to the recovery room.

There had been anxious moments for Nancy Reagan during this operation, moments she spent in a small private office the hospital made available to her and in the chapel, where she met Sarah Brady, whose husband had been erroneously declared dead in mid-afternoon reports on all three television networks.

For 53 minutes after the shooting not much was known at the White House press office. It wasn't until 3:18 p.m. that communications director Ursomarso stood on veteran press aide Connie Gerrard's chair in the upper press office to tell a packed crowd of reporters that Reagan had been shot.

Every television set was turned on as staff and reporters watched replay after replay. The room was full of people who work with Brady every day, and the replays, particularly those in slow motion, made all who were present think that his chances for survival were slight.

Some aides wept for their fallen press secretary. It was pouring rain outside now, and correspondents who usually would have broadcast from the White House lawn stood on chairs in the briefing room to get above the heads of their milling colleagues and talked to fill air time.

At 3:37 p.m. Gergen appeared in the crowded briefing room.

"Good afternoon," he said. "This is to confirm the statements made at George Washington hospital that the president was shot once in the left side this afternoon as he left the hotel. His condition is stable.

"A decision is now being made whether or not to operate to remove the bullet. The White House and the vice president are in communication. And the vice president is now en route to Washington."

On Air Force Two

Going to Washington had not been George Bush's plan. On a day of routine politicking, he had slipped into his blue, Eisenhower-style official flight jacket, buckled his seatbelt and settled back for a moment of relaxation as his plane took off from Fort Worth at 2:41 p.m. EST for a short hop to Austin.

Behind him was a speech to cattlemen and the dedication of the former Hotel Texas as a national monument — it was the hotel where John F. Kennedy had spent his last night before that fatal trip to Dallas. Ahead, in Austin, awaited an address to the Texas Legislature and a news conference.

Air Force Two was still climbing, a couple of minutes later, when Edward Pollard, head of the vice president's Secret Service detail, took an urgent message from the Fort Worth office. He was told of the assassination attempt, and was told that the president had not been hit. And he also was informed, incorrectly, that two Secret Service agents were down. Pollard immediately relayed this message to Bush.

Bush nodded quietly and began talking of the possibility of shortening his Austin stopover. The telephone line flashed again. This time it was Bush's press secretary, Peter Teeley, with a message identical to the one Pollard had given.

The vice president's chief legislation aide, Robert V. Thompson, rushed back to the VIP section in mid-plane and announced to the assembled Bush aides and three Texas congressmen that an attempt had been made on the president's life.

Up front, at 3:04 p.m., Haig telephoned Bush. There is no secure tele-

phone line to Air Force Two, and Haig was guarded in his communication. He also had a very poor connection.

"I think you should come directly back to Washington," Haig said. "There's been an incident." He also told Bush that he would be sending him a message over the coded Telex machine that is the only secure channel of communications between Air Force Two and the ground.

Bush hung up and turned to his aides. "We are going directly back to Washington," he said. "I just spoke to Haig." It was a quarter of an hour later before he learned what had happened.

"Mr. Vice President, in the incident you will have heard about by now, the president was struck in the back," the Telex from Haig said. "Medical authorities are deciding now whether or not to operate. Recommend you return to D.C. at earliest possible moment."

Quickly, the word was passed through the plane. House Majority Leader Jim Wright (D-Tex.) walked into the front cabin, and Bush turned to him and said, "Why in the world would anybody shoot a man like Ronald Reagan?"

Air Force Two did not have enough fuel on board to make it to Washington nonstop, so the plane landed in Austin as scheduled, but only for refueling. Bush stayed on board, sipping on a diet cola and saying very little.

At the White House

At the White House, Cabinet members and other high White House officials assembled in the Situation Room: Attorney General William French Smith, Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger, Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis, National Security Council staff director Richard V. Allen, domestic adviser Martin Anderson, CIA Director William J. Casey, counsel Fred Fielding. Hours later, Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige would arrive.

There were so many people rushing back and forth that Allen tried to close the door to the Situation Room to keep some of the staff members out. Allen put a tape recorder on the table in the center of the room along with another that was already there.

Some knew they were talking for posterity, but others didn't even notice the recorders. What the men in the Situation Room wanted to know were three things: how badly was the president hit? Was the shooting a conspiracy or an individual act? Would Brady survive?

While first reports from the hospital seemed to be positive, everyone in the Situation Room was aware that the president was 70 years old and faced major surgery. They were trying to prepare for every contingency.

Smith and Fielding briefed the Cabinet members on constitutional succession and on the 25th Amendment, which spells out the procedures for the vice president's assuming office in case of presidential disability. The review was brief, because the Cabinet members spent much of the time on the telephone and, like millions of other Americans, before the television set.

Of those in the Situation Room, Smith knew Reagan best. He is Reagan's long-time attorney, a charter member of the "kitchen cabinet" and a close friend. He also has jurisdiction over the FBI, and was on the telephone immediately, checking on Hinckley.

The readout from the FBI showed that the suspect carried psychiatrists' cards in his pocket, which convinced them that he probably was acting on his own.

Smith was outwardly calm, but his thoughts, like Deaver's, went back to the day John F. Kennedy was shot and the pall it cast over the nation. He was relieved to hear that Reagan was trying out one-liners on the doctors, knowing, as he would say later, "that this was a sign of normalcy."

Weinberger had been told by his secretary that he was wanted at the Situation Room. At first, he couldn't find a car, and thought of taking a taxi, but CIA Deputy Director Bobby Inman was visiting him, and he offered to take the defense secretary to the White House.

When Weinberger arrived, Haig was making telephone calls on the only secure phone in the Situation Room. Weinberger stepped outside to call Gen. David Jones, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They discussed the combat-readiness of American forces, and Weinberger, after receiving unspecified classified information on a little white slip of paper, directed Jones to order "a little higher state of readiness," but one that was short of a full alert.

Other Cabinet members were making similar determinations in their areas of responsibility.

Regan told Treasury Undersecretary for Monetary Affairs Beryl Sprinkel to tell the Federal Reserve that the dollar should be supported on foreign exchange markets. Afterward, Regan described his action as "a normal procedure that has been done before" when some crisis threatens the dollar's value.

The order meant that the Federal Reserve bought dollars with other currencies, though not in massive amounts.

The attention of the officials in the Situation Room then turned to the

television set, which showed Speakes in the press room fending off questions. He hadn't been told much, and some of the questions concerned possible emergency actions the nation was taking in the crisis. He was asked the key question of whether the U.S. military had been placed on higher readiness.

"Not that I'm aware of," Speakes replied.

His response drew criticism from both Weinberger and Haig, but the secretary of state was especially agitated. He said that "the next time someone opens their yap" they had better make sure that what they are saying is true. Weinberger then left the room to make a telephone call.

"We've got a problem, and it's now," Haig said, turning to Allen. "We had better go upstairs and get this straightened out."

Haig and Allen double-timed upstairs to the press room, which the secretary of state, who had undergone open-heart surgery, later thought might have accounted for his subsequent shaky appearance on television. He reached the briefing podium at 4:14 p.m.

In a voice cracking with emotion, he told the nation and the world: "I just wanted to touch upon a few matters associated with today's tragedy. First, as you know, we are in close touch with the vice president, who is returning to Washington. . . . We have informed our friends abroad of the situation, the president's condition, as we know it [is] stable, now undergoing surgery. And there are absolutely no alert measures at this time that we're contemplating."

Haig was then asked who was making decisions for the government at the time, and responded, "Constitutionally, gentlemen, you have the president, the vice president and the secretary of state, in that order, and should the president decide he wants to transfer the helm to the vice president, he will do so. He has not done that. As of now, I am in control here, in the White House, pending return of the vice president and in close touch with him. If something came up, I would check with him, of course."

Haig's appearance astounded Baker and Meese, who were watching at the hospital. And it flabbergasted Haig's colleagues in the Situation Room, none of whom had been consulted before he left on his self-appointed mission.

"What's Al doing up there?" asked Lewis.

Weinberger, returning from his telephone call to Jones, looked up and saw Haig on the screen and asked, "Why are they running that old tape of Al Haig?"

It's not a tape, he was told. Haig's up there.

"He can't be, he was right here," said Weinberger, still disbelieving. As he watched, Haig told reporters in the briefing room that no change in military alert procedures was contemplated.

Weinberger knew that this was untrue because he had just ordered the increased state of readiness, but had done so without telling Haig.

When Haig returned to the briefing room, Weinberger was waiting. In a dramatic moment of angry but controlled confrontation, Weinberger demanded that Haig explain why he had said what he had in the briefing room. The two men kept their voices down, but their differences were clear and sharp. Despite Haig's announcement, Weinberger told him, he had increased the readiness of American military forces.

"That's just what I said we weren't doing," Haig said.

"I didn't know you were going up there," Weinberger replied, adding that he didn't think it "was appropriate" for Haig to be going before the television cameras in the manner he had done. For good measure, he also said that Haig had misstated the order of presidential succession, prompting Haig to respond: "You should read the Constitution."

Afterward, both Haig and Weinberger would try to minimize the exchange, which lasted only a few minutes. Haig responded to criticisms of his appearance by saying that he was winded from running up the stairs.

"I may have been quivery, but I've been through 50 times worse than that," he said.

At the Hospital

At the hospital, Haig's impromptu briefing was one of the bad moments for the watching White House aides. An even worse one came in the press room when the television networks incorrectly announced Brady's death. Some aides were furious. Others wept silently as they continued to work.

Baker, however, knew better than the networks. He had just had a report that Brady was holding his own, and he called the Situation Room and told them to disregard the report. Hospital interns who heard the reports asked the surgeon operating on Brady if he hadn't heard that his patient was dead.

At about 4:30 p.m. former president Richard M. Nixon called the hospital, asking for Nancy Reagan. She was unable to come to the telephone, but Baker did.

"Please convey my concern that I know is shared by all Americans," Nixon said.

At 5:20 p.m. the bullet was removed from the president and the

medical reports were positive. Baker called the Situation Room and told them they didn't have to worry themselves any more with the 25th Amendment.

Meese called the vice president, whose plane was still an hour out of Washington.

Cradling the phone in his cabin after he received the news, Bush turned to his aides and said, "The bullet's been removed. The operation was a success. The president is fine."

It was now agreed at the hospital that the president's top aides should split up. And it was also agreed that any further briefings on the president's condition should be by the doctors, even though this meant keeping the press waiting for another hour.

Deaver and Nofziger, whose experience was an asset in White House press relations, remained at the hospital, where Nofziger related the first of the Reagan jokes in surgery. Meese

went to the vice president's residence to brief Bush upon his arrival.

Meese met Bush at the residence, and together they rode in an armored limousine back to the White House. Meese had sent a helicopter for the vice president to Andrews Air Force Base, and a Bush aide had suggested that the chopper fly directly to the White House.

"No, I don't want to do that," Bush said. "Only the president flies onto the South Lawn."

It was 7 p.m. when Bush arrived in the Situation Room. In rapid-fire order Allen ticked off an agenda that had been discussed previously: the president's health, an update on the world intelligence situation, the status of U.S. military forces, the status of what the press and public had been told, the status of information given privately to members of Congress, the outlines of the statement which had been drafted for Bush, the question of whether it was appropriate for Bush to visit Reagan at the hospital, information about Mrs. Reagan and the family, the cancellation of Bush's planned trip to Geneva and an update on the next day's schedule, which Bush would fulfill.

At 7:30 p.m., with Brady still fighting for his life, Dr. Dennis O'Leary, clinical dean of George Washington, briefed the press.

At 8:45 p.m., Meese, Baker and Weinberger met in Baker's office for a drink and a discussion of the next day.

At about this time, Nancy Reagan left the hospital with their son, Ron, and his wife, Doria. In a corridor, she encountered the parents of the wounded Secret Service agent, and said gratefully that their son had saved her husband's life. McCarthy's father sobbed. Then, on the ground floor, she met Brady's mother, Dorothy.

"Hi, Nancy," said Mrs. Brady, in a manner that was strikingly composed, "We are just praying for both of them."

Nofziger remained at the hospital to brief reporters on Brady. At 9:30 p.m. he gave the first relatively optimistic report on Brady's condition.

At 8:50 p.m. the president, with the anesthesia worn off, scribbled a note to his doctors in the recovery room.

"All in all, I'd rather be in Philadelphia," it said, in the words of a famous movie line by W.C. Fields.

Everyone laughed. When the message was relayed to the Situation Room, Smith said, "I know he's going to be all right."

At 3 a.m. Tuesday, the tubes in Reagan's mouth were removed. The president's first words were about his assailant.

"Boy, what's *his* beef?" Reagan asked.