

JFK LEAVES THE BUILDING

The twenty second of November, nineteen sixty three, a Friday, I was in a junior in high school at Los Gatos High, in the Silicon Valley of California, before it was known as that.

I remembered it as a Thursday, so I emailed my friend Hopner, whose father was working on RAM at IBM at the time. I had no idea then what RAM was or what random access memory would come to mean.

I remember a warm day, cloudless, sunny.

I was in Mr. Hickman's U.S. History class, and I think I remember an announcement over the P.A : “The president has been shot.”

Memory always plays tricks. That's a fact.

There may have been some radios. No television.

Mr. Hickman, from behind his desk at the front of the room, a blue suit, white shirt, red tie, asked me: “ What's your take on this?”

I told him that I would defer to our resident genius, sitting to the right of me at the back of the sun lit room.

Hickman: "Jolene."

Jolene, tall, slender, gracious, an essentially quiet, thoughtful person: "The government will go from upper class, Ivy League intellectuals to LBJ's power brokers. As to the motive, look to opportunity. Who had both? Who had the knowledge of where the victim was going to be, that he would be at that spot, in that moment, at that time? Opportunity is the key."

Me? I wondered then how such an intelligent guy, so savvy, with so many capable people around him, would allow himself to be such a sitting duck.

I remember everyone wandering through the halls, the sounds of shuffling feet, a dull aura of mourning everywhere.