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Subject: Altgens obit

AP Photographer Altgens Dies 11:21 AM Today Category: Domestic Keywords: Obit-Altgens

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10< ^AP-Obit-Altgens<,0329<^AP Photographer Altgens Dies<< DALLAS (AP) _ James W. ``Ike" Altgens, a retired photographer for The Associated Press who witnessed the assassination of President Kennedy and provided early word about it to AP editors, has died. He was 76. The bodies of Altgens and his wife, Clara, were found Tuesday at their home in Dallas, according to an employee of Sparkman-Hillcrest Funeral Home who did not want to be identified. The cause of their deaths has not been determined, he said. Altgens was taking pictures of the Kennedy motorcade in Dealey Plaza on Nov. 22, 1963, when the president was shot. Altgens raced to a telephone and was able to provide the first information to AP that Kennedy had been struck by gunfire and had been seriously wounded. An AP bulletin about the shooting quoted Altgens as saying he thought someone had set off fireworks until he saw blood on the president's head. In a bylined story later that day, Altgens wrote, ``There was a burst of noise _ the second one I heard _ and pieces of flesh appeared to fly from President Kennedy's car. ``Blood covered the whole left side of his head. ``Mrs. Kennedy saw what had happened to her husband. She grabbed him exclaiming, `Oh, no!" Altgens later testified before the Warren Commission, the panel that concluded Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in firing the fatal bullets from the nearby Texas Schoolbook Depository building. One photo that Altgens took that day, showing a man peering from the entrance of the book depository, caused controversy because the man looked like Oswald. Such evidence could have been used to show Oswald could not have fired the gun from an upper floor. But authorities concluded the man was another book depository employee. The photographer, a native of Dallas, worked for the AP for a half-century, from 1938 to 1988. A memorial service was set for Friday. AP-NY-12-14-95 1021EST<END OF FILE-> WIRE READY NEWSWIRE SYSTEMS
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