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ComposedDate: 05/28/1996
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Subject: AP Story on JFK Film
AP 28-May-1996 8:13 EDT REF201Copyright 1996. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS. All rights reserved. The information contained in the AP news report may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or otherwise distributed without the prior written authority of The Associated Press. DALLAS (AP) -- Long-lost television news film of events surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy, including the chaos in Dealey Plaza after the shooting, has been turned over to the agency compiling the public record. The 45 minutes of silent, black-and-white 16 mm film -- mostly unaired sequences -- also includes Kennedy and his wife holding hands at the airport before boarding the motorcade and pictures of Jack Ruby waiting for Lee Harvey Oswald at an appearance before reporters the night of the assassination, The Dallas Morning News reported Tuesday. "This is significant historical film," said Richard Trask, of the Assassination Records Review Board, the independent agency created by Congress to compile a complete public record on the assassination. The film does not show the president's motorcade under rifle fire in Dealey Plaza on Nov. 22, 1963, and offers no obvious evidence toward settling the case's many controversies, according to the few authorities who have viewed it. But the film -- only a fraction of which has ever been shown publicly -- does show the confusion that engulfed Dealey Plaza after the president was shot and the immediate search for the shooter in the railroad yard behind the grassy knoll. It also includes the only known footage of Vice President Lyndon Johnson leaving Parkland Memorial Hospital after the president was pronounced dead. Only a careful analysis could tell researchers who did what and where in the moments after the fatal shots as they try to reconstruct and resolve history. "Who knows what we might find in there?" Trask said. The review board transferred the footage to videotape last week at the National Archives, where researchers and the public will be able to view it as part of the JFK Collection. "Historically, the film is extremely important," said Gary Mack, an archivist for The Sixth Floor Museum in the Texas School Book Depository. "The gaps that have existed for 32 years will be closed by finds like this." Roy Cooper Jr., a staffer for television station KTVT, now a CBS affiliate, rescued the unaired footage from the trash in the days after the assassination, the Morning News said. He shared his secret with a friend, Eli Sturges, who persuaded Cooper to make a copy in case anything happened to the original. Cooper, who retired from KTVT in the early '90s and died last year, and Sturges tried unsuccessfully to sell the film over the years, but the only buyer was a 1988 British TV program that purchased about two minutes. The film was hidden beneath a house for years and was nearly destroyed in a house fire a year ago. Sturges' family turned over their copy to the review board last week. In a first for the review board, a representative flew to Dallas from Washington last week just to pick up the film, packed onto two large reels and stored in a rusting steel
Body:
recstat: Record
DeliveryPriority: N
DeliveryReport: B
ReturnReceipt:
Categories: