

the
**Henry
Ford**

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**An Evening
with Former Secret
Service Agent**

Clint Hill

and Lisa McCubbin

Henry Ford Museum®





▲ Keeping a watchful eye as President John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline Kennedy exit St. Francis Xavier Church in Hyannis, 1961. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston



▲ President Dwight D. Eisenhower waves from the 1950 Lincoln Continental presidential limousine, Seoul, South Korea, 1960.

▶ President Lyndon Johnson and Lady Bird Johnson sit in the 1961 Lincoln presidential limousine after its rebuild, 1964.

▶ 1972 Lincoln Continental presidential limousine used by President Ronald Reagan. Presidents Nixon, Ford, Carter and George H.W. Bush also used this car.



▲ Clint Hill noted he had difficulty breathing at Mexico City's high elevation as he jogged alongside SS-100-X Lincoln, July 1, 1962. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston

▶ 1950 Lincoln presidential limousine used by Eisenhower.



A presidential parade car provides two things: visibility and security. Those concepts are often at odds. The Henry Ford's presidential Lincolns illustrate the difficult and changing balance between the chief executive's need to be seen and need to be safe.

"Sunshine Special," the 1939 Lincoln Model K most often associated with Franklin D. Roosevelt, was the first parade car specifically modified for presidential use. Coachbuilder Brunn & Company focused more on utility than luxury, deleting armrests for maximum seating capacity and adding wide running boards for Secret Service agents. The car was not armored until Pearl Harbor, when bullet-resistant tires, glass and armor plating were installed.

In 1950, Harry S. Truman took delivery of a new Lincoln with a body by Raymond Dietrich, but the car was used most often by successor Dwight D. Eisenhower. Again, there was no armor, but in 1954 the limo received the weatherproof plexiglass roof that inspired its nickname, "Bubbletop." Security features did not extend much beyond riding steps on the rear bumper and flashing red lights at the front.

Planning for the next car started under Eisenhower, but the 1961 Lincoln Continental limo is forever tied to John F. Kennedy. Once again, armor was not considered necessary, and Kennedy preferred to travel with the top removed whenever possible. But his assassination ended the tradition of open cars. Ford Motor Company and custom car builder Hess & Eisenhardt rebuilt the 1961 Lincoln with a permanent roof, titanium armor and bullet-resistant glass five layers thick.

The 1972 Lincoln limousine was the first presidential parade car designed and built as an armored vehicle from the start. Security was now of prime importance — a point dramatically underscored when an attempt on Ronald Reagan's life was made as he was getting into the limo in 1981.

The Henry Ford's presidential Lincolns were leased to the White House. As the leases ended, the cars were returned to Ford Motor Company, and the firm gifted them to the museum. Currently, Cadillac supplies the president's state cars. Each is custom-built — most recently on truck platforms — and each is typically destroyed at the end of its service life. 🇺🇸

By Matt Anderson, Automobile Historian and Curator of Transportation, The Henry Ford



Presidential Limousines

AT THE HENRY FORD



An Evening with Former Secret Service Agent **Clint Hill**

Henry Ford Museum®
Monday, May 16, 2016

7 p.m.

Welcome remarks from
Patricia Mooradian,
president, The Henry Ford

7:10 p.m.

Program with Clint Hill,
author, *Five Presidents:
My Extraordinary Journey
with Eisenhower, Kennedy,
Johnson, Nixon, and Ford,*
and Lisa McCubbin,
journalist

8:00 p.m.

Program concludes



About Clint Hill

Clint Hill is remembered as the Secret Service agent who leaped onto the presidential limousine in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963, trying to protect President John F. Kennedy and first lady Jacqueline Kennedy as an assassin fired.

Hill had been assigned to Mrs. Kennedy's Secret Service detail and was on the car immediately behind the president's. He was later cited for his bravery that day.

Born during the Great Depression in North Dakota in 1932, Hill was placed in an orphanage soon after birth. He was adopted by the Hill family of Washburn, North Dakota, and grew up there, graduating from high school in 1950. He studied history at Concordia College in Minnesota and joined the army after graduation. Selected for training at the Army Intelligence School, he became a special agent in the Counter Intelligence Corps.


In 1958, Hill was hired by the Secret Service for its Denver office but was soon transferred to the White House, serving under five presidents and later becoming assistant director of the Secret Service. But Hill remained haunted by the events in Dallas. He retired in 1975 at age 43 and spent years mired in what he calls an "emotional prison" before concluding he had done what he could that day in 1963.

Late in life, he began collaborating with journalist Lisa McCubbin to tell his stories. Their first book, *Mrs. Kennedy and Me*, a memoir of Hill's four years protecting the first lady published in 2012, became a New York Times best-seller. Their next book, *Five Days in November*, about the days surrounding Kennedy's assassination, was published the next year and also became a best-seller.

Their new book, ***Five Presidents: My Extraordinary Journey with Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and Ford***, was released in May 2016.



About Lisa McCubbin

McCubbin is a journalist who has been a television news anchor and reporter, hosted her own radio show and spent more than five years in the Middle East as a freelance writer. Hill has credited his collaboration with McCubbin for helping him "find a reason to live, not just exist." 

Explore the history of transportation in America by visiting the **Driving America exhibit in Henry Ford Museum**. Learn more about The Henry Ford's unmatched collection of historical vehicles. For more details, visit thehenryford.org/drivingamerica.

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◀ 1961 Lincoln Continental presidential limousine used by John F. Kennedy. Front cover image courtesy of the author. All photos are from The Henry Ford Archive of American Innovation™ unless otherwise noted.