



THE DAILY SENTINEL

GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO



ALSO INSIDE
MONTROSE EYES
SPOT IN CLASS 4A
STATE TITLE GAME
SPORTS 1B

Friday
November 22, 2013

75¢

Community news source since 1893

Democrats vote to curb filibusters on appointees

By **DAVID ESPO** and **ALAN FRAM**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Sweeping aside a century of precedent, Democrats took a chunk out of the Senate's hallowed filibuster tradition Thursday and cleared the way for speedy confirmation of controversial appointments made by President Barack Obama and chief executives in the future.

Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., who orchestrated the change, called the 52-48 vote a blow against gridlock. Republicans warned Democrats will eventually regret their actions once political fortunes are reversed and they can no longer block appointments made by a GOP president.



PRESIDENT OBAMA

"The gears of government have got to work."

At the White House, Obama welcomed the shift. "The gears of government have got to work," he said, and he declared that Republicans had increasingly used existing rules "as a reckless and relentless tool to grind all business to a halt."

But Republicans warned of a power grab by Democrats, some predicting worse is yet to come.

"This drastic move sets a dangerous precedent that could later be expanded to speed passage of expansive and controversial legislation," said Sen. Richard Shelby of Alabama.

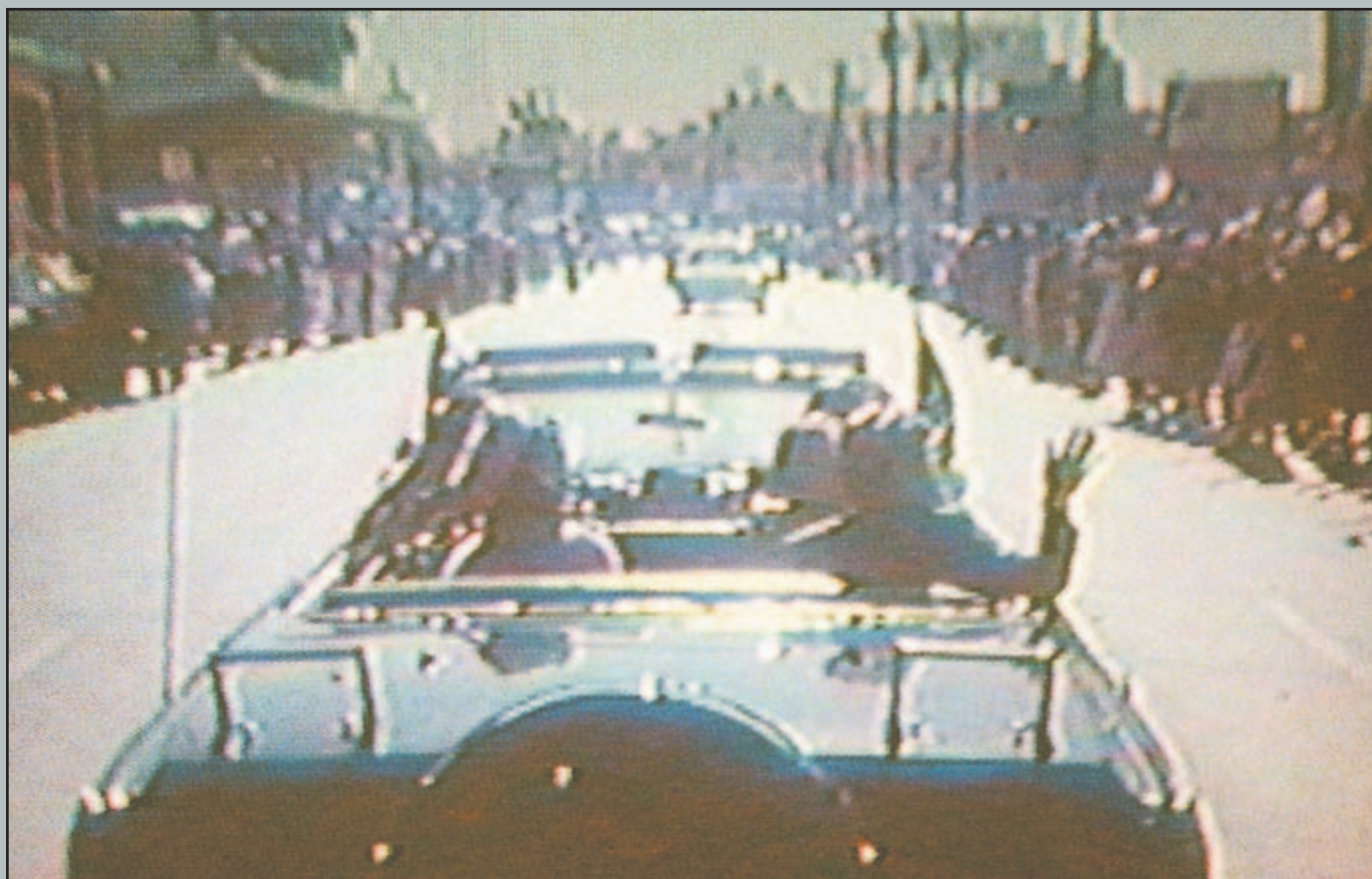
The day's change involved presidential appointees, not legislation — and not Supreme Court nominees.

At issue was a rule that has required a 60-vote majority to end debate in the 100-member Senate and assure a yes-or-no vote on presidential nominees to federal courts or to Cabinet departments or other agencies.

Under a parliamentary maneuver scripted in advance, Democrats changed the proceedings so that only a simple majority was required to clear the way for a final vote. In Senate-speak, this was accomplished by establishing a new precedent under the rules, rather than a formal rules change.

The day's events capped more than a decade of struggle over judicial nominations, in which first President George W. Bush found his appointees stalled by Senate Democrats, and more recently Obama has complained that Republicans have been delaying or preventing confirmation for his picks.

JFK's last day, 50 years ago



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In this footage taken by presidential aide Dave Powers and photographed from a television screen, President John F. Kennedy, accompanied by his wife, Jacqueline, waves from his limousine in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963. According to an AP-GfK survey done in April 2013, about 6 in 10 Americans say they believe multiple people were involved in a conspiracy to assassinate President John F. Kennedy, while only one-fourth think Oswald acted alone. Belief in a conspiracy, though strong, has declined since a 2003 Gallup poll found 75 percent said they thought Oswald was part of a wider plot. The Powers film, uncovered by the Assassination Records Review Board and released Thursday, Nov. 21, 1996, shows Kennedy's trip to Texas Nov. 21-22, 1963, prior to the assassination. Powers ran out of film before the motorcade entered Dealey Plaza where the fatal shots were fired.

Conspiracy claims can't sway former Secret Service agent

By **BOB SILBERNAGEL**
Bob.Silbernagel@gjsentinel.com

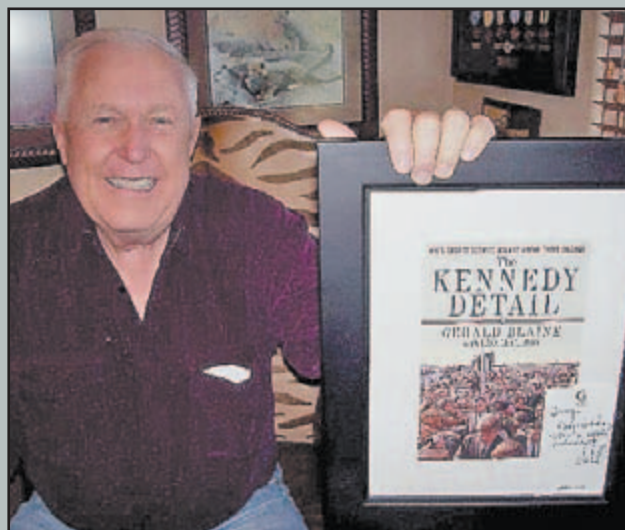
Jerry Blaine has heard just about every conspiracy theory put forward about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, 50 years ago today.

He isn't buying any of them.

"I went through 23 volumes of evidence, including the Warren Commission report," Blaine said last week during an interview at his home in Grand Junction. "There's ironclad evidence it was the work of a lone, mentally unstable gunman who wanted attention," Lee Harvey Oswald.

Blaine speaks with more than a little authority. He is the coauthor of "The Kennedy Detail," the story of the Secret Service agents who were assigned to protect the president and his family in 1963.

Equally important, Blaine was a member of that detail, and one of the Secret Service special agents who accompanied Kennedy to Texas on that fateful trip in November of 1963. But Blaine wasn't in Dallas the morning of Nov. 22, when the president and First Lady Jackie Kennedy joined Texas Gov. John Connally in an open limousine to drive through the city.



Former John F. Kennedy secret service agent Jerry Blaine is shown just before the publication of his book "The Kennedy Detail," which supports the lone gunman assassination theory.

SENTINEL FILE PHOTO

See **JFK**, page 7A

MORE ON THE JFK ASSASSINATION ANNIVERSARY INSIDE

Former reporter Mary Louise Giblin Henderson recalls the scene in The Daily Sentinel newsroom on Nov. 22, 1963, **PAGE 6A**.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A law enforcement officer walks past a pile of marijuana seized Thursday during a raid at Swiss Medical Industries in Boulder.

Feds raid Denver area pot shops

By **COLLEEN SLEVIN** and **KRISTEN WYATT**
Associated Press

DENVER — Federal agents raided an unknown number of marijuana dispensaries and growing sites in Colorado Thursday, confiscating piles of marijuana plants and cartons of cannabis-infused drinks just weeks before the state allows recreational marijuana retailers to open their doors.

The raids, conducted on a snowy morning, were the first in Colorado since the U.S. Department of Justice said in August that it wouldn't interfere

with state marijuana laws as long as the states keep the drug away from children, the black market and federal property.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Denver said the federal action "comports with the Department's recent guidance" but would not elaborate. The U.S. Attorney's Office said authorities were executing sealed search and seizure warrants and wouldn't disclose how many businesses were targeted or what they're being investigated for.

In a statement, spokesman

Jeff Dorschner said the Internal Revenue Service's criminal investigations division was also involved.

Retail marijuana sales are to begin Jan. 1 in Colorado, though not all municipalities will be ready to go by then.

For now, dispensaries are supposed to sell only to people with medical permission to use the drug. Many of the state's 500 or so existing dispensaries are making plans to convert to recreational sales.

See **RAID**, page 7A

Burglars smash car windows near CMU

By **SENTINEL STAFF**

Items valued at thousands of dollars have been stolen within the past five weeks from dozens of cars in central Grand Junction.

The Grand Junction Police Department received 67 theft from vehicle and criminal mischief reports between Oct. 20 and this Tuesday, according to a press release from the department.

Fifty of the theft incidents happened east of Fifth Street, west of 28 1/2 Road, south of Bookcliff Avenue and north of Rood Avenue. Three more incidents happened slightly north of that area.

Seventeen of the theft from vehicle reports involved cars that had been left unlocked, while 36 of the reports involved a thief smashing a window to get property inside the vehicle.

In every break-in reported so far, victims reported a thief

See **SMASH**, page 7A

'Monster' cosmic blast zips by Earth

By **SETH BORENSTEIN**
AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON — Astronomers call it the monster. It was the biggest and brightest cosmic explosion ever witnessed. Had it been closer, Earth would have been toast.

Orbiting telescopes got the fireworks show of a lifetime last spring when they spotted what is known as a gamma ray burst in a far-off galaxy.

The only bigger display astronomers know of was the Big Bang — and no one, of course, was around to witness that.

"This burst was a once-in-a-century cosmic event," NASA astrophysics chief Paul Hertz said Thursday.

But because this blast was 3.7 billion light-years away, mankind was spared. In fact, no one on Earth could even see it with the naked eye.

A gamma ray burst happens when a massive star dies, collapses into a brand-new black hole, explodes in what's called a supernova and ejects energetic radiation. The radiation is as bright as can be as it travels across the universe at the speed of light.

A planet caught in one of these bursts would lose its atmosphere instantly and would be left a burnt cinder, astronomers say.

Scientists might be able to detect warning signs of an impending gamma ray burst. But if a burst were headed for Earth — and the chances of that happening are close to zero, astronomers say — there wouldn't be anything anybody could do about it.

See **BLAST**, page 7A

