

The Book: Feared for VIPs at Rites

"Brooding was pointless now. Nevertheless she couldn't cut it off. She would nap afternoons and lie awake throughout the night, turning things over and over in her mind. She considered Oswald and hoped he had been part of a conspiracy, for then there would have been an air of inevitability about the tragedy; then she could have persuaded herself that if the plotters had missed on Elm St. they

would have eventually succeeded elsewhere. What was so terrible was the thought that it had been an accident, a freak, that an inch or two here, a moment or two there, would have reversed history."

Jacqueline Kennedy's near-despair after the assassination, from "The Death of a President."

By PAUL HEALY

Washington, March 28 (NEWS Bureau) — The FBI and CIA, alarmed by assassination threats, urgently warned President Johnson and other world leaders against marching behind Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy in the procession to the funeral mass for the late President, William Manchester's "The Death of a President" discloses. Johnson, in earthy terms, and others brushed aside the advice.

Fears that the murder of John F. Kennedy was the signal for a conspiracy to overthrow the U. S. government also spurred Defense Secretary Robert McNamara to flash an immediate warning to every American military base in the world.

"By every readable signal the situation was very red," Manchester writes.

Yet, incredibly, though McNamara and the Joint Chiefs of Staff didn't realize it, Johnson had never been informed about the procedure for setting off the nation's retaliatory nuclear weapons. Those instructions were locked in a football-shaped box carried on Presidential trips by a virtually anonymous "bagman."

- Tolson _____
- Loach _____
- Mohr _____
- Casper _____
- Callahan _____
- Conrad _____
- Felt _____
- Gale _____
- Rosen _____
- Sullivan _____
- Tavel _____
- Trotter _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Holmes _____
- Gandy _____

But...
Rapp...
JAD

- The Washington Post _____
- Times Herald _____
- The Washington Daily News _____
- The Evening Star (Washington) _____
- The Sunday Star (Washington) _____
- Daily News (New York) 3
- Sunday News (New York) _____
- New York Post _____
- The New York Times _____
- World Journal Tribune (New York) _____
- The Sun (Baltimore) _____
- The Worker _____
- The New Leader _____
- The Wall Street Journal _____
- The National Observer _____
- People's World _____

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Johnson Not Briefed

"The difficulty was that Johnson had no idea of what was in the bag," the book says. "He knew that it existed, but he hadn't been briefed about the contents and if the thunderbolt of all-out war struck that afternoon, the country's retaliatory arsenal could be spiked until he had been led through (the) primers for the first time."

In addition, according to Manchester, the new President did not know that six members of his cabinet were at that moment airborne over the Pacific en route to a conference in Japan, according to Manchester.

In his controversial book, to be published April 7, Manchester also asserts that the two-hour telephone blackout in Washington immediately following the Nov. 22, 1963, assassination could have meant the difference between survival and defeat if the Soviet Union had been plotting a nuclear war.

Pentagon Denial

The author further insists that, as the book was being written, the Signal Corps still had not been given the go-ahead to link the homes of all vital government officials to an emergency telephone system.

The Pentagon denied that there had been any military communications blackouts, and said in a statement:

"Military communications facilities are, and have been, considered to be adequate."

One blackout victim, according to Manchester, was Sen. Edward Kennedy, who rushed home from the Senate dias where he had been presiding when he first heard the terrible news. Panicky to find out exactly what had happened to his brother, he could make no calls because his phones were all dead.

Got Word From Bobby

The Senator and an aid, Claude Hooten, split up and roamed Georgetown area streets, frantically pressing the buzzers of neighboring townhouses hoping one would have a functioning phone. When such a phone was at last discovered, the book says: "Ted called his brother. Bob told him quietly: 'He's dead. You'd better call your mother and our sisters.'"

(The term "blackout" was rejected by a spokesman for the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Co. here. He conceded only that, due to the unusually heavy traffic after the assassination, "if you picked up the phone, you might have to wait a few seconds to get a dial tone.")

The book explains Johnson's desire to be sworn in before the Presidential plane left Dallas as being due to his concern that the assassination "might be part of a worldwide plot." According to Manchester, Johnson was inaccurate in telling the Warren Commission seven and a half months later that then Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy agreed with him on this point in a telephone conversation.

RFK Puzzled

"In fact, Kennedy was unresponsive," Manchester writes. "He was not among those who suspected a grand conspiracy, and he didn't understand what Johnson was talking about."

The book shows the tension between Johnson and Kennedy in the hours and day immediately following the assassination. The presence of the brooding brother who sounded so much like Johnson's predecessor made the new President uneasy. But the book should do little to exacerbate further the strained relations existing between the two today.

The anti-Johnson feeling in the original manuscript which Kennedy objected to was largely edited out under pressure from the Kennedys and their lawsuit. Johnson emerges as a not-unsympathetic figure caught in an accident of history. He is depicted as trying to do the right thing in the face of hostility from agonized Kennedy aids during those harrowing hours after high noon in Dallas.

Definitive Version

Ironically, the two Kennedys—Bobby and Jacqueline—who carried on a winter-long war with Manchester over the deletion of material objectionable to them both emerge as nothing short of heroic in the book. "The Death of a President" bears out Mrs. Kennedy's statement last December that Manchester was "hired" to do the definitive—that is, the Kennedy—version of the assassination and its immediate aftermath.

Since the Manchester work enjoyed the greatest free publicity buildup in the history of publishing, the world was expecting a great book. This it is not.

For one thing its veracity on several points relating to the events in Dallas already has been challenged successfully by several observers who were on the scene.

For another thing, Manchester's treatment is subjective and highly emotional, although this is precisely what will probably keep

the book on top of the bestseller list.

The author tells the story in the spirit of a Camelot-like fairy tale in which the dazzling young king is killed in his prime, and his beautiful queen carries on nobly, an inspiration to the populace. He calls Jack and Jackie "beautiful people" on page 27 and goes on from there.

This is not, however, a simple book. Manchester has woven interviews with 269 persons (named in the appendix) into a compelling narrative that cuts back and forth like a skillful movie script into vivid episodes. It is more than a peephole into history-in-the-making.

The author takes the reader into drawing rooms, offices and the Presidential aircraft and lets him eavesdrop on eminent persons making wise or foolish decisions under awful stress.

Sad and Funny

These anecdotes involving famous men with their guards down are what give the book its sparkle. Most of the incidents are related to the preparation and carrying out of the most moving and majestic funeral in American history.

Depicted in sad, funny or exasperating moment, are Richard Cardinal Cushing of Boston, French President de Gaulle, Deputy Soviet Premier Anastas Mikoyan, former President Eisenhower, Emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie and other VIPs.

Manchester describes in detail the reaction to Mrs. Kennedy's surprising decision to follow on foot the horse-drawn caisson bearing her husband's coffin from the White House to St. Matthew's Cathedral. If the widow was to walk those eight blocks of open avenue, no head of government wanted to do otherwise.

Two "Prime Targets"

This caused consternation in some quarters. Secretary of State Dean Rusk confided to the Cabinet that he was "deeply worried" that someone would take a pot shot at two "prime targets"—de Gaulle and Mikoyan. Undersecretary of State George Ball was so concerned that he remained in the State Department during the funeral procession "preparing to cope with an emergency should shots ring out six blocks away."

Warnings against the march to the cathedral were made by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, then CIA Director John McCone and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The Mounties had information that an unidentified French Canadian was heading south to shoot de Gaulle. McCone had an "ominous" report from an "absolutely reliable" source in Geneva that de Gaulle would be murdered outside the cathedral.

De Gaulle scorned the suggestion that he ride in a limousine. He felt it would be "a courtesy to Mrs. Kennedy" to show "disregard for his life."

When the warning was broached to Johnson, Manchester quotes the president as saying: "You damned bastards are trying to take me over. If I listen to you, I'll be led to stupid, indecent decisions. I'm going to walk."

Bobby Kennedy, the author continues, "was equally decisive, if less earthy."

As for de Gaulle's decision to rush to the U. S. for the funeral, Manchester quotes Averell Harriman as suspecting the statesman's motives. Harriman muttered that de Gaulle was acting "shockingly, disgracefully, even treacherously."

The book reveals that Mrs. Kennedy, who outwardly bore her grief like a Spartan, broke down twice during the Requiem Mass. Watching Cardinal Cushing, who had performed her marriage, on the altar she finally "commenced to cry uncontrollably."

"Racked by Sobs"

"She couldn't stop shaking," the author continues, "Clint Hill (her Secret Service agent) reached over and gave her his handkerchief. It didn't help. She was racked by sobs. Then Mrs. Kennedy felt a hand tighten. Caroline couldn't see her mother's face but she felt her spasms; she was comforting her. Presently the violent trembling subsided, and the widow prepared for communion."

Jacqueline broke again when the cardinal a little later unexpectedly switched from Latin to English with his own anguished prayer which began: "May the angels, dear Jack, lead you into Paradise."

"He was, she thought, one person who had a right to call her husband 'dear Jack,' and the poignancy of it was too much," the book goes on.

"She began to shake again. She looked away, and Caroline saw her tear-streaked face. The small hand reached up to clutch hers. Mrs. Kennedy heard her daughter say: 'You'll be all right, Mummy. Don't cry. I'll take care of you.'"

Cushing in a "Hassle"

The day before, Cardinal Cushing had got into what he later called a "hassle" with, of all people, the Most Rev. Egidio Vagnozzi, apostolic delegate to the U.S., over how the Mass should be conducted.

Vagnozzi argued that five absolutions should be read at the end of the Mass, because a head of state was entitled to five. The cardinal objected. He pointed out that this would take more time than the Mass itself. He said that if the Pope's emissary wanted

five absolutions, he'd have to read them himself. He didn't.

The book related the planning of the unforgettable funeral, with all its inevitable crises and foul-ups. On a light note, Sen. Edward Kennedy discovered on the morning of the funeral that his hurriedly rented full-dress suit arrived minus hat, gloves and pants. He found the late President's gloves, and brother Bobby agreed to go hatless to keep him from looking conspicuous. The result was that all the men in the procession — diplomats, heads of state, etc. — went hatless.

Fast Tailoring Job

But what about the pants? The only ones available in the White House were those worn by Jack at his own inauguration. George Thomas, the late President's valet, quickly let them out three inches to accommodate Teddy's waistline, and the Senator got them on in time.

Manchester writes that when the funeral procession reached Arlington National Cemetery the carefully planned protocol for handling VIPs fell apart.

Eisenhower complained that he and Harry Truman ended up "out in left field." Lyndon Johnson, moved among the Supreme Court members for security, fumed: "What the hell am I doing here?"

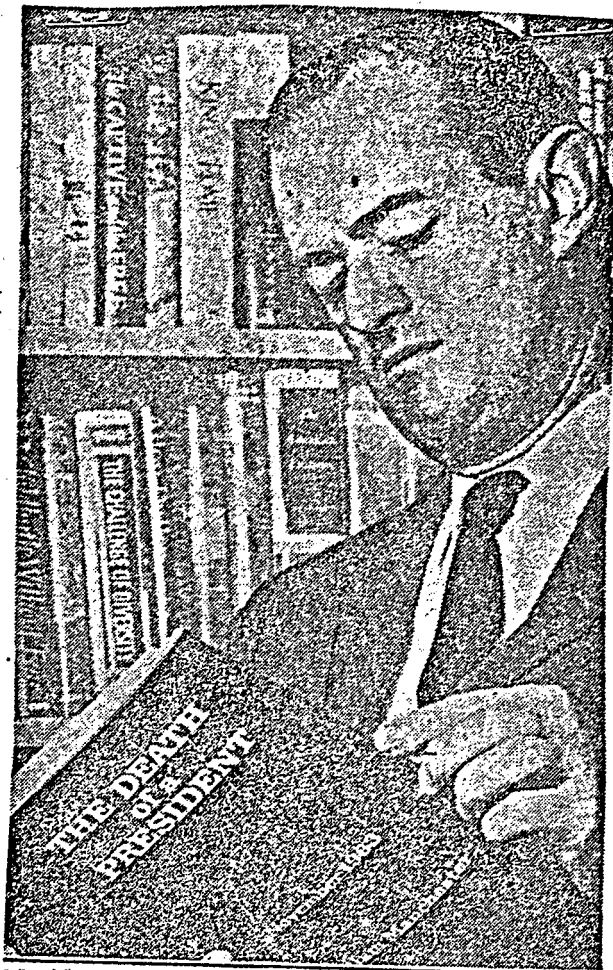
Manchester's account of Mrs. Kennedy receiving the dignitaries at the White House after the burial is one of the most moving sections of the book. Many heads of state wept unashamedly when they took her hand. Nobody was more affected than Mikoyan, then Soviet Premier Khrushchev's personal representative.

Covered His Face

"His distress was apparent," the author says. "She reached for his hand, and as he gave it he looked terrified. She said: 'Please tell Mr. Chairman President (Khrushchev) that I know he and my husband worked together for a peaceful world and now he and you must carry on my husband's work.' The interpreter translated. Mikoyan blinked and covered his face with both hands."



President Johnson (left) and Lady Bird walk in funeral procession for late President. Robert Kennedy, Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy and Edward Kennedy (l. to r. at right) lead procession.



Author William Manchester with copy of his controversial book. (Associated Press photo)



Secretary McNamara
Warned every U.S. base



Lee Harvey Oswald
Not listed as No. 7 victim