

Mrs. Johnson Taped Impressions

Dictated Notes Show
a Flash of Anger
by Mrs. Kennedy

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 23—Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson, compelled despite her horror to record history, made voluminous notes within 36 hours after the assassination of President Kennedy.

On Nov. 30, 1963, and continuing for three days, she dictated the essence of her impressions into a tape recorder as "a form of therapy—to help me over the shock and horror of the experience."

The transcript of how she remembered the events of Nov. 22, 1963, sent to the Warren Commission last July 16 in lieu of testimony, forms a remarkable and historic document—detailed in reporting, painstaking and occasionally poetic in expression—that Mrs. Johnson originally intended should never be used.

The Warren Commission did not begin to take testimony until Feb. 3, 1964, when the memories of many witnesses were neither so fresh nor so precise as Mrs. Johnson's.

A mystery developed today about a quotation attributed to Mrs. Johnson, reported by Jack Anderson in Parade magazine yesterday in the Washington Merry-Go-Round column by Mr. Anderson that was published today.

Asked About Clothes

The columnist quoted extensively from Mrs. Johnson's transcript, which he said tonight he had obtained "from sources within the Warren Commission." The other excerpts matched the Warren Commission transcript to the last word.

In the plane going back to Washington from Dallas, the new First Lady asked Mrs. Kennedy if she would like to change out of her clothes, saturated with her husband's blood. The following words of Mrs. Johnson did not appear in the official transcript:

"And then with something—if you can say a person that gentle, that dignified, you can say had an element of fierceness she [Mrs. Kennedy] said, "I want them to see what they have done to Jack."

"I wanted to help her, but there was nothing I could do to help her."

The quotation, if accurate, reveals the only fierce flash of Mrs. Kennedy's anger in the



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MARKED BY TRAGEDY: Mrs. John F. Kennedy, in blood-stained dress, arriving at Andrews Air Force Base after the trip back from Dallas in the plane bearing her husband's body. Holding her hand was Robert F. Kennedy.

midst of her anguish.

A White House source said that the Warren Commission transcript would "have to stand that way" and that Mrs. Johnson would not comment. "But I do think it sounds just like Mrs. Johnson," the source added.

Mr. Anderson, reached by telephone in Miami Beach, said of the passage:

"That was in the transcript, I assure you. I didn't make that up."

Saying he had obtained the "raw transcript" some time ago, he added, "I thought that was the most newsworthy part" of Mrs. Johnson's description.

"I got the original transcription that the Warren Commission had," he went on. "It's just possible that the commission would have edited for reasons that I wouldn't understand. That transcript I got contained that quote. I don't think there was any sinister conspiracy, but the quote was edited out."

An assistant counsel for the commission who would not be named said that it was "my understanding that if anything was omitted from Mrs. Johnson's transcript, it would have been noted."

In a letter dated last July 16, the President's wife told the commission that "beginning on

November 30 and as I found time on the following 2 days, I dictated my recollection of that fateful and dreadful day on a small tape recorder which I had at the Elms, where we were then living."

The Johnsons had bought the 12-room mansion in northwest Washington from Perle Mesta after Mr. Johnson became Vice President. They moved into the White House Dec. 7, 1963.

In a striking passage contained in the official transcript, Mrs. Johnson describes the sight of Mrs. Kennedy in the Washington-bound plane on Nov. 22, moments after she had been widowed:

"Mrs. Kennedy's dress was stained with blood. Her right glove was caked—that immaculate woman—it was caked with blood, her husband's blood. She always wore gloves like she was used to them. I never could. Somehow that was one of the most poignant sights—exquisitely dressed and caked with blood."

Mrs. Johnson recalled that earlier, as the Johnson car—two cars behind the Kennedy automobile—drove up to the emergency entrance of Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas after the ride from the Texas School Book Depository, "Secret Service men began to pull, lead, guide and hustle us out." She continued:

"I cast one last look over my shoulder and saw, in the President's car, a bundle of pink. I think it was Mrs. Kennedy lying over the President's body."

The facts of the day and the testimony of other witnesses tend to corroborate Mrs. Johnson's vivid impressions. Mrs. Kennedy was wearing a bright pink suit that day and was bent

entirely over her husband as he lay face up in her lap.

Mrs. John B. Connally Jr., wife of the gravely wounded Texas Governor, remembered that aides "could not seem to get Mrs. Kennedy or the President out of the back of the car" at Parkland Hospital. The Connallys had been riding on the jump seats of the Kennedy automobile.

Mrs. Johnson's notes continued:

"We didn't know what had happened to John, I asked the Secret Service men if I could be taken to them. They began to lead me up one corridor, back stairs, and down another. Suddenly I found myself face to face with Jackie in a small hall."

"I think it was right, outside the operating room. You always think of her—or someone like her—as being insulated, protected; she was quite alone. I don't think I ever saw anyone so much alone in my life. I went up to her, put my arms around her, and said something to her. I'm sure it was something like 'God help us all,' because my feelings for her were too tumultuous to put into words."

Elizabeth Carpenter, Mrs. Johnson's press secretary, said that Mrs. Johnson did her notes "rather slowly and tediously."

Mrs. Johnson's compulsion to record history has been a continuing preoccupation. Since she entered the White House she has been tape-recording her experiences at least once a week, sometimes more often before memory fades, in her second-floor study.

She has said that she will not make this diary public, but leave it to her children and grandchildren.