

## Manchester Reports

# Kennedy Death Plane Marked By Animosity...

By RELMAN MORIN

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NEW YORK (AP) — "I have only one President, and he's lying back in that cabin."

In his book, "The Death of a President," William Manchester attributes these anguished words to Brig. Gen. Godfrey McHugh, Air Force aide to President John F. Kennedy. The author wrote that, as he spoke, McHugh gestured toward the coffin carrying Kennedy's body, shortly after the assassination in Dallas.

It is one of several instances cited by Manchester to show the animosity that flared between Kennedy's aides and the adher-

ents of Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson before Johnson was sworn in as chief executive.

Scenes of near-hysteria, tears, and swelling bitterness took place aboard the presidential airplane, Air Force One, Manchester wrote.

They are described in Look magazine's third installment of a four-part serialization of the controversial book.

Manchester also reported:—Mrs. Kennedy found Johnson on a bed, dictating, in the private cabin when she boarded the airplane.

"Because she regarded the bedroom as hers, she did not knock," Manchester wrote.

"She simply grasped the latch and twisted it. Inside, reclining on the bed, was Lyndon Johnson, dictating to Marie Fehmer."

The author said Johnson and the secretary hastily left the cabin.

—After the swearing-in ceremony, Johnson and his wife asked Mrs. Kennedy to sit with them in a forward compartment on the plane. She excused herself, however, and hurried to the rear, to be near the coffin.

"And she began to cry," Manchester wrote. "It was the first time she had wept; the tears came in a flood, and for a long time she couldn't speak."

—Johnson twice asked Kenneth O'Donnell and Lawrence O'Brien, aides to Kennedy, to sit with him. They refused.

Manchester says Gen. McHugh wanted to be sure the reporters aboard the plane knew about this and said to them — pounding the table — "I want the record to show they (Kennedy's four aides) spent this flight in the tail compartment with the President — President Kennedy."

—Mrs. Johnson, "ordinarily the essence of tact," inadvertently said to Mrs. Kennedy that what hurt her most was the fact that Kennedy had been killed in Texas. Manchester quoted her as saying later, "immediately, I regretted it."

He wrote, "This was no day for Texas chauvinism; Kennedy's death should be what wounded her most."

—Mrs. Kennedy "fiercely" rejected suggestions that she change from her blood-drenched dress to fresh clothing before the plane landed in Washington. "No," she replied, "let them see

the horror."

— A man, never identified, made off with two objects used in the ceremony — Kennedy's personal Bible and a card on which the oath of office had been typed.

Manchester said the man stopped Judge Sarah Hughes, who swore in Johnson, as she was leaving the plane, and asked her if she wanted them. Manchester wrote, "...She surrendered them, assuming he was some sort of security man. He wasn't."

Reports of the frictions and

tensions aboard Air Force One have long been current.

Malcolm Kilduff, assistant press secretary to Kennedy, said incidents took place that might prove embarrassing to all parties. He said he turned down a five-figure offer from a national magazine to tell his story.

The taut, supercharged atmosphere on the plane developed out of two incidents before it took off for Washington.

The first took place at Parkland Hospital when Dallas authorities informed the Kennedy aids that the law stipulated an autopsy must be performed before his body could be removed.

Mrs. Kennedy had adamantly refused to leave the hospital so long as it remained there. She had begged to be permitted a last look before the casket was closed and, according to Manchester, kissed his lips and slipped her wedding ring on his finger.

Then, as time passed, she was saying, "Why can't I get my husband back to Washington?"

O'Brien and O'Donnell envisioned a delay of hours, or perhaps even a day, before the autopsy could be completed. They were determined to spare her the ordeal of a long wait.

A furious dispute erupted. Manchester wrote that a Dallas policeman present was "fingering his pistol."

All accounts of the melee — it became a shoving match — are confused. But O'Donnell and O'Brien both testified before the Warren Commission that they heard someone say, "This is just another homicide."

That triggered the climax. O'Donnell told the commission he determined then to remove the body immediately. He notified the Secret Service and the Kennedy aides to be prepared to leave.

His testimony reads:

"We pushed the casket out through the hall. This first gentleman who, I presume, was from the coroner's office, shouted very loudly, 'You can't do that, you can't leave here now.' Nobody paid any attention to him.

"It was most disconcerting because we were concerned at all times that at some moment they would say 'stop' and I hated to think what might happen

to Mrs. Kennedy if she had to go back and go through this all over again. So we brushed them all aside."

Thus, grieving and shocked by the assassination, and with their emotions further aroused by the angry incident at the hospital, the Kennedy party brought the President's body to Love Field where the presidential and vice presidential planes were waiting.