

rear of the aircraft, which they understood sympathetically. Dave, Larry O'Brien and I stayed with her beside the casket until we landed in Washington. There was not much room in the rear compartment, with the casket taking up most of the space. Other members of the Kennedy staff — Pamela Turnure, Jackie's press secretary, Dr. Burkley, General McHugh, Evelyn Lincoln, Clint Hill — came back and visited with us one at a time. When the plane lifted off the runway, I felt a great relief to be getting away from Dallas at last and announced that I was going to have a stiff drink of Scotch. I made one for Jackie, too. She was unable to feel it, and switched to coffee. The rest of us drank several more Scotches but it was like drinking water. It left us cold sober.

Later descriptions of the mood in Air Force One on the flight back from Dallas by writers who were not on the plane painted a picture of open and bitter resentment toward Johnson from the Kennedy group. Some of us did feel that he was using Mrs. Kennedy and the Kennedy aura when he moved into her husband's Presidential plane so he could stage his oath taking ceremony there with her present, and so he could arrive in Washington with her and President Kennedy's casket. I think Johnson sensed that he might be criticized for taking over Air Force One instead of going back to Washington earlier on his own plane, as we assumed he would do. This must have been why he later made a big point of insisting in his testimony before the Warren Commission, and in interviews with reporters, that I had specifically told him to take Air Force One when we talked before he left Parkland Hospital. He was trying to shift the blame for his being on Air Force One to me, just as he insisted that he waited in Dallas to take the oath on the plane because Bobby Kennedy had told him to do so, which was not true at all.

I distinctly remember that when Johnson and I talked at the hospital there was no mention of which of the two planes he should use. Nor was there any mention that he was considering waiting for Jackie and the President's casket to be on the same plane with him before he left Dallas. Later a lawyer for the Warren Commission, Arlen Specter, pointed out to me that Johnson's testimony that I had told him to board Air Force One disagreed with my own testimony before the commission about our conversation at the hospital. Specter asked me, to my amazement, if I would change my testi-

mony so that it would agree with the President's. "Was I under oath?" I asked Specter, as, of course, I was. "Certainly I wouldn't change anything I said under oath."

But whatever resentment some of us might have felt, neither Dave nor I can remember any open display of antagonism against Johnson because he was aboard Air Force One on the flight back from Dallas. Nor do we recall that we forcibly prevented him from joining Mrs. Kennedy and our group when we were carrying President Kennedy's casket from the plane at Andrews Air Base in Washington, as he claimed in later interviews.

The impression that there was a wall of coldness between us and Johnson on the plane rose simply from the fact that we remained during the flight with Jackie beside the casket, separated by a narrow passageway from the President's office and lounge, where Johnson sat with his advisers, Cliff Carter and Bill Moyers. Johnson came back once to visit with us, and told Larry and me that he wanted us to stay on with him at the White House. "I need you now more than President Kennedy needed you," he said. We heard later that he said the same thing in exactly the same words to everybody else on the White House staff during the next few days. Bill Moyers came back to us later and said that the President wanted us to come up and join him for a talk about arranging a Congressional leadership meeting. I explained that we did not want to leave Jackie, and Moyers said agreeably, "We understand perfectly."

Our talk with Jackie beside the casket that evening during the flight back to Washington was like the talk at an Irish wake, filled with warmly sentimental reminiscences. She remembered how much Jack had loved the singing of Luigi Vena, a tenor from Boston, at their wedding in Newport, and she decided then and there that Vena would sing Schubert's *Ave Maria* and Bizet's *Angus Dei* at the President's funeral Mass, as he did. Of course, she added, their good friend Cardinal Cushing, who married them, would say the low requiem Mass, which Jack liked better than the solemn high ritual. She enjoyed it when Dave and I told her about Cardinal Cushing's meeting with the President at the North American College in Rome during our trip to Europe a few months earlier. All of the prominent Cardinals from the United States had been in Rome during the previous week, attending the coronation of the new Pope Paul VI, but Cardinal Cushing was the only one remaining to greet President