

## Letter Stressed 'Control and Restraint'

# Mrs. Kennedy Assured Khrushchev Johnson Would Continue JFK Policy

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In a letter written 10 days after her husband was assassinated Mrs. John F. Kennedy assured Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev that President Johnson would continue President Kennedy's policies of "control and restraint—and he will need your help."

Mrs. Kennedy noted in her letter that her husband and the then Russian leader were "adversaries." But she added that "you were allied in a determination that the world should not be blown up. You respected each other and could deal with each other."

"I know that President Johnson will make every effort to

establish the same relationship with you," she concluded.

The letter, dated Dec. 1, 1963, and written on White House stationery, is published for the first time in the fourth and final installment of Look magazine's serialization of "The Death of a President" by William Manchester.

Manchester's controversial book—it has been repudiated by Mrs. Kennedy as, in part, "tasteless and distorted"—will be published April 7 by Harper & Row.

The closing 16,000-word excerpt in Look deals with the immediate aftermath of the tragedy and the behind-the-scene strains that soon developed between Lyndon B.

Johnson and the Kennedy family.

Mrs. Kennedy's ten-paragraph letter to Khrushchev, which closes the serialized account, is in direct counterpoint to Manchester's report of barely concealed hostility between the Johnson and Kennedy camps.

Just 24 hours after the assassination in Dallas, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., a Kennedy aide and former Harvard historian, convened a luncheon meeting at a private dining room in the Occidental Restaurant, two blocks from the White House. It came to be known as the "Harvard lunch" because so many of the par-

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ticipants had been associated with the university before joining the New Frontier.

Afterward, according to Manchester, J. Kenneth Galbraith, former Ambassador to India, wrote in his diary that "Arthur was in a rather poor mood . . . he was reacting far too quickly to the chemistry of the moment and was dwelling on the possibility of a ticket in 1964 headed by Bob Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey."

Galbraith felt at the time that the idea of dumping the new President in favor of John F. Kennedy's brother "is fantasy, unless of course Johnson stumbles unbelievably, or even then."

### Kennedy Arrives Late

That afternoon, President Johnson summoned his first Cabinet meeting. Robert Kennedy, the Attorney General and the new head of the family, was not present when the session began.

Manchester says Kennedy entered the Cabinet Room almost by chance: In the midst of preparing for his brother's

funeral, he wanted to check whether President Kennedy's Cabinet chair had been removed.

McGeorge Bundy, then the White House national security aide, persuaded him to remain. Several members leaped to their feet to greet and console Kennedy but "others, including Johnson, did not move," Manchester said.

After the 25-minute Cabinet session, the new President, according to Manchester, complained about Kennedy's late arrival to an unnamed member of the Cabinet. This observer quoted the President as telling him:

"Jackie has been just great. She said she'd move out as soon as she could, and I said, 'Honey, you can stay as long as you want. I have a nice, comfortable home, and I'm in no hurry. You have a tragedy and many problems.'"

On the other hand, by this account, the Attorney General was bent upon "humiliating" Mr. Johnson—or so the President thought—and had confided to an aide that "we won't go in until he has already sat down."

Kennedy denied to Man-

chester that he had any such thoughts in mind. The author described Kennedy's reaction to the Johnson version of the meeting as initial amazement followed by amusement.

"The Death of a President" makes it clear, however, that Mr. Johnson sought to have as little personal contact as possible with Robert Kennedy in the days that followed the assassination.

### Used 2 Emissaries

Thus, Mr. Johnson used two emissaries, Bundy and a Kennedy brother-in-law, Sargent Shriver, to negotiate with his Attorney General over the

timing of his speech to a joint session of Congress.

The President, obliquely citing pressures from "the leadership of the Government," felt the address should be given on Tuesday, the day after President Kennedy's state funeral. Shriver, then director of the Peace Corps, agreed because of the necessity to dispel a belief in underdeveloped nations that "whoever had killed President Kennedy would now be President."

But Robert Kennedy said to Bundy: "I don't like that. I think you should wait at least one day after the funeral." When Bundy pressed on, the Attorney General shot back: "Well, the hell with it. Why do you ask me about it? Don't ask me what you want done. You'll tell me what it's going to be anyway. Just go ahead and do it."

In the end, however, it was Johnson who relented. He gave his "we must continue" speech on Wednesday, Nov. 27.

The tension had begun that morning when Lyndon Johnson had unexpectedly approached Mrs. Evelyn Lincoln, President Kennedy's personal secretary, and asked for the use of her office by "my girls" at 9:30 a.m.

Mrs. Lincoln, in tears, then told Robert Kennedy. "Oh, no!" Kennedy said. Kennedy asked Mr. Johnson whether he could wait some days before moving from the vice presidential quarters in the Executive Office Building to the West Wing of the White House.

"Well, of course," the new President reportedly said, going on to report that while

he himself wasn't eager to occupy the White House, his advisers were insisting upon it.

Manchester also reports that Mr. Johnson had tentatively decided to appoint a commission composed exclusively of Texans to investigate the presidential assassination. But the then deputy Attorney General, Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, learned of the plan and quickly contacted Abe Fortas, a Johnson intimate who later was named to the Supreme Court.

Fortas agreed with Katzenbach that an all-Texas commission would be a ghastly mistake. He persuaded the President to follow Katzenbach's advice to name Chief Justice Earl Warren to head a blue-ribbon commission.

#### Conspiracy Feared

According to the book, the possibility that John F. Kennedy might have been the victim of a conspiracy continued to haunt officials in the days after the Johnson Administration took office. At one point, James Rowley, then chief of the Secret Service, persuaded the new President that he should not walk behind the

gun carriage bearing the coffin to the funeral Mass.

Later, however, Mr. Johnson said: "Lady Bird told me I should do it, so I changed my mind."

Nevertheless, Johnson showed White House counsel Theodore C. Sorensen an FBI memo advising him that the heads of "an unfriendly power" had been hoping for Kennedy's death. Sorensen dismissed the memo because it contained no hard facts and used a code word to describe the FBI's informant.

Manchester does not explain in the serialized version why the FBI — which is charged with domestic se-

curity matters — and not the Central Intelligence Agency provided such information.

The CIA, however, did get to play a role in the funeral arrangements. It agreed to run its presses through the night to print a Mass card for the service.

When Sandy Fox, the White House social aide, reported that the only way to have the job done in time was through the CIA, "everyone was dumbfounded," Manchester writes. "None of them had known the spies had a press," he adds.

Manchester makes much of what he calls Mr. Johnson's "chameleon nature" — the

ability to emphasize a different facet of his personality toward each person he meets.

To at least one visitor, Sir David Ormsby-Gore, then British Ambassador and a Kennedy intimate, the President reportedly said that if his family should vote upon his remaining in office, there would be at least three votes for resigning immediately "and maybe four."

Mrs. Kennedy is portrayed by Manchester as far less stoic and self-assured than she appeared in public at the time of the funeral. She was, for example, unable to bring herself to tell her daughter Caroline and son John of their father's death. Instead, their nurse, Mrs. Maud Shaw, told them.

It was Robert Kennedy, and not his sister-in-law, Manchester says, who planned the Presidential funeral.

Manchester wrote that near the close of the funeral Mass, Caroline, seeing the tears in her mother's eyes, took her by the hand and said: "You'll be all right, Mummy. Don't cry. I'll take care of you."