

Mrs. Kennedy Felt Some Remorse

By Drew Pearson

Jacqueline Kennedy's controversy over the Manchester book discloses one of the little-known aspects of her life.

The public knew her as the most glamorous First Lady ever to occupy the White House—beautiful, charming, vivacious, evoking the cheers of Vienna and the plaudits of Paris and, with it all, demure.



Pearson

But she also had a will of her own. At times she could be imperious. She had experienced some stormy scenes with her late husband which perhaps contributed to this.

Twice before he became President she left him. And after he became President love did not always follow a serene path in the White House. Memory and remorse obviously flooded her mind as the head of her dead husband lay in her lap after the tragedy of Dallas; and some of it poured out to William Manchester during 10 hours of taping Mrs. Kennedy's story.

Some of the bitterness toward the Vice President from Texas who had urged her husband to go to Dallas also came out during the tense hours after the assassination. And one incident in the book relates to a conversation in Fort

Worth when the raised voices of LBJ and JFK could be heard from behind closed doors arguing over Texas politics.

Afterward, Mrs. Kennedy quotes the late President as telling her that he didn't believe Lyndon; that if Lyndon told you one thing he meant another.

These are some of the passages Mrs. Kennedy wants suppressed.

Incidentally the book also reports that Bobby Kennedy, consulted by his brother before making the trip to Dallas, joined Vice President Johnson in recommending that he go.

Remorseful Memories

Mrs. Kennedy commissioned Manchester to write the book—or as she expressed it, "hired" him—in February 1964, three months after the assassination, when she was still remorseful about herself, still bitter toward the Johnsons.

Some of the remorse creeps into a remark she made to Manchester that she and her husband could not spend the last night together in the hotel room in Fort Worth because of mattress conditions, a reference which she wants censored. There is also a letter she wrote her husband from Greece—one of the trips she took to get away from the White House—in which she says, "I miss you and I hope you miss me."

Those who knew the Kennedys will say she should not

be remorseful over leaving her husband on occasion. Once was shortly after the inauguration when she took the children off to Middleburg, Va. The longest separation was in 1956 when Kennedy, after his failure to get the vice presidential nomination on the Adlai Stevenson ticket, went to see his father on the French Riviera.

She was pregnant at the time, and had a miscarriage while her husband was away. For a long time she wouldn't listen to his overtures for a reconciliation. I talked to Kennedy, then a Senator, about this. He blamed himself for the estrangement.

But living in Georgetown after the assassination, with the street in front of her house jammed with tourists, and photographers lying in wait when she dined at the Jockey Club with Marlon Brando, she continued remorseful and bitter.

This was why she moved to New York. There in a city of eight million she could have more privacy; there she regained her composure and perspective.

Memories Once Again

But today litigation over the Manchester book has reversed all this. Once again the public spotlight is on her. Once again her memories go back to the tragedy of Dallas.

Jackie did not at first want him to run for President and she entered the White House with some reluctance. But

once she got there she loved it.

Her refurbishing of the White House and her rummaging around the attic for old furniture made her famous as an amateur historian. Her husband was enthusiastic and very proud of her.

But though she did a great job as First Lady, she also did what she wanted to do. She called the tunes, not her husband. When she wanted to fly a stallion from Pakistan by Air Force plane, she did it—something the Johnsons would catch hell for today.

Yes, Mrs. Kennedy was a glamorous, charming and effective First Lady, but no one, not even her husband, could tell her what to do when she didn't want to do it.

Manuscript Went to RFK

The publisher of Manchester's book has documentary evidence that the manuscript not only was submitted to Sen. Robert Kennedy (D-N.Y.) for approval, but that several corrections were made.

Though Kennedy has claimed he never saw the manuscript, Harper and Row, the publisher, has a signed receipt that 116 galleys were delivered to Kennedy's apartment on Aug. 16.

On the day of their arrival, Kennedy called in a group of literary friends to review the manuscript. They made corrections on pages 4, 48, and 80 and the publisher made the requested revisions.