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NIGHT LEAD HUGHES-MANCHESTER-BIBLE (620)

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DALLAS, TEX., FEB. 7 (AP)-A MINOR MYSTERY STILL LINGERING AFTER THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY IS THE ONE OF THE DISAPPEARING BIBLE.

U.S. DIST. JUDGE SARAH T. HUGHES, WHO USED THE BIBLE WHEN SHE SWORE IN LYNDON B. JOHNSON AS PRESIDENT, DOESN'T KNOW WHERE IT IS, AND NO ONE HAS SAID THEY HAVE IT.

JUDGE HUGHES SAID TODAY IN AN INTERVIEW THAT SHE WAS HANDED KENNEDY'S PERSONAL BIBLE AND A TYPED COPY OF THE SWEARING-IN OATH.

AFTER THE CEREMONY FORMALLY MAKING JOHNSON PRESIDENT, SHE SAID, SHE HANDED THE BIBLE AND THE TYPED OATH TO SOME MAN AS SHE LEFT THE AIRPLANE WHERE THE EVENT TOOK PLACE.

SHE SAID IT WAS A SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT ACT BECAUSE THE BIBLE "WASN'T MINE."

THE INCIDENT OCCURRED NOV. 22, 1963.

IT WAS REVIVED TUESDAY IN AUTHOR WILLIAM MANCHESTER'S ACCOUNT OF WHAT HAPPENED THAT DAY IN A LOOK MAGAZINE INSTALLMENT OF HIS BOOK, "THE DEATH OF A PRESIDENT."

MANCHESTER SAID MRS. HUGHES WAS "PERSUADED" BY THE MAN TO GIVE HIM THE BIBLE.

SHE SAID SHE WASN'T INFLUENCED BY ANYONE TO GIVE AWAY THE BIBLE.

JUDGE HUGHES SAID THE MAN ASKED:

"DON'T YOU WANT TO KEEP IT?"

SHE SAID SHE ANSWERED: "NO, IT DOESN'T BELONG TO ME."

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MANCHESTER ASSERTED THAT DURING THE SWEARING IN JUDGE HUGHES

WAS SO CONFUSED SHE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WHERE TO FIND THE PRESIDENTIAL OATH AND ASSISTANT ATTY. GEN. NICHOLAS KATZENBACH HAD TO DICTATE IT FROM THE CONSTITUTION BY PHONE FROM WASHINGTON.

JUDGE HUGHES SAID SOMEONE HANDED HER A COPY OF THE OATH AND THE BIBLE WHEN SHE ARRIVED ON THE PLANE. SHE SAID SHE REALIZED IT WAS A ROMAN CATHOLIC BIBLE "BECAUSE IT WOULD BE NATURAL ON THE PRESIDENTIAL PLANE OF A CATHOLIC PRESIDENT. I WASN'T THE LEAST BIT DUBIOUS ABOUT USING IT."

MANCHESTER SAID JUDGE HUGHES WAS HESITANT ABOUT USING KENNEDY'S BEDSIDE BIBLE BECAUSE IT WAS "PROBABLY" CATHOLIC BUT DECIDED IT WOULD BE "ALL RIGHT."

JUDGE HUGHES SAID SHE SAW NO SIGN OF BICKERING BETWEEN KENNEDY AND JOHNSON AIDES WHILE SHE WAS ON THE PLANE.

JJ/MM604PCS