

How Bishop Broke the Kennedy

By MARY CRAWFORD

Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy was dead set against helping Jim Bishop, biographer and syndicated columnist, write a book about the infamous day her husband was shot.

Bishop, a white haired tiger with the disposition of a kitten, sat at a window table with his pretty blonde wife yesterday in the Top of the Mark bar, drank black coffee and told how Jackie tried to build a wall between him and all the people close to the President on that day, November 22, 1963.

He spent four years and seven months researching the book, and five months writing it.

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The book was published 10 days ago by Funk & Wagnalls and is running in a 10-part condensation in *The Examiner*.

"I had been with President Kennedy and Mrs. Kennedy in the White House the last week in October, 1963. I was trying to write a magazine article about the President, and Kennedy was trying to get me to write a book."

"And the last day I was with him he was talking about assassination. He said he had read a book of mine, 'The Day Lincoln Was Shot,' and he said he shared Lincoln's feeling that no one could protect you 100 percent.

"He said, 'Anyone who is willing to exchange his life for mine can take it.'

"He also told me that living with the thought of assassination as he did had forced him to think of it as a joke."

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Then Bishop told one of the President's favorite stories about joking with the Secret Service men who guarded him when he went to Mass one Sunday.

Kennedy told Bishop the four Secret Service men boxed him in as they left the church. Bishop quoted President Kennedy as saying, "As we get towards the back I begin to bend my knees until eventually I'm walking like Groucho Marx. Then I whisper to the two Secret Service men in front. 'If there's anyone



Jim Bishop
Against Jackie's will

in the choir loft trying to get me, they're going to have to get you first."

On Oct. 28, 1963, Bishop left for the island of Aruba, to write "A Day in the Life of President Kennedy" (published in 1964).

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Bishop turned on the radio in his boat 25 days later and he and his wife, Kelly heard a garbled report that the President had been shot.

Within 48 hours he started work on a book about what happened that day in Dallas.

"The key to the whole situation was that I was sort of a favorite of President Kennedy, but heartily disliked by Bobby and Jackie. Mrs. Kennedy found me to be intractable."

As an aide, Bishop explained that Mrs. Kennedy demanded 60 changes in "A Day in the Life of President Kennedy." She didn't

want him to mention her smoking habit or the fact that she wore a nightgown.

She demanded that he delete a sentence quoting her as saying, "I never met a politician I admired."

Bishop said that when the word got around that he was working on a book about the day of the assassination, both Mrs. Kennedy and Bobby Kennedy asked Pierre Salinger, President Kennedy's press secretary, how Bishop could be prevented from writing the book.

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"They thought if they picked a writer of their own, William Manchester, and opened all the doors to him and closed all the doors to me they would have only what they wanted in the book," Bishop said.

"So I tried one of the doors and it didn't open. That was when I went to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. The new receptionist there was my friend, a Negro named George Thomas. He was short and plump and cherubic. He had been the

President's valet — Jack Kennedy liked to change clothes seven times a day from the skin out.

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"George said to me — almost in tears — Jim, I can't talk to you. I was told to talk only to Manchester.

"Then the next door I tried was Richard Cardinal Cushing's. We sat down and talked and we were like old buddies. He said, 'Sure I'll tell you all I know about the assassination.' But in a couple of days he wrote me a note saying, 'I'm sorry I can't talk to you.'"

Bishop became convinced that the Kennedy wall was more formidable than the Berlin wall.

But he found a hole in it

Wall

when he went to the White House again, this time to write "A Day in the Life of President Johnson."

Bishop and President Johnson became friends.

And Bishop found ways to get through the wall.

Doors that had been closed and locked began to open. The Johnson Policy is if a federal employe can talk to one writer, he can talk to all writers. More and more persons became available for interviews and the bits and pieces for the book, like a puzzle, fell into place.

And the prediction of the

President's widow fell by the wayside. She had written to Bishop that he would have to rely on the Warren Commission report on the assassination. "I have asked all who had anything to do with that day to speak only to Mr. Manchester," Mrs. Kennedy wrote Bishop.

Those were fighting

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words to Jim Bishop, who started his career as a copy boy for the New York News in 1929.

Bishop and his wife leave tonight for Los Angeles.