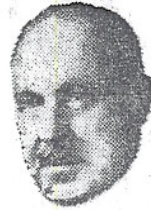


Merry-Go-Round

SF Chronicle Dec. 22, 1966

Smoldering Ill Will--**Kennedys vs. Johnson****Drew Pearson**

THE BATTLE OVER the William Manchester book "Death of a President" actually goes deeper than the removal of certain emotion-packed paragraphs from the book. It really involves the ill will smoldering between the two top political families of the nation, an ill will which may influence the course of history; certainly the outcome of the next election.

The particular paragraphs which make the book worth \$650,000 to Look magazine, tell how Mrs. Kennedy arrived at the Dallas Airport with the body of her husband to take the plane back to Washington to find that the President's plane, Air Force One, was now under the new President.

She was so informed by Mr. Johnson's staff.

"What are we waiting for?" one of the Kennedy staff is reported as saying. A Johnson staff member replied that they were waiting for the President. "Johnson now is President. When he comes we'll take off."

There is no evidence in the book that the new President had anything to do with this or even knew about it, but the incident caused bitterness.

★ ★ ★
THE BODY OF the late President had been immediately put aboard the new President's plane and Mrs. Kennedy went into a rear compartment to kneel beside him.

She remained there the entire trip to Washington, sitting on the floor and refusing to leave except when Mr. Johnson, before the plane left Dallas, came in to tell her he was going to be sworn in and he wanted her to be with him. She stood beside him in her blood-stained dress and later made it clear in the book that she

fiercely resented the haste with which the transition was made from the one President to another. Pouring her heart out to Manchester about these events, she said that she did not want "that man" coming in to comfort her.

Jackie regained her composure after returning from Dallas to Washington. But the Kennedy family's resentment against the Johnsons continued.

★ ★ ★
THIS FRICTION between the two top political families of the Nation had begun long before the tragedy of Dallas, however. It began when stories began to be published by newsmen close to the Kennedy family that Vice President Johnson was an unwanted fifth wheel on the Kennedy administration.

He was pictured as a gawky, uncouth Texan who didn't fit into the Kennedy's svelte jet-set scheme of things and that President Kennedy had a hard time conjuring up projects to keep him busy.

This hurt the vice president. He felt, as did most political observers, that his presence on the ticket and his ability to carry several southern states tipped the balance in the very close race between Mr. Kennedy and Richard Nixon.

President Kennedy himself went out of his way to make sure there was no friction between him and the vice president. But Mr. Johnson deeply resented the derogatory stories which came from some of the White House staff, and — he suspected — from Bobby Kennedy.

Little of this comes out in the Manchester book where he is reported to be portrayed as ineffectual though brusquely grasping for the chance to become President.

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