

The Jackie Kennedy Public Never Knew



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JACKIE KENNEDY'S controversy over the Manchester book discloses one of the little-known aspects of her life.

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

But Jackie 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.

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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.

One incident in the book relates to a conversation in Fort Worth when the raised voices of Mr. Johnson and Mr. Kennedy could be heard from behind closed doors arguing over Texas politics. Afterward, Jackie 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.

Jackie 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.

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, Jackie continued remorseful and bitter.

This was why she moved to New York. There in a city of 8,000,000 she could have more privacy; there she regained her composure and perspective.

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

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THOUGH JACKIE 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, Jackie Kennedy was a glamorous, charming and very effective First Lady. But she was THE First Lady, and no one, not even her husband, could tell her what to do when she didn't want to do it.

You have to know this to understand why Mrs. Kennedy, a widow who has shunned public attention and wanted to live with her children, is now willing to have all her memories revived and the public's attention rekindled by attempting to suppress a book which she initiated and which probably gives a fairly accurate portrayal of a tragic event in the history of a nation.