

Jackie's Bitterness Toward Johnson



1-12-67
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THE PUBLIC at first did not know of the tension aboard the presidential plane as the dead president and the new president flew back from Dallas. But shortly after the return, signs began to appear that all was not well between the two most powerful political families in the United States — the Johnsons and the Kennedys.

Immediately following the assassination, members of the Kennedy staff spoke savagely of the fact that President Kennedy had gone to Texas at all and seemed to blame Mr. Johnson for luring him down there. Apparently they did not know — or else had forgotten — that it was President Kennedy who took the initiative, that Mr. Johnson discouraged the trip.

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IT WAS reported that on the night after the assassination, members of the Kennedy staff and family stayed up in the White House most of the night planning how they could rebuild the Kennedy image and take the headlines away from President Johnson. Plans were laid for a state funeral in which the presidents, the prime ministers, and the kings of all the allied countries would march behind the casket.

The Johnsons remained in their private home in Spring Valley for 14 days, during which Mrs. Kennedy lived in the White House. The period was so prolonged that newsmen started asking Mrs. Johnson when Mrs. Kennedy was expected to move. Mrs. Johnson retorted almost angri-

ly: "I would to God I could serve Mrs. Kennedy's comfort. I can at least serve her convenience."

When Mrs. Kennedy asked that the Cape Canaveral missile site be named after her husband, Mr. Johnson complied immediately, despite opposition from Florida residents and the local Chamber of Commerce and he also sent a bill to Congress asking for \$17.5 million to finance the John F. Kennedy cultural center in Washington, an enterprise started by the Kennedys and supposed to be financed by private funds.

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IN ADDITION, he put \$50,000 in his own White House budget to be paid to Mrs. Kennedy annually for a public relations assistant, Pamela Turnure, plus a secretarial staff. This was the first time in history that the widow of a president had received funds for such an office.

Mrs. Kennedy, whose husband left her a \$10 million estate, received \$50,000 plus \$10,000 until last year when the office expense was cut to \$30,000. Her allowance is still double the expenses allowed ex-President Truman and ex-President Eisenhower.

What President Johnson probably didn't realize was the bitterness of Mrs. Kennedy's feelings toward him — until the late spring of 1965, when he and Mrs. Johnson invited Jackie to come to Washington to participate in the dedication of the rose garden in her name. Mrs. Kennedy refused to come.

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