

EB371DN

WITH MANCHESTER BOOK (440) (KX RELAY)

FIRST LEAD HUGHES B53

BY DENNE H. FREEMAN

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

DALLAS, TEX., FEB. 7 (AP)-U.S. DIST. JUDGE SARAH T. HUGHES SAID TODAY SHE HANDED PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY'S PERSONAL BIBLE TO THE FIRST PERSON SHE SAW AS SHE LEFT THE PRESIDENTIAL PLANE NOV. 22, 1963, AFTER SWEARING IN PRESIDENT JOHNSON AFTER THE ASSASSINATION.

THE BIBLE IS STILL MISSING AND JUDGE HUGHES SAID IN AN INTERVIEW SHE REMEMBERS ONLY THAT THE MAN SHE HANDED IT TO WAS WEARING A SUIT.

"I HANDED IT TO SOMEBODY BECAUSE IT WASN'T MINE," MRS. HUGHES SAID. SHE SAID THE MAN ASKED:

"DON'T YOU WANT TO KEEP IT?"

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

JUDGE HUGHES ALSO SAID SOMEBODY HAD HANDED HER A COPY OF THE OATH AND THE BIBLE WHEN SHE ARRIVED ON THE PLANE.

SHE SAID SHE REALIZED IT WAS A 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."

JUDGE HUGHES SAID SHE WAS GIVEN A COPY OF THE OATH ALTHOUGH SHE COULD HAVE ADMINISTERED IT WITHOUT A COPY.

"I DID NOT CALL ASSISTANT ATTY. GEN. NICHOLAS KATZENBACH," JUDGE HUGHES SAID. "AT THE TIME IT (THE OATH) WAS HANDED TO ME, I WASN'T TOLD THAT HE HAD BEEN CALLED."

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AUTHOR WILLIAM MANCHESTER REPORTS IN HIS BOOK, "THE DEATH OF A PRESIDENT," THAT AN UNIDENTIFIED MAN PERSUADED JUDGE HUGHES TO GIVE HIM THE BIBLE ALONG WITH THE CARD ON WHICH THE OATH HAD BEEN TYPED.

JUDGE HUGHES SAID NOBODY "PERSUADED" HER TO GIVE THE BIBLE AWAY. SHE SAID IT WAS JUST A NATURAL REACTION BECAUSE IT WASN'T HER BIBLE.

SHE ALSO SAID THERE WERE NO SIGNS OF BICKERING BETWEEN KENNEDY AND JOHNSON AIDES WHILE SHE WAS ON THE PLANE, AND THAT PRESIDENT JOHNSON WAS "NOT RUDE TO MRS. KENNEDY."

JUDGE HUGHES SAID THE PRESIDENT WAS "EXTREMELY CONSIDERATE."

SHE SAID PRESIDENT JOHNSON HELD UP THE SWEARING IN CEREMONY TO WAIT FOR MRS. KENNEDY BECAUSE SHE WANTED TO BE THERE. HE PUT HER ON HIS LEFT ARM AND MRS. JOHNSON ON THE RIGHT, JUDGE HUGHES SAID.

SHE SAID: "SOMEBODY ASKED THE PRESIDENT: 'WHO DO YOU WANT IN THE ROOM?'"

"HE SAID: 'AS MANY PEOPLE AS WE CAN GET.'"

JUDGE HUGHES SAID SHE GAVE JOHNSON THE OATH AND ADDED "SO HELP ME GOD" AT THE END ALTHOUGH THE CONSTITUTION DOESN'T CONTAIN THOSE WORDS.

SHE SAID PRESIDENT JOHNSON THEN KISSED MRS. KENNEDY AND MRS. JOHNSON AND TOLD THE PILOT, "LET'S BE AIRBORNE."

SHE SAID MRS. KENNEDY, WHO DIDN'T SAY A WORD DURING THE CEREMONY, RETURNED TO HER CABIN.

JUDGE HUGHES DENIED THAT SHE WAS "CONFUSED" AT ANY TIME DURING THE SWEARING IN CEREMONY AS MANCHESTER'S BOOK STATES.

JUDGE HUGHES SAID SHE WOULD NOT "SPECULATE" WHO TOOK THE BIBLE FROM HER BUT SAID, "MY OPINION AT THE TIME WAS THAT HE WAS AN AIDE OR A SECRET SERVICE MAN."

"I JUST WISH THIS WHOLE THING COULD BE LAID TO REST," JUDGE HUGHES SAID.

(NO PICKUP)

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