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MANCHESTER BOOK BJT 1,000

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NEW YORK, MARCH 29 (AP)-THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT DENIES STATEMENTS IN WILLIAM MANCHESTER'S BOOK THAT PRESIDENT JOHNSON HAD NOT BEEN ADVISED ON PROCEDURES FOR ORDERING NUCLEAR RETALIATION IN THE EVENT OF AN ATTACK FOLLOWING THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION.

SECURITY OFFICIALS IN THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION ALSO DENIED THAT JOHNSON HAD NOT BEEN BRIEFED. THE U.S. ATOMIC ATTACK CODE WAS CARRIED IN A FOOTBALL-SHAPED SATCHEL THAT LAY IN THE PRESIDENTIAL JET WHICH TOOK JOHNSON AND THE BODY OF KENNEDY BACK TO WASHINGTON FROM DALLAS ON NOV. 22, 1963.

KENNEDY OFFICIALS SAID THAT AT THE LATE PRESIDENT'S INSISTENCE JOHNSON HAD BEEN FAMILIARIZED THOROUGHLY ON THE CONTENTS OF THE SATCHEL.

MANCHESTER SAYS IN THE BOOK, "THE DEATH OF A PRESIDENT":

"THE DIFFICULTY WAS THAT JOHNSON HAD NO IDEA OF WHAT WAS IN THE BAG. HE KNEW THAT IT EXISTED, BUT HE HADN'T BEEN BRIEFED ABOUT THE CONTENTS, AND IF THE THUNDERBOLT OF ALL-OUT WAR STRUCK THAT AFTERNOON, THE COUNTRY'S RETALIATORY ARSENAL COULD BE SPIKED UNTIL HE HAD BEEN LED THROUGH TAZ SHEPARD'S PRIMERS FOR THE FIRST TIME."

CAPT. TAZEWELL SHEPARD WAS A MILITARY AIDE TO PRESIDENT KENNEDY.

MANCHESTER ALSO WRITES:

"HAD RUSSIA ATTACKED ACROSS THE DEW LINE, THE GREATEST MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD MIGHT EASILY HAVE BEEN MUSCLEBOUND DURING THE 15 FATEFUL MINUTES OF WARNING TIME AND PERHAPS EVEN AFTERWARD, WHEN SECOND-STRIKE CAPACITY BECAME A FACTOR."

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT ISSUED A STATEMENT YESTERDAY SAYING:

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"THE STATEMENTS CARRIED BY THE PRESS SERVICES ATTRIBUTED TO

WILLIAM MANCHESTER BEARING ON THE NUCLEAR READINESS OF THE UNITED STATES ON NOV. 22, 1963, WERE UNTRUE.

"ON THAT DATE, LYNDON JOHNSON, AS VICE PRESIDENT AND AS PRESIDENT, WAS FULLY AWARE OF THE PROCEDURES USED TO AUTHORIZE THE RELEASE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN RETALIATION AGAINST ATTACK ON THE UNITED STATES."

MANCHESTER ALSO SAYS THERE WAS A SLOWDOWN IN COMMERCIAL TELEPHONE SERVICE BECAUSE OF THE GREAT LOAD OF CALLS IN THE HOURS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE ASSASSINATION. HE SAYS PHONES IN THE SENATE AND HOUSE OFFICES, THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE SIGNAL CORPS HAD BEEN PARALYZED TEMPORARILY.

ACCORDING TO MANCHESTER'S ACCOUNT, SEN. EDWARD M. KENNEDY ROAMED THE STREETS IN WASHINGTON, TRYING THE PHONES OF STRANGERS, UNTIL HE GOT THROUGH TO THEN-ATTY. GEN. ROBERT F. KENNEDY, TO LEARN IF THEIR BROTHER WAS DEAD.

"IT BECAME OBVIOUS THAT IN A NATIONAL EMERGENCY THIS (TELEPHONE SERVICE) WOULD BE THE FIRST LINK TO SNAP," MANCHESTER WRITES.

REGARDING THE PASSAGES ON THE SLOWDOWN IN COMMERCIAL TELEPHONE SERVICE, THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT SAID:

"GOVERNMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS, MILITARY AND CIVIL, WERE FULLY OPERATIONAL AT ALL TIMES AND WERE FAR IN EXCESS OF ANY REQUIREMENT ARISING OUT OF ANY SECURITY EMERGENCY. THOSE SECURE COMMUNICATIONS OPERATE INDEPENDENTLY OF COMMERCIAL SYSTEMS."

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE CHESAPEAKE AND POTOMAC TELEPHONE CO. IN WASHINGTON SAID THAT DUE TO THE UNUSUALLY HEAVY TRAFFIC AFTER THE ASSASSINATION, "IF YOU PICKED UP THE PHONE YOU MIGHT HAVE TO WAIT A FEW SECONDS TO GET A DIAL TONE."

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THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT ALSO TOOK ISSUE WITH A PASSAGE IN THE BOOK WHICH SAYS THAT FEARS OF AN INTERNATIONAL PLOT TO OVERTHROW THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PROMPTED SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ROBERT S. MCNAMARA TO ALERT EVERY AMERICAN MILITARY BASE AROUND THE WORLD THE MOMENT HE HEARD KENNEDY HAD BEEN SHOT IN DALLAS.

"BY EVERY READABLE SIGNAL, THE SITUATION WAS VERY RED," MANCHESTER SAYS.

ON THIS PASSAGE, THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT SAID:

"THE JOINT STAFF DID NOT ORDER ANY CHANGE IN THE STATE OF ALERT OF THE ARMED FORCES FOLLOWING THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY. HOWEVER, THE JOINT STAFF DID SEND A MESSAGE TO THE COMMANDS INFORMING THEM OF THE ASSASSINATION AND CAUTIONING THAT THEY SHOULD BE ESPECIALLY ON THE ALERT. ROUTINE POSTURE REMAINED IN EFFECT.

"ALTHOUGH THERE WAS NO OFFICIAL CHANGE IN STATE OF ALERT, SOME COMMANDS DID ON THEIR OWN INITIATIVE TAKE SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS. SAC (STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND) WAS ONE WHICH TIGHTENED UP FOR A FEW HOURS BEFORE RELAXING."

A PENTAGON SPOKESMAN SAID THAT IF MCNAMARA ORDERED AN ALERT, HE NORMALLY WOULD TRANSMIT SUCH AN ORDER THROUGH THE JOINT STAFF.

MUCH OF THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOK, WHICH WENT ON SALE IN PITTSBURGH PREMATURELY YESTERDAY, HAS ALREADY BEEN SERIALIZED IN LOOK MAGAZINE.

BUT SOME HERETOFORE UNDISCLOSED PASSAGES INCLUDE MANCHESTER'S DESCRIPTION OF THE FOOTBALL-SHAPED SACHEL CONTAINING THE CODES NEEDED TO LAUNCH A RETALIATORY NUCLEAR ATTACK.

IN THESE PASSAGES, MANCHESTER ALSO MENTIONS GEN. MAXWELL TAYLOR, THEN CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF. THE AUTHOR WRITES THAT TAYLOR WAS CONFIDENT THE SACHEL WOULD BE SOMEWHERE NEAR JOHNSON BUT HE WAS UNSURE WHETHER THE NEW PRESIDENT KNEW WHAT WAS IN IT.

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MANCHESTER SAYS THE MAN IN CHARGE OF THE BLACK BAG WAS WARRANT OFFICER IRA D. GEARHART OF THE SIGNAL CORPS.

HE SAYS GEARHART HAS "THE MOST SINISTER TASK IN THE PRESIDENTIAL PARTY" AND WAS VARIOUSLY KNOWN AS "SHADOW," "THE MAN WITH THE SACHEL" AND "THE BAGMAN."

MANCHESTER DESCRIBES THE BAG, SOMETIMES CALLED "THE FOOTBALL," AS BEING A 30-POUND METAL SUITCASE WITH AN INTRICATE COMBINATION LOCK CONTAINING "VARIOUS BULKY STRANGELOVE PACKETS, EACH BEARING WAX SEALS AND THE SIGNATURES OF THE JOINT CHIEFS."

MANCHESTER'S DESCRIPTION CONTINUES:

"INSIDE-ONE PACKET WERE CRYPTIC NUMBERS WHICH WOULD PERMIT THE PRESIDENT TO SET UP A CRUDE HOT LINE TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE PRESIDENT OF FRANCE ON FOUR MINUTES' NOTICE.

"A SECOND PROVIDED THE CODES THAT WOULD LAUNCH A NUCLEAR ATTACK. THE REST CONTAINED PAGES OF CLOSE TEXT ENLIVENED BY GAUDY COLOR CARTOONS. THEY LOOKED LIKE COMIC BOOKS--HORROR COMICS, REALLY, BECAUSE THEY HAD BEEN CAREFULLY DESIGNED SO THAT ANY ONE OF KENNEDY'S THREE MILITARY AIDES COULD QUICKLY TELL HIM HOW MANY MILLION CASUALTIES WOULD RESULT FROM RETALIATION ABLE, RETALIATION BAKER, RETALIATION CHARLIE, ETC. . ."

THE BOOK, PUBLISHED BY HARPER & ROW, HAD AN APRIL 6 RELEASE DATE FOR REVIEWS, BUT THE EMBARGO WAS BROKEN YESTERDAY BY WOMEN'S WEAR DAILY, A TABLOID NEWSPAPER FOR THE FASHION TRADE, AFTER THE BOOK WENT ON SALE PREMATURELY IN PITTSBURGH.

THE BOOK RUNS 647 PAGES, PLUS CHARTS, DIAGRAMS AND A LIST OF SOURCES. IT IS PRICED AT \$10.

HARPER & ROW SAID IT HAD NOTIFIED ALL BOOKSELLERS, JOBBERS AND THE TRADE THAT SALE OF THE BOOK IS NOT AUTHORIZED BEFORE THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION DATE, APRIL 7.

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LEADING BOOKSTORES IN NEW YORK CITY SAID YESTERDAY THEY SAW NO REASON TO PLACE THE BOOK ON SALE BEFORE THE PUBLICATION DATE UNLESS A LOCAL STORE VIOLATED THE AGREEMENT.

ADVANCE SALES OF THE BOOK IN METROPOLITAN NEW YORK BOOKSTORES REPORTEDLY RANGE FROM FAIR TO HEAVY.

STUART HARRIS, OF THE PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT OF HARPER & ROW, SAID ORDERS OF THE BOOK HAD BEEN "EXTREMELY HIGH."

GEORGE A. HECHT, GENERAL MANAGER OF DOUBLEDAY BOOK SHOPS, WHICH HAS SIX OUTLETS IN THE CITY AND ABOUT 30 NATIONWIDE, SAID ADVANCE SALES WERE "GOING VERY WELL."

A SPOKESMAN FOR MACY'S BOOK DEPARTMENT SAID EARLY SALES WERE "VERY HEAVY."

A SPOKESMAN FOR E.J. KORVETTE REPORTED THAT ABOUT 6,000 OUT OF AN INITIAL ORDER OF 15,000 BOOKS HAD BEEN SOLD IN ADVANCE.

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