



Around the World with LBJ: My Wild Ride as Air Force One Pilot, White House Aide, and Personal Confidant

James U. Cross

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When Lyndon Baines Johnson wanted to go somewhere, there was no stopping him. This dynamic president called for Air Force One as others summon a taxi—at a moment's notice, whatever the hour or the weather. And the man who made sure that LBJ got his ride was General James U. Cross, the president's hand-picked pilot, top military assistant, and personal confidante. One of the few Air Force One pilots to have a position, simultaneously, in the White House, General Cross is also the only member of LBJ's inner circle who has not publicly offered his recollections of the president. In this book, he goes on the record, creating a fascinating, behind-the-scenes portrait of America's complex, often contradictory, always larger-than-life thirty-sixth president.

General Cross tells an engrossing story. In addition to piloting Air Force One around the globe, he served President Johnson in multiple capacities, including directing the Military Office in the White House; managing a secret two-million-dollar presidential emergency fund; supervising the presidential retreat at Camp David, the president's entire transportation fleet, and the presidential bomb shelters; running the White House Mess; hiring White House social aides, including the president's future son-in-law, Charles Robb; and writing condolence letters to the families of soldiers killed in Vietnam. This wide-ranging, around-the-clock access to President Johnson allowed Cross to witness events and share moments that add color and depth to our understanding of America's arguably most demanding and unpredictable president.

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