



Jim Bishop: Reporter

L.A. Her-Ex
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'The Pain Is Fresh'

One of the premonitions which beset John F. Kennedy was that he was leading a group of amateur authors. He was the first President to ask his entire official family to take an oath not to write about their experiences in the White House.

The President regarded himself as a professional writer. His publishers were Harper and Row. Kennedy felt that, when his two terms had been completed, he would retire to a presidential library near Boston and write his memoirs.

Bigger in Death

In November 1963, he was martyred by a young malcontent. At once, all literary vows were declared invalid, and the scourging whips of words hit the national conscience as the Kennedy group began to

pound out books by the dozen.

In death, John F. Kennedy became a bigger man than he was. His noble ideals, his aspirations for America, were drowned in petty apologies for his mistakes.

A small book of mine — written at the invitation of the President — was whirled up onto the best-seller lists, where it did not belong.

It became sicker. Robert Kennedy, a man who hoards his enemies, tried with support of Mrs. John F. Kennedy, to control the flow of material.

Once weeded, the Kennedy clan sought out literary agents and were transmuted from belligerent politicians into authors with suitcases full of sentimental adjectives.

The 26-volume set of the

Warren Commission Report became a goldmine for researchers. Ted Sorensen, the moody speech-writer, worked on a book. Arthur Schlesinger, a truly professional writer with the mind of an analyst, worked on a book.

There Were Others

Pierre Salinger, Kenneth O'Donnell, Evelyn Lincoln and many others raced toward the spinning presses.

I plan a moment-by-moment book on the assassination, a project which will require years of work but, the moment I started, obstacles were dropped before me. Robert Kennedy met two men from Random House and asked why they would publish "the Bishop book." Evelyn Lincoln, President Kennedy's personal secretary, wrote she was sorry.

Mrs. John F. Kennedy sat at lunch with Bennett Cerf of Random House and wept, asking Cerf to publish my book. Then she wrote to me, asking me not to write it. The reason, it seems, is she had "hired" someone else. I have never heard of hiring a writer, but so be it. She said in the letter if she decides the book should never be published, then the writer would be reimbursed for his time.

No Suppression

It is tasteless and cruel to profit by a lady's personal agony, but the official Kennedy family goes on publishing. She talked about a time when "the pain is not so fresh" and the words sting. She has been heard, she says, taking the children to a news shop and seeing a magazine with a picture of Oswald staring up.

My book will not be published when the pain is fresh. It's a long way off. By the same token, no one will be able to pay me a retainer to suppress it. . . .

(See - Marie Lester, NYT - 5/19/65)

William Manchester, the Baltimore editor-novelist-biographer chosen by Mrs. Kennedy to write "the authoritative story of the assassination," is hard at work, but won't have it ready for Harper's for 3 to 5 years.