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Mrs. Kennedy Reads Part Of Book on Assassination

Meets Magazine Aides

By JOHN CORRY

Mrs. John F. Kennedy apparently read some passages from "Death of a President" yesterday at a meeting with representatives of Look magazine. She left the meeting in tears, visibly upset.

The meeting was held in a law office on Wall Street. Mrs. Kennedy accompanied by Sloan H. Rifkind, her lawyer, and Richard Goodwin, an adviser, arrived at 1:15, a little later than expected.

When she left the office about two hours later, she stared at the ground, refused to talk and climbed quickly into the rear seat of a dark blue Oldsmobile.

Had Not Read Book

After Mrs. Kennedy had left, Mr. Rifkind said that Look had just given her access to the disputed material in "Death of a President," the story of the assassination of her husband, which the magazine plans to begin serializing Jan. 10.

Elsewhere, it was reported that Mr. Manchester was convinced he could not make further changes in his book without betraying his understanding of history and his interpretation of the late President's attitude toward important events.

On Friday, Mrs. Kennedy filed suit in State Supreme Court to prevent the serialization and to bar Harper & Row, publishers, Inc., from publishing the book this spring.

In her affidavit, Mrs. Ken-

A Picture of Johnson

President Johnson is reported to be depicted in William Manchester's book on the assassination of President Kennedy as sympathetic to the Kennedy family after the tragedy but bewildered by the Kennedy group's hostility toward him.

"The over-all impression you get of Johnson at that time," said a person in the publishing field who read the manuscript six months ago, "is that of a guy who is in a state of shock and who is confused by the Kennedy hostility."

According to this source, who is not involved in the current disagreement about the book, "Death of a President," Mr. Johnson was shown as being a "weak and ineffectual person" until the assassination made him President.

Texas Trip Urged

The manuscript, according to this person, showed the then Vice President to be of so little significance that immediately before the motorcade on the day of the assassination, important persons were trying to avoid riding in his car.

The manuscript is said to have shown Mr. Johnson as pleading with President Kennedy to go to Texas to help solve a local political problem that Mr. Johnson should have been able to settle.

"Johnson," said the person who read this manuscript, "will absolutely hate it. There's no question about it to me. But to



The New York Times

ARRIVE FOR A CONFERENCE ON KENNEDY STORY: Mrs. John F. Kennedy, Richard Goodwin, right, who was assistant to President Kennedy, and Simon H. Rifkind, almost hidden, lawyer, on way to Wall Street offices of Look magazine representatives.

nedy said that she had not read "Death of a President." She also said that Cowles Communications, Inc., publishers of Look, had not shown any of her representatives the material it planned to use in the serialization.

The meeting was held in the office of David W. Peck, a member of the law firm of Sullivan & Cromwell, which is representing Look. Mr. Peck is a former justice in the Appellate Court of New York.

Mr. Rifkind said:

"One of the problems was that we did not have access to the material. Judge Peck gave us access to the material. Mrs. Kennedy came along to look at it.

"When we asked a question about the material she was available. I am studying the material now. I expect to read as much of it as possible."

Mr. Rifkind observed that Mrs. Kennedy was upset and said the meeting had been arranged quickly and privately.

"There were no settlement discussions," he said. "It was just an opportunity to discuss the material."

Mrs. Kennedy has said that William Manchester, who wrote "Death of a President," had violated her rights and confidence and "exploited" the emotional state she had found herself in after the assassination of her husband.

Mrs. Kennedy and Senator Robert F. Kennedy had authorized the book and had agreed in a memorandum that no member of the Kennedy family would assist any other author in writing an account of the assassination.

More Revisions Refused

According to one source involved in the legal dispute, Look magazine had refused to make any further revisions in the material it plans to serialize. Mrs. Kennedy contends that she has never approved the publication of any part of "Death of a President."

However, when asked what Look's position was on further changes, Mr. Rifkind said only that "I cannot answer that question."

It is known that as early as last August, Mrs. Kennedy began to telephone officials of Look with some frequency, asking them to delete passages in "Death of a President."

In particular, she was agitated about sections that dealt with the trip from Dallas to Washington aboard Air Force One, the jet that carried her husband's body after the as-

assassination.

It is understood that Look agreed to make revisions in the manuscript in September and that Mrs. Kennedy then began to exert new pressure on the magazine to suppress the entire serialization.

Besides Mrs. Kennedy's objections to the use of her personal recollections in the manuscript, it has been reported that Senator Kennedy was unhappy with some passages concerning President Johnson. These pictured Mr. Johnson as having been rude and overbearing. Mrs. Kennedy and friends, in turn, were said to have been infuriated by his behavior.

Senator Kennedy and his as-

sociates are said to believe that this could only cause new tensions between the Johnsons and the Kennedys.

In The New York Times this morning, however, James Reston reports that Bill D. Moyers, Mr. Johnson's press secretary, has read the passages dealing with Mr. Johnson. Mr. Reston said that the President undoubtedly knows about them.

Commenting on Mrs. Kennedy's suit, Edward S. Greenbaum, the attorney for Harper & Row, said that "there's never been a case like this before."

Mr. Greenbaum said he would file his answer to the suit this

week, probably on Thursday.

"You'll know what our defense is when you see it," he said.

However, it is expected the publishers will contend that Mrs. Kennedy and Senator Kennedy gave their permission to publish in a telegram that Mr. Kennedy sent to Mr. Manchester last summer. The telegram said that members of the Kennedy family would "place no obstacle" in the way of publication.

Mr. Kennedy, however, contended in an affidavit he filed in support of Mrs. Kennedy that the telegram did not mention

the date of publication and that it did not void the original contract. This states that the book will not be published until Nov. 22, 1968, five years after the assassination.

After the meeting yesterday with Mr. Peck in his office at 48 Wall Street, which is near the corner of William Street, Mrs. Kennedy tried to leave from a back exit on Pine Street. Finding this blocked, she left from the Wall Street side.

She wore a short camel colored coat and a matching dress with a short skirt. When she arrived, her car first circled the block, apparently because one

of her companions recognized a reporter outside Mr. Peck's office, and she wanted to find another entrance.

There is surprise in publishing circles that Mrs. Kennedy filed a suit.

One source close to the dispute said:

"We were all astonished that it went this far. Our lawyers have had some fascinating arguments: Will she or won't she serve the papers. No one really expected Mrs. Kennedy to go through with it."

When she was baffled, her publishing source said, "It was a good idea to let Mrs. Kennedy wind up. That Goodwin would show up at the last minute and work something out."

Mr. Goodwin, who accompanied Mrs. Kennedy and Mr. Rifkind to the meeting yesterday, has been Mrs. Kennedy's chief adviser on the manuscript of "Death of a President."