

# Manchester Denies Book Broke Faith With Mrs. Kennedy

BY ANDREW J. GLASS

Exclusive to The Times from the Washington Post

WASHINGTON — William Manchester denied Sunday that he had ever "broken faith" with Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy in writing an account of her husband's death that she has repudiated as "both tasteless and distorted."

"This is my book," the author of "Death of a President," declared in a statement. He pleaded that the 300,000-word book be "given the chance . . . to withstand any objective test—particularly the test of time."

The 44-year-old author broke a week-long silence to contend that the Kennedy family last summer had authorized both publication of the book by Harper & Row in early 1967 and a prior serialization in Look magazine.

Last Friday, Mrs. Kennedy openly broke with some of her oldest friends in the publishing world by suing Manchester, Harper's and Cowles Communications, Inc., publishers of Look, to halt publication of the book in its present form.

## Cited Signed Memorandum

In her court action, Mrs. Kennedy cited a March, 1964, memorandum of understanding signed by Manchester and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy (D-N.Y.).

A clause in the memorandum said: "The completed manuscript shall be reviewed by Mrs. John F. Kennedy and Robert F. Kennedy, and the final text shall not be published unless and until approved by them."

In defending himself Sunday, Manchester noted that "Mrs. Kennedy herself did not ask to see the manuscript and still hasn't. If she had, I would, of course, have given it to her."

Mrs. Kennedy raised strong objections to the publication of the Manchester manuscript only after it had been sold Aug. 11, 1966, to Look

# Manchester Asserts He Didn't Break Faith

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for a record price of \$665,000. In effect, the accord with the Kennedy family made the magazine sale the sole source from which Manchester could expect to receive a substantial financial reward. Substantial funds from book sales were to be channeled into the Kennedy Memorial Library.

Manchester recalled that Mrs. Kennedy had initially asked him to write the book, that she had voluntarily submitted to 10 hours of interviews and that his account had been repeatedly revised with the help of "distinguished friends" of the Kennedys.

"In the last analysis," Manchester concluded, "this is my book. Neither Mrs. Kennedy nor any member of the Kennedy family nor anyone else is in any way responsible for my research or the content of my work."

Asked for comment, a source close to the Kennedy family who requested that his name not be used, said:

"These are brave words. But they come from a man who broke a contract for money. His statement does not really speak to the issue. The issue is whether he is prepared to honor a written contract, and the courts will decide that."

## Cites Price Hike

This source added that Manchester's plea, citing both editorial freedom and historical truth, "would sound a lot better if Look were not using his book to

raise its price to 50 cents a copy."

Last Friday, Mrs. Kennedy obtained in Manhattan court a show-cause order returnable Dec. 27 requiring Harper & Row and Look to show why publication should not be stopped.

In spite of the bitterness aroused by the dispute, quiet efforts were still under way to reach an accord before the start of what Mrs. Kennedy has termed a "horrible" court trial.

Simon H. Rifkind, her lawyer, and Richard N. Goodwin, her principal adviser, conferred with David W. Peck, a Cowles attorney, for three hours Saturday afternoon. Mrs. Kennedy, who attended the meeting, reportedly left with tears in her eyes.

## Asks Compromise

While the purported purpose of the session was to allow the Kennedy representatives to read the Manchester draft in its present form, Peck used the occasion to propose a compromise. As one source put it, "It wasn't necessary to sit around for three hours to read a book."

For his part, Manchester refrained from mentioning in his statement that he had heavily edited his April, 1964, interviews with Mrs. Kennedy, which took place in her former Washington home. The material which Manchester himself regarded as too personal was laid aside to be deposited in the Kennedy library.

Arthur Schlesinger Jr., the Harvard historian and family friend who inter-

viewed Mrs. Kennedy for the library's oral history project, decided to skip the assassination period.

They agreed that it would be too painful to repeat the material covered in the Manchester interviews, in which she emotionally and vividly recalled her feelings and actions toward her husband and her children at the time of the President's death.

Thus, it was planned that the Manchester tapes would be used for the oral history under the standard provision that the person interviewed — in this case, Mrs. Kennedy — would have complete control of the material.

"The only issue," one Kennedy source said, "is whether the things Jacqueline told Manchester under great stress for the 21st century became Manchester's personal property."

In the foreword to his book, Manchester reports that Lyndon B. Johnson — whose deportment in assuming the Presidency is still another issue in the controversy — twice sche-

duled and broke interviews with him.

However, a reliable White House source said the President never intended to allow Manchester to see him. The source said Mr. Johnson regarded the Manchester book as "a Kennedy project" and that he was always leery of becoming involved.

Bill D. Moyers, outgoing White House press secretary, Sunday denied a published report that he had read parts of the book dealing with Mr. Johnson and that he had briefed the President about them.