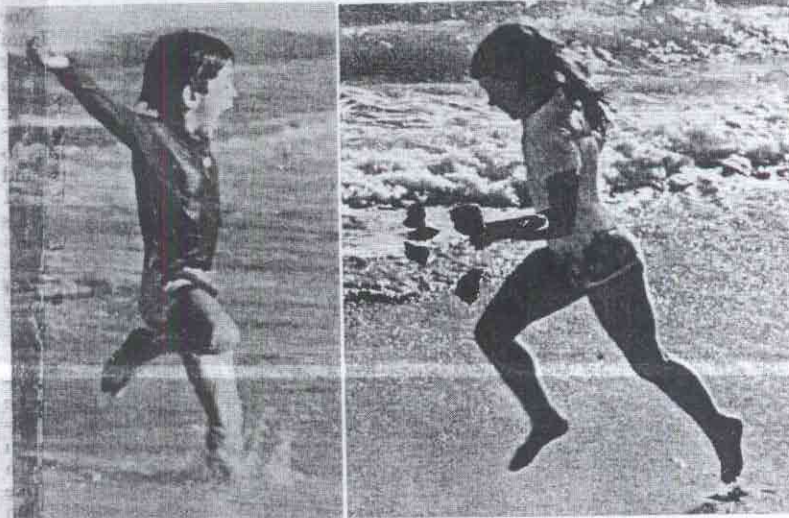


NATIONAL AFFAIRS



On a sun-washed beach in Antigua, John Jr. splashed, Caroline dashed . . .



. . . and Jackie took a breather in the case of Kennedy vs. Manchester

no good reason for his recent image troubles. "In my judgment we have done the best we could," he said, philosophically. "If you try to do what is best for this country, the country will do what is best for you."

**THE KENNEDYS:
Temporary Cease-Fire**

The combatants were scattered: Jacqueline Kennedy in sun-washed Antigua, Bobby in the snowy Idaho ski country, William Manchester—fevered and battle-weary—in a hospital in Connecticut. The headlined war over "The Death of a President"—the anatomy of the assassination compiled by Manchester under commission by the Kennedy family—had become a wrangle among their respective lawyers. And last week, just as the whole unseemly affair seemed bound at last to be dragged into open court, the lawyers negotiated a cease-fire at least through New Year's.

In their injunction suit against Manchester's publisher, Harper & Row, the Kennedys held an imposing trump: their agreement with the author requiring that the manuscript be cleared by them. That persuader apparently convinced

Look magazine to prune 1,621 contested words—most of them relating Jackie's personal reactions to the assassination—from its forthcoming serialization of the book (NEWSWEEK, Jan. 2). But Harper & Row startled everyone by demanding a court hearing last week—a move interpreted by some as a gamble aimed at pressuring the Kennedys to a discreet and mutually agreeable settlement.

And sure enough, a bare eight hours later, the warring camps announced in a rosy joint statement that Mrs. Kennedy had agreed not to push her case for a quick temporary order blocking publication of the book. Harper's quid pro quo was an agreement not to put it out before April 1—which it hadn't planned on doing anyway.

Assuming they finally conclude a treaty with the publisher, plus another still to be bargained out with Manchester himself, the Kennedys could not yet claim even a paper victory. Look, as part of its peace pact, agreed to talk with foreign publications that had bought its condensation and try to persuade them to follow its cuts. London's Sunday Times, France's Paris-Match and Italy's Epoca all went along with the trims Look sent them, mainly on the ground that the deletions were personal and peripheral

—not political. Yet at least two other publications—Germany's Stern and the Netherlands' Revu—vowed to print all a move that could plunk the censored passages into the public domain.

Target: Even the trimmed version, moreover, is said still to contain Manchester's supposedly unflattering portrayal of Lyndon Johnson and his behavior immediately after the assassination. Those who have read the manuscript say that press accounts of its pro-Kennedy, anti-Johnson content are overdrawn—that LBJ comes off as the innocent target of the Kennedys' inflamed reaction to their loss. But there were already signs of a pre-publication counter-attack from the White House. Officially, Mr. Johnson clamped down a no-comment silence. But the embargo did not keep word from leaking out that LBJ has, in his files, several letters from Jackie thanking him for his kindness and thoughtfulness in those baleful November days—a point, incidentally, Manchester himself notes in the book.

William Manchester, indeed, had become a chessman in a battle of giants—and the toll was painfully evident last week. Once before, in 1965, he had worked himself to a point of exhaustion, so deep that his doctor put him in a Connecticut sanitarium for about four weeks. Now, in a letter to The New York Times, he was suddenly defensive about having taken the commission as the Kennedys' official historian, subject to their pre-publication review. "I may say that under ordinary circumstances I should never have agreed to do so," Manchester wrote "... It was difficult to think clearly [at the time]. I vividly recall that after the telephone call from Washington asking me to undertake this project, I turned to my secretary and said, 'How can I say no to Mrs. Kennedy?' She replied, 'You can't.' Nor could I. One did not, I felt, bargain over a national tragedy."

Telegrams: Then on Christmas night, Manchester suddenly came down with chills and fever—a kick-up of a pneumonia-like virus infection he had caught first on an autumn rest trip to England. Rushed from his Middletown, Conn. home to a hospital, he was bedded with a 104-degree fever, dosed with antibiotics and tranquilizers and treated for a scratch on the corner of his right eye (suffered while he was trimming the Christmas tree). "He feels lousy," said his doctor, F. Erwin Tracy—a diagnosis he and Manchester's psychiatrist, Dr. Asher Baker, publicly elaborated to include insomnia, mental and physical fatigue and a "reactive depression" resulting from the original virus. Bobby sent the author a get-well telegram from Sun Valley, and so did Jackie, just before departing for Antigua with John Jr., Caroline and a playmate of Caroline's.

"Please know how distressed I am to
know that you are sick and how much I
hope you will be better soon. Mrs. K. G.
nedy wired, but the unwritten post-
script was that their accounts still re-
main to be settled. E. M. D. The