

The Newsweek Interview

William Manchester says in an interview in the current issue of Newsweek that the controversy over his book, "The Death of a President," did not begin until Look magazine agreed to pay \$665,000 for the serialization rights.

In the interview, Mr. Manchester recalled that he had been told in his first meeting with Senator Robert F. Kennedy, "I don't want anyone to make a killing out of my brother's death."

The author said that his own response to this had been, "You dictate the terms."

He said that until the Look offer "staggered everybody" there had been no indication that an extraordinary amount of money would be made from the book. He said that according to current estimates, the Kennedy Library stands to make \$5-million from the book.

He also said that his agent predicted that his own share might be "in the area of \$1.5-million."

After taxes and legal expenses, Mr. Manchester said, "I may come out with something in the range of \$500,000."

He called this "a lot of money" but said it was not ex-

cessive "in light of my three years' agony."

It was only after the disclosure of the deal made with Look that the Kennedy family began raising objections, Mr. Manchester said in replying to questions put to him by James M. Cannon, senior editor, and Edward Kosner, a general editor, of News Week.

The day after the deal was made, Mr. Manchester said, "Bobby told Jackie, and a mushroom cloud appeared over Hyannis Port."

"She was concerned over the sum of money and what she felt was commercialization," he said. "Apparently, Jackie didn't know the details of the memorandum of understanding between Bobby and me. She didn't hire me."

He said there had been a conference with Senator Kennedy in Washington a week later at which "Bobby was so irrational. He was concerned about the money now."

Asked if that had been the real reason for their distress, Mr. Manchester told the Newsweek team, "It was impossible to ascertain their motives," but he said the family was "all for the book — but no magazine serialization."

"On Sept. 7, Dick Goodwin and I flew up to Hyannis Port on the Caroline to see Jackie," he said. "She took the position that I was the St. George who was going to slay the dragon — Look. I couldn't get her to face the reality that I had signed a contract with them."

Richard N. Goodwin was an aide to President Kennedy.

"By now the whole four months of editing and approval by designated representatives was forgotten about by the Kennedys," Mr. Manchester said. Mr. Goodwin, he said, was editing "largely for political reasons—material about Bobby and Johnson."

Editing Called 'Fantastic'

"Dick tried to emasculate the Look galleys," he said. "His editing of the Look galleys was fantastic."

Another conference was held later in the fall at Hickory Hill, Robert Kennedy's home in McLean, Va.

"It was chilly," Mr. Manchester said, "but Bobby being Bobby, he had to put on a bathing suit and go swimming."

He said the Senator "would ask me a question, then duck under water, and I would wait for him to surface in the pool before answering."

Mr. Manchester said that it was during this conversation that "Bobby told me Ted Sorensen had advised him to file suit because of his own political future."

"But putting Jackie on the

stand would be intolerable," Manchester said the Senator said, "so would I consider the personal changes which Dick Goodwin was then making in Look, and I said I would."

Theodore C. Sorensen was an aide to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.

Mr. Manchester told the Newsweek interviewers that he had been given a letter from Mrs. Kennedy in which she said the changes she had asked for were personal ones involving her or her children.

"But," the writer said, "the first six that I encountered in the galleys involved L.B.J. and had nothing to do with her or her children."

The author is quoted in the Newsweek interview as saying that it was not until after Mrs. Kennedy had filed suit that she read the book and the excerpts for Look. He said she had been smiling when she left the meeting, but that her eyes filled with tears when she saw reporters and photographers outside—and that's how the stories that the book made her cry got started." 