

reworked 1/30/67

MANCHESTER'S OWN STORY

Through the long legal haggling over publication of "The Death of a President"—William Manchester's book about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy—Manchester refrained from discussing the case. Last week, Mrs. John F. Kennedy's suit against the author and his publishers was finally settled (page 22) and Manchester was free to tell his side of the story. He granted his first interview to NEWSWEEK Senior Editor James M. Cannon and General Editor Edward Kosner.

Q. What has been the lesson for you in this whole episode?

A. I think anyone who undertakes to write contemporary history has to anticipate problems. In this case I found myself pitted against a dozen people who had been good friends. I learned something about the political animal—people who are betting their futures on another Kennedy Administration, who are willing to do anything.

Q. How did the controversy over "The Death of a President" begin?

A. I finished the manuscript and came to New York on March 26, 1966, with one original and four Xerox copies of the book. I gave one copy to Harper & Row, one to my agent and three to Bobby's secretary, Angie Novello. I went to Jackie's office that afternoon and talked to [her press secretary] Pam Turnure. I said for the fifteenth time: "I'm dealing with two principals here, Jackie and Bobby. Am I doing the right thing? Should I give one copy to Jackie?" Pam said: "Work through Bobby."

Bobby and Jackie agreed verbally and in letters that the book would come out before 1968. For almost exactly four months [editor] Evan Thomas of Harper worked with the two people designated by Bobby—[journalists] Ed Guthman and John Siegenthaler. At my request, [ex-JFK and LBJ aides] Arthur Schlesinger and Dick Goodwin read the book. I incorporated changes of both groups because they were good. On July 14 there was a conference call between Bobby, Siegenthaler, Thomas and myself. We resolved one final phrase. Siegenthaler said: "It's okay with Bobby. Go ahead with submission to the magazines." On July 28, Bobby sent a special-delivery letter to Evan Thomas and an identical wire to me. When I saw "members of the Kennedy family will place no obstacle in the way of publication" of the book, I thought it was all over.

Q. But it wasn't?

A. The magazine bidding quickly narrowed to Look and Life. Life bid \$150,000 more than Look on the first round but refused to give me complete editorial control. I was in touch with

Bobby twice on the telephone. Bobby also talked to [Look's Washington correspondent] Warren Rogers and expressed the hope that Look would get it. Bobby told me: "If it's Life, check back with me; if it's Look don't bother to call me back." Life was being sticky; they said they wanted to give me the answer on Monday. I was in the marvelous position of saying: "Tell Henry Luce he's got till 5 p.m. today." On Saturday I called Bobby on the tennis court in Hyannis Port and said: "It's Look." "Gee, that's great," Bobby said when I told him the price was \$665,000. "That's a record, isn't it?" I said: "I don't know." Bobby said: "I'm glad it's Look because they have been



Manchester: A lesson in history

so nice to the family and Luce has been such a -----."

The next day 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. Apparently Jackie didn't know the details of the memorandum of understanding between Bobby and me. She didn't hire me. Later, she explained, in effect: "None of us wanted to think about this—we turned it over to you and let you worry about it. We hadn't thought these things through."

I spent that whole week after the agreement with Look trying to find out what the situation was. Ethel Kennedy assured me there was no problem. I talked to Angie Novello. Angie took a note in to Bobby who was in a meeting. The substance of the reply she quoted to me was: "Tell Manchester I've always kept my word and I will in this case." During the airlines strike in August, Evan Thomas and I chartered a plane and

flew to Washington and dealt with Bobby and Siegenthaler for three hours. Bobby was so irrational. He was concerned about the money now."

Q. Do you think the money was the real reason for their distress?

A. It was impossible to ascertain their motives. They were 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. She was not hostile. 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. By now the whole four months of editing and approval by designated representatives was forgotten about by the Kennedys. Goodwin was made responsible by Jackie for everything that would be in the manuscript. Dick tried to emasculate the Look galleys. His editing of the Look galleys was fantastic. At one point nearly 50 per cent of the third installment was edited. It would have been unprintable. He was editing largely for political reasons—material about Bobby and Johnson. My position was that political material was vital for the historical record and was not negotiable. Personal changes were something else.

After my meeting with Jackie, there was another meeting later in the fall with Bobby at Hickory Hill. It was my last meeting with Bobby. It was chilly, but Bobby being Bobby, he had to put on bathing trunks and go swimming. He would ask me a question, then duck underwater and I would wait for him to surface in the pool before answering. His head was underwater most of the time. 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 and he himself could only lose politically. So would I consider the personal changes which Dick Goodwin was then making in Look and I said I would. This was a very friendly meeting. I had supper with Ethel, Bobby and the children and we watched television.

In early September, Evan Thomas and I told Goodwin he should expect galleys of the book in late October and would be given two weeks to make suggestions. When the galleys came in I took them over and personally handed them to Dick's secretary (he was away) with a covering letter that pointed out that "Time is of the essence. I must have the galleys in the mail by Nov. 10." I gave him fifteen days. Nothing happened, no word. I called—Goodwin was traveling in Europe. "In the absence of suggestions, I assume you have none," I wrote Goodwin in a letter and I mailed the galleys off to meet the Harper production deadline.

I was to go to England the morning of

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Nov. 16 and I did. While I was in England there had been another meeting. RFK and [Look's Gardner] Cowles made more changes. Cass Canfield [of Harper's] and Evan Thomas flew over to England with other changes—I did not approve all of them. I made changes in about 50 per cent of the galleys submitted. Cass Canfield handed me a letter from Jackie saying there were personal changes involving her and her children—but the first six that I encountered in the galleys involved LBJ and had nothing to do with her or her children. My recollection is that seventeen of the 27 changes she asked for were made.

I got sick. On Dec. 13 I landed in New York and read in The New York Times about a spokesman saying Mrs. Kennedy was contemplating litigation. Bobby had told me there would be no lawsuit. I learned from the Times there would be. But I didn't believe it until it was actually filed.

Q. How do you feel about Mrs. Kennedy now?

A. The wisest thing would have been if she had read the book at the beginning. But everybody felt it would be too painful for her. Finally, after she filed suit, Jackie did sit down and read the whole book. She sat up with Goodwin one night until 5:30 a.m. She had read the Look excerpts first at a meeting at the offices of the Look lawyers on Wall Street. She read every word of Look with growing interest and surprise. She left the meeting smiling. But when she saw the reporters and photographers waiting outside, her eyes filled with tears—and that's how the stories that the book made her cry got started.

Regardless of what has happened, for four crucial days [after the President's assassination] this woman behaved superbly. She was virtually the government of this country and held it together. Nobody can ever take that away from her. I feel a deep well of sorrow that what began as a noble project should have descended to a lawsuit. I am distressed by the extent of the reaction against Jackie because I think that as a symbol she is important. Maybe it's an illusion, but maybe people need illusions. If they don't have a President who reigns, they need something else.

Q. What was the precise extent of the editing prompted by the litigation?

A. The Look people came up with a figure of 1,600 words deleted, and 2,000 more were deleted from the book version. That's 3,600 words out of 360,000—1 per cent. Changes were made in about 250 places. A word here, a phrase there—some of Jackie's changes were baffling—but not a single incident is omitted.

Q. What was your attitude toward Lyndon Johnson when you began the research for the book, and did it change?

A. I don't know people like Johnson. I

had had no contact with him before. I felt as I think most people did—that he was a strong and effective Senate Majority Leader. I never tried harder for an interview. I felt it would be ghastly to have to say in the book that everyone agreed to see me except the President and the assassin's widow. Twice LBJ agreed to see me, once with Mac Bundy and once with a member of the Kennedy family, and I even had a rehearsal session in the White House with one of his staff people for the interview, but he never granted it. The President has never discussed the intimate details of [Nov. 22, 1963] with [a reporter]. I believe it was impossible for him to do it.

The book is not pathologically anti-LBJ. I think Johnson acted in incredibly difficult circumstances. I think he behaved well. We were all slobbs that afternoon. He was trying. He was strong, effective. I am distressed that there have been so many anti-Johnson stories attributed to the book. They are not true and not in the book at all. But I couldn't avoid reporting what he actually did.

Q. Are you convinced that Oswald was the assassin?

A. The evidence is utterly overwhelming that he assassinated the President.

Q. When you started you said publicly that you didn't want to make any money out of this project. But somewhere along the way it became obvious that you were going to make a great deal. Would you explain the evolution of your thinking on the question of money?

A. The first time I talked to Bobby before we signed the agreement, he said: "I don't want anybody to make a killing out of my brother's death." I said: "I'm not going to negotiate about your brother's death—you dictate your terms." I put into the memorandum of under-

standing everything Bobby wanted.

I was bringing to this the sum of all my experience as a writer over twenty years. The first time I had any indication that there would be an extraordinary amount of money made was when this extraordinary Look offer came through. It staggered everybody.

Yes, I am going to make a lot of money. But in the light of my three years' agony, it's not excessive. In the publishing world, the professional estimates are that the Kennedy library will make \$5 million from the book. My agent has predicted that my share may gross somewhere in the area of \$1.5 million, but that will be substantially reduced by taxes and legal expenses and I may come out with something in the range of \$500,000. At the time I wrote the memo I was not thinking in terms of money—this wasn't why I was doing it—and I refused to worry about it. I live quietly and rather frugally on the edge of a college campus and I don't intend to change my way of living now.

Chapter II

Jacqueline Kennedy's month-long legal fight to protect her right to privacy against the demands of history ended last week—in a draw.

Mrs. Kennedy, author William Manchester and his publishers, Harper & Row, agreed to a court settlement in New York that averted the final threat of litigation and cleared the way for April publication of Manchester's 700-page account of John F. Kennedy's assassination, "The Death of a President." But the bickering continued. Kennedy spokesmen said that 25 passages containing personal details objectionable to Jackie had been deleted or modified, but they complained that Manchester had reinserted other material hostile to Lyndon Johnson. And they refused to retract Mrs. Kennedy's earlier characterization of the book as "tasteless and distorted."

Despite the agreement, some of the material to which Mrs. Kennedy objected was almost certain to see print anyway. Look magazine, which is carrying a four-part serialization of "The Death of a President," agreed earlier to trim 1,600 words of text as she demanded. But the German weekly Stern, which paid Look \$72,500 for the condensation, refuses to be bound by Look's settlement with Mrs. Kennedy. Look brought suit against Stern in Germany, but last week a Hamburg court refused to bar Stern from publishing its uncensored version of the serialization.

With negotiations still under way in Germany, Look published its second Manchester installment this week. The narrative begins with Lee Harvey Oswald's departure with his rifle for the



UPI
Jackie: Interest and surprise



HOMICIDE REPORT

POLICE DEPARTMENT CITY OF DALLAS

Name of Person Killed KENNEDY, John F. (PRESIDENT OF U. S.)		Birth Date 11/17/29	Sex M	Age 47	Address of Person Killed Washington, D. C. (White House) F-89930
For the By [Signature]		Title or Relationship [Signature]	Sex M	Age [Signature]	Address of Person Reporting [Signature]
Place of Occurrence (Circle) MURDER			After Investigation Closed to		
Place of Occurrence - Street and Number or Intersection Elm St. (approx. 150' W of Houston)		Division 2	Block 101	Officer Making Report CN Ihority 476 ER Eleasing 698	I. B. No. [Signature]
Day of Week Fri	Date of Occurrence 11/22/63	Time of Day 12:30PM	Date Reported 11/23/63	Time Reported 5:10PM	Report Submitted By Mayo
DESCRIPTION OF DEAD PERSON					
Age 47	Height 5'10"	Weight 175	Eyes Blue	Hair Brown	Complexion Fair
Covered Scuffed Joe B. Brown		State of Career (Occupation)—Time of Service Dr. Kemp Clark, LPN, Parkland Hospital		Date of Precursor (Arresting)—Time of Arrest AM 7:30	
Physician Dr. Kemp Clark, LPN, Parkland Hospital		Address [Signature]			
DETAILS OF OFFENSE (Give Description of Offense and its Investigation) See Also Map of File Sheet.					
The expired was riding in motorcade with wife and Governor John Connally, and his wife. Witness heard gun shot and saw the expired slump forward. More shots were heard and the expired fell in his wife's lap. Governor Connally was also shot at this time. Car in which they were riding was escorted to Parkland Hospital by Dallas Police Officers.					

At Parkland Hospital, the Presidential limousine—and a Kafkaesque form for 'Kennedy, John F. ...'

Texas School Book Depository on the morning of Nov. 22, 1963, and ends at Dallas's Parkland Hospital with President Lyndon Johnson preparing to leave for Love Field for the flight back to Washington on Air Force One. The 17,000-word excerpt contains dozens of fascinating passages, among them:

■ John Kennedy's story of his visit to the LBJ Ranch eight days after the 1960 election, as he recounted it to Jackie. Acting the gracious host, Lyndon Johnson arranged a dawn hunt—"the finest treat his ranch could offer." Kennedy hated hunting, but he realized that his host would be insulted if he refused. Reluctantly, he had killed his deer, but could not forget the expression on the doomed creature's face as he fired and hoped to forget the whole episode. But LBJ had the deer head mounted, lugged it over to the White House and urged Kennedy to display it on the wall of his office. Kennedy ordered the deer head stored away, but LBJ persisted. He inquired about the trophy so often that it became an issue and Kennedy finally had to hang it in the Fish Room. Afterward Kennedy liked to quip to friends: "The three most overrated things in the world are the state of Texas, the FBI and mounted deer heads."

■ Kennedy's reaction, just before the Dallas motorcade, to a right-wing ad in The Dallas News, all but accusing him of treason. "Oh, you know," he told Jackie in their hotel room, "we're heading into nut country today." Then, in an effort to shake off the ad, he indulged what Jackie called his "Walter Mitty streak." "You know," he said, "last night would have been a hell of a night to assassinate a President. I mean it. There was the rain and the night and we were all getting jostled. Suppose a man had a pistol in a briefcase." Writes Manchester:

"[JFK] gestured vividly, pointing his rigid index finger at the wall and jerking his thumb twice to show the action of the hammer. Then he could have dropped the gun and brief case—in pantomime, he dropped them and whirled in a tense crouch—and melted away in the crowd."

■ The slow responses of the Secret Service agents in the Presidential limousine. Manchester believes only two shots were fired, five seconds apart. Secret Service driver William Greer and agent Roy Kellerman, Manchester writes, "were in a position to take evasive action after the first shot, but for five terrible seconds, they were immobilized." Although age slows men's reflexes, he observes, Secret Service tradition dictated that senior agents be assigned to the posts closest to the President; Greer was 54 at the time of the assassination, Kellerman 48.

■ The nightmare scene within the limousine after Oswald's second hit exploded the back of JFK's head. Mrs. Kennedy saw a piece of her husband's skull fly off. "At first," Manchester writes, "there was no blood. And then ... there was nothing but blood spattering her, the Connallys, Kellerman, Greer, the upholstery. Gobs of blood as thick as a man's hand soaked the floor of the back seat ... To Kellerman, it appeared that the air was full of moist sawdust."

■ An effort to settle one of the major disputed points about the assassination: the location of the entry wound in President Kennedy's back. The Warren commission held that the first shot to hit Kennedy struck him in the base of the neck, exited at his throat, then entered Texas Gov. John Connally. But critics of the commission have suggested that the slug actually hit Kennedy lower in the back; this means that it could not have struck Connally as the commission believes and points to a second assassin (NEWSWEEK,

Dec. 5, 1966). X-rays and photographs made at the autopsy, Manchester writes, support the commission's conclusion that the bullet struck the President in the neck, ripped his windpipe and exited at his throat. Manchester says that he did not personally examine the X-rays and pictures, but interviewed three unnamed experts called in by the Warren commission to study the material. Their unanimous opinion, he writes, supports the commission thesis; so does the recollection of all the doctors at the autopsy.

■ Examples of confusion, dissension and almost inexplicable behavior among Secret Service men and Kennedy and Johnson aides after the assassination. The chief of the Secret Service's White House detail did not make the Texas trip, Manchester writes, and after the assassination, the agents were essentially without a leader. Some agents switched allegiance immediately to LBJ, others stuck close to the Kennedys. In the emotional chaos of Parkland, JFK's military aide, Maj. Gen. Chester Clifton momentarily forgot all about the Signal Corps communications capability, according to Manchester, and placed a credit-card call through the hospital switchboard to the White House. Connected "miraculously" to the Situations Room, he first directed that his wife and Mrs. Kenneth O'Donnell in Washington be told their husbands were unharmed and only then, Manchester writes, asked a National Security Council official: "Is there any intelligence on this?" Told that JFK had been wounded, Johnson staffer Elizabeth Carpenter was struck by the notion that LBJ would take over Kennedy's scheduled speech at the Dallas Trade Mart—and dashed off to the hall with another distaffer in a careening police cruiser.

■ Kafkaesque examples of bureaucracy at work. Clerks at Parkland dutifully

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logged in "Kennedy, John F.," a white male, at 12:38 p.m., assigned him Emergency Room No. 24740, and listed his "chief complaint" as "GSW"—gunshot wound. "Connally, John, No. 24743, had the same problem and he was entered three spaces below, after a white female with a bleeding mouth and a colored female with abdominal pains."

■ Jackie's last fleeting hope when she heard someone in the emergency room use the word "resuscitation" while the doctors worked over Kennedy. Manchester writes: "He's still alive, she thought in amazement. It made no sense. She was convinced that he had been killed. *Could there be a chance that he could live?* she thought; and, *Oh, my God, if he could, I'd just do everything all my life for him.*" Moments later, Jackie tried to push past a nurse blocking the emergency-room door; the nurse shoved back and Mrs. Kennedy was allowed in only when the President's physician, Vice Adm. George Burkley, interceded for her. "I want to be in there when he dies," she said, and she was. "Your husband has sustained a fatal wound," surgeon Kemp Clark finally told her. Adds Manchester: "[Her] lips moved silently: *I know.*"

■ Bobby Kennedy getting the first news of the shooting from FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover, who phoned him during lunch at the pool at Hickory Hill: "I have news for you," Hoover said tonelessly. "The President's been shot." There was a pause. Kennedy asked whether it was serious. "I think it's serious. I am endeavoring to get details," said Hoover." Bobby, Manchester writes, walked dazed across the lawn. "His jaw sagged. 'Jackie been shot!' he said, gagging, and clapped his hand over his face."

■ A portrait of the new President in the agonizing moments after the shooting. Manchester pictures him propped against a hospital wall, sniffing a vapor inhaler, exchanging mute looks with Lady Bird, and bearing "little resemblance to the shrewd, assured President Johnson the country came to know." "This is a time for prayer if there ever was one," he whispered to a Texas congressman. Moments after Kennedy was pronounced dead, press staffer Malcolm Kilduff found LBJ in booth 13 of Parkland's minor-medicine section and sought permission to break the news at a press conference. "He cleared his throat," writes Manchester, "and said, 'Mr. President.' It was the first time that anyone had addressed Johnson. He turned and, according to Kilduff's later recollection, 'looked at me like I was Donald Duck.'"

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