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PRESSURE DENIED ON KENNEDY BOOK

Family Said to Be Concerned
Over Its Serialization

By HOMER BIGART

Are the Kennedys trying to delay, censor or squelch the serialization of William Manchester's account of the assassination of the President?

So persistent are reports of family interference that Look magazine is planning a full-page newspaper advertisement next week that will announce the forthcoming publication and support the author's statement that neither the President's widow, Mrs. John F. Kennedy, nor his brother Senator Robert F. Kennedy had tried to edit the manuscript.

What the Kennedys reportedly are concerned about is not the impact of Mr. Manchester's book, "The Death of a President," which Mrs. Kennedy herself authorized, but the impact of its serialization in six or seven installments.

Distortion Feared

They are said to fear that certain episodes, printed outside the total context of the drama, might present some important individuals in an unsympathetic — and distorting — light.

Consequently Mrs. Kennedy is reported to feel that Look should run the manuscript in two or three long installments. Then there would be less danger of distortion, especially in news articles based on the installments.

There are episodes in the narrative that require delicate and

detailed handling. According to one who has read it, the Manchester manuscript reveals that in their last conversation President Kennedy and Vice President Johnson got into an argument.

President Kennedy reportedly did not feel that his visit to Texas was necessary. Why could not Mr. Johnson, with all his reputed skill as a Texas politician, patch up the feud between the state's two Democratic factions: the Connolly Democrats and the Yarborough Democrats, and let the President tend to pressing business in Washington?

Reflecting that the Texas trip ended in the President's assassination in Dallas, a careless reading of the Kennedy-Johnson argument might result in anger over the role of Mr. Johnson.

But Mr. Manchester is said to have gone to considerable length to give the reasons Mr. Johnson urged the trip. Texas had been won in 1960 by a slim margin, and a deepening Democratic split threatened loss of the state to the Republicans in 1964. Mr. Johnson is said to have argued that, since becoming Vice President, he had lost much of his political leverage in Texas, and that only a visit by the President would help.

Look plans to start serialization early in 1967, it was learned, and the appearance of the last installment will coincide with publication of the book by Harper & Row. Look is said to have paid a record \$650,000 for first serial rights.

The planned advertisement would carry the author's foreword to the book in which Mr. Manchester stresses his complete independence as a writer — he received no money from the Kennedys, he was not on the Government payroll, he undertook the task reluctantly because he knew that, as a friend of the late President, the writing would be emotionally searing.

Some of Mr. Manchester's

material has been deleted on grounds of taste and national interest, it was learned, but none of the Kennedys have read the manuscript let alone tried to censor it.

Of the ten hours of taped interviews with Mrs. Kennedy, Mr. Manchester himself deleted some segments because he felt that publication would be "unwarranted invasion of privacy."

These deletions will be kept under seal at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston.