

# Mrs. Kennedy Will Seek an Injunction To Block Book About the Assassination

**Suit to Be Filed Against  
Harper & Row, Author  
and Look Magazine**

*Statements and foreword  
of book are on Page 36.*

By JOHN CORRY

Mrs. John F. Kennedy will seek an injunction shortly to block the publication of "Death of a President," William Manchester's account of the assassination of her husband, on the ground of breach of contract.

Simon Rifkind, a former Federal judge who will represent Mrs. Kennedy, said he would file suit in State Supreme Court in two or three days against Mr. Manchester, Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., and Look magazine, which plans to begin a serialization of portions of the book on Jan. 10.

Mr. Rifkind said he would seek "a variety of relief" from the defendants, including a temporary injunction to restrain publication of the magazine articles and book.

Mr. Rifkind led an investigation of railroad labor problems for President Kennedy in 1961. He is a partner in Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, the law firm that Theodore C. Sorensen joined after he left Washington. Mr. Sorensen was a special counsel to President Kennedy.

Harper & Row had scheduled the publication of "Death of a President" for March and then announced that it would be de-



Mrs. John F. Kennedy



William Manchester

Associated Press

layed because of editorial revisions by the author. Look has said that it is going ahead with plans for publication.

Mrs. Kennedy said that, "as horrible as a trial will be," she had no other alternative to prevent the publication.

In one of her infrequent statements, she said that Look magazine, Harper & Row and Mr. Manchester "have repeatedly made clear that only legal action can alter their insistence upon publishing at this time—without regard to accepted standards of propriety and good faith, and in specific violation of my wishes, my contract with Mr. Manchester and the dignity and privacy which my children and I have striven with difficulty to retain."

In a statement, Harper & Row said that it "has done its utmost to comply with the wishes of the Kennedy family, and deeply regrets their present attitude."

Gardner Cowles, editorial chairman of Cowles Communications, Inc., which publishes Look, said:

"We feel strongly that it would be improper to withhold this significant document from the American people; to do so would amount to censorship of history."

Mrs. Kennedy said the book had "inaccurate and unfair references to other individuals," whom she did not identify, although it contained "generous

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references to all members of the Kennedy family."

"These unfair references "are perhaps beyond my prevention," she said, "but to expose to all the world at this time all the private grief, personal thoughts and painful reactions which my children and I endured in those terrible days does not seem to me to be essential to any current historical record."

She was shocked, she said, that Mr. Manchester would "exploit the emotional state" she had found herself in after the assassination, and she said she was "equally shocked that reputable publishers" would cooperate with him.

The suit will be based on an agreement signed by Mr. Manchester and Senator Robert F. Kennedy on March 26, 1964. The agreement contains 11 clauses. The most significant ones say:

¶ "The complete manuscript shall be reviewed by Mrs. John F. Kennedy and Robert F. Kennedy and the final text shall be approved by them.

¶ "The book may not be published before Nov. 22, 1968, and shall be published at such date thereafter as shall be mutually acceptable to the contracting parties."

A spokesman for Mrs. Kennedy said that neither she nor Senator Kennedy had read "Death of a President." To have done so, he said, would be "far too painful for either of them."

He said that neither the Senator nor Mrs. Kennedy had wanted a book written about the assassination, but that they "felt they had to accept one." He insisted that "no one in the Kennedy family had guided Manchester in the writing or had approached him while he was working."

#### Issued by Office

Mrs. Kennedy's statement was issued by her office at 400 Park Avenue, on the corner of 54th Street. The office is staffed by three women, who are assisted by eight volunteers.

After the assassination, Congress voted to give Mrs. Kennedy \$50,000 a year to maintain the office, which handles her correspondence and relieves her of some public obligations. Recently, Mrs. Kennedy asked Congress to reduce the appropriation to \$30,000.

At an informal briefing in the office, which Mrs. Kennedy did not attend, associates of the Kennedy family amplified her views before a dozen reporters. They met in a room where stationery was stored. A small color photograph on the wall showed Mrs. Kennedy in the foreground, her late husband smiling in the background.

The spokesman for Mrs. Kennedy said she "had been personally assured by Manchester and Harper & Row that the book would contain nothing

that was personally offensive to her."

"The suit," the associates of the Kennedy family said, "does not involve truth or accuracy but a breach of faith. Manchester has refused to take some material out and has refused to talk about other changes."

They said, however, that no one close to the Kennedys had any clear idea of what, precisely, was now in the book.

They said that Look had refused to show any representative of the Kennedys material it would use. Negotiations, they said, among representatives of the Kennedy family, Look, Harper & Row and Mr. Manchester had collapsed last Friday.

Mr. Manchester arrived here

Tuesday morning on the Queen Mary. He had traveled from Europe alone and in the cabin class. He declined to answer questions about the dispute and said that he had been "puzzled by the disturbance." He said that he had found it "distracting."

Mr. Manchester, wrapped in a trench coat, dozed in a lounge as the ship was brought into port. He had been one of the first passengers to be cleared by the immigration and health officers after they had come aboard and he said he was eager to get ashore.

#### Difficulties Noted

In an attempt, perhaps, to relieve some of the bitterness that is certain to arise from the suit, a spokesman for Mrs. Kennedy noted the difficulties Mr. Manchester had faced in writing the book and called him "a sensitive human being who was really doing the work the Warren Commission had done, but was trying to do it alone."

Mr. Manchester was chosen to write "Death of a President" by Mrs. Kennedy in March, 1964. He had previously written about her husband two years before in "Portrait of a President," which a reviewer for The New York Times had said, "could only be described as adoring."

Mrs. Kennedy, a friend said, did not read all of "Portrait of a President," although she had seen part of its serialization in Holiday. When it was announced that the Kennedy family had authorized Mr. Manchester to write the new book, a news release from Senator Kennedy, then the Attorney General, said that the account would not be expected before three to five years.

Mr. Manchester interviewed Mrs. Kennedy on two successive days in early April and tape-recorded her remarks. A spokesman for Mrs. Kennedy said that "Jackie made no attempt at self-censorship during the interview, not that there was anything improper said, but she did reveal her deepest thoughts."

The spokesman said he was

not certain if Mrs. Kennedy could use the suit to seek possession of the tapes.

Mr. Manchester, he said, fin-

ished the manuscript late last year. Early this year John Siegenthaler, editor of The Nashville Tennessean, and Edwin O. Guthman, national news editor of The Los Angeles Times, read the manuscript at the request of Senator Kennedy.

Later, Richard Goodwin and Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who had been assistants to President Kennedy, received copies of the manuscript from Mr. Manchester.

Although Mr. Goodwin, who represented Mrs. Kennedy, was to suggest some editorial changes, most of the early suggestions were made by Mr. Siegenthaler and Mr. Guthman.

However, a source close to the Kennedy family said that Mr. Siegenthaler and Mr. Guthman had worked far more with Evan Thomas, editorial vice president of Harper & Row, than with Mr. Manchester. He insisted that there had been "no substantive conversations with Bill Manchester."

He said that Mr. Siegenthaler, Mr. Guthman and Mr. Thomas had had a number of phone conversations about the book and that they had met in a Washington hotel room in May to discuss editorial changes.

"By and large," he said, "the three were in agreement. They thought that Manchester had used bad judgment, even bad taste, in places."

#### Not Deeply Involved

He said that Mrs. Kennedy and Senator Kennedy were not deeply involved in the editorial process then.

"Siegenthaler," he said, "would phone Bob and make some general comments. Mrs. Kennedy stayed out of it."

The spokesman indicated that Mr. Manchester had been requested to make a substantial number of changes. He declined to describe the alleged lapses of judgment or taste, although he said that a number of the changes had involved factual corrections.

He said, for example, that Mr. Manchester had written that Senator Kennedy had been too young for service in World War II, which was inaccurate, and that, in describing a meet-

ing, he had incorrectly identified the participants.

In the summer, he said, while Mr. Siegenthaler and Mr. Guthman were still making suggestions, Mr. Manchester expressed anxiety about the possibility that the book might never be published.

Consequently, the spokesman continued, Senator Kennedy, without consulting Mrs. Ken-

nedy, told Mr. Manchester in a telegram that he would not try to block publication. The telegram, the spokesman said, did not mention the date of publication.

"I think there was some feeling in the Kennedy family," he said, "that the best thing would be to get publication over with. It didn't matter about the date too much, if only Manchester would agree to the changes."

#### 'Not the Wisest Thing'

He said that after the tape-recorded interview, which was "not the wisest thing Mrs. Kennedy has ever done," she met Mr. Manchester only once, at Hyannisport on Cape Cod. Mr. Goodwin was also present, he said, and he also suggested some editorial revisions.

The spokesman said that the Senator and the author, after meeting when the contract was signed, met only twice, last August and September. Mr. Goodwin was also at the second meeting.

Mr. Manchester, the spokesman said, "was asked repeatedly to make changes, and he gave us a variety of answers to the requests."

We know that some of the material that offends Mrs. Kennedy is still in the manuscript," the spokesman said.

On Dec. 27, one issue before the scheduled start of the serialization, the price of Look magazine will go up nationally from 35 cents to 50 cents.

S. O. Shapiro, vice president and director of circulation of Look, said the rise had been in effect in "substantial portions of the country" since Nov. 1.

It is uncertain if Mrs. Kennedy will be called to testify in the suit, or what will become of "Death of a President." Mrs. Kennedy is said to be insistent that the parts she considers objectionable never be published.

"To have it in a book, just like a movie magazine," a friend said, "is repugnant to her."

He also said there was no possibility the disputed material would be made public during the court action.

Senator Kennedy "supports" Mrs. Kennedy in the legal action, a colleague said, though his full feelings are not known.

"The suit," said a man who

is acquainted with the Kennedys and also close to the publishing industry, "will be a battle of giants."