

# Book Settlement Predicted

By ALBERT ELLENBERG

A source close to the Kennedy family voiced optimism today that an agreement with Harper & Row over William Manchester's "The Death of a President" will be reached before the new trial deadline of Jan. 16.

"I'm not going to guarantee it," the source said, "but much points to a resolution. There has been progress and I think things could well be resolved noiselessly—and soon."

The publisher of the 300,000-word account of President Kennedy's assassination also termed the situation "hopeful."

The fresh optimism was expressed after a series of fast-moving court maneuvers yesterday. For a time, it seemed that the two sides were due for an abrupt confrontation that would rule out a negotiated settlement.

With Manchester hospitalized, lawyers for the author and Harper & Row at first asked for a postponement of court ac-

tion until Jan. 16. The Kennedys, represented by former federal judge Simon Rifkind, readily agreed to the delay.

But then, in a surprise move that obviously nettled Rifkind, Harper & Row counsel Edward Greenbaum asked State Supreme Court Justice Streit for a hearing tomorrow. The request was granted.

The move threatened to wreck talks between the two sides. "I'm in no position to negotiate while I'm getting prepared for a hearing," Rifkind snapped.

Greenbaum denied that the move was calculated to needle the Kennedys into faster negotiations. "All we wanted was that this matter be disposed of," he said. "We were ready yesterday to argue the case, just as we had been the week before."

But talks hadn't completely broken down. And by 6 p.m., both sides were ready to release a joint statement which was issued from Sen. Robert Kennedy's office.

The temporary truce provided that Jacqueline Kennedy would hold off her suit to prevent publication of the book. The publishers, in turn, voluntarily agreed not to publish the volume before April 1.

"Both parties have agreed to request a trial date for mid-January in the event that no agreement is reached," the statement said.

"The sole object of this arrangement is to give all parties including the author sufficient time for thorough discussions."

Meanwhile, the Kennedys formally dropped their suit against Look magazine which has agreed to excise material Mrs. Kennedy feels is too "personal" from its 60,000-word serialization starting next month.

Mrs. Kennedy and her children are vacationing in guarded privacy at the retreat of banker Paul Mellon in Antigua, B.W.I.