

Jackie Wants Her 'Secrets' Out of Book



JACQUELINE KENNEDY



WILLIAM MANCHESTER

By PETER LISAGOR

Washington, Dec. 10 (CDN)—The family of John F. Kennedy is still engaged in a strange and bitter struggle to delete from the book they commissioned some highly personal and poignant recollections of Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy embracing her innermost secret thoughts.

The Kennedy's decline to discuss their quarrel with William Manchester, whose "Death of a President" is due to be published by Harper & Row next March and serialized in four installments in Look starting Jan. 10.

But enough details of the conflict between the principals have circulated to tantalize New York publishing circles and excite the gossip-ridden political community here.

The manuscript is understood to contain hitherto unpublished material involving President Johnson and the Kennedys in the immediate aftermath of the assassination of JFK in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963. These revelations are likely to exacerbate existing tensions between Johnson and the Kennedy clan, according to those familiar with the Manchester work.

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The author and the editors, however, have been mainly caughtup in the anguish of Mrs. Kennedy over some of the disclosures in the 350,000-word manuscript. They are said to include some of her innermost thoughts and emotional attitudes at the time of the tragedy, which she doesn't want published.

The Kennedys are said to feel that Manchester violated his contract and breached the confidences of the widow, who spent many hours tape-recording in the author's presence her candid recollections of events surrounding her husband's death.

"Jackie now regrets having poured out her soul to Manchester as if he were a psychiatrist," says one person who has read the manuscript. "In truth,

the book is a remarkable history which everybody comes out real. When the dust settles, everybody's going to be pleased."

This judgment is not shared by those familiar with other facets of the enterprise which have become controversial.

Ironically, Mrs. Kennedy, together with her brother-in-law, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, hand-picked Manchester to write the book for two reasons.

First, they were anxious to fend off an expected parade of authors seeking the family's cooperation in writing their own accounts of the assassination.

Secondly, Mrs. Kennedy was greatly impressed by an earlier Manchester book about JFK—"Portrait of a President," a sensitive and intimate closeup of Kennedy in the White House.

Right to Review

According to friends, the contract with Manchester gave the family the right to review the manuscript and presumably remove any material that they felt was unseemly, embarrassing or in bad taste.

Neither Mrs. Kennedy nor Robert Kennedy has read the

manuscript, these friends say. However, the Senator had two of his former associates in the Justice Dept., Edwin O. Guthman, now on the Los Angeles Times, and John Siegenthaler, editor of the Nashville Tennessean, read it.

They were instructed to take out anything that appeared gratuitously hostile to President Johnson, for the Kennedys were worried lest the book be judged as an authorized political document. Other Kennedy friends also read the manuscript, including Richard N. Goodwin and Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

Magazine Problem

The trouble between Manchester and the family was magnified when the magazine rights were sold to Look, which paid an estimated \$600,000 to excerpt some 60,000 words. The author began to resist efforts to remove what the Kennedys thought to be some of the more sensational passages.

The magazine objected to editing changes, although several were agreed to by its editors. Negotiations on possible changes are continuing right up to the publishing deadline.

Many persons interviewed by Manchester were led to believe that he wouldn't publish the book for five years, or until after the 1968 elections, to allay any suspicious of a political motive on the part of Robert Kennedy.

Friends of the family, on the other hand, say that the agreement was that the book would be published within five years. The decision to publish it when finished was made, they say, to avoid any charges that it was timed to promote the Kennedy fortunes in politics.

The Speculations

"No matter what time was chosen to publish the book, it would inevitably raise suspicion," one source said, "so this seemed like as good, or least bad, time to do it."

Meanwhile, the flood of gossip, speculation and conjecture surrounding the book has washed up the story that Manchester worked himself into such a taste of physical and emotional exhaustion that he was forced into a sanitarium during the preparation of the book.

In any case, it is understood that the Kennedys have rejected any idea of suing Manchester to prevent publication of the book. "Imagine what would be said about the Kennedys being ruthless and censorious if that happened," a friend observes.