

What Manchester Wrote

By ARTHUR GREENSPAN and RALPH BLUMENFELD

The emotional conflict between President Johnson and President Kennedy's entourage in Dallas after the assassination—as told in William Manchester's "The Death of a President"—was divulged in detail today by two men who have read the manuscript.

The bitterness of the Kennedy group over Johnson's insistence that he immediately "establish his Presidency" is vividly described in the book, said both men—one a publishing executive and the other a journalist.

Their revelations to the New York Post came as Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy's lawsuit to halt the book's publication drew a comment from author Manchester for the first time—and new reports that an effort is being made to settle the suit out of court.

Manchester, 43, said President Kennedy "would have wanted his countrymen to know the truth of those terrible days," and added:

"John Kennedy was my President. To suggest that I would dishonor his memory or my association with him is both cruel and unjust."

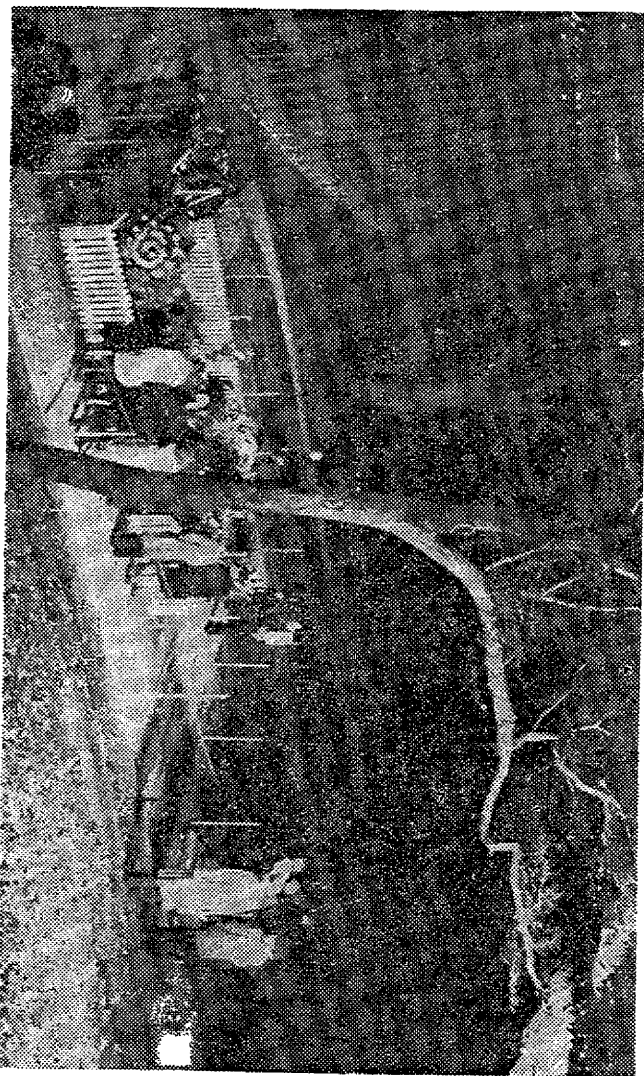
No Great Dark Secrets'

The publishing executive contacted by The Post was one of many editors on half a dozen major magazines who read the book when it was offered to them for serialization by Manchester's agent, Donald Congdon. It eventually was purchased by Look magazine for a reported \$665,000.

"There are no terribly mysterious revelations, no great dark secrets," the magazine editor said. "It's simply that Jackie, in her talks with Manchester, told him everything she could remember."

What emerged from his reading of the book, the editor said, was the aura of fear and suspicion dividing the Johnson and Kennedy factions on the day of the assassination.

"The President is killed. Johnson's first thought is



JFK rests here, but the battle rages.

that there is a conspiracy—that the Russians or someone are behind it,” the editor said. “He had to establish his Presidency. He wanted not to leave the country thinking it was leaderless, powerless.”

Pitted against Johnson's fear, he said, was the agony of the Kennedys' "bitter, awful loss."

'This Was Johnson's State'

"There was this feeling among them that this was Johnson's state—Texas. That it happened in his state. They didn't think he had anything to do with it, but he had brought them there.

"They remembered that it was in Dallas that Adlai Stevenson had been spat upon. And they, the Kennedys, felt that Johnson was part of this thing, this conservatism, and there wasn't anything he could have done that would have changed their minds.

"He represented everything President Kennedy wasn't—the crudity, the Southerner, the professional politician."

Both the editor and the journalist told The Post they did not get the impression that Mrs. Kennedy was "hysterical" aboard Air Force One, the Presidential jet, of which Johnson took command for his swearing-in.

"She was in a state of shock, clearly," the editor said. "She was resentful of the fact that Johnson and his entourage were assuming the Presidency."

But, he said, Manchester's book describes Mrs. Kennedy as having been "like an automaton going through the motions. There was very little hysteria. And I wouldn't say she was hysterical."

President Johnson, he learned, "behaved in a not surprising way. He wanted to establish that he was President. There was a great deal of deference to the Kennedy family. But he's a much more rough-hewn individual, and the Kennedys are more polished. There was a great gulf between them. The book shows this."

It also shows, he indicated, that Johnson "did some things that he might have done differently if he'd had a chance to think about them."

The book leaves the impression, he said, that Johnson

Continued on Page 52

Continued from Page 3
was intent on being sworn in as rapidly as possible.

"There is the feeling that when he got in contact with Bobby to ask about the proper procedure, they [the Kennedys] feel he misinterpreted what Bobby said—so he could be sworn in in Dallas. I think, from reading the book, that they feel he did misinterpret what Bobby said."

The editor speculated about what passages Mrs. Kennedy is objecting to in her lawsuit, and cited this episode:

"Kennedy has been shot. His head lay in her lap, and they were rushing to the hospital.

"She felt he was dead and she didn't want other people to see how badly he looked, how he had been disfigured.

"When the Presidential car came to Parkland Hospital, there is a description of Mrs. Kennedy trying to protect with her own body the body of her husband, of her not wanting to let anyone take him away from her.

"Finally, a Secret Service

man, or someone, covered the body with a raincoat, and it was only then that she let them place the body on a stretcher and take it inside the hospital.

"Then the scene follows the President, into the hospital. She knew he was dead, although he apparently wasn't clinically dead when they got to the hospital. But she knew there was no chance to save him."

Another section of the book tells of Mrs. Kennedy's apparent calm and composure during the funeral, the editor said. He cites the incident which is still vivid to those who saw it or watched on TV, when John Jr., then 3, stood at attention and saluted his dead father.

"In the book, she tells how she had gotten John-John to do the salute. I think it was something he had done elsewhere, and she suggested to him it be done then, and he did it."

The book also focuses on Marina Oswald's rejection of her husband, Lee Harvey Oswald, on the night before he allegedly killed Kennedy — an episode already disclosed by the Warren Commission report.

NEW YORK POST, MONDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1966

Manchester, in his book, was "more sympathetic to Oswald than he was to Marina," the editor said. "He tells how she led him on that night, then laughed at him, derided him for his sexual inadequacy and dismissed him. And the next day, Oswald goes out and kills the President. Manchester attributed some sort of Freudian overtones to the killing."

A journalist who said he read the book last July—"not once but three times"—told The Post he thinks Manchester "made a tremendous effort to be accurate" and has produced "the greatest job of history I've seen."

"I saw some things [publisher] Bennett Cerf said that I don't recall being in the book," he said. "And as for Mrs. Kennedy being 'hysterical' — they mustn't have read the same book I read."

He said he believes that "if people read the whole sweep of the book and use their judgment, they'll see that it's everything that happened."

"I think people will understand very well what happened

— to President Johnson, to everyone—and they will understand that nobody did anything very bad."

Manchester does name some Dallas policemen, FBI agents and Secret Service men who were "allegedly derelict in appraising the assassination," another report said today.

The book reportedly retells stories of a Secret Service "split" in Dallas, when some agents assigned to guard the President decided that their duty was to the murdered Kennedy, while others switched their allegiance to Johnson.

Manchester also revives some examples of the friction caused when Johnson apparently tried to requisition Kennedy office space for his secretarial staff before he moved into the White House.

Finally, the choice of burial ground for President Kennedy created a major struggle between the Kennedy group—who favored a Massachusetts burial—and one led by Defense Secretary McNamara, who insisted

on Arlington National Cemetery.

Mrs. Kennedy decided to bury her husband at Arlington.

Simon Rifkind, the former federal judge who is Mrs. Kennedy's lawyer in her suit to block the book, discounted rumors of a strong move toward out-of-court settlement.

He said he still plans to press for an injunction Dec. 27 to stop Look magazine's first installment of its projected four-part serialization, starting Jan. 10, and the Harper & Row hardcover release planned for spring.

Repeating Mrs. Kennedy's insistence that she has not given her approval to the manuscript as agreed on Rifkind said:

"I don't know about literary integrity, nor the matter of history . . . but I believe strongly in a man keeping his word, particularly when it is in a written memorandum of understanding."

Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), the youngest Kennedy brother, said in Washington that Manchester is violating both the word and spirit of his agreement, "despite the pain he knows it will give Mrs. Kennedy."