

DRIVEN INTO SUIT, KENNEDY CHARGES

He Says Publishers Barred
Access to Manuscript

By MARTIN ARNOLD

Senator Robert F. Kennedy said last night that neither the publisher of "The Death of a President" nor Look magazine had allowed representatives of the Kennedy family to see the versions of the works they now plan to publish until after a lawsuit was filed last Friday.

"They did not think that we could afford to sue. They did not think it, to the point of not letting anybody see the manuscript that they now plan to publish," the New York Democrat said in a telephone interview from Sun Valley, Idaho, where he is vacationing with his family.

"This is what pushed us to the suit," Mr. Kennedy said. "We didn't want to go through with a suit, and we spent a lot of time trying to avoid that.

"But not letting us see the manuscript, after they supposedly made corrections and deletions, drove us to that point of suing."

Saw Original Manuscript

Senator Kennedy added that after Mrs. John F. Kennedy's original complaint was made known to the author, William Manchester, and to the publisher, Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc. she was told by Harper & Row that her representatives could not see the manuscript. The book deals with the assassination of President Kennedy.

Last Friday Mrs. Kennedy filed a suit in State Supreme Court to prevent both the publication of the book and the serialization of parts of it in Look magazine. Her suit was based on the contention that Mr. Manchester had violated a contract with Senator Kennedy which provided that the book could not be published before Nov. 22, 1968, and that it must be approved by Mrs. Kennedy and the Senator.

Early last summer representatives of the Kennedy family were allowed to see the manuscript as originally written, the Senator said in the interview last night.

When objections were then made, presumably changes were made, he said, but no Kennedy representative was allowed to see the re-edited manuscript.

On Saturday Mrs. Kennedy, Simon H. Rifkind, her attorney, and Richard N. Goodwin, an adviser, reviewed some passages from the book that are scheduled to appear in Look.



Associated Press Wirephoto

CAUCUS ON THE SKI SLOPES: Senator Robert F. Kennedy giving two of his children some tips yesterday as they continued holiday vacation in Sun Valley, Idaho.

Representatives of the Kennedy family have not yet seen the revised manuscript that Harper & Row plans to publish, but that apparently has been made available to them.

Senator Kennedy said last night he had not seen a statement by Cass Canfield, chairman of the executive committee of Harper & Row, defending the company's decision to print the book. However, a statement by a family spokesman was issued at Mrs. Kennedy's office.

The statement said that Mr. Manchester, Harper & Row, and Look had not permitted Mrs. Kennedy or her representatives to see the manuscript "despite repeated assurance throughout the entire period by Harper & Row that the contract would be honored." It said:

"The question is not the book's 'right to live'—no one had denied that right—the question is the right of Mrs. Kennedy and her children to live with a minimum of privacy and dignity, free from the publication of intimate details of their lives at a time of great sorrow—details which bear no conceivable relation to history."

Senator Kennedy insisted in the interview that until the suit was filed "our representatives saw only an earlier draft of the manuscript."

His remark that neither the publisher of the book nor Look thought "we could afford to sue" was a reference to the political situation.

The Senator declined to comment on that point. But it is known to be the belief of the Kennedy family that both the publisher of the book and Look magazine had gambled on the fact that the Senator would not push the lawsuit because he was afraid that the ensuing publicity would hurt his political ambitions.

Kennedy in Ski Mishap

SUN VALLEY, Idaho, Dec. 19 (AP)—Senator Kennedy took a bad spill today when he avoided a collision on a steep expert ski slope at this Idaho resort. Neither he nor the other skier was injured.

After the spill, Mr. Kennedy went back up Rock Garden Slope and made the fast downhill run in good form.