

Report Publishers Yielding to Jackie

Book Will Respect Privacy

By JOHN MOLLESON

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The dispute between Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy and the author and publishers of "The Death of a President" may be nearing an out-of-court settlement—on Mrs. Kennedy's terms.

The publishers have already yielded on major points in the manuscript, and continuing negotiations have reached the stage of quibbling over words, it was reliably reported yesterday.

If a settlement is reached, it will represent a victory for Mrs. Kennedy, who fought to keep forever private a portion of her personal share in the tragedy of John F. Kennedy's assassination.

Some of the details she found objectionable have, in fact, been made public in various news "leaks" to reporters covering the controversy.

PERMANENT RECORD

But a spokesman for the Kennedy family said that publication in the daily press was not the same as publication in a book that will inevitably be an important part of the permanent record, read around the world and used as an authorized source for generations.

Mrs. Kennedy is not taking part in the minute discussions of the text. Her ambassador in the day-to-day, and hour-to-hour negotiations, is Rich-

ard N. Goodwin, 34, a Harvard Law School graduate who served both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson as consultant, speech writer and idea man.

He left Washington more than a year ago and retired to the campus of Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., where he is a fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies.

Goodwin was one of the few friends Mrs. Kennedy invited to read William Manchester's manuscript, and he was present last summer at Hyannisport, Mass., when Mrs. Kennedy outlined to Manchester the passage she considered offensive to herself and to good taste.

"Goodwin knows the manuscript and its problems better than anyone else. He knows what is acceptable to Mrs.

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Kennedy and what is not," a Kennedy spokesman said.

Goodwin was reached yesterday at the midtown office of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, at 110 E. 45th St. From there he apparently went to Sen. Kennedy's apartment at 870 United Nations Plaza, where discussions continued for most of the day.

Goodwin emphasized that he had read to Mrs. Kennedy every passage in the book of a personal nature or had given her a detailed summary.

"She then made the decision what she thought was too personal, of no historical importance, and should not be included in the book," Goodwin said.

"Publishers' statements to the contrary, Mrs. Kennedy knew precisely what she was objecting to in the book."

Goodwin said that "informal contacts" were being made, but he declined to be specific about the talks, because "at this stage, it might spoil everything."

'GREAT PRESSURES'

Nevertheless, reports from publishing circles during the day were insistent that a settlement was in the making. A Kennedy family spokesman said there were "great pressures" for an out-of-court settlement before tomorrow, the day on which the defendants in Mrs. Kennedy's law suit must file legal answers to her petition for an injunction.

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"So long as people talk there are indications there might be a settlement," one source said.

"Good will is being shown. I think everyone is trying to be reasonable."

Another source said:

"I think there was a lot of misunderstanding before. That's been cleared up. Now that everybody has had a chance to talk, things are a lot better."

BEING PRINTED

The defendants are Cowles Communications, publisher of Look Magazine; Harper & Row, publisher of the hardcover version of "The Death of a President," and William Manchester. Look intends to publish the first installment of its serialization of 80,000 words of Manchester's 300,000-word manuscript on Jan. 24. The issue is now being printed in Chicago and is due to go on sale Jan. 10.

If the issue has to be scrapped because of an injunction, the loss to Look, it is estimated, will be between \$3 and \$5 mil-

tion, and a bond in about that amount would have to be posted by the Kennedy family pending an appeal. The financial burden involved in a litigation is one reason both sides are anxious to settle out of court.

The Kennedy spokesman noted that Look has announced it would advance its newsstand price to 50 cents. He questioned whether the causes of history and freedom of the press were the only issues involved in publication of the book without Mrs. Kennedy's approval.

'If history alone is at stake, why don't they do it at cost?' he asked. "I doubt if John Peter Zenger was interested in serial rights."