



## End of the Affair

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The announcement of Edward Greenbaum, counsel for Harper & Row, that his client would face the Kennedys in open court tomorrow seemed implausibly rash to most sophisticates on Foley Square yesterday morning.

But, by nightfall, the dare had worked; and there issued forth from both parties the agreement that all swords had been sheathed in honey, that great progress had been made, and that negotiations could go peaceably on for two weeks more. The lesson was plain for all those who recognize that we shall live with the Kennedys for 30 years: he who would deal with them must take chances.

Our State Supreme Court is a very old theater and, to anyone who knows its habits and its traditions, the chance Harper & Row took had to seem a very wild one indeed.

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For one thing most of its judges are dedicated Democrats, and the prospect of the publication of William Manchester's history of the assassination was painful alike to Robert Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, the two most substantial Democrats at large. For a second thing, there was the issue of the feelings of a widow. For the last, there was the existence of what appears to be at least a plausible contractual right of the Kennedys to suppress if they chose. For all these reasons, Manchester and Harper & Row had no visible chance to win on that track.

Still, they took a chance on running it, and the result indicates that they were entirely sound in that risk. The one consistent pattern in this melancholy affair has been for the Kennedys to fight up to the point where the legal issue is just about directly to be joined and then to settle.

It takes two to make a lawsuit. This case only began when the Kennedys filed their charges against Harper, Look and Manchester; it would not be joined until the defendants made their reply. Look was supposed to make public its answer to the complaint on Thursday last; the Kennedys settled with Look Wednesday night.

Yesterday morning, Harper announced that it would not withhold its reply beyond last night; yesterday afternoon the Kennedys moved to settle.

Their reason ought to be obvious by now. Harper & Row's legal answer would be long and detailed; and its text would be published in full in the papers. I do not suggest that it would offset the Kennedys' legal claim; but it would present life as much more complicated than the Kennedy brief suggested. When a defendant is honest—and Manchester and Harper & Row are all honest—he has earned some sort of a case; and that case is the history of the three years that brought Harper & Row to that refusal to bend one more inch.

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One felt at the beginning that this business would do the Kennedys no good. One is glad for them and for all of us that its end seems again to be approaching. For, so long as it lasts, the Kennedys have what we have come to recognize as the Johnson sickness, in whose course no matter what the victim does, he looks bad.

Yesterday it became known that Sen. Kennedy and Mrs. John F. Kennedy had each sent William Manchester a telegram wishing him well on his sickbed. That gesture may have been conceived as gracious, but it was only royal. They had called this man a huckster. When you have called a man a huckster, you either apologize or you treat his physical condition as an irrelevancy. He is not your sick friend.

The Kennedys are not responsible for Manchester's illness. A man gets sick on his own. But they are responsible for everything that went before he got sick; they seduced him and then they betrayed him; and then they harried him and then they defamed him; and to hell with their good wishes when he is sick; let them go down on their knees for what they did when he was healthy. They will live long, and it is time for them to learn that a public relations sense is not a conscience.