

Accord Near in Kennedy Book Dispute

By DOUGLAS ROBINSON

Mrs. John F. Kennedy's dispute with William Manchester, author of "The Death of a President," and Harper & Row, publisher of the book, appeared last night to be close to settlement.

Although participants in the discussions declined to be overly optimistic, it was reported that only a few items remained to be ironed out.

"We've been close before, but things have come unhinged at the last moment," a source close to the talks said.

Another source said, however, that only a "snag or two" stood in the way of a settlement.

The discussions, which have gone on for nearly a month, have centered on Mrs. Kennedy's objections to personal material that she feels would violate her "dignity and privacy" if published.

Yesterday's talks were held in the office of former Federal Judge Simon H. Rifkind at 575 Fifth Avenue. Judge Rifkind, who represents Mrs. Kennedy, is a member of the law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison.

Pressure for a speedy settlement was increasing. Both sides are known to want to avoid a court fight and Mr. Manchester is scheduled to appear today in State Supreme Court for a trial on a permanent injunction sought by Mrs. Kennedy to block publication of his book.

The suit is based on Mrs. Kennedy's contention that publication would breach a contract between Mr. Manchester and Senator Robert F. Kennedy, who has assumed the role of family representative in the dispute.

Although the contract stipulated that the book on President Kennedy's assassination could not be published before Nov. 22, 1968, Mr. Manchester and Harper & Row have as-



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Simon H. Rifkind, counsel for Mrs. John F. Kennedy.

serted that Mrs. Kennedy gave her consent for publication.

Neither Mr. Manchester nor Harper & Row, in their answers filed in court, said exactly how Mrs. Kennedy had given her approval. Both reported previously that Senator Kennedy, in a telegram to the author last July, had said that "members of the Kennedy family will place no obstacle in the way of publication of this book."

In his reply, Mr. Manchester also contended that since the court action was based on an alleged breach of contract with Senator Kennedy, the suit was invalid unless the Senator joined it. The Senator has filed an affidavit in support of Mrs. Kennedy's suit, but has not joined her as a plaintiff.

Harper & Row, which plans to publish the controversial book next April, is scheduled to appear in court for trial on Wednesday.

In addition to the talks on the Harper & Row book yesterday, other discussions went on at Judge Rifkind's office concerning a proposed lawsuit against Stern, a West German magazine that bought serialization rights to the Manchester work from Look magazine.

Stern has refused to cut or modify material objected to by Mrs. Kennedy, changes agreed to several weeks ago by Look. The first installment of the unexpurgated version was printed by Stern last week.

Despite a visit by representatives of Look and the Kennedy family to Hamburg late last week, Henri Nannen, the editor of Stern, has consistently refused to tailor the serialization. Stern bought the rights from Look for \$72,500.

Look sold the serialization rights in 25 countries. Each agreement stipulated that foreign installments must appear five to seven days after they first appeared in Look.

The West German magazine came out with its first installment last Monday, the same day that Look went on sale.

Although the issue of Look was to have come out on Tuesday, Jan. 10, the magazine moved its publication date up because details of its first installment were printed in The Chicago Daily News on Jan. 7.

Look's complaint against Stern is apparently based primarily on the publication date rather than the textual changes.

On Dec. 24, it was learned, Look received a telegram from Stern that indicated it would honor the publication date, which was scheduled to be Jan. 15, five days after the appearance of Look.