

JFK Book Row: A New

Author William Manchester says he refused an invitation by Chief Justice Warren to declare that the findings of the Warren Commission on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy were acceptable to the Kennedys because he felt "it would be improper."

Manchester, writing in the issue of Look magazine which goes on newsstands tomorrow, gives his account of the story behind the controversy surrounding his book, "The Death of a President."

"Unknown to the press," Manchester writes, "the Chief Justice had given me security clearance and a desk in the commission's VFW Building offices . . . There, I had immediate access to all testimony, documents, exhibits and depositions."

"Rather cannily, I thought, the Chief Justice had also invited me to read a first draft of the report and declare, as a friend of the family, that its findings were acceptable to the Kennedys in every respect."

His Objections

"Although I had cooperated with him in other ways, I demurred, explaining that I felt it would be improper. I was, after all, a private citizen, and my own inquiry had far to go."

"Unlike Mr. Mark Lane, I also declined an invitation to testify, giving the same reason. I refused to rush to judgment in 1964. More to the point, however, I was working a new and entirely different line."

Lane is the author of "Rush to Judgment," a book critical of the Warren report.

Manchester also writes of the Warren Commission:

"As I then knew, and as the nation has since discovered, the prestigious names on Earl Warren's panel did little except glitter; the long hours were put in by junior staff men. They were dedicated. They were also young; I believe I had more investigative experience than any of them."

Manchester has said that he agrees with the main conclusion of the Warren Commission that Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated President Kennedy without accomplices.

The author also writes that painstaking professional editing of the book in April, May and June of 1966 was ignored later that year and waves of changes were being urged upon him.

He says the first came from Pamala Turnure, a young secretary in Mrs. Kennedy's office. John Seigenthaler, editor of the Nashville Tennessean and a former associate of Robert Kennedy in the Justice Dept., also

suggested changes, Manchester says.

"Pam was a lightweight," Manchester writes. "John Seigenthaler, a heavy. John had already approved the manuscript. But now he (or someone) was beginning to have second thoughts — political thoughts. That was the second wave of proposed deletions, and there were 111 of them."

That Cabinet Meeting

"Like Pam's, they were stapled to the galleys, but while hers had been largely trivial, he would have required a rewriting of history. Among other things, he wanted a new version of President Johnson's first Cabinet Meeting, eliminating the friction between Johnson and Bob (Kennedy). It would, in brief, have constituted outright distortion and was swiftly rejected."

Manchester indicates he believes that most of his troubles over the proposed changes in his manuscript stemmed from Jacqueline Kennedy. He says she had come to think of him as a member of her court.

Mrs. Kennedy filed a lawsuit against Manchester, Look magazine and publishers Harper & Row last Dec. 13 to block publication of his book, which she called "tasteless and distorted."

The suit was settled out of court and Look subsequently published a four-part serialization. Harper & Row plans to publish the book next month.

In his article in the current issue, Manchester also criticizes Theodore Sorensen and Pierre Salinger, White House aides to President Kennedy. He says the two gave in to demands by the Kennedys for changes in the manuscripts of books they wrote about the late President.

The two years following the assassination, Manchester says, were to be the loneliest in his life.

Manchester says he had been on a first-name basis with Mrs. Kennedy, calling her Jackie, but after strained relationships began developing, her letters to him would end, "Sincerely, Jacqueline Kennedy."

Chapter

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