

Manchester Book May Be ^{F Paul} Best Seller Of 20th Century ^{1/27/67}

NEW YORK (AP) — Reports from the book industry indicate that William Manchester's "The Death of a President" may be one of the runaway best sellers of the 20th century.

A spokesman for Harper & Row, the publishers, said orders were piling in so fast that they have not been able to fix the size of the first printing.

"It looks as if it may have the largest advance sale in our history," the spokesman said.

In Chicago, Wendel Goodpasture, buyer for the major book-dealing firm, of Kroch's and Brentano's, said: "I have seen nothing like it in nearly 50 years in this business."

The retail price of the book is \$10.

"It's the hottest thing in the book industry since the Gutenberg Bible," was the word from Laura Rivers, advertising executive of the May Co. stores in Los Angeles.

Many dealers said they expected a flood of orders as soon as the publication time—tentatively early in April—is firmly fixed by Harper & Row.

A few thought publication of an abridged serialization in Look magazine—which paid Manchester \$665,000 for the rights—might take the edge off hard-cover sales. Most booksellers, however, voiced the view that Look's version had only whetted the public's interest.

Officials of the magazine won't say what the abridgement

has done, if anything, for Look's circulation.

"Some people think the whole thing will be printed in Look but we explain that Look will carry only excerpts," said manager Jerry Dickson of Martindale's book store in Los Angeles. "The price doesn't bother anyone. I think it's going to be a big seller."

Mrs. John Sylla, head of the Bennett Schneider book store in Kansas City, Mo., agreed.

"With every new issue of Look magazine that comes out, more people come in and ask for the book," she said. "We had a similar run of advance orders for 'Human Sexual Response' but 'Death of a President' will probably exceed those."

In San Francisco, book store owner Paul Elder commented:

"There's never been anything before so substantial as this.

Ethel Gardner, head of sales at Gimbels in Philadelphia, thought the price "will hold some people back—but we've been getting plenty of inquiries and I think it will be a real big seller."

Booksellers in Dallas, Tex., where President Kennedy was assassinated, had reservations.

"We have about 400 advance orders now, and that's down from about 600 at one point," said Bliss Albright, manager of

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the Cokesbury book store, largest in Dallas.

"We had 20 to 30 cancellations when the first installment appeared in Look, and more than that after the second installment.

"My opinion is, many of these people may have had a belly full—a lot of people are disgusted with Manchester, the Kennedys, the book publisher and the magazine publishers."

Bill Gilliland, manager of a Dallas branch of Doubleday said:

"The book will sell extremely well but it won't be a complete runaway. The Look magazine series will take the bloom off the rose nationally, I think."

A spokesman for Brentano's in New York said "it looks like the book is going to be very big—one of the biggest."

Virginia Griffith, manager of the book department of Ivey's department store in Charlotte, N.C., said: "We have had our greatest prepublication ordering of any book of general interest."

Some secrecy still surrounds the division of proceeds from the book's sale.

Harper & Row has announced that it will receive only 6 per cent of the net receipts, after normal overhead and taxes, from the sale of the first 100,000 copies.

The publisher says a "substantial share" of proceeds will go to the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library in Cambridge, Mass.

Neither the publishers nor Manchester has disclosed what royalty the author will be paid per copy, but a Harper & Row spokesman said the library also would be given "a substantial portion of what otherwise would go to Manchester."

Manchester said recently his over-all receipts from the manuscript had been estimated by his agent at \$1.5 million. Manchester said taxes and other expenses might leave him a net of \$500,000.

A knowledgeable publishing source previously estimated that Manchester's gross take might be closer to \$3 million and broke it down this way: royalties from hard cover sales \$150,000; paperback editions, \$1.5 million; Look magazine serialization \$665,000; Book of the Month club, \$250,000; foreign publication rights, \$200,000.