

Statements on settlement of Harper's suit NYT 1/17

Manchester

"At his news conference Manchester refused to answer questions"

"A close friend of ~~the author~~ Mr. Manchester said the author had originally intended to turn the tapes and all the supporting documents over to the Federal Archives in Washington along with the original manuscript".

He doesn't even call Mrs. Kennedy that. In his formal statement she is "Jacqueline Kennedy"

He pretends all this came to pass because not Mrs. Kennedy but others read the ms. Now, he says, "she has studied the full text", which is as self service and deceptive as most of his language, "and I have made certain alterations at her request". He says they are "less than seven pages out of a 700-page book" (even here he cannot be accurate, for Harper & Row said 654). He also says that "I should like to observe that from the marginal notations on the page proofs examined by Mrs. Kennedy, it now appears quite clear she has raised no real objection to either the taste or accuracy of the original manuscript..." Plainly this is and to his knowledge is false, for she has no way of knowing whether or not much of it, particularly that part dealing with the assassination, is true or false, accurate or inaccurate. And an abundance of it is inaccurate, the invention of Mr. Manchester's own mind.

"Like Jacqueline Kennedy I am distressed by flagrant publicity (especially when it makes a multimillionaire out of him). Like her I cherish my privacy and regret the painful notoriety of the past several weeks and I am aware that on occasion it has unjustly stung the President of the United States who has been the victim of unauthorized, false and malicious versions of the manuscript's content" (Like "tong" isn't there and all the other cracks at him, and Manchester didn't himself pull the rotten cracks about the dances in the White House, the lack of Daiquiris because they were popular with the former resident, the slurs about the music played in Washing, like Yellow Rose of Texas, etc. At the end he condescends to try and explain away what he considers Mrs. Kennedy's sin against him: The catastrophe was insane. It was the nightmare of our generation. One cannot always be sensible about it."

In his press conference at which he refused to answer questions he added to this:

"Mr. Manchester quickly left the press conference, describing himself as "a very sick man".

Without so intending, on that same day Historian Allen Nevins made an appropriate comment: "Imagination, he said, should be one of the characteristics of good history", in the words of the Washington Post

In his statement he also pretends that the tapes are under his control, that they cannot be seen or heard, ever, without his written permission, and that he is having everything done himself. He fails to mention where all this stuff will be deposited. TIME commented on this provision of the agreement as follows (1/20) Manchester agreed to turn over tapes of Jackie's candid remarks to him during a ten-hour interview..."

Re his pretended solicitude for LBJ "unjustly stung" by "unauthorized, false and malicious versions of the manuscript", that in effect blames the assassination of LBJ by saying that the President went to Texas at LBJ's insistence.