

The FBI accused in 'battle of book'

Evening Standard Reporter: New York, Monday

The Battle of the Book, Death of a President, continued today with revelations that author William Manchester not only includes stories about friction between President Johnson and the late President Kennedy, but also about factionalism within the secret service and allegedly negligent FBI agents, Dallas police, and secret service men.

Manchester defended his book yesterday in a statement in which he said President Kennedy would have "wanted his countrymen to know the truth of those terrible days." A publishing company executive who has a copy of the manuscript said today that it contains a number of examples of alleged incompetence or neglect among those who guarded Mr. Kennedy the day he was killed.

Secret Service split

This source, who refused to permit use of his name, said: "The book also describes a split in the Secret Service which broke out shortly after the assassination. Some of the men were convinced their obligation was to the murdered president. Others were equally certain their first duty was to his successor."

"It was one of these Secret Service groups which ordered Mr. Johnson aboard the Air Force aeroplane in Dallas where he was sworn in as President and then flown, along with the widow, the body of her husband, and presidential aides, to Washington."

The New York Times reports the same source said the book also went into details about alleged ineptitude of FBI agents. "Manchester names everybody and he has the quotes to back it up," the source added.

The book also reports on the inability of Robert Kennedy and Mr. Johnson to communicate directly with each other.

President Johnson had held



JACKIE KENNEDY

back from moving into the White House, but tried to get space there formerly occupied by President Kennedy's aides for his assistants.

'Boorishness'

This was seized upon by the Kennedy contingent as an illustration of Mr. Johnson's boorishness.

Then, when President Johnson conveyed to Robert Kennedy that he was planning to address a joint session of Congress four days after the assassination, to show there was no disruption of Government functioning, another disagreement arose. Mr. Kennedy considered this date far too soon and an example of Johnson's desire to seize power without concern for good taste.

Even the question of where President Kennedy should be buried became a subject for heated differences. Some of the Kennedy family wanted him buried in his home state of Massachusetts, and some members of the Government argued in favour of Arlington National Cemetery.

The dispute was resolved when Mrs. Kennedy decided her husband would have favoured Arlington.

The source said the book shows that "Mrs. Kennedy made about 90 per cent of the decisions about the funeral and behaved with incredible courage."

A spokesman for Look magazine said today that the editors of the magazine had decided to go ahead with publication of the first instalment on January 10, despite present efforts to prevent it.

● The New York Times reported that in Washington, Senator Edward M. Kennedy charged that Manchester "now intends to go ahead in violation of the word of his agreement, the spirit of his arrangements and despite the pain he knows it will give Mrs. Kennedy."

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