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A Correction Holds Up Manchester's Book

Production of William Manchester's book, "The Death of a President," was halted for several days last week to correct an error, says Evan Thomas, vice president of Harper & Row, publishers of the book.

The correction, Thomas said yesterday, resulted from Manchester's account of the actions of Maj. Gen. Chester V. Clifton Jr., military aide to President Kennedy. Clifton is now retired.

Manchester had written that Clifton, after the assassination in Dallas, first called the White House and asked that Mrs. Clifton and Mrs. Kenneth O'Donnell be informed their husbands were safe, rather than immediately handling the military situation involved.

Manchester had written: "The General's order of priorities was staggering. Only after wives had been reassured could he deal with the possibility of a plot against the United States."

Thomas said Clifton, a longtime friend, informed him that the story was incorrect—that Clifton had made an earlier phone call to the White House which dealt with military and security aspects.

Said Thomas: "When I learned that he (Clifton) had done his job, I believed him. So we changed it. Once we learned the truth we were damned anxious to use it."

Thomas said the change meant removing several pages, reprinting them and replacing them in the as yet unbound books.

Thomas said that 100,000 copies had to be corrected.

The original version appeared in the second installment of Look magazine's serialization of the book.