

Seven Lots Withheld From Kennedy Auction

JFK's Children Still At Odds With Seller Over Several Personal Items

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More than 500 artifacts from the life of John F. Kennedy are to go on sale today at a New York auction that has sparked bitter disputes between a collector and both the Kennedy family and the federal government.

After a week of negotiations that threatened to halt the auction, Robert L. White agreed late Monday night to withdraw seven lots and turn them over to the National Archives, which claims they are federal property.

They include a highly valued Oval Office writing table prominently featured in the Guernsey's auction house catalogue, the telegram from Lyndon Johnson congratulating Kennedy on winning the 1960 Democratic nomination and memos in which the president mulls Cold War strategies. Each item is said to be worth thousands.

A standoff continued last night between White and the Kennedy family over several other more personal items, including two hand-written journals and a briefcase the president carried the day he was assassinated.

An attorney for White said he expected the two sides to reach a resolution before the auction. "It only makes sense for Mr. White to put these items, these claims, behind him," Robert Adler said.

Guernsey's officials said the auction, which they expect to draw throngs of Camelot fanatics and earn several million dollars, would not be hurt by the loss of the disputed lots.

Controversy has swirled around the auction

See KENNEDY, D9, Col. 1



This Oval Office writing table is among the Kennedy items to have been sold at auction today that will instead be turned over to the National Archives.

BY GUERNSEY'S VIA REUTERS

KENNEDY, From D1

since it was announced late last year. The Kennedy children—who themselves reaped several million dollars with the auction of their mother's estate two years ago—quickly denounced the Guernsey sale, calling it an affront to their father's memory.

Though nearly 70 different collectors have consigned memorabilia to the sale, most of the attention has focused on the items offered by White, a former salesman from Catonsville who has amassed a vast and celebrated collection private of Kennedyana.

White inherited many, though

tion, added in a statement that Lincoln's "obsession with President Kennedy's possessions and writings led her to the delusion that even the most personal effects, letters and most significant historical writings were hers to keep or give away. They never were."

The Kennedys have demanded several auction items, including two hand-written journals the then-congressman kept of his 1951 tour of Eastern Europe, an Hermes black leather briefcase and two wallets, White's attorney said.

Kennedy and Schlossberg also are asking White for a Saint Christopher's medal—a piece not offered in the auction—that the president

not all, of the 10,000 items in his collection from Evelyn Lincoln, Kennedy's personal secretary of 12 years and herself an avid collector.

Famous for her devotion to the president, Lincoln—who died in 1995—saved almost every doodle or scrap of paper Kennedy discarded. White says Lincoln received many more personal relics of the president from Kennedy's widow.

But in a scathing letter released this week, Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg and John Kennedy Jr. said Lincoln "took advantage" of the family by saving numerous personal items without permission.

Paul Kirk, an attorney for the John F. Kennedy Library Founda-

is believed to have been carrying when he was assassinated, Adler said.

They also want two medical prescriptions for Kennedy that originally were offered for sale but which White willingly withdrew after the family complained on grounds of poor taste.

Archives officials first stepped forward last week to lay claim to a separate list of items they said were public property or historically significant. In negotiations with White, Archives officials agreed to let White keep several items they had sought, including the stereo system Kennedy traveled with and numerous documents.

Instead, they received a more limited selection, including a drop-leaf table on which the president signed important papers in the Oval Office, and 20 documents considered historic, three of which are considered classified.

They include:

- The "Dear Jack" telegram from Johnson, in which Kennedy's unsuccessful rival for the nomination and eventual running mate promises his support.
- Memos from Kennedy to his secretaries of state and defense, including early musings on Vietnam and Cold War foreign policy.
- A leather-bound briefing book for Kennedy's historic 1961 summit

with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in Vienna.

- A daily 14-item to-do list in which the president reminded himself "Get Canadians to change interest rates."

White also agreed to allow the Archives to make high-quality photocopies of more than 100 other documents of lesser historical significance before they are sold at auction.

Neither auction officials nor lawyers on either side would say which documents were considered classified. Auction house president Arlan Ettinger said he was mystified as to how the documents in question had any bearing on national security.

"But if the government deems it worthy of protection," he said, "I'm more than willing to help."