

Last Manchester Episode Draws Schlesinger Fire

The fourth and final installment of *Look* magazine's serialization of "The Death of a President" today stirred a new controversy—this time between author William Manchester and historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

Schlesinger took issue with a claim by Manchester in the *Look* version — due on the stands today — that he had discussed within 24 hours of the Kennedy assassination the possibility of replacing President Johnson with Robert Kennedy as the 1964 Democratic presidential candidate.

Schlesinger a member of President Kennedy's inner circle of advisors, called the Manchester account "a melodramatic distortion of a wholly academic conversation" and said the actual incident was "unaccompanied by any urging that President Johnson be replaced . . . or by any supposition that he would be superseded by Robert Kennedy in 1964."

Manchester writes: "Schlesinger wondered whether Lyndon Johnson should be his party's candidate in the coming election. He conferred with Democratic National Chairman John Bailey, asking him whether it would be possible to deny the new President the nomination."

Manchester says Bailey answered it might be technically feasible but would lose the party the election.

Then Manchester quotes another Kennedy aide, John Kenneth Galbraith, as saying Schlesinger "was dwelling on the possibility of a ticket in 1961 headed by Robert Kennedy and

Hubert Humphrey."

Manchester also claims that an inadvertent late arrival by Robert Kennedy at Johnson's first cabinet meeting was viewed by the President as an intentional snub that ruined the effect of Johnson's remarks to the gathering.

"Clearly, Johnson regarded the late President's brother as a formidable obstacle," the author adds.

Manchester also writes that then Acting Attorney General Katzenbach labeled a Johnson idea to have a Texas Commission, composed entirely of Texans, investigate the assassination as a "ghastly mistake."

Katzenbach went to Abe Fortas, then a Washington attorney, and suggested the sort of investigation later led by Supreme Court Justice Warren, Manchester says.

The possibility that the assassination may have been the work of a conspiracy, a theory intensified by Jack Ruby's slaying of Lee Harvey Oswald, led Johnson to agree to a Secret Service suggestion that Johnson not walk behind the gun carriage bearing Kennedy's body during the funeral, Manchester writes.

But the President later said Lady Bird told him he should march, "so I changed my mind."



ARTHUR SCHLESINGER
He's angry.

The *Look* serialization concludes with a letter from Mrs. Kennedy to then Soviet Premier Khrushchev, penned 10 days after Kennedy's death.

"You and he were adversaries," it says, "but you were allied in a determination that the world should not be blown up. You respected each other and could deal with each other. I know that President Johnson will make every effort to establish the same relationship with you . . . and he will need your help."