

William Manchester~~s~~ wrote "Death of a President" with the subtlety and grace of a back-alley fishmonger, the dedication of a professional sycophant, the faithfulness to fact and reality of Ananias and the pen of Croesus. In so doing he becomes a millionaire, and in so becoming fashioned a national scandal whose magnitude has been reduced by the personal bravery of Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy who, in filing suit against Manchester and his publishers faced the awful possibility of a public reliving of her great tragedy.

Mrs. Kennedy's suit disassociates the Kennedy name and prestige from the Manchester slush which has become the unofficial whitewash of the investigation of her husband's assassination. Had she not done this, when the full magnitude of Manchester's unfactual account of the assassination of the assassination was understood, it would have appeared that the late President's family had sponsored and promulgated a false explanation of his murder, resulting in a clamorous calumny of unimaginably proportions.

All of this is lost in the sensation of Manchester's political scatology with which his work is first introduced in Look's serialization. When the jet-set thinking of the press and commentators vaporizes and ~~leaves~~ through the fog the ooze of the lickspittle is apparent, there will still be a great shame because of the Kennedy origin of Manchester's <sup>MULTI-</sup> million-dollar malaise.

But it will no longer carry the Kennedy imprint. The suit makes clear, as had Manchester in his foreward and Look in its afterthought footnote, that Manchester does not speak for the Kennedy family and does not enunciate their doctrine or belief.

For all of this, after his self-inspired political scurrilities and the execrable bad taste of the <sup>per intimate</sup> personal secrets he uses as journalistic skills to sell his rewriting of history, not a single important voice was raised to call him a "literary scavenger". That epithet, coined by Manchester's first victim, Texas Governor John Connally, is reserved for those who, like me, say we have not been told the

truth about the assassination by the government.

It is somehow decent and respectable for Manchester to become a millionaire from his political pornography. But those who avoid his slime and at personal cost insist on fact, as total and untainted as man can make it, are accused of indecency.