

Talks Adjourned On Final Accord For JFK Book

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NEW YORK, Dec. 22.—

Negotiations over William Manchester's book "The Death of a President" adjourned Thursday night without any indication whether any progress had been made or when the talks might be resumed.

Lawyers for Manchester, Mrs. John F. Kennedy and Harper &

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Row, which intends to publish the book in April, conferred for several hours in an effort to reach a settlement of Mrs. Kennedy's remaining litigation against the controversial account of the assassination of the President.

The meetings, which took place in the office of Mrs. Kennedy's attorney, Simon H. Rifkind, followed an accord Wednesday night with Look magazine that removed or modified a dozen passages relating to the personal life of the late President's wife and her two children. In return, Mrs. Kennedy withdrew her suit against Cowles Communications, Inc., publishers of Look.

EXTENSION GRANTED

New York State Supreme Court Justice Saul S. Streit granted the parties an extension until next Tuesday to answer Mrs. Kennedy's allegations. Justice Streit was known to be ready to push the deadline back even farther in order to facilitate an out-of-court settlement.

It was learned Thursday, meanwhile, that Mrs. Kennedy and her children, Caroline and John, Jr., are booked on a flight to Antigua, British West Indies, on Dec. 26.

There were some indications that the accord with Look, calling for the deletion of 1600 words from the 80,000-word four-part serialization by the magazine, was concluded without the full approval of Manchester and his lawyer, Carleton G. Eldridge, Jr.

Eldridge was kept informed by telephone as the pact between the Kennedy family and

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Cowles was hammered out, section-by-section. At least three proposed drafts of a joint announcement were prepared until, finally, William Attwood, Cowles' editor-in-chief, prepared his own statement for the press.

Afterwards, Attwood was quoted as saying: "Did you see that Rifkind push me out of my seat? Do you know what those people would have done to us if we let them get on first? This way Look makes the announcement. They'd have killed us if we'd have let them put us on second."

Rifkind later recalled to a friend how Attwood had rushed out of the room. He denied that he had pushed him aside to gain the spotlight before the emplaced microphones and television cameras.

On leaving Rifkind's law offices, Attwood was further quoted as saying: "We gave up some slush. A little gingerbread off the top. But the structure is intact."

The editorial deal with Look was concluded over two days in conference between six of Look's top editors, including Attwood and Gardner (Mike) Cowles, the editorial chairman, and Richard N. Goodwin, a former special assistant to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.

Goodwin kept Mrs. Kennedy periodically informed of which changes had been agreed to. The widow read the Manchester text for the first time last Saturday at a session with Attwood and Cowles' lawyer, David W. Peck.

TEARFUL DEPARTURE

Attwood quoted her as saying: "Bill, I had better leave you some cigarettes because you and Dick Goodwin have a lot of work to do." She was later reported, to Attwood's great surprise, as having left the session on the verge of tears.

Attwood and Goodwin first became acquainted when they

shared a room as campaign workers during John F. Kennedy's Presidential drive in 1960. Attwood later served two years as Mr. Kennedy's Ambassador to Guinea and Kenya. He has written a book about his experiences, entitled "The Reds and the Blacks," due to be published by Harper & Row next spring.

None of the episodes and anecdotes excised from the Look text dealt with the Kennedy-Johnson relationship. Mrs. Kennedy, however, has obliquely referred to Manchester's analysis of the transfer of power as unfair to Mr. Johnson and as an inaccurate recital of history.

In the initial draft, Manchester's opening passage was an anecdote that reflected unfavorably upon Mr. Johnson. At the suggestion of two Kennedy friends and Evan Thomas, the book's editor at Harper's, the passage was shifted to another portion of the 300,000-word book.

The two Kennedy readers who decided, with Thomas, to change the opening were John Seigenthaler, editor of the Nashville Tennessean, and Edwin O. Guthman, national editor of the Los Angeles Times.

The shifted passage, while unflattering to Mr. Johnson, was described by informants as not objectionable and unrelated to the assassination.

MORE CUTS SOUGHT

Although Harper's said it was willing to make all the changes accepted by Look in the already much-edited manuscript, Mrs. Kennedy is known to be pressing for further deletions from personal material that was not earmarked for serialization.

Meanwhile, the West German illustrated magazine Stern announced in Hamburg that it would publish a complete and unabridged serialization of the book. The editor in chief, Henri Nannen, said Stern was not bound by any agreement between Look and Mrs. Kennedy.

Nannen said Stern had paid \$72,500 for the German serial rights, and the contract between Stern and Look did not provide for any changes or cutting of the text.

FAMILY'S STATEMENT

After consulting with attorneys for Mrs. Kennedy, a source close to the family said:

"We do not know anything about the Stern statement except Look represented to us that they had made no agreement which permitted Stern or any other publication to which Look had sold rights to publish any text other than that which appears in Look magazine."

A Look spokesman said later, "It is our responsibility. We will take every appropriate action."

He did not elaborate, saying "the statement speaks for itself."

Look, which paid Manchester \$665,000 for serial rights, sold foreign rights to a number of publications.

GERMAN LAW CITED

In Hamburg, the magazine Stern said it did not think Mrs. Kennedy could block West German publication through court action, since only that which is probably false or damaging to a person's honor can be prohibited under German law.

The magazine said neither of these grounds apply to the serialization, even though the political prestige of President Johnson might be injured by parts of the book.

"I can understand that Ser Robert Kennedy would like to avert this dispute (with President Johnson) for the sake of his political career, but this can be no reason for not reporting the complete, unmodified historical truth," Nannen commented.