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THE INSIDE STORY

Manchester vs. The Kennedys

Continued from Page 8 Sclesinger

to the Kennedy Memorial Library, turning suddenly to Robery Kennedy and saying: "I'll tell you one thing —I want to be the man who says how much I'm going to give to the Library, and nobody should tell me how much."

And as personal relations and evaluations altered under the stresses, Manchester, who not long before had offered to write speeches for Bobby Kennedy, at one time simply refused to see Kennedy at the Berkshire Hotel suite maintained by Look. Chagrined and frustrated, Bobby went around the corner, sat on the lobby stairs at the Waldorf Astoria and blurted: "Well, what do we do now?"

The use to be made of 10 hours of tape, during which Jackie Kennedy revealed her intimate recollections, will be discussed in detail in this series and is described by a friend of both sides as the keystone in the complex dispute.

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Manchester is pictured as knowing well that his lengthy interview with the President's widow, so soon after the tragedy, was intended only "for the 21st Century"—part of an extensive oral history program of the Kennedy years.

Yet the very fact that Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who conducted the early questioning of Mrs. Kennedy, turned over to Manchester the questioning about the assassination made it implicit to the author that he could draw on the tapes for his book.

But he did not tell Jacqueline, one participant in the controversy says, that he was using the material she believed was being sealed for future historians.

The Post will disclose that some of the "purple prose" of the original draft was considered by Manchester's editor to be insulting to both President Kennedy and President Johnson. The editor wrote that the author has "almost deprived the marvelous Irish politician of his miraculous self" and transformed the late President into "the child of Arthur and Guinevere."

It was some time after the text had become a source of concern to others, the account discloses, that Jackie first was alerted to the need for revisions by her press secretary, Pamela Turnure Timmins, who read the manuscript while Jackie was in Hawaii. It was a memorandum from Pamela Timmins, who today cannot discuss the book without giving way to tears, that marked the beginning of Jackie's concern.

Other principals say, however, that Jackie's first objections came only after Manchester sold domestic serialization rights to Look for $520,000, plus $145,000 for world rights.

The Manchester's thought the fight "all goes back to Jackie. Bobby released the book—but Jackie was angry at the high price, and she just blew up."

Throughout the controversy there was an amazing discounting of the value of Manchester's book—until magazine editors were given copies and reacted almost physically to the power of Manchester's account of the assassination.

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Although the idea for the book was conceived by the Kennedy family and the late President's associates largely because of their knowledge that "a number of other writers" were planning similar volumes, there was little awareness of its potential cash value to the author.

"We thought maybe $100,000," says one who was involved in the story from the beginning. "Pierre (Salinger) was thinking maybe $200,000." But no one, in or out of the publishing industry, saw it as the literary gold mine of the era.

Partly because of this under-evaluation of the project, the memorandum of understanding between Robert Kennedy and Manchester was drawn "without lawyers or persons skilled in the publishing field," a principal recalls. It was an omission to be regretted later.

President Kennedy at news conference.

The Post interviews make clear, however, that while awareness of the book's value may have come late, there was earlier awareness of the need to publish it as soon as possible. Author Jim Bishop, for one, had made inquiries to the Kennedy family in connection with the account he had been planning.

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Publishers, seeking to advance the publication date, told the Kennedy family: "In all fairness to Manchester, his book *has* to come out first."

And Robert Kennedy, who originally had seen the book as "being put away for perhaps as much as 25 or 50 years," acquiesced, but ruled out 1968 as an election year and 1970 because "it would look like something turned out just to help me, with all the talk of running for the Presidency in 1972." So the decision was for 1967.

These political considerations, as opposed to Jackie Kennedy's reservations over passages she considers violated her personal feelings and those of her children, gave rise to much of the acrimony.

Bobby Kennedy's friends scanned the galleys with his interests admittedly in mind, but Pamela Timmins, herself, in a letter to editor Evan Thomas, suggested alterations which went beyond considerations of Jacqueline Kennedy's privacy into other areas.

Manchester got galleys with suggested changes flagged by paper clips. With this was a letter from Jackie saying the changes were needed for the sake of her children.

"The first six changes were about Lyndon Johnson's political career," the author told Murray Kempton. "Did that involve the feelings of the children?"

By the account of others, however, "about 30 of the 36 changes were references to personal things about Jackie.

The sale of the serialization rights, which came immeasurably to complicate the dispute, was distressing to Jackie but completed with the knowledge, and even the assistance of Bobby Kennedy.

Shortly before the frenetic weekend when final bids were due on the now-valued property, with one editor poised by a phone in a hot room while a rival was sailing off Montauk, Bobby Kennedy gave encouragement to a Look editor and told him he was willing to help if he could.

But later, an editor says, "It became Jackie's show."

The Post was told that Jackie, after insisting that serialization be canceled entirely by Look, twice gave assurances, once through an emissary to Manchester, another time in a letter to Gardner Cowles of Look, that everything would be all right and she would not sue.

And Robert Kennedy told a friend in Washington there would be no lawsuit because "the family would look like book-burners."

But demands from Jacqueline for changes persisted and at the height of the controversy Manchester was invited to Hyannis Port for a weekend.

The Post was told that Manchester assured Jacqueline all the changes she was demanding would be made. By phone the galley proofs were ordered flown to Hyannis Port immediately.

The day passed pleasantly, talks were friendly, there was a late-afternoon sail and a swim—during which Manchester wondered if he was going to drown and if he did what would happen to the book.

Manchester left for home, stopping on the way at the airport where, The Post was told, he gave orders that the galleys be flown right back to New York without the Kennedys seeing them.

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As on-again, off-again progress toward agreement on changes continued, the Kennedys are pictured as increasingly bewildered by Manchester's attitude. Promises were given that changes would be made—but nothing happened, they said.

Bobby Kennedy said that the Harper editor in charge of the book, the same who handled John Kennedy's books, failed to tell them he had no control over the editing of the Look serialization.

At another meeting with Manchester, Kennedy felt he had received a promise of a revision, but was concerned by Manchester's emotional involvement with the story and his repeated protestations that he was "sick."

The lawsuit, which almost everyone intimately involved on both sides considered unthinkable, was decided upon by Jackie after a turn-around flight to Europe by Cass Canfield, executive chairman of Harper & Row, expressly to talk Manchester into meeting her demands. Canfield, before leaving, assured her the alterations would be made.

The Post account will tell of the London session which was so tense that no one could eat breakfast, at which Canfield asked Manchester to meet Jacqueline's latest demands.

Manchester, "in a state of shocked dismay, and angry as well," dug in his heels and refused to budge past a certain point. Canfield returned unhappily to New York and wrote Jackie a brief note about his transatlantic mission.

"One paragraph was about Book-of-the-Month Club sales; the other two said that he was sorry but Mr. Manchester had not agreed to the requested changes," an intermediary recalls. "That's the point when Jackie decided to sue."

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Others observe that by that time—last November —the Kennedys could have obtained all the changes they wanted. The decision to sue, they hold, was to establish proof that the book no longer had the Kennedy seal of approval. They wanted to shake loose from the political embarrassment.

Throughout the complex negotiations, there was the growing feeling by the Kennedys that their adversaries were getting tougher, standing their ground against changes more stubbornly, because they felt certain the family would not sue.

There was miscalculation on both sides.

"They thought it would be too politically dangerous for me if the whole thing was brought into court," Robert Kennedy says.

But Jackie, too, felt that the other side would not chance a court action and would give in.

She told Manchester at Hyannis Port:

"Unless I run off with Eddie Fisher, the people will think that anyone who is in a fight with me is a rat."

On Dec. 14, Jacqueline filed notice of a suit, "horrible as a trial will be."

TOMORROW: The Full Story Begins.