

LOOK ACTS TO SUE STERN OVER BOOK

Breach of Contract Is Laid to German Magazine

By PHILIP SHABECOFF

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BONN, Jan. 14—William Attwood, editor in chief of Cowles Communications, said today that Look magazine would take legal action against Stern for what he called the West German magazine's breach of contract in publishing the uncut version of "The Death of a President."

Mr. Attwood made his announcement after he and William vanden Heuvel, an attorney for and friend of the Kennedy family, held meetings last night and this morning with officials of Stern, seeking to persuade them to make deletions from the magazine articles.

Stern bought from Look the German rights to the William Manchester book about President Kennedy.

Last night, Mr. vanden Heuvel gave Henri Nannen, chief editor of Stern, a message from Mrs. John F. Kennedy asking that the desired cuts be made. The message read:

"You know that the passages it is desired to have deleted from the manuscript deal only with personal feelings. They are in no way essential to a record of my husband's Administration.

"Every other country with a devotion to freedom of the press has recognized this. I should not think that Germany, always at the center of President Kennedy's concern, would wish to be the only one to ignore the private feelings of a wife and the innocent griefs of two small children."

Stern published the first installment of the book last Monday. It contained only one major passage that Mrs. Kennedy wanted cut, a letter she wrote to her husband in 1963. The next Stern installment, which contains the second half of the first Look installment, will come out on Monday.

Mr. vanden Heuvel said by telephone from Hamburg today that Stern officials refused to make any concessions on the request for deleting material.

"We are not looking for censorship," he said. "Anybody with good taste and editorial judgment would have made the

changes themselves."

The American lawyer said that Stern had got itself "out on a limb with its ridiculous statements" and thus believed it could not change its stance at this point.

Mr. Nannen has said that the desired cuts are of historical interest. The Stern official said that he would not print anything he thought would hurt Mrs. Kennedy personally.

Mr. Nannen has also said that

the reason the Kennedy family wanted certain passages deleted was that they would be harmful to the political aspirations of Senator Robert F. Kennedy of New York.

One of the charges in the planned legal action against Stern is that the German magazine broke its agreement not to publish any of the text before Jan. 15.

Mr. Attwood said by telephone, "I think we have a good case."

In a statement after his fruitless meetings with officials of Stern, Mr. vanden Heuvel said: "The major deletions refer to private moments that no decent person would want to transgress in the sorrow of Mrs. Kennedy. There are not now, and there never was in any of our discussions, any suggestions for cuts or changes that have any political implications regarding Senator Robert F. Kennedy."

Mr. vanden Heuvel said he had offered to review with Mr. Nannen on the spot all changes requested. If Mr. Nannen did not agree that the changes affected only the privacy of Mrs. Kennedy, Mr. vanden Heuvel said he would then take Stern's objections back to New York.

Mr. vanden Heuvel also offered to subject the proposed cuts to review by five or 10 West German editors chosen by mutual consent, to review the disputed passages, and pass judgment on their tastes.

Stern rejected the proposals and had no counterproposals to offer, Mr. vanden Heuvel said.

He added that Mrs. Kennedy had not wanted the legal action proposed by Look, nor had the American magazine itself.

"But we are hopeful that the rights, decency and private feelings that the laws of all other nations have protected can find sanctuary in Germany as well," Mr. vanden Heuvel declared.

2 Other Magazines Cited

HAMBURG, Germany, Jan. 14 (UPI)—Henri Nannen said in a statement today that the French weekly magazine Paris Match had appeared on newsstands with the serialization Jan. 9. The Italian magazine Epoca published it Jan. 11, the editor said.

Mr. Nannen said that William Attwood had told him the Kennedy family wanted 7,000 words deleted from the book.

"The more Mrs. Kennedy's advisers are now talking about those cuts, the better it is to publish the unabridged text and leave it to the judgment of the public whether good taste and respect for Mrs. Kennedy are violated," Mr. Nannen said.