

AS "THE BOOK" APPEARS: A CLOSE LOOK AT THE FACTS

New controversy is swirling about the book, "The Death of a President." When a first installment appeared, it was quickly challenged on grounds of accuracy and taste. One highly placed witness called it a "propaganda instrument." This is a report on what the facts show.

Dissension rocked the Democratic Party after publication of the opening chapters of a book, commissioned by the Kennedy family, about the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy during a political tour of Texas.

There was nothing especially new or unexpected in the first installment of "The Death of a President," by William Manchester, as published in condensed form in "Look" magazine.

"Leaks" to press. Much of the material, including some racy portions censored by the Kennedys during last-minute litigation, had been "leaked" to the press in advance by various sources.

With the controversial chronicle out in the open, however, other authorities with first-hand knowledge of the events challenged the taste and accuracy of the account. Mr. Manchester relied heavily on information provided by the Kennedy family and friends, often without reference to conflicting views.

Governor John B. Connally of Texas, who was seriously wounded during the assassination of President Kennedy, called the Manchester work "an astonishing propaganda instrument." Mr. Connally said he was going to publish his own memoirs—to correct the record for future historians.

Governor John J. McKeithen, of neighboring Louisiana, said flatly: "[Robert] Kennedy is trying to destroy [President] Johnson, and that's what Manchester's book is about."

President Johnson remained silent.

Senator Robert F. Kennedy, of New York, also refused comment. However, he made unsuccessful efforts to have changes made in European editions.

Henri Nannen, editor of "Der Stern," Europe's biggest illustrated weekly, which is publishing the uncut story contained in the original manuscript, said the Senator's efforts were dictated by "political considerations."

Mr. Nannen told his readers in a foreword that the unfavorable picture of President Johnson given in the Manchester book could spoil Mr. Johnson's re-election chances, as well as Senator Kennedy's political prospects. The editor said Mr. Kennedy "wants to become President in 1972."

The book deals with the same historic event as did the Warren Commission which conducted an official inquiry into the death of President Kennedy, backed by the full investigatory resources of the U. S. Government.

Mr. Manchester's account, however, differs in many important particulars from the findings of the Warren Commission, although he concurs in the main conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald was the "lone assassin."

Also, Mr. Manchester's book echoes thoughts expressed by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., in his 1965 volume about the Kennedy Administration, "A Thousand Days." Mr. Schlesinger, a former vice chairman of Americans for Democratic Action, acted as a consultant to Mr. Manchester.

The document commissioned by the Kennedy family raises these controversial issues:

POLITICAL FEUD

Mr. Manchester makes it appear that the only reason for President Kennedy's ill-fated trip to Texas was to settle a political feud among warring Democrats, which Lyndon Johnson should have been able to take care of in his own home State.

But Governor Connally said: "It's common knowledge that this was part of a series of political trips of President Kennedy's own making, planned in the wake of polls reflecting [his] declining popularity."

Another Texan who participated in the arrangements said Mr. Kennedy



—USN&WR Photo

"Look" is now serializing book after making deletions Kennedys demanded.

hoped to raise money in Texas for his 1964 re-election campaign. He estimated that if a final \$100-a-plate dinner had come off as planned in Austin, the national coffers of the Democratic Party would have gained half a million dollars.

The Warren Commission found that the President—among other roles—went to Texas as a "prospective candidate for re-election."

The Commission said Mr. Kennedy "looked forward to public appearances, which he personally enjoyed."

Mr. Manchester pictures Vice President Johnson as being politically impotent in 1963, because "he lacked a power base."

The "blazing feud" in Texas, according to the author, was between Governor Connally, identified as a "conservative," and Senator Ralph W. Yarborough, described as a "liberal."

Governor Connally retorted: "To the extent that there was any significant argument prior to the trip, it was between the then Vice President Johnson and Senator Yarborough, both of whom were readily available in Washington."

Reporters in Texas confirm this view. Only three months before the President's



Mr. Manchester's book implies that reason for President Kennedy's trip was to settle feud between Democrats, Senator Yarborough [left] and Governor Connally [behind JFK]. Mr. Connally disagrees, says that JFK came to improve his image.



—Wide World Photos

President Kennedy, according to Mr. Manchester, wanted Mrs. Kennedy to look her best in Texas to "show those Texans what good taste really is."

trip, Senator Yarborough was making speeches attacking Mr. Johnson as "a power-mad Texas politician."

Since Mr. Johnson became President, they say, Senator Yarborough has "switched his attack to Governor Connally," while relations with Mr. Johnson have become "more amicable."

The President helped block Governor Connally in 1964 from putting up a strong primary opponent against the "liberal" Senator.

Mr. Manchester points out that at the 1960 Democratic Convention in Los Angeles, "when the rest of the State party rallied to Johnson's favorite-son candidacy," Senator Yarborough supported John Kennedy for President.

"The Washington Evening Star" reported January 9: "Some Texas conservatives . . . are convinced that Robert Kennedy is going for the presidential nomination next year, unless President Johnson's stock goes up substantially from its present level."

Governor Connally is said to believe that Senator Yarborough would desert Mr. Johnson in favor of Robert Kennedy for the presidential nomination, if it ever came to a showdown.

TEXAS WOMEN

Mr. Manchester relates an incident which, he says, took place in the White House before the Texas trip. As Mr. Manchester tells it, President Kennedy

"was determined that his wife should look her best in Texas." The President is quoted as telling his wife:

"There are going to be all these rich Republican women at that lunch, wearing mink coats and diamond bracelets. Be simple—show those Texans what good taste really is."

According to "The New York Daily News" of Dec. 23, 1966, the original wording in the Manchester manuscript was: "Show those cheap Texas broads what good taste really is." According to "The New York Times" of Jan. 8, 1967, the phrase was "those rich Texas broads."

The word "Texans" was substituted during Mrs. Kennedy's legal bout with the publishers, according to New York sources.

Mr. Manchester was said to have obtained his information from 10 hours of tape-recording sessions with Mrs. Kennedy at her home.

JFK WARNINGS

The book claims that five prominent Democrats warned President Kennedy against going to Dallas—the late Ambassador Adlai Stevenson, Senator J. W. Fulbright of Arkansas, Senator—now the Vice President—Hubert Humphrey, Representative Hale Boggs of Louisiana, and Byron Skelton, former Democratic National Committeeman from Texas.

The Vice President, however, has said he has no recollection that the matter ever came up. Mr. Boggs declared his warning was about getting involved in Texas politics—not a matter of physical danger.

The "warnings" allegedly were based on two prior incidents—when Mr. Johnson and his wife were pushed by a crowd at a political rally in Dallas in 1960, and when Mr. Stevenson was heckled by demonstrators on Oct. 24, 1963.

Out of a city with a metropolitan-area population of more than 1 million people, police estimated not more than 1,000 were involved in the anti-Johnson demonstration, and only 100 in the incident involving Mr. Stevenson.

Violence elsewhere. Similar demonstrations, with more violence, have taken place in other American cities, including racial disorders in New York, Philadelphia, Newark, Rochester, Cleveland, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara was forced out of a car, and shouted down when he tried to speak, by student demonstrators at Harvard University on Nov. 7, 1966.

Repeated demonstrations have taken place at the University of California at Berkeley, including a massive student

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revolt Dec. 2-3, 1964, when 773 persons were arrested.

Mr. Manchester blames Governor Connally inferentially for President Kennedy's death in Dallas because the Trade Mart was chosen as a luncheon site. Otherwise, the author wrote, "The Dallas motorcade would not have passed beneath the Texas School Book Depository," where the assassin was lurking with his mail-order rifle.

But the Warren Commission said: "Kenneth O'Donnell [special assistant to President Kennedy] made the final decision to hold the luncheon at the Trade Mart," instead of one of two other possible locations.

Also, the Commission pointed out that Governor Connally was seriously wounded by the same assassin while riding in the President's car along the motorcade route in Dallas that fateful November day.

DALLAS CRIME

Mr. Manchester makes much out of the "climate" in Dallas, and its presumed relationship to the assassination. He states:

"Texas led the United States in homicide, and 'Big D' led Texas. There were more murders in Dallas each month than in all England. Furthermore, nearly 3 out of every 4 slayings (72 per cent) were by gunfire. Big D had no requirement for firearms registration. Before November 22, there had been 110 murders committed in Dallas in 1963."

This is a repetition of a theme first expressed in Mr. Schlesinger's book, but with slightly altered crime statistics.

Mr. Schlesinger wrote that Dallas was "a city of violence and hysteria, and its atmosphere was bound to affect people who were already weak, suggestible, and themselves filled with chaos and hate."

What are the facts? Here's what the FBI's "Uniform Crime Reports" show:

In 1963, there were 113 murders in Dallas—110 of them up to November 22. Of all arrested for murder, 71 per cent were Negroes. Of all homicide victims, 69 per cent were Negroes. These figures do not suggest that crime in Dallas is the doing of "Texas gunslingers" or "right-wing extremists."

Throughout the nation, in cities of more than 250,000 population, the numbers of criminal homicides recorded in 1963 were: New York, 548; Chicago, 364; Los Angeles, 200; Baltimore, 142;



—Wide World Photo

Mr. Manchester blames Governor Connally for choice of luncheon site which led motorcade past assassin. But the Governor was also shot as he rode with JFK.

Philadelphia, 125; Detroit, 125; and Dallas, 113.

On the basis of crimes per 100,000 population—which law-enforcement officers say is the only fair basis of comparison—Texas had a homicide rate of 7.3 in 1963.

Seven other States had higher rates—Alabama, 10.2; South Carolina, 10; Georgia, 9.4; Florida, 8.2; Nevada, 7.9; North Carolina, 7.8, and Arkansas, 7.4.

Also, a dozen other cities across the country had a higher murder rate than Dallas, with 10.1 per 100,000 population. Several other Texas cities had higher rates, including Big Spring, 24, and Amarillo, 12.7.

In England, criminal statistics put out by the Home Office showed 142 murders in 1963, compared with 113 in Dallas. However, an official of the Justice Department said the actual number of homicides in England may have been higher, since the British do not keep their crime statistics the same way they are kept in the U. S.

Dallas, at the time of the Kennedy assassination, had an ordinance against carrying concealed weapons. Only seven out of the 50 States in 1963 had firearms-registration laws, according to the Justice Department.

THE ASSASSIN

Jacqueline Kennedy reportedly said, upon learning that Oswald was the "lone assassin," that her husband "didn't even have the satisfaction of being killed for civil rights. It had to be some silly little Communist. . . . It even robs his death of any meaning." This is another passage said to have been censored out of the original manuscript by Mrs. Kennedy's agents.

In the first installment of the Manchester book, it does not come across clearly that Oswald was a self-avowed Marxist who had been absorbing Communist literature from age 15.

There is only incidental reference to the fact that Oswald tried to kill Maj. Gen. Edwin A. Walker, an active anti-Communist, on April 10, 1963—eight

months before the Kennedy assassination—in a carefully planned plot, even to burying his rifle afterward so that police dogs couldn't "sniff it out."

The Warren Report shows that Oswald "defected" to the Soviet Union, and lived there almost three years; tried to renounce his U. S. citizenship, and married a Russian woman; admired Fidel Castro's Communist regime in Cuba so much that he assumed an alias—"Hidell"—resembling the Cuban leader's name; and was seeking to return to the Soviet Union, via Cuba, shortly before the Kennedy assassination.

Birthplace: New Orleans. The Manchester account does not make it clear that Oswald, 24 years old at the time of his death, was not a native of Texas. He was born in New Orleans, and lived eight years, all told, in Louisiana.

Oswald got around a great deal, spending 74 months in Fort Worth, 37 months in Dallas, 33 months in the Soviet Union, 15 months in Japan, 18 months in New York City, and 13 months in California. The assassin returned to Dallas less than two months before President Kennedy was killed.

Instead, Mr. Manchester presents Oswald as a mental case, threatened by "paranoia" since childhood, who finally went "mad" while watching a World War II film on television, on the night before the assassination, because his wife had rejected him.

This lay theory finds no support in the official findings of the Warren Commission. Investigators found that Oswald and his wife, Marina, had engaged in repeated fights, with physical violence on both sides. They also had repeated separations, followed by reconciliations.

The Warren Commission called in psychiatrists to go over the entire pattern of Oswald's behavior and possible motivations. A member of the Commission's legal staff said:

"We didn't include this in the report, because it was too speculative. It had no probative value. With his characteristics, however, there was not a chance that Oswald would have been found to be legally insane." [END]