

W.J.T. 7/2/67

WHAT JOE KENNEDY WOULD HAVE DONE

By BOB CONSIDINE

World Journal Tribune Columnist

It boggles my brain when I try to figure out what turns the tantrums over the Manchester book would be taking today if Joseph P. Kennedy Sr. was not incapacitated by a stroke.

Behind the curtain that has fallen between himself and communication with the outside world must seethe frustration and anger fierce enough to create spontaneous combustion. But it is the fate of this once volcanic man to suffer in helpless silence the playing out of a seamy drama that has brought no credit to any of the principals.

The old saw about every action inducing a reaction does not apply to "The Death of a President." This book has succeeded in tarnishing the images of everyone it has touched, chiefly that of the woman who just a short time ago was voted the most admired person of her sex in all the world.

Jacqueline Kennedy did not step down from her pedestal daintily. She threw herself down.

CRAFTY AND TOUGH

Old Joe would have been in the thick of this fight. The guess here is that he would have charged ruggedly to the side of the family, blasted Manchester out of the ballpark, and offered to buy Look magazine and Harper & Row just to scrap them.

On the other hand, he might have restrained his daughter-in-law and his son, the senator, from making their belated moves to vitiate the personal and political passages in the script. Or taught them how to do this in a craftier or tougher way. Old Joe was both crafty and tough.

If Manchester and the assorted publishers bucked Old

Turn to Page 4



United Press International Photo

Bobby, Jack and Old Joe, one-time mastermind of the Kennedy clan

Manchester to Pen a P.S. On Day Kennedy Died

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By LARRY VAN GELDER

World Journal Tribune Staff

William Manchester intends to write an epilogue to his "Portrait of a President," the book about John F. Kennedy that led the Kennedy family to choose him to write the authorized account of the assassination, the controversial "The Death of a President."

According to reports in literary circles, the epilogue will give Manchester an opportunity to write without restriction about the day of President Kennedy's assassination and the

events of the following week, the first week of the Johnson administration.

Plans for the epilogue were confirmed by Arthur H. Thornhill Sr., president of the Boston publishing firm of Little, Brown & Co., publishers of "Portrait of a President."

Thornhill said "Portrait of a President" with the epilogue would not be reissued until after Harper & Row publishes the hard-cover version of "The Death of a President," an event scheduled for early April.

Asked about reports that the

epilogue would be 3,000 or 4,000 words in length, Thornhill said he did not know how long it would be. "It could be 3,000 words or 10,000 words," he said.

Thornhill said the epilogue would be written in an effort to bring "Portrait of a President," written before the assassination, up to date and would not be written with the intention of commercializing the dispute over Manchester's subsequent work.

Harper & Row was given permission to bring out the hard-cover version of "The Death of

Turn to Page 4

Continued from Page One

Joe in his prime he would have fought them to the hilt with all his power of sulphuric invective, his skills and the vast fortune he always tapped generously when he felt a cause or crusade warranted the tapping.

"How many states do you think Jack would have taken if he hadn't been a Catholic?" I asked Old Joe just after the 1960 election.

"Forty-eight!" he snapped testily.

A veteran photographer who was taking candid shots of him during that interview asked him to straighten him necktie. Old Joe obliged. The instant he touched the knot the photographer flashed a bulb.

One of the nation's richest men vaulted out of his office chair like a shell and, red of

face, cursed the photographer until the plaster shook. The poor man instinctively threw up a guard as if waiting to be whipped.

"Don't you ever do that again, you — —," Old Joe shouted when he cooled out a bit. "If you want a picture of me adjusting my tie you say to me 'I want a picture of you adjusting your tie.' But if you every try to trick me again, I swear to God I'll . . ."

RULED FAMILY

Old Joe ruled his family, dreamed of steering Joe Jr. into a seat in the House of Representatives, then on to the Senate and to the White House.

Joe Jr. had everything: Looks, intelligence, shrewdness, ambition and millions.

When Young Joe was killed in a heroic air mission over

Europe it was inevitable that Jack would step in the political box. JFK would have preferred to be a foreign correspondent, a writer, maybe even a professor at Harvard.

"But I never had a chance for any of those things after Joe died," he told me just after the 1956 convention, where he had lost his bid for the number two spot on the ticket headed by Adlai Stevenson. Estes Kefauver beat him out. Then he added reflectively, "if I had died after that bit in the Pacific, it would have been Bobby, with my father. If Bobby had gotten knocked out, Teddy."

John Fitzgerald Kennedy loved his father but in his own special way.

"My father is a Taft Democrat," he used to say. It broke Jack's heart not to be able to

communicate with his father, after the stroke.

What would the old champ be doing today, if God hadn't ordered him to hang up his glove? What iron-clad orders would he be issuing to the clan? No man can know because Old Joe is not able to issue those commands. But it seems unlikely that things would have turned out quite as disastrously for all concerned if he had been in charge. It is conceivable that he would have stood out in front of all the rest of them and taken the punishment himself, secure in the knowledge that he had absorbed bigger and better beatings from political and business foes in the golden years of his vibrant life.

I'm sure of one thing. He would have protected the memory of John Fitzgerald Kennedy a lot better than it has been

Author Plans P.S. On Day JFK Died

Continued from Page One

a President" under terms of an agreement reached with Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy after she filed suit to prevent publication because some of the material in Manchester's manuscript was objectionable to her.

MODIFICATIONS MADE

Harper & Row made modifications in the manuscript, as did Look magazine, publishing the serialized version. The dispute with the Kennedy family has reportedly left Manchester disgruntled, and writing the epilogue would give him an opportunity to deal with some aspects of the assassination for the first time without restraint.

During the dispute, Mrs. Kennedy made it clear that she objected to material that she considered personal and private. This included letters she sent the president while she was vacationing in Greece and material taken from Manchester's tape-recorded interviews

of her, particularly her thoughts in the aftermath of the assassination.

Under terms of a memorandum of understanding signed by Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and Manchester, the manuscript could not be published until the Senator and Mrs. Kennedy had given their approval.

fended for by either the widow or the late President's brothers. I would hazard the guess also that if Old Joe were operating on all eight cylinders, his daughter-in-law would never have been quoted in public as saying that anyone who combatted her opposition to the Manchester book would be regarded as a "rat" by the general public unless she in turn suddenly eloped with Eddie Fisher.

Whether by coincidence or design Fisher immediately announced his engagement to Connie Stevens.