

Manchester Says Jackie, RFK Bickering Raised Book Fuss

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WASHINGTON (AP) — William Manchester says differences of opinion between Mrs. John F. Kennedy and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy may account in part for the dispute over his book, "The Death of a President."

"... I think she was apparently blazing like a bonfire at Bob," the writer said, referring to an incident before the controversy erupted into public.

Manchester added yesterday that Kennedy "has a strong and admirable sense of family loyalty. When he learned that Mrs. Kennedy was distressed, then he tried to find another solution."

The author discussed his book on the NBC radio and television program, "Meet the Press."

AFTERWARD he told a reporter he is considering doing a book about this problems in writing the story of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. But he said he has been incapable of writing anything since July when he first heard reports of "discontent" among the Kennedys about his manuscript.

A spokesman for Sen. Kennedy said "No comment" when pressed for Kennedy's reaction to Manchester's statements.

The panel discussion also covered these points:

- References to President Johnson:

Manchester said his book is not critical of the President. "I was and still am very sympa-

thetic to President Johnson who, I think, behaved admirably," he said. "... If anything he ought to have taken over more rapidly than he did."

- An apparent contradiction of fact:

In his book, Manchester pictured Kenneth O'Donnell, appointments secretary to Kennedy, as pacing the corridor with his hands covering his ears during the swearing-in ceremony aboard the presidential airplane, Air Force One.

O'Donnell testified before the Warren Commission, however, that he was present at the rite. Last Friday, the Boston Globe published a photograph showing O'Donnell standing beside Mrs. Kennedy as Johnson took the oath.

Questioned as to this, Manchester replied, "... My account of what took place was based on interviews with 33 people and when a clear majority said that something happened then I must conclude that it did happen."

- A critical letter of last May 16:

Evan Thomas, editor-in-chief of Harper & Row, publishers of Manchester's book, wrote the letter and said the manuscript "is in part gratuitously and tastelessly insulting to Johnson."

Manchester, when questioned about the letter, said he never has seen it "and I will not believe it until I have seen the letter." He said his correspond-

ence with Thomas did not indicate that the editor held such a point of view, "so I am at a loss to explain it."

- The demand for 188 revisions in his manuscript:

The writer said a representative of Sen. Kennedy wanted 111 changes which were "purely political." A representative of Mrs. Kennedy proposed the other 77 and he described the deleted material as "very personal."

"In one case," Manchester said, "I was asked to rewrite my account of President Johnson's first cabinet meeting. To me this would have been a distortion of history. It was a threat to the integrity of my manuscript, and I refused."

- The role of two representatives:

When Manchester finished his manuscript, Kennedy asked two of his former government aides to read it. They were John Seigenthaler, editor of the Nashville Tennessean, and Edwin Guthman of the Los Angeles Times.

Manchester apparently referred to them when he said his difficulties "arose on lower levels when there were employees who knew that they would be answerable to the Kennedys and who were understandably overzealous in their suggestions."

- Revisions and Sen. Kennedy's "political future:"

Originally, Manchester said,

considerations of Kennedy's political future played no part in the suggested revisions. But he added:

"Afterward there came two waves of changes—the suggestion that 111 passages be deleted, these were clearly political. They were not made by the senator, who has not read the manuscript, but by one of his representatives. These I resisted."

Manchester said that in his view, Kennedy "liquidated" their memorandum of understanding, one passage of which read, "the final text shall not be published unless and until approved by Jacqueline Kennedy and Robert Kennedy." The senator has asserted that the author violated this agreement.

MANCHESTER said former President Dwight D. Eisenhower made a comment to him in which he said "he wished someone had done something of this sort after the assassination of President Lincoln."

The author said that the editing of the book did not damage its integrity. "I am confident that when the book appears," he said, "it will stand on its own and the controversy will recede into the past."