

Author Sick, Talks On Deletions Halt

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*Special to The Inquirer
And Washington Post*

MIDDLETOWN, Conn., Dec. 26.—William Manchester, author of the controversial book on President Kennedy's assassination, was hospitalized on Monday, suffering from the early stages of pneumonia.

Manchester's physician, Dr. Erwin F. Tracy, described the author's condition as critical.

The strain Manchester has been under for weeks during negotiations over the publication of his book, "The Death of a President," could have contributed to his condition, Tracy said.

72-HOUR WAIT

When Manchester was admitted to the hospital, Tracy said, his temperature was 104. Twelve hours later it was normal.

The doctor said that Manchester remained on the critical list but that the prognosis was good. He said physicians won't know for 72 hours if their antibiotic treatment has been successful.

Tracy said he has barred Manchester from working for a week, and that only members of his immediate family are being admitted to his bedside.

'CAUGHT EARLY' 7.6

The physician said Manchester was rational, but that his condition made the author "so

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Compare "bargain" with what he told
RFK.

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Author Ill, Talks on JFK Book Stalled

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miserable he hasn't thought about the book."

Manchester is in generally good health, except for the pneumonia which lodged in the lower lobe of his left lung, Tracy said.

"We caught it early and I am optimistic," the doctor said. Manchester's recuperation is expected to take about six weeks.

The onset of pneumonia began Christmas Day with chills and fever, the doctor reported. He said the condition may have begun about three weeks ago in England where, Tracy understands, Manchester suffered a similar attack.

Tracy said Manchester also had scratched the cornea of his right eye with a Christmas tree branch while decorating the tree on Christmas Eve.

MEETING CANCELED

As a result of Manchester's illness, his publishers, Harper and Row, canceled a meeting with representatives of Mrs. John F. Kennedy. The meeting

was called to discuss changes in the Manchester manuscript to meet Mrs. Kennedy's objections.

To stop the use of this material, she filed a law suit against Manchester, Harper and Row and Look magazine, which will begin a 60,000-word serialization of the book on Jan. 10. An out-of-court settlement was reached last week between Mrs. Kennedy and Look.

But her dispute with Harper and Row remains unsettled, although a source close to the Kennedy family said negotiations "definitely had made progress and the meetings up until Christmas Eve were friendly."

AUTHOR REPLIES

A hearing on Mrs. Kennedy's suit against Harper and Row is scheduled for Manhattan Supreme Court Tuesday. A spokesman said a continuance would be sought.

The essence of the dispute is Mrs. Kennedy's charge that Manchester and his publishers violated a written agreement that the book would not be pub-

lished without her approval.

Manchester replied to that charge in a long letter published on Monday in the New York Times. The Manchester letter was inspired by an earlier one in the Times from author Theodore White.

"Mr. White makes two key points," Manchester wrote. "The first is that no writer should agree to submit his manuscript for approval. I may say that under ordinary circumstances I should never have agreed to do so."

CALL FROM CAPITAL

"I merely ask that readers of the Times recall the Nation's emotional climate in the wake of the President's murder. It was difficult to think clearly."

"I vividly recall that after the telephone call from Washington asking me to undertake this project I turned to my secretary and said, 'How can I say no to Mrs. Kennedy?' She replied, 'You can't. Nor could I. One did not, I felt, bargain over a national tragedy."

"Mr. White's second point is far graver, for he challenges my personal integrity. He charges that I broke faith with Mrs. Kennedy—that 'the issue is whether Mr. Manchester is to be given an exemption from pledged word. . . . I consider this an assault upon my character'"

Manchester then summarized his agreement with the Kennedy family which involved "no contract with Mrs. Kennedy" but rather an agreement with "another member of the family who represented her" (Sen. Robert F. Kennedy).

When the manuscript was finished, he wrote, it was submitted for approval to "a team of men, each of whom had been close to President Kennedy" and who had been selected to represent the family.

After four months of consultation and editing, this "team . . . assured the family that the manuscript was satisfactory. A member of the family then sent a special delivery letter to Mr. (Evan) Thomas (of Harper and Row) and a telegram to me stating that 'members of the family will place no obstacle in the way of publication' of the work. . . ."

'UNJUST AND CRUEL

"Under these circumstances it seems inaccurate, unjust and cruel to accuse me of a breach of faith . . . In over 20 years as a professional writer I have never broken a confidence, never published a statement made off the record, never exploited a source."

Mrs. Kennedy, meanwhile, left for Antigua in the British West Indies, with her children, Caroline, 8, and John, 5, and a friend of Caroline identified from the manifest only as C. Nelson.

SFC. IS ADVISOR?