

# On LBJ Raised Fears

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NEW YORK, Dec. 22—White

House Press Secretary Bill D. Moyers reportedly expressed fears last summer that William Manchester's book, "The Death of a President" would reflect unfavorably upon President Johnson.

According to an informant, Moyers contacted a close friend of the Kennedy family to determine whether the Manchester account of President Kennedy's assassination was being "toughened up" in order to embarrass his successor in the White House.

He was said to have been assured that the book was indeed being edited, at the behest of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy (D-N.Y.). But, on the contrary, passages that dealt with the Kennedy-Johnson relationship were being deleted and revised to remove what were felt to be unduly harsh assessments of Mr. Johnson.

Moyers, who will resign next



BILL D. MOYERS

month to become publisher of Newsday, a Long Island newspaper, flatly denied the report tonight. He said he did not know anything of the contents of the book in July, and had

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not been in touch with the Kennedys about it.

"There is absolutely nothing to it," Moyers said.

## Confer for Several Hours

In the meantime, lawyers for Mrs. John F. Kennedy, Harper & Row, which intends to publish the book in April, and Manchester conferred for several hours today in an effort to reach a settlement of Mrs. Kennedy's remaining litigation against the controversial book.

The meeting, which took place in the office of Mrs. Kennedy's attorney, Simon H. Rifkind, followed an accord last night with Look magazine that removed or modified a dozen passages relating to the personal life of the late President's widow and her two children. In return, Mrs. Kennedy withdrew her suit against Cowles Communications, Inc., publishers of Look.

In the Harper & Row case, The meeting, which took place in the New York State Supreme Court Justice Saul S. Streit granted defense attorneys an extension until next Tuesday to answer Mrs. Kennedy's allegations. Justice Streit was known to be ready to push the deadline back even farther in

order to facilitate an out-of-court settlement.

There were some indications that the accord with Look, calling for the deletion of 1600 words from the 80,000-word four-part serialization by the magazine, was concluded without the full approval of Manchester and his lawyer, Carleton G. Eldridge Jr.

## 3 Drafts Prepared

Eldridge was kept informed by telephone as the pact between the Kennedy family and Cowles was hammered out, section-by-section, last night. At least three proposed drafts of a joint announcement were prepared until finally William Attwood, Cowles' editor-in-chief, prepared his own statement for the press.

Afterwards, Attwood was quoted as saying: "Did you see that Rifkind push me out of my seat? Do you know what those people would have done to us if we let them get on first? This way Look makes the announcement. They'd have killed us if we'd have let them put us on second."

Rifkind later recalled to a friend how Attwood had rushed out of the room. He denied that he had pushed him aside to gain the spotlight before the emplaced microphones and television cameras.

## Calls Structure Intact

On leaving Rifkind's law offices, Attwood was further quoted as saying: "We gave up some slush. A little gingerbread off the top. But the structure is intact."

Two excisions requested by Mrs. Kennedy, according to

one present at the negotiations, were:

1. A reference by Mrs. Kennedy to the discovery of a wrinkle on her face.
2. A quotation from Mrs. Hugh Auchincloss, Mrs. Kennedy's mother, to her daughter as "strategy."

## Two-Day Negotiation

The editorial deal with Look was concluded during two days in conference. On one side were six of Look's top editors, including Attwood and Gardner (Mike) Cowles, the editorial chairman. On the other side was Richard N. Goodwin, a former special assistant to Presidents Kennedy

and Johnson. All excisions were cleared with Robert Kennedy, now on a skiing vacation in Sun Valley.

Goodwin kept Mrs. Kennedy periodically informed as to which changes had been agreed to. The widow read parts of the Manchester text for the first time last Saturday at a session with Attwood and Cowles' lawyer, David W. Peck.

Attwood yesterday quoted her as saying at that time: "Bill, I had better leave you some cigarettes because you and Dick Goodwin have a lot of work to do." She was later reported, to Attwood's great surprise, as having left the session on the verge of tears.

Attwood and Goodwin first became acquainted when they shared a room as campaign workers during John F. Kennedy's presidential drive in 1960. Attwood later served two years as Mr. Kennedy's Ambassador to Guinea and Kenya. He has written a book about his experiences, entitled "The Reds and the Blacks," due to be published by Harper & Row next spring.

## None on Relationship

None of the episodes and anecdotes excised from the Look text dealt with the Kennedy-Johnson relationship. Mrs. Kennedy, however, has obliquely referred to Manchester's analysis of the transfer of power as unfair to Mr. Johnson and as an inaccurate recital of history.

In the initial draft, Manchester's opening passage was an anecdote that reflected unfavorably upon Mr. Johnson. At the suggestion of two Kennedy friends and Evan Thomas, the book's editor at Harper's, the passage was shifted to another portion of the 300,000-word book.

The two Kennedy readers who decided with Thomas to change the opening were John Seigenthaler, editor of the Nashville Tennessean, and Edwin O. Guthman, national editor of the Los Angeles Times.

The shifted passage, while unflattering to Mr. Johnson, was described by informants as not objectionable and unrelated to the assassination.