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LBJ Misquoted in Look Serial

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President Johnson is misquoted in Look magazine's first installment of William Manchester's book "The Death of a President."

The small but touchy blunder appears in the third chapter of the condensed version of the book. It is touchy because it relates to what President Johnson feels is a distorted picture of

his last night with President John F. Kennedy.

The author has portrayed the final meeting as stormy. Manchester quotes Max Peck, manager of the Rice Hotel in Houston, as saying,

"He (LBJ) left that suite like a pistol." And, the Manchester article continues: "Peck, watching him shoot into the corridor, long legs pumping, thought he looked furious."

In his account of the episode Manchester wrote:

"What was that all about?" Jacqueline Kennedy asked, coming in after the Vice President had left. 'He sounded mad.' The President looked amused. 'That's just Lyndon . . .,' he said. 'But he's in trouble.'"

Here is the nub of a new snarl in the impasse between President Johnson and members of the Kennedy family.

Manchester said of the Kennedy-Johnson meeting:

"The substance of their final conference is unclear. According to Johnson's recollection 19 months later: 'There definitely was not a disagreement . . . there was

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an active discussion' in which the two 'were in substantial disagreement.'"

It seemed to some readers an odd contradiction. Johnson was quoted first as saying there was no disagreement—in what apparently was a talk about the tangled affairs of top Texas Democrats—and then as speaking of "substantial disagreement."

A copy of Johnson's answer to 14 questions submitted to him by Manchester during preparation of the book treats with this particular aspect as follows:

"The President recalls a conversation with President Kennedy at the Rice Hotel before the Lulac reception. There definitely was not a disagreement between the two. There was an active discussion in which the two were in substantial agreement."

Thus Johnson says there was agreement; Look and Manchester quote him as saying both that there was agreement and disagreement.

Manchester was not able to arrange a hoped-for interview with President Johnson. The President, in turning down the request, told the author that he felt the upcoming book was purely a project of Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and the family in general, and that he felt it should remain in that status.

But Johnson consented to accept written questions from Manchester. The replies are couched in the third person: "The President recalls . . . The President states . . ."

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