

**Publisher Calls Off Meeting** 12/20/66

# Author Manchester Hospitalized; Johnson Bars Comment on Book

## Christian Says President Never Saw Manuscript

By Carroll Kilpatrick  
Washington Post Staff Writer

AUSTIN, Tex., Dec. 26—President Johnson will not discuss the controversial book "The Death of a President" and he has instructed his staff to refrain from discussing it, White House Press Secretary George Christian said today.

Christian made these disclosures when questioned about Newsweek magazine's report on the President's recollection of his succession to the Presidency on Nov. 22, 1963.

Mr. Johnson has not seen the manuscript of the forthcoming book by William Manchester, Christian said. Nor has he seen the text of the Newsweek report of his own memories of that fateful day.

But, based on news accounts of the magazine story out today, Christian took issue with Newsweek's sources and information.

"The President has granted no interviews to anyone including Mr. Manchester and has asked his staff to refrain from discussing the subject of the book," Christian said.

"He did not talk to Newsweek. I'll not discuss the various attributions credited to so-called friends and alleged intimates except to say that I believe them to be inaccurate and untrue."

[In New York, Newsweek editor Osborn Elliott replied: "Newsweek has confidence in its reporter and in the reliability of the source from which the information came. Had it been otherwise, we would not have printed the story."]

Reporters sought unsuccessfully to draw Christian into a discussion of what he thought accurate and what he thought inaccurate about Newsweek's report of the President's recollections of that day.

Mr. Johnson's activities on the day of President Kennedy's assassination have become a central part of the controversy

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## Stricken With Pneumonia; Strain Seen as a Cause

Special to The Washington Post

MIDDLETOWN, Conn., Dec. 26—William Manchester, author of the controversial book on events surrounding President Kennedy's assassination was taken to a hospital here today, suffering "early stages of pneumonia."

Dr. Erwin F. Tracy, the Manchester family physician, described the author's condition as critical, but said the prognosis was good.

The strain Manchester has been under during the past weeks while negotiations were under way concerning the publication of his book, "Death of a President" could have contributed to his present condition, Dr. Tracy said. He added that Manchester has been "confused and depressed" by the controversy.

When Manchester was admitted to Middlesex Memorial Hospital with viral pneumonia, he said, the author's temperature was 104. Twelve hours later, at noon, it had dropped to 98.6 or normal. But the doctor said physicians won't know if their antibiotic treatment has been successful until 72 hours have elapsed.

Dr. Tracy said he has barred Manchester from working for a week, and that only members of the immediate family are being admitted to the author's bedside. The period of recuperation is expected to last about six weeks, he added.

The physician said Manchester was rational and seemed in good spirits, but that his condition made the author "so miserable he hasn't thought about the book." Manchester is in generally good health, otherwise, Dr. Tracy said.

"We caught it early and I am optimistic" about the prognosis, the doctor said.

The onset of pneumonia began Christmas Day with chills and fever, the doctor

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**PRESIDENT—From Page A1**

## President Refuses To Discuss Book

over the Manchester book. According to those who have seen the manuscript, it gives an unflattering picture of Mr. Johnson at the time.

Newsweek did not claim that it interviewed the President. It said intimates of Mr. Johnson reported his recollection of the events of the day and of his conversations with Mr. Kennedy.

For months the White House has been deeply interested in the Manchester book and has made attempts to obtain the manuscript. While Christian said he knew of no White House staff member who has seen it, it was understood that retiring Press Secretary Bill D. Moyers has seen the excerpts which Look magazine will begin publishing next month.

When first word leaked out several months ago that the book was critical of the President, the White House assembled considerable documentation to uphold the President's side of the argument that he had shown the greatest possible consideration for the Kennedy family. But it has never made any of the material public.

### Gave Written Answers

Christian said today that Mr. Johnson declined to grant Manchester an interview but that he did respond to written questions which Manchester submitted.

Otherwise the President stands on the statement he made to the Warren Commission about the events of Nov. 22, 1963, Christian said.

Asked if the President would

continue to refuse to discuss the book and the events mentioned, Christian said:

"I can't say he will never discuss them again but he doesn't have any plans to do so."

### Johnson's Attend Funeral

This afternoon, the President and Mrs. Johnson went by helicopter to Floresville, south of San Antonio, to attend the funeral of Sam Fore Jr., a longtime friend.

Fore, former publisher of the Floresville Chronicle-Journal, died Saturday. Services were held in the Floresville Methodist Church.

In addition to the President, Gov. and Mrs. John Connally also attended the funeral. Connally is a native of Floresville.

Immediately after the services, the President and Mrs. Johnson returned by helicopter to their ranch, about 80 miles from Floresville.

Christian said that the President worked at his ranch the rest of the day.

"As of now, it looks as though he will be here all week," Christian said.

Mr. Johnson flew to Texas from Washington Dec. 16.



## Manchester Is Hospitalized With Pneumonia

reported. He said the condition may have begun about three weeks ago in England where, Dr. Tracy said, he understands Manchester suffered a similar attack.

Dr. Tracy said, as an aside, that while Manchester was helping decorate his family's yule tree on Christmas Eve, the author scratched the cornea of his right eye with a Christmas tree branch.

As a result of Manchester's illness, his publishers, Harper & Row, canceled a scheduled 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 "personal" material used by the author.

To stop the use of this material, she filed a law suit against Manchester, Harper & 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 & 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."

A hearing on Mrs. Kennedy's suit against Harper & Row is scheduled for New York Supreme Court Tuesday.

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 published without her approval.

Manchester replied to that charge in a long letter published today in the New York Times. His letter was inspired by an earlier letter in the Times from another author, Theodore H. White.

"Mr. White makes two key points," Manchester wrote to the newspaper. "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. 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 and set forth the basic facts, which are as follows.'"

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 Kennedys in editing the book.

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 & Row) and a telegram to me stating that 'mem-

bers of the family will place no obstacle in the way of publication' of the work . . .

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

In still another development today, the editors of the French magazine, Paris Match, said their serialized version of the Manchester book will conform to Mrs. Kennedy's wishes and will not contain the materials she objected to.