

Mrs. Kennedy Withdraws Plea to Court

Action Delays Move
To Suppress Book;
Author Recovering

12/28/66
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NEW YORK, Dec. 27—Mrs. John F. Kennedy agreed today to withdraw her request for an immediate court injunction against publication of William Manchester's book, "The Death of a President."

The action was announced in a joint statement tonight by representatives of the late President's widow and attorneys for Harper & Row, which plans to publish the book April 7.

The announcement came eight hours after a court session in which Harper's, in a surprise move, asked for and was granted a hearing Thursday on Mrs. Kennedy's motion for a temporary injunction to suppress the book. The decision to drop the motion, which came after a full day of discussions between the parties, voids the Thursday hearing.

Observers speculated that Harper's action was designed to bring pressure on Mrs. Kennedy's representatives to reach a settlement in negotiations to delete portions of the book.

Meantime, in Middletown, Conn., Manchester was recov-

See KENNEDY, A4, Col. 1

ering from viral pneumonia. He also remained under "supportive" psychiatric treatment for depression, his psychiatrist said.

Dr. Asher L. Baker, the psychiatrist who had treated Manchester earlier, said depression "very frequently" follows a viral infection. But Dr. Baker emphasized that Manchester was without signs of "psychotic depression" and that he was "perfectly rational and in good spirits."

Today's agreement, while it leaves the matter of deletions still unsettled, eases the pressure on everyone concerned. If the suit had gone to a hearing Thursday, Harper & Row would have filed documents—probably on Wednesday—answering Mrs. Kennedy's earlier charges that Harper and Manchester had violated agreements giving her the right of approval before the book is published.

'Other Side' Silenced

It was understood that these documents contain material disputing Mrs. Kennedy's position, including evidence that her brother-in-law, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy (D-N.Y.), had approved the book. Harper's answer would thus have laid out for the first time before a court the other side of the case. Observers felt that the Kennedys, eager to avoid this, were thus successfully pressured into dropping their bid for an injunction.

The announcement marked the latest turn in the literary furor over a book that, in its unedited form, contained many personal references—supplied by Mrs. Kennedy—to the 1963 assassination of her husband as well as uncomplimentary references to President Johnson.

The agreement still leaves open the possibility of a court trial on Mrs. Kennedy's request for a permanent ban on the book. But it postpones any such action until mid-January. This gives the parties additional time to work out a settlement.

A similar dispute between Mrs. Kennedy and Look magazine over a four-part series of excerpts from the Manchester book, was settled last week with the deletion from the manuscript of 1621 words considered objectionable by the Kennedys.

Settlement with Harper is being held up by disagreement over portions of the book not included in the 60,000-word Look excerpt.

Hearing Continued

In today's court hearing, Supreme Court Justice Saul Streit agreed to continue un-

til Jan. 16 the portion of the hearing involving Manchester. In the meantime, Manchester's attorney, Carleton Eldridge, is participating in the Harper-Kennedy talks.

Both Mrs. Kennedy and Sen. Kennedy sent get-well telegrams to Manchester yesterday. Mrs. Kennedy's message said: "Please know how distressed I am to know that you are sick, and how much I hope you will be better soon."

Dr. Baker described Manchester's mental condition as "reactive depression," which can be brought on by almost anything: "the loss of a loved one, severe mental or physical strain or a virus."

'Maintenance Therapy'

The psychiatrist said that his treatment, using anti-depressant and tranquilizing drugs, was "maintenance therapy" to prevent a recurrence of the depression Manchester suffered after his return from England earlier this month.

He said he had treated Manchester for "mental fatigue" last fall and that he had hospitalized the author in Elmcrest Manor Hospital in Portland, Conn., across the Connecticut River from here.

Manchester then went to England, only to return in the face of the controversy surrounding his book.

Manchester's attending physician, Dr. Erwin F. Tracy, said the author's temperature remained at 98.6, or normal.

Dr. Tracy said "Manchester wondered if the millions of copies of Look were on the newsstands." The doctor added that he would recommend that Manchester and his family take a vacation "after this lawsuit is settled."

Participating in today's meeting were Edward S. Greenbaum, attorney for Harper & Row, and Richard Goodwin, a friend of the Kennedy family, and Simon H. Rifkind, Mrs. Kennedy's attorney. Mrs. Kennedy is vacationing with her children in the Caribbean.