

'Death Of A President'

Publishers Want To Go Ahead With Book Despite Objections

NEW YORK (AP) — Attorneys in the battle over "The Death of a President" maneuvered Monday for a compromise on passages which Mrs. John F. Kennedy regards as too starkly personal for publication.

With eight days left before a court hearing on a suit to block publication of the book, a spokesman for the publishing firm of Harper & Row reported "continuing efforts to patch things up."

Meanwhile, however, Cass Canfield, chairman of the executive committee of Harper & Row, said the book is being published "in the interest of historical accuracy and of the people's right to know the true facts of the awesome tragedy."

"I want to stress how very badly I feel that Mrs. Kennedy, for whom I have such deep re-

gard and respect, is so disturbed about the book," Canfield added in statement.

"Understandably, the members of the Kennedy family were unwilling to read the manuscript themselves and hence they designated representatives to do this for them. Had they read it themselves, the present situation might have been avoided."

Canfield said the publisher's advance to the author "was \$40,000 and not the \$675,000 erroneously reported by the press."

Mrs. Kennedy's brother-in-law, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, D-N.Y., declared: "It's what she feels that's important here. It's very, very, very distressing to her. She is a very sensitive woman."

Bit by bit, in leaks by people who have read author William Manchester's 300,000-word manuscript — or an 80,000-word Look magazine abstract — the disputed passages were being made public.

One passage tells of Mrs. Kennedy wrestling with a nurse who tried to bar her from a Dallas hospital room where her husband was taken after the assassination on Nov. 22, 1963.

The reader who reported this quoted the book:

"Jackie keeps saying she wants to keep her blood-spat-

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tered clothes on so "they can see what they've done."

A former high official in the Kennedy administration cited another portion of the book which Mrs. Kennedy found objectionable:

"There was a letter Mrs. Kennedy wrote to the president while she was in Greece. It was highly personal. She described her feelings about her husband to her husband. Manchester used several quotes from the letter and I do know that Mrs. Kennedy objected to this."

Another disputed passage described in Mrs. Kennedy's own words the last night she spent with her husband before going to Dallas.

One who read the manuscript said "there was too much blood and guts" in its description of the actual shooting of the president.

Another described as "heart-breaking" an intimate account of how the assassination and the president's funeral were explained to Kennedy's children, Caroline and John F. Jr.

The New York Times, New York Post and Nashville Tennessean reported that other controversial matter in the book included:

An allegation of incompetence and laxity by Secret Service men, FBI agents and Dallas police responsible for the president's safety on the day of the slaying.

Friction between Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson over how soon the latter should deliver his first message as president to a joint session of Congress.

A Kennedy family disagreement over whether the slain president should be buried in Massachusetts or in Arlington National Cemetery. The book says Mrs. Kennedy insisted on Arlington.

Mrs. Kennedy's lawyer, Simon H. Rifkind, said he did not rule out the possibility that the Kennedy family's suit might be settled short of a trial.

The hearing on Dec. 27 before a Manhattan judge of the New York Supreme Court will be on a petition by Mrs. Kennedy and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy for an

injunction to bar publication.

The injunction hearing will be based on affidavits filed by Mrs. Kennedy and the senator. If Manchester and the defendant publishers decide to resist an injunction, the case would go to trial. Mrs. Kennedy then would face the ordeal of a witness stand appearance.

Manchester denied in a statement that publication of the book would be a breach of an understanding with Mrs. Kennedy and the senator.

The Kennedys insist that the book was written under an agreement giving Mrs. Kennedy and the senator veto rights over its content and publication time. Manchester says the senator gave him a go-ahead in a telegram last July. The senator denies this.

Manchester, in his statement, insisted that "in the summer of 1966, authorization was given by the family for publication of the book in early 1967, to be preceded by serialization in Look magazine."

When Manchester decided he was free to proceed with publication of the book, his agent sent copies to Life, Look, The Saturday Evening Post, Ladies' Home Journal, McCall's and Good Housekeeping for bids on serialization rights.

Look won out with a bid of \$665,000, plus a grant of considerable control by Manchester over how the serialization would be handled.

The Kennedy suit places Look in a dilemma. The serialization is scheduled to begin in its Jan. 24 issue, which normally would reach newsstands on Jan. 10.

The issue has gone to press. Look has declined to say how many copies might have to be withheld if the court grants an injunction against publication.

A number of persons who have read the Manchester manuscript say that in addition to the intimate personal references which upset Mrs. Kennedy, the book is generally uncomplimentary to President Johnson. It thus might prove politically embarrassing to Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

One publishing executive who saw the manuscript told the New York Post it relates a feeling among the Kennedys after the assassination that "this was Johnson's state — Texas. That it happened in his state.

"They didn't think he had anything to do with it, but he had brought them there."