

# Mrs. Kennedy Sues to Block Book On Assassination of the President

By Andrew J. Glass  
Washington Post Staff Writer

NEW YORK, Dec. 14—Mrs. John F. Kennedy said today that she must seek a "horrible" court trial in an effort to halt publication of the book she had commissioned about the assassination of her husband.

The widow of the late President accused William Manchester, author of "Death of a President," of having written "a premature account of the events of November, 1963, that is in part both tasteless and distorted."

In a bitterly worded statement issued by her office here, Mrs. Kennedy also declared: "I am equally shocked that reputable publishers would take commercial advantage of (Manchester's) failure to keep his word."

The 350,000-word manuscript is scheduled to be published by Harper & Row in April. The first segment of a four-



United Press International

**WILLIAM MANCHESTER**  
... author of Kennedy book

part serialization of the book is due to appear in the Jan. 10 issue of Look magazine.

Mrs. Kennedy's lawyer,

former Federal Judge Simon H. Rifkind, said a suit seeking to stop publication will be filed in New York State Supreme Court within 48 to 72 hours. "We will seek a variety of relief against the defendants, including a temporary injunction to restrain the publication of the magazine articles and the book," Rifkind announced.

Mrs. Kennedy based her suit on the alleged violation of a contract signed on March 26, 1964, between Manchester and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy (D-N.Y.), who was then Attorney General.

The contract stated, in part, that "the completed manuscript shall be reviewed by Mrs. John F. Kennedy and Robert F. Kennedy and the text shall not be published unless and until approved by them."

After Mrs. Kennedy announced she was bringing

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# Mrs. Kennedy Sues to Curb Publishers

## Text of Mrs. John F. Kennedy's Statement on Book Suit

suit, Harper & Row, who have brought out virtually all of the recent best-selling biographies of John F. Kennedy, said they intended to go ahead with their publication plans for "Death of a President."

William Atwood, editor-in-chief of Cowles Communications, Inc., publishers of Look, said: "There is a point at which you have to stop, where censorship and freedom of the press become the issue."

The first installment of the four planned Look articles—sold to the magazine by Manchester's literary agent, reportedly for a record \$650,000—has already gone to the printers. About two million copies of the 8-million-copy press run have already been run off.

Sources close to the Cowles management said Look had no intention of stopping the presses. Attorneys for both defendants privately expressed their belief that Mrs. Kennedy's impending court action was without legal merit. Both Harper & Row and Look, it was understood, will maintain in court that they possess valid contracts with the 44-year-old author, who was handpicked in 1964 by Mrs. Kennedy to write the official Kennedy family-sponsored account of the assassination.

Manchester, who was at his home in Middletown, Conn., after returning yesterday from a trip to Europe, said: "It's rather well known that I wouldn't have taken a step in the publication of this book



MRS. JOHN F. KENNEDY  
... "my only redress"

NEW YORK, Dec. 14 (AP)—Here is the text of the statement by Mrs. John F. Kennedy on her suit to stop publication of "Death of a President."

Look magazine, Harper & Row, and Mr. William Manchester have repeatedly made clear that only legal action can alter their insistence upon publishing at this time—without regard to accepted standards of propriety and good faith, and in specific violation of my wishes, my contract with Mr. Manchester and the dignity and privacy which my children and I have striven with difficulty to retain—a premature account of the events of November 1963 that is in part both tasteless and distorted.

Its inaccurate and unfair references to other individuals, in contrast with its generous references to all members of the Kennedy family, are perhaps beyond my

prevention; but to expose to all the world at this time all the private grief, personal thoughts, and painful reactions which my children and I endured in those terrible days does not seem to me to be essential to any current historical record.

I am shocked that Mr. Manchester would exploit the emotional state in which I recounted my recollections to him early in 1964; and I'm equally shocked that reputable publishers would take commercial advantage of his failure to keep his word. To the author and publishers this book will only be another transient chapter in their works; but my children and I will have to live with it for the rest of our lives.

As horrible as a trial will be, it now seems clear that my only redress is to ask the courts to enforce my rights and postpone publication until the minimum limits of my family's privacy can be protected.

the Senator to read Manchester's first draft.

The Kennedy friends, both former high-level aides in the Justice Department, are Edwin O. Guthman, national editor of the Los Angeles Times, and John Seigenthaler, editor of the Nashville Tennessean.

Neither Mrs. Kennedy nor Sen. Kennedy has read the Manchester account, but the Senator sent his two friends the manuscript in early 1966, soon after the author had completed his two-year writing project.

The friends recommended changes in the text and some of them were made. Most of the revisions reflected what

Guthman and Seigenthaler felt were unduly harsh and factually inaccurate assessments of Lyndon B. Johnson at the time of the assassination.

The original contract with Manchester anticipated that his volume would appear five years after the assassination, although Mrs. Kennedy was granted the right to change the publication date.

It was the Senator, however, who decided that the book should come out in 1967. He believed that if the book were to appear in 1968—a presidential election year—it could conceivably be used against

the re-election drive of President Johnson.

Fresh difficulties arose, however, after the sale to Look. These new problems revolved almost entirely around Mrs. Kennedy's feelings that Manchester had breached a trust in quoting extensively from their 10 hours of taped conversations that occurred on two successive evenings in late March, 1964.

For a time, Look negotiated on Mrs. Kennedy's behalf with Richard N. Goodwin, a former presidential assistant to Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Johnson and a close family friend. The magazine's editors agreed to some revisions. They also

agreed to postpone the serialization from October to January.

Several weeks ago, however, Look objected to any more revisions and, denied representatives of the Kennedy family further access to the page proofs. Harper & Row, for their part, reached a similar decision last Friday. It was these dual actions that prompted Mrs. Kennedy's decision over the weekend to seek a court injunction against publication.

Earlier, Robert Kennedy had informed the publishers and the magazine that he would not try to stop publication through legal action. He is not a party to Mrs. Kennedy's suit.

Today, however, a source close to Mrs. Kennedy said that the Senator "certainly supports the action."

Although Mrs. Kennedy has never read the Manchester manuscript, both Goodwin and Pamela Turnure Timmins, her personal secretary, have read the drafts and told her about material that purportedly reflected an invasion of her privacy and that of her two young children.

In her statement, Mrs. Kennedy cited alleged "inaccurate and unfair references to other individuals, in contrast with its generous references to all members of the Kennedy family..." It was believed that Mrs. Kennedy was referring principally to President Johnson.

without the approval of Robert Kennedy speaking as a member of the Kennedy family."

Manchester was alluding to the key to the defendants' case: A July 22 telegram from Sen. Kennedy to the author that said, in effect, that the Kennedy family would not stand in the way of publishing "Death of a President."

The wire from the Senator was preceded by extensive negotiations between the author and his publishers, on the one hand, and, on the other, two close friends of Robert Kennedy who had been asked by