

KENNEDY DISPUTE OVER LOOK SERIAL BELIEVED SETTLED

Magazine Is Said to Yield to
Most Demands of Widow
on 'Offensive' Material
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AIM WAS SENSIBLE PACT

Robert Kennedy Is Reported
Weighing Accord—Book
Publisher Not at Talks

By JOHN CORRY

Mrs. John F. Kennedy and Look magazine apparently settled their dispute last night over the serialization of "The Death of a President."

An informed source indicated that the magazine had yielded to virtually all of Mrs. Kennedy's demands that it not publish material she had found to be offensive personally.

There were signs that a final announcement of the settlement was being delayed until it could be cleared with Senator Robert F. Kennedy, who is on vacation in Sun Valley, Idaho, with his family.

Last night, it was learned, the agreement was being discussed with the Senator by telephone.

Earlier in the day, Richard N. Goodwin, an adviser to Mrs. Kennedy, met with William Attwood, the editor in chief of Cowles Communications, Inc., which publishes Look.

Mr. Goodwin had made the final revisions in the 80,000-word, four-part serialization, which Look will now publish in the issue that will be on sale Jan. 10.

In the afternoon, David W. Peck, the attorney who represented Look, met with Simon H. Rifkind, Mrs. Kennedy's attorney, in Mr. Rifkind's office at 575 Madison Avenue.

'A Sensible Package'

While reporters gathered out-

side, the attorneys discussed, Mr. Rifkind said, "a sensible package" for a settlement. He said that "many other things are involved," not only the text of the serialization.

Mr. Rifkind, a former Federal judge, said earlier that he was not involved in discussions of a settlement. His statement yesterday was his first public acknowledgment that an agreement was possible.

Mr. Rifkind is with the firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind & Garison.

Mr. Peck, a former presiding justice of the New York Appellate Division, who was sometimes mentioned as a possible Republican candidate for Governor, is with the firm of Sullivan & Cromwell.

During the meeting, television newsman placed six cameras outside Mr. Rifkind's office. Nine microphones were placed on a table.

Harper & Row, which wants to publish "The Death of a President" in book form in April, was not represented at yesterday's meeting. However, it is expected that any agreement with Look would ease the way for a settlement of Mrs. Kennedy's suit against the book publisher.

Mrs. Kennedy filed the suit last Friday, contending that the publication of "The Death of a President," in either serial or book form, would violate a memorandum that William Man-

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chester, the book's author, and Senator Robert F. Kennedy signed on March 26, 1964.

The memorandum specified that the book would not be published before Nov. 22, 1968, five years after the assassination of President Kennedy, and that it must be approved by both Mrs. Kennedy and the Senator.

The approval, Mrs. Kennedy said in her suit, was never given.

Although the suit was based on breach of contract, Mrs. Kennedy was most disturbed by what she said was Mr. Manchester's "tasteless" use of her own personal recollections.

Mr. Manchester, who had been promised that no member of the Kennedy family would cooperate with any other author in an account of the assassination, got these personal recollections in two lengthy conversations with Mrs. Kennedy in the spring of 1964.

One source close to the dispute said that Mrs. Kennedy had treated Mr. Manchester like a "confessor," and that she had "made no attempt at self-censorship" in the interviews.

Mr. Manchester finished his 300,000-word manuscript late last year. Subsequently, a number of advisers to Mrs. Kennedy and Senator Kennedy, most of them onetime New Frontiersmen, read and revised it.

"The Death of a President," those who have read it say, depicts Mr. Johnson unfavorably and speaks of the hostility that the Kennedys felt toward him. Some of Mr. Kennedy's advisers insisted that its publication would strain the delicate political alliance between the Senator and the President.

Besides political ambitions, the controversy touches on substantial sums of money, old friendships and the public's right to know versus the right to personal privacy.

Look paid \$665,000 for the right to serialize "The Death of

a President." The magazine has already recovered half of this by selling the European serialization rights. Harper & Row, which has been paid \$250,000 by the Book of the Month Club for the privilege of distributing the book, has also been offered \$1-million by Dell Books for the paperback rights.

If Mrs. Kennedy had been upheld in her court appeal to stop Look from publishing the serialization, an executive of Look said, the magazine would have been forced to cancel the issue on sale Jan. 10. The loss, he said, would have been between \$3-million and \$5-million.

From the beginning, the suit was one that no one really wanted. It was learned that the attorneys for Mrs. Kennedy, Look and Harper & Row, even before the suit was filed, told Justice Saul S. Streit of the State Supreme Court that there was at least a possibility of a settlement out of court.

Moreover, all sides let it be known that they preferred a prolonged period between the time the suit was filed and the time a hearing was held.

No Decision on Size

When the suit was filed last Friday, consequently, Justice Streit chose Dec. 27 for a hearing. Usually, a shorter time elapses between the filing of the papers in such a suit and the hearing.

A friend of the Kennedys said the other day that "everybody in the Kennedy family was against a suit," but that the family thought there was no alternative.

Both Harper & Row and Look are known to have been surprised when Mrs. Kennedy did, in fact, begin legal action.

Earlier, Harper & Row amplified a report in The New York Times yesterday that it would increase its first printing of "The Death of a President" from 100,000 to 250,000 copies.

It said the size of the printing was still undecided, and that it could reach 250,000. Harper & Row said it would not seek

greater profits from this and would, in fact, turn over all the profit from anything after the first 100,000 copies to the Kennedy Library in Cambridge, Mass.

The publishing company also reaffirmed its pledge to accept "only a small return" from the first printing, and said that it would donate part of the profit from the first 100,000 copies to the Kennedy Library.

The book apparently has been set in type. Harper & Row had agreed to remove some of the passages that Mrs. Kennedy objected to before she brought suit.

A spokesman for Harper & Row said that Mr. Manchester was now correcting galley proofs of his book, and that all other proofs of the book were at Harper & Row. He also said that a complete set of the galley proofs had not yet been made.

The book, which will have a midnight blue jacket that suggests a night sky, has not yet been bound.

There were unconfirmed reports that the excised material from "The Death of a President" had found its way to Taiwan, where it would be published and then smuggled into the United States.

Copies of the 1,200-page typewritten text were circulated by Don Congdon of the Harold Matson Company, Mr. Manchester's agent, last spring when he sought to sell the magazine rights. Reportedly, 25 copies were made.

If a bootlegged version is published in Taiwan, which has never signed an international copyright agreement, one of these copies could be the source.

However, one informed literary man, who declined to be identified, said that virtually anything could be passed off as the "one, true and original Manchester book."

He said that at least one supposedly accurate copy, or part of a copy, of the book that is now in New York is spurious.