

Publication Accord Is Reached by Look And Kennedy Family

Lawyers Working On Details; Author May Go to Court

By Andrew J. Glass
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NEW YORK, Dec. 21 — Look magazine and the Kennedy family reached a final accord on editing changes today that seemed to clear a path to begin serialization of "The Death of a President" in the magazine next month.

Lawyers for both camps, however, negotiated into the evening over the manner by which the agreement would be announced, and Mrs. John F. Kennedy's suit to block publication would be set aside.

But the prospect remained that the book's author, William Manchester, would bring a separate legal action—presumably against Mrs. Kennedy—on the basis of her previous allegations that he had produced "A tasteless and distorted" account of her husband's assassination, and had violated her confidences in doing so.

Not Directly Involved

Harper & Row has not been directly involved in the dealings that led to deletions in the Look text, changes that Mrs. Kennedy insisted on to protect her privacy. But it was understood that the publishing house was willing to incorporate these changes when it brings out the full, 300,000-word hard cover book in April.

It was learned that Man-

chester last week retained Carleton G. Eldridge Jr., a New York attorney, to represent his interests in the literary and legal dispute. A spokesman for Koudert Brothers, the law firm with which Eldridge is associated, declined to comment on any aspects of the case.

However, it was known that Manchester was in New York and keeping informed of the
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negotiations over the 80,000-word account due to appear in Look in four parts, beginning with the issue that goes on sale Jan. 10.

The author, a resident of Middletown, Conn., has spent the last several days here preparing a detailed chronological account of his dealings with members of the Kennedy family and their representatives throughout the long dispute over publishing his 200,000-word manuscript.

Despite the seeming accord on the text to be used in the Look articles — hammered out over two days in the magazine's Madison Avenue offices — there were widely varying reports tonight over how much material was deleted from the manuscript to meet Mrs. Kennedy's objections.

5000 Words Cut Out

A source close to Mrs. Kennedy asserted that about 5000 words had been removed from the manuscript before the late President's widow agreed to drop her legal action.

"When you ask for ten changes and get ten changes, I regard that as a victory," the

Kennedy informant said.

However, a source close to Cowles Communications, Inc., publishers of Look, said: "We just took out a little fat. All the bones are still in there."

The Cowles source said the deletions agreed upon in order to have Mrs. Kennedy approve publication amounted to "several hundred words — all of them gingerbread. They all related," the source continued, "to Mrs. Kennedy's personal vanity. None of the changes in any way altered the historical record of the President's assassination."

The immediate eagerness of both sides to claim a victory in what observers views as a face-saving compromise still endangered the understanding. "If they push us too far," a Cowles informant said of the Kennedy's, "this thing could still blow up in their faces."

Had Approval Right

Last August, Look paid Manchester a record \$665,000 for the U.S. magazine serial rights to his account. Mrs. Kennedy selected Manchester to write the assassination story under a 1964 agreement that gave her and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy (D-N.Y.), the right to review and approve the manuscript before publication.

This accord served as the basis for Mrs. Kennedy's breach-of-contract suit in the New York State Supreme Court—a suit in which Sen. Kennedy was not a party.

It was learned that Manchester has kept the \$365,000

Rifkind conferred into the night with David Peck, a former New York Appellate Court justice, who is representing Cowles. Mrs. Kennedy's lawyer described the talks as "a preliminary meeting" and reported that "the press would not be received afterwards."

Goodwin, who sat in on these meetings, also conferred by telephone from Rifkind's office with Mrs. Kennedy, at her Fifth Avenue apartment, and with Robert Kennedy, who is on a skiing vacation in Sun Valley, Idaho.

John Seigenthaler, editor of the Nashville Tennessean and a former aide to Kennedy in the Justice Department in his years as Attorney General, also participated in the talks. Seigenthaler was one of the two friends whom the Senator asked to read Manchester's draft before the current controversy erupted.

The problems faced by the lawyers centered on the manner in which Mrs. Kennedy's suit would be dropped. The Kennedy side was eager to include ironclad protective

already turned over by Look under a delayed-payment formula in escrow. He has lived for the last three years on his savings, as well as a \$40,000 advance paid to him by the book's hard-cover publishers, Harper & Row.

Although the bulk of the material that proved offensive to Mrs. Kennedy would have appeared in the Look serialization, informants said that Harper's and the Kennedy family would still have to study the rest of the book to determine whether any further changes must be made in the full text to win Mrs. Kennedy's approval.

Line-by-line cuts in the Look articles were agreed upon in a conference that took place yesterday and again today between the magazine's top editors and Richard N. Goodwin, a former special assistant to President Kennedy and Johnson, who is acting as Mrs. Kennedy's adviser in the dispute.

Legal aspects of the negotiations then began this afternoon, further up Madison Avenue, in the law offices of Pual, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison. Former Federal Judge Simon H. Rifkind, the firm's senior litigating partner, is serving as Mrs. Kennedy's attorney in the court action.

Another partner in the firm, former White House Counsel Theodore C. Sorenson, is known to have played an important behind-the-scenes role on behalf of the Kennedy interests.

Confer Into Night

devices that would give them the right to check the magazine's final proofs and to ensure them that the agreement would not be violated.

No Replating Changes

It was learned that under the editorial deal Look would be able to keep intact all of the material it had previously printed for its initial 15,000-word installment, without having to make any replating changes at the magazine's Chicago plant.

The magazine's blue cover will also remain unchanged despite Mrs. Kennedy's displeasures at the fact that the cover text terms Manchester's account the only version of the assassination story that she has ever authorized.

Informants said that Look would be unable to recoup its investment in the Manchester book through any increased sales and despite its resale to European magazines for a total of nearly \$300,000.

Despite any agreed version that Look and Harper & Row eventually print, there is the growing prospect that pirated and uncensored versions of the original will be widely read. One publishing source said 25 copies of the typewritten text were in circulation among prospective bidders, and that some had "almost certainly" been sold to outlaw publishers in Formosa.

For years Formosan printers have turned out cheap copies of medical, technical and art books as well as best-sellers for world distribution.