

Kennedy Book Battle—How It

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Look magazine warned William Manchester, author of "Death of a President," that "we will not accept any censorship" of his book by either him or members of the Kennedy family.

The magazine's lawyers took this stand in a letter to the author last September. Their sharply worded

letter was written several weeks after Manchester, in an emotion-wracked meeting with Mrs. John F. Kennedy at Hyannis Port, promised her that she would not be embarrassed by a series of Look articles about the assassination of her husband taken from the Manchester book.

Although Look and Manchester then proceeded to make substantial

changes in the articles, they refused to show the revised draft to Mrs. Kennedy's representatives or to inform them of which suggestions were accepted and which were denied.

In the course of the Hyannis Port meeting, Manchester arranged for the 300,000-word manuscript to be flown to her for further editing. According to sources close to Mrs.

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Kennedy, Manchester changed his mind later in the day and never turned over the draft.

Cowles Communications, Inc., publishers of Look, purchased the magazine rights to Manchester's account for a record price of \$665,000 in a deal that was signed on Aug. 11, 1966. The book is scheduled to be published in April by Harper & Row,

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the house that has brought out all of the books of the late John F. Kennedy and his brother, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy (D-N.Y.).

In her court suit against Manchester, Cowles and Harper's, Mrs. Kennedy contends that the author violated her contract rights by planning to publish a manuscript that she had not approved.

But sources close to Mrs. Kennedy assert that the issue could have been settled without a court fight had Manchester not signed away his own basic rights to the manuscript in the Look contract.

When Don Cogdon, Manchester's longtime literary agent, submitted "Death of a President" to many of the country's leading magazines last July 18, Mrs. Kennedy was vacationing in Hawaii and knew nothing of the move.

But her brother-in-law, Sen. Kennedy, had come under pressure to follow through on his earlier decision to allow the book to be published in early 1967. The original contract permitted serialization.

It was former White House

Press Secretary Pierre Salinger who suggested that Manchester write the book. Salinger contacted Manchester in February, 1964, soon after the author had returned from Germany where he was writing a book about the Krupp family for Little, Brown and Co.

From the start, it was agreed on all sides that, as one Kennedy source noted, "nobody should get rich from this book." Manchester, who viewed the project as "a special trust," had nothing to say over the specific terms of the accord with the Kennedys.

Under the contract with Harper's, Manchester's royalties were halved from the normal amount and limited to the first printing. Subsidiary royalties were scaled down to ensure that the bulk of the proceeds would go to the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library in Boston.

Manchester received a \$40,000 advance from Harper's although they withheld the final third of the money until it possessed an "approved" manuscript. Therefore, in order to subsist, the author was

forced to dip into his savings and to use up his advance from the Krupp book.

In early summer—three months after he had turned over the first draft to Harper's—Manchester approached Arthur Schlesinger Jr., a close friend of the Senator's and himself a biographer of John F. Kennedy, in an effort to obtain a release from the Kennedy family.

It was Schlesinger who wrested the key telegram from the Senator that said "members of the Kennedy family will place no obstacle in the way of publication of his work."

Acting upon even earlier oral assurances from Kennedy to Evan Thomas, the book's editor, Harper's paid Manchester the remaining third of his advance on the basis of what Thomas believed at the time to be an "approved" version.

It was at this juncture that Cogdon, the literary agent, moved quickly to sell the book to a magazine. As Cogdon well knew, under the agreement the magazine

rights were the only source from which Manchester could possibly make a substantial financial return on his two-year project.

Besides Look, Cogdon submitted the draft to such magazines as Life, The Saturday Evening Post, New Yorker, Good Housekeeping and Cosmopolitan. He assured all the editors involved that Manchester was fully empowered to sign a binding contract.

Final bids for the magazine rights were to be submitted by 5 p.m. on July 29. At 3:30 p.m., David Maness, articles editor of Life, submitted a bid of \$550,000 plus promotional benefits to Harper's.

Ninety minutes later, Look Editor William B. Arthur and Robert Meskill, a managing editor arrived. Cogdon opened their offer and told them that Look had bid low.

The Look team, greatly disturbed at the news, conferred in an anteroom and finally said they would return at 7. They arrived with the winning \$665,000 package that also called for Manchester to re-

ceive a fee as a "special editorial consultant."

Cogdon thereupon called Maness at Life and informed him for the first time that his bid was low. Maness was able

to improve the Life offer only slightly. He asked for time to consult with Time-Life top brass before a contract was reached. But, by then, it was too late.