

Chapter II—or Finis?

Like many another woman before her, Jacqueline Kennedy last week got her way by stubbornly insisting on her rights. In her reluctant but aggressive battle to prevent publication of numerous personally embarrassing passages in Manchester's *The Death of a President*, she scored a victory over *Look* magazine, which plans to begin serializing the book in its issue out Jan. 10, and appeared likely to win a similar capitulation from the book's publisher, Harper & Row.

By threatening a costly lawsuit over the "painful" passages, Jackie forced *Look* either to delete or drastically tone down every last one of them. The magazine went out of its way to emphasize that the changes involved only 1,600 words, out of 60,000, and Editor in Chief William Attwood of Cowles Communications, the magazine's publisher, told New York Post Columnist Murray Kempton: "We gave up some slush; a little gingerbread's off the top, but the structure's intact." The fact remained, however, that *Look's* editors had fought hard to preserve the gingerbread—and that, in the end, Jackie took it away from them. After the *Look* negotiations, a spokesman for Harper said that the company "will be very glad" to settle Mrs. Kennedy's suit along the lines of her agreement with *Look*.

Such lofty phrases as "historical accuracy" and "the right to know" were tossed about freely during the dispute, but they were not really at issue. Neither was "the book's right to live," as Harper Executive Committee Chairman Cass Canfield put it. The central point of the dispute was whether the author had violated an agreement guaranteeing the Kennedys' control over Manchester's final account of the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Whether or not the Kennedys should have demanded such an agreement was also beside the point. "Manchester made a promise," said Jackie's attorney, former Federal Judge Simon Rifkind, "and now has not lived up to his part of the bargain."

Deadly Dozen. The settlement followed a week of politely barbed name calling—some of it conducted at long distance. In Washington, Senator Edward Kennedy chided Manchester for

refusing to cut out the offending passages "despite the pain he knows it will give Mrs. Kennedy." In Manhattan, Canfield said that the row "has been the most trying and distressing one in a 40-year publishing career," added that if either Jackie or Senator Robert F. Kennedy had read the book, "the present situation might have been avoided." In Sun Valley, Idaho, a vacationing Bobby Kennedy paused on the ski slopes long enough to blast the publishers. "We didn't want to go through with a suit," he said, "and we spent a lot of time trying to avoid that. But they drove us to that point."

While the words flew cross-country, representatives of the Kennedys and *Look* were at work in Manhattan searching for a way out. At a weekend meeting in Manhattan, Jackie read key sections of the serialization. With former Presidential Speechwriter Richard Goodwin at her side, she pointed out twelve passages that she considered to be invasions of her privacy, demanded their deletion. The passages included:

► An account of how President Kennedy personally selected the pink wool suit that Jackie wore that day in Dallas because, according to the *New York Daily News*, he wanted to make sure she would show up "the cheap Texas broads."

► An unnecessarily personal and detailed recounting of Jackie's conversation with her husband on their last night together.

► In the description of the actual assassination, the "clinical, gruesome detail" of the President's injuries, as one reader described it, and of Jackie's attempts to cover the wounds.

► A passage describing how Jackie used petroleum jelly in order to slip her wedding ring on Jack's finger after he had been pronounced dead at Dallas' Parkland Hospital.

► A report of her reaction on learning the identity of her husband's assassin. "That's absurd," she cried when she was told that it was not a right-wing fanatic but Lee Harvey Oswald. "He didn't even have the satisfaction of being killed for civil rights. It had to be some silly little Communist." To her mother, Mrs. Hugh Auchincloss, she later said: "It robs his death of any meaning."

► An account of a dispute over where Kennedy should be buried. Most of the family favored his native Massachusetts, but after Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara entered an eloquent plea for Arlington, Jackie chose that site.

The day after Jackie spelled out her objections, Goodwin and Editor Attwood met in Bobby Kennedy's 14th-floor apartment at United Nations Plaza to see what could be done. "What Jackie wanted," said one publishing executive, "was simply to chop the twelve points out. She wanted to use a meat ax. Instead, Goodwin agreed that a scalpel could be used."

Wielding scalpels—and occasionally surgical saws—Goodwin and Attwood

carved away until sundown. They cut out most of a passage describing how Caroline Kennedy, then nearly six, learned of her father's death from her nanny. They condensed her reaction into two words: "She cried." There was considerable paraphrasing where Jackie's own words had been used. Direct quotes from two letters that Jackie had written to Jack—one while she was holidaying in Greece a month before his murder, the other written after his death and placed in his casket—were reworded and trimmed drastically. Cuts were made in all four installments of the *Look* serial, the bulk of them in the last two, which deal with the immediate aftermath of the assassination, the flight to Washington and the funeral.

Attwood and Goodwin continued to



JACKIE VICTORIOUS IN MANHATTAN

that the Kennedys, too, were satisfied—and with better reason. "Every passage of a personal nature under contention was either deleted by *Look* or changed to her satisfaction," he said. Therefore Mrs. Kennedy "has withdrawn her suit." Both sides emphasized that the serial could in no way be considered an authorized version. As if that were not enough, the Kennedys rubbed an added pinch of salt into *Look's* wounds. Possibly to get the family off the hook for what is said to be a highly unflattering portrayal of Lyndon Johnson, Jackie deplored what she described as "historical inaccuracies and unfair references in this book."

Ironic Upshot. Though Jackie's separate suits against Manchester and Harper had not been withdrawn at week's



BOBBY TUMBLING AT SUN VALLEY

Cutting away the gingerbread with scalpel and saw.

perform minor incisions and excisions for the next three days. At midweek, they met in Rifkind's Madison Avenue offices to thrash out a final understanding. For 7½ hours, eleven participants painstakingly examined every word of a four-page draft agreement. What held things up, as one of them acidly put it, was the fact that Bobby Kennedy was off skiing in Idaho, where he narrowly escaped injury in a bad fall, and had to be consulted by telephone on every point at his "Sun Valley command post."

Off the Hook. When the locked doors swung open, Attwood was the first to step up to an array of five television cameras and eleven microphones to issue a statement. According to his tight-faced account, *Look* had hardly given away a thing. The changes, he said, "in no way affected the historical accuracy or completeness of Mr. Manchester's manuscript." Added Attwood unconvincingly: "We are satisfied with the outcome of the discussions."

In his statement, Rifkind made it clear

end, the defendants' deadline for filing arguments was delayed until this week to give both sides more time for negotiations. Deletions from the book, which runs to 300,000 words, are likely to be much more extensive.

Ironically, the upshot of the dispute has been to draw attention to the very sections of the book that, in Jackie's view, most threatened her privacy. There was some fear that the deletions might be ignored by publishers outside the U.S. In Hamburg, Editor Henri Nannen of West Germany's sensational weekly *Der Stern* said that he intended to publish the unexpurgated version of the serialization, for which he paid *Look* \$72,500. "There is nothing in our contract with *Look* about changes and deletions," he said. Because *Look* is responsible for the contents of foreign serializations under last week's agreement with Jackie, the magazine plans to fly an agent to Germany to try to get Nannen to change his mind.

Though a few untidy loose ends re-

mained, the dispute seemed to have run its course. Observers were already wondering whom it helped and whom it hurt. The publishers, for one, seemed unable to resolve the sort of questions of taste and discretion that commonly confront magazines and newspapers when they explore stories in depth. Manchester's material passed through innumerable filters; yet not one of those who read it screened out the passages that ultimately triggered the battle of the book.

For two who did not read the book—Robert Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson—the political implications were ambiguous. Almost all of the deletions concerned Jackie and her children, not the hostile appraisal of the President. Weeks before *Look* was to hit the newsstands, months before the book's scheduled April appearance, there are already signs that the shabby treatment of Lyndon Johnson might create a backlash of public sympathy for him. Said Malcolm Kilduff, who was Kennedy's press secretary on the trip to Texas and who came back to Washington on Air Force One after the assassination: "I can't help but feel that Johnson showed the utmost concern for Mrs. Kennedy and the whole Kennedy party that was with us. Once he got off the plane, he continued to show that concern. There was no grossness on his part, as has been implied by others."

As for Jackie Kennedy, having comported herself with regal mien in the days following the assassination, she apparently lost some of her composure during her ten hours of interviews with Manchester. Her usually impeccable taste deserted her, as did the judgment and discretion of her interviewer. At week's end, with a settlement in sight, Jackie prepared to fly with her children to Antigua in the British West Indies. There she planned to rent a cottage at a hotel for eleven days of rest and—she hopes—complete privacy.

SEQUELS

A Last Wish

Another chapter in the history of John F. Kennedy's assassination drew toward a close last week. Jack Ruby, whose conviction for the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald was struck down in October by the Texas Court of Appeals, lay incurably ill of cancer in Dallas' Parkland Memorial Hospital, to which he had been transferred from the Dallas County jail. The chances seemed remote that he would ever face his retrial, which is scheduled for February in Wichita Falls, Texas.

Coughing, vomiting and experiencing chest pains, Ruby at first received treatment for a virus at the jail, was hospitalized only after he assured Sheriff William Decker that he was feeling "not worth a damn." Though the precise source of Ruby's cancer remained undetermined, tests showed a malignancy in a lymph node in his neck and a clus-



MAILMAN FIGHTING THE HOLIDAY RUSH
As much as all other countries combined.

ter of nodules in the chest and lungs. So far advanced is the cancer that doctors ruled out surgery and radiation, instead gave Ruby regular intravenous doses of 5-fluorouracil, a drug that starves cancerous cells and, when successful, slows the deadly spread of the disease.

A pale, sunken shadow of his once robust self, Ruby continued to look back on the assassination even in his final illness. Though his claim has already been corroborated by two lie-detector tests, he wants to take another test, says his brother Earl, "so that people will be convinced that there was no plan on his part, or conspiracy of any kind," to kill Oswald. "There is nothing to hide," Ruby said last week. "There was no one else."

THE ADMINISTRATION

More Zip for the P.O.

While the rest of the nation celebrates the holidays, the U.S. Post Office yearly undergoes its weeks of winter discontent. This year the Post Office staggered beneath a record 9 billion pieces of holiday mail, an avalanche that subsides only gradually in the last hours of the old year. By diverting \$30 million from next spring's budget, hiring temporary workers earlier than usual and winning a high degree of public cooperation—even the White House used ZIP codes on its Christmas cards—the Post Office managed to get by with only routine delays in most places. Much worse than a couple of weeks of slower deliveries, however, is the very real danger of having a "holiday hell" all year long. The Johnson Administration fears that the ever-growing mail load imposed on an archaic postal system could seriously erode year-round service in a few years unless drastic reforms are made.

Chicago Snarls. The Post Office now handles some 80 billion pieces of mail annually, as much as all other countries

combined. The increase in the past year alone was 6%—twice the anticipated rise. As a result, in late September and early October the Post Office suffered some snarls and snafus—particularly in Chicago, the nation's busiest relay point. Even after that crisis abated, one large direct-mail company reported a ten-day delay in sending third-class mail from Manhattan to Brooklyn.

One of the postal system's worst problems is the obsolescence of its facilities. Few major terminals have been built in the East since World War II. While existing processing centers are often well situated in relation to railroad networks, mail moves increasingly by truck and plane. Automation has swept the industrial world but so far has barely touched the Post Office, where the manual labor of 681,600 employees, now reinforced by 150,000 seasonal workers, still is the prime mover of mail. Opposition from powerful postal unions and from some lethargic officials has slowed innovation.

Subject of Ridicule. Less tangible but nonetheless real has been the department's stepchild status in Washington. Congress looks at the Post Office Department as one of the last big pork barrels. Appointments and construction schedules both remain matters of patronage. Because the Post Office charges the public for service, the chronic P.O. deficit—estimated at \$1.2 billion for the current fiscal year—is a subject of congressional ridicule. Yet it is Congress that sets the rates, fixes wages, and writes other regulations that assure losses in most postal operations.

The Post Office is also caught in a personnel bind. The generation of workers and supervisors recruited in the hungry '30s, when civil services attracted many qualified young men, is now retiring. With a basic starting pay of \$5,331 for clerks and letter carriers,