

JFK's Aide Says Author Broke Pact

BOSTON, Feb. 14 (AP)—Former presidential assistant Kenneth P. O'Donnell said today that William Manchester, author of "Death of a President," promised him that none of the information he gave Manchester would be published before the 1968 election.

O'Donnell said in an interview with the Boston Globe that he and other aides of the late John F. Kennedy consented to be interviewed for the book "only on the basis that none of the information would appear" before the next presidential election.

"For him to say now that the agreement referred to the book and not to magazine articles is silly on its face," O'Donnell said.

Manchester "never mentioned magazine serialization to me," O'Donnell said. "This wasn't any contract with Sen. (Robert F.) Kennedy. This was his promise to me."

Further Cuts Sought In Manchester Book

By JUDSON HAND
World Journal Tribune Staff

A journalist who represented Sen. Robert F. Kennedy in editing William Manchester's controversial book "The Death of a President" today declared the manuscript should have been changed more.

"If I'd had my way there would have been a hell of a lot more changes," said John Seigenthaler, editor of the Nashville Tennessean, by telephone. Without being specific, he indicated he thought the changes should have been in passages dealing with President Johnson and with "personal" reactions of Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy.

Seigenthaler was reacting to remarks by Manchester on a television show Sunday in which he said "overzealous employees" of the senator and Mrs. Kennedy blew up controversy over the book.

"Had the Kennedys read the book last spring I think we would have been spared much," said Manchester.

NOT EMPLOYEES

Seigenthaler and Edwin Guthman, national news editor of the Los Angeles Times, who also represented Sen. Kennedy, went over the manuscript with Evan Thomas, editor-in-chief of Harper & Row, the publishing house.

Guthman, reached by tele-

phone, said "I wish Manchester had been more specific on the TV show. I'm not sure I know what he's talking about."

Asked if he thought he'd helped "blow up" controversy over the book, he replied, "That's not the way I'd put it."

Both journalists denied vehemently that they were employees of the senator or Mrs. Kennedy. Both said they'd refused all payment for work on the book.

Neither would comment on Manchester's statement that "the difficulties arose on lower levels when there were employees who know they would be answerable to the Kennedys and who were understandably over zealous in their suggestions."

"I don't have any idea to whom he's referring," said Seigenthaler.

At the same time, Thomas said he was "appalled" that a letter from him to Seigenthaler and Guthman had been made public. He said he regarded the letter as a "privileged" communication.

The letter, which Manchester said he'd never seen, was reported to state that the book was "in part gratuitously and tastelessly insulting to President Johnson."

Thomas declared that "the overall tone of the letter was that it was a very good book—

too good a book not to be improved."

He said the letter had said nothing he hadn't said "to Manchester's face" when the two were going over the manuscript line-by-line.

Seigenthaler said he and others involved in editing the book for the Kennedys had declined to present their case on a network television show.

"The book's a best seller before it's been published," he said. "Why should I publicize it further?"

However, he said he may speak up later "if there are a number of inaccuracies in the book, as I suspect there may be."