

Mrs. Kennedy Gives Publishers Notice of Court Move on Book

By JOHN CORRY

Mrs. John F. Kennedy has served a summons on Harper & Row and Look magazine in an apparent effort to stop the publication of a book she once wanted written "in the interest of personal accuracy."

The book, "Death of a President," was written by William Manchester, who returned here from Europe yesterday. He said that he was "puzzled by the disturbance" and that he had had "advice not to speak to anyone."

The summons, according to Harper & Row, is simply a notice that Mrs. Kennedy will pursue court action. It carries no legal attachment and does not show what course Mrs. Kennedy will follow.

Mr. Manchester, who arrived on the Queen Mary, said he was "out of the picture" and "not informed on what was happening."

A friend of his said later that at Mrs. Kennedy's request Mr. Manchester had made some revisions in the book about President Kennedy's assassination. But the friend said no one in the Kennedy family had been shown the revised book "for fear they will want more changes."

Mrs. Kennedy chose Mr. Manchester to write the story of the assassination "to prevent

Continued on Page 42, Column 6

distortion and sensationalism." Now she is said to be upset by Mr. Manchester's use of some of her personal recollections.

Senator Robert F. Kennedy, the President's brother, has told Harper & Row that he would not seek to prevent publication of "Death of a President" although he is known to be unhappy with it.

A source close to the New York Democrat said that the original manuscript had reflected the distaste some of the Kennedys felt for President Johnson and that Mr. Kennedy and his associates believed this could hurt the Senator's political career.

The unedited version of the book, he said, depicted Mr. Johnson as boorish. He said that, in describing the air trip from Dallas to Washington after the assassination Mr. Manchester had indicated that Mr. Johnson had not shown respect for Mrs. Kennedy's feelings.

Sorensen Advice

The source also said that, because the book might be regarded as the official Kennedy family version of the assassination, it could create insurmountable tension between the Johnson and Kennedy political alliances.

Mr. Manchester, he said, had reported conversations that the Kennedys had regarded as private.

"The Kennedys fear," he said, "that the book will be so anti-Johnson as to be damaging to Bob."

He said Theodore C. Sorensen, who was once a special counsel to President Kennedy, had suggested to Senator Kennedy that he pursue legal action. Another associate, he said,

suggested to Senator Kennedy that he rebut Mr. Manchester in a magazine article.

Mrs. Kennedy is said to regret having made a confidant of Mr. Manchester. Mr. Manchester, in turn, was described by a friend as "bewildered and caught in the middle of an unpleasant situation."

Last February Mr. Manchester told a friend that writing the book had been "sheer agony" because he had been forced to relive the time of the assassination. He said he had regarded the book as a "special trust."

Harper & Row had scheduled publication of "Death of a President" in March but announced over the weekend that it was delaying it until April because of revisions by the author.

Cass Canfield, chairman of the board of Harper & Row, said he was "deeply distressed over the fact that Mrs. Kennedy is upset, because I have great respect and admiration for her."

Earlier, when asked if the Kennedy family had sought changes in the book because of Mrs. Kennedy's feelings, Evan Thomas, vice president of Harper & Row, said:

"It is impossible to say as to their motives."

If "Death of a President" is published, it is virtually certain to be a best seller.

Look magazine is said to have paid more than \$650,000 for the serialization rights and to have sold its ownership of the European rights for nearly \$300,000. The Sunday Times of London paid more than \$100,000 for the rights in Britain and Ireland. French publication is to be in Paris Match, German in Der Stern and Italian in Epoca.

The serialization in Look has been scheduled to begin on Jan. 10.