

## PUBLISHER BACKS DECISION TO PRINT

Holds 'People Have Right to Know' Assassination Facts

By JOHN CORRY

Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., defended yesterday its decision to publish "The Death of a President," and said that the people had a "right to know the facts of the awesome tragedy"—the assassination of President Kennedy.

Cass Canfield, the chairman of the executive committee of Harper & Row, softly criticized the Kennedy family by suggesting that, if any of them had read the book, "the present situation might have been avoided."

Last Friday, Mrs. John F. Kennedy filed a suit in State Supreme Court to prevent both the publication of the book and its imminent serialization in Look magazine.

The suit is based on the contention that William Manchester, the author of the book, violated his contract with Senator Robert F. Kennedy. The contract said that "The Death of a President" could not be published before Nov. 22, 1968, and that it must be approved by Mrs. Kennedy and Senator Kennedy.

### Breach of Propriety Seen

Mrs. Kennedy said she had filed the suit because Mr. Manchester had abused her confidence by using her personal recollections "without regard to accepted standards of propriety and good faith."

Simon H. Rifkind, attorney for Mrs. Kennedy, said yesterday that he knew "nothing about any efforts at a settlement."

However, a source close to the participants in the dispute, said that "contacts, informal ones" were being made by both sides.

Mr. Canfield made his statement at the Overseas Press Club, 54 West 40th Street, before about 40 reporters. Afterward, he declined to answer any questions about the statement or the book.

He said that his "experience in connection with 'The Death of a President' has been the most trying and distressing one in a 40-year publishing career."

"The principals involved in this dispute are all people for whom I have such deep regard and admiration," he said, adding that the book "is a moving, sincere and outstanding piece of writing."

Mr. Canfield said that Mr. Manchester had been "subject to many repeated pressures for many months" because of the book, and he himself felt "very badly" that Mrs. Kennedy was disturbed.

## Text of Statement by Publisher of Book

Following is the text of a statement issued yesterday by Cass Canfield, chairman of the executive committee of Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., in the controversy over "The Death of a President," a book written by William Manchester:

My experience in connection with "The Death of a President" has been the most trying and distressing one in a 40-year publishing career, and Evan Thomas, the editor of the book at Harper & Row, shares my distress. We take great pride in being the publishers of President Kennedy's great book, "Profiles in Courage," and of books by Senator Robert F. Kennedy. When the Kennedy family asked us to publish the Manchester book and we agreed to do so, they were asking us to assume the responsibilities of a publisher. It is a function we have

exercised honorably and professionally over nearly 150 years.

I want to stress how very badly I feel that Mrs. Kennedy, for whom I have such deep regard and respect, is so disturbed about the book. The principals involved in this dispute are all people for whom I have deep regard and admiration. Mr. Manchester's book itself is a moving, sincere and outstanding piece of writing. He has been subject to many repeated pressures for many months. He was asked to prepare for publication an accurate account of the events of the assassination and he was assured that his role as an author would be respected.

Understandably, the members of the Kennedy family were unwilling to read the manuscript themselves and

hence they designated representatives to do this for them. Had they read it themselves, the present situation might have been avoided.

Harper & Row was not motivated by profit when it undertook the publication of this book. On the contrary, all Harper profits will go to the Kennedy Library except for a small return to Harper's on our first printing. In no event will this limit be exceeded. Mr. Manchester is also making substantial contributions to the library from his earnings on the book. Incidentally Harper & Row's advance to him was \$40,000 and not the \$675,000 erroneously reported by the press.

In the interest of historical accuracy and of the people's right to know the true facts of the awesome tragedy—the right to know which led the Kennedy family to request Mr. Manchester to write his book and us to publish it—we join with him in defending the book's right to live.

Harper & Row, Mr. Canfield said, "was not motivated by profit" when it undertook to publish "The Death of a President."

"On the contrary," he said, "all Harper profits will go to the Kennedy Library except for a small return to Harper's on our first printing."

Mr. Manchester, Mr. Canfield said, "is also making substantial contributions to the library from his earnings on the book." Harper & Row's advance to Mr. Manchester, he said, was \$40,000 "and not the \$675,000 erroneously reported by the press."

Look magazine has paid \$665,000 to serialize the book, which is virtually certain to be a best seller. Look has already received half the \$665,000 back in its sale of its European rights.

Mr. Canfield apparently offered his statement more in sorrow than in anger yesterday. It is known that Harper & Row had not expected Mrs. Kennedy to press her suit, and that Senator Kennedy had been reluctant to see her do so.

The book is said by some persons to present President Johnson in an unfavorable light, in some situations, and to speak of hostility that the Kennedys felt toward him. This, the Senator and his advisers thought, could only increase political tensions between the Kennedys and the Johnsons.

Nonetheless, the Senator is said to feel that a suit was not the appropriate action.

Besides politics, the dispute over the book touches persons who are connected through marriage, friendship and business.

### Was 'Deeply Distressed'

Last week Mr. Canfield said, he was "deeply distressed over the fact that Mrs. Kennedy is upset because I have great respect and admiration for her."

Mrs. Kennedy's sister, Mrs. Stanislas Radziwill, was once



The New York Times

**PUBLISHER COMMENTS:** Cass Canfield, head of Harper & Row, defending William Manchester's book at news conference yesterday.

married to Michael T. Canfield, the son of Mr. Canfield, who is the grandfather of their son Anthony.

The memorandum of agreement signed by Mr. Manchester and Senator Kennedy stipulates that, "at the request of the Kennedy family, the publisher will be Harper & Row." Mr. Manchester was asked to get a written release from Little, Brown & Co., which was then his publisher.

Evan Thomas, the vice president of Harper & Row, is also an old friend of the Kennedys. He edited "Profiles in Courage," for which John F. Kennedy re-

ceived a Pulitzer prize in biography in 1957, and he worked on "The Enemy Within," Robert Kennedy's book on the teamsters union.

The Senator, then the United States Attorney General, was helped in writing the book by John Seigenthaler, now editor of The Nashville Tennessean and then an administrative assistant to Mr. Kennedy. Later, Mr. Seigenthaler reviewed "The Death of a President" for the Senator.

During the editing of "The Enemy Within," Mr. Thomas, Mr. Seigenthaler and the Senator became quite close.

### Aided John Kennedy

William Attwood, editor in chief of Cowles Communications, which publishes Look, has connections, too. In 1960, John Kennedy asked him to join his campaign staff. Later, Mr. Kennedy appointed him, successively, Ambassador to Guinea and Kenya.

Cowles Communications and Harper & Row are also joined by family ties. John Cowles Jr., a nephew of Gardner Cowles, the chairman of Cowles, is the editor of The Minneapolis Star and Tribune, which owns half of Harper's magazine.

Harper & Row owns the other half. John Cowles Jr. is the president of Harper's and serves on its board with Mr. Canfield, who is also his father-in-law.

Mr. Cowles married the former Jane Sage Fuller Flores, a daughter of Mr. Canfield's second wife.

"The thing is," said a participant in the dispute, "all these people know one another. It's baffling that the thing has gone as far as it has."