

Harper Hopeful of Accord To Publish Kennedy Book

By JOHN CORRY

Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., said last night that the chances "looked good" that its dispute with Mrs. John F. Kennedy would be settled out of court. However, neither

Harper & Row nor the negotiators for Mrs. Kennedy said a settlement was imminent. There were indications that it was slightly more difficult than had been expected.

For one thing, Mrs. Kennedy's representatives believe they have a stronger case against Harper & Row than they had against Look magazine. For another, "The Death of a President," in book form, is a far bulkier package than the serialization.

The book, which is scheduled for April, is said to be about 300,000 words in length. Its four-part serialization, which Look will begin in the issue that goes on sale Jan. 10, is 60,000 words long.

Agrees to Withdraw Suit

Mrs. Kennedy agreed Wednesday night to withdraw her suit to prevent Look from publishing the serialization. She said the magazine had "agreed to remove or modify all those passages" that relate to the personal life of herself or her children.

Technically, the legal action against Look is still pending. Mrs. Kennedy's attorney, Simon H. Rifkind, has not filed a notice of discontinuance, which would release Cowles Communications, Inc., the publisher of Look, as a defendant in the suit.

The other defendants are Harper & Row and William Manchester, who wrote "The

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Death of a President." A Look executive said yesterday that the serialization would be 60,000 words, not 80,000 words as had been reported. He said that Look had been authorized to use up to 80,000 words, but that the serialization, even before the legal action began, had been planned at 60,000 words.

"We didn't reveal it," he said, "because we didn't want to bind ourselves in. We wanted the leeway to maneuver."

He said that because of the agreement with Mrs. Kennedy the serialization had been shortened by nearly 1,600 words. He emphasized, however, that most of the loss had come through the rewriting of disputed passages and that there had been no major deletions.

"The historical accuracy is unimpaired," he said. "The changes dealt with the descriptions of Mrs. Kennedy's emotions, such as how she felt when she was standing by her husband's coffin."

He said Mr. Manchester was being kept "informed" of the revisions.

A Single Revision

The first installment of the serialization, which deals largely with the background to the assassination of President Kennedy, needed only one revision.

The page on which this appeared, the Look executive said, had not been printed. He said that Look's production schedules would not be affected and that copies of the issue would be bound early next week in Chicago.

Stern, a weekly magazine in West Germany with a circulation of about 2 million, announced yesterday that it had agreed to pay Look \$72,500 for the German language rights to the serialization.

Stern said it would use the serialization in weekly installments and that they would be "unshortened and unchanged."

Under the agreement with Mrs. Kennedy, however, Look must control the material that is serialized elsewhere. A spokesman for Look said that it would "take the appropriate action" in dealing with Stern.

There are reports that copies of the material deleted from

"The Death of a President" have found their way to Taiwan, where there are plans to publish unexpurgated versions of the book.

However, a report from Taiwan yesterday indicated that, though the publishers there are not bound by international copyright laws, the Nationalist Chinese Government would intervene to block any attempts to distribute the book.

It is believed that the Nationalist Chinese Government is wary of entangling itself in a dispute, which an unauthorized version of the book could raise.

Meanwhile, it was announced that Mrs. Kennedy and her children would leave here Dec. 26 for a vacation in Antigua in the British West Indies. They plan to return Jan. 5.

Lawyers Confer

Earlier yesterday, Mr. Rifkind, Carleton Eldridge, Mr. Manchester's lawyer, and Edward Greenbaum, the lawyer for Harper & Row, conferred with Justice Saul S. Streit of the State Supreme Court.

Justice Streit had ordered the defendants in Mrs. Kennedy's suit to file their answers to her charges by today.

Mr. Greenbaum and Mr. Eldridge, however, asked that the deadline be extended until Tuesday, which is the date the hearing on Mrs. Kennedy's appeal is to be held.

Justice Streit granted the extension. It is known that the lawyers in the litigation had told him earlier that an out-of-court settlement was possible. The appeal for an extension in filing the papers, it was believed, was a further indication of this.

Look Printing Is Not Delayed

Special to The New York Times

CHICAGO, Dec. 22—A spokesman for R. R. Donnelley & Sons, Inc., the printers of Look magazine, said today that the edition now on the presses, which contains the first installment of the controversial serialization of "The Death of a President," would not have to be reprinted.

The spokesman said those 8 million copies of the magazine were not affected by the agreement of Cowles Communication Inc., to delete 1,600 words from the four-part account upon the demands of Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy.

No problems are expected in printing the three other installments, the spokesman added.