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FIRST LEAD KENNEDY BOOK (230)

BY JOHN VINOCUR

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

NEW YORK, DEC. 27 (AP)-A SUPREME COURT JUSTICE TODAY SET A HEARING FOR THURSDAY AT THE REQUEST OF THE PUBLISHERS OF "THE DEATH OF A PRESIDENT" IN MRS. JOHN F. KENNEDY'S SUIT TO BLOCK ITS PUBLICATION.

(AT THE SAME TIME, THE COUNSEL FOR THE AILING AUTHOR, WILLIAM MANCHESTER, ASKED THAT THE HEARING, AS IT APPLIES TO HIM, BE PUT OFF UNTIL JAN. 15.

~~JUSTICE SAUL STREIT GRANTED BOTH REQUESTS.~~

EDWARD S. GREENBAUM, COUNSEL FOR THE PUBLISHERS, HARPER & ROW, DEMANDED THE THURSDAY HEARING DATE.

OUTSIDE THE COURT, GREENBAUM SAID "NO HITCH HAS DEVELOPED" IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH MRS. KENNEDY'S REPRESENTATIVES. NEGOTIATIONS WERE CANCELED YESTERDAY WHEN MANCHESTER WAS TAKEN TO A HOSPITAL IN CONNECTICUT SUFFERING FROM PNEUMONIA.

SIMON H. RIFKIN, MRS. KENNEDY'S CHIEF COUNSEL, ASKED ABOUT THE PUBLISHER'S INSISTENCE ON A THURSDAY HEARING, SAID: "I DON'T QUITE UNDERSTAND IT, BUT I WON'T COMMENT."

ASKED HOW CLOSE THE PARTIES WERE TO AN OUT OF COURT AGREEMENT, HE REPLIED: "THE SOLUTION HAS NOT BEEN FOUND."

GREENBAUM, RIFKIN, AND CARLETON ELDRIDGE, ATTORNEY FOR MANCHESTER, CONFERRED WITH STREIT IN HIS CHAMBERS FOR MORE THAN AN HOUR BEFORE THEY WENT TO AN OPEN COURTROOM WHERE THE MOTIONS FOR DELAYS WERE HEARD.

THE DEFENDANTS HAD BEEN ORDERED TO SHOW CAUSE TODAY WHY THEY SHOULD NOT BE BARRED FROM BRINGING OUT MANCHESTER'S 300,000-WORD ACCOUNT OF THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY.

EARLIER, RIFKIN HAD SAID "I HAVE NO GRAVE OBJECTIONS TO PUTTING THE MATTER OVER AS LONG AS NECESSARY. I'LL MAKE THAT VERY CLEAR. COUNSEL FOR MR. MANCHESTER NEEDS THE VIEWS OF HIS CLIENT AND THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE NOW."

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PMS BUDGET (380)

KENNEDY BOOK

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NEW YORK, DEC. 27 (AP)-THE DISPUTE OVER "THE DEATH OF A PRESIDENT" MOVES INTO A JUDGE'S CHAMBERS TODAY WITH MRS. JOHN F. KENNEDY'S ATTORNEY FAVORING A POSTPONEMENT OF HEARINGS ON HER MOVE TO BLOCK PUBLICATION OF THE BOOK.

AUTHOR WILLIAM MANCHESTER, HOSPITALIZED WITH PNEUMONIA, AND HARPER & ROW, PUBLISHERS OF HIS 300,000-WORD MANUSCRIPT ON THE ASSASSINATION OF THE PRESIDENT, HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO SHOW CAUSE IN STATE SUPREME COURT WHY THEY SHOULD NOT BE BARRED FROM BRINGING OUT THE ACCOUNT.

LAWYERS FOR THE TWO SIDES WERE TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION INFORMALLY IN JUSTICE SAUL STREIT'S CHAMBERS.

"I HAVE NO GRAVE OBJECTIONS TO PUTTING THE MATTER OVER AS LONG AS NECESSARY," SAID SIMON H. RIFKIND, ATTORNEY FOR MRS. KENNEDY. "I'LL MAKE THAT VERY CLEAR. COUNSEL FOR MR. MANCHESTER NEEDS THE VIEWS OF HIS CLIENT AND THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE NOW."

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STREIT, WHO ISSUED THE SHOW CAUSE ORDER DEC. 16, SUGGESTED PREVIOUSLY HE WOULD AGREE TO POSTPONE THE HEARINGS IF NEGOTIATIONS ON REMOVING DISPUTED PASSAGES FROM THE TEXT WERE NOT COMPLETED BY TODAY.

EDWARD S. GREENBAUM, ATTORNEY FOR THE PUBLISHERS, DECLINED COMMENT ON ANY POSTPONEMENT REQUEST.

NEGOTIATIONS ON TRIMMING PASSAGES THAT MRS. KENNEDY CONSIDERS INTIMATE BEYOND THE INTEREST OF HISTORY CONTINUED YESTERDAY. MORE TALKS -- A KENNEDY SPOKESMAN SAID THEY "ARE GOING ALONG WELL" -- WERE SCHEDULED FOR TODAY.

"NATURALLY," THE SPOKESMAN SAID, "THIS ILLNESS MAKES THINGS JUST THAT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT. MANCHESTER CAN'T BE CONSULTED ON THE MANUSCRIPT AND THAT SLOWS THINGS, OF COURSE."

MRS. KENNEDY HAS ALREADY REACHED A SETTLEMENT ON DELETING SECTIONS OF A 30,000-WORD EXTRACT OF THE MANUSCRIPT THAT LOOK MAGAZINE PLANS TO SERIALIZE BEGINNING IN THE ISSUE WHICH REACHES NEWSSTANDS JAN. 10. THE BOOK IS SCHEDULED FOR PUBLICATION IN APRIL.



THE LITERARY AND LEGAL MANEUVERING CAME AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF MANCHESTER'S ILLNESS, A WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT DENYING COMMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO THE PRESIDENT BY NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE RELATING TO THE ASSASSINATION, AND MRS. KENNEDY'S DEPARTURE WITH HER CHILDREN FOR A HOLIDAY ON THE BRITISH WEST INDIES ISLAND OF ANTIGUA.

MANCHESTER WAS ORDERED TO REMAIN IN THE HOSPITAL FOR AT LEAST A WEEK AFTER HIS ADMISSION EARLY MONDAY MORNING WITH WHAT HIS PHYSICIAN CALLED "A SLIGHT TOUCH OF PNEUMONIA."

THE 44-YEAR-OLD WRITER WAS TAKEN OFF THE CRITICAL LIST TODAY AND WAS REPORTED IN GOOD SPIRITS AFTER A COMFORTABLE NIGHT, HIS PHYSICIAN, DR. F. ERWIN TRACY, SAID AT MIDDLESEX MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AT MIDDLETOWN, CONN.

TRACY BARRED TELEPHONE CALLS OF "AN EMOTIONAL OR CONTROVERSIAL NATURE" TO MANCHESTER. THE DOCTOR SAID HE HAS BEEN "CONFUSED AND DEPRESSED" FOR THE PAST FEW WEEKS.

MANCHESTER, PICKED BY MRS. KENNEDY TO WRITE A DEFINITIVE ACCOUNT OF THE ASSASSINATION, WAS ACCUSED IN THE LAWSUIT FILED BY THE PRESIDENT'S WIDOW OF BREAKING THEIR CONTRACT BY OFFERING HIS MANUSCRIPT FOR PUBLICATION WITHOUT HER APPROVAL. SOME PASSAGES IN THE TEXT, SHE SAID, CONTAINED MATERIAL CONSTITUTING AN INVASION OF HER PRIVACY.

MRS. KENNEDY AND HER BROTHER-IN-LAW, SEN. ROBERT F. KENNEDY, D-N.Y., SENT MANCHESTER TELEGRAMS WISHING HIM A SPEEDY RECOVERY.

PRESIDENT JOHNSON, MEANWHILE, ASKED THAT HIS STAFF NOT DISCUSS THE BOOK OR THE CONTROVERSY AROUND IT FOLLOWING A NEWSWEEK REPORT THAT THE PRESIDENT'S RECOLLECTIONS OF HIS SUCCESSION VARIED SHARPLY WITH THOSE SAID TO APPEAR IN THE STILL UNPUBLISHED TEXT.

WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY GEORGE CHRISTIAN CALLED THE STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO JOHNSON IN THE ARTICLE "INACCURATE AND UNTRUE" AND SAID "THE PRESIDENT HAS GRANTED NO INTERVIEWS TO ANYONE, INCLUDING MR. MANCHESTER, AND HAS ASKED HIS STAFF TO REFRAIN FROM DISCUSSING THE SUBJECT."

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JOHNSON HAS NOT SEEN THE MANCHESTER BOOK, CHRISTIAN SAID, BUT ADDED "I CAN'T SAY THAT HE'LL NEVER DISCUSS THE SUBJECT AGAIN."

NEWSWEEK REPORTED THAT MANCHESTER'S MANUSCRIPT CONTAINED A DESCRIPTION OF MRS. KENNEDY'S SHOCK AT FINDING JOHNSON ALREADY ON BOARD AIR FORCE ONE WHEN SHE ENTERED THE JET IN DALLAS AFTER THE ASSASSINATION. IT ALSO SAID SHE FOUND GRATING THAT JOHNSON WOULD ADDRESS HER AS "HONEY."

JOHNSON TOLD INTIMATES, ACCORDING TO THE MAGAZINE, THAT HE ORDERED, AGAINST THE SUGGESTION OF THE SECRET SERVICE, THAT PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S COFFIN BE PLACED IN AIR FORCE ONE INSTEAD OF THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL PLANE.

"I WASN'T GOING TO LET MRS. KENNEDY FLY BACK ALONE WITH HIS BODY," HE QUOTED AS SAYING.

ON THE "HONEY" ISSUE, JOHNSON REPORTEDLY EXPLAINED THAT "IT'S JUST A WORD THAT COMES EASY TO ME AS A TEXAN."

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NEWSWEEK EDITOR OSBORN ELLIOTT SAID THE MAGAZINE "HAS CONFIDENCE IN ITS REPORTER AND IN THE RELIABILITY OF THE SOURCE FROM WHICH THE INFORMATION CAME. HAD IT BEEN OTHERWISE, WE WOULD NOT HAVE PRINTED THE STORY."

MRS. KENNEDY ARRIVED IN ANTIGUA LAST NIGHT WITH HER CHILDREN, JOHN JR., 5, AND CAROLINE, 8, FOR A WEEK'S VACATION IN THE SUN. WITH THEM WAS A BLONDE GIRL OF CAROLINE'S AGE, IDENTIFIED ONLY AS C. NELSON.

THE PARTY WILL STAY AT THE MILL REEF CLUB, ONE OF THE MOST PLUSH ON THE ISLAND, SCHEDULED TO BECOME INDEPENDENT IN A FEW MONTHS.

MRS. KENNEDY AND THE CHILDREN ARRIVED BY COMMERCIAL JETLINER FROM NEW YORK. WHILE WAITING TO BOARD THE PLANE, THE PRESIDENT'S WIDOW DECLINED TO ANSWER REPORTERS' QUESTIONS OR SMILE FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS.

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