

Johnson 'Indignant' Over Book 'Feels He Can't Hit Back'

WASHINGTON — (UPI) — President Johnson today is reported to feel maligned and without a forum to combat author William Manchester's characterizations of his behavior in the days following President Kennedy's assassination.

According to a copyright interview in U.S. News & World Report, Johnson is "indignant" and his friends are convinced Manchester's "The Death of a President" was designed to "destroy Johnson."

The magazine quotes friends and sources close to Johnson as saying the Kennedy-commissioned account of the assassination was intended to make Johnson "out to be some sort of monster."

'VENDETTA'

The report described the book as "an outward manifestation of a deep, bitter, and continuing vendetta that has been going on between warring factions of the Democratic Party ever since that fateful day in Dallas."

The magazine goes on to cite examples of what it says were accessions by Johnson to many "unusual demands" by the Kennedy family.

It said "President Johnson and friends have never accepted for a minute that the Kennedy's 'have lost' control of the Manchester manuscript," despite the legal action the family took to bar publication of certain passages.

It said Johnson feels "that he has no recourse, no proper forum, no legitimate way to set the record straight in connection with derogatory reports that have gained wide credence."

'UNUSUAL DEMANDS'

Among the "unusual demands," made on Johnson, the magazine cited:

- Mrs. Kennedy's remaining in the White House for 14 days after her husband's death as contrasted to Eleanor Roosevelt's moving out the day after President Roosevelt died in 1945.

- The maintenance of a White House kindergarten for the Kennedy children and others until the end of the school term in December, 1963.

'CALCULATED'

The magazine quotes a Johnson associate as saying too that:

"The entire post-assassination series of events has been a calculated, contrived, emotional buildup — not for the sake of paying honest respect to and showing genuine grief for John F. Kennedy — but to enhance the image of the Kennedy family and the Kennedy name."

And, the report said, the same associate said the President now feels his legislative success with the "Kennedy program" may have been a source of his troubles in last November's elections.