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DURHAM, N.C., JAN. 6 (AP)--THEODORE C. SORENSON, FORMER AIDE AND CLOSE FRIEND OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, SAID TONIGHT MRS. KENNEDY HAS STRONG GROUNDS FOR COURT ACTION IN THE CONTROVERSY OVER PUBLICATION OF "THE DEATH OF A PRESIDENT," BUT HE EXPRESSED HOPE THE ISSUE WOULD BE SETTLED WITHOUT A HEARING.

✓ SORENSON ALSO IS A MEMBER OF THE LAW FIRM REPRESENTING MRS. KENNEDY IN A DISPUTE WITH AUTHOR WILLIAM MANCHESTER AND THE PUBLISHING FIRM OF HARPER & ROW.

"I'M BIASED AND RETICENT ON THE SUBJECT," SORENSON SAID. HE ACKNOWLEDGED HE HAS NOT READ THE BOOK, WHICH DEALS WITH THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION.

"MRS. KENNEDY KNEW SHE WAS CHOOSING A PAINFUL COURSE WHEN SHE DECIDED TO GO TO THE COURTS," SORENSON STRESSED. "I DON'T WANT TO GO ANY FURTHER THAN THIS." HE SAID.

AS A MEMBER OF THE WHITE HOUSE INNER CIRCLE DURING THE KENNEDY YEARS, SORENSON WORKED IN THE PRESENTATION AND PREPARATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROGRAMS.

NOW HE IS INTERESTED, HE SAID, IN RETURNING TO GOVERNMENT SERVICE, BUT NOT TO AN ELECTIVE OFFICE AS MANY OTHER KENNEDY AIDES HAVE ATTEMPTED, SOME WITHOUT SUCCESS.

"I WON'T SAY THE IDEA HASN'T OCCURRED TO ME," SORENSON ADMITTED. "I'M STILL YOUNG." HOWEVER, HE SAID HE DOES NOT LIKE THE "BACK-SLAPPING" ASPECT OF POLITICAL LIFE THAT SEEMS TO BE NECESSARY FOR CANDIDATES.

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