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U R G E N T

STERN-KENNEDY

HAMBURG, GERMANY, JAN. 25 (AP)-THE WEST GERMAN MAGAZINE STERN IN A SURPRISE ANNOUNCEMENT SAID TODAY IT WAS VOLUNTARILY CUTTING SOME SECTIONS OF ITS SERIALIZATION OF "THE DEATH OF A PRESIDENT" THAT THE FAMILY OF THE LATE PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY HAD FOUND OBJECTIONABLE.

A STERN SPOKESMAN SAID THE CUTS AMOUNTED TO 122 LINES OUT OF A TOTAL OF 7,911 IN THE GERMAN SERIALIZATION OF WILLIAM MANCHESTER'S BOOK ABOUT THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY.

THE CUTS, HE SAID, AFFECTED ONLY PASSAGES DEALING WITH WHAT MRS. KENNEDY HAD TOLD MANCHESTER ABOUT HER "PERSONAL CONCERNS" AT THE TIME OF THE ASSASSINATION.

BUT, HE ADDED, STERN HAS NO INTENTION OF SUBMITTING ITSELF TO WHAT HE CALLED THE "POLITICAL CENSORSHIP OF SEN. ROBERT F. KENNEDY." STERN'S CUTS ARE NOT IDENTICAL WITH THOSE OF LOOK AND OTHER MAGAZINES TO WHICH LOOK HAD SOLD FOREIGN RIGHTS, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

HENRI NANNEN, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF STERN, SENT A TELEGRAM TO MRS. KENNEDY, SAYING:

"WHAT I COULD NOT DO UNDER EITHER POLITICAL CENSORSHIP OR PRESSURE OF LEGAL ACTIONS I GLADLY . . . DO VOLUNTARILY. THE NEXT 'STERN' ISSUE OF WILLIAM MANCHESTER'S 'DEATH OF A PRESIDENT' WILL NOT CONTAIN THE PERSONAL PASSAGES YOU OBJECT TO. I AM SORRY TO HAVE CAUSED YOU DISPLEASURE."

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NEITHER MRS. KENNEDY NOR SEN. KENNEDY WERE AVAILABLE FOR IMMEDIATE COMMENT.

STERN SAID NANNEN GOT A QUICK REPLY FROM MRS. KENNEDY, THANKING HIM. HER FULL RESPONSE WAS NOT DISCLOSED.

LOOK MAGAZINE ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

"WE ARE NATURALLY PLEASED AT THIS TURN OF DEVELOPMENTS. AS FAR AS THE LEGAL QUESTION IS CONCERNED, WE SIMPLY DON'T KNOW WHERE WE ARE UNTIL WE RECEIVE THE OPINION OF THE COURT."

THE OPINION MENTIONED IS THE WRITTEN EXPLANATION OF A HAMBURG COURT RULING MONDAY THAT STERN COULD CONTINUE TO PUBLISH THE UNCUT SERIALIZATIONS. A LOOK SPOKESMAN SAID THAT UNTIL THE EXPLANATION WAS RECEIVED

AND GERMAN LAW CHECKED, THERE COULD BE NO DECISION ON WHETHER TO LET THE SUIT AGAINST STERN DROP OR APPEAL THE DECISION.

THE GERMAN MAGAZINE SAID IT HAD SUBMITTED ITS MANUSCRIPT TO A PANEL COMPRISED OF GOLO MANN, A HISTORY PROFESSOR; KURT BIRRENBACH, A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC MEMBER OF THE WEST GERMAN PARLIAMENT (BUNDESTAG) AND PRESIDENT OF THE GERMAN COMMITTEE FOR THE KENNEDY LIBRARY, AND WERNER HOEFER, A TELEVISION NEWSMAN.

THE PANEL, STERN SAID, HAD CONFIRMED THE MAGAZINE'S CONTENTION THAT NO PASSAGES OF POLITICAL OR HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE HAD BEEN CUT, BUT ONLY "PERSONAL STATEMENTS OF FEELING" BY MRS. KENNEDY.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT CAME TWO DAYS AFTER A HAMBURG CIVIL COURT HAD RULED THAT STERN COULD CONTINUE TO PUBLISH THE UNCUT SERIALIZATION OF THE BOOK.

THREE STERN INSTALLMENTS OF THE SERIES ALREADY HAVE APPEARED THAT HAVE INCLUDED MATERIAL THAT MRS. KENNEDY HAD WANTED CUT.

NANNEN HAS MAINTAINED THAT POLITICAL, MORE THAN PERSONAL, REASONS WERE BEHIND THE KENNEDY FAMILY'S REQUEST TO CUT THE MANCHESTER TEXT. HE ALLUDED TO PASSAGES THAT MIGHT BE CONSTRUED AS UNFAVORABLE TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON.

"I CAN UNDERSTAND THAT SEN. ROBERT KENNEDY WOULD LIKE TO AVERT THIS DISPUTE (WITH JOHNSON) FOR THE SAKE OF HIS POLITICAL CAREER," NANNEN HAS SAID. "BUT THIS CAN BE NO REASON FOR NOT REPORTING THE COMPLETE, UNMODIFIED, HISTORICAL TRUTH."

LOOK MAGAZINE HAD FILED THE HAMBURG SUIT IN AN EFFORT TO HALT STERN FROM PRINTING WHAT IT CONTENDED WAS AN UNAUTHORIZED VERSION OF THE SERIALIZATION.

EA132

THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE SOUGHT AN INJUNCTION AFTER STERN REFUSED TO MAKE CHANGES IN THE ORIGINAL TEXT AS REQUESTED BY MRS. KENNEDY AND AGREED TO IN NEW YORK BY LOOK AND MANCHESTER. LOOK HAD SOLD THE GERMAN MAGAZINE RIGHTS TO STERN FOR A REPORTED \$72,500.

IN CHARGING STERN WITH CONTRACT VIOLATIONS, LOOK DID NOT CITE THE KENNEDY AGREEMENT, BUT RATHER STERN'S PRINTING OF PHOTOGRAPHS, CAPTIONS AND SUBHEADINGS WITHOUT APPROVAL OF LOOK OR MANCHESTER. LOOK ALSO ALLEGED THAT STERN HAD BEGUN THE SERIES AHEAD OF IT AND HAD PUBLICIZED THE SERIES IN A MANNER NOT IN KEEPING WITH THE DIGNITY OF THE MANCHESTER REPORT.

THE HAMBURG CIVIL COURT HELD THAT LOOK DID NOT HAVE A RIGHT OF ITS OWN TO FILE A SUIT ALLEGING COPYRIGHT VIOLATION. THE COURT'S REASONING EVIDENTALLY WAS THAT THE ORIGINAL COPYRIGHT RESTED WITH MANCHESTER AND ONLY HE COULD FILE SUCH A SUIT. MANCHESTER, HOWEVER, WAS NOT A PARTY IN THE CASE.

COWLES COMMUNICATIONS INC., LOOK'S PUBLISHER, WAS DIRECTED TO PAY THE 26,000 MARKS (\$6,500) IN COURT COSTS.

AFTER THE RULING, NANNEN HAILED THE DECISION AS "A VERDICT FOR FREEDOM OF THE PRESS." IT WAS NOT, HE SAID, DIRECTED AGAINST THE KENNEDY FAMILY.

THE MAGAZINE ISSUED A STATEMENT MONDAY SAYING:

"STERN HAS REPEATEDLY DECLARED THAT IT HAD NO INTENTION OF INTRUDING UPON THE INTIMATE SPHERE OF MRS. KENNEDY. BUT THAT IT OPPOSES ALL CENSORSHIP AND THAT IT WILL NOT ACCEPT ABRIDGMENT OF POLITICALLY OR HISTORICALLY INTERESTING PARTS OF THIS REPORT."

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