

Look Magazine's Manchester Gold Mine

New York

In Pennsylvania railroad cars and along the crowded platforms of the New Haven's suburban stations, Look magazine posters continue to urge commuters: "If you can't but it, borrow it."

That exhortation is a reminder of the scramble for newsstand copies of the magazine's four-part serialization of William Manchester's book, "The Death of a President," which began in January and ended with the issue dated March 7.

During the two months of heavily promoted sales, Look's circulation rose from 7.5 million an issue to 9.5 million at the peak of sales of the Manchester issues, according to trade sources. A Look official said that during the series, newsstand sales increased from 500,000 to two million an issue.

With the appearance today of the March 21 issue, the first one after the Manchester series, Look executives expect that sales would begin to level off, but still remain at a new high.

"We've reached the highest circulation in Look's history this week except for the four Manchester issues," a Look official said.

Although he declined to reveal circulation details, trade sources estimated that about 700,000 copies of the current issue have gone to newsstands and that 7.2 million copies have been sent to subscribers.

Before the Manchester issues, the magazine had distributed slightly more than 550,000 copies to the newsstands and 7 million to subscribers.

The estimated total of al-

most 8 million copies would further widen the gap between Look, a bimonthly magazine, and Life, which has a guaranteed circulation between 7.2 million and 7.4 million each week. Life's newsstand sales amount to 500,000.

Subscription increases are more highly prized than newsstand sales because they determine the advertising rates of a publication. Look, while raising its newsstand price to 50 cents from 35 cents on December 27, has retained a subscription rate of \$4 for 24 issues, or less than 17 cents an issue.

Life costs 35 cents at the newsstand and its subscription rate for 52 issues is \$7.75, less than half the newsstand price for each issue.

The financial return from the Manchester series is still a guarded secret at Cowles Communications, Inc., Look's parent company.

However, officials of Look privately acknowledge that the \$650,000 paid for the series has brought a substantial dividend, both in publicity and in sales.

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