

Manchester Says Profit Is Limited

By HARRY GILROY

William Manchester, author of "The Death of a President," will make "three or four hundred thousand dollars" from his history of the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The memorial library named for the President will receive "five to 10 million dollars."

Mr. Manchester gave this summation of financial results from the book in a talk at the Century Club yesterday with eight book journalists and three officials of Harper & Row, his publishers. The publishing concern is limited by contract to earn no more than \$33,000 plus overhead expenses.

The author was speaking about the book on the day of its official publication. However, the book has already had heavy sales and a price war has developed so that the \$10 volume is offered in some stores for less than \$6. Harper & Row has issued 600,000 copies and is planning another printing soon.

Mr. Manchester expressed respect about the controversy with the Kennedy family. Mrs. John F. Kennedy filed suit to prevent publication of the book and ultimately forced the publisher and author to make some changes in it. The author had been asked by the Kennedy family to write the book and had agreed to submit it for approval. However, Mrs. Kennedy insisted that this was never done.

Asked if he would "do it all over again," Mr. Manchester said that when the proposal to write the history was made in February of 1964, he thought that there would be trouble connected with such a project. What he had in mind was not the struggle with the Kennedys, he indicated, but rather that if he recreated the events of the

weekend of the assassination it would revive "the irrationalism" of the time.

Still, he said that he felt then and still would feel, "I cannot refuse." He did not think then that it would be a popular book, he said. Reporters with whom he spoke told him "it has all been done."

He did not write the book to make money, he said. He said that he had forfeited the second serialization rights, which cover serialization of the book in newspapers and magazines after publication in hard cover, and he said he would not submit a claim for \$20-\$25,000 in research expenses that he is entitled to collect.

However, Mr. Manchester will get royalties from editions printed abroad. He said that this month the book would come out in France, Italy, Spain, Norway and Greece, and be followed by Finnish, Danish and Portuguese editions. In estimating how much he would make on the book, he counted in the European royalties as well as his American income, but deducted taxes and legal fees.

The author told of having a mass of paper "larger than the book" about all the interviews he conducted. He said this material would go to the national archives and eventually to the Kennedy library, "where it belongs." He said he had not destroyed anything except for 20 pages of manuscript which he got rid of before submitting the book to the publishing concern.

He expressed regret that, as a result of the settlement of the court action, there had been removed from the book a forward in which he expressed thanks for help given by Mrs. Kennedy, Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson and others.

About the Kennedy family, he said:

"I feel no sense of bitterness, rather a deep sense of sadness that some differences tragically and needlessly descended into a public brawl."

He added that "all the principals were motivated by principle," and he indicated that the part played by some intermediaries was troublesome.

Regarding claims of error that have been made against the book, Mr. Manchester said, "No one ever bats a thousand." He added, "I do not know of any major error." He said there were a dozen things of varying importance that seemed to call for change.

He indicated that he would make some small revisions when a second edition of the book was published. He explained:

"The court agreement is so binding that before we can make a change, it must be cleared with the Kennedys."

Mr. Manchester said his notes represented an accumulation of material that was compiled while memories were fresh. "A future historian might decide that the book was not a good book," he said. "He might want to use my material and write his own book." He said the notes would all be under seal for some future time when

those involved were no longer alive.

He said that the report that the treatment of President Johnson in the book was altered at editorial insistence was wholly untrue.

Evan Thomas, executive vice president of Harper & Row, intervened to say that material in the first nine pages of the book that concerned Mr. Johnson had been shifted to another place. Mr. Thomas said the book "wasn't written with the idea of damning President Johnson."