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Compromise

In Kennedy Book Suit

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Look Magazine and the Kennedy family reached a final accord on editing changes yesterday that seemed to clear a path for publication of "The Death of a President" in Look next month.

Lawyers for both camps, however, negotiated into the evening over how the agreement would be announced and how Jacqueline Kennedy's suit against the publishers of the book would be set aside.

Despite the apparent settlement of the case, the prospect remained that the book's author, William Manchester, would bring a separate legal action, presumably against Mrs. Kennedy, on the basis of her previous allegations that he had produced "a tasteless and distorted" account of her husband's assassination and had violated her confidences.

DETAILED

The author has spent the last several days here preparing a detailed account of his dealings with members of the Kennedy family and their representatives throughout

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the long dispute over publishing his 300,000-word manuscript.

Despite the seeming accord on the text to be used in the Look articles — hammered out over two days in the magazine's Madison avenue offices — they were widely varying reports last night over how much material was deleted from the manuscript to meet Mrs. Kennedy's objections.

A source close to Mrs. Kennedy asserted that about 5000 words had been removed from the manuscript before the late President's widow agreed to drop her legal action.

VICTORY

"When you ask for ten changes and get ten changes, I regard that as a victory," the Kennedy informant said.

However, a source close to Cowles Communications Inc., publishers of Look, said: "We just took out a little fat. All the bones are still in them."

The Cowles source said the deletions agreed upon in order to have Mrs. Kennedy approve publication amounted to "several hundred words — all of them gingerbread. They all related," the source continued, "to Mrs. Kennedy's personal vanity.

None of the changes in any way altered the historical record of the President's assassination."

COMPROMISE

The eagerness of both sides to claim a victory in what observers view as a face-saving compromise still endangered the understanding.

"If they push us too far," a Cowles informant said of the Kennedys, "this thing could still blow up in their faces."

Last August, Look paid Manchester a record \$665,000 for the U.S. magazine serial rights to his account of the assassination. Kennedy selected Manchester to write the assassination story under a 1964 agreement that gave her and Senator Robert F. Kennedy (Dem.-N.Y.), the right to review and approve the manuscript before publication.

This accord served as a basis for Mrs. Kennedy's breach-of-contract suit in the New York Supreme Court — a suit in which Senator Kennedy was not a party.

LIVING

It was learned that Manchester has kept in escrow the \$35,000 already turned over by Look under a deal he has lived for the last three years on his savings, as well as a \$40,000 advance paid to him by the book's publishers, Harper & Row.

Harper & Row has not been directly involved in the dealings that led to deletions in the Look text. Changes that the widow insisted upon to protect Mrs. Kennedy's privacy. But it was understood that the publishing house was willing to incorporate those changes when it brings out the book next April 7.

Line-by-line cuts in the Look articles — scheduled to start January 10 — were agreed upon in a conference that took place Tuesday and again yesterday between the magazine's top editors and Richard N. Goodwin, a former special assistant to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, who is Mrs. Kennedy's adviser in the dispute. Former Federal Judge Simon H. Rifkind is serving as Mrs. Kennedy's attorney in the court action.