

NIGHT TALKS HELD ON KENNEDY BOOK

Both Sides Hoping for an
Accord by Christmas

By DOUGLAS ROBINSON

Negotiations between Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., and representatives of the Kennedy family continued through the day and into the night yesterday in an attempt to reach agreement before the Christmas holidays.

Spokesmen for both sides in the controversy over publication of the book "The Death of a President" expressed guarded optimism that a settlement could soon be reached.

Most of the discussions yesterday, it was learned, centered on a revised manuscript given by Harper & Row to Simon H. Rifkind, a former Federal judge who is Mrs. John F. Kennedy's legal representative in the case.

Although it is not known just what had been expurgated from the original manuscript, most of the changes were thought to involve Mrs. Kennedy's personal life.

"We're still at it," a source close to the talks said last night. "There are no snags, just the mechanical problems of that much text."

In addition to discussions between those discussing editorial changes, the attorneys for both sides were meeting separately to work out the legal aspects of the case.

Hearing on Tuesday

A spokesman for Harper & Row said that talks would continue today and Monday, "if necessary."

Adding to the need for speed on the part of the negotiators is a hearing scheduled for Tuesday in State Supreme Court on Mrs. Kennedy's suit to block publication of the book.

In her lawsuit, Mrs. Kennedy contended that William Manchester, the author of the book, had violated her rights by going ahead with plans to publish the unapproved manuscript dealing with the assassination of President Kennedy.

Although she conceded that she once had authorized the book, she said she was moving against its publication in the interest of "accuracy, good taste and dignity."

At the apparent heart of the controversy is material obtained by Mr. Manchester in 10 hours of taped interviews with Mrs. Kennedy in which she had revealed her deepest thoughts. There are also indications the book may contain some unflattering political material that might affect the relationship between Senator Robert F. Kennedy and President Johnson.

Look Suit Called Off

Named as defendants in the suit were Mr. Manchester, Harper & Row and Cowles Communications, Inc., the publisher of Look magazine, which plans a 60,000-word serialization of the book.

Last Wednesday night, Mrs. Kennedy agreed to withdraw her suit against Look after the magazine had agreed to "remove or modify" passages that relate to the personal life of herself and her children.

Yesterday's talks were said to be going slower than the previous negotiations with Look because of the larger size of the book over the magazine serialization. The book, which is scheduled for publication in April, will run to some 300,000 words.

Mr. Manchester was also said to be participating in the current talks. The author did not take part in the negotiations with Look representatives.

Although Mrs. Kennedy has agreed to drop her suit against the magazine, no notice of discontinuance was filed in court yesterday and the publication technically remains as a defendant. Any legal papers, however, could be filed on Monday with Saul S. Streit, the ranking justice of the court.