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NEW YORK, JAN. 24 (AP)-EVAN THOMAS, EDITOR OF THE CONTROVERSIAL BOOK, "THE DEATH OF A PRESIDENT," CONFIRMED TODAY THAT HE HAD REQUESTED THE AUTHOR, WILLIAM MANCHESTER, TO MAKE SOME REVISIONS IN IT.

"THE MANCHESTER BOOK WAS REVISED IN RESPONSE TO MANY OF THE EDITORIAL COMMENTS MADE BY THE KENNEDY READERS AND MYSELF," SAID THOMAS, WHO IS CHAIRMAN OF THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF PUBLISHERS HARPER & ROW.

HOWEVER, THOMAS SAID ONE OF MR. JOHN F. KENNEDY'S ADVISERS VIOLATED A "PERSONAL AND PRIVATE" RELATIONSHIP WHEN HE MADE PUBLIC PASSAGES FROM A LETTER WRITTEN BY THOMAS TO MRS. KENNEDY'S REPRESENTATIVES.

IN SAN FRANCISCO LAST SUNDAY, RICHARD GOODWIN SAID: "WHEN HE (MANCHESTER) DELIVERED THE MANUSCRIPT IN MARCH, 1965, THE PUBLISHERS WROTE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE KENNEDY FAMILY." GOODWIN SAID ONE SUCH LETTER DESCRIBED THE BOOK AS "IN PART TASTELESS AND GRATUITOUSLY INSULTING TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON AND, FOR THAT MATTER, TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE PRESIDENT KENNEDY."

MRS. KENNEDY, IN HER ANNOUNCEMENT THAT SHE WOULD FILE SUIT TO BLOCK PUBLICATION OF MANCHESTER'S BOOK, CALLED IT "TASTELESS AND DISTORTED."

THE SUIT WAS SETTLED LAST WEEK, CLEARING THE WAY FOR PUBLICATION.

THOMAS' LETTER, DATED MAY 16, WAS ADDRESSED TO JOHN SEIGENTHALER, EDITOR OF THE NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN, AND EDWARD GUTHMAN, OF THE LOS ANGELES TIMES. BOTH HAD SERVED IN THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT WHEN SEN. ROBERT F. KENNEDY, D-N.Y., WAS ATTORNEY GENERAL.

THE LETTER SOLICITED THEIR COMMENTS ON THE MANUSCRIPT, AND SUGGESTED EACH USE HIS INITIAL, "S" OR "G," TO DENOTE PASSAGES THEY WOULD WANT TO DISCUSS WITH THOMAS.

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AN INFORMANT SAID THOMAS THEN FLEW TO LOS ANGELES AND NASHVILLE LAST AUG. 9, TO TALK ABOUT THE PASSAGES.

GOODWIN ISSUED HIS STATEMENT SUNDAY AFTER INTERVIEWS WITH MANCHESTER WERE PUBLISHED. THE AUTHOR SAID GOODWIN HAD EDITED -- "LARGELY FOR POLITICAL REASONS -- MATERIAL ABOUT BOBBY (KENNEDY) AND (PRESIDENT) JOHNSON."

IN A PREPARED STATEMENT TODAY, THOMAS DID NOT REFER SPECIFICALLY TO GOODWIN OR THE MAY 16 LETTER. HIS STATEMENT SAID:

"THE FUNCTION OF AN EDITOR IS TO EDIT AND THAT'S WHAT MY JOB WAS IN CONNECTION WITH THE MANCHESTER BOOK.

"IT WAS COMPLICATED BECAUSE FOR A PERIOD OF MONTHS STARTING IN

MARCH OF 1966, I WAS WORKING ON THE MANUSCRIPT WITH A NUMBER OF SEN. KENNEDY'S REPRESENTATIVES. WHEN SEVERAL PEOPLE ARE THUS WORKING EDITORIALY ON ANY WORK (AND EDITORS ARE NEVER WORKING SEPARATELY FROM THE AUTHOR -- IT'S HIS WORK AND THEY ARE WORKING WITH HIM) THE EDITORS' EXCHANGES OF VIEWS WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH THE AUTHOR ARE ALWAYS REGARDED AS CONFIDENTIAL -- THEY ARE PERSONAL AND PRIVATE AND PART OF A WORKING PROCESS.

"EVERY EDITOR MAKES CRITICAL COMMENTS IN THE COURSE OF EDITING A WORK -- THEY ARE PROPERLY SUBJECT TO DISCUSSION BETWEEN AUTHOR AND EDITOR OR EDITORS. THE MANCHESTER BOOK WAS REVISED IN RESPONSE TO MANY OF THE EDITORIAL COMMENTS MADE BY THE KENNEDY READERS AND MYSELF. HARPER REGARDS THE FINAL VERSION AS A FINE WORK."

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