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MANCHESTER

WASHINGTON, FEB. 12 (AP)-AUTHOR WILLIAM MANCHESTER SAID TODAY HE REJECTED A REQUEST BY THE KENNEDY FAMILY TO REWRITE HIS ACCOUNT OF PRESIDENT JO

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SON'S FIRST CABINET MEETING AS "CENSORSHIP" WHICH "WOULD HAVE BEEN A DISTORTION OF HISTORY...A THREAT TO THE INTEGRITY OF MY MANUSCRIPT."

"I WAS ASKED TO REWRITE MY ACCOUNT OF PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S FIRST CABINET MEETING," MANCHESTER SAID, "AND I REFUSED." HE DID NOT EXPLAIN WHAT CHANGES HE WAS ASKED TO MAKE NOR DID HE SAY PRECISELY WHO MADE THE REQUEST.

THE AUTHOR SAID THAT IN EDITING THE MANUSCRIPT OF HIS FORTHCOMING "DEATH OF A PRESIDENT" WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE KENNEDY FAMILY, "NOTHING WAS DELETED OF A HISTORICAL OR POLITICAL NATURE." HE TERMED THE DELETED MATERIAL "VERY PERSONAL."

OF THE 188 PROPOSED CHANGES, HE SAID, 77 WERE MADE BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF MRS. JOHN F. KENNEDY AND THE OTHER <sup>111</sup> 41, WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS "PURELY POLITICAL," WERE URGED BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF SEN. ROBERT F. KENNEDY, D-N.Y.

EXCERPTS OF THE BOOK ABOUT THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY ARE BEING PUBLISHED IN LOOK MAGAZINE, AND THE ENTIRE VOLUME IS TO BE PUBLISHED IN APRIL BY HARPER AND ROW.

MANCHESTER DISCUSSED HIS PROBLEMS IN WRITING THE BOOK ON THE NBC RADIO AND TELEVISION PROGRAM "MEET THE PRESS."

MANCHESTER SAID HIS DIFFICULTIES WERE NEITHER WITH SEN. KENNEDY NOR WITH MRS. KENNEDY, BUT "AROSE ON LOWER LEVELS" FROM PERSONS "WHO KNEW THEY WOULD BE ANSWERABLE TO THE KENNEDYS AND WERE OVERZEALOUS."

"HAD THE KENNEDYS READ THE MANUSCRIPT LAST SPRING," HE SAID, "I THINK WE WOULD HAVE BEEN SPARED MUCH."

MANCHESTER SAID HE FELT A LETTER FROM SEN. ROBERT F. KENNEDY TO HARPER AND ROW, SAYING THE FAMILY WOULD PLACE NO OBSTACLES IN THE WAY OF PUBLISHING THE BOOK, HAD "LIQUIDATED" HIS AGREEMENT THAT KENNEDY AND MRS. KENNEDY APPROVE THE MANUSCRIPT.

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"I DON'T THINK THAT I BROKE MY AGREEMENT," HE SAID. "I THINK THAT THE AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REVISED AMONG US."

MANCHESTER WAS ASKED ABOUT THE ACCURACY OF A STATEMENT IN THE

MOST RECENT LOOK EXCERPT THAT PHOTOGRAPHS OF JOHNSON'S OATH-TAKING CEREMONY "DID NOT RECORD THE PRESENCE OF A SINGLE MALE KENNEDY AIDE" IN LIGHT OF PUBLICATION OF A PICTURE LAST WEEK SHOWING KENNETH P. O'DONNELL STANDING NEXT TO MRS. KENNEDY AT THE CEREMONY.

HE REPLIED THAT O'DONNELL, WHO WAS PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S APPOINTMENTS SECRETARY, "DID TELL ME HE WAS PRESENT" BUT THAT "FIVE PERSONS SAID THEY SAW HIM IN THE CORRIDOR."

"A REPORTER HAS TO OPERATE ON CONSENSUS," MANCHESTER SAID, ADDING THAT HE RELIED ON THE RECOLLECTIONS OF THE MAJORITY OF THE 33 PEOPLE ABOARD THE PLANE. "WHEN A CLEAR MAJORITY SAID SOMETHING HAPPENED," HE SAID, "I MUST CONCLUDE IT DID HAPPEN."

MANCHESTER REJECTED SUGGESTIONS THAT THE BOOK IS "CRITICAL OF PRESIDENT JOHNSON. "I WAS AND STILL AM VERY SYMPATHETIC TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON WHO I THINK BEHAVED ADMIRABLY," HE SAID.

ASKED IF HE THINKS JOHNSON HAD TAKEN THE PRESIDENTIAL OATH TOO QUICKLY, MANCHESTER SAID "IF ANYTHING HE OUGHT TO HAVE TAKEN OVER MORE RAPIDLY THAN HE DID."

HE SAID HE DOESN'T THINK "THE BOOK HAS BEEN DAMAGED" BY THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE KENNEDYS AND THAT HE IS CONFIDENT "IT WILL STAND ON ITS OWN AND THE CONTROVERSY WILL RECEDE INTO THE PAST."

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