Lawyers In Fight Over Book Manoeuvre For Compromise

By HAL COOPER

NEW YORK (AP)—Lawyers in the battle over the book The Death of a President manoeuvred for a compromise on passages which Mrs. John F. Kennedy regards as too starkly personal for publication.

With eight days left before a Dec. 27 court hearing on a suit to block publication, a spokesman for the publishing firm of Harper and Row reported "continuing efforts to patch things up."

Meanwhile, Cass Canfield, chairman of the executive committee of Harper and Row, said the firm wanted to publish the book "in the interest of historical accuracy and of the people's right to know the true facts of the awesome tragedy."

"Understandably, the members of the Kennedy family were unwilling to read the manuscript themselves and hence they designated representatives to do this for them. Had they read it themselves, the present situation might have been avoided."

Canfield said he publisher's advance to the author was $40,000.

Mrs. Kennedy's brother - in-law, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, said:

"It's what she feels that's important here. It's very, very, very distressing to her. She is a very sensitive woman."

SLOWLY REVEALED

Bit by bit, in leaks by people who have read author William Manchester's 300,000-word manuscript—or an 80,000-word Look magazine abstract—the disputed passages were being made public.

One passage tells of Mrs. Kennedy wrestling with a nurse who tried to bar her from a Dallas hospital room where her husband was taken after the assassination Nov. 22, 1963.

A former high official in the Kennedy administration cited another which Mrs. Kennedy found objectionable:

"There was a letter Mrs. Kennedy wrote to the president while she was in Greece. It was highly personal. She described her feelings about her husband to her husband. Manchester used several quotes from the letter and I do know that Mrs. Kennedy objected to this."

Another described in Mrs. Kennedy's words the last night she spent with her husband before going to Dallas.

TOO STARK FOR FAMILY

One who read the manuscript said "there was too much blood and guts" in its description of the actual shooting of the president.

Another described as heartbreaking an intimate account of how the assassination and the president's funeral were explained to Kennedy's children, Caroline and John F. Jr.

The New York Times and New York Post reported that other controversial matter included:

1. An allegation of incompetence and laxity by U.S. Secret Service men, FBI agents and Dallas police responsible for the president's safety on the day of the slaying.

2. Friction between Robert Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson over how soon the latter should deliver his first message as president to a joint session of the U.S. Congress.

3. A Kennedy family disagreement over whether the slain president should be buried in Massachusetts or in Arlington National Cemetery.

Mrs. Kennedy's lawyer, Simon H. Rifkind, said he did not rule out the possibility that the Kennedy family's suit might be settled out of court.

CLAIMS NO BREACH

Manchester denied in a statement that publication of the book would be a breach of an understanding with Mrs. Kennedy and the senator.

The Kennedys insist that the book was written under an agreement giving Mrs. Kennedy and the senator veto rights over its content and publication time. Manchester says the senator gave him a go-ahead in a telegram last July. The senator denies it.

Manchester, in his statement, insisted that "in the summer of 1966, authorization was given by the family for publication of the book in early 1967, to be preceded by serialization in Look magazine."

A number who have read the manuscript say the book generally is uncomplimentary to President Johnson.

One publishing executive told the New York Post it relates feeling among the Kennedys after the assassination that "it happened in his (Johnson's) state."

"They didn't think he had anything to do with it, but he had brought them here.

"And they, the Kennedys, feel that Johnson was part of this thing, this conservatism, and there wasn't anything he could have done that would have changed their minds.

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CITY AND QUEENS

CHRISTMAS CONCERT in North River Hall Thursday, December 22 at 8 p.m. Admission .25 and .50.

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ROSS — Yvonne and Crystal are pleased to announce the birth of their brother Donald Baxter, at the Prince Edward Island Hospital on December 16, 1966. The proud parents are Dennis and Joan Ross, Pinette.

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