

2 OCT 1968

Approved For Release 2004/10/13 : CIA-RDP88-01350R000200630009-6

NORTON WILL ISSUE CUBAN-CRISIS BOOK

\$250,000 Paid for Rights to
Robert Kennedy Memoir

By ALDEN WHITMAN

Book rights to the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy's 25,000-word account of the Cuban missile crisis have been acquired by W. W. Norton & Co., a small privately owned publishing house, for a sum in excess of \$250,000.

The sale, which became known yesterday, was from the McCall Corporation, which purchased the manuscript last month from the Senator's estate for \$1-million. The manuscript will appear as a magazine article in the November issue of McCall's. The book will be published January 20.

Norton's acquisition of the book rights was negotiated over the last six weeks by George P. Brockway, president of the company, and Evan W. Thomas 2d, an editor and vice president of the concern.

Ironically, Mr. Thomas, who will edit the book with Mr. Brockway, was editor, when he was at Harper & Row, of William Manchester's "Death of a President," a task that culminated in serious differences between Mr. Thomas and the Kennedy family.

Earlier in his 22-year career at Harper's Mr. Thomas had edited John F. Kennedy's "Profiles in Courage" and three books by the late Senator. His relations with the Kennedys had been amicable until the Manchester episode.

Center of Controversy

The Manchester chronicle of the assassination of President Kennedy was published in 1967 when Mr. Thomas was vice president of Harper & Row. At the time he was a center of controversy over changes in the book that were demanded by the Kennedy family and resisted by the author. One of the spokesmen for the family was the late Senator. Mr. Thomas resigned from Harper & Row last spring to join Norton.

The sale to that company, after spirited bidding by a number of publishers, was approved by Theodore W. Sorensen, attorney for the Kennedy estate's executors — Mrs. Robert F. Kennedy, the Senator's widow; Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, his brother, and Mrs. Patricia Kennedy, his sister.

The slain Senator was President Kennedy's Attorney General and confidant during the Cuban crisis in October, 1962.

Mr. Thomas said that Mr. Sorensen "must have received permission from the Kennedy family" to offer the book to Norton, and added:

"I personally can rejoice that Mr. Sorensen felt it could be shown to Norton despite earlier misunderstandings between the Kennedy family and me, differences that we hope are largely settled."

'Great Public Servants'

Mr. Thomas went on to emphasize that "I never viewed Robert Kennedy or John Kennedy other than as great public servants."

Mr. Sorensen, Mr. Thomas said, will write explanatory notes for the book "subject to the Kennedy family's approval." "We feel very fortunate to get Mr. Sorensen to do these notes," Mr. Thomas continued, "because he was a member of the inner White House circle during the missile crisis and knew both brothers under extraordinary circumstances."

Mr. Sorensen served as special counsel to the President in the Kennedy Administration.

The book's publication Jan. 20 will mark the eighth anniversary of President Kennedy's inauguration. Its title, suggested by Mr. Thomas, will be "Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis."

In addition to the Sorensen notes, the 160-page book will contain introductions by Robert S. McNamara, President Kennedy's Secretary of Defense, and Harold Macmillan, the British Prime Minister during the crisis with the Soviet Union over its emplacement of missiles on Cuba.

Neither these introductions nor the Sorensen notes will appear in McCall's.

"Thirteen Days" will also include documents of the crisis, including President Kennedy's speech to the nation on it, maps, diagrams and photographs. The book will be priced at \$4.95, and a first printing of 100,000 copies has been scheduled.

According to Mr. Thomas, the Norton book has been sold to the Book-of-the-Month Club and will be its February selection. The paperback rights, he said, have been bought by the New American Library, which will publish its edition next summer. Mr. Thomas declined to disclose what his company had received for these subsidiary rights.

Approved For Release 2004/10/13 : CIA-RDP88-01350R000200630009-6