

THE

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THE ASSASSINATION

On November 21, 1963, President and Mrs. Kennedy and Vice President and Mrs. Johnson, accompanied by Governor and Mrs. Connally and other Texas political figures, aides, and members of the press, began a tour of Texas.

Governor Connally had opposed the Texas tour, thinking it politically unwise.⁽¹⁾ The Democrat Party in Texas was in great turmoil, torn by internal dissension. A recent special election had revealed astonishing Republican Party strength in Dallas. Factions and personalities of the Democrat Party, jockeying for position and prestige, were blaming each other because Texans generally seemed to be in a mood to repudiate new frontierism at the polls in the next elections.

Neither the growing strength of conservatism nor the factional strife among liberals in the Democrat Party created any special *danger* for the President in Texas. There was no extraordinary anxiety about his *safety*, but Governor Connally did feel that a Kennedy visit at this time would create more and deeper cleavages in the ranks of the Democrat Party.⁽¹⁾

President Kennedy, however, decided to come to Texas as a "peacemaker" for his own political party.⁽²⁾

The tour began in San Antonio. The crowds were large, friendly and orderly. It was the same in Houston and in Fort Worth. The presidential entourage arrived at Love Field, Dallas, at 11:37 a.m., Friday, November 22, greeted by a large, friendly gathering of Dallasites. The President and the Governor, and their wives, got into an open limousine for a parade through Dallas. The President and Mrs. Kennedy sat in the rear seat, the President on the right side. On jump seats in front of them were Governor and Mrs. Connally, the Governor directly in front of the President.

The motorcade formed with the presidential car immediately behind the lead car, the Vice President and other dignitaries and members of the press following. It made a 12-mile drive into and through downtown Dallas, along a route which had been widely publicized for days —

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