

Connally Played Key Role From Visit's Start to End

Washington Bureau of The News
WASHINGTON—Gov. John Connally played a principal role in the trip of President Kennedy to Texas in November, 1963, from its planning stages until its tragic end in the emergency room at Parkland Hospital.

The Warren Commission pointed out in its voluminous report that Connally, President Kennedy, and Vice-President Lyndon B. Johnson made the basic decision for the trip during a meeting at Cortez Hotel in El Paso on June 5, 1963.

"The three agreed that the President would come to Texas in late November, 1963," the report said. Connally met President and Mrs. Kennedy at San Antonio on Nov. 21 when the formal visit

opened. He and Mrs. Connally were with the first family from then on.

IN DALLAS, Connally told the commission of the motorcade and then the reports picks up his testimony about the assassination:

"Gov. Connally testified that he recognized the first noise as a rifle shot and the thought immediately crossed his mind that it was an assassination attempt.

"From his position in the right jump seat immediately in front of the President, he instinctively turned to his right because the shot appeared to come from over his right shoulder.

"Unable to see the President as he turned to the right the governor started to look back over his left shoulder, but he never completed the turn because he felt something strike him in the back. In his testimony before the commission, Gov. Connally was certain that he was hit by the second shot, which he stated he did not hear."

THE REPORT said that Mrs. Connally pulled the governor down into her lap.

"Observing his blood-covered chest as he was pulled into his wife's lap, Gov. Connally believed himself mortally wounded. He cried out, 'Oh, no, no, no. My God, they are going to kill us all.'"

The report continues: "The governor was lying with his head on his wife's lap when he heard a shot hit the President. At that

point, both Gov. and Mrs. Connally observed brain tissue spattered over the interior of the car."

THE RACE was then on to Parkland and on arrival the commission report says:

"Gov. Connally, who had lost consciousness on the ride to the hospital, regained consciousness when the limousine stopped abruptly at the emergency entrance. Despite his serious wounds, Gov. Connally tried to get out of the way so that medical help would reach the President. Although he was reclining in his wife's arms, he lurched forward in an effort to stand upright and get out of the car, but he collapsed again. Then he experienced his first sensation of pain, which became excruciating. The governor was lifted onto a stretcher and taken into trauma room 2."

DR. ROBERT SHAW, chief of thoracic surgery, arrived at trauma room 2 about 12:45 p.m. to take charge of Connally's wounds, the report said.

It continued: "Gov. Connally had a large sucking wound in the front of his right chest which caused extreme pain and difficulty in breathing . . ."

"At 1:35 p.m., after Gov. Connally had been moved to the operating room, Dr. Shaw started the first operation by cutting away the edges of the wound on the front of the governor's chest and suturing the damaged lung and lacerated muscles."