

# Transcript of Interview With Gov.

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DALLAS, Nov. 27 (AP)—  
Following is a transcript compiled from stenographic notes of an interview by Martin Agronsky of the National Broadcasting Company with Gov. John B. Connally Jr. of Texas, who was wounded in the assassination of President Kennedy:

Q. Governor Connally, what are your recollections of those fateful moments when you and President Kennedy were shot?

A. Martin, just before it occurred, of course, we had a great morning in Fort Worth, a magnificent breakfast, spoke in a slight drizzle. We got into downtown Dallas where there was a tremendous crowd with real warmth, real understanding and real appreciation. Nellie and I saw it all so vividly because we were riding in the car with them.

We did not attempt to acknowledge the obvious magnificent ovation because we realized it was for the President. The President remarked on it and so did Mrs. Kennedy. As a matter of fact, not 30 seconds before the tragedy occurred, Nellie turned to the President and said, "Mr. President, they can't make you believe now that there are not some in Dallas who love you and appreciate you." And he said, "No, they sure can't."

We had just turned the corner, we heard a shot, I turned to my left, and the President had slumped. He said nothing. As I turned, I was hit and I knew I had been hit badly. I knew the President had been hit and I said, "My God, they are going to kill us all." Then there was a third shot and the President was hit again.

When he was hit, she said, "Oh, my God, they have killed my husband—Jack, Jack." After the third shot, the next thing that occurred—the Secret Service said, "get out of here and get to the hospital." In the space of a few seconds, it is unbelievable what can happen. We went from great joy, great anticipation to great tragedy.

## Asked About Thoughts

Q. What are the thoughts that have come to you as you have lingered here in this hospital bed recovering from your wounds?

A. Martin, there have been many, many subjects, and I just wonder—you wonder all

types of things. Why his life was taken and why my life was spared. I know of course some may speculate that it was me the man was after and not him. Of course, I had been campaigning all over Texas, in cars, on street corners, where I could have been easy prey for anyone with no security whatever. So I think the man did what he intended to do—shoot both of us.

Q. What other reflections have you had, Governor?

A. Only that maybe, Martin, the President of the United States, as a result of this great tragedy, has been asked to do something in death that he could not do in life, that is to so shock and so stun the nation, the people and the world of what is happening to us, of the cancerous growth that is being permitted to expand and enlarge upon the world and the society in which we live, that breeds hatred and bigotry, and intolerance, indifference and lawlessness, and is an outward manifestation of what occurred here in Dallas, which could have occurred in any other city in America.

This is an open manifestation of extremism on both sides that is the genesis of our own self-destruction if we are ever going to be destroyed. I am not the least fearful of any sworn enemy so long as we have within ourselves not hate but human understanding, not passion and prejudice, but reason and tolerance and not ignorance, but knowledge and the willingness to use that knowledge. This is the only answer I can give, Martin, as to why he is gone and I am not.

## Told About Death

Q. Governor, when did they tell you that President Kennedy was dead?

A. They told me Saturday after I was conscious enough to really understand. Nellie told me and it was no news to me because I was almost sure he would be after the two shots that I felt he had taken. I hoped as everyone else did, I hoped longer than most because I didn't know that he had succumbed. Because I personally felt that I had been killed, too, when I received my shot.

Q. What were your first conscious thoughts?

A. Martin, my really first

conscious thoughts are still my same conscious thoughts, just "my God, what a horrible, horrible tragedy," and how in the space of a fleeting moment things can change. Here were two relatively young men almost identical age, riding with what I would like to believe two of the most beautiful wives in this country. We were together 24 hours that were happy.

We were their hosts, and had a tremendous welcome in San Antonio, Houston, Fort Worth and Dallas, and in a matter of a few seconds, this incident occurred that changed all of our lives, changed the course of history for many people in what many divergent ways you never know, and it makes you reflect, ponder and wonder if you do all that you ought to do day by day in trying to make whatever contribution you can to society in which you live because you never know when your day may come.

Q. Governor, there has been a lot of talk about a memorial for President Kennedy. Have you thought about that?

A. I most certainly think we should have a memorial to the President. It could be any kind of memorial—marble, granite, stone, but really I would hope that if the American people build a monument to President Kennedy that they not do it in the sense of absolving themselves of the sins which I think we all must suffer for a lack of tolerance, lack of understanding, the passion, the prejudice, the hate and the bigotry which permeates the whole society in which we live, and which manifested itself here on Friday.

This was only one facet of it. We see it in the bombing of the five little children in Birmingham. We above all else, if we erect such a monument, we ought to erect it as a monument to patience, to knowledge, to tolerance, to human understanding, to human dignity, to freedom of individual society that lives under law and under God, and where each can respect each other, notwithstanding that they disagree with each other.

We have permitted circumstances to occur where Fascism and extremism have be-



# Connally on Assassination

come a fad—a fashionable fad, and this has to be destroyed. People of reason, logic and intelligence are going to have to emerge. They are the silent people who are not speaking and their voice is going to have to become the dominant voice of this country.

**Q.** Can you point out the way that fate intervened to literally change the world at this moment? It has given the United States a President from the state of Texas for the first time in history.

## Close to President

**A:** I thought about that, Martin. I have been very close to the President. I first went to work for him in 1938, again in 1949. We served in the uniform of the Navy as President Kennedy did. President Johnson and I were serving in the Navy together during the war, and I thought how ironic in spite of the fact I managed his campaign unsuccessfully for President that the man who defeated him named me Secretary of the Navy, a highly treasured position as far as I was concerned, and then on the very day that the President was assassinated and I was wounded as a result of that, Mr. Johnson became the President of the United States—a rather strange set of circumstances.

**Q:** Tell us something about Lyndon Baines Johnson.

**A:** Martin, he is a person of many complexities really. He is a person who will be viewed by some as being perhaps unlettered and in some ways he is unlettered, but in other ways he is probably as literate a person as you will ever see in your life—literate in the understanding of the terms of human nature—not the most well-read person but he has the greatest human understanding that you will ever encounter. He is a person of great charm and great poise—at times he can be almost brusque and rude, always determined, always firm, and always a man of his convictions, an indomitable worker, working always for perfection.

I would point out first. Naturally, since he is now President of the United States, it can be fairly said that no man ever really assumed the burdens of that office better

equipped than he. He is 55 now—eight years older than I am. Born in rugged country of rugged parents—saw many hard times—they can even be considered poverty stricken times. Days of his schooling were arduous—pulled himself up by his own bootstraps.

He has worked with people of many nationalities, of many languages, of many economic views and many economic levels, and I think he understands the heartbeat of this nation as well as any man that's ever been President of the United States. He has been a laborer, not just to be one, but because he had to be one. He has been a school teacher, taught Latin at Cotulla, Texas. He was head of the N.Y.A. [National Youth Administration] when he was 26 years old.

He was the youngest administrator in the country—did one of the finest jobs in the United States. He worked with young people and saw the need for education and what contribution you can make to young minds. He has walked among the great and near great, yet I don't think it has changed him in the least.

## Rough Exterior

He still has the roughhewn, the rough exterior of the hill country from which he came. He is as readable as an open book in many ways, but with many complexities. He is very firm and very determined, and I think in dealings with foreign nations I know of no man in my lifetime that I would rather have dealing my hand than him.

Martin, you were wonderful to come down. I hope you understand that this is the first moment I have had to say anything or express anything. Nellie [Mrs. Connally] expressed our mutual concern to Mrs. Kennedy in a handwritten note that our son, John, took and delivered to her at the funeral services in Washington on Monday. I am thankful you are all ing here and just thankful I can see you again.

**A.** Thank you, Governor. I am thankful you are all right, and may I say to you, Mrs. Connally, I want you to know everyone in the nation admires the grace and courage with which you have conducted yourself.