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February 12, 1970

Mr. Walter Cronkite
c/o CBS Television News Department
Columbia Broadcasting System
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Cronkite:

I have enjoyed the first two of your three part interviews with Lyndon Johnson. The final interview, I understand, is scheduled for May 2nd, and will cover the events surrounding President Kennedy's trip to Texas, the assassination, and the aftermath.

I trust that you will cover the events and decisions that led up to this trip, and Lyndon Johnson's part, if any, in these decisions; as there remains, at least in my mind, some serious flaws in the record, that, I feel could be clarified by Mr. Johnson in your next interview.

No doubt your research staff at CBS has studied the historical documents and news accounts relating to these decisions and has prepared background material for you to use in your May 2nd broadcast. However, on the chance that you may not have seen the enclosed material, I am sending them along with the hope that they may prove helpful.

PLANNING THE TRIP TO DALLAS.

1. According to the Warren Commission, the basic decision to make the trip to Texas was made on June 5, 1963 at the El Cortez Hotel in El Paso, Texas. Present at this meeting were JFK; LBJ; Cliff Carter, LBJ aide; Gov. Connally, and Secretary of the Navy, Fred Korth. (1) (2)

2. When we realize that June 5th is the earliest date for the basic decision, it therefore, came as a somewhat surprise when I came across this story printed in the DALLAS TIMES HERALD on April 24, 1963, or 43 days prior to the June 5th meeting. (3)

As you can see, this is the lead story, on the front page. The article includes photographs of the Vice-President meeting with the editorial staff and assistants, including the publisher himself.

There is no reason to assume, here, that we are dealing with an over zealous cub reporter. I have great difficulty characterizing this as an accidental "leak" that somehow escalated into a major news story.

Furthermore, I find it odd that this story escaped the attention of both the FBI and the Warren Commission; when you consider that the FBI was asked by the Commission to check the Dallas newspaper files for the month of April, 1963, on another matter. (4) They were checking Marina Oswald's allegations that her husband wished to leave their apartment in Oak Cliff, around April 23rd to see "the vice-president," who she thought was in Dallas at the time. An investigation was instituted and the FBI informed the Commission that Vice-President Nixon was not in Dallas at this time.

It seems odd when we read that Vice-President Johnson on April 23rd, correctly names the cities and the approximate times of day that these cities are to be visited. This is before the Texas trip had been planned!

As you can see, the then Vice-President, Lyndon Johnson, announces that JFK will come to Texas "sometime this summer" (5) and will visit San Antonio, Houston, Fort Worth and Dallas. He speaks of a one day affair "this summer" - which later becomes a two day trip in November. Otherwise, he is fairly accurate, even to spelling out specific times:

- *a breakfast in Fort Worth (correct)
- *a luncheon in Dallas (correct)
- *an afternoon tea in San Antonio (correct)
- *a dinner in Houston (correct)

According to Gov. Connally, these times and specific cities were not known at this time, as Connally relates in his LIFE MAGAZINE story of November 24, 1967 "WHY KENNEDY CAME TO TEXAS." Connally states that he met with JFK at the White House October 4, 1963 and "they agreed on five cities." "I'll accept your judgement on that John" JFK replied. (6) Connally had dinner with LBJ that evening at LBJ's Washington home. Connally says LBJ was upset over not being consulted in the planning of this Texas trip.

On October 8, 1963, in the DALLAS TIMES HERALD the following story says:

JFK TEXAS VISIT MAY INCLUDE
CITY, CONRALLY REPORTS

PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S TEXAS VISIT WILL
BE ONE DAY AFFAIR ON NOVEMBER 22ND.

The Texas trip had been first revealed in the TIMES HERALD last September 13th and was met with official denials for almost two weeks. Gov. John Connally last weekend said the President will be in Texas November 22nd.

After scoring a news first with their April 24th story, the DALLAS TIMES HERALD now says they first announced this in September! Apparently they failed to notice what they themselves had printed on Page One five months earlier.

SUMMARY

Did former President Johnson prematurely announce President Kennedy's trip to Texas? Did this have anything to do with the final decision to make this trip?

I feel, that, if a Vice-President announces a proposed trip of his President, it would obligate or commit the President to carry it out. At least, President Kennedy would find it difficult to cancel this trip after this Page One story in a major Dallas paper, without causing acute embarrassment to his Vice-President. Also, at this time, you may recall, rumors were rife that Johnson was due to be replaced on the 1964 ticket. Had the White House denied this DALLAS TIMES HERALD story of April 24th, it would have given credence to the "dump Johnson" gossip, which the administration took pains to deny.

So approximately two million Dallas residents saw this story, not to mention radio and television coverage, and the White House apparently made no comment.

I can find no record in the testimony of the various Kennedy aides, who were involved in the trip planning, that makes mention of this April 24th DALLAS TIMES HERALD story.

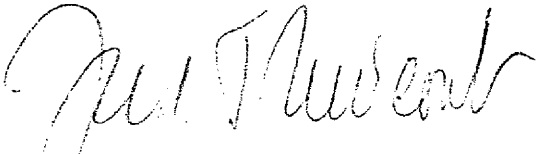
Evelyn Lincoln, President Kennedy's secretary writes that he told her, "I am going to Texas, because I have a commitment. I can't patch up those warring factions. This is for them to do, but I will go because I have told them I would. And it is too early to make an announcement about another running-mate -- that will perhaps wait until the convention." (7) Mrs. Lincoln wrote the conversation verbatim in her diary.

Incidentally, in fairness, I do not feel that the story in the DALLAS TIMES HERALD, quoting Johnson as saying ... "at least wait until next November before you shoot him down..." (8) has any sinister implications. It is probably just one of those fantastic, historic, faux'pas that crop up from time to time. He probably meant to say November 1964 and not November 1963, which was not an election year.

I realize that the information included here may possibly affect the final editing of, or the evaluations you place, on the video tape you have already completed with President Johnson. For this reason, I want you to see this as soon as possible, since the questions raised here seem important to the subject to be discussed in your next program.

Enjoy the series very much - keep up the fine work.

Respectfully,



FRED F. NEWCOMB

FIN:gnh
Enclosures

FOOTNOTES

1. Warren Report, page 48 - New York Times edition.
2. Affidavit of Cliff Carter, dated May 30, 1964, (see attached xerox) - Warren Commission Hearings and Exhibits, volume 7, pages 474, 475.
3. Attached xerox of two pages from the DALLAS TIMES HERALD, dated April 24, 1963.
4. Warren Report, "Richard M. Nixon Incident", page 175- New York Times edition.
5. DALLAS TIMES HERALD, page 1 - April 24, 1963 - (see attached xerox).
6. LIFE MAGAZINE, page 100A - November 24, 1967.
7. KENNEDY AND JOHNSON, page 205 - by Evelyn Lincoln.
8. DALLAS TIMES HERALD, page 22 - April 24, 1963 - (see attached xerox.)