

In History's Shadow: An American Odyssey, by John Connally with Mickey Herskowitz (Hyperion, \$12.95). These days, John Connally may be best known as the man sitting next to Kennedy in Dallas Nov. 22, and to the legions of JFK assassination aficionados the man will always be more a piece of physical evidence—the guy through whom the so called “magic bullet” had to pass—than a historical figure. But as this memoir, written just before his death in 1993 makes clear, Connally’s role in American politics extended well beyond that macabre cameo. A Texas governor, protege of Lyndon Johnson’s, Kennedy ally and Nixon advisor during Watergate, Connally spent decades poised near the heart of American political intrigue. This autobiography delivers some deft portraits of the men Connally served—especially LBJ, who comes off as a weird mixture of charm and back-slapping crudeness. Of course, Connally also delivers an extended, inside-the-motorcade treatment of the assassination and explains why he has always believed that Oswald acted alone. Kennedy’s last words before being shot, we learn from this account, were to his wife: “Jackie, take off your gloves.”