On the nest 17 pages LIFE presents two insights into the tragedy that took place in Dallas four years ago this week. The governor of Texas, who accompanied President Kennedy throughout the fateful visit, sets the record straight on a controversial and widely misreported aspect of the event. LIFE has previously published the famous Zapruder film, showing the actual assassination. Here, on pages 87-97, is a portfolio of hitherto unpublished pictures, taken by bystanders, of the last moments of the motorcade in Dallas and then the return to the White House in Washington.

by JOHN CONNALLY
Governor of Texas

I might as well be blunt about this. I was not anxious for President Kennedy to come to Texas. For a year and a half he had sought the trip that ended so savagely on the afternoon of Nov. 22, 1963. The national pain and trauma that followed his death have produced the Kennedy legend, and I suppose it is natural that, in the growth of the legend, the real purposes and circumstances of his trip have been largely obscured. Now I want to set the record straight.

The fact is that President Kennedy wanted to visit Texas with two distinct purposes in mind. The first was to raise funds. The second was to improve his own political position in a state that promised to be critical in the election of 1964. He wanted me, as governor, to arrange the trip for him, but for good personal reasons I had been delaying it.

The day came, in June 1963, however, when President Kennedy invited me to his hotel suite in El Paso, and I knew I had exhausted my running room. I did not know the President intimately, but I liked him, had served as Secretary of the Navy early in his administration and counted him a friend. He was cordial, as always, with that reserve which was his characteristic, and he seemed in a good mood. He had flown from Washington for visits in Colorado and New Mexico and had stopped in El Paso: there had been a motorcade and now he was turning with easy relish to one of the most practical aspects of domestic politics.

When I walked in, he was smiling lightly and it was obvious that he had been ribbing Vice President Johnson gently and, I thought, with affection.

"Well, Lyndon," he asked, "do you think we're ever going to have that fund-raising affair in Texas?"

The question was directed to Mr. Johnson but the bite was intended for me. Texas was honored to have a native son on the national ticket and by the same token it was obligated to support that ticket financially. I knew that my delaying tactics, though entirely valid, had brought the Vice President some needling. Now he threw the ball to me.

"Mr. President," Mr. Johnson said, with

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a side glance at me, "you have the governor here. May be now you can get a commitment out of him."

Both men were looking at me and, though they were smiling and it was friendly and relaxed in the room, I was fully aware of the stare of the White House.

"Mr. President," I said, "fine—let's start planning your trip."

I understand what was at stake, some background is in order. The genesis of President Kennedy's trip was pragmatic and quite natural. Campaign funds are the fuel of politics and it was important to begin raising money before the heat of the 1964 race began. The national committee was $4 million in debt and yet Texas, a key state because of Mr. Johnson's place on the ticket, had contributed little since 1960. As we talked in El Paso that evening, I recall the President saying, "If we don't raise funds in another state, I want to do so in Massachusetts and Texas."

I was Mr. Johnson's campaign manager in Los Angeles. With booklets forgotten, coffee cups stacked on tables and the air heavy with tobacco smoke, he had reasoned out the situation. During the discussion, Mr. Johnson said very little. A deliberate, almost somber tone came over him. I had not seen him before so deeply in this mood, but I have seen it often since he has become President. Normally he dominates any conversa- tion, but without any organization or political money. He is restless, confident, persuasive. When faced with a great decision, he changes. He fails often, almost always. He questions without revealing his thoughts. All of his energy appears focused on the decision. As the discussion wore on, we tried to understand that Mr. Johnson had no alternative but to accept the vice presidential nomination and thus helped convince him that his religion need not be an insurmountable barrier in the great Protestant states and that if he didn't carry another state next year, he couldn't carry Texas and Massachusetts. This was a point of both pride and concern to the President. The national ticket had taken Texas 24 electoral votes (now 25) in 1960 only by a minute fraction—66,253 votes out of more than two million cast—and its position had barely improved since.

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At about 12:30 p.m., President Kennedy's motorcade came down Main Street in Dallas. The drawing locates his car turning toward the Book Depository (showing last letters of Hertz sign on top). From the corner (position 1 in drawing), Phil Willis, a real estate man, took the picture above. As the motorcade turned onto Houston Street, he photographed the limousine (left) carrying the Kennedys and Connally followed by Vice President Johnson's car—a rare last picture of both Kennedy and Johnson.
Phil Willis, whose pictures appear on the preceding page, was one of nine amateur photographers whose pictures of the 40 seconds before President Kennedy's assassination and its immediate aftermath are published here for the first time. The FBI has seen almost all of them and found nothing that would furnish clues to the assassination itself.

More chance ruled what was photographed—and what wasn't. Mrs. Elise Dorman worked as a mail supervisor in the Book Depository. Her form can be seen on the opposite page in a window—two floors from the top and six windows from the right—from which she took the movie sequence at left. The window where it was established that Lee Harvey Oswald waited is at far right on the top floor. Boxes behind which he presumably was hiding are visible. The picture at right was taken by Robert Hughes, a Customs agent. In it the Kennedy car has turned onto Elm Street, its front hidden by spectators.
To get a good view, the family of Civil Engineer Jim Towner came an hour early to the motorcade route and stationed themselves at the corner of Houston and Elm, directly across from the Book Depository (drawing opposite page, bottom). Towner remembers noticing people in some of the Depository windows, one of whom he now believes was Oswald. As the presidential car slowly turned the corner just 25 feet in front of them, past the D-l-Tex building, Towner took the picture below. Meanwhile Tina, the Towners' 13-year-old daughter, was using a movie camera to film the procession passing in front of the Book Depository (sequence at
right) up to within moments of the first shot. She stopped when all she could see was the rear of the President’s car. At the sound of shots she shouted, “Some dummy is fighting firecrackers!” But her father, an experienced rifleman, knew better. He sprinted down the motorcade route and took one final picture (p. 94).

As the President’s car turned past him into Elm Street, Jim Towner (position 5) snapped the picture shown on the opposite page. A few feet away (position 4), his daughter Tina took the movie sequence shot of the motorcade. Her last exposure (bottom frame) was made just 12 seconds before the fatal shot.
Nearly identical views record an instant before the shots

The crowd was thinner but no less enthusiastic as the President's car moved down Elm Street into Dealey Plaza. A security car with Secret Service men riding in it and standing on its running boards was only a few feet behind. After taking the pictures shown on page 87, had cut across the open plaza in time to take the picture above. A fraction of a second earlier, from a position near Willis, Hugh Betzner Jr. took an almost identical picture (opposite page). In the Willis picture, the President can be seen to the right of a motorcycle cop. In the Betzner picture he is visible, but the rest of the car is blocked out by the man in foreground. Irks, using a technique called retrosorting to determine the time of exposures, computed the President's car to be five feet farther along Elm Street in Willis' picture than in Betzner's. Similar analysis places the time of the Willis picture as just before the first shot. A dark shape is seen in both pictures on the slope—which becomes famous as the "grassy knoll"—to the left of the Stemmons Freeway sign and half hidden by a concrete wall. By photogrammetry (irk has verified it as the figure of a man. Previously published photographs, taken at the moment of the fatal shot, show that by then he had joined two men seen in Willis' picture standing behind a lamppost at left. There is no evidence to indicate he was anything more than an onlooker.
After the shots were fired, several bystanders kept on taking pictures. In their photographs, some spectators ran for cover while others ducked to earth and shielded children with their bodies. Police with weapons drawn rushed toward the crest of the grassy knoll. Some witnesses believed shots had come from there, a belief the Warren Commission discounted.

Patsy Paschall, a court clerk, was taking pictures from a window of the courthouse at Houston and Main. She had stopped photographing the procession after it passed her vantage point. Hearing the shots, she started up again in time to photograph the President's limousine as it went under the railroad overpass (top picture at left) and started to emerge from the shadows. Mark Bell, a postman standing in the photo, photographed a policeman running toward the overpass (center left). Jim Tannen, who had taken a picture before the shooting (p. 90), took the one at bottom left of people cries following the President's cut. Two men stood stunned as a kneeling police officer waved his gun toward the slope.
of Dallas, who declined to have her own portrait used. In this sequence a few frightened onlookers have fallen to the ground (top picture). As police have started moving toward a picket fence on the knoll, one officer has hopped off his moving cycle (center). In the two pictures above, he can be identified by his white helmet, reaching the top of the knoll and climbing the obelisk behind the Fort Worth sign.
And then the journey home to receive a last
These pictures, previously unpublished, show the aftermath of the tragedy. Two hours after the assassination, Secret Service men lifted a casket bearing the dead President into Air Force One at Love Field. Mrs. Kennedy, flanked by presidential assistants Larry O'Brien, Ken O'Donnell and Major General Ted Clifton, waited. Then she too climbed aboard, followed by Personal Secretary Mary Gallagher.

In the East Room of the White House at 6:30 a.m. next morning—Saturday—the President's casket was draped in a U.S. flag and attended (left) by a guard of honor. Mrs. Kennedy, still wearing the suit she had on at the time of the assassination, stood at left of the casket. Beyond her is the President's brother, Robert. Flanking them are other members of the President's family and government officials.

Above, on Sunday afternoon the casket was carried through the main corridor of the White House on route to the Capitol Rotunda. Following it are Mrs. Kennedy, Caroline and John and Robert Kennedy.
Kennedy wanted to raise funds and meet the opposition

This was the situation in June 1963, when I went to the President's suite in El Paso for the first time he asked me directly to help. I agreed. Most of my reasons for delaying the proposed trip were past: I had successfully gone through three elections and healed some of the wounds. I had stepped into the governorship and had seen my program through the legislature. And I had been thinking about four fund-raising dinners or meetings in Houston, San Antonio, Fort Worth and Dallas. I was sitting at the desk of four dinners when he went on blithely to say that he thought Mr. Johnson's birthday, Aug. 27, might provide a logical date and reason for the trip. I'm sure Mr. Johnson appreciated as well as I did the fullness of the early date, but I think he was prepared to let me carry the ball for a while.

"Well, Mr. President," I said, "you know my feelings for Vice President Johnson, but I must tell you that the very people you want to reach are likely not to be here—Texas gets mighty hot in August."

"If you don't like that date, what date do you like?" the President asked.

I wasn't prepared to offer an immediate alternative and the President said, still in a friendly but definitely businesslike fashion, "Well, let's get on with it. We've been talking about this for a year and a half or more. Let's get an agreement about what we are going to do and get together and start making our plans."

For some time thereafter, I gave a great deal of thought to the President's visit. I should say that, once we began, I never looked back. I was fully ready to go ahead. But I was anxious to see that it went off well and the first move to that end was to drop the plan for four dinners. I felt there should be one dinner and that it should be held not in any of the four cities the President suggested, but in Austin, the state capital, which is a smaller city, centrally located and traditionally considered neutral ground in Texas. It was the only place to which people from other Texas cities would come with no feeling of working against Fort Worth people would resist supporting a Dallas dinner, or Dallas a Houston dinner. But they would all come to Austin.

On Oct. 4, 1963, I was to be in Washington, and now, with firm ideas on what the visit should be, I asked for an appointment with President Kennedy. He came from behind his desk in the Oval Office with outstretched hand, then sat down in a chair, gestured me to one of his two small couches and moved immediately into the subject. "How about those fund-raising affairs in Texas, John?" he asked. "Mr. President," I said, "we can have four separate affairs, but I think it would be a very serious mistake.

He didn't answer immediately and I went right on. "In the first place, I don't think four will raise appreciably more money than one properly organized affair—certainly not enough to make up for the political cost to you. You haven't made a real visit to Texas except to El Paso—since you became President. You've made no speeches and no appearances. If you come down there and try to have fund-raising affairs in four cities on one trip, they are going to think you are trying to financially rape the state," I used just those words.

"I'm inclined to agree with you," the President said.

"Mr. President," I said, "what really do you want to do on the trip?"

In addition to the fund-raising, he said, he wanted to see and talk to some of the Texas people who opposed him so sharply. I think it galled him that conservative business people would suspect that he, a wealthy product himself of our capitalist system, would do anything to damage that system. He added with some heat, "They don't have any reason to fear my administration."

I had a strong conviction that if the business community of Texas could see President Kennedy in the flesh and talk to him, it would feel quickly enough that he was no extremist. I told him now, "If you come down there to try to convert some of the more conservative people who have been against you or at least lukewarm, you are going to have to be with them and talk with them, and it is going to have to be done in a basically non-political setting, because a lot of these people just won't come to a straight political meeting. What's more, these are the people who are going to supply the funds you need."

Texans are a courteous and hospitable people. Their portion of the business element which distrusted President Kennedy would have felt neither desire nor obligation to attend an event hung around support of the national party. But I knew those same men would count it a point of pride and honor to entertain and welcome the President if he appeared as President instead of politician.

And I went on, "Now I hope you can give us two days—one for an affair in Houston, something in San Antonio, a breakfast in Fort Worth, a luncheon in Dallas and the dinner in Austin. This dinner will be at $100 a plate and will be strictly political—but the rest of it should be nongovernment. It will have a good taste in everyone's mouth, it will enhance your prestige with all of Texas and it will help you with the business community you're interested in reaching."

"I accept your judgment on that, John," he said. I told him I believed he would carry Texas in 1964, though it might be close. "I would anticipate that," he said. "Lyndon thinks we'll carry Texas, but he says it will be hard." The thought irked him; Texas is Democratic country. "We shouldn't have a hard race in Texas." I suggested that if the trip was successful, his problems might be considerably eased and then I ventured that I thought it would help a great deal if Mrs. Kennedy accompanied him. She had not previously gone on essentially political trips. She had captured the imagination of the country and particularly of the women, she had come to stand for culture, beauty and fashion—her hair style and her wardrobe were news. The wives of the men he wanted to attract would be most interested in seeing Mrs. Kennedy, and her presence would make the trip seem less politically oriented. The President nodded. Mrs. Kennedy was in Europe then, he said, but on her return she would ask her. I recall he said, "I agree with you. I would hope that she would come."

I was having dinner that night at the home of Vice President Johnson and when I arrived he had already learned that I had been with the President. He was distinctly irritated. He greeted me: "Well, did you all get the trip all worked out?" I said yes and he said, "I guess you think I have no interest in Texas or in this visit." I pointed out that I could hardly instruct the President as to his White House visitors, but Mr. Johnson was not mollified: "Well, I hope you know that I've got a slight interest in Texas and in this trip, too." I regretted my thoughtlessness in not discussing the plans with him, and I apologized.

I went back to Texas, called in my associates and began the extraordinary planning that a successful presidential trip requires. There is no end to the detail that must be mastered, always with the knowledge that a single point overlooked can mar a trip so hopelessly as to ruin it. It's easy to fall behind schedule—but a rule of working politics is that if a candidate falls an hour behind schedule, he might as well not have come. The people who've waited to see him will become irritated and resentful, and his message falls flat. Then it is all for nothing.
Soon the Secret Service men were in Texas and behind them came the President’s own advance men, sent down from Washington by the White House to oversee all the arrangements. Just as I had anticipated, trouble began almost immediately.

It lay in the great schism in Democratic politics in Texas, in a personal feud that grew in turn from a political feud that is even older. It had nothing whatsoever to do with the President’s trip to Texas except that it was a tiresome fashion it complicated some of the arrangements. But later, after the tragic ending of the trip, it was to assume huge and distorted proportions.

For a number of years Ralph Yarborough, now senior senator from Texas, had been in violent controversy with Mr. Johnson and with the majority of the state’s Democratic leadership. The senator’s support came generally from liberals and labor. He had run three exhausting, expensive campaigns for governor in the 1930's before he managed to win his seat in the Senate. It is hard to describe the bitterness that such campaigns generate in a state in which each individual must rally and hold his own support instead of relying on a party structure. I would not attempt to chronicle here the claims of betrayal and the counterclaims of perfidy that inflamed those times, but it was clear that Senator Yarborough was and remains the enemy of Mr. Johnson, while he was both in the Senate and after Mr. Johnson became Vice President.

Since there was a constant clash between Mr. Johnson and Senator Yarborough on patronage matters, President Kennedy was entire aware of the situation. Much later it was suggested that the purpose of the President’s trip to Texas was to settle this tiresome old feud. The idea is ridiculous. First, both men operated in Washington, not in Texas. One was across the street from the President and one was less than a mile away, and Washington would have been the place to settle it. Second, Presidents never insert themselves into such quarrels, for they can only get hurt. Third, the President couldn’t have settled it anyway: the quarrel is implacable.

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Connally continued

Rousing receptions on the way to Dallas

It was an unpleasant incident, but quite minor. After the assassination, when everything that had happened became important and much talked about, it came to seem significant. I think there is no doubt that this fed the gradual growth of the public impression that the President went to Texas to settle a feud. He did require Senator Yarborough to pay Mr. Johnson the simple courtesy of riding in a car with him, but there was no more to it than that.

It was still daylight in Fort Worth that morning, but the President appeared in good spirits. He seemed to have slept well. The Secret Service had selected his suite, one that was rather plainly furnished but had only one door. Contrary to reports made much later that it was dingy and poor, the hotel had renovated it. What's more, a committee had gathered from private homes all over Fort Worth a collection of great paintings worth, I suppose, nearly a million dollars—a Picasso, I remember, and a Monet, a Van Gogh and many others—to hang in the suite. Before President Kennedy came down that morning he called Mrs. J. Lee Johnson III, who had assembled it, and thanked her again his speeches—at breakfast to the Chamber of Commerce and to the public in the parking lot across the street from the hotel—were strong and laced with a pleasant touch of fun. He certainly impressed the Fort Worth Chamber members, just as I had anticipated. We flew the few miles to Dallas at about 11 a.m. and while we were still airborne he looked out the window and said with a smile, "Our luck is holding. It looks as if we'll get sunshine."

And indeed, when we landed it was a whole different day. The clouds were gone and the sun was crisp and brilliant. Texas has magnificent weather in the fall and now, in this most crucial of Texas cities, we were being favored. There was an overpowering sense of success and I know that President Kennedy felt it too.

I had been worried about Dallas, fearing not violence but embarrassment. An ugly advertisement had run that very morning in the Dallas Morning News. A month before, United Nations Ambassador Adlai Stevenson had been hit on the head by a picket sign. There had been the 1960 attack on Senator Johnson in which he had jumped and spat at his Nixon supporters. I was afraid of rude signs or that the crowds might be hostile or, what is almost as bad, apathetic or solemn. I had objected to the parade route being announced well in advance because that lends itself to organized heckling.

But as we neared downtown about noon...
and the crowds thickened, all my fears fell away. The people were friendly, waving, smiling, calling his name and Mrs. Kennedy's name. They were out in huge numbers long before we got into the center of the city, and it was plain that the President was enjoying himself.

We saw only one unfortunate sign. It read, I believe, "Kennedy Go Home!" He nudged my shoulder and gestured with his thumb. "See that sign, John?" he asked. I said that I had and that I had hoped he hadn't. He grinned. "If I see them everywhere I go," he said, adding with an edge of sarcasm, "I bet that's a nice guy."

At another point where the crowds slackened momentarily, he asked, "John, how do things look in Texas?" He had been warmed by the crowds and the success, and his political interest was quickening.

"There'll be a Houston Chronicle poll out tomorrow," I said, "which should give us some ideas."

"What's it going to show?" he asked.

"I think it will show that you can carry the state, but that it will be a close election."

"Oh? How will it show you running?"

"Mr. President," I said, "I think it will show you running a little ahead of you."

"That doesn't surprise me," he said, and that was the last conversation we had. We came back into heavy crowds then, and, of course, you cannot talk in the car at such times, for the people who have come to see you realize your interest is not with them and they resent it. Because we spent so much of our time together in motorcades, the fact is I didn't talk to the President a great deal.

There was a bright glitter to the sunshine and after a while Mrs. Kennedy slipped on a big pair of sunglasses. When the President looked around, he said in a low voice, "Take off your glasses, Jackie." She had no way of knowing, but glasses are nearly as effective as a mask for hiding one's face and make participation in a parade almost useless. In a moment, forgetting perhaps, she slipped them back on and I heard him say in the same tone, "Take off the glasses, Jackie."

He was watching the crowds, waving at them steadily with a stiff forearm, his right hand moving only a few inches, out from his face and back. It was a small movement and curiously formal but, I thought, quite effective. I heard a low monotone rumble from the back and then I realized he was responding—"Thank you, thank you, thank you"—over and over to people who couldn't hear him but who could see he was answering them, who knew that contact had been made. And then he turned his head slightly and said, "Jackie, take off your glasses."

With Governor Connally and Vice President Johnson, President Kennedy speaks in Fort Worth hours before he was killed.