

EB75

ROWAN (290)

CHICAGO, MARCH 24 (AP)-A FORMER STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL SAYS HE BELIEVES A STRONG REASON FOR PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S FATAL TRIP TO TEXAS WAS THE PRESIDENT'S CONCERN FOR THE NEGRO AND HIS DEDICATION TO DECENCY AND DEMOCRACY.

CARL T. ROWAN, FORMER AMBASSADOR TO FINLAND AND NOW A SYNDICATED COLUMNIST, SAID IN THE CURRENT ISSUE OF EBONY MAGAZINE THAT KENNEDY TOLD HIM TWO DAYS BEFORE HIS ASSASSINATION THAT HATRED WAS "SPREADING ACROSS THE COUNTRY LIKE A CANCER." ROWAN QUOTED KENNEDY AS SAYING HE FELT PARTLY TO BLAME.

ROWAN, WHO IS A NEGRO, RECALLED A MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT ON NOV. 20, 1963, THE DAY BEFORE KENNEDY LEFT FOR DALLAS. ROWAN HAD BEEN OUT OF THE COUNTRY FOR SIX MONTHS. HE QUOTED KENNEDY:

"CARL, A LOT HAS HAPPENED IN THE SIX MONTHS YOU'VE BEEN OUT OF WASHINGTON. HATRED IS SPREADING ACROSS THIS COUNTRY LIKE A CANCER, THE BIGOTS, THE BIRCHITES ARE LIKE A PLAGUE. THEY GET BOLDER EVERY DAY. I SUPPOSE YOU READ ABOUT THE DISGRACEFUL THINGS THAT THEY DID TO ADLAI STEVENSON DOWN IN TEXAS.

"THIS TREND IS DANGEROUS FOR THE COUNTRY. IT ENDANGERS YOU, ME AND HUMAN RIGHTS AND ALL THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION STANDS FOR.

"I HAVE MADE UP MY MIND THAT A PRESIDENT IS OBLIGATED TO USE THE PRESTIGE OF HIS OFFICE TO TRY TO HALT THIS DAMNED MADNESS. I HAVE CONCLUDED THAT I AM PARTLY TO BLAME BECAUSE I HAVEN'T GOT OUT AMONG THE PEOPLE ENOUGH. I'M GOING TO TEXAS TOMORROW PARTLY BECAUSE I BELIEVE IT IS SOMETHING I AM OBLIGATED TO DO."

ROWAN SAID HE CONCLUDED FROM PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S REMARKS THAT KENNEDY "WANTED TO BELIEVE THAT HE HAD A NOBLE AND PATRIOTIC PURPOSE, THAT HE THOUGHT HIS MISSION WAS TO RESTORE THE SANITY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE."

ONE OF THE REASONS GIVEN AT THE TIME FOR KENNEDY'S TRIP TO TEXAS WAS TO PATCH UP A POLITICAL FEUD WHICH THE THEN VICE PRESIDENT, LYNDON JOHNSON, REPORTEDLY WAS UNABLE TO SOLVE.

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