

Merry-Go-Round**Behind Kennedy's
Fatal Trip to Texas****Drew Pearson**

Today's column is by Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson

THE CHIEF reason for Kennedy family bitterness against Lyndon Johnson immediately after the assassination was the belief that it was the Vice President who had persuaded President Kennedy to go to Texas.

If it had not been for Johnson's persuasiveness, Mr. Kennedy never would have gone to the dangerous anti-Kennedy city of Dallas and would be alive today — or so the Kennedy family believes.

However, we have done some careful research regarding the reasons why Mr. Kennedy went to Texas and find that the facts are exactly the opposite. It was President Kennedy himself, not the Vice President, who initiated the trip.

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HERE IS the story of what happened:

In August, 1961, eight months after Kennedy was inaugurated, he approached speaker Sam Rayburn regarding a trip to Texas and asked him to handle the preparations. Rayburn said he would be glad to do so, but the time was not ripe.

The following August Mr. Kennedy conferred with another Texas Congressman, the late Albert Thomas of Houston. At that time Dick McGuire, chief Democratic money-raiser, had been pressing Mr. Kennedy because no funds had been collected in Texas since 1960.

After talking to Thomas, President Kennedy phoned Vice President Johnson, who advised him to check with John Connally, Mr. Kennedy's Secretary of the Navy, then running for Governor of Texas.

Connally was then embroiled in a tough primary election. Connally made it clear it would be embarrassing to have the President come to Texas during the middle of the campaign.

After Connally's victory in November, 1962, Dick McGuire telephoned Connally about the proposed Kennedy trip and the fund-raising dinner. Connally replied that the time was still not ripe.

Following Governor-elect Connally's negative response, President Kennedy checked with Vice President Johnson about the trip. Mr. Johnson agreed with Connally, urged delay.

Six months later, in June, 1963, President Kennedy told both Vice President Johnson and Governor Connally that he wanted to go to Texas.

Connally didn't give all the reasons to Mr. Kennedy, but he felt the Kennedy visit would not help him politically at all. Result: Both Connally and Johnson advised the President to wait.

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LATER IN the summer President Kennedy proposed that the Texas fund-raising dinner be held August 27, Lyndon Johnson's birthday. Again Connally said no, it was too close to Labor Day, too many moneyed Texans would be out of town.

However, he agreed that the dinner should be held in November. He was still far from enthusiastic, since he was still raising money to pay off his own 1962 campaign debt.

Vice President Johnson didn't learn about the dinner until September. And on October 20, the White House officially confirmed the fact that President Kennedy was going to Texas on November 21-22.

It was only at this point that Vice President Johnson got official confirmation.

This was the chain of events which led to President Kennedy's tragic end.

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