USE OF THE MASS COMMUNICATION MEDIA
BY GOVERNOR JOHN B. CONNALLY, JR.

THESIS

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By

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Governor John B. Connally Jr., who served as chief executive of the State of Texas from 1963 to 1969, made extensive use of the mass communication media to further both his programs and his own political fortune. It is the purpose of this study to examine the history of Connally's use of the media, to evaluate the degree of success he achieved in the use of the media, and to present evidence of how he was able to achieve success in the use of the media.

The study was done in three phases. In the first phase, microfilm files of two newspapers, the Dallas News and the Houston Chronicle, were studied in detail for the years 1962 through 1968. Clipping files of the Associated Press in Austin and the Dallas Times Herald also were studied for the years in question. Also, the New York Times Index was examined for references to Connally during these years. Such references were then checked on microfilm files of the Times. In the second phase, key members of Connally's staff for those years and key members of the capitol press corps in Austin were interviewed. As a third step, a questionnaire was mailed to 25 selected Texas editors soliciting their views on Connally's press relations.
The thesis was organized into chapters according to years, with alternate chapters dealing with election campaigns in even-numbered years and alternate chapters dealing with sessions of the legislature in odd-numbered years. Two chapters before the summary chapter report the views of Connally's staff members and the Texas editors toward his press relations as governor. Appendix A is a copy of the questionnaire sent to the editors.

Both the editors and members of Connally's staff agreed that his press relations were good, and that he was successful in his use of the media. There seems to be ample evidence to support such a conclusion. Connally's popularity with the voters was demonstrated at the polls. In addition, the Texas Poll reported that public approval of Connally's administration reached a high of 84 percent in December of 1964. There also seems to be evidence that the editors were uncritical of Connally on some points, particularly the amount of state spending, which doubled during his tenure.

A major ingredient of this success was Connally's personal charm, in the opinion of the editors. His good looks made him effective as a public speaker, as a television speaker, and as a subject for newspaper photographers. His press staff ranged at times from adequate to excellent, the two key members being Julian Read and George Christian. Read has his own private public relations firm with offices in
Austin and Dallas. Christian, who had been an administrative assistant to former Governor Price Daniel, was Connally's best press secretary. It was Read who gave Connally his knowledge of the use of television. Background information about Read is included in this study.

In addition to his personal charm and his talented staff, Connally made good use of several devices designed to give him maximum publicity. Included were a train trip from Texarkana to El Paso during the 1962 campaign and a trip around the state by airplane just before the 1962 runoff. He also used a "Coffee With Connally" television show in 1962, staged lavish inauguration celebrations in Austin, made good use of the press conference at key points in his administration, and often made state-wide television speeches at the height of several legislative battles. On occasion Connally wrote by-lined columns for the editorial pages of major newspapers to air his views.

Another reason for his success with the press was the fact that there were some real accomplishments in state government during his administration. For example, state support for higher education rose 168 percent in the six-year period. This was Connally's major campaign issue, the need for more support for higher education.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION ............................................. 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connally Biography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, 1962 ......................... 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. FIFTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE, 1963 ................. 26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Assassination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, 1964 ......................... 47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. FIFTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE, 1965 ..................... 58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, 1966 ......................... 70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. SIXTIETH LEGISLATURE, 1967 ...................... 81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. SIXTIETH LEGISLATURE, SPECIAL SESSION, 1968 .. 97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, 1968 ......................... 104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. VIEWPOINTS OF CONNALLY STAFF MEMBERS ............. 112</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI. VIEWPOINTS OF SELECTED TEXAS EDITORS .......... 119</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS ......................... 138</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX .................................................. 146</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY .............................................. 148</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

While still in his teens, John B. Connally Jr. got his first taste of politics when his father, a candidate for county clerk, stationed him in the courthouse to guard the ballot box. The senior John Connally was one of a group of Wilson County ranchers who had decided to run a slate against the entire courthouse crowd and "throw the rascals out." Someone was needed to watch the ballot box in view of the fact that the sheriff was one of the "rascals." (1)

From this beginning, John B. Connally Jr. has risen politically into the spotlight of national politics, and even international politics, through his round-the-world trip in 1972 for President Nixon. He became a trusted aid of Lyndon B. Johnson in the late 1930's and later served as Secretary of the Navy under President Kennedy in the early 1960's. From 1963 to 1969, Connally served as governor of Texas. During his years as the chief executive of Texas, he was highly successful in pushing his programs through the legislature. He also enjoyed considerable personal popularity with the public. The Texas Poll reported that approval of Connally's handling of the governorship ranged from 54 percent in May of 1963 to a high of 84 percent in December
of 1964. No other governor in the history of the Texas Poll, begun in 1940, had broken above the 80 percent mark (2).

After two years as a private citizen, Connally was appointed Secretary of the Treasury under President Nixon in 1971 and was credited with stemming the tide of inflation. Although he did not change his political party, there was considerable serious speculation that he would be Nixon's 1972 vice-presidential running mate. There was also serious talk that he might be the 1976 Republican presidential candidate. This speculation was heightened when Connally, after his resignation from the Treasury post, accepted the national chairmanship of an organization he formed called Democrats for Nixon. There was also speculation that he might rejoin the cabinet in Nixon's second term, possibly as Secretary of State.

A vital part of Connally's rise in politics, his success with the legislature in Texas and his popularity with the public was Connally's use of the mass communication media—the newspapers, radio, and television. Repeatedly when he or his programs needed help while he was governor, Connally turned to the press conference, the state-wide television address, or some gimmick which would provide abundant news coverage.

Wilbourn E. Benton pointed out the importance of the media in his book, *Texas: Its Government And Politics:*
Tremendous sums are spent on campaigning in the pivotal cities of Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio. If a candidate can poll a large vote in these four cities, he is well on his way to winning the nomination or election to state-wide office. The position of the large daily papers in these cities is of paramount importance. Although the large dailies cannot dictate candidates or assure winners, they have great power in moulding public opinion. (3)

It will be the purpose of this thesis to examine the ways in which Connally used the mass communication media during his tenure as governor and to assess the measure of his success. Use of the media by politicians has become an important factor in American politics. A discussion of some of the techniques of such a man as John Connally, who now has national stature, should serve a useful purpose to future office holders who might wish to copy those techniques and to future journalists who will have those techniques used upon them. There also should be some value to the political scientist and to the voting public.

Research for this paper consisted of reading the microfilm files on the *Dallas Morning News* and the *Houston Chronicle* for the years 1961 through 1969, reading the clippings files of the *Dallas News*, the *Dallas Times Herald* and the Associated Press for those years, and interviewing key members of the Connally staff. In addition, a questionnaire (see Appendix A) was mailed to twenty-five key Texas editors soliciting their views on Connally. Three members of the capitol press were also interviewed.
Connally Biography

John Bowden Connally Jr. was born February 27, 1917 in Floresville, Texas. His father was a prominent Wilson County rancher. He attended public schools in Floresville, near San Antonio, and at Harlandale in San Antonio, the latter while his father was seeing the family through rough times by driving a truck from San Antonio to Corpus Christi. (4)

In 1934, Connally entered the University of Texas at Austin, working his way through school by selling gum and making beds during the school year, among other things, and working for the Texas Highway Department in the summers. His country blue jeans gave way to city dress and the Homburg hat became his trademark. Connally had the lead in the 1938 Curtain Club production of "College Widow." The female lead was played by Idanell Brill, the U-T Sweetheart, who became Mrs. Connally on December 21, 1940. Connally was elected president of the Students Association in 1938 and that summer worked for Ernest O. Thompson in his campaign for governor. He received his bachelor of laws degree in 1939.

Lyndon B. Johnson, elected to his first full term in Congress in 1939, had been looking for a bright young man to take back to Washington with him. Connally had barely broken in as a lawyer at this time, losing his first case defending a cattle rustler in Floresville. Johnson chose Connally as his congressional secretary. Their first election campaign
together was in 1941, when Johnson lost a special senate race to W. Lee O'Daniel.

Connally was commissioned in the U. S. Naval Reserve June 11, 1941. Stationed in Washington, he served in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations and later in the Office of the Under Secretary of the Navy. In 1943, he was transferred to the immediate office of Under Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal. Connally was later sent to Algiers, where for nearly a year he assisted in planning for the Italian invasions. He was then assigned to the carrier U.S.S. Essex in the Pacific and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V" for heroism as fighter director officer during an attack by Japanese aircraft. He was detached from the Essex in November, 1945, and left active duty January 3, 1946, in Washington.

Following the war, Connally organized radio station KVET in Austin with a group of partners that included his brother, Merrill; Jack Pickle, who later was to represent the Austin area in Congress; and Ed Clark, who later was to represent the United States as ambassador to Australia. Connally was president and manager of the station for three years. After that, he practiced law in Austin until 1952. Connally and Charles Herring of Austin ran the state headquarters during Johnson's 1948 race for the U.S. Senate. For most of 1949, Connally served on Johnson's staff in Washington.
In 1952, Connally became lawyer, manager, and "right hand man" to wealthy Fort Worth oilman Sid Richardson. Richardson and Perry R. Bass were independent oil operators. The Richardson-Bass holdings included companies engaged in salt water control, carbon and carbon black products, radio and television stations, insurance, and oil and gas properties. When Richardson died, Connally was the only one of the three executors of the estate not related to Richardson. Through his work for Richardson and various business ventures Connally became wealthy.

Throughout this earlier period, Connally was close to Lyndon Johnson. In 1956, he nominated Johnson for president at the Democratic National Convention. He engineered Johnson's 1960 drive for the presidential nomination, a drive which unexpectedly culminated with Johnson as vice-president.

Reportedly at the suggestion of Sam Rayburn, but with the obvious approval of Johnson, on December 27, 1960 President Kennedy named Connally as his Secretary of the Navy.

He was serving in that cabinet post when he decided to run for governor of Texas. On December 11, 1961, after serving Kennedy less than a year, he resigned.

Connally served three terms as governor, and it is this period from roughly mid-1961 to early 1969 when he decided to seek the office that is the subject of this thesis.
The historical highlight, of course, was when Connally was almost fatally shot during the assassination of President Kennedy.

After he returned to private life in 1969, Connally was active as a partner in the Houston law firm of Vinson, Elkins, Searls and Connally.

On February 11, 1971, President Nixon appointed Connally as Secretary of the Treasury, a post in which he served until May of 1972 when he once more returned to the Houston law firm.
FOOTNOTES


In the second half of 1961, the citadel surrounded by a moat full of oil that the pro-business Democratic Party of Texas had erected in Austin was under siege. Governor Price Daniel, into his third term, had worn out his welcome at the polls. He had come into office with a $54 million surplus in the state treasury and was to run up a deficit of $77 million by the end of the year (1). With the regular session and three called sessions, he had kept the Fifty-sixth Legislature at work--and fighting--a record 205 days. The next legislature passed the state's first sales tax, a controversy that took its toll on Daniel's appeal to the voters. Meantime, the Republicans and the Texas liberals both were threatening. The GOP had elected the first Southern Republican to the U.S. Senate since Reconstruction when John Tower won a special 1961 election. The Republicans were preparing to mount campaigns in more than half of the congressional districts in the state. Labor was ready to support Ralph Yarborough for governor if he would run (2).

George Christian, Daniel's administrative assistant and later press secretary to Connally and President Johnson, recalls that after the big tax fight of 1961 business was unhappy with Daniel (3). Yet, no logical successor was in sight. "There
just wasn't anybody on the scene," Christian said in a 1972 interview.

When Senator Lyndon Johnson resigned his senate post following his election as vice-president in 1960, Governor Daniel came close to appointing Connally to the U.S. Senate instead of William Blakely of Dallas, who lost in the 1961 special election when 71 candidates ran. "Daniel wanted to and should have appointed John Connally to the Senate," Christian said. "Daniel told him he would appoint him provided Blakely didn't want it. He had a long-time commitment to Blakeley. Connally understood this." When Blakeley took the Senate appointment, Connally was offered, instead, and declined, appointment to the University of Texas Board of Regents. Christian also said Daniel had indicated to Connally in a conversation that he did not plan to run for a fourth term. "A lot of people started bugging Connally to come home and run," Christian recalls. By this time, Connally was serving as Kennedy's Secretary of the Navy. "He [Connally] told me that Johnson urged him not to run in '62. But a lot of people in Texas were disenchanted with Daniel and they put a bug in his ear to come back and run."

The first step by Connally was to float a couple of balloons and see what reaction he could get. On October 26, 1961, the Dallas Times Herald ran a story saying Connally
planned to resign and make the race for governor (4). On October 29, the New York Times ran a similar story. Anthony Lewis of the Times staff wrote that there were several forces in favor of Connally's running:

One is a belief among some Democrats that he could unite the perpetually warring party factions in Texas. Mr. Connally believes that he might be able to get the liberals and conservatives together. With the Republicans gaining more and more strength in Texas, a Democratic candidate who can hold the party together will be invaluable in the gubernatorial contest next year. A Republican senator, John Tower, was elected this year partly because of Democratic division (5).

Connally announced on December 9 that he planned to resign from the cabinet on December 20 and make the race. Meantime, Governor Daniel was having second thoughts about his own plans. "Daniel talked a lot about Connally being unable to win because Kennedy and Johnson were so unpopular in Texas," recalls Christian, who at that time was on Daniel's staff. Daniel did not favor Attorney General Will Wilson or liberal Houston attorney Don Yarborough, the two men he expected to be the contestants in the Democratic Party runoff primary. "He talked himself into the notion that only he could beat Will Wilson," Christian says. "He didn't want it to look like Wilson drove him out of the race. He said he would rather be carried out feet first." On January 26, 1962, Allen Duckworth of the Dallas News reported that Daniel might run and said Austin was worried about Connally (6). "One
would have to deal through the Johnson hierarchy in Austin if Connally were governor," he said Austin politicos were saying. Duckworth also reported that Daniel had asked Connally to hold off on the very day that Connally announced his decision to run. Subsequently, Daniel decided to get into the race.

Suddenly, on January 25, the liberal threat faded somewhat when Ralph Yarborough announced he would not run (7). He said President Kennedy had called him in December to discuss the governor's race. Speculation was that Kennedy had offered Yarborough a greater role in dispensing of patronage in Texas if he would not run. However, the liberals still had Don Yarborough, no relation to the senator. He announced his candidacy the same day the senator said he wasn't running. So the candidates were to be Connally, Daniel, Wilson, Don Yarborough, Marshall Formby and Edwin A. Walker in the Democratic Primary of 1962. Connally was decidedly an underdog.

Richard More head of the Dallas News Austin Bureau spoke in a column of the "Johnson-Daniel" leadership in the governor's race with no mention of Connally (8).

It became quickly apparent that Connally planned to use the communication media to the fullest and that he knew how to use them better than any of the other candidates. Jimmy Banks, former Dallas News Austin reporter, described in his book Money, Marbles & Chalk, the Wondrous World of Texas Politics (9), the advantage Connally had from having worked
in campaigns for Lyndon Johnson in 1941 and 1948:

There wasn't a publisher in the state of Texas I hadn't known (Banks quotes Connally as saying,) and known pretty well. There wasn't a one I couldn't call on or go see. This didn't mean they were committed to me, but at least I had an entree. I'd had some working relationship with nearly all the top editors and publishers in the state during those two state-wide campaigns for Johnson.

As Connally was getting together a campaign staff, he turned to his hometown, Fort Worth, to a public relations and advertising man, Julian Read, who had handled Jim Wright's campaign for Congress in 1964 and who had been recommended to him. Around Christmas of 1961, Connally met with Read of Read-Poland and asked him to handle his public relations and advertising. It was to be one of the best moves Connally ever made. Read became a trusted adviser on a wide range of subjects, but he was the brain behind the superb use of the media by Connally during his entire tenure as governor.

Read worked five years on the Fort Worth Press before he went to Texas Christian University to complete his degree in economics in 1954. A native of Forth Worth, he had been an advertising-public relations "entrepreneur," as he put it, even while he was a newspaperman. He created his own firm in 1951. When WBAP-TV in Fort Worth was the only television station in Texas, Read was producing two live commercials each night, 365 days a year, for its "Weather Telefax" show. His first political work was for Don Kennard, who became a state senator in 1952. Read utilized a considerable amount
of television in his work for Wright in 1954 when TV was still a novelty, putting his candidate on "live" 15 minutes at a time. "I was able to learn the medium in an ideal climate of complete freedom," Read recalled in a 1972 interview (10). "They were glad to have you on the air."

He was joined in 1955 by Dan Poland, a Yale graduate with a retail advertising background. Read bought Poland out in 1962 because the company had changed direction by concentrating on the political arena. Read has not bothered to change the name and the firm is still known as Read-Poland, with offices in Austin and Dallas.

Connally made excellent use of Read and television in the campaign. He reported spending $572,480 in the two 1962 Democratic primaries compared to $288,061 spent by Don Yarborough, his run-off opponent (11). But, as Clifton McCleskey states in his The Government and Politics of Texas, "Some informed observers felt that more realistic totals would have been obtained by doubling each set of figures" (12). McCleskey said that, depending on the hour chosen and the station pattern, a single state-wide television program of 30-minute duration could cost the candidate $15,000 to $20,000, plus other costs. The standard fee for a firm like Read-Poland, he said, would be 17 percent. Thus, on a budget of $200,000, the public relations firm would get $34,000 (13). Read was so close to the operation that the Connally state headquarters in the
Trans-American Life Building in Fort Worth had a direct telephone line to Read's office (14). It was clearly a media campaign. "Instead of hillbilly bands and old-fashioned oratory at the courthouse square," McCleskey said, "one finds a heavy reliance on the mass media of communication, especially TV, to carry the campaign to the voters" (15).

Connally's campaign kickoff rally in the Rice Hotel, for example, was carried on a 19-station television hookup. To illustrate Connally's problem as the underdog, the story of his campaign opening was carried on page 4 of the Dallas Morning News. It was on page 20 of the Houston Chronicle even though it occurred in Houston.

Read took two major steps designed to make Connally known to Texans. The first was a series of five-minute television shows called, "Coffee with Connally." Read knew that there was a five-minute cutaway from the "Today" show on NBC at 7:25 a.m. that the local stations didn't know what to do with. He was able to buy the time at a rate which he says was "incredibly low," $50 for the Dallas-Fort Worth market and other markets as low as $15, a fantastic bargain as television rates go (16). "We wanted to develop a personal identity for Connally with the public," Read said. "I took it to Connally and with his incisive mind he immediately saw the possibilities. He bought it immediately" (17). The show was videotaped at Connaly's home in Fort Worth for several weeks--it was on the air each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
morning during the first primary campaign. Later shows were done in a television studio. "It did exactly what we wanted it to," Read said. "Connally came across as a person. He had a personal link with the individual" (18).

The next step shows how Read was able to amplify and expand the value of moves initiated by Connally. It was the candidate's idea to throw a barbecue at his ranch in Floresville. It was Read's idea to invite the capitol press corps and tape the entire proceedings for use on television. Read took a videotape unit to the ranch along with a busload of capitol reporters. He taped and filmed an hour and a half of the events and cut that to a half-hour documentary of Connally "down home."

Read described the problem and the solution:

Connally had been under attack as "Lyndon's Boy John." The news that came out of this was that Connally said he would not renounce his friendship with the vice president to be governor of Texas. The press had been highly skeptical of John Connally. This was his first major visibility to the state-wide press. As such, it was damned impressive. They saw the base of his strength among homefolks. They saw him in a different perspective. He looked like someone who had to be contended with. The barbecue was a pure Connally thing. Our role was, OK what can we do with that? That was the great strength we were able to give him. His press secretaries knew some segments, but they did not have the scope of thinking we did (19).

By January 30, Connally had been endorsed by eleven Texas newspapers, including the Fort Worth Star-Telegram and the Austin American-Statesman. Still some of the most influential
papers, such as the Dallas News, were either pro-Daniel or uncertain as late as April. On April 25, the News editorially noted liberal attacks on Connally and observed: "The fact that the ADA, the Washington liberal columnists and the Ralph Yarborough liberals of Texas are all fighting Connally raises the News' opinion of him."

Connally was able to win over the Houston Chronicle with a neat piece of political footwork. On April 14, the paper said editorially that Daniel and Connally probably would be in the runoff and that the voters should judge them on the basis of the issues of efficient administration, education, and new industry for Texas. On April 22, the Chronicle carried a column under a four-column headline with John Connally's byline, outlining his views on the subjects the paper had raised. Daniel's forces were not heard from and on May 7 the Chronicle endorsed Connally, specifically mentioning his column and stating, "We liked his reply."

The Dallas News on April 29 endorsed Connally on the basis of the need for a new face but, indicative of Connally's continuing problem as the underdog, the News endorsed him, "without prejudice to Governor Daniel."

Meantime, Connally was charming the working press. Typical of the spell he cast over them was this passage from a story in the Houston Chronicle May 7 by Olin Clements:
Connally's mannerisms are typically Texan. He is loose-jointed, amiable. His eyes wrinkle in the glaring sun. His speech is not a drawl, but rather the pleasant, cultured tones of an educated man of big business (19).

Still the Chronicle had Bo Byers, their top political writer, traveling with Governor Daniel.

Connally used television extensively. There was a 23-station network on April 26, and a 22-station hookup the Friday before the May 5 election.

The results of the first primary showed the effectiveness of the Connally organization. He received 431,498 votes to 317,986 for Yarborough. Governor Daniel ran an unexpected third. Three other candidates got fewer than 200,000 votes each (20).

The runoff with Yarborough presented a new set of mass communication problems described by Read:

The main idea was to find some means of creating activity in the press and create public interest in the runoff, because historically runoffs have a light voter turnout. We ran farther ahead in the primary than expected. This tended to make his supporters think he's got it made. Don Yarborough had made the runoff unexpectedly.

So all the down side was ours and all the up side was his. The problem was firing our people up--how do you follow that act (21).

Read's solution was simple and it was a political throwback. On May 12, Connally announced that he would make a campaign train trip from Texarkana, in the northeast corner of Texas, to El Paso, in the far western corner. He made
38 stops in the 836-mile trip and spoke to a large number of voters during the "whistle stops." But the important thing was that all the major news media in Texas sent their top political reporters on the train trip while Yarborough was struggling to get the attention of second-stringers by using less imaginative campaign methods. Of course, the "John Connally Victory Special" provided the best food and drink service to the reporters that the Texas & Pacific could offer, and that was considerable. No political writer could fail to be wooed. It was a media coup of the first order.

Endorsements came rapidly. Yarborough charged that "at least half" of the daily newspapers in Texas were "hatchet men" for Connally (23). The Dallas News replied, "If he will continue to run for governor, we will continue to edit this newspaper and support his opponent, John Connally, for the June 2 runoff" (24). The News, with its large Republican and very conservative following, had to defend its endorsement of Connally, which illustrated that Connally still was not solidly in with the conservative establishment at this time. The News said it had received "scores of communications from life-long readers who expressed astonishment at its decision." The paper replied that Connally was not a "wild-eyed liberal" and made it clear that the endorsement was for the primary only. Not only that, but the paper said it would withdraw its endorsement if he "pursues the liberal policies of the New Frontier" (25). Meantime, Connally, who had spurned free
television time for a debate, continued to spend heavily on TV.

After the election became a liberal-conservative fight in the runoff, the newspapers went all-out for Connally. Efforts by Republicans to help Yarborough on the basis that he would be easier for the GOP to beat in November were labeled "Republican roulette" (26). Connally was tagged as the conservative candidate (27) and was endorsed as "the only native Texan in the race" (28). The News on June 1 attacked "the lusts of a loose liberalism." An ad by Connally claimed the endorsement of more than 50 daily newspapers (29).

It all paid off at the polls. At a time when a liberal Democrat was in the White House and when Yarborough was the embodiment of the New Frontier in Texas, Connally won in a squeaker—565,174 to 538,924 (30). A 28,000-vote majority in Dallas and Tarrant counties was a major factor. Yarborough carried Harris County (Houston), his home, but only by 11,000 votes, perhaps because of the strong editorial support of the Chronicle for Connally. Also, perhaps due to the influence of the News, Connally was able to get 64 percent of the votes in Dallas County.

In the general election, Connally faced the most serious challenge the Republicans had mounted since 1932, when Orville Bullington was defeated by Mrs. Miriam (Ma) Ferguson. The Dallas News called the campaign of Republican Jack Cox the
most active in modern political history (31). News political writer Allen Duckworth said the last big GOP campaign was in 1869 (32). It was a hard-fought campaign and an expensive one with both sides going all-out.

Newspaper endorsements favored Connally, although Cox got his share. The Dallas News ran a tortured editorial October 21 without endorsing either candidate. After Cox replied to a question in Dallas about the proposed Trinity River canal project by saying he wanted to study it further, the News ran an editorial critical of Cox' position, but still not endorsing Connally. In Houston, both the Post and the Chronicle supported Connally, although the Chronicle added, "The Chronicle has no ill words to say for Mr. Connally's opponent. It is his misfortune that he is matched against a man of the abilities of Mr. Connally" (33). Among papers which endorsed Cox were the papers in Breckenridge, Brownsville, Denton, El Paso, Gainesville, Edinburgh, Henderson, and McAllen. Papers in Amarillo, Galveston, Midland, San Antonio, Odessa, Pampa, and Tyler did not endorse him.

The Chronicle on November 4 listed 52 papers which had endorsed Connally, with a total circulation of more than two million. It said the eight which endorsed Cox had a circulation total of about 120,000. Clearly, John Connally had won over the editors and publishers of Texas (34). Also, this time the major papers sent their top political writers with Connally and the second-stringers with Cox, although there was some switching off.
It was a touch campaign with many petty issues. Primarily, it was a media campaign, with both sides spending large sums for television time, billboards and other communications. The one big media "stunt" of the fall campaign was Connally's "Around the State in 48" trip in which he traveled 3,618 miles hitting 30 stops by plane on November 2 and 3. "The question we faced," Read said, "was how we were going to climax. We also wanted to touch all the organization--to give them a last-minute hypo." Read said one purpose of such trips was to give the press a chance to talk to Connally "in a different atmosphere," to gain "depth-type rapport" (35). In other words, it was to let Connally work his charm on the reporters as he had already done on their editors and publishers. Read said such plans were weighted on a scale of yield in benefits versus time and expense. Cox had no such expert advice on the media, although some old GOP political pros were helping as best they could. Having been long in the minority, they were short on experience.

Connally won with 845,038 votes, but Cox got 715,025--more than any GOP candidate in history except for Democrat Allan Shivers, who allowed his name to be cross-filed in 1952 (36). Cox carried Dallas and Harris counties, although the media campaign of Connally and the endorsements may have hurt him fatally there. The Republican won Harris County by 1,721 votes, such a narrow margin that Cox expressed disappointment saying he had hoped to do better there. Without the same kind of support from the newspapers that he had in
Houston (the News never did endorse Connally outright),
Connally lost Dallas County.

On November 6, the Dallas News made note of the outlay by
the candidates for TV time and other campaign expenses: "Never
in Texas history has a general election campaign for governor
been so hotly contested, nor so expensively." (37)
FOOTNOTES


4. The story was written by the author of this thesis, who, at the time was political writer for the Times Herald. It was written on the basis of a tip from John McKee, regional governmental affairs director for the Ford Motor Co., who obtained Connally's consent to the publication of the story and verification.


10. Interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972.


12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.


17. Interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972.

18. Interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972.


22. Interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972.


34. The author of this thesis was political writer for the Dallas Times Herald at this time. He was ordered to do a series of articles on Connally's background. When he asked if such a series also would be published about Cox, he was told no. "If we are going to support him, we ought to support him all the way," one of the editors replied.

35. Interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972.


CHAPTER III

FIFTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE, 1963

Connally let the press know immediately that he was a man who made news. He held his first press conference on November 8, 1962, and demonstrated his skill at saying quotable things. He told the Austin reporters that he did not plan to punish Dallas County for voting against him, but said he was uncertain about a second congressman for Dallas. He made it clear he would not have much time to confer with the new Republican members of the legislature.

During the 1962 campaign, Connally had made two campaign promises that were to come back to haunt him almost immediately. One was that he would hold frequent press conferences and one was that he could cut state administrative costs 10 percent. Both ended up having a bearing on his media relations.

But before any storm clouds gathered, Connally treated the press and the people of Texas to one of the biggest inaugur-ations in history. Portions were carried live on radio and television and the remainder got tremendous newspaper, radio and television coverage. It quickly established Connally as a colorful, newsworthy governor, although extravagant.
A $25-a-plate dinner sponsored by the State Democratic Executive Committee started things on the night of January 14. More than 5,000 attended to see Vice-President Lyndon Johnson and show-business stars Vic Damone, Joey Bishop, Patrice Wymore, and Abby Dalton, all of whom made great copy and film.

Billy Graham preached at a prayer breakfast to start things rolling on inauguration day. Jets flashed overhead and a nineteen-gun salute sounded as the oath was administered, with about 15,000 people around the steps of the capitol for the ceremonies. The Houston Chronicle estimated there were more than 100,000 in Austin for the occasion. Police estimated 80,000 saw the inaugural parade, which was 1.3 miles long and had more than 50 bands. It took two hours and forty minutes to pass the reviewing stand. The climax of the day was a public reception in the capitol. This was Connally's idea, according to Read. Read's role in the inauguration was writing and editing Connally's various speeches, especially his first address to the legislature on January 16. More than a thousand persons were in line when the Connallys started shaking hands in the rotunda at 7 p.m. Thus the colorful, extravagant governor also became a man of the people.

Typical of the effect was an editorial on the Houston Chronicle:

It was a significant day for Texas, and certainly one of the most impressive inauguration days in our history. Texans may well look forward confidently, as well as purposefully, toward that greatness which the governor so impressively forecast.
Connally's first address to the legislature set the tone for his administration. It was full of news. He made a total of twenty-one recommendations, covering education reforms, tourism, repeal of the poll tax, equal rights for women, a Little Hoover Commission, a two-term limit on the office of governor, and consolidation of the Parks Department and the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

The address also produced the first controversy of the Connally Administration, and it concerned the press. Connally, who had promised to cut spending, started by asking for $197,000 in emergency funds, including $85,772 for the Governor's Office. The office money was to go for two $15,000-a-year assistants, one the press secretary; two others at $12,000; and 15 secretaries. State Representative Bill Hollowell of Grand Saline attacked the new staff members as "lobbyists on the floor" and "press people" and said they were unnecessary. Republicans in the House charged that the four would be organizers for the Democratic Party (5). But the legislature voted Connally the money and the newspaper which had hailed him as a true conservative, the Dallas News, did not utter an editorial word.

Connally had already made a deal with the man who was to be his first, and probably least effective, press secretary. He had known Wilbur Evans when they were at the University of Texas. Evans, who had been with the Southwest Conference as a
publicist for two years and had been sports information director at Texas University 12 years prior to that, said he "ran into" Connally at the Cotton Bowl game on January 1, 1963 (6). "He told me at the time that he hadn't lined up a press secretary," Evans recalls. Although he didn't mention the job to Evans at that moment, Connally called back about a week or ten days later and offered it to him. Evans said his family had wanted to move back to Austin, so he took the job. However, he had misgivings.

Evans says he was clearly a "fish out of water," but then again, so was Connally. "I guess he was almost as much in the dark as I was," Evans said. He expressed the opinion that the law which starts the governor's term at the same time the legislature starts to meet is "the most ridiculous thing I ever heard of." He described the Governor's Office in the early days of the Connally Administration as a scene of mass confusion. Evans found his main job was writing proclamations and setting up picture-taking sessions with the governor and visitors.

Evans soon realized he wasn't cut out to be a governor's press secretary. Besides, he discovered that Connally really didn't need much help with the press, because of his radio background, and since he already had so many friends in the press. By May, Evans had decided to go back to sports. "Frankly, I didn't think I was doing the job adequately," he
explained. "I was weak in state government background. Every job I had ever had before I had thoroughly enjoyed, but I had just been in intercollegiate athletics too long to enjoy this one." For example, he would pick up the paper in the morning and read the sports pages before he would read about the legislature.

Evans suggested Jimmy Banks of the Dallas News Austin Bureau and George Christian of the Texas Employment Commission, who had been administrative assistant to Governor Price Daniel. Evans had planned to become sports information director at Texas A & M University, but instead took a job with the Dallas Cowboys. Indicative of the favorable treatment Connally was getting from the Dallas News was a statement by Evans on Banks as a successor for press secretary. "I guess Connally liked Banks where he was," Evans opined. Connally subsequently chose Christian.

One early press problem for Connally was the infrequency of press conferences. Both Evans and Christian suggested that the press felt Connally should have had more than he did. Read also mentioned the problem of press conferences, but said the press was satisfied with the results when one was held because Connally produced so much news. "Connally was such a great game player that you tended to overlook it if he didn't show up for some practices," Read explained.(7), Connally, he continued, had a good sense of timing on his press conferences and
didn't want to wear out the value of press conferences by "going to the well too often." Read said Connally didn't want his press conferences to become a "commonplace thing."

Christian was of the opinion that Connally didn't like all the bother of getting ready for press conferences, but did enjoy them once they were underway. "He didn't like for the press to bitch at him for not doing it," he said (8). "I've never been one to agitate all the time for press conferences," Christian said in explanation of his own policy as press secretary. "He had promised one a week or something like that when he went in. That was a mistake and that was part of the problem," he said. Connally also irritated the press, according to Christian, because he frequently didn't talk to them when they called and didn't return their calls promptly. "He was not readily accessible to anyone," he continued. He hated to spend all day long seeing people."

Connally also missed one chance to make points with the press when, at a February 15 press conference, he was non-committal on the proposed law to require that all public bodies hold meetings open to the press, the so-called Open Meetings Law, which subsequently passed.

Typical of the way Connally courted the press was a meeting in Austin on March 6 to which he invited top Texas editors. It was Connally's idea, but Read was able to capitalize on it. The problem was that Connally was about to
lay out a record spending proposal for his programs, and he wanted to "pull the teeth" of editors who might "snarl" about big spending. Conally fed the editors breakfast at the Driskill Hotel. Then, at 8:30 a.m. he bused them to the Paramount Theater in Austin for the budget presentation. Read helped with that. With the help of visual aids, Connally hammered at the fact that eighty-five cents of every dollar coming in to state government was "untouchable," that is, already earmarked for some specific use. This, he explained, gave the governor very little leeway for his programs (9). The editors, who thought they were going to get an exclusive preview of the budget, were disappointed, but they took the bait anyway. Mike Quinn of the Dallas News wrote that Connally, "evidently used the publishers' session Wednesday as a softening-up process for his Thursday talk"(10). He called it "the artillery barrage before the infantry moves in." After Connally had laid out his budget on March 7, major papers in the state followed up with editorials reflecting the "untouchable" line Connally had pressed at his briefing. The Dallas News had a cartoon on its editorial page on March 10 showing an "Untouchable Pie" along with an editorial reflecting Connally's viewpoint. "The News might differ with the governor on a few details," the paper editorialized, "but in the main congratulates him on a conservative approach to a difficult situation"(11). Thus, a record $3.1 billion state budget was characterized as "a conservative approach." The Houston
Chronicle carried an editorial favorable to Connally's plans along with a cartoon and two charts, both copied after charts Read had prepared for use in the Austin briefing (12).

There were other little ripples on an otherwise tranquil sea during the session. When J. Carter King, Jr., of Albany, chairman of the Parks Board, announced opposition to Connally's plan to combine the Parks Department and the Fish and Wildlife Commission, Evans insisted that the governor had no statement, but the press secretary significantly handed out photostats of stories about the county Democratic convention at which King had opposed Connally for governor (13). After it was revealed that the Reverend C. A. Holliday, whom Connally had appointed as the first Negro on the Board of Corrections, had a brother in prison, Connally replied that he had appointed Holliday and not his brother. On April 8, the Dallas News disclosed that Railroad Commissioner William J. Murray, Jr. had made $285,000 on a $10 investment in oil leases. To disassociate himself, Connally walked from his office over to the attorney general's office across the capitol grounds and, according to the Dallas News (14) "personally pressed the probe."

His major battle with the legislature in this session was over spending for higher education. Connally wanted to increase support for the state's colleges and universities and he wanted full credit for it. On May 20, the Conference
Committee considering state spending reported out a bill which included an increase of $58.9 million for higher education, $18.7 million of which involved bringing the University of Houston into the state system (15). But Connally wanted $10 million more. His staff reported that he stayed up until 3 a.m. studying the conference report. Several times he met with the committee, emphasizing to the members and to the press his concern for higher education. On the morning of May 23, Connally held a press conference to express his disappointment in the conference report. That afternoon, the committee agreed to add $4.4 million. That night, he suggested places where another $8 million could be cut and added to higher education (16). He argued for "brainpower instead of bricks" and objected to buildings being built and repaired while money was needed for faculty salaries, research, and libraries. Improving education was his main campaign issue in 1962 and obviously was going to be his main issue in 1964.

At midnight on May 24, the regular session of the 58th Legislature ended. The spending bill passed and sent to the governor contained only the $58.9 million increase in the first conference report. On May 25, Jimmy Banks reported in the Dallas News that Connally planned to veto the bill and go on radio and television to blast the legislature. "Connally will come out swinging, via television and radio, at pork barrel and log rolling, which he believes shortchanged higher
education in the two-year, $3.14 billion spending bill," Banks wrote. It was uncertain whether or not Connally really considered such drastic action at that point or whether by means of his press conferences, public statements, and meetings he was merely trying to call attention to his fight for higher education. The fact is, he did not use the veto at that time.

On May 29, the Dallas News asked Connally to reconsider his veto threat. "In the opinion of the News," it said, "he should sign the bill, then call a special session to consider the additional money he wants for higher education." The News pointed out that the bill did include $58.9 million additional for higher education, but said his position was "understandable." Thus, he called public attention to the fact that he did get $58.9 million in additional funds in fulfillment of his campaign pledges.

On June 11, he finally went on television and vetoed $12.4 million in appropriations in order to create what he termed "a nest-egg for greatness" in education (17). He also promised a special session for the Fall and hoped the Texas system of higher education "would not be critically endangered" by not getting more than the $58.9 million increase. Among items he vetoed were $3.6 million for a state finance building, $2.2 million for a Confederate home for men in the home district of Appropriations Committee Chairman Bill
Heatly, $751,000 for improvements to state parks, and about $2.8 million for 15 schools for the mentally retarded (18). The bill would have become law without his signature on June 13. To be certain that his move got state-wide attention, he had held a press conference prior to the television presentation. It also got editorial support. The Houston Chronicle pointed out that Connally could ask the legislature to spend the "nest-egg" on higher education. "If the legislature refuses, Connally has a campaign issue," Saul Friedman of the Chronicle observed. "If the legislature agrees, he can take the victory to the voters" (19). At any rate, it was clearly fixed in the minds of the voters by that time that Connally was the champion of education who had delivered plenty and has fought for more.

As Connally victories in the 58th Legislature, the Houston Chronicle listed more funds for higher education, loan shark regulation, submission of poll tax repeal to the voters, a request for the creation of a Padre Island National Seashore, approval of Texas Water Commission storage contracts, approval of a Committee on Education Beyond the High School, combining of the Parks Board and the Game and Wildlife Commission, providing more research money for the mentally retarded, revising the election code, limiting city annexations, revision of the criminal code, submission of an increase in old age assistance to the voters, creation of a Tourist
Development Agency, and increasing the speed limit to 70 miles per hour (20).

As defeats, it listed his recommendations to abolish county school superintendents, to create an industrial safety program, to set up a Little Hoover Commission to check efficiency in state government, to revise the Commission on Higher Education, to create an Office of Economic Development, to give equal rights to women, to conduct a wage study, to create a Bureau of Labor, and to allow the appointment of out-of-state residents to boards of regents.

Following the session, Connally acquired George Christian as his press secretary. However, as Christian and Read describe the situation, Christian was more than a press secretary, and Read continued to handle some press duties. "I tended to handle a lot more than anyone else moving in as press secretary," Christian explained later. (21) Too, since Christian had been executive assistant to Daniel, he knew the workings of the governor's office before he came aboard. Among other things, Christian actually made the preliminary selections on Connally's appointees. "He would assign me a stack of appointments, and I would make recommendations on who to appoint," Christian said. Subsequently, Christian would check out the appointments with the senators involved for their approval. In effect, Connally merely retained veto power over Christian's appointments. Christian also
wrote all of Connally's speeches. To help with them, Christian had a string of contacts across the state. "I would call them on the phone and kick around ideas," he recalled. Read was one of those consulted. Others were Robert Strauss of Dallas, a wealthy lawyer who later was national Democratic Party treasurer; George Dillman, a public relations man for former Attorney General Gerald Mann of Dallas; Harry Ransom, president of the University of Texas; Ernest Goldstein, a law professor at Texas; Dr. Robert Tate of First Methodist Church in Austin; Judge Herman Jones of Austin; and Waco newspaperman Harry Province. He also called on state department heads for help.

Christian recalled that Connally averaged a speech a day. "It was a horrendous job," he reflected. Sometimes it involved a complete text. At other times, Connally only wanted an outline or an outline of facts on general issues by subject matter. But both Christian and Read agree that Connally is an excellent editor. "He's a damn good editor," Read declared. "Even with competent writing, he came up with good changes. Rather than just ego changes, they were good, incisive thoughts." Christian explained that he was able to put himself in Connally's mind. "He was the easiest to do this with on that score," he continued, "I had trouble writing speeches for President Johnson because I couldn't get into
his mind." Christian also pointed out that Connally was a good orator. "Give Connally trash and he'll make it sound pretty good," he said.

The Assassination

On October 6, 1963, Connally announced that President Kennedy would probably visit Dallas on November 22 (22). Then on November 8, Connally announced Kennedy's itinerary. There was division in the ranks of Texas Democrats. Lobbyists in Austin had balked at buying $1,000 worth of tickets each to the $100-a-plate dinner planned for Kennedy. Some state officials did too (23). Supporters of Senator Ralph Yarborough charged that Connally was giving Yarborough a "back seat" because he hadn't been invited to sit at the head table. Yarborough was then assured of a place at the head of the table and was invited to fly to Dallas with Kennedy. In San Antonio, one of Kennedy's stops, liberals said Connally had planned things to please his backers and not Kennedy's people. At Houston on November 21, Yarborough apparently refused to ride with his long-time political enemy, Vice-President Johnson. Saul Friedman reported in the Houston Chronicle that Yarborough originally was scheduled to ride in the third car with Houston Mayor Lewis Cutrer, but the White House had changed the arrangements to put Yarborough and Johnson together, apparently Kennedy's idea for uniting the party. Instead, Yarborough got in the car with Houston Congressman Albert Thomas, saying that since it
was Thomas' city he thought he should ride with him (24).
Later, on board Air Force One en route to Dallas, Yarborough
issued a statement blasting Connally for not inviting him to
a reception at the governor's mansion the night of November
22, declaring that Connally was "terribly uneducated govern-
mentally" (25). This, in short, was the situation Kennedy
was facing in Texas. There were reports that Connally had
tried to get Kennedy to call off the trip to Texas. Allen
Duckworth reported in the Dallas News on November 23 that
Connally had told Kennedy the trip would not be wise politi-
cally because it would expand the wounds of the party and
there might be an unpleasant incident. Portentously,
Adlai Stevenson had been spat on and hit with a sign in Dallas
in October.

However, the Republicans were breathing down the necks
of Texas Democrats. Two more Republicans had been elected
to the legislature from Dallas County in a special election
November 9. A Republican and a Democrat were in a runoff
in a special election in Austin for a vacant congressional
seat. And on November 22, before the assassination story
came over the wires, the Houston Chronicle was carrying a
story saying that their poll showed Barry Goldwater leading
Kennedy 52 to 48 percent in Texas. Incidentally, the poll
also showed that Connally could beat Don Yarborough in 1964
"handily," but that it might be closer if the Republicans
syphoned off votes into a GOP primary.
All this was to change with the crack of three shots in the crisp, sunny Dallas air at 12:30 p.m. on November 22. Suddenly, Kennedy was dead and Connally appeared to be dying.

Besides Mrs. Connally, only Read and Bill Stinson, the governor's traveling aide, were with Connally at the time. Christian, who had been sick, was in Austin. Read, riding on the White House press bus just behind the cars of the top dignitaries when the shots were fired, set up a press office at Parkland Hospital immediately. "They came in three waves," Read said of the reporters. "There was the White House press immediately, then the local press, and then they came from everywhere. I've never seen such a deluge" (26). For example, he said he met at 3 a.m. November 23 with two reporters from Canada.

For two weeks there were two governor's press offices. Read was running one in Dallas and Christian was running one in Austin. Read, on the day of the assassination, got information from Mrs. Connally about what happened in the car, and from Stinson, who went into the operating room with Connally. Read and Stinson then held a joint press conference with Stinson reading the bulletins from the doctors. Twice a day they held briefings for the press.

On Sunday, November 24, Read set up a press conference for Mrs. Connally, at which time she read an emotional statement, part of the time in tears. Just as she finished, word came that Lee Harvey Oswald had been killed.
There were bits of news: the Connallys were sending their son, John Connally III, to Kennedy's funeral, the governor got more than 1,000 wires from well-wishers, Connally was signing his name with an "x", and many who had not bought $100 tickets to the Austin dinner were now sending in their money. On November 26, Connally canvassed the results of the November 9 election, his first official act since the assassination.

But Read later recalled that Connally was in the shadow of the bigger picture of the change in presidents. "When in history has a governor been nearly assassinated and it ends up as a sidebar?" he asked, using the newsman's term for a secondary story of minor value. Still, there was publicity enough for all. "It is almost routine to the secretaries and staff officers (at Connally's hospital office)," the Dallas News reported December 1, "to meet newspaper, magazine, television and radio reporters from such places as New York, California, Chicago, Stockholm, Paris and London--and Waxahachie, Amarillo, Houston, Corpus Christi, and numerous cities and countries."

Both the local and visiting reporters had begun to ask when Connally would hold a press conference. The problem, as Read explained, was that "Connally was damn near dead." Read then struck on the idea of a press conference conducted by one lone newsman with the others sharing on a pool basis.
Read chose Martin Agronsky of NBC. "Agronsky was selected primarily because, if we were doing to do it, I wanted to do it with somebody with whom Connally had worked," Read recalled (27). Connally had known Agronsky when he was in Washington as Secretary of the Navy. "I had confidence he would handle it with good taste and with full consideration of his [Connally's] condition," Read continued. Others, including Christian, still think that Agronsky was Connally's choice, but Read implied that Connally was in no shape to make such a decision. Ironically, Agronsky was at Arlington Cemetery visiting Kennedy's grave when the governor's office tried to reach him. He was, as Read said, "on a personal emotional visit reflecting on what had happened."

The television interview was conducted November 27. All the reporters submitted written questions and Agronsky was to pick the best ones to ask Connally. In reality, he merely asked about the assassination. The interview was monitored on TV sets in the hospital press room as it was being taped. It was made available and the stories were released an hour after it was taped. There were about 60 reporters, including some foreigners, in the press room. Only Agronsky, two wire service photographers, and the TV cameramen were in the room with Connally (28). While it was an NBC man who did the interviewing, all networks had access to the tape. There were
complaints from CBS and ABC. "We just played hardball with them and told them that was the way it was going to be," Christian recalled. "If you let the networks run your life, you have an endless problem," he said.

Connally walked around the room December 3 and on December 5 returned to Austin. He held a press conference at Parkland before he left and reporters were given time to call their photographers. He also held a plane-side press conference in Austin when he got there. On December 10, Connally was taken to St. David's Community Hospital in Austin with a vein inflammation and was hospitalized until December 15. He saw newsmen in two groups in the hospital room on December 12.

Political fortunes in Texas were reversed by the assassination. The Belden Poll showed Johnson was now favored 73 to 17 percent in Texas (29). Jake Pickle, the Democrat, won the special congressional race in Austin, 27,206 to 16,037 (30). President Johnson went to the mansion in Austin on December 24 to visit Connally. The governor and Mrs. Connally visited with reporters in the backyard of the mansion for half an hour before the President arrived (31).

On December 31, the Belden Poll reported a new landmark in personal popularity for the wounded governor. "Since the poll began keeping tabs in 1940 on how Texas governors are satisfying the people, only Allan Shivers has equalled the high mark of 79 percent approval given this month to the present governor" (32).
FOOTNOTES

3. Interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972.
7. Interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972.
27. Interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972.
At the end of 1963, it appeared that John Connally, the man who had been shot with Kennedy and who had himself almost died was unassailable as a politician. Richard Morehead wrote in the Dallas News that prospects for Connally's re-election were "rosy," with little or no opposition expected. He sized up the coming election year this way:

Before November 22, Houston attorney Don Yarborough eyed another race against Connally for governor. He was runner up in 1962 and seemed headed for another try with strong backing from labor union and radical groups. This prospect has virtually disappeared. Seemingly, only a foolhardy candidate would tackle the wounded governor, who occupied a formidable position even before the Dallas episode (1).

But most political observers reckoned without Don Yarborough, who announced on January 25, 1964, that he would, indeed, take the "foolhardy" step and run against Connally. The action was to give rise to reports of a political deal which was to strain relations between Connally and Johnson almost to the breaking point. However, it probably had nothing at all to do with Don Yarborough.

Conservative political leaders in the state, Connally included, were busy at this time trying to find a candidate to run against liberal Senator Ralph Yarborough. The leading
prospect was former Congressman Joe Kilgore. What happened next is a matter of speculation, so far as the public record is concerned. For a period following a meeting between Connally and President Johnson on February 2, the press was full of stories regarding a rift between the two. Supposedly, Johnson did not want a fight in the Democratic primary, meaning that he did not want Yarborough to have an opponent. He then pressured Kilgore out of the race, and Connally was furious because of the White House interference in Texas politics. Another part of the story was that if the conservatives would not run against Yarborough, the liberals would not run against Connally. Don Yarborough's entry into the race was thus supposed to have been a violation of the "deal."

Bo Byers wrote in the Houston Chronicle on February 2 that Connally had talked with former Governor Allan Shivers, Kilgore, and others about running against Yarborough in the Senate race. Byers quoted a "source close to Connally" to the effect that the governor had said he might have to run against Senator Yarborough himself. Connally had said at a Headliners Club dinner in Austin on February 1 that there were "still some things to be worked out" before he filed for re-election as governor. The threat was clear.

On February 3, Byers speculated on Don Yarborough's action. "This could be a hard race for Connally if Ralph Yarborough
has no tough opponent and the liberals are able to concentrate their support behind Don Yarborough," he wrote. Byers also speculated that a strong conservative opponent for Ralph Yarborough would entice conservatives into the Democratic primary and thus help Connally (2).

The Chronicle the next day reported that Connally had considered making the Senate race and had even thought about getting out of politics, he was so angry (3). An editorial in the same issue said: "Ralph Yarborough, the incumbent and a liberal Democrat, must feel that Christmas comes in February."

Jimmy Banks declared in the Dallas News on February 5 that relations between Connally and Johnson were strained "almost to the breaking point." He cited one report that Johnson had tried to get Jim Wright, congressman from Fort Worth, to run against Ralph Yarborough after Don Yarborough announced he would run against Connally. But at an informal press conference in Dallas on February 5, Connally said he remained "a warm, personal friend" of the President (4).

The day after that, former Governor Shivers held a press conference and said Johnson had pressured Kilgore out of the race for the U.S. Senate and that Connally had "seriously considered" not running at all because of it (5).

Whether it was relevant or not, the Houston Chronicle on February 7 reported that Johnson was holding up the appointment of Don Yarborough's father-in-law, Leverett Edwards,
as chairman of the Federal Mediation Board. He had been on
the board 14 years. The White House said Johnson had been
"very busy." The Chronicle then detailed the alleged "deal."
It said the agreement had, in fact, been worked out between
the late President Kennedy and Houston Congressman Albert
Thomas. "The two Democratic factions were to rally to the
support of Governor John Connally and Senator Ralph Yarborough,
both up for re-election," the paper reported.

The day after that, the Dallas News reported that the
President had called the governor's mansion in an effort to
talk with Connally and had been told that the governor was
going to Floresville and would be unable to meet with him.
The Houston Chronicle had a similar version, so the story
must have come from Connally's staff.

Dick West, editorial writer for the Dallas News and a
personal friend of Connally, reported on February 9 that the
stories had some substance, but he did say that Connally had
not been a party to the so-called "truce." West, perhaps
writing Connally's version, said: "Months ago--last summer
in fact--word got to him indirectly that if Ralph Yarborough
had no opponent he--Connally--wouldn't. 'To hell with the
deal,' the governor replied."

On February 14, the Houston Chronicle reported that the
AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education (COPE) would not make
an endorsement in the governor's race. The paper referred to
"an agreement top labor leaders made with the Johnson
administration for no endorsement in the primary race between Governor John Connally and Don Yarborough."

Things then cooled down for a while. Later, Connally went to New York and made the statement that press accounts of a rift with Johnson had been "grossly exaggerated" (6). But when he got home and was questioned by Jimmy Banks of the Dallas News on the statement, he said he was not talking about stories in the Texas papers, only the Eastern press stories. "The stories I have read in Texas papers were fair," Banks quoted Connally as saying (7). "They were not unreasonable at all and they didn't take any poetic license with the facts."

Both Read and Christian have their version of the incident. They agree on three essential points. First, Johnson did keep Kilgore out of the Senate race. Second, Connally was hopping made about the White House interference in his state. Third, they do not think there ever was any deal involving Connally and Don Yarborough. Any agreement was between Johnson and Big Labor, they think (8).

Read said he doesn't know if there was any deal made. "Who controls Don Yarborough?" he asked rhetorically (8). Even if there was some kind of deal, Read does not think it would apply to Don Yarborough, whom he said is not the kind to be controlled by deals. He and Christian both agree that Connally's attitude toward public service was tested at this point. The governor, they believe, seriously considered not running for public office again.
Read agreed that Connally was most upset. "There was no question about it," he said (9). "He did feel the President was unwise and misguided in his action in interfering in an internal Texas political situation." Read also pointed out that peace in Texas in 1964, when Johnson won by a landslide, was "not exactly important to his survival."

Christian said that Connally wanted Kilgore to run because he wanted Ralph Yarborough to have an opponent, but that Connally stopped short of urging Kilgore to run. "Connally would not insist that Kilgore run," Christian said (10). "Kilgore kept fishing to get an iron-clad demand that he run for the Senate. But Connally never did that to anyone. If he didn't want to run and give his all, then he shouldn't run."

Here is the way Christian described the situation:

Johnson got credit for putting the kabosh on Kilgore running and Connally did not at all like Johnson or Johnson's people interfering. He resented the White House trying to keep him out. It didn't have a thing in the world to do with Connally and Don Yarborough. Lyndon Johnson did not want a hot Democratic Senate race in '64 with him having to get re-elected. He wanted the wholehearted support of George Meany (president of the AFL-CIO) and the labor people and they wanted Ralph Yarborough.

In my judgment, the whole exercise was to pacify the political situation in Texas so as not to embarrass Johnson or to cause labor to think he put the axe to Ralph Yarborough. Looking through White House eyes, it was the perfectly natural thing to do. As for ever putting through a deal, I don't think that happened (11).

Christian said, in fact, that Connally "really kind of wanted" Don Yarborough to run so he could beat him soundly, as he knew he could do. "My biggest worry was whether he
would run again," Christian said (12). He said many thought Connally did not want to run again because he was afraid he would be killed, but this was not true. "A lot of it was his own friends saying you've got to do this and that and he just said, 'Hell, I don't have to do anything,'" Christian recalled. "Primarily, he was ticked off at Johnson. He thought he had been abused by the President" (13).

Meantime, the election sparring went on. It was known that Don Yarborough would announce on Saturday, January 25. Perhaps coincidentally and perhaps not, the Dallas News was granted an exclusive interview with Mrs. Connally the day before. That interview got a four-column headline with picture. The story of Yarborough's announcement got a two-column head at the bottom of the same page with no picture (14). On March 27, Mrs. Connally conducted a tour of the Governor's Mansion for the White House press corps which got national publicity.

Connally only appeared at public functions as governor and didn't campaign, as such, until April 24 for the May 2 election. He accepted an award in Houston from the Texas Association for Retarded Children, spoke to the Association for Texas Colleges and Universities, went to the House to attend the ceremonies for the swearing in of the new commissioner of the new Bureau of Labor Statistics (with attendant photographers), and did other assorted chores in his official
capacity, many of them calling attention to his pet projects, such as retardation, education, and token labor legislation.

On April 21, Connally went to Washington to appear before the Warren Commission on the assassination, with the effect of calling attention to his wounds. He also opened the Texas Pavilion of the New York World's Fair, a publicity grabber.

Editorial support was plentiful. For example, the Dallas News ran an editorial with a cartoon on April 30 and another editorial on May 1 supporting Connally. The Houston Chronicle ran pro-Connally editorials on April 23, April 26, and on May 1.

Connally campaigned only eight days, visiting eleven cities. He spoke on a thirty-station television network on election eve, ending the campaign in Dallas, as the Dallas News said, "the city where he was wounded," another reminder of his condition (15).

The results were predicted and predictable. Connally received 1,125,884 votes to 471,411 for Yarborough (16). He carried Dallas County 89,620 to 18,174 (17) and Harris County (Houston) 104,260 to 61,995. Yarborough had carried Harris County by 12,000 votes in 1962 (18). While it seems to be clear that Connally was in good shape politically before the assassination, there is no doubt that he benefited at the polls from his wounds and the fact that Johnson was in the White House. As the Dallas News noted on May 5, "The serious attempt on his life November 22 added sympathy
Connally's general election campaign against Republican unknown Jack Crichton was almost nonexistent. He nominated Johnson for President at the Democratic National Convention during the summer and got lots of public exposure for that, and he made an important television address to thirteen southern states for Johnson. Connally and Price Daniel spoke to the southerners on behalf of Johnson without mentioning his liberal running-mate, Hubert Humphrey. Connally, who had been against the public accommodations and fair employment practices portions of the Civil Rights Act, had rapport with the South.

In the election, Connally actually out-polled Johnson in winning three to one over Crichton. The vote was 1,877,793 for Connally and 661,675 for Crichton, a far cry from the close Cox race two years previously. To illustrate the change in the political climate, all nine Democrats won the Dallas County legislative races and Harris County went strongly Democratic for the first time since 1948.

"Connally's general election campaign," the Dallas News reported, "was confined to some newspaper advertisements, radio and television broadcasts and contacts by letters". The News called Connally "the most magnetic and effective Texas political leader in a generation," another change from
two years previously, when the News was neutral in the general election. "He came along at a time when the party was in disarray and he has brought it together into a cohesive, productive force," the paper said.

Christian pointed out that 1964 was a critical year for Connally in another sense, even before the assassination. His early problem was Johnson and the charge that he was merely Johnson's tool for running Texas. Christian explained:

In June or July, 1963, he made a real critical decision to go against Johnson on the public accommodations bill. When he did that--right or wrong or what--he suddenly demonstrated his independence. A lot of conservatives were not happy with him up to that point. He had made a lot of awfully liberal appointments. These made him look a lot more liberal than the electorate. (21);

This move, coupled with the fight over the Kilgore race and its aftermath, Christian believes, clearly marked Connally as his own man. "He staked out an independent position and the public began to accept him more," Christian recalled (22), "The press quit writing that he was Johnson's stoolie."
Christian stated that the events made it clear that, "He didn't jump every time the President said frog," and the press liked it.
FOOTNOTES

8. Interview, George Christian, Austin, July 7, 1972, and interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972.
CHAPTER V

FIFTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE, 1965

By the time 1965 rolled around, Connally and Johnson had patched up their differences and the governor was ready to launch what was to be a rocky legislative session. Perhaps without realizing what he was getting into, Connally took on the school teachers of Texas and lost. Some of the charisma he had built up with the legislature and others had begun to wear off and he had to call on his reserve supplies of charm.

To begin with, his man Ben Barnes was elected speaker of the House. Connally had cleared the way for Barnes by appointing the previous speaker, Byron Tunnell, to the Railroad Commission on the death of Ernest O. Thompson early in January. Connally went into the House chamber after Barnes won and was photographed congratulating his protege. (1) It looked like a good omen.

Then as evidence of his new relationship with Johnson, Connally went to the inauguration in Washington on Air Force One, the President's plane. He and Nellie stayed in the Lincoln Room of the White House. Also, publicity for a fundraising victory dinner on January 25 was handled by an office assigned to Johnson in the new Federal Building in Austin. (2)
Connally didn't need an elaborate inauguration in 1965, so it was subdued. But Edie Adams, Dan Blocker, and astronaut Alan Shepard appeared at the $25-a-plate dinner attended by some 4,000 Democrats the night before (3). The Houston Chronicle carried a page-one picture of Blocker giving the "Hook 'Em Horns" sign of the University of Texas to Miss Adams and Shepard. But the inauguration was simple, with no parade and no ball. There was a reception at the Governor's Mansion at which Connally met anyone who wanted to come. All afternoon and into the early evening he shook hands as lines of ordinary citizens paid their respects.

Connally's address to the legislature on January 27 was typical of his blockbuster messages. The Houston Chronicle counted fifty-five major points (4). Among other things, it called for creation of a state Coordinating Board to guide the state colleges and universities, revamping of the state colleges and universities into three large systems, repeal of the poll tax, a new state department of mental health, a one-cent increase in the cigarette tax, and four-year terms for state officials elected state-wide (5).

A major provision of the speech was Connally's recommendation of a ten-year plan for merit increases in pay for school teachers instead of the "$45 in '65" plan of the Texas State Teachers Association for an across-the-board $45 a month pay increase for all teachers. It called also for local
school districts to pay a greater share of the costs of public education. His message, to illustrate this point, included these lines:

'Oh, ship ahoy,' rang out the cry, 
"Oh, give us water or we die'!  
A voice came o'er the waters far
'Just drop your buckets where you are' (6).

In the poem, the shipwrecked sailors dying of thirst had drifted unknowingly into the mouth of the Amazon River where the water was fresh. The poem, which impressed Connally's plan on the minds of the legislators, came out of his childhood, Christian said (7). "He was always coming up with stories out of his childhood," the press secretary recalled.

Christian explained such "Connallyisms" were similar to "Johnsonisms" he encountered with the President, presumably because of their many shared experiences and similar backgrounds.

On January 29, the Dallas News called the governor's teachers pay plan "controversial," and a January 31 story saw a head-on collision brewing between Connally and the T.S.T.A. On February 2, El Paso teachers picketed Connally at the airport there (8). That same day, the president of the university of Texas announced his opposition of Connally's university systems plan and another battle was launched.

To offset the bad publicity for him and the fact that 3,000 teachers were getting ready to hold a rally in Austin, Connally, on February 3, held a press conference. He said he was "very encouraged" over the prospects for his teachers'
Pay Plan (9). Always the charmer, he was described by the *Dallas News* as "the smiling, confident-appearing chief executive." There was no *Dallas News* coverage of the teachers' rally. The teachers took their lumps in a column February 13 in the *News* by Richard Morehead, who called their methods "gangbuster tactics."

Meanwhile, Connally was getting his Coordinating Board passed by the legislature despite charges that he was trying to gain control over the colleges and universities. And a column by Morehead said Connally wanted a four-year term so that the governor of Texas could be active in national politics in presidential election years without worrying about getting re-elected (10). He said Connally's stock was at an all-time high and, "should the governor be able to solve this problem (the teachers' pay deadlock), with legislative assistance, without incurring deep political wounds, his position as a leader in Texas politics will remain unassailable and another term can be his for the asking" (11).

But Jimmy Banks of the *News* reported on February 28 that there was trouble brewing in the Senate over the manner in which Connally handled the Coordinating Board debate. "Some felt like they were being treated like puppets with Connally pulling the strings," he wrote (12).

A Belden Poll in the *Dallas News* on March 2 said Texans favored Connaly's plan 70 percent to 21 percent, but the T.S.T.A. said the questions were loaded. On March 4, the
News endorsed Connally's plan and said, "No doubt the magic name of Connally, by all odds the most popular figure in Texas, was the factor most responsible in a 70 percent approval" (13). But then the Dallas School Board threw the News and Connally a curve by endorsing the T.S.T.A. plan. Connally responded in typical fashion by calling a press conference on March 12 at which he chided the school board for saying his plan would cost more in "local" taxes. He said all taxes were local, ultimately (14). He also said he would go on television in about thirty days to explain his plan.

At mid-March, the Dallas News was reflecting the split between its two sacred cows, the Dallas School Board and John Connally. Sam Acheson had written a column on the editorial page using school board figures in relation to the two rival plans, Connally's and the T.S.T.A.'s. Rather than reply himself, Connally relegated the job to Senator Jack Strong of Longview, who was carrying his school teachers' pay plan in the Senate. On March 17, Strong rapped the Dallas News "editorial" saying the figures used in it were misrepresented to the school board (15). The next day, the News carried an eight-column story at the top of page one in which Dr. W.T. White, superintendent, defended the school board's figures. Thus, Connally appeared to lose a major round in his fight. However, he then pulled out one of his previously used media devices and on March 16 the News carried a by-lined column by
Connally explaining his plan. It got prominent attention on the editorial page (16).

Connally spoke several times across the state on behalf of his pay plan. But by March 28, the Dallas News was talking about a possible compromise. The Texas Manufacturers Association endorsed Connally's plan on April 7. On May 1 the State Republican Executive Committee endorsed the T.S.T.A. plan. On May 3, Connally pointedly refused to say if he would veto the T.S.T.A. plan if it passed. Then on May 5, Connally met with Senator A. M. Aiken of Paris, sponsor of the T.S.T.A. bill and Senator Strong met with officials of the T.S.T.A. and the Texas Education Agency.

Connally now fell back on his typical weapon, the statewide telecast appealing for support for his plan. The Houston Chronicle called it "hard hitting," but State Representative George Hinson, who was carrying the T.S.T.A. bill in the House, said it "slammed the door" on compromise. Connally also threatened not to call a special session on teachers' pay and congressional redistricting if they weren't handled in regular session (17). The implication was that teachers just wouldn't get any kind of raise and Connally would let the courts redistrict the state.

The teachers countered by filling the House chamber when the issue came up before the Senate Education Committee. The lead story on Page One of the May 14 Dallas News said that a
compromise plan by Connally had been rejected by the T.S.T.A.
A press conference, planned for noon, at which the compromise was supposed to be announced, had been canceled (18).

Editorial comment, to this point, had been scarce in the News, but after Connally spoke in Dallas on his proposal, the News supported the governor's plan on May 15.

Finally, on May 17, a compromise was announced. In order not to appear the loser, Connally himself announced the agreement at a press conference attended by leaders on both sides (19). Basically, it called for $71 million in the state budget for teachers. T.S.T.A.'s original $45 a month would have cost the state $92 million and Connally's first compromise offer $58 million.

Thus, Connally appeared to be the hero, although he actually lost a major battle. Typical of the comments was this by Richard Morehead of the Dallas News: "This year, John B. Connally must be rated as the most effective governor in modern Texas history" (20). The Houston Chronicle said, "The Fifty-Ninth Legislature was a Connally legislature. Probably no governor since Jim Hogg (1891-95) has had such a strong influence over the work of the legislature as John B. Connally had over this one" (21).

There had been other developments during the long teachers' pay fight. Some opposition began to stir. On April 5, Ben Barnes in a press conference announced opposition to Connally's
three-systems plan for state schools. Ralph Yarborough expressed disapproval of the four-year term for state officials because Connally could then run in 1970 against Yarborough with "free time" in between, politically speaking. On April 13, Connally vetoed a medical school for Texas Tech in Lieutenant Governor Preston Smith's hometown and thus incurred his long enmity. And there were rumblings that George Bush, a strong Republican, might run for governor in 1966 (22).

Meanwhile, there was a legislative fight over state spending. The first week in May, a Conference Committee had reported out a bill that would authorize spending of $38 million more than either the House or Senate had voted. Connally responded with a press conference calling the action "incredible" and saying he might support a natural gas production tax increase and a corporate franchise tax increase--red flags to business and oil--if spending went too far (23). The next day, $25 million was cut from the spending bill.

Then, a bitter fight over redistricting was finally resolved at 1:35 a.m. on the last night of the session. Connally won that one. He already had appeared on the floor of the House at a joint session of the House and Senate at 4 p.m. to make a 12-minute speech reviewing the record of the legislative session, especially the things he asked for and got (24). He called it, "the most productive of any session of this century" (25).
The Houston Chronicle on May 30 took two full pages to recount the acts of the Fifty-Ninth Legislature. An editorial was generally favorable to Connally:

The 59th Legislature has set Texas firmly on the road to excellence in higher education. That is its greatest accomplishment.

It also approved by far the largest budget and passed the biggest general appropriations bill in history; gave the public school teachers increases in salary; and, in its closing hours, was attempting to wind up the toughest problem of the session, redistricting.

While seldom, if ever, is anyone completely satisfied with a legislative session--that includes the lawmakers themselves--it can be said that the 59th accomplished a great deal. It was, on the whole, a productive session (26):

Major accomplishments included almost all of Connally's program with some important, though not major, exceptions. Items approved included a record $3.6 billion state budget with no major tax increase except for a three cent additional tax on cigarettes. Of this record budget, $1.7 billion was for education, including a $91 million increase for faculty salaries, research and vocational-technical training. Another $71 million was for public school teachers' raises.

The session also approved congressional, legislative and senatorial redistricting, established the Coordinating Board, overhauled the mental health and mental retardation programs, passed a mass of water legislation, improved the TB treatment program, expanded industrial and tourist development programs, created a fine arts commission, provided for oil pooling, gave pay raises to state judges and state employees, and
submitted twenty-five proposed constitutional amendments to a vote of the people. Included were amendments to repeal the poll tax, set up four-year terms for state officials, authorize $200 million in water development bonds, and set annual salaries for the speaker and lieutenant governor (27). Connally also got $3.5 million for HemisFair in San Antonio.

Connally lost a few issues, mainly the teachers' pay battle. He also did not get the state colleges and universities reorganized into three systems as he wanted. No women's rights bill was passed, despite mild efforts to get one, and where Connally had asked for 200 more state highway patrolmen, the legislature gave him 75 (28).

On June 2, the Dallas News endorsed Connally's assessment of the session as the most productive of the century. The paper lauded Connally's educational efforts, pointing out that when Connally became governor the state was spending $531 million on education and the total had reached $850 during his tenure.

Significantly, there was still no editorial comment on the amount of spending he was doing.
FOOTNOTES


Connally almost didn't make a political campaign in 1966. He very nearly stepped out of politics. Of course, once he decided to run for re-election, it was no contest. But he did get involved in the campaign of Democratic Attorney General Waggoner Carr against Republican U.S. Senator John Tower, a race that Carr, and indirectly Connally, lost.

Read revealed that Connally came a lot closer to bowing out than most people know (1). "He wanted some reason to run again," Read continued, "He sensed his own lagging interest" (2). Read noted that in his opinion one of Connaly's great strengths was his instinctive graciousness, as evidenced by his ability to make people around him think that, at that moment, they were the most important people in the world. "That must take a lot out of him," Read said.

When the State Democratic Executive Committee met in Amarillo on September 18, 1965, Connally's staff, the state party leadership, and the public were all guessing about his plans. They were not revealed in the text of the speech he was to make, but he ad-libbed it at the end. "The staff didn't know what he was going to do," Read said (3). "But Nellie, at the last moment, gave him encouragement to go ahead."
She had been opposed." The Associated Press reported that Connally was "blinking back tears and speaking grevely" as he announced: "I am here to tell you that at the appropriate time, I shall again become a candidate for governor" (4). A wild cheer went up from the 700 top Democrats assembled.

Connally ended 1965 with an exchange with Senator Ralph Yarborough, hinting that if he was going to have a 1966 opponent, he would just as soon it would be Yarborough (5). Yarborough replied that Connally had tried to beat him in 1964 and that the State Democratic Executive Committee under Connally had supported the Republican candidate, George Bush. At the end of the year, the Dallas News ran a Belden Poll which showed that 73 percent in Texas approved of Connally's actions and only 12 percent disapproved (6). News political writer Allan Duckworth wrote at the year's end: "While Connally probably won't make any public endorsements, he is expected to pass the word in favor of those who played on 'the team' with him, namely Martin for attorney general and Carr for U.S. Senate" (7).

On January 5, Connally made news by appointing his so-called "Committee of 15" to study the public schools. That same day, Ralph Yarborough announced he would not run against Connally, but predicted the governor would have an opponent. Labor leaders met in San Antonio January 7, but failed to come up with anyone to run against Connally, although they
tried. On January 18, H. S. Brown of the Texas AFL-CIO said labor was still looking.

Finally, on January 20, Stanley C. Woods, a Houston lawyer and oilman, filed against Connally, and the announcement was so "underwhelming" that the Houston Chronicle in Woods' hometown put it on Page Ten (8). The Dallas News responded on January 23 with a long recapitulation of John Connally's record.

Connally's reply to Woods' opening telecast was a press conference at which he said, "The steam that blows the whistle never turns the wheel," supposedly another aphorism from his youth (9). When Connally filed officially on February 4, he was so confident of his political strength that he predicted the need for "substantial new tax revenues" (10). It takes political clout to talk about higher taxes while seeking re-election. The Republican candidate for governor was T. E. Kennerly, 62, a Houston attorney.

In the absence of anything to fight over in the primary, the Democrats conjured up a philosophical fight. On May 3, Connally announced he would meet with precinct workers in Dallas, Houston and San Antonio in order to head off an attempt by liberals to take over the party. He scheduled a state-wide television address for May 5. "The governor wants to build a fire under his supporters," the Dallas News quoted an aide as saying (11). In Dallas, Connally was photographed
with his arm around the conservative candidate for county chairman, who had a liberal opponent.

Just how real the liberal threat was is unclear. In fact, Connally won the precinct conventions hands down. It was six to one in often-liberal Bexar County. But it was hailed as a "tremendous victory" for Connally by the Dallas News. Jimmy Banks wrote that it killed any hopes Ralph Yarborough had to be governor, was a "storm signal" to Johnson, and strengthened Connally's hand in dealing with the President (12).

Almost incidentally, Connally won the primary 932,641 to 291,651 for Woods, (13) a margin of more than three to one.

Then began one of Connally's few losing battles, his push to elect Carr to the Senate in place of the Republican Tower. On November 1, at a meeting in Amarillo, Connally strongly endorsed Carr. However, the Dallas News on October 23 already had told its readers to vote for either Carr or Tower. Again on November 6 and November 7, the News hedged and recommended either conservative, Democrat or Republican. The Houston Chronicle, however, had not taken a stand prior to Connally's November 1 speech and on November 6, the paper endorsed Connally and Carr, calling Connally, "one of the most effective and courageous governors in the history of the state'! (14)
The significant event of the campaign occurred five days before Labor Day in late August, when Connally and Carr drove 40 miles from Austin to meet a group of Mexican farm workers. They were marching to Austin to petition the governor to call a special session and pass a minimum wage bill.

The 400-mile march had started July 4 in the Rio Grande Valley. When Connally and Carr drove out to meet them, the marchers were near New Braunfels, south of Austin. Connally told the marchers he would not be in Austin to meet them when they arrived on Labor Day, and that he thought a $1.25 an hour minimum wage was not urgent enough to call a special session of the legislature.

The Reverend Antonio Gonzalez of Houston spoke for the marchers: "Governor," he said, "Why pussyfoot? Why not sit down and discuss these problems with us"? (15)?

When Connally and Carr drove up, there were cries of, "Viva Connally" and "Viva el Gobemador."

But then Eugene Nelson, organizer of the National Farm Workers Association, asked Connally to call a special session on the minimum wage question.

"The answer to that is no," Connally said.

This was answered by cries of "Viva la Huelga."

After cautioning the errant Mexicans to keep their march orderly, Connally ended the 45-minute confrontation. Eight Roman Catholic bishops had urged Connally to see the workers
in Austin. A poll by the Houston Chronicle showed that 74 percent of the people of Texas supported the goals of the march (16).

The marchers did go on to Austin, where Cesar Chavez and Ralph Yarborough were among the speakers. The Mexicans kept sentinels on the steps of the capitol for several days and the Houston Chronicle expressed the opinion that the legislature "should give careful consideration to the plight of the marchers" (17).

Connally had little to lose with an unknown as his Republican opponent, but Carr was fighting against an incumbent U.S. Senator. Yet, Connally's prestige was on the line too. On November 7, election eve, Connally spoke at the final Carr rally, which was televised. The governor read a wire from President Johnson endorsing Carr (18). The Dallas News on election day said, "Governor John Connally has laid his prestige on the line in an effort to elect Carr..." (19). And the Associated Press election day story said, "Texas voters choose a U.S. Senator today with the prestige of the President and the governor firmly behind the Democrat."

Tower received 56 percent of the votes in handily defeating Carr. The Republicans elected two members to Congress, a state senator, and three state representatives. Just how much impact the confrontation at New Braunfels had on the Carr race became a point of debate. In the 50 counties listed
by the *Texas Almanac* as having 25 percent or more Spanish surnames in the population, Carr did not do as well against Tower as Democrat Bill Blakely had done in a special election in 1961. Blakely got 49.07 percent of the votes in those counties and Carr got 48.49. Tower, for example, failed to carry Nueces County (Corpus Christi) against Blakely, but did against Carr. Blakely had not been a favorite of the more liberal Democrats, having survived a fiercely fought first round in the special election. Blakeley was considered even more conservative in his race than Carr was later (20).

State Senator Don Kennard of Fort Worth said Connally's "lash" in the primaries hurt Carr:

> Our power structure seems to feel you can kick a substantial element of the Democratic party in the teeth during the primary—that you can try to destroy its leadership and its power—and then expect to pull your chestnuts out of the fire in November. But it doesn't work out that way (21),

Some of Carr's friends, and perhaps even Carr himself, tended to blame Connally for the New Braunfels backlash, if there was one. But Connally's staff members emphasize that Carr went along by choice and not by force.

Here are Read's recollections:

> New Braunfels was Connally's idea. There was no unanimity of opinion among the staff. We had no clear answer on it. But Connally was strong in feeling that it was unsound government to be in a position of bowing to a demand for an audience with the governor.

> Connally interpreted his gesture as a fair gesture. As he interpreted it, OK, he's going to meet them, to speak to them, and to be direct and candid rather than ignore them.
But the whole incident was distorted and came out in something less than the manner in which he saw it.
I don't think he conceived it as being an arrogant rebuff. The interpretation depends on your point of view (22).

Read would not say that the press distorted the situation, only that it was distorted in the press because that's the way Connally's opponents saw it. No consideration was given to Carr's political fortunes in making the decision, Read said. "Carr came along for the ride," he stated. Some held the view that Carr was pulled along by Connally for support. "That ain't so," Read said. "He was ready, willing, and able" (23).

Meanwhile, Connally lost his press secretary-aide, George Christian, to Johnson. Christian had left Austin unannounced in the spring to go to Washington and become a staff member of the National Security Council. As such, he was slated to go to Vietnam with Defense Secretary Robert McNamara. He had departed suddenly and it was two or three days before Johnson let it be known that he was in Washington (24).
About six months later, Christian was named by Johnson to be his press secretary.

For a while, Connally got along without a press secretary, with Read filling the gaps. Whether or not the New Braunfels episode would have been handled differently had Christian been on the staff is problematical. If it was Connally's idea to go, probably the best Christian could have done was
temper the press coverage. Bill Carter, who came from and later returned to the Department of Public Safety information office, served as his press secretary for about a year. From mid-1968 on, Kyle Thompson, who came from and later returned to the United Press International Austin Bureau, temporarily acted as press secretary.

Christian had served also as part of the Connally legislative lobbying team. "He used his staff extensively in legislative work," Christian said (25).
FOOTNOTES

1. Interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972.
2. Interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972.
3. Interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972.
22. Interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972.
23. Interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972
CHAPTER VII
SIXTIETH LEGISLATURE, 1967

Connally started 1967 by getting into a feud over the assassination. William Manchester had just released his book, *The Death Of A President*, which the governor promptly denounced. On January 10, in a prepared statement, Connally attacked Manchester's book as "shocking" and said it was "a recitation of recollections and observations collected and reflected through the prisms of prejudice" (1). What set Connally off, mainly, was Manchester's contention that John Kennedy had come to Texas to settle arguments within the Democratic party. Connally's version was that Kennedy had planned the Texas trip as part of a series of trips "in the face of declining popularity" (2). He said if there were any arguments they were between Yarborough and Johnson, both of whom were available in Washington. Richard Morehead of the *Dallas News*, who spoke of an "aura of near martyrdom" about Connally, said the governor might tell his side of it in detail later (3).

Both the House and Senate in Austin passed resolutions backing Connally's version, and the *Houston Chronicle* attacked Manchester and backed Connally editorially (4).
Perhaps indicative of a slight fading of the glow about Connally, the inauguration in 1967 was fairly elaborate once more. There was a victory dinner featuring former Miss America Anita Bryant and Cactus Pryor, an Austin comic. A black-tie ball preceded the swearing-in the night before and a parade followed it in the afternoon.

On January 18, Connally gorged the legislature with another of his full-course programs--this time with twenty-seven major points. He called for $62.5 million in new taxes, endorsed the one-cent city sales tax, asked for revision of the Code of Criminal Procedure, asked for a five percent increase in teachers' salaries (only half of what the T.S.T.A. was asking), advocated an industrial safety program, called for creation of a public utilities board, asked for re-examination of all drivers every four years with driver education required for all youths, sought judicial, congressional and legislative redistricting, once more favored four-year terms for state officials, asked for a $75 million bond program for parks, called for creation of a fine arts commission, wanted revision of the election laws, advocated branch banking and annual sessions of the legislature, and suggested a convention to revise the Texas Constitution. It was quite a mouthful for the legislators to chew on.

It was quickly apparent that all would not be peaches and cream. Dallas Senator George Parkhouse fought Connally's request for $5.5 million to finance HemisFair, the world's
fair-type exposition planned for San Antonio. Connally's forces won, but only after a nearly three-hour filibuster by Parkhouse, usually a Connally backer, who criticized the Senate for being "brainwashed" by Connally. Some said Parkhouse saw HemisFair as a rival to the State Fair of Texas in Dallas.

At a press conference on February 24, Connally laid out his plans for liquor-by-the-drink, the key issue of the 1967 legislative session and one of the battles Connally was destined to lose. Connally's reputation for making news at his press conferences was such that this time there were ten television cameras and seventeen microphones in the Governor's office. In addition to the lead story on February 25, the *Dallas News* carried five other stories related to the press conference.

Backing liquor hurt Connally with the voters, but only slightly. A Belden Poll published in the *Dallas News* on February 25 showed a dip from 74 percent approval and 13 percent disapproval in August of 1966 to a 69-21 score in February, 1967. Still, Connally was much more popular in Texas, according to the poll, than President Johnson, who scored only 59-31. As late as November, 1964, Johnson had run ahead of Connally in the poll.

There were skirmishes all through the session, with the liquor bill cropping up now and then in a sort of running war that continued until late May.
A Belden Poll on March 11 showed Texans opposed to three of Connally's five tax proposals—the one-cent hike in gasoline taxes, the sales tax increase to three cents, and a natural gas tax increase. On March 13, Connally talked to the Texas Council of Churches, saying the 7,000 who wrote opposing liquor-by-the-drink didn't understand him. On March 15, Senator A. R. Schwartz of Galveston filibustered against the city sales tax. And on March 21, there were about 1,000 at a hearing on the liquor bill. Dr. Abner McCall, president of Baylor University, a Baptist institution, said he would go to court to test the legality of the bill in view of the constitutional prohibition against "open saloons" (6). On March 22, the city sales tax finally cleared the Senate.

Some of Connally's tactics once more started to come under fire. State Representative Ed J. Harris of Galveston on March 29 accused Connally of "brazen arm twisting" over the four-year terms for state officials. He said Connally threatened to block a four-year university in one member's district if he didn't support the four-year terms. Connally, characteristically, called a press conference to deny it (7). And at the Texas Gridiron Club dinner in Fort Worth, the newsmen-actors had Connally singing to Ralph Yarborough and John Tower, "These boots were made for climbing, and that's just what they'll do. They're gonna climb all over you" (8),
On April 3, the Senate passed a $4.7 billion budget in line with Lieutenant Governor Preston Smith's claim that new taxes could be avoided. Speaker Ben Barnes said the bill was political and that members of the committee had told state agencies they would be taken care of by the conference committee. In other words, Smith was trying to get a small bill through the Senate to back up his no-taxes claim, knowing that it wouldn't take care of the state's needs. The conference committee would then report out a much larger bill and Smith would get credit for trying to hold off tax hikes.

On April 4, the Senate approved the four-year terms. It was about this time that Connally side-stepped what could have been a major controversy. State Senator Jim Bates of Edinburg pushed a resolution to investigate the Parks and Wildlife Commission's secret handling of the purchase of land for the 245-acre LBJ Park around Johnson's ranch. There were questions about secret contributions to the fund, the condemnation of land for the park, and other matters which were done in private. But, despite the fact that Connally had appointed John Ben Shepperd as chairman of the commission, none of the onus seemed to fall on Connally.

On April 19, Jimmy Banks had a copyrighted story in the Dallas News predicting that Connally would advocate a one-year budget instead of the normal two-year budget in order to avoid new taxes. That very night, Connally addressed a joint
session which was broadcast and telecast state-wide, outlining his no new taxes plan. The leak to Banks only increased the TV audience. The plan pulled the teeth from Preston Smith's no-taxes ploy.

Liquor-by-the-drink cleared a House committee on April 25, but on April 28, a full-page advertisement appeared in the Dallas News signed by 350 individuals opposing Connally's plan. Possibly indicative of Connally's continuing political strength, the advertisement never mentioned him by name. It only said, "Even Governors Can Be Wrong," and referred only to "he."

Meanwhile, the struggle continued between Connally and Smith. Connally's one-year budget meant a surplus the first year. Therefore, Smith proposed that the extra money be used for pay raises for teachers. Connally retaliated with another press conference, saying he hated to see essential services cut "just because someone is trying to please the teachers" (10). Smith replied by blasting Connally for announcing state financial information at a press conference instead of giving it directly to the Senate. Barnes took Connally's side. The Senate passed Smith's teacher pay bill. The House passed Connally's and the battle moved to the conference committee, which gave the teachers a compromise $630-a-year raise.

Connally was getting editorial support from the Dallas News on many of his programs, including the one-year budget, four-year terms, and annual sessions, but not liquor-by-the-drink. The Houston Chronicle, however, had three editorials
backing his liquor plan. But it was a losing battle. On May 25, John Field and Dick McKissack, House members from Dallas who had sponsored the liquor bill, announced that Connally was dropping the idea, but would bring it up in the future (11).

Connally had won a tricky battle with Austin State Senator Charles Herring, who was normally a Connally backer. The issue was pay raises for state employes, an issue made complex by the large percentage of Herring's constituents who worked for the state.

On January 23, Herring proposed a $5.2 million emergency pay raise for state employees, a raise to go into effect in March instead of the start of the new fiscal year in September. It would have upset Connally's budget plans and was regarded as an effort by Lieutenant Governor Preston Smith and Herring to put Speaker Ben Barnes and the governor "on a political hot spot" (12).

Connally, understandably, was upset. Herring denied the charge of politics. "I didn't realize I was supposed to check with the governor before introducing a bill in the Senate," he said (13).

On January 26, the Senate sent the bill to the House by resolution, urging Connally to tag it as an emergency so the four-fifths rule would not apply. Herring had failed on a 23-7 vote in favor of the bill to get a suspension of the rules.
And on January 30 the House voted 143-0 to ask Connally to submit his pay plan as an emergency so it could go into effect sooner than September. Connally said he would give the House resolution, which also had passed the Senate, "every consideration" (14).

On February 7, the Senate deleted the funds for HemisFair from an emergency appropriation and intended to hold it hostage until the House passed the pay raise.

Representative Bill Heatly, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, who was doing Connally's bidding at this point, said the House might consider the pay bill "in 30 to 45 days" (15). On February 11, the Senate caved in and passed the HemisFair money, Connally did not give in on the pay raises, and they went into effect in September as he had planned.

Connally gained some major victories--approval of the one percent city sales tax, a one-year state budget up seventeen percent, strengthening of the water and air pollution controls, a new round of water legislation, creation of a fine arts commission, passage of an industrial safety act which he had promised labor, a fourteen percent increase in the salaries of state employees, a package of driver and traffic legislation, and a move toward federal tax sharing (16).

But he also lost some big battles--liquor-by-the-drink, a proposal for a convention to revise the constitution,
judicial districting, four-year terms for state officials, creation of an Agriculture Development Board to study farm problems, revision of the Workmen's Compensation Program, authorization of branch banking, a seven-point program he proposed on councils of governments for cities, and teachers' pay. Connally had proposed a five percent increase for teachers and the legislature gave them an average of $554, more than Connally favored.

On revision of the Criminal Code, Connally did not get his request for stiffer penalties for murder, but he did get the legislature to go back to the former law that prisoners had to serve one-third of their sentences before being eligible for parole, instead of one-fourth.

On balance, Connally probably lost more than he got, but what he got was considerable. He had asked for so much from the legislature that he could lose much of it and still have a good record of achievement. The legislature also achieved congressional, legislative and senatorial redistricting.

Connally almost got involved in another controversial, and probably losing, issue--horse race betting. Read said the governor wanted to endorse not only liquor-by-the-drink but horse race betting as well. "He was disdainful of the political consequences. He didn't care. He felt like it ought to be done," Read said. But the staff was against it. "We all felt that was too much of a good thing. The state was not ready yet for that move. It was premature" (17),
The remainder of 1967 included an African safari for Connally, another spat with Yarborough, a fight at the National Governors Conference over Vietnam, and much speculation over whether or not Connally would seek a fourth term.

On July 19, Connally left for Tanzania to hunt leopard on a safari as part of the American Broadcasting Company's series "The American Sportsman," in which celebrities hunt at exotic places and the results are shown on television. Such was his prominence in the minds of the American people. On the hunt with him were Bing Crosby, Phil Harris, and David Janssen, all in show business. "He had always wanted to go to Africa," Read says. "Connally has a fascination for nature. The TV network contacted him. Actually, he had been invited earlier and had not been able to accept" (18). He returned from Africa on August 31.

Connally's new fight with Yarborough came in the wake of Hurricane Beulah. On September 21, Connally led a delegation to South Texas to inspect damage resulting from the storm. Yarborough thought Connally was taking too long to request that the counties involved be declared a disaster area to qualify for federal relief programs. On September 25, in Corpus Christi at a meeting of the Public Works Subcommittee, of which Yarborough was a member, Yarborough attacked Connally. He said the governor "still shilly-shallies and dilly-dallies around" about seeking federal aid.
Connally replied on September 27 at a press conference at which he called Yarborough "a very despicable man," according to the Dallas News (19), and a "very despicable demagogue," according to the Houston Chronicle (20). The governor called Yarborough's actions "the lowest form of demagoguery" and "the foulest distortion of facts and truth that I have ever seen uttered by a public official" (21). The Chronicle, which has large circulation in the area involved, sided with Connally. "The victims of this storm need help, but the senator's outburst doesn't fall in this category," the paper said, without mentioning Connally's outburst (22).

Once again Johnson stepped in to restore order to his home state's political front. On September 28, both Connally and Yarborough rode in the plane with Johnson to inspect the hurricane's damage.

In October, Connally led a fight at the National Governors Conference over a resolution on the Vietnam war. The governors met in New York and sailed on the Independence, a luxury liner, to the conference in the Virgin Islands.

Connally was called "the chief spokesman" for a group of governors which met for three hours at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York. He had obtained the signature of 20 of them on a resolution backing Johnson's handling of the war. Read, who was on the Independence with Connally, said the action by Connally was, in his opinion, both an effort to
assist Johnson and an accurate reflection of Connally's own personal views on the war (23).

At any rate, Connally lost at the Governors Conference in a battle that generally pitted him against California Governor Ronald Reagan. The vote was on suspension of the rules so the governors could take up a watered-down-resolution supporting LBJ. It did not mention the President by name. It only said, "We stand committed to the successful conclusion of the struggle for freedom in Southeast Asia" (24). But the vote was 26 to 18, not enough to suspend the rules. It was seven votes shy. Johnson was so mad he refused to address the conference, although, as the Houston Chronicle reported: "When the governors began their annual meeting aboard the luxury liner, it was considered almost certain that Mr. Johnson would address them" (25).

All this time speculation was continuing on whether or not Connally would run again. Although it was not known then, Connally probably had already decided during the last summer or early fall of 1967 not to seek a fourth term. And he also had already had some preliminary talks with Johnson about the President's plan not to run again.

On October 4, before the National Governors Conference, Connally had met for four hours with supporters and insisted he had not made up his mind. He reportedly said he could not support Robert F. Kennedy for President if Kennedy won the nomination. And a Gallup Poll had showed that Kennedy had a twelve-point lead over Johnson (26).
On October 9, Connally met at the Driskill Hotel in Austin with thirty-two supporters from Houston, including Everett Collier, the editor of the Houston Chronicle. When the meeting was over, Connally asked Collier to explain the meeting to reporters. He said it was a spontaneous meeting of Connally's Houston "friends" (27). "Quite a few of the governor's personal friends started calling each other and said, 'Why don't we go up and see the governor and tell him to his face how we feel about his running for a fourth term and how badly we feel Texas needs him!'" (28). The Houston Chronicle listed those attending and they were the captains of business and industry in Texas, including some lobbyists.

On October 11, Richard Morehead in the Dallas News said speculation was that Connally would say, "yes," but Lieutenant Governor Preston Smith predicted he would say, "no," and mentioned that Connally had said about Price Daniel seeking a fourth term. Smith, who had already said he was running for governor even if Connally ran for re-election, attacked Connally as a big spender and said Texans should blame high taxes on Connally.

The morning of November 10, Jimmy Banks had a copyrighted story in the Dallas News saying that Connally would not seek re-election. At a press conference later that day, Connally made it official. "I no longer can be ensured in my own mind that I could bring to the office for another two years the enthusiasm, resilience, the patience that my conscience would demand and that the state would deserve" he said (29). His
wife, Nellie, said he had decided "several months ago" not to run and that she had not wanted him to run in 1966. Connally said the polls showed that he could beat "the field" if he ran (30). And the Houston Chronicle said their polls showed the governor would get sixty-seven percent of the vote if he ran for re-election (31). The paper regretted editorially his decision (32). So did the Dallas News, which had an editorial highly complimentary to Connally and a cartoon showing an empty chair with the caption, "Big Chair To Fill" (33).

In an interview with CBS in December of 1969, President Johnson said his own decision not to run for re-election was not tied down until the spring of 1967, "when he and Governor John Connally Jr. of Texas exchanged indications that neither would run for re-election" (34).
FOOTNOTES

17. Interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972.
18. Interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972.
23. Interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972.
CHAPTER VIII

SIXTIETH LEGISLATURE, SPECIAL SESSION, 1968

Although Connally was not a candidate in 1968, he was very much in the political picture. First of all, there was a race for the Democratic nomination for governor and the question of who would succeed him. And he was interested in that. Second, there was a special session of the legislature, during which he tried to offset the disadvantage of being a lame duck by periodically threatening to run again if he didn't get his way.

On January 10, about forty of Connally's top backers and advisers met at his ranch in Floresville to pick a candidate. They took a straw poll and the winner was Eugene Locke, a wealthy Dallas oilman and attorney who had strongly backed Connally and who had been state chairman of the Democratic Party during Connally's tenure (1). On January 19, Locke filed as a candidate and immediately was tagged as Connally's candidate. Merrill Connally, the governor's brother, was named as Locke's campaign manager in case someone missed the point.

But first Connally had to put down a scandal within the powerful Texas Liquor Control Board. On December 31, 1967, seven T.L.C.B. employees had been fired in what was alleged
to have been a protection racket in Dallas County. Connally's initial reaction was to back the T.L.C.B. director, Coke Stevenson Jr., son of a former governor, who Connally said "should be commended" (2). Later in the month, Connally had a conference with the board, urging quick work on its probe. On February 1, John W. Crank, director of undercover agents for the liquor control agency, was fired. He in turn issued a blast at Stevenson, saying his work had been limited to four cities, and that if he wanted to work anywhere else he had to clear it with Stevenson.

Connally then tried to capitalize on the moment by saying he might submit liquor-by-the-drink again as a cure for the ills of the present liquor law (3). He also threatened to outlaw private clubs in dry areas, thus putting the heat on those who drink wet and vote dry (4).

Finally, on February 20, Stevenson resigned. Connally seemed untarnished by this new scandal within his administration. However, Stevenson did not work under the governor because of Texas' unique system of plural executive. Connally did, however, have appointment control over the T.L.C.B., which appointed the director.

On March 31, President Johnson dropped his bomb on the American political terrain by saying he would not run again. George Christian, the President's press secretary, said Connally was one of the few consulted by LBJ in making the
decision and that Connally had opposed the move. The Dallas Times Herald said Connally knew LBJ was thinking of withdrawing when he decided not to seek re-election himself. The paper quoted Christian as saying he thought Johnson's thinking affected Connally's decision (5). The Associated Press reported that Johnson and Connally had discussed LBJ's possible retirement five times during the previous year, and that in October of 1967 Christian had spent an hour and a half at the Governor's Mansion with Connally "going over the type of statement that should be issued" (6). Each tried to get the other to run again, according to the Associated Press. The A.P. said Johnson first mentioned not running again to Connally "a year ago," which would have been the spring of 1967, a fact Johnson later confirmed to CBS. They again discussed the situation in Austin at Christmas time. The wire service said Johnson had a withdrawal statement in his pocket in January when he gave his State of the Union message. Apparently, Johnson and Connally had both decided "to hell with it" in the spring of 1967 and each kept trying to talk the other out of the decision.

There followed a brief boom for Connally for president. He geared up to lead the Texas delegation into the National Democratic Convention that summer in Chicago to represent Johnson's interests and to head off the liberals, especially the "doves," on the Vietnam war issue.
When Dr. Martin Luther King was killed in April, Connally got crossed with the press for one of the few times in his days as governor. An Associated Press story had quoted Connally as saying at an appearance in Weslaco that King "contributed to the chaos and turbulence in this country but did not deserve this fate." Connally, who had started to get feedback from the remark, called a press conference in San Antonio, where he was attending HemisFair, and said he was misquoted. He said what he had said in Weslaco was: "However much people might feel that King has contributed to the chaos and confusion, he did not deserve this fate." Apparently unknown to Connally or his staff, KGVT-TV at Harlingen had taped the governor's remarks. The tape revealed that Connally's actual remarks were: "He contributed much to the chaos, and the strife, and the confusion, and the uncertainty in this country, but whatever his actions, he deserved not the fate of assassination." After the station turned up with the tape, an aide to the governor could only say that Connally would have nothing else to say on the subject (7).

Meanwhile, Connally discovered that his charisma was not transferable. His man Locke ran fifth in the first primary. Eventually, his own nemesis, Preston Smith, was elected to succeed him. The Dallas News said Connally's prestige suffered, despite the fact that Connally had not publicly endorsed Locke, because Connally's "people" were highly visible
in Locke's behalf. Furthermore, Locke had been identified as a friend of President Johnson, but apparently it didn't help much under the circumstances.

The primary was not a total loss, as Connally's liquor-by-the-drink idea won a straw poll conducted in the primary though without any legal force, 694,000 to 673,000 (7).

On June 4, the day the special session opened in Austin, Robert F. Kennedy, Johnson's No. 1 enemy and the liberal most feared by Connally, was shot in Los Angeles.

Security around Connally was beefed-up after Robert Kennedy was killed. The News said he was already the most heavily guarded governor in Texas history (8).

Connally hit the legislature with another package deal, this one calling for a $2.6 billion, one-year budget with a $120 million tax plan. He called for additional Taxes on motor vehicle sales, real estate transfers, phone bills and services, such as laundry, parking, dry cleaning, barber and beauty shops and auto repairs. He also advocated the legalization of miniature bottles of liquor in eating places, a backdoor approach to liquor-by-the-drink that was quickly tabbed the "baby bottle bill." The proposals got a lukewarm reception from the legislature and the Dallas News said editorially it was too early to assess accurately Connally's program--not an enthusiastic response (9). The paper was particularly cool to a plan by Connally to raise the sales tax to three percent and rebate one percent to the cities.
And Yarborough sniped at him again. In June, Yarborough asked the state chairman to postpone the state convention in memory of Kennedy. Connally replied that the convention was set by state law and could not be postponed. Of course, legislature was in session at the time and could have changed the law.

On the day that Yarborough tried to head off the state convention, the State Democratic Executive Committee was honoring Connally at a dinner attended by 1,900, not including Yarborough. It was no coincidence. When the convention was held the next day, Connally was elected 2,834 to 498 to head the Texas delegation to the national convention as the state's favorite son. There was some talk that the governor might end up as Hubert Humphrey's running mate (10).

And the special session continued. Connally offered no objections when the House threw out his tax plan and substituted a straight three percent state sales tax. A 17 to 14 vote in the Senate killed the minibottle bill, but two days later a 16 to 15 vote revived it. Then State Senator Doc Blanchard of Lubbock filibustered the baby bottle proposal to death and, along with it, a move to ban private clubs in dry areas.

When the session ended, it had passed a $160 million tax bill with $148 million in new spending. Higher education, a Connally favorite, got $344 million, up $23 million from 1968. (11) It wasn't much of a session, as Connally-era sessions went, for little was accomplished.
FOOTNOTES

5. Dallas Times Herald, April 1, 1968.
CHAPTER IX

ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, 1968

Since Connally was not a candidate in 1968, his election campaign activity consisted of doing his bit for Locke in his race for governor and for Johnson at the National Democratic Convention in 1968. After Locke ran fifth in the first primary, Connally's political efforts were essentially concerned with national issues.

Connally's fight over the Vietnam resolution at the National Governors Conference proved but a prelude to his battle at the convention. As late as February 10, Connally had said, "We are going to win in Vietnam" (1). And at the Southern Governors Conference in June, he said he would lead the fight against George Wallace in the South (2).

To start with, the conservative Texas Democrats were unhappy with Humphrey over his efforts to abolish the unit rule, a device under which these political czars had traditionally controlled all of the state's large delegation as one unit. Connally had firm control over the state's 104 votes, by the unit rule. Texas liberals and the Connally conservatives fought for four and a half hours before the Credentials Committee at Chicago. There were threats of a Texas walkout, and the Houston Chronicle quoted Speaker Ben Barnes saying
Humphrey could not count on Connally's releasing the Texas votes on the first ballot. He declared Humphrey was "taking Texas for granted" (3).

Before leaving for Chicago, Connally hinted at a press conference that he might bolt the convention over the unit rule issue (4). And he hinted as a dire threat to Humphrey, that he might even nominate Johnson for President. The Houston Chronicle said editorially that Johnson might not support Humphrey if he veered too far to the left on Vietnam. The paper asked if LBJ might not be reconsidering running in the light of what Barnes had said (5). However, the Connally group was seated by the Credentials Committee and the liberals were left out. Pierre Salinger of the Humphrey staff accused Connally of McCarthyism and the battle raged anew.

Connally on August 22 addressed the Platform Committee on Vietnam, blasting the dove proposals as "courses of appeasement," and singled out Eugene McCarthy and George McGovern as objects of his disdain (6). The New York Times carried the story of his speech on page one and included the complete text inside the paper (7).

The weekend prior to the convention opening on August 26 was a busy one for Connally. Robert Baskin reported it in the Dallas News:

Texas Gov. John Connally, after three days of consultations with other Southern delegation chairmen, reportedly concluded that there was no possibility of forging a Southern coalition that would bring Humphrey to a more conciliatory position to the South.
However, Connally's activities here in the last few days were regarded as having contributed to the strong statement Humphrey issued Sunday endorsing President Johnson's conduct of the war and promising that North Vietnam is 'not going to get a better deal out of me.'

One of Connally's principal goals in the past few days has been to prevent Humphrey from yielding to the demands of the left wing of the party for mild language on Vietnam (8).

The second day of the convention, Connally released the Texas votes to Humphrey, whom Connally called "the best choice available to us" (9). The move came after an hour-and-a-half conference among Humphrey, Connally, and Barnes. The Houston Chronicle, which had said editorially that the best Connally could hope for was to raise a little fuss and make Humphrey pay more attention to the interests of the south, claimed he achieved his purpose. However, "It is doubtful that Connally will be an enthusiastic campaign leader for Humphrey in Texas this fall," the paper predicted (10). Later, the paper itself backed Republican Richard Nixon. The Dallas News, too, felt Connally had succeeded: "It is fairly obvious that Connally's strong speech before the Platform Committee on the Vietnam plank did much to keep Humphrey from yielding to the dovish persuasion," Baskin wrote (11). "The governor's position is well reflected in the final platform produced by the committee."

Connally called the platform plank "a clear message to Hanoi" (12) and said he was "elated." The Dallas News stated, "The governor, Speaker Ben Barnes and others in the Texas
delegation worked hard for several days to persuade other delegations that a strong Vietnam plank was necessary" (13).

On August 29, the *Dallas News* carried a page one headline that read: "Lid On Chicago Blows Sky High."

Connally himself sat up several hours in the pre-dawn of Wednesday morning watching from his Conrad Hilton Hotel suite as the Chicago police and the Illinois National Guard battled a mob of peace demonstrators across the street in Grant Park.

Texas' 104 votes against an end-the-war plank had killed it.

Following the convention, Connally said he would back the Democratic ticket, but, "I'm not going to ask for any jobs," he said (14). Both Connally and Yarborough campaigned in seven cities with Humphrey in October. On October 31, Richard Morehead of the *Dallas News* said Connally might not appear with Humphrey in Houston on election evening because of a previous engagement. The *News* quoted Houston Republican George Bush as saying, "In my heart I don't believe Governor Connally is enthusiastic about Humphrey. I think party loyalty may be asking too much." The *News*, too, was supporting Nixon. On November 3, Humphrey, Johnson, and Yarborough appeared in Houston, but not Connally.

On November 3, the *Dallas Times Herald* carried a story saying that Connally had given the Republicans a list of his contributors for use in soliciting funds for Nixon. The
meeting reportedly was held on October 14 in Dallas at the Sheraton-Dallas Hotel. Among those attending were Peter O'Donnell, state Republican chairman, and Bill Clements, Texas GOP finance chairman. The story stated that Connally had refused to publicly endorse Nixon. Ernest Stromberger of the Times Herald Austin Bureau wrote the story. He said the Times Herald held the explosive story out of early editions until Editor Felix McKnight called Connally and the governor confirmed that it was correct (15).

In his lost cause, Humphrey barely carried Texas, and Nixon won in Dallas, Fort Worth and Houston. Most political observers felt Humphrey was hurt by the deep divisions within the Democratic Party as a result of the Chicago convention. Humphrey's stand on Vietnam, seeming to go along with Johnson's conduct of the war and the fact that he had been part of the administration, however, were a part of it.

The question arises: Did Connally push Humphrey into a hard floor fight over the Vietnam plank so as to divide the party and cause his downfall at the polls? There seems to be little doubt that Connally forced Humphrey into a hawkish plank. Christian claimed the plank was strong "because of the whole shove of the Johnson administration," of which he was a part (16). "Connally played a helluva role in it," he said, although it was not, in his opinion, the deciding role. The plank, Christian said, "was touch enough for the Johnson
administration to live with." But he does not think the issue contributed to Humphrey's defeat. "He got just about all the votes he was going to get," Christian declared. As split as the nation was in 1968, he continued, Humphrey would have been defeated worse had he run as the peace candidate. Eugene McCarthy, for example, would have been "slaughtered" in Christian's opinion.

Read also expressed doubts that Connally had any effect on Humphrey's defeat. "Humphrey had an uphill fight from the start," he said (17). "He was tied, for better or worse, to Johnson."

During the campaign, Read pointed out, Humphrey never did define what he wanted Connally to do. "He [Connally] said publicly that he was for him. There was no switch to Humphrey at the last. That is not so. He was always 'for' Humphrey," Read insisted, but pronouncing the "for" as though it were perfunctory only.

Connally gave his farewell speech to the legislature on January 15, 1969. He said the state's population had gone up 1.5 million in the six years he was governor, but income had gone up 30 percent. He cited gains in higher education, public school education, water and air pollution control, tourism, recreation and conservation, industrial development, highway construction, traffic safety, care of the mentally ill and the retarded, intergovernmental relations, consumer credit
regulation, industrial safety, Job Corps training, and landscaping of the Governor's Mansion (18). When he left office, Connally joined the Houston law firm of Vinson, Elins, Weems and Searls.
FOOTNOTES

15. Interview, Ernest Stromberger, Austin, July 7, 1972.
17. Interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972.
CHAPTER X

VIEWPOINTS OF CONNALLY STAFF MEMBERS

Connally had four press secretaries—Wilbur Evans, who was on the staff from January 11, 1963, to June 1, 1967; George Christian, who was with Connally from August 1, 1963, to June 1, 1966; Bill Carter, from 1966 to March 1, 1968; and Kyle Thompson, May, 1968 to January, 1969. Their salaries ranged from $15,000 to $16,000.

Actually, none of them had the same relationship with Connally that Christian had. And Read was always in the wings helping with press problems and other media relations. In point of fact, Connally went long stretches without a press secretary. It was announced on May 28, 1966, that Christian had joined the White House staff. But Carter didn't really come on the job for several months, coming aboard about December. Connally was without a press secretary from March to May in 1968.

Christian pointed out that the scope of the job depended on who was in it. Christian, for example, handled a lot more than just press relations. "I tended to handle a lot more than anyone moving in as press secretary," he said. This included helping with appointments to state boards, legislative liaison, and other policy chores.
Evans, as he has said himself, was ill suited for the job. "Connally liked to come up with fresh thoughts," Read recalled, "There is no question that Wilbur was a fresh thought."

Although he was new to politics, Evans was highly respected in his field of sports information. He was a very popular man with the press and Connally was seeking popularity. Too, Connally had known Evans for years. But he was a fish out of water in politics. Early in the Connally administration, Christian remembered, press relations were "not good at all" (2). The press just didn't seem to have much rapport with the Governor's Office, he continued, but this situation had begun to work itself out by the time he joined the staff, Christian said. Part of the problem was Connally's lack of familiarity with the job. "Connally's press relations from the time he came into office to the assassination were, you'd have to call them adequate," Christian recalled. "Connally wasn't looked upon as any giant or anything by the press. They had their normal resentments, such as his inaccessibility."

Carter was a competent civil servant type of information officer who came from the Department of Public Safety and went back there after Connally was through with him. His position with Connally was never anything like that of Christian and Read. The same was true of Thompson, who came from UPI and returned to UPI.

After the assassination, press relations changed for Connally. "Obviously, he was big news," Christian said.
"He was hurt. The way he responded, reacted and grew out of that episode increased his stature with the public at large and with the press he worked with." To Christian, Connally changed. "He became more of a human being rather than a man sitting in the governor's office--a king or something."

Christian, in a 1972 interview, described why he thought Connally's press relations were good and how he thinks he achieved good relations:

I think they were successful. His relationships with the news media around the state were very good. He had a good working relationship with the leadership of the media. His personal relationships were good with many of them. His relationships with the press in the capitol were adequate.

The press generally respected him. They thought of him as a good operator, a good mover, even though he sometimes was rather distant to them.

All public officials have trouble looking at the press very objectively. I've never seen one yet who could treat one [reporter] like an ordinary man. Their tendency is to use the press to their own advantage and to resent it when they don't do what you want them to. Connally was less apt to do that than anyone I saw around here [Austin] or in Washington.

Connally never consciously tried to use an individual reporter, Christian said. He let things happen as they would and he knew he would benefit from the things he did, Christian believes. "He took some of them hunting in Dimmit County and he enjoyed it more than they did. He didn't do it in any sense that he was going to con them. He looked on it as a part of his press relations. His motivation was that he was proud of the place and wanted them to see it."
Christian said Connally occasionally would generalize about the press, saying such things as "The press builds these things up out of proportion." But he never complained to his press secretary that the press was being unfair, Christian recalled. "He never gave me a working-over for anything the press was doing in general. He might get sore at a particular individual." The press was never black or white, never hero nor villain to Connally, Christian stated. "I thought that was a unique art. That's pretty rare really in politics," he said.

Connally did have a strong sense that the press was vital to his political life, Christian acknowledged. "He was completely sold that that was an important factor in getting anything done," he continued, "He was annoyed that the governor's power was so limited. It was really the power of persuasion. And he had to acquire this through press support."

Christian also stated Connally had power in the fact that he was not a professional politician and was not overly ambitious. "I looked on him as a fellow who had never had to hold political office. He didn't get into politics until he was in his 40s," Christian pointed out. "He enjoyed public life, power, and the trappings. He knew what to do with them, but he also enjoyed private life." Christian said Connally never had any ambitions to be president that he knew of and didn't really have a "burning desire" to be governor. "That was part of his charm and his power," he said.
Read's role in the Connally administration was different. He said he was always sensitive to the role of the press secretaries and could not remember any conflicts with their role. "It is hard to separate our counsel on decision making and on press relations," Read recalled (3). "We did get involved in the decision process." His role frequently was to explore the communication implications of an action and how to handle them--whether with a state-wide television speech, a press conference or a news release. He helped Connally make decisions, based in part on their implications to the media, and then helped with the media arrangements.

"Connally and I have had an extremely rare relationship," Read said. "We related so well that I could come into a situation and leave it with ease, I understood him so well," he explained. Read said he would walk into a meeting and know how Connally was thinking without having to undergo an extensive briefing.

Read believes the secret of Connally's success with the press lay largely in Connally's own personality. "The members of the press corps developed, not only respect for him, but developed, nearly all of them, an affection for him," Read said. Whatever oversights Connally might have, the press tended to overlook them, he recalled.
Read described Connally this way:

He had a sense of utilization of the media. He could come up with by instinct what by profession we should have come up with. He's instinctively a communicator, personally a communicator.

Unlike Johnson, who never felt at home with any of them, Connally had developed a rapport with editors.

Both men said Connally's success with the press stemmed from his ability to win them with his personality, and with the fact that he made news and the fact that he knew how to "use" the media in the best sense of the word.

Wilbur Evans, along with Christian and Read, credited a great deal to instinct. Good press relations came natural to Connally, Evans said (4). "Good press relations is something that has got to be natural with you," he said. "If you have to work at it, you don't do a good job." Evans said Connally's good looks--his bearing and his appearance--helped, along with what Evans called "his natural charm." Connally looked like a good governor who knew what he was doing.
FOOTNOTES

1. Interview, George Christian, Austin, July 7, 1972.
2. Interview, George Christian, Austin, July 7, 1972.
3. Interview, Julian Read, Austin, July 8, 1972.
CHAPTER XI

VIEWPOINTS OF SELECTED TEXAS EDITORS

Editors and reporters around Texas, who observed Connally as governor and who were questioned as part of this study, agree generally that Connally was popular with the press, had good press relations for a variety of reasons, and was usually good for a story.

Interviews were conducted with three veteran capitol press corps members—Sam Kinch, formerly with the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* and now retired; Garth Jones, long-time Austin bureau chief of the Associated Press; and Ernest Stromberger, chief of the *Dallas Times Herald* Austin Bureau.

In addition, a questionnaire (see Appendix A) was mailed to 25 selected editors representing newspapers in all parts of the state seeking their views on Connally and his press relations.

Kinch said he thought Connally was successful in his press relations, as Kinch put it, "mainly because he said something when he had a press conference or when you cornered him for a question" (1). What Connally said might not have been all there was to say on the subject, Kinch said. "But he knew enough to call press conferences only when he wanted them, and to agree to them when he knew there was some topic important enough to justify questions."
For those reasons, Kinch thinks Connally was popular with the press. "He could be as close to a newspaperman as any official I've known," he said, "And he could be as distant."

Connally also avoided playing favorites within the capitol press corps, in Kinch's opinion. "I don't believe he had any what you might call 'pets' in the press corps. He had some whose judgment he respected more than others, but none to whom he leaked important stories. He leaked none to me, at least, and none to others that caused me to object seriously."

Kinch did feel that Connally used the press for political aims, "as I think every political figure I've ever known has done." And he used the press to get public reactions on certain issues, to "float a balloon" as it is sometimes called. "Another thing he did not discover or copyright," Kinch continued.

In summary, Kinch stated:

Overall, I think I can say he never gave me a big exclusive and never gave one to someone else that caused me concern. I think he never lied to me, but he may have done as other politicians and dodged a question or pretended ignorance.

I made many trips with him and Nellie and enjoyed them all. And I figured if he wanted to hold something back, that was his privilege--so long as it did not represent a serious public interest. And I don't believe he hurt the press on that count.

Jones, too, felt the Connally press relations were good. "He always answered questions directly, even if it was to say, 'I'm not going to tell you,'" Jones recalled (2); The AP chief said he thought Christian was particularly adept at
handling the press and generally served as a friend of the reporters as well as the governor.

Stromberger of the *Times Herald* credited Connally's good looks for his good press relations. He said he did experience some "front office" bias toward Connally, particularly in his story about Connally giving the Nixon people the names of his contributors in 1968. Stromberger said he felt that any story that reflected badly on Connally had to be based on solid information to get printed in the *Dallas Times Herald* (3).

Of the twenty-five editors who were sent the questionnaire about Connally, sixteen, or sixty-two percent, responded. However, the sixteen represented newspapers in all the major cities of Texas--Dallas, Houston, Fort Worth, San Antonio and El Paso. They represented a total circulation of more than two million (4).

Of the sixteen newspapers represented, nine supported Connally editorially in the first primary of 1962, his first race, and seven did not. In the second primary and the general election of 1962, eleven supported Connally and five did not. Thereafter, in two elections in 1964 and two in 1966, twelve of the papers consistently supported Connally editorially and four did not. Those that did not endorse him did not necessarily endorse someone else, however.

Eight papers editorially endorsed Connally in all seven elections in which he was a candidate. They were the *Dallas*
Morning News, the Houston Chronicle, the Houston Post, the San Antonio Light, San Antonio Express, Abilene Reporter-News, Bonham Daily Favorite and the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

Three papers, the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, the El Paso Times and the Austin American-Statesman, did not endorse Connally in that tough first primary, but did so in every election thereafter.

The Corpus Christi Caller-Times, on the other hand, endorsed Connally in that first 1962 primary, but did not ever endorse him again.

The Gainesville Register endorsed Connally in all elections after the three in 1962. The Valley Morning Star in Harlingen never editorially endorsed Connally at all. Two others, the Pampa News and the Midland Reporter-Telegram did not endorse candidates in any elections in those years.

One of the questions on the list was, "Do you think John Connally was successful or unsuccessful in his press relations? Why do you think he was able to be successful or why was he unsuccessful?"

In choosing their own words to describe Connally's press relations, four editors used the words "very successful," one said "highly successful," nine said "successful," one said "generally successful," and one said "fairly successful." None said he was unsuccessful.
Tom J. Simmons, managing editor of the Dallas News, said Connally had a dynamic personality, "second only in histronics, if second, to Ronald Reagan." He credited the "quality of personality" for his good press relations, saying Connally had "lots of pazzazz."

Sam Wood, editor of the Austin American-Statesman, said Connally was successful, although press relations were sometimes strained, which he said is normal. "He generally answered press queries promptly. His press conferences were free-wheeling, but difficult on occasion to get in a question."

Dorrance Guy, executive editor of the El Paso Times, said Connally always did his "home work" and could communicate at his press conferences.

The editor of the Corpus Christi paper, which did not support Connally generally, spoke of Connally's "arrogance," but agreed that his press relations were successful. "He spoke with conviction and authority and was well informed," said the editor, who chose not to sign the questionnaire.

O. D. Wilson, assistant managing editor of the Houston Post, said Connally was articulate, made himself available and had a well-organized staff. "I traveled with him during his first campaign," Wilson said, "and was very impressed with the man and his campaign, although my personal political persuasion was more toward his liberal opponent."
William B. Bellamy, managing editor of the San Antonio Light, mentioned that Connally had charisma, was bright, and made good copy.

Bill Wagner, managing editor of the rival San Antonio Express-News, agreed: "His personal charm aided him tremendously, as did his availability to the press. He was generally cooperative," Wagner said.

Ed N. Wishcamper, editor of the Abilene Reporter-News, said Connally was successful in his press relations "because he was more intelligent, more forthright and direct than most public officials, and especially most Texas governors." But Wishcamper pointed out that no public official pleases all of the press and the public.

Everett Collier, editor of the Houston Chronicle, used the terms "honesty, forthrightness and leadership" as keys to Connally's successful press relations.

Fletcher Robertson, managing editor of the very conservative Valley Morning Star, said his paper often disagreed with Connally. However, he stated he felt Connally was fairly successful in his press relations, "Because he is a personable and likeable man."

Jack Butler, editor of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, wrote on his questionnaire that Connally answered questions frankly and squarely. "He also happens to be a likeable sort of fellow," Butler stated. "Note the friendly attitude of the Washington press corps," he said in reference to Connally's
favorable treatment by the national press before and after his term as governor.

Jack Joyce, editor of the Gainesville Register, expressed the opinion that Connally was successful because he played fair with the press and always seemed available for comment with good quotes.

Three editors, Aubrey McAlister of the Bonham Daily Favorite, Dallas F. DeWeese of the Pampa News, and W. H. Collyns of the Midland Reporter-Telegram, cited Connally's frankness. "He was successful because he speaks directly and doesn't beat around the bush. He seldom tries to avoid a question, but answers as frankly as possible," McAlister said. "He never dodged an issue or answer in our relations with him," said DeWeese. "I think Connally was successful in his press relations, generally speaking," Collyns noted, "largely because of his open and frank policy."

All of the editors felt Connally was popular with the press except for the Corpus Christi editor, who said few governors are popular. "With governors, as with presidents, an adversary relationship generally develops in time," he said. One, Wishcamper of Abilene, said he didn't know how popular Connally was with the press because he was not part of the capitol press corps.

Wilson of the Houston Post pointed out that Connally's good press relations did not mean that individual reporters always voted for him:
But I think most of them liked the man and recognized that he had a lot of ability and was adept at communicating his ideas. This enabled reporters to do a real good job covering his campaign. And when a source creates a climate where a reporter can function at a 100 percent clip and really know that he is doing a good job, well, it is kind of hard not to like the man.

Simmons of the Dallas News said Connally had detractors among the liberal reporters, but never really tried to get the press to like him. He called Connally "an emperor-type of politician," implying that Connally held himself above the reporters. Wood, too, said Connally never "tried to buddy up to the press, but was courteous." The Austin editor said Connally also always "kept his cool" under questioning and never blew up at a reporter.

Ability was one factor frequently mentioned by the editors. Guy of El Paso said Connally was popular because he knew what he was talking about. Charles Guy of Lubbock said he was popular because reporters sensed that Connally was an able administrator, "an on-the-ball governor." Joyce of Gainesville cited Connally's "personal charisma and his ability as a leader and policymaker." McAlister mentioned Connally's "fairness."

In response to the question, "Do you think Connally was treated differently by the press after the assassination? If so, in what way?", the editors were divided, five saying he was treated differently, nine saying he was not, and two with indefinite opinions.
Simmons of the Dallas News pointed out that before 1963 Connally was "Lyndon's Boy John" to his critics and there was strong anti-Johnson feeling. After the assassination, Simmons stated, "it was almost like cursing motherhood to condemn" the governor. "He had almost a spiritual quality with the press and the people because of what he went through. He never really had a bad press after the assassination," Simmons stated.

Wishcamper of Abilene expressed a common view: "There was widespread sympathy for him as a natural aftermath of the assassination and his injury. After he regained full health and activity, as I recall, the press attitude and relations with him were about as they had been before." Editors in Lubbock and Corpus Christi expressed similar views.

Collyns of Midland said he participated in Connally's first press conference after his return to the Governor's Office and he observed that the press treated Connally "a bit more gently" after the assassination. Butler of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram also mentioned sympathy for Connally in his answer.

Wagner of San Antonio's Express and News agreed: "The incident elevated his stature, which he gladly would have foregone, gave him world-wide exposure, involved him in the Kennedy mystique, gained him much sympathy, and generally altered his image beyond being just another governor," he said.

Ed Hunter, editor of the Houston Post, had a different view from that of his assistant managing editor, O. D. Wilson.
Hunter said he has a feeling the capitol press corps tends to be "just a shade more understanding and patient with irritations" when the governor becomes a national figure. "It may be subconscious, but I believe it happens," Hunter said. "Of course, it's something you can't document, but John sure as hell became a national figure after November, 1963." Wilson agreed that Connally did get more attention from the national press, but he said he honestly does not think that Connally was treated differently by the press in Texas.

Editors of the *San Antonio Light*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Valley Morning Star*, *Pampa News*, *Austin American-Statesman*, *El Paso Times*, *Gainesville Register*, and *Bonham Daily Favorite* said they did not think Connally was treated any differently. Bellamy of San Antonio noted that Connally always had a good press, implying that his press couldn't have been improved by the assassination, in his opinion.

Some of the editors said their newspapers disagreed with Connally on some issues, but several said they did not disagree on any major issues.

Simmons of the *Dallas News* and Bellamy of the *San Antonio Light* said flatly that there were no issues on which their papers disagreed with Connally.

Wagner of the *San Antonio Express-News* said his paper had no major disagreements with Connally, although the paper quarrelled with his Parks and Wildlife Board on several issues.
Editors in Austin, El Paso, Gainesville, and Bonham said they had no major disagreements with Connally. Wood of Austin said his paper did not go along with some of Connally's legislative strategy, however. Joyce of Gainesville said his paper did have reservations at first: "There was nothing of major importance (in the way of disagreements) after he convinced us of his ability during his first term of office. Originally, we questioned whether he was his own man. He erased any doubts on that count in his first term." And McAlister had some thoughts in retrospect: "I feel he may have inspired us a little too heavily on education that is growing over-costly and unnecessarily too top heavy in many ways," he said.

Robertson of the Valley Morning Star said his paper disagreed with Connally too many times to list. "We believe in minimum government," he noted.

The editor of the Corpus Christi paper said his paper disagreed with Connally "on the extravagantly ambitious Texas Water Plan on the grounds that its ecological impact had not been explored sufficiently." Otherwise, he said, there was general agreement with Connally's program, especially his higher education program. And the Lubbock paper was mad at Connally for vetoing a medical school for Texas Tech and "gave it to him good" for that, said Guy, the editor and publisher.
The **Houston Post** was a strong editorial supporter of the governor, but did not agree with him on everything, Wilson said. One was on mental illness. At a news conference, Connally said he was seriously considering recommending to the legislature a law requiring that a person adjudged to have been insane at the time he committed a serious crime be imprisoned for the rest of his life, without parole or release. The **Post** pointed out that Connally was "speaking more emotionally, rather than rationally, an understandable reaction to the horrible massacre on the campus of the University of Texas," a reference to the case of Charles Whitman, the sniper who killed twelve passersby from the tower at the school on August 1. But, Wilson observed, "I would have to say the **Post** agreed with Connally on many more issues than it disagreed."

Collier of the **Houston Chronicle** said his paper disagreed with the governor on the need for annual sessions of the legislature, among other things.

Of the sixteen editors who answered the questionnaire, five said their papers did not comment editorially when Connally left office. Two others did not answer the question regarding comment at the end of Connally's tenure. Nine said their papers did comment, and, in every case, the editorials were full of praise for Connally.

Some examples from the comments of the editors:
Results of three elections are proof that Texans approve and appreciate the solid contributions under Connally's administration.

In the decision of Connally not to run for re-election... Texas is the loser; for here is a man with that rare combination of knowledge, personality and dedication. Politically, he avoided the extremes of visionary liberalism, on the left, and stultifying reaction on the right. Foremost in his mind has been a personal determination to protect states' rights against the tidal wave of federal erosion.

The News, which has given Connally its strong support, is proud of his record and of the man.

--Dallas News, quoted by editor Tom Simmons

His administration has been one of vision and progress.

--Houston Post, quoted by editor O. D. Wilson

We were sorry to see him leave and praised his administration.

--Houston Chronicle editor Everett Collier

We said he'd made one of the state's better governors, and wished him well, but again noted what we considered his lack of understanding on West Texas needs insofar as the medical school was concerned. All this, Connally knows. We are personal friends and while he got mad as hops over our racking him back on the med school, we remain personal friends. I'd like to see him go 'all the way' because I consider him an unusually able man.

--Charles A. Guy, editor and publisher, Lubbock Avalanche-Journal

We miss him and need men of his calibre.

--William B. Bellamy, San Antonio Light

We took note of his achievements in education, which was his primary platform when he first announced, and gave him credit for being a dynamic, effective leader of a sometimes-wayward government due to a reluctant legislature. We recalled that his first session with the legislature resulted in failure of his program; he vetoed most of the budget and called a special session to get the program written right.

--Bill Wagner, San Antonio Express and News
We applauded him. He made a good governor.
--Sam Wood, Austin American-Statesman

We lauded him as a superb political leader and for his service to Texas. He was unquestionably the dominant political leader in Texas during the decade of the sixties.
--Jack Joyce, Gainesville Register

We merely said, in substance, he had been Texas' best governor.
--Aubrey McAlister, Bonham Daily Favorite
FOOTNOTES

1. Interview, Sam Kinch, Austin, July 7, 1972.
2. Interview, Garth Jones, Austin, July 7, 1972.
4. Editor and Publisher Yearbook, 1972, New York Editor and Publisher Co., Inc. 1972.
CHAPTER XII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Russell Baker, columnist for the New York Times, once wrote that those who grew up in the movie era automatically divide men into two classes--"men who always get the girl at the end of the movie and men who never get the girl" (1). He classed John Connally with the former. "Look at John Connally," he said. "What do you immediately think? The kind who always gets the girl, right?" Baker's comment seems to sum up the underlying reason for Connally's successful use of the media.

From the comments cited herein by Connally's staff members, it is valid to conclude that they felt he had good relations with the press. From the comments by selected Texas newspaper editors, it is equally clear that they agreed. Certainly, Connally's popularity with the public did not wane materially. The Texas Poll showed that approval of his efforts never fell below the 54 percent he received in May of 1963 and reached a high of 84 percent in December of 1964. After he bowed out with his announcement that he would not run again, the figure was 62 percent (2). Richard Morehead of the Dallas News Austin Bureau in a column critical of Connally in his late dealing with the press, admitted that the governor's relations with the news people "has bordered on adulation.
by some individuals." He wrote of "a Connally mystique which baffles the closest observers at times, particularly of late" (3).

There seems to be ample evidence that editors protected Connally on many occasions. For example, Connally was spared harsh editorial criticism for his massive spending, which was greater than that of other governors. State spending doubled under Connally, leaping from $1.2 billion to $2.5 billion (4). In the several controversies that arose during his administration, editors did not criticize Connally, or lay the blame at his door. The case of William Murray, the Railroad Commission member who profited from oil leases, the case of the man he appointed to a corrections job who had a brother in prison, the case of the secret funds for the LBJ Park and the condemnation of land for it, and the Liquor Control Board scandal are among examples of kid-glove treatment accorded Connally. There is another example. It involved the death of Connally's daughter. However, most newspapers would not use such a story involving anyone in public life, not only Connally. Only Time magazine used the story. Had Texas newspapers been out to get Connally--they all knew of the incident, which had been reported as a routine police story in 1959--they could have dredged up the tragedy. Connally's oldest daughter, Kathleen, was married at 16, in 1959. "Later that year," Time reported in a 1964 cover story, "according to her youthful husband, he came home one night and found her threatening suicide with a shotgun. He
said he tried to take the weapon away from her, and in the scuffle it went off, hitting her" (5).

How did Connally achieve this remarkable success with the press and the public? There seem to be several key factors. The most important appears to be Connally's winning personality. Another important one was his ability to make news. He was worth writing about. Also, he used a wide range of clever devices, such as the Texarkana-El Paso train trip, to get publicity. As for his staff, it was weak at first, with the exception of Read, who was not actually a staff member. Read and Christian were the only truly effective staff members as far as having a major impact on his relations with the media are concerned. Evans, Carter, and Thompson simply filled the jobs, although they were adequate. Too, Connally could point to a valid list of accomplishments which earned him a good press, although detractors could also point to some failures and the high price of his accomplishments.

Connally's charm served him in his personal relations with individual reporters and editors. It also transmitted well in his speeches, both in person and via television. His looks won him many television viewers not accustomed to handsome politicians, especially after several years of Price Daniel.

His personality also included a fierce tenacity. An incident from his youth illustrates this characteristic. Connally was working in the fields with his brothers on the family farm near Floresville. Suddenly, his horse decided to
go back to the house and ran away with the lanky teenager. Humiliated in front of his brothers, Connally refused to let the horse stop when it got back to the house. He ran it until it tired out—and acknowledged Connally as master (6).

Connally was smart enough to know that he had to be newsworthy to get good press coverage. When he had a press conference, as Christian mentioned, it was for a specific reason. When he presented a program for the legislature, it was full of stories. When he went on television, the viewers knew he was going to say something. He also had a very good memory for facts and could provide the information for news stories "off the top of his head." He also was an active governor, frequently moving around the state getting local press coverage.

Among the devices Connally used were the train trip, the "Coffee With Connally" TV series, the "Around the State in 48" plane trip, the meeting with the editors in 1963 on taxes, the African safari for television, the lavish inaugurations, and the columns he wrote on selected occasions for selected newspapers. He held press conferences at key times when key issues, such as his education budget, the teachers' pay dispute, and the liquor-by-the-drink debate, were at stake. He also kept in reserve the state-wide television speech, a device he used for his "nest egg for greatness," education veto and the teachers' pay issue. Even the Martin Agronsky interview at
the time of the assassination was a highly effective publicity device, although Connally could have had unlimited publicity then through almost any means.

As for his staff, the real brain was Julian Read, so far as the media were concerned. Christian developed into a highly effective press secretary. But the idea man, the man who taught Connally how to use television, was Read. His experiences in the use of the communication media might be worthy of a thesis in themselves.

Finally, Connally managed some real accomplishments which, whatever the cost, were substantial and newsworthy. In the field of higher education, there was the creation of a Governor's Committee on Education Beyond the High School, which led to the creation of the Coordination Board to prevent duplication and waste in the state's educational system. The Texas Opportunity Plan provided financial help to 21,309 students during Connally's tenure. Three more senior colleges were added to the state system, along with ten new junior college districts. State support for higher education increased 168 percent in the six-year period of Connally's governorship. In 1962-63, the 4,811 faculty positions in the state system carried an average salary of $7,237, which was $1,159 below the national average. When Connally left office, there were 9,345 faculty positions with average salaries of $10,856. Enrollment in Texas colleges and universities increased 72 percent, while
graduate enrollment jumped 140 percent. State investment in organized research climbed 508 percent, and the investment in libraries rose 236 percent. In the area of tourism, the Texas Tourist Development Agency was created. In four years, there was a 46 percent increase in visitors to the state. They spent 77 percent more money while they were in the state than had been spent four years previously. Almost 6.4 million persons visited HemisFair, which had state support. In the area of industrial development, Texas attracted 1,460 new plants while 1,976 existing plants expanded. A total of 35,000 new jobs were thus created. A reorganization of the state's programs for mental health and mental retardation also got impetus from Connally. By September 1, 1968, the patient population at state mental hospitals had dropped and the average length of patient stay had declined (7).

In summary, John Connally's tenure as governor of Texas saw a happy marriage between his political aims and the reportorial aims of those who covered him. He wanted favorable news coverage; the reporters and editors wanted good stories. Each got what he was after. As for the people of Texas, while Connally did have major accomplishments, they probably were not as great as the people were led to believe by the press coverage. Certainly they were not made fully aware of the prices of such achievements. Probably Connally came out of the Governor's office with a loftier reputation than he deserved as an administrator and political leader. He used
the communication media very successfully overall to enhance his own political fortunes and, to a substantial degree, to get things done for the state. He built a personal power base that was almost unassailable by his enemies, who could not get the ear of the press in many cases. As later events showed, however, this power was non-transferable. It was Connally's and could not be bestowed on Eugene Locke, Ben Barnes, or anyone else. It was uniquely his.
FOOTNOTES


4. Appropriations for 1961-1962 were $1,285,256,210. For 1968-1969, they were $2,554,812,109, according to the Legislative Reference Division of the Texas State Library, Austin, Texas.


APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE TO EDITORS
1. Did your paper endorse John Connally editorially:
   In the first primary in 1962? ___ Second primary in 1962? ___
   In the general election in 1962? ___
   In the first primary in 1964? ___ General election in 1964 ___
   In the first primary in 1966? ___ General election in 1966 ___

2. Do you think John Connally was successful or unsuccessful in his press relations? Why do you think he was able to be successful or why was he unsuccessful?

3. Do you think he was popular or unpopular with the working press? Why do you think he was able to be popular with the working press or why was he unpopular?

4. Do you think Connally was treated differently by the press after the assassination? If so, in what way?

5. Were there any issues on which your paper disagreed with Connally? If so, what were they and why?

6. Did your paper comment editorially when Connally left office? If so, what was the gist of the comment?
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