

What Gov. Connally told Gerald Celente that every American should know



President John F. Kennedy riding in his motorcade, minutes before he was shot and killed. John Connally, the governor of Texas, is sitting directly in front of the president.

Baylor University Collections of Political Materials/Walt Cisco, Dallas Morning News

By Gerald Celente

On the news that President Donald Trump

is planning to release the confidential files of John F. Kennedy's assassination, I reveal the inside story told to me by then-Texas Gov. John Connally, who was seriously wounded when he took a bullet in the back sitting in front of Kennedy.

It's been over a half century since the assassination of John F. Kennedy in Dallas on 22 November 1963.

What did John and Nellie Connally tell me that may be revealed if the JFK files are released? What was it that Connally wanted every American to know before he died?

Everyone old enough to remember that day recalls where they were and what they were doing when they heard the news. I search the news every Nov. 22 to see how the Kennedy assassination is commemorated. For the most part, it is only dutifully mentioned or barely reported on. This year, though, with the expectation that the sealed files of the assassination will be released, the upcoming anniversary will be more extensively covered in the news.

As a young boy in grade school, I saw Kennedy campaign in front of the Yonkers train station at Larkin Plaza. A few of my Catholic school classmates and I took a bus to see him. As Kennedy's motorcade left the campaign stop, I ran up behind his car, reached over the back of the trunk and touched his outstretched hand.

As life would have it, we would connect again.

FAST FORWARD

The year was 1992. The place was Dallas, Texas. It took me 46 years to get from 2940 Hone Ave. in the Bronx, where seven of us lived in a five-room walk-up, to Dallas.

It was there that the former Democratic governor of Texas and former Treasury secretary appointed by Republican President Richard Nixon, John Connally, who almost was assassinated along with Kennedy, wanted to meet me on a Sunday.

I'd planned to get away that fall weekend with my wife to an Adirondack lake resort where I was to give the keynote address to a healthcare association the following Monday.

But I knew in my gut that going to Dallas was more important than going to Lake George.

Weeks before the 1992 presidential election, there I was having lunch with Connally and a few others in the restaurant at the Anatole Hotel. I was asked to meet with him because he wanted to know how, three years earlier, I'd forecast the rise of a third political party when only 13 percent of the public thought such a movement possible.

What's more, in my book *Trend Tracking* (1989), I

We All Helped
To Pull the Trigger

See Editorial, Page 14

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5 CENT

Marxist Held as JFK Assassin; Johnson Meets With Rusk, Ike

John Fitzgerald Kennedy



Kennedy's Body Lies In Repose

By JEDDIEMAN SMYER
WASHINGTON (UPI)—Lyndon Baines Johnson today met the anonymous representative of President of the United States' group determined—with the help of God and a sainted Angel—to carry on the task left him by John F. Kennedy.

Less than 24 hours after he formally took office in a hot, stuffy airplane in Dallas, Tex., the new chief executive called in Secretary of State Dean Rusk at 8:00 a.m. E.S.T. for the first of a full day of impromptu meetings.

AMONG other officials Johnson was in earlier at 11:30 a.m. with former President Dwight D. Eisenhower.



DA Says He Has 15 Witnesses

DALLAS (UPI)—The Harvey Oswald, all-around Marxist and a 1960 Castro sympathizer, was charged today with the assassination of President Kennedy.

Marshall, his few out and inlets, his manner cool, the 24-year-old political nihilist and Marxist reject, was bound on a murder charge and jailed without bond.

"This is ridiculous," Oswald said.

The maximum penalty on conviction is death by electrocution.

District Attorney Henry Wade and his 12 witnesses to the assassination, his and investigators had named Dean Connally's assistant-husband wife that he

had singled out Ross Perot as just the kind of political maverick who could pull it off. Perot, a third-party candidate, was making a serious run for the White House.

I'd come all this way to have lunch with Connally, but frankly, I wasn't an admirer.

I thought of him as a cowboy con artist, a smooth-talking wheeler-dealer only interested in feathering his own nest. But as he talked over lunch, I realized my dislike was based on his media image. The more he talked, the more ashamed I felt for prejudging him. Secondhand dislike swiftly turned to deep admiration.

I found myself getting annoyed with others at the table. I'd never heard anyone speak as articulately and with such economy of words as Connally. Each word seemed like a sentence, each sentence a paragraph. I remember wishing I had a tape recorder to capture every word.

I wanted to hear what he had to say and what was on his mind. "Please shut up!" I'd say to myself, hoping the power of suggestion would work when others at the table cut him off and talked about what they thought and believed. It didn't. Quietly and courteously, he would yield to them.



John Connally with his wife, Nellie, and Gerald Celente in front of the Texas Book Depository in 1992.



But I would not. Whenever there was a pause, or I was able to create an opening, I'd prompt Connally with a question to lead him back to his previous stream of thought.

I had flown from New York to Nashville the previous day to meet with John Jay Hooker, the Tennessee gadfly who'd arranged the meeting. As we were finishing lunch, Hooker boomed, "What do you say John, ready to go now? The limousine is waiting."

In his rumpled seersucker suit, sporting a white Stetson hat, the tall Hooker was right out of Central Casting. It was he who'd brought us together and, unbeknownst to me, had arranged with Connally and his wife Nellie to go with us to the Texas School Book Depository.

Hooker had lost a close race for governor of Tennessee several years earlier, but never left the political scene. His finely appointed Nashville apartment walls were covered with pictures of him and the late-greats. It was a who's who of American politics: all the Kennedy clan with him at Kennebunkport, Hubert Humphrey, Lyndon Johnson and a cast of congressional movers and shakers. He was now a

Gerald Celente and his dad at a party just before his passing. The splotches on his hands were like those on Connally's.



vociferous opponent of America's electoral process that promotes the buying and selling of politicians through campaign financing.

"They won't let go of the tit, Celente my boy," Hooker said, looking and sounding almost like W.C. Fields. "Once they're in power, they're all the same. They think that tit's only for them to suck on and that no one else is entitled to the mother's milk of our great country," Hooker told me, referring to Democrats' and Republicans' permanent grip on the political system.

John Jay Hooker, the man who prompted Ross Perot to throw his hat into the race for president in 1992, had now convinced John Connally and his wife Nellie to return to the scene of JFK's assassination. This would be the first time they'd gone back since the day it happened, almost 30 years earlier.

And there I was, this kid from the Bronx, parked outside the book depository listening to John and Nellie Connally tell, firsthand, what had happened on 22 November 1963.

WHAT CONNALLY SAW

Connally set the scene, pointing out the direction the presidential motorcade had taken around Dealey Plaza. He had been sitting in the jump seat in front of President Kennedy. A tall and rangy man, Connally imitated his uncomfortable scrunched-up position in the small seat and how he was holding his Stetson hat on his knee. To his side sat Nellie, directly in front of Jackie Kennedy.

"I heard a gunshot. I knew it was a gunshot because I'd been hunting since I was a little boy," Connally said. "I looked to the right and didn't see anything. I was wearing a dark blue suit that day," he recalled. "When I looked to my left, I saw brains on my shoulder. I knew they were brains because my daddy was a butcher.

"Then I felt as though there was a pounding on my back," he said, making two parallel fists as if to mimic someone hitting him on the back. He grimaced as he explained what he felt when the bullet meant for Kennedy tore through his back, hand and his knee.

And so, he and Nellie went on, recounting the minute details of that gruesome event: The three gunshots and the ensuing chaos... The screams of fear... Nellie throwing her body over her husband to shield him... The mad dash drive to Parkland Hospital.

Connally had incredible luck in those worst of times. A thoracic surgeon, seeing the motorcade screaming into Parkland while on break, rushed to

the emergency room. As luck, or life, would have it amid the mayhem, he would be the doctor that would immediately operate on Connally's lung and save his life.

It was hard for me to process what I was hearing and how fortunate I was to be there.

For me, it was a day of epiphany.

On the way back to the hotel, hardly a word was spoken. On my left sat Hooker. Pat Caddell, the pollster, sat on my right. Connally was across from me. To his right was Rama Fox, Larry King's girlfriend at the time, and Nellie to his left.

It was then that I figured out why I was so taken with the way Connally was speaking, with his calmness, extraordinary clarity, his gestures and assuredness. I knew with absolute certainty that he was a man with a lot to say... and not much time to say it.

Connally was dying.

I could see the signs — a stiffness and weakness like those I noticed some 10 years earlier when my father, may his soul rest in peace, was dying. Like Dad, Connally was suffering from a pulmonary condition. His was from the gunshot that had ripped through his lungs. My dad's lungs were rotted from asbesto poisoning when he worked in shipyards during World War II.

When I looked at Connally's hands, I saw my father's hands before he died. They were stiff, with big, purplish splotches — a reaction to massive doses of prednisone, a cortisone used to temper his lung inflammation.

Connally, remembered as a "straight shooter" by those who knew him, would die of pulmonary fibrosis eight months later. I don't believe he consciously knew he was dying when we met on that sunny Sunday. But I was convinced that it was his subconscious that dominated his conversation.

When the limo pulled up to the hotel, Connally and I, the middle passengers, were the last to get out. The others were a dozen steps ahead of us, heading for the elevators. Connally stopped and turned to me.

"Gerald, I read your book and it's a fine piece of work," he said. "And I know that your heart is in the right place, but you don't have a clue of what's going on in the government, and neither do the American people.

"Because if they did, there'd be a revolution in this country."

MY EPIPHANY

Without another word, he headed for the elevators

"You don't have a clue of what's going on in the government, and neither do the American people. Because if they did, there'd be a revolution in this country."

John Connally, speaking privately to Gerald Celente

and caught up with the others. For an instant, I stood alone. I didn't know what was behind that remark, but with Connally as the source, it came less as a shock than as a confirmation. Even without knowing the details, I understood what Connally was telling me.

Over the years, the unique Globalnomic trend-forecasting system that I had developed, and which was proving remarkably successful, had given me an advantage in viewing the world and machinations of government with a critical eye. I was able to stand outside the political box and beyond the scope of print- and broadcast-media reporting. With no agenda to sell and beholden to no one, I had become a political atheist, uncommitted to either party and interested only in accurately interpreting the facts.

But what I had not quite realized before my lunch with Connally was the extent of corruption and slim odds of anyone bucking the system and winning.

This was coming from the horse's mouth. Here was a man who had been at the top of government and deep inside the corridors of power. This was not Sunday morning Beltway babble coming from Face the Nation or Meet the Press. This was a one-on-one straight scoop coming from a man in a position to know, talking outside of a public forum.

I recognized it as a singular and privileged moment. I was given insight into the real gravity of just how bad things were. It was the culmination of a long process.

Straight out of graduate school, I had begun my career as the No. 2 man running the Republican/Conservative mayoral candidate in Yonkers, New York. From there, I went to Albany as assistant to the secretary of the New York State Senate.

Recognizing that I was seeing politics in action from a different vantage point than those caught up in party dogma, I designed and taught "American Politics and Campaign Technology" at St. John's University. I spent the next several years as a government affairs specialist working between Chicago and Washington, D.C., representing a major segment of the chemical industry.

Beginning as a believer in the American democratic system, I held that belief into my early 30s. But, by the time I met Connally, I had lost my naiveté and harbored deep doubts about government. And my disdain for most politicians was growing. It was not just what Connally said that moved me, but the authority and gravity of the way he said it.

He was my epiphany.

We all went up to his suite and had a couple of drinks, a few snacks and some small talk. Hooker was trying to sign Connally onto the Board of Directors for a chain of steak houses he wanted to develop. Caddell, a Washington pollster, and Connally traded tales of political days gone by. Fox cooed about her engagement to Larry King.

I half listened and said nothing. My brain was back in the hotel lobby replaying Connally's statement: "If the American people knew what was going on in this government, there'd be a revolution."

That line reinforced my political atheism. I refused to believe in political dogma, genuflect before any political preacher or vow obedience to any political god.

I would not be a member of any party or follow any

leader.

That day in Dallas strengthened my resolve to base forecasts on verifiable data and to select those facts that illuminated the actual situation rather than those supporting a particular political/economic/philosophical agenda.

"If the American people knew what was going on..." I wondered if revolution would happen and when.

A quarter-century later, most people fight among themselves, defending the political party they believe in and the cast of cowards, liars, freaks and fools... the politicians for life they pledge allegiance to who run and ruin their lives.

As I look back now, not only is the political divide worse than ever, so too is the State of the Union.

Can it change?

Yes.

It is up to We the People, not the dictates of the current failed political system.

"It does not take a majority to prevail... but rather an irate, tireless minority, keen on setting brushfires of freedom in the minds of men."

— Samuel Adams 