



[Assassination Turns to Mystery](#)

The morning of November 22, 1963 was one filled with excitement and patriotism in Dallas, Texas when President John F. Kennedy came to town. This positive mood, however, turned into an infamous moment to be remembered forever in a matter of under 30 seconds when multiple shots were fired at the president. It was a moment filled with confusion and fear as people wanted to run for their own safety while also wanting to know the state of their president. The questions began to be thrown immediately about who committed the crime and why would anyone possibly do such a horrendous act. From a national standpoint, President Kennedy was well liked and very popular, having one of the highest approval ratings for a president in all of the 1900s. This made his assassination so much harder to believe because it was hard to think of any group that would want him killed. Just hours after the shots were fired, Lee Harvey Oswald was found and the police attempted to arrest him but were not able to do so without another casualty, officer J.D. Tippit, whom Oswald shot on the spot. Oswald was killed only two days later while being transported from jail to jail by a man named Jack Ruby. This murder destroyed the chance of being able to fully interrogate Oswald and see what his alibi was, if he had one. A week later, once the madness had settled, President Lyndon B. Johnson chose the Warren Commission, a group of investigators led by Earl Warren, to lead an investigation on the event and who was responsible. They spent over a year going over the evidence presented and known information and eventually came to the verdict that Oswald was acting alone and was the only shooter in Dallas that day. This was an extremely impactful decision because it took out any possibility that there was an actual group trying to kill Kennedy and rather it was just a random lunatic that wanted to make a statement or take a stand. The verdict, however, did not sit well in everyone's mind across the country. Many doubted to truth of the conclusion the Warren Commission came to and thought there must be more to the story than was presented. Now, over 50 years later, the outcome of the investigation is still being debated and many believe it was really a conspiracy all those years ago. With the evidence provided through facts and witness testimony, it truly does seem that the Warren Commission was feeding lies and that there was more to the story.

It is important to know the historical context of this time period and what was going on with the country as a whole. When President Kennedy came into office, he immediately offered a new domestic agenda which he called the "New Frontier" and he claimed it would bring the most political change since the New Deal and Franklin Roosevelt's time in office. As a Democrat, it was

known that he would make change which scared many Southerners as this was a time of heavy political turmoil as the civil rights movement had the most steam it had ever had. Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks among many others were stirring the pot in the South and it was only a matter of time before a major change was made in federal law, especially with a frontier-changing democrat elected into office. These were also the beginning years of the Cold War against the Soviet Union as they were the base of communism and many made it a priority to stop its spread. Many were scared of communism in the United States and were becoming paranoid that it would take over. This led to the controversy of whether or not we should get involved in the Vietnam war between the communist North Vietnam and South Vietnam. Many felt it was necessary to stop the spread of communism to South Vietnam while others thought it was not our war to fight and it would simply lead to millions of American lives lost without just cause. These were all extremely controversial topics in the country and many people felt strongly about each of them. Kennedy had to take a side on each of them however and due to the controversy, there were many who disagreed with him which would later lead to many conspiracy theories about his assassination. Now with a background knowledge on the time period in the United States, it is now possible to talk about why the assassination was so controversial itself and why one cannot simply believe everything the Warren Commission released.

Witness testimony is one of the most vague and least convincing pieces of information one can provide for detail. When vast numbers, however, share the same testimony about a similar event, the evidence presented by said testimonies starts to become harder to deny. The statements made by a multitude of the witnesses at the crime scene are contradictory to the statements made by the Warren Commission. One of the most important witnesses, for example, was Governor John Connally who was sitting right next to JFK. He was also wounded by one of the shots fired and he, along with his wife and a police motorcyclist that was riding to the right of the president, all claimed that he and the president were shot by separate bullets (Bojczuk 22). This goes against the single bullet theory given by the Warren Commission. It seems silly to argue against the person who was actually wounded during the event and could see the president getting shot along with feel when he was hit by a bullet himself. It is nearly impossible for him to be mistaken about the timing of it, and he is certainly credible as a teller of the events as he was a governor at the time. There were also “[a]t least two dozen, perhaps four dozen” that thought there were shots fired from in front of the car rather than behind where the Warren Commission said that Oswald was (Morley 1). If they were correct, this means there was a completely different person besides Oswald that was shooting which would add a whole new perspective to the argument. Its preposterous, however, to disregard the statements of all these people. The fact that someone was shooting from the grassy knoll, the area in front of the motorcade, is unknown, yet impossible to dismiss as the Warren Commission did.

When accusing Oswald, along with contradicting popular witness testimony, one must also contradict common sense. There were many unlikely events which go against the known evidence that must have transpired in order for him to have committed the crime alone. In order for a single bullet from the rifle he was said to be using to hit both Connally and Kennedy, it would have had to take “a midair turn to the right, followed by a squiggly one to the left” (Kaplan 8). This is a path that a bullet could not possibly take and the statement is evidence that the single bullet theory given by the Warren Commission is wrong. The film of the assassination was also very contradictory to the

claim that Oswald was alone. Oswald was said to be behind Kennedy during the shooting. However on film Kennedy's head moves backwards when it is struck. This would allow one to infer that the bullet had to have struck from in front of the victim which would mean it was someone other than Oswald that landed that bullet. Many army U.S. Army officials and FBI experts that claimed the rifle found in the depository was simply too inaccurate to fire that many shots in that short of a time (Bojczuk 24). It would take these experts being wrong about their own study of work for the Warren Commission to be telling the truth and that alone is enough to be convincing that there is more to the story.

It is clear to see, however, why people were so quick to blame Lee Harvey Oswald in the first place. His past was somewhat dark as he had to deal with the death of his father at a very young age and later deal with a distant relationship with his "angry, unstable and domineering mother" (Ayton 20). He obviously had no attachments with either of his parents meaning he had no sense of responsibility or moral judgement. He grew up as an outsider which led him to having an adulthood full of darkness. His friend Palmer McBride later testified that he even spoke of murdering a U.S. President one day (Ayton 24). He also had a history of abusing his wife and having fits of uncontrollable rage. Oswald was even said to have connections with the Soviets which would really make him an easy scapegoat if the government was just using him to trick the public. If this was their plan, framing him for being involved with the Soviets would be the easiest way to do so because Americans hated the Soviets at the time due to the cold war getting started and this made it easy to hate Oswald as he became associated with Soviets. Whether or not people truly believe it was Oswald based on the facts or simply based on the fact that a government appointed group of people said it was him, it is clear that many people believe it was him and only him.

There are a multitude of other reasons that people had no reason to believe there was a conspiracy theory at all. Many people simply had so much trust in the government that they couldn't handle the possibility that they could be corrupt enough to hide something this bad. This was a time when people were finally happy about the government and had no reason to doubt it in something this important. People in the present perhaps don't accept the idea of a conspiracy because they don't want to change the way history is written. It is easy to keep Oswald as the only shooter, but think of the doors of wonder that would exist if it was revealed there was a second shooter. People would be in a frenzy trying to figure out who the other shooter was and whom they were working for. Many people that believe the Warren Commission was telling the whole truth usually don't have evidence to back up this belief. People simply believe it because it is the easy and convenient way to keep things.

To contradict this, most Americans today believe there really was more than one person involved in the shooting. Over the years, the amount of people that have this belief has in fact gone up and stands at 61% today (McCarthy). This is most likely because as the years go on, curiosity is starting to overtake the minds of many Americans. This was not the case decades ago when the assassination of the president itself was too painstaking for people to bear and they did not want to talk about it. Nowadays however, people are realizing that the story told by the Warren Commission really does have a lot of holes in it and they want to get to the truth and the search for it is not as upsetting as it once was. Time really does heal wounds such as this one and it is allowing for better research and

more need to know what happened on that tragic day.

It is important to understand that with this increase in belief among the American public comes a new realization coming to light among it. People are starting to figure out how significant it would be if the U.S. government lied about something this substantial. If this turned out to be true, people would be quick to jump onto the bandwagons of other conspiracy theories. For example, there is much talk that the government is really the ones that planned and executed 9/11 because it gave us an excuse to go to war in the Middle East and boom in oil. This theory is far less talked about than the JFK assassination, but if JFK really was a conspiracy then people would start to talk more and more about these other theories. It would let people know that the government is willing to do unspeakable things in order to get their way, no matter what the consequences. This could create a massive blow to the government itself because the people could decide they are not going to stand for anymore corruption and try to overthrow the system as a whole. This would lead to a massive implosion in the American public and possibly another civil war except far different from the one that occurred a century and a half ago because this would be people versus government rather than people versus other people with different beliefs. It could lead to the downfall of the democracy of our country as a whole which would take away everything the United States stand for. Trust in the system is something that is necessary for the wellbeing of a nation and if this secret got out, the foundation of our governmental system would be hanging on by a thread which would be detrimental to our nation as a whole.

Since it is clear that Oswald was not the only shooter that day, one is quick to try and find out what really happened. This led to a variety of different conspiracy theories being born and many of them check out to make sense logically. For example, many believe that the Soviets were behind the entire operation due to the Cold War and the fact that Oswald had ties to the USSR (Goldman 2). This theory is believable because, as aforementioned, people hated the Soviets and they were easy to point fingers at so when it was mentioned that they could be behind the assassination, people were quick to believe that story. It is also backed up by the fact that a former KGB agent came out years later and said that the Soviets played a role in the plot. While it is possible that he made that up, it's also possible that he didn't and that would open up a whole new investigation. Another theory that is less talked about but more compelling for that very reason is the belief that the shots from the front were the result of accidental friendly fire. This theory states that secret service agent George Hickey, who was sitting in the car in front of Kennedy, accidentally shot his weapon when the car came to a sudden stop after the shots were fired and that is where the front bullets that struck Kennedy came from (Arkin 6). This theory is not popular at all, most likely because it lacks intrigue. People choose to believe stories where there are massive conspiracies among rival countries or groups, but in this instance, it was simply a mistake that was covered up for decades. However, the evidence would surely hold up with this story which is why it is truly compelling. There are countless other theories about who else was involved and Americans have spent decades trying to figure out which one they believe and will pass down to their children as the story of what really happened.

It is clear that no matter what really happened, it was certainly not Oswald acting alone. Most evidence provided points away from that conclusion and it is simply not possible for him to have done it by himself. But regardless of which story one chooses to believe, it is vital to understand the

importance of the false story given by the Warren Commission. Their output shows that either the government of our nation was incompetent or covering something up. While it may be grim to think about the fact that our own government may have been involved in the assassination, it is necessary because the trust that can be put into it must be limited and this truth was put on full showcase on the outcome of the events on November 22, 1963.

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