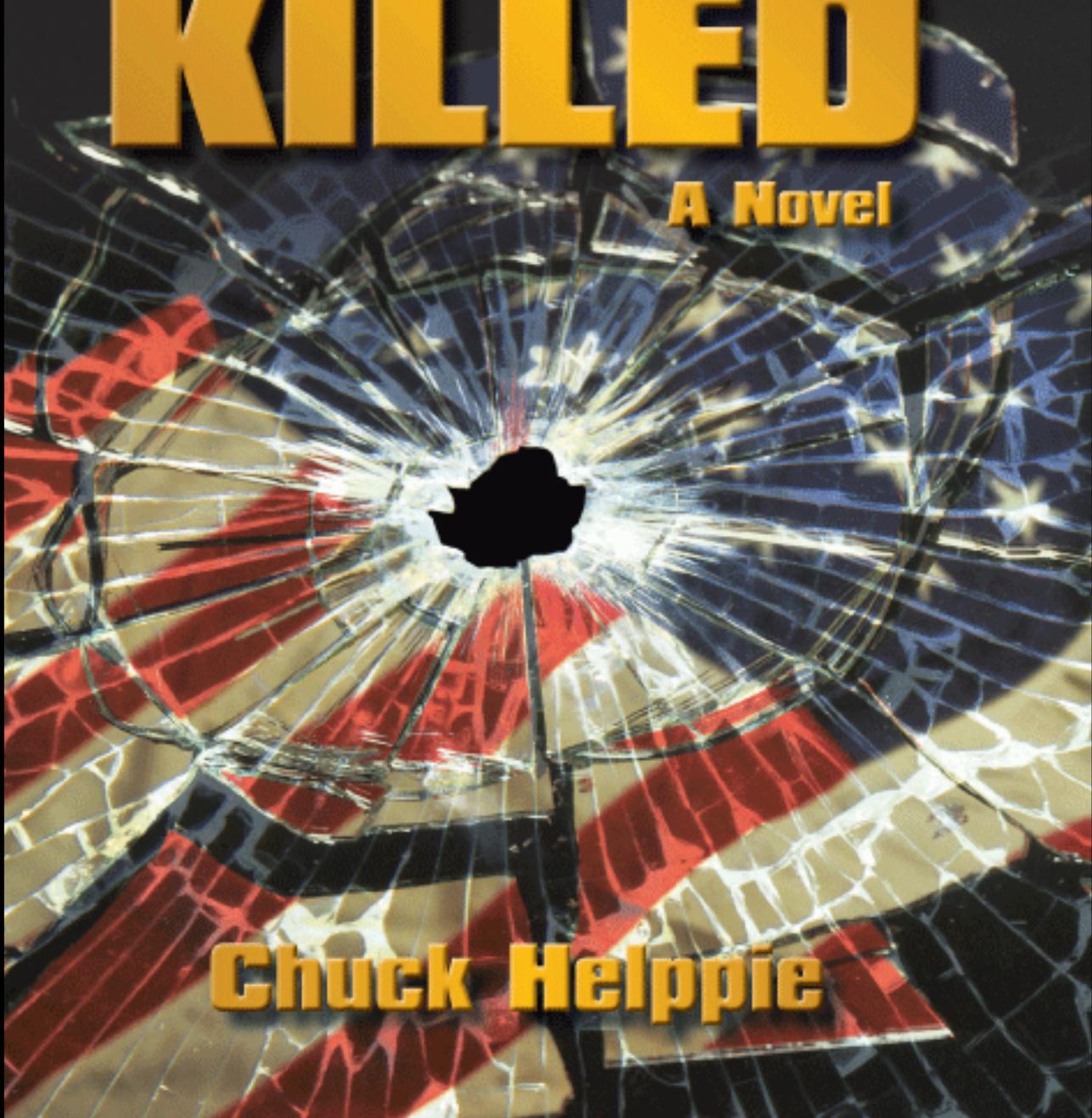


KENNEDY MUST BE KILLED

A Novel

Chuck Helppie

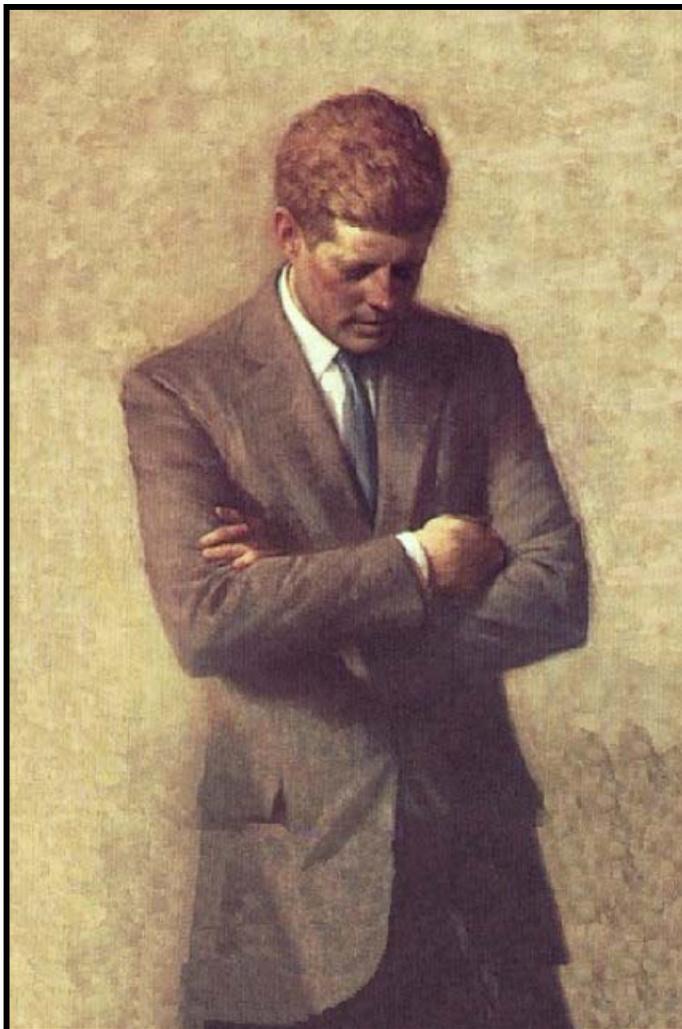


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“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

— George Santanya



John F. Kennedy was headed down a path to failure the moment his family stole the 1960 presidential election.

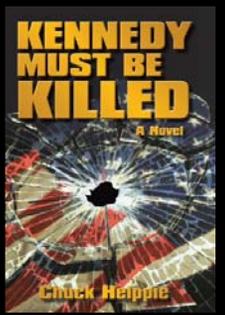
Patrick McCarthy knew that JFK was the wrong man in the wrong place at the wrong time. He had witnessed years of poor judgment and appalling bad behavior by Jack and his family, and it both concerned and sickened him. Cold War tensions were overheating, and he knew Jack Kennedy couldn't possibly stand up under its pressures. He wasn't alone in those thoughts. The Kennedys had made many enemies over the years and the political power struggle that had been long brewing was now coming to a head.

When JFK's numerous foreign policy blunders took the nation to the very brink of nuclear war, and his meddling in civil rights inflamed racial hatreds in the South, a shadowy group of powerful men known as the Patriots decide it is time to act. Kennedy must be stopped before his next mistake resulted in the deaths of millions of innocent Americans. On November 22, 1963, a cruel twist of fate finds Patrick McCarthy concealed on a grassy knoll in Dealey Plaza, cradling a sniper's rifle and waiting patiently for the presidential motorcade to pass by.

Spanning the period from 1946-1978, **KENNEDY MUST BE KILLED** is a meticulously researched novel featuring a wide ranging cast of historical characters, including Jack and Jackie Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Dwight Eisenhower, Allen Dulles, Alger Hiss, Joseph McCarthy, Nikita Khrushchev, J. Edgar Hoover, Marilyn Monroe, Frank Sinatra, and Sam Giancana.

The novel explores the social and cultural underpinnings that lead to the assassination of the president—the ever-advancing threat of Communism, the growing power of the CIA, the heated tumult of the civil rights movement, the clandestine influence of the Mafia, and the escalation of the Cold War through the numerous national security blunders of the Kennedy administration, as well as the reckless personal behavior of JFK himself.

Helppie has crafted a fact based story of betrayal and hubris so plausible that the reader is left only to wonder: Could it really have happened that way?



KENNEDY MUST BE KILLED

A Novel

A 47 Year Old Story is about to change for the final time...

On November 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was shot and killed in Dallas, Texas. Less than 90 minutes later Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested and charged with the murder of the President. Lee Harvey Oswald vehemently proclaimed his innocence (claiming I'm just a patsy). Forty-eight hours later while in police custody Oswald was silenced forever.

On September 24, 1964, the United States Government officially declared President John F. Kennedy was killed by a lone gunman. The case was officially closed. The investigation into President Kennedy's murder was over.

On March 29 1979, the United States Government changed its position. Over fifteen years after the tragedy that shook the nation, the government declared President John F. Kennedy was probably killed as the result of the conspiracy. A second gunman was probably involved; however, no conspirators were identified and no second gunman was ever named.



The gunman on the grassy knoll is now ready to tell his story...



As a young CIA officer, Patrick McCarthy witnesses first-hand JFK's political immaturity and personal recklessness. When Kennedy is elected in 1960, Patrick fears that Kennedy is unprepared to lead the nation in the height of the Cold War. After the near catastrophic events of the Cuban Missile Crisis, The Patriots, a shadowy group of powerful men, decide to take action before Kennedy's next political blunder destroys the country. Patrick's devotion to protecting his country ensnares him in the conspiracy to assassinate the president.

After the assassination, Patrick assists in orchestrating the Warren Commission cover-up. He realizes too late that he has been duped by those he trusted. Years later, the House Select Committee on Assassinations reopens the investigation and subpoenas Patrick to testify. Patrick grapples with the decision to reveal the truth—a truth which will re-write American history and destroy the reputations and fortunes of some of America's most powerful men.

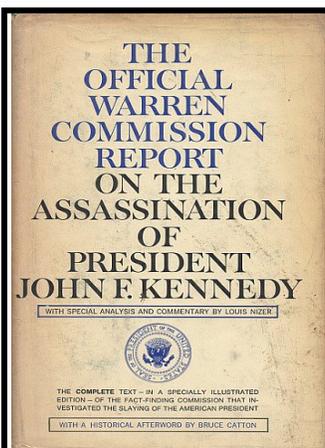
KENNEDY MUST BE KILLED chronicles the life of Patrick McCarthy from the time he arrives in postwar Washington D.C. as an idealistic, patriotic young man to that fateful day on the grassy knoll when he destroys the heart of the nation. It is a story about one man's love for his country, love for his wife and family, and an act of betrayal that causes him to lose everything that he holds dear.

www.kennedymustbekilled.com

Contents:

<i>Book Prologue</i>	2
<i>Photo Gallery</i>	3
<i>Author Bio</i>	4-5
<i>JFK: A Contrarian View</i>	6-9
<i>Historical Backdrop</i>	9-11
<i>Book Group Discussion</i>	12-13
<i>Bibliography</i>	14-25

- Public curiosity and interest in the assassination remains strong to this day. A 2003 Gallup Poll reported 81% of all Americans (240 million out of 300 million) DO NOT believe Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin of President John F. Kennedy. More than 75% of Americans believe the United States government covered up the evidence of the conspiracy.
- Currently, over 400,000 blogs theorize and daily debate the details of the Kennedy assassination.
- Two million people visit Dealey Plaza every single year, and five million people have paid to visit The Sixth Floor Museum since it opened February 20, 1989 on President's Day



KENNEDY MUST BE KILLED



We descended into the horrified crowd, pretending to be just as shocked and alarmed.

It was how we had planned our escape.

It was hard, however, not to be too elated—our plan had worked.

President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was dead.



Prologue

I knew the moment I squeezed the trigger that something had gone wrong.



The recoil of the rifle didn't deliver the customary hard, crisp jolt to my shoulder. The sound was dirty and muffled. I immediately knew from all the hours I had spent practicing that something wasn't right.

A fraction of a second later, I saw what I had just felt.

Damn it.

He was still alive.

The voice in my radio earpiece screamed, "Green light! Green light!" Out of the lower left corner of my non-shooting eye, I could see the motion down on the curb. The open, black umbrella mechanically pumped up and down in our prearranged signal.



He was still alive.

Through my telescopic sight, I saw both of his hands turn into fists as his arms flew up to protect his throat—my bullet's errant trajectory apparently caught him in the Adam's apple. A range of emotions swept over his face—he didn't know what the hell had hit him. His survival instinct kicked into motion. He was having trouble breathing. He was alive for now, but he was doomed. I calmly and quickly racked another round into the bolt-action chamber of my rifle. I again reacquired my target through the precision gun-sight. The head of the man sitting in front briefly blocked my view when he turned toward the commotion in the backseat. In-

stantly, a fusillade of bullets from Lucien and Ruger cut down the momentary obstruction—flinging him into his wife's lap and out of my way.

I heard the anxious "Green light! Green light!" as I searched to place my target's face in my crosshairs.

I felt a reassuring pat on my shoulder by my spotter, who kept his eyes peeled for anyone who might have observed us. He undoubtedly felt time was running out, but for me, time was standing still. My target was still alive—I had a job to finish.

The first shot I squeezed off had to have been a misfire. It wasn't my aim; I knew that. The sabot must have had a bad powder charge or had been incorrectly loaded in its firing sleeve. I knew that such an error wouldn't occur again—the second bullet in my chamber was a full-charge cartridge without a sabot. I had meticulously used Lucien's jewelers saw to cut a small 'x' into the tip of all my bullets. That tiny 'x' would insure that the bullets would fragment immediately upon impact. The result would be a devastating wound.

It had to be. We were to kill him.

I watched through the optical precision of the expensive Zeiss gun-sight as the big 1961 Lincoln convertible parade limousine came to a halt directly in front of me. I brought my crosshairs to bear, centering upon his right eye in my sight. He was barely ninety feet away—so close that I felt I could reach out and touch him. I smiled to myself and thought: Jesus, he's no farther away than the first baseman would be if I were throwing a double-play ball from second base. Instead, I was delivering a bullet at over 2,000 feet per second at a distance of ninety feet. It would get there pretty damn fast and pretty damn hard.

I paused to study the familiar face in my sight. Fear had clearly taken hold of him. He knew he was helpless—sheer panic enveloped his face. I had prepared myself for any possible equipment failure or operational disruption—but I had never thought about how I would feel as I completed my assigned task. "Green light! Green light!" The voice in my earpiece persistently chanted. That was fine—it was his job to call out as long as our man was still alive. It was an annoying reminder of my team's combined failure up to this point.

Roscoe's breath panted in my ear. "Come on, Patrick. You can do it." His voice rose at the end with coiled tension. The crowd below had begun to panic, but I was completely at ease.

His eyes wildly swept his surroundings; then, they locked onto mine through the telescopic gun-sight. I felt my adrenaline surge. Experienced shooters had warned me that seeing the eyes of my victim would shock the hell out of me. I'd never shot a man before.

I knew that he couldn't see my eyes, but I sure couldn't miss his. His eyes frantically searched for answers.

"Goodbye, Jack!" I whispered, squeezing the trigger gently a second time. This time the rifle's recoil felt crisp and firm as it kicked back into my braced right shoulder. I saw my bullet's impact instantly. I was so close to where he sat—upright, wounded, vulnerable, and frozen in shock.

The full force of my shot took off the top of his head. I saw it explode in a pink cloud of blood, brain matter, scalp, vaporized skull bone, and gristle. There was no question about it. He was dead now.

The voice in my earpiece shouted, "Red Light! Red Light! Red Light! Red Light!" I tore the annoyance out of my ear. The umbrella man on the sidewalk signaled that the President was dead. Our ambush had worked as planned. I withdrew the rifle from the top of the slats of the white picket fencing and handed it to my spotter, Roscoe. He threw it into the open trunk of the sedan parked directly behind me. I saw Jackie desperately try to crawl across the Lincoln's broad trunk only to be shoved back into her seat by a Secret Service agent who threw himself on top of her to protect her as he was trained to do. It hadn't registered with me that she had been sitting next to Jack the entire time.

I solemnly watched the big Presidential limousine accelerate out of Dealey Plaza—its wounded occupants slumped in their seats. I turned away as the rest of the presidential motorcade raced underneath the triple underpass in a panicked pursuit of the President's car. Roscoe adjusted his Dallas police uniform and drew his service revolver out of his holster. I pulled my fake Secret Service credentials out of my pocket and held them in my clenched fist, ready for display.

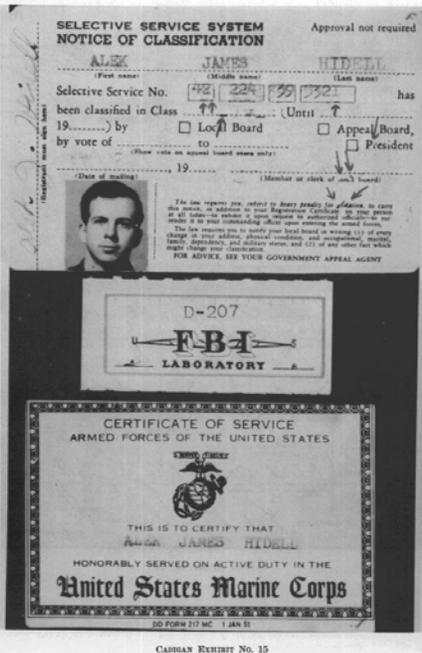
We descended into the horrified crowd, pretending to be just as shocked and alarmed.

It was how we had planned our escape.

It was hard, however, not to be too elated—our plan had worked. President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was dead.



Two hours after President John Kennedy was shot in Dallas on November 22, 1963, Vice President Lyndon Baines Johnson was sworn in as 36th President of the United States. Johnson took the Oath of Office aboard Air Force One while still in Dallas. He was accompanied by Kennedy's young widow, Jacqueline, and by his wife, Lady Bird Johnson. Above photos are from the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum National Archives and Records Administration—Cecil Stoughton's photos. Note in the center picture, Lady Bird Johnson's smiling face as well as the general mood just two short hours after the national tragedy. Note the winking eye of Congressman Albert Thomas in the picture on the right.



The Warren Commission determined that in March 1963, Oswald (using the name Alek J. Hidell) purchased a rifle and handgun that was later linked to the events of November 22, 1963.

Rifle: 6.5x52mm Mannlicher-Carcano M91/38 bolt-action rifle Serial number C2766 Western Cartridge 160 grain ammunition Slide-mounted Ordinance Optics 4 x 18 scope

This photo, which shows Oswald with a rifle, handgun, and leftist newspapers was taken on March 31, 1963 by his wife, Marina. The Warren Commission tagged the photo as exhibit 133-A. Since Oswald's death, there have been questions on the photo's authenticity. The House Select Committee on Assassinations in the 1970s concluded that the photo was real, although some still refuse to accept this verdict.



WANTED FOR TREASON

- THIS MAN is wanted for treasonous activities against the United States:
1. Betraying the Constitution (which he swore to uphold).
 2. He is turning the sovereignty of the U.S. over to the communist controlled United Nations.
 3. He is betraying our friends (Cuba, Katanga, Portugal) and his friends (our enemies Russia, Yugoslavia, Poland).
 4. He has been WRONG on innumerable issues affecting the security of the U.S. (United Nations, Berlin wall, Alaska removal, Cuba, Wheat deals, Test Ban Treaty, etc.)
 5. He has been lax in enforcing Communist Registration laws.
 6. He has given support and encouragement to the Communist inspired racial riots.
 7. He has illegally invaded a sovereign State with federal troops.
 8. He has consistently supported Anti-Christians in Federal office.
 9. Upholds the Supreme Court in its Anti-Christian rulings.
 10. Aides and knowers: Communists abound in Federal offices.
 11. He has been caught in factitious LIES to the American people (including personal ones like his previous marriage and divorce).

The FBI and the Dallas police very carefully investigated the source of the "wanted for treason" handbills which began appearing on the Dallas streets 1 to 2 days before Kennedy's arrival. Their investigation determined that it was the work of some right-wing Kennedy-haters who had no connection with Oswald. However, the handbills do serve to give some indication of the attitude that prevailed, at least among fanatics, in Dallas at the time of the assassination.



"I would like to know what really happened in front of the old Texas School Book Depository. I'd really like to know."

— Gary Mack, curator of The Sixth Floor Museum, Dallas, Texas

Author Bio



Chuck's interest in the Kennedys began when his father worked for Bobby Kennedy in the Justice Department in the early 1960's, and he was able to attend both JFK's inauguration and his funeral. He currently lives in an undisclosed location outside of Ann Arbor, Michigan with his wife Vali and his dog Lacey.

"Chuck Helppie is the Dan Brown of the Kennedy assassination."

- K.T. Shipley, former Time-Warner executive



A 'Thank You' note from Bobby Kennedy, sent to my father in appreciation for some homemade chocolate chip cookies my mother baked for a Justice Department Christmas party.

Growing Up in Arlington

My father worked for Bobby Kennedy as an economist in the Anti-trust Division of the Justice Department from 1960-1965. I grew up in Arlington, Virginia about a mile from the Pentagon and Arlington National Cemetery. I was fortunate to be able to attend President John F. Kennedy's inauguration. I stood with my mother in the bitter cold on the lawn of Capitol Hill to hear JFK's famous inaugural address, and later stood along Pennsylvania Avenue to see the inaugural parade pass the presidential reviewing stand.

Just about all of my neighbors and my classmates' parents worked for the military or the government. When we played "war" in our neighborhood, we didn't always play with plastic guns and rifles. Many of my friends also brought out real World War II flame throwers, bazookas, German Luger pistols, and other war souvenirs their fathers had in the house.

I had one classmate whose father spent a year in Antarctica. I remember being fascinated by home movies and pictures of my friend's

father and his returning buddies sunbathing on the deck of the naval vessel taking them home. The most amazing thing was that they were in their swimsuits surrounded by naval personnel bundled up in cold weather gear. When we asked him how cold it was, he said it was about +20 degrees, but they had spent a year getting used to temperatures of -50 degrees. "It felt warm to us," he marveled.

I had another classmate whose father worked for the CIA. He told me one day his father was in Pakistan on a "top secret mission" and would be gone for about a year. So much for operational secrecy! (This is a reason I've always doubted Valerie Plame's story about how she worked for the CIA and nobody knew it. In Washington, D.C., everyone knows what everyone else is doing. The most powerful currency in D.C. is knowledge and gossip.)

Growing up in Arlington with my family at that time was a unique experience and a special time in history. The Mercury Seven astronauts all lived in Arlington at that

time. John Glenn lived a short distance away, and his house was surrounded by news crews during and after his brief orbit of the earth.

I was supposed to attend a lecture by Jacques Costeau at the National Geographic Society on the evening of November 22, 1963. After the news of the president's assassination, official Washington slowly began to shut down and the lecture was cancelled.

I was standing in the crowd along the cortege route in D.C. on November 24, 1963 when someone in the crowd shouted: "Oswald's been shot!" The somber mood of the crowd quickly turned to anger as someone else screamed out in frustration, "Now we'll never know what really happened!" I silently agreed with him. The next day, we could hear the twenty-one gun salute at Arlington from the front lawn of our house.

Each and every time I crossed the Memorial Bridge over the Potomac River from D.C. to Arlington, I looked for the glow from the eternal flame.



General Lyman Lemnitzer

My brother's best friend was Billy Lemnitzer. Billy's father was known to me as Colonel Lemnitzer, and Billy's grandfather was General Lyman Lemnitzer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. General Lemnitzer was, in effect, the second most powerful man in the United States military. Only the commander in chief held a higher rank. Bruce tells a great story about how Billy brought his grandfather to "show-and-tell" at Kate Waller Barrett Elementary School in full military dress uniform. (Can you imagine that?) Because of the friendship between our families, my dad was occasionally invited to play poker with the Lemnitzers and other neighborhood men (mostly high-ranking Pentagon officers). Dad told me it never made him feel particularly safe about our nation's security when he could bluff the generals out of the poker pot with a pair of twos.



Richard M. Nixon

One of the scenes in my story involves former Vice President Richard M. Nixon in the immediate aftermath of the inauguration of John F. Kennedy as president. This story has never been reported until now.

My father was an economist in the Antitrust Division of the Justice Department. His office was located in the Securities and Exchange Building near the Capitol. Dad came home from work and told our family about his encounter with the former vice president earlier that day.

He said he had arrived at work that morning and the entire building was buzzing with the gossip that Nixon was in a temporary office in the basement of their building. He said everyone was looking for various excuses to go downstairs and see the former presidential candidate in the flesh, and he decided to yield to his curiosity too.

He made his way to Nixon's basement office and found a shocking sight. He said he saw Nixon standing knee-deep in papers slung wall to wall. The former V.P. had a couple of secretaries who were trying to sort through the mess, but Dad said Nixon looked truly miserable. When one of the secretaries made eye contact with my father, he asked what was going

on and got an unexpected answer. "The Kennedys did this," she replied. She went on to explain, "We had carefully sorted, collated, boxed, and labeled all of Vice President Nixon's papers after the election in preparation for the change of administrations. It's historical protocol for the possessions of the old administration to be moved out of their offices during the swearing-in ceremony to allow the new administration to move in. The V.P.'s papers were picked up by the movers and brought over here to these temporary offices to be held until they were to be shipped to their final destination. However, the Kennedys gave orders to the movers to open all of Vice President Nixon's boxes and to dump the contents on the floor. It was simply a terribly mean and spiteful thing to do, as well as completely unnecessary."

Even though my father was a confirmed Nixon hater from way back, he said he actually felt sorry for Nixon, seeing him standing forlornly in the midst of all of the chaos of his personal files.

This story was my first inkling into the cruel temperament of JFK and RFK. Even I thought it was a childish and needlessly heartless prank on their part.

Cliff Carter

I personally knew Cliff Carter, President Lyndon Baines Johnson's right-hand man. My brother played catcher on the same Optimist baseball team in Arlington as Cliff's son, Lyndon Carter (who also happened to be LBJ's godson). I'll never forget the championship game against Arlington Motors when star pitcher Lyndon Carter ran out of allowable innings and had to be removed from the game. He was replaced by my brother, Bruce.

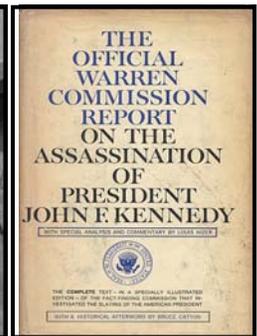
While Bruce was warming up, I

became so nervous I had to slip out of my seat in the bleachers. I found refuge underneath the stands where I tried to calm my nerves. Imagine my surprise when I was joined by Mr. Carter, who proceeded to chain-smoke one cigarette right after another. "I just can't watch — I'm too nervous!" he confessed.

I thought it was more than strange that a Little League baseball game would make a man nervous who also gave advice to the most powerful man in the United States. I never forgot it, either.

Dr. Elmer Lodmell

My great-aunt Lyla was married to Uncle Lodi, who was one of the physicians who attended to President Dwight D. Eisenhower after the president's heart attack in 1955. I was always fascinated by, and proud of the fact, that my uncle had served the president. I never missed a chance to ask him about Eisenhower every time we got together. He was the first person I had ever met that personally knew a president..



David Belin (Warren Commission Assistant Counsel)

Before he passed away in 1999, I had an opportunity to hear David Belin lecture at the University of Michigan. His topic was the Warren Commission and its findings.

I'll admit I wasn't surprised by Belin's spirited defense of this flawed commission, but I was stunned by one admission he made. Belin revealed how the keystone of the entire Warren Commission Report was conceived. The "single bullet theory" (later popularized as the "Magic Bullet Theory") was the supposition that one bullet hit President Kennedy in the back, exited his throat, hit Governor Connally in the back, shattered a rib when it exploded through his chest, smashed into (and

broke) the governor's wrist, and wounded the governor's leg. The bullet was considered a "magic" bullet because it caused at least six wounds and yet emerged almost unscathed when it was found later on President Kennedy's discarded hospital gurney. Everyone that has studied the Warren Commission's findings is familiar with the story. What we're not familiar with is the story behind the theory. Belin reported that the Commission had a tough time reconciling the reported shots, the various wounds, and the timeclock of the Zapruder film. The film showed the sequence of injuries could only have occurred within a certain and short period of time if only one gunman was

involved. He admitted that it appeared more than one gunman might have been responsible, which was anathema to their stated goal. Belin then told the assembled audience that the solution to their problem came to him one night in a dream. He stated he dreamed the wounds to the president and the governor were the result of a single shot. He said he rushed to the commission the next day to tell Arlen Specter what he had conceived while slumbering. Specter immediately recognized the importance of Belin's achievement and proceeded to build the commission's findings around it. David Belin's dream became the foundation for the Report's scientific findings.

Intrigued, I went backstage after the lecture to ask Belin a follow-up question. I was intrigued because my professional background is in financial services, and David Belin's curriculum vitae stated his area of expertise was tax law and estate planning. (He had authored a few books on the subject.) I told him I was interested in his criminal law background. "Did you have experience in criminal law or forensic science prior to being appointed as an assistant counsel to the Warren Commission?" I asked. He replied, "No, I didn't."

Ponder this: The single bullet theory was literally dreamed up by a tax attorney.

KENNEDY MUST BE KILLED

"What is needed is a meta-analysis of the clandestine social, political, military, and global forces at work at mid-century as they converged upon Dealey Plaza. If you can understand the state of the world, America, and the South as it truly was on November 21, 1963, then the events of November 22 flow inevitably from there, falling into place as neatly as the pieces of a puzzle." — Gaeton Fonzi, former investigator for the House Select Committee on Assassinations

JFK: A Contrarian View

"As America passes the 47th anniversary of the death of President John F. Kennedy, the research community has made little progress in determining the true motive behind the assassination. The known facts do not, and never have, supported the premise that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin. However, the meticulously collected data has been intellectually analyzed in a manner that has left America either perplexed or dissatisfied with all these other conclusions. Perhaps it's time to consider another motive altogether if we ever hope to understand this national tragedy."

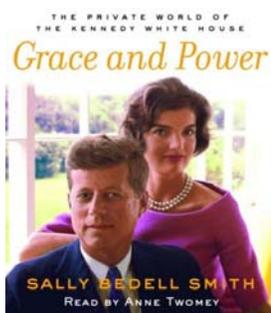
THE RESEARCHER'S TASK:

In the "Acknowledgements" section of her book, "Grace and Power—The Private World of the Kennedy White House," author Sally Bedell Smith writes:

"Biographers are accustomed to sifting and cross-checking facts, but writing about Jack and Jackie Kennedy also requires separating fact from myth — what might be called the Camelot variations. Whether in hagiographies or attack biographies, the Kennedys are often unrecognizable. Researching and writing this book was like restoring an old photograph: filling in the missing pieces, sharpening the blurred lines, removing the discolorations."

"...the Kennedys are often unrecognizable."

How profound.



During years of research into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, one constant is undeniable:

Every single researcher has approached the subject of motive from the biased supposition that John F. Kennedy was a great president.

In searching for a motive, most research begins with the basic premise:

- What kind of man (or men) would want to kill a great man like John F. Kennedy?
- What could they achieve by doing so?
- What would they gain?

Having worked for over thirty years in the financial services industry, I have learned how to mine for important data, how to filter data, and how to analyze data. I was taught how to think critically without emotional bias, and how to consider a contrarian approach in the analysis of information. A financial advisor who tends to have an opinion of market conditions at variance with most others is a contrarian. A contrarian often expresses a contradictory viewpoint and may disdain the majority persuasion. Contrarians often consider "what if?" when determining whether or not to denounce prevailing market trends; for instance, they may buy when most investors are selling or systematically invest against the mainstream. A contrarian approach, colloquially put, means "to go against the flow" or "to think outside the box."

Once I began to use a contrarian approach in analyzing the JFK assassination, a clear motive behind the assassination began to emerge.

The incredibly complex confluence of sequential circumstances involving a seemingly unrelated myriad of components finally began to make sense when examined *in toto*.

THE NEXUS

These extraneous threads all converged in Dallas on November 22, 1963: Joseph P. Kennedy

The roots of the JFK assassination may have begun to take form as early as the 1920's and 1930's with the rise to power of JFK's father, Joseph P. Kennedy.

- Joseph Kennedy was a noted and vocal supporter of Neville Chamberlain and his policies of appeasement toward Adolph Hitler.
- By November 1940, Ambassador Kennedy was the highest-ranking Nazi sympathizer in the United States government. Consider the outrage that must have ensued behind closed doors when, fifteen short years after the end of World War II, Ambassador Kennedy's son was elected president in the midst of the Cold War. That singular event alone would have engendered monumental distrust of Kennedy within the Pentagon and the hierarchy of the American military.

Memory of Pearl Harbor

Place that in historical context. The United States was still reeling psychologically from the impact of the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. As Cold War tensions with the Soviet Union began to grow, the United States military was singularly vigilant about insuring that another sneak attack would never happen again.

- The advent of the nuclear age made it imperative that America remain alert. Our Strategic Air Command was established as an important part of that protection.
- Few people today remember that the United States keep rotating squadrons of military aircraft aloft twenty-four hours

a day seven days a week as a deterrent to a Soviet sneak attack.

- Those SAC bombers all carried nuclear bombs and were sent into the skies to allow the United States to be able to carry out an effective counterattack against the USSR if it were ever necessary. (This was years prior to the creation of our nuclear submarine deterrence.)

PT-109

The Pentagon Joint Chiefs were all well aware that their new commander in chief was a manufactured war hero. JFK was almost court-martialed over the PT-109 incident and only narrowly avoided prosecution in a military tribunal. JFK was confronted with immediate skepticism by the military—Kennedy lacked the experience and judgment to be supreme commander of the armed forces.



Eisenhower's Legacy

Almost nothing young Jack Kennedy had accomplished in life engendered confidence in either his abilities or his judgment.

- Eisenhower had served as the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe and had planned and directed the D-Day invasion of Nazi-held Europe.
- Kennedy, on the other hand, had gone to bed with a Nazi spy while serving in Naval Intelligence in Washington, and then had his PT boat run over and sunk by a Japanese destroyer without a single shot being fired. President Eisenhower had carefully constructed a chain of command



to insure the security of the nation. One of JFK's first acts upon assuming office was to dismantle the infrastructure of the Eisenhower White House. Instead of allowing his subordinates to analyze and filter information before passing it up to the White House, Kennedy announced he intended to micromanage all decisions by instituting a wheeled command, where he would sit at the hub and all information would be brought to his desk for his consideration. The military knew Kennedy's command structure was hopelessly inept, confusing, and unworkable. The young president quickly proved to the Pentagon leaders that he wasn't up to the challenges presented by this new analytical structure.

JFK's Incompetence

JFK's competence was called into question with three major failures in leadership.

- The failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion can be directly traced by historians to Kennedy's considerable meddling in the planning, dithering in the decision-making, and other strategic and management blunders.
- Kennedy's miserable failure in the delicate negotiations at the Vienna Summit in June, 1961. The president's inability to stand up to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev at the summit proved to Khrushchev and the world that Kennedy was weak and inexperienced in the matter of foreign policy. Upon the summit's conclusion, JFK freely admitted, "He beat the hell out of me." Khrushchev, however, left Vienna confident Kennedy was too weak to oppose the USSR.
- Khrushchev's assessment of Kennedy's ineptitude led directly to the Berlin Wall Crisis later in 1961 and then the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. [Khrushchev's son later wrote in his memoirs that his father had revealed he began construction of the Berlin Wall to test Kennedy's resolve, and that he would have stopped construction if JFK had ever objected. He told his son he was shocked and surprised JFK never objected and never directly told him to stop.]

JFK's Adultery

To the American public, Kennedy presented the image of a family man; in private, he had liaisons with an implausible number of famous and not so famous women. Though many in Washington, New



York, Boston, and Hollywood had knowledge of his serial adultery, his philandering was kept "behind closed doors" by those in power. The media was also guilty of collaborating to keep the topic of Kennedy's extramarital affairs a secret.

J. Edgar Hoover

Hoover played the role of America's top lawman and he was perceived by most Americans to be the second most powerful man in the United States after the president. People today do not know or do not remember how powerful FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover was in the 1940's, 1950's, and 1960's. However, even a cursory study of his writings reveals the conflict Hoover would have had with the Kennedys.



Hoover authored numerous articles about his theories on law and order, and many of those viewpoints involved discussions of morality. For example, Hoover proclaimed that any man who could not control his sexual urges was the worst kind of degenerate:

- "Any man who lacks sexual discipline displays to all a basic sign of weakness in character."
- "A leader of men must especially be a moral man. Without a foundation in morality, that leader cannot lead."
- "A man whose mind is clouded with sexual thoughts cannot be expected to think clearly or rationally in times of crisis."

Hoover would have been appalled with JFK's personal life. Regardless, Hoover wasn't the only person in America in 1963 who would have thought that way. The American public in 1963 would have undoubtedly been even more outraged than the 2009 public response to Tiger Woods' peccadilloes had they known about JFK's reckless sexual activities.

The scores of women who had a private audience with the president were well documented. But even more worrisome was the frightening implication that some of his illicit relationships had on national security.

Mary Pinchot Meyer, Marijuana, and LSD

Historians focus on Judith Campbell Exner and her connections to mob boss Sam Giancana, but JFK's affair with Mary Pinchot Meyer was far more dangerously reckless and has been all but ignored.

Mary was a divorcee (her ex-husband, Cord Meyer, was a high-ranking officer at the CIA) who led an adventurous life involving indiscriminate sex and drugs.



- She was a friend and acolyte of Timothy Leary, the high priest of psychedelic drugs. Meyer

bragged of enticing JFK to try both marijuana and LSD with her while in the White House.

- It should be noted that LSD was not illegal in the U.S. at that time and that its use to facilitate psychotherapy and artistic endeavors was not uncommon in some of Meyer's social circles.
- She was murdered October 12, 1964 and her murder remains unsolved to this day.



- Kennedy's illicit use of amphetamines and other drugs was also privately well known in many circles around Washington, but the introduction of LSD might have taken concerns to new levels of anxiety.

- Did JFK abuse drugs such as LSD and marijuana on a regular basis? No tangible evidence exists that he did. However, the mere fact that such rumors existed might have provoked grave concerns over national security issues.

There can be no doubt that a commander in chief who experimented with illicit drugs was a danger to his country in many ways. For example:

- What if the Soviet Union decided to launch an attack on the United States while JFK was either stoned on pot or tripping on LSD? Would he be capable of issuing orders to launch our nuclear response?
- Could drug-induced paranoia impair JFK's decision making process? What if JFK suddenly decided to initiate a launch command on his own in the absence of evidence of a Soviet threat?
- Finally, if he did take LSD along with Mary Pinchot Meyer, what would happen if the Soviets were able to find out when he was taking it? Could that information possibly be used to launch a sneak attack against the United States?



KENNEDY MUST BE KILLED

- Men in power would have undoubtedly been enraged by JFK's reckless personal behavior.
- Such recklessness might very well have left the United States temporarily defenseless against a surprise Soviet attack.
- That helplessness would certainly never have been tolerated by generals with World War II experience such as Curtis LeMay and Lyman Lemnitzer, or any other senior Pentagon officer.

Was the military unhappy with the murder of President John F. Kennedy? Draw your own conclusions, but there are numerous anecdotal reports of General LeMay watching the entire JFK autopsy while savoring a cigar.

The CIA and Regime Change

The CIA had a growing history of experience in regime change around the world. Here are a select few:

- The 1953 overthrow of Iran
- The 1954 overthrow of Guatemala
- The 1955 assassination of the president of Panama
- The assassinations of Patrice Lumumba (The Congo) - January 17, 1961
- The assassination of General Rafael Trujillo (Dominican Republic) —May 30, 1961
- The assassination of Ngo Dinh Diem (South Vietnam) — November 1, 1963
- Numerous unsuccessful planned attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro (Cuba)

Was regime change in Washington D.C. beyond the CIA's ability? Clearly not.

An additional element of motive might have been JFK's dismissal of the entire top command structure of the CIA in 1961 in the aftermath of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion.

Civil Rights and Social Upheaval

This social context cannot be ignored, either. The South was in the midst of a radical upheaval over the push for civil rights for the Negroes by the Kennedys, who were viewed as "damned Yankees" (and worse).

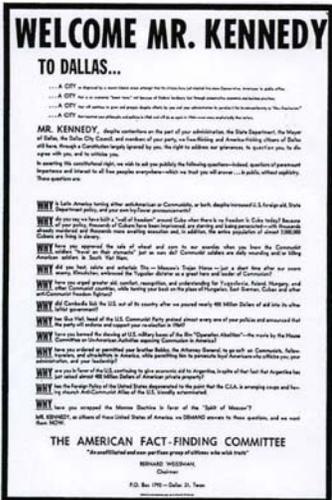


Texas Businessmen

Powerful businessmen in Texas were angry at the Kennedy administration.

- Those same Texas businessmen clearly understood that any Soviet missiles launched from Cuba could easily strike Dallas, Houston, and Austin.
- They feared JFK's next foreign policy blunder could result in millions of Americans (and Texans) being killed, and a comfortable way of life destroyed for all.
- They controlled almost every aspect of Texas law and politics; they possessed the means to remove this threat.

"Organized crime [was] heavily involved in Texas politics (in the 1950's and 1960's)" —Madeleine Brown, mistress to LBJ.



LBJ's Legal Problems

Vice President Lyndon Johnson had numerous and troublesome legal problems.

- Johnson was intimately linked to the criminal actions of both Billie Sol Estes and Bobby Baker, both of whom were on trial in 1963 for their misdeeds. Johnson

knew his only chance to stay out of prison was to become president, and his close aides and friends in Texas knew it too.

- It's documented that the second telephone call new President Johnson made from Air Force One at 2 p.m. on November 22, 1963 was to Don Reynolds to inquire about whether Bobby Baker's court testimony that day had explicitly tied LBJ to Baker's illegal indiscretions.



JFK had already indicated he was planning to drop LBJ from the ticket in 1964—and rumors were that RFK would be his replacement as vice president. To the concern of many, a potential Kennedy dynasty was seen in the making.

LBJ had massive character issues and flaws, especially concerning ethics. After working in the Johnson White House, Secret Service agent Richard Roth declared: "If Johnson weren't president, he'd be in an insane asylum."

Mannlicher-Carcano Rifle

A few years ago I was fortunate to be able to tour the Conspiracy Museum, located a few short blocks from Dealey Plaza. I had always made it a point to stop by whenever I was in Dallas on business, and I had always found the people at the museum to be interesting and well-informed on a variety of topics. On this particular occasion, one of the employees spent the afternoon guiding me around Dealey Plaza and various points of interest in Oak Cliff. Upon returning to the museum, I was asked if I wanted to hold an actual 6.5mm Mannlicher-Carcano rifle. Of course I did.

John took me downstairs to the basement archives, where they had a rifle with the same model number as the alleged Oswald rifle. After making sure the rifle wasn't

loaded, I was able to handle the rifle and look through the telescopic sight. I was stunned by what I saw. The optics of that cheap gunsight were on par with the same crappy optics as my hotel door's security peephole!

Since I was familiar with the Warren Commission recreations of the assassination, as well as many other filmed recreations, I had expected to see a crisp, clear image through that gunsight. What I got instead was a blurry, indistinct image that shifted clarity as my eye wavered. Now I understood why the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle was jokingly called 'The Humanitarian Rifle' by the Italian army. It earned that nickname because they couldn't kill anyone with it.

Why hadn't any researchers ever commented on this glaring problem? Compounding my consternation was the fact that the Warren Commission stated the gunsight on Oswald's rifle was broken and needed to be shimmed to hold it in place. If that gunsight was wobbling on November 22, 1963, it would have been impossible to acquire a moving target, let alone be able to hit it.

When I later interviewed Gary Mack, curator of the Sixth Floor Museum, Mr. Mack casually dismissed my observation by maintaining, "That shot was so easy, Oswald could have probably just looked over the top of the gunsight to shoot. He wouldn't have even needed to use it."

Oh, really? Former U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam sniper Craig Roberts said: "I could not have done it," after he saw the view from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository. He went on to say, "I analyzed the scene as a sniper...I looked at the engagement angles. It was entirely wrong...Three problems arose that would influence my shots. First, the target was moving away at a drastic angle to the right from the window, meaning that I would have to position my body to compete with the wall and a set of vertical water pipes...This would be extremely difficult for a right-handed shooter. Second, I would have to be ready to fire exactly when the target emerged past some tree branches that obscured the kill zone. Finally,



I would have to deal with two factors at the same time: the curve of the street, and the high-to-low angle formula — a law of physics Oswald would not have known." Gunnery Sergeant Carlos Hathcock, one of the most decorated combat snipers in United States military history, echoed Robert's sentiments. Hathcock earned 93 confirmed kills in Vietnam and went on to become the senior instructor for the U.S. Marine Corps Sniper Instruction School at Quantico, Virginia. He said, "Let me tell you what we did at Quantico...We reconstructed the whole thing: the angle, the range, the moving target, the time limit, the obstacles, everything. I don't know how many times we tried, but we couldn't duplicate what the Warren Commission said Oswald did. Now if I can't do it, how in the world could a guy who was a non-qual on the rifle range (and later only qualified 'marksman') do it?"

How indeed?

A Contrarian View—Right or Wrong?

"Power, war, violence, passion, betrayal—Shakespeare is universal in his understanding of the human condition." — Dame Judith Dench

The assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy is as compelling as any of Shakespeare's great tragedies. It is an archetype of the darkest elements of human nature—power, war, passion, violence, and betrayal.

Shakespearean tragedy exposes those dark impulses that slumber below life's smooth surface. Shakespeare masterfully crafts heroes who allow power and greed to overtake their lives, often leading to catastrophic betrayals. Shakespeare, a great psychologist, understood the dark side of power. Macbeth, Othello, Hamlet, and Julius Caesar each explore the psyche of powerful men.

- Is it possible for men in power to be jealous of other men? Macbeth murders his King for one reason only—vaulting ambition. Iago manipulates Othello for the sheer satisfaction of bringing down a powerful man.

- Do men conspire with others in order to achieve power? Shakespeare certainly thought so. He theorized about the morality of a preventive assassination in his play, Julius Caesar.
- How far will a man go to achieve the power to which he feels entitled? Certainly, Hamlet explores that dilemma when Claudius murders his own brother to take the throne of Denmark.

Shakespeare's plays hold relevance because they cast human nature in an honest light. Shakespeare not only delves into betrayal and hubris, but he also exposes the illusions that prevent man from seeing the reality of a situation.

In the year 2010, why do we assume our own leaders are not capable of similar emotions and human actions? Is it naiveté? Ignorance? Or hubris?

The horror of the assassination instantaneously began to cloud America's view of the late president. In one fell swoop, all of Kennedy's missteps and blunders were erased from the national psyche. Suddenly John F. Kennedy became a hero, a statesman of great proportion, who was cut down in his prime.

It's quite thought-provoking to examine President John F. Kennedy from a contrarian point of view.

- Suppose JFK was not a great man?
- What if he was not considered to be a great president on November 21, 1963?
- What if his reckless personal behavior (known to many, many people inside and outside Washington, D.C.) caused moral men to question his judgment?
- What if his numerous policy blunders caused powerful men to question his leadership abilities and judgment?

"What is history but a fable agreed upon?"

— Napoleon Bonaparte

What happens when an inexperienced young president's numerous policy blunders and reckless personal behavior collide with the reality of the Cold War and the paranoid fear of a nuclear Pearl Harbor?" — Chuck Helppie

HISTORICAL BACKDROP

No one has ever asked this question before, and it became the crux of my story.

My novel, **KENNEDY MUST BE KILLED**, is a fact-based story that explores the motives behind the assassination, as well as the historical and cultural environment of the United States leading up to that fateful day in Dallas.

I believe that there were four possible resolutions to the problems presented by the Kennedy presidency.

1. **Defeat JFK in the 1964 election?** He was still a fairly popular with the voters in late 1963, despite the blunders of his first one thousand days in office. There was a chance he would be re-elected. This option might not work.
2. **Embarrass JFK into resigning as the result of a scandal?** Certain people in Hollywood knew of JFK's and RFK's relationship with Marilyn Monroe, but the public at large didn't find out until decades later. The murder of Marilyn Monroe was perhaps an attempt to link the Kennedy brothers to Marilyn's death and thus force a crisis of confidence in which might force the Kennedys to step down. However, evidence exists that RFK managed to have other people sanitize the crime scene before police were called. This option did not work.
3. **Impeach him?** We saw what happened with both the Clinton impeachment and the threatened Nixon impeachment. A constitutional crisis could easily create confusion over who had launch authority in case of a nuclear attack by the Soviet Union. In other words, an impeachment would leave the United States vulnerable to the very attack everyone feared.

It would be too easy for the Soviet Union to exploit the confusion over who was really in charge of the nuclear launch codes. This option was too risky.

4. **Assassinate him?** Kill JFK and replace him with Vice President Lyndon Johnson so fast the Soviet Union wouldn't have time to launch a surprise attack. This is the solution that seemed to make the most sense out of the four possible options. (An added side benefit would be to save LBJ from prosecution over his known links to the financial scandals of Billy Sol Estes and Bobby Baker, two of LBJ's trusted aides. LBJ would avoid prosecution if he's president.) Option #4 probably made the most sense at the time.

Could this be the long-sought motive behind the assassination?

"He who controls the past controls the future; and he who controls the present, controls the past."

— George Orwell

"I've read practically every Kennedy assassination book out there to understand the horrible turning point, but I still don't know what really happened (and why)."

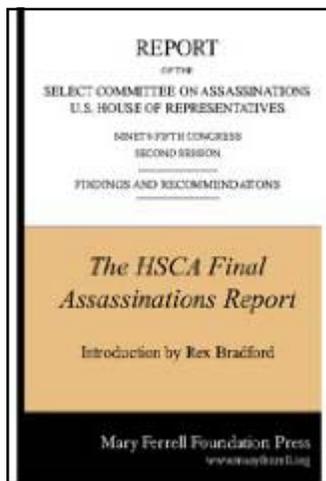
— Frustrated Blogger

Apparently, the two thousand or more non-fiction research books written since 1964 on the Kennedy assassination still haven't provided a satisfactory answer to the mystery of what really happened in Dallas, Texas on November 22, 1963. Most people understand various bits and pieces of the controversy over JFK's death, but they crave an explanation for the motive that doesn't require the suspension of both logic and belief. Many of the theories don't

KENNEDY MUST BE KILLED

make sense because they make the same intellectual mistakes the Warren Commission made. Many are either intellectually shallow or have incomplete evaluations of the nuances of the period.

- The mob killed Kennedy?
- Angry Cubans killed JFK?
- The military killed Kennedy to escalate the war in Vietnam?
- The CIA killed Kennedy to protect the "heroin trade" out of Southeast Asia?
- A lone gunman killed Kennedy to become famous?



"What is needed is a meta-analysis of the clandestine social, political, military, and global forces at work at mid-century as they converged upon Dealey Plaza. If you can understand the state of the world, America, and the South as it truly was on November 21, 1963, then the events of November 22 flow inevitably from there, falling into place as neatly as the pieces of a puzzle."

— Gaeton Fonzi, former investigator for the House Select Committee on Assassinations

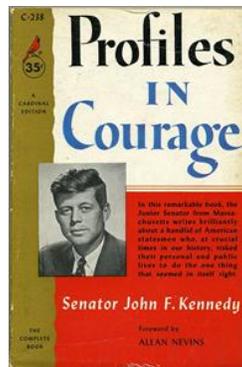


Gaeton Fonzi was exactly right. This quote instinctively guided my research, which opened up fascinating details and leads not previously researched or discovered. The origins of the assassination of President Kennedy can be traced back to events and strands of history as early as the 1920's and 1930's. These isolated events slowly built to a cruel and catastrophic collision - whose nexus was at 12:30 p.m. on November 22, 1963 in Dealey Plaza.

I believe the roots of the assassination are directly related to the actions of Joseph P. Kennedy, the president's father, in the decades preceding his son's presidency.

"Easy money, sudden fortunes, increasingly powerful political machines and blatant corruption transformed much of the nation..."

— John Fitzgerald Kennedy, "Profiles in Courage"



Joseph P. Kennedy was arguably the most detested businessman in the United States in the 1920's and 1930's. A well-known stock market manipulator and swindler, Old Joe Kennedy was also a bootlegger with ties to organized crime. Kennedy possessed political ambitions of his own, with an eye toward challenging Franklin D. Roosevelt for the presidency. In the late 1930's, FDR appointed Joseph Kennedy Ambassador to the Court of Saint James (ambassador to Great Britain). Kennedy quickly earned the enmity of Churchill and his supporters when he publicly declared his opinion the British



should surrender to Hitler. Kennedy's role as a prominent Nazi sympathizer became so politically toxic that FDR was finally forced to recall Kennedy as ambassador, and Joseph Kennedy resigned in disgrace. Joseph Kennedy's personal political fortunes were finished, but his political ambitions remained. He began to groom his sons for the White House. Fifteen years after the end of World War II, Joseph P. Kennedy succeeded in stealing a tainted 1960 presidential election for his son, John F. Kennedy. JFK was clearly the least qualified of the three men who wanted to be president in 1960. At the time, Vice President Richard Nixon and Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson were two of the most powerful men in D.C. while JFK was considered to be a back-bench playboy senator with an unimpressive legislative record. With his young son in the White House, Joseph Kennedy was now the power behind the president in the eyes of a generation of World War II veterans who hated him and everything he stood for.

"John Fitzgerald Kennedy was considered to be a lightweight in D.C. — the sheltered son of a wealthy right-wing bigot."

— Gore Vidal (Jackie Kennedy's stepbrother)

After the end of World War II, the victorious Allied Forces barely had time to celebrate their hard-fought victory before tensions with the



Soviet Union emerged and coalesced into the Cold War. However, the new Soviet threat added yet another dimension to the paranoia: atomic bombs. The next sneak attack against the United States could very well be a nuclear one. The United States had learned its lessons too well from the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor and our military and civilian leaders were determined to make sure it never happened again.

The Central Intelligence Agency proved its worth to President Eisenhower by demonstrating how easily a threat could be defused by the simple, expedient of regime change. Starting with the overthrow of Iran in 1953, the overthrow of Guatemala in 1954, and leading up to the planned overthrow of the Castro government in Cuba, the CIA worked hard to refine its techniques throughout the globe.

While serving as president from 1953-1961, former general Dwight D. Eisenhower worked closely with the Pentagon and the CIA to keep all foreign threats away from American shores. The American military felt comfortable with Eisenhower because of the rigid chain of command he implemented and kept in place while in office. However, all of that changed in 1961.

Confidence in JFK suffered from the very start. JFK quickly dismantled the Eisenhower chain of command in favor of a "wheeled command" in which JFK was the hub at the center and everyone else was a spoke in the wheel. The Pentagon instantly knew that it was a recipe for disaster when JFK meddled in, and ultimately ruined, the carefully planned invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. The young President then compounded his mistakes by blaming the fiasco on the CIA and then firing the entire top command structure of the Agency.

"Whether you like it or not, history is on our side. We will bury you."

— Nikita Khrushchev

Two months later, after alienating the Canadian Prime Minister, JFK traveled to a summit meeting in Vienna with Soviet Premier Nikita



Khrushchev. Kennedy arrived completely unprepared for what he encountered. Kennedy was bullied so relentlessly by Khrushchev that his aides



watched in absolute horror as he capitulated to the Soviet leader on virtually every major point of the conference. After meeting JFK face-to-face, Khrushchev left Vienna convinced he could easily push JFK around in the future. To prove it, Khrushchev initiated the Berlin Wall Crisis in late 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Kennedy confirmed Khrushchev's assessment of his weak character when JFK did nothing to oppose the construction of the Berlin Wall, and the president only defused the Cuban Missile Crisis by betraying the United States alliance with NATO in his own private and secret negotiations with Khrushchev, while deliberately excluding our country's experts from the State Department, the Pentagon, and the CIA.

Powerful men in the military, government, and business came to the conclusion that the inexperienced young president's next blunder could get millions of innocent Americans killed. JFK's civil rights blundering stirred up strong emotions in the South where the Kennedy brothers quickly became hated figures. Southern society was in an uproar over the social promises being made to the Negroes by the Kennedys. JFK simply had to be stopped before his reckless personal behavior (sexual recklessness and drug experimentation), political immaturity and bad policy judgments resulted in the destruction of America in a nuclear sneak attack from the Soviet Union.

"If the country had a young President, and he had a Bay of Pigs, there would be a certain

uneasiness. Maybe the military would do a little criticizing behind his back. Then, if there were another Bay of Pigs, the reaction of the country would be, 'Is he too young and inexperienced?' The military would almost feel that it was their patriotic obligation to stand ready to preserve the integrity of the nation...Then if there were a third Bay of Pigs—it could happen."

— John Fitzgerald Kennedy, even JFK himself understood the precarious position he was in.

Belated Warning to LBJ— Letter to LBJ

(LBJ Presidential Library Archives)

Author's note: This letter illustrates the predominate attitude toward President John F. Kennedy that prevailed in East Texas as of the weekend of November 22, 1963. This letter was published in an Esquire magazine column by Mark Warren titled: "On The Anniversary of Kennedy's Death, Extremism Lives On" (<http://www.esquire.com/features/kennedy-anniversary-112009>)

Mr. Warren reports he came across this letter in the stacks at the LBJ Presidential Library in Austin while doing research of his own. He identifies Bruce Alger as the "then-congressman from Dallas, and the only Republican in the Texas delegation." [F.Y.I. - Texas was a predominately Democrat state in 1963.]

Tyler, Texas

November 24, 1963

President Lyndon B. Johnson
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

In this time of mourning and appreciating how very busy you are, I still must write about existing conditions here in East Texas, even if you are too busy to read this, because I feel it is my duty to do so. I wanted to write President Kennedy's staff and try to get them to persuade him not to go to Dal-

las but unfortunately didn't do it out of fear of being a crank or busy-body. This time I will risk that appellation. I am frightened at conditions that prevail in East Texas.

Mr. President, the easy thing and what is desperately trying to be done [is] to convince a stunned nation and world that Mr. Kennedy's murder was the work of some deranged crackpot, and while the trigger was pulled by such a one, perhaps the atmosphere that made it inevitable was the hatred of the people (I don't mean every one of them but a big majority) who wanted Mr. Kennedy and anyone connected with him out of the White House. A week ago this might have sounded ridiculous but subsequent events lend it credence, I believe. There is a virus of disrespect and hate spreading here very rapidly. And unless one lives right here with it, day in and day out, it is unbelievable how quickly and subtly it infects reasonably intelligent persons. This is not too hard to understand only if one recognizes the unremitting, deep, bitter religious and racial prejudice existing today in this section of our land — I don't know if any of them are similarly infected in other sections, but I know personally of what I speak as regards East Texas. In fact, although nearly every one indignantly denies having any racial or religious prejudice to the point where he deceives even himself in this matter, after listening seriously to protestations of horror and shock one can almost hear a collective sigh in essence, "Too bad he had to die but after all a Catholic is no longer in the White House and this ought to set the 'niggers' back on their heels for awhile!" It is painful to some of us I know to give credence to such a condition so we blind ourselves that where religious and racial prejudice prevails, not just the killer but all are mentally confused. When this prejudice is played upon so adroitly and exploited actively (as in our locality) by such groups as The American Fact-Finding Committee and many more [of] that ilk, for instance the John Birchers, etc., it soon fans into a situation as exists here, many, many citizens ridden by a vicious hate which

inevitably erupts and expresses itself in violence — as in the case of Mr. Kennedy's murder in Dallas. A strong evidence of this was the recent demonstration of violence against Ambassador Adlai Stevenson in Dallas, and even more clearly by an article carried in the Dallas News (a 100% anti-Kennedy sheet) stating that Mr. Bruce Alger advised the citizens of Dallas there was absolutely no need to feel apologetic about this incident — everyone being free to express his opinion. He neglected to specify the degree of violence of such expression. And the citizens vote for Bruce Alger! So what can one expect? I just heard the flash about Oswald being shot and also the theory that this was caused by mass hysteria. That is here, all right, but I think rather there are certain groups and individuals who wish to insure Oswald's complete and continuing silence because, knowing the 'temper' of Dallas, I can't believe a known police character of Ruby's caliber would risk his neck through any feeling of patriotism or love for Mr. Kennedy — can you?

I don't know if anything can be done about the festering sore of prejudice and hatred on our social structure here, but I doubt if you can know its deadliness unless you are in constant, daily touch, and I thought it my duty to mention it, in case, even though you may consider I am an alarmist and am exaggerating. I only wish I were.

Respectfully,

Charlotte Essman





Book Group Discussion Questions

Though the story is a memoir, it is a story within a story — part is told chronologically in the past and part is told in the present. Patrick has reached a point in his life where he must make an important decision. He reviews his life, year by year, through re-reading his journal in an attempt to gain insight into his life.

The following topics and quotations from the book suggest questions for thought and discussion:

Historical Background

- In telling Patrick's story, the author also tells the story of postwar America. What insights can you make about American life and culture compared to life today? What are the basic values that govern the American psyche in each chapter? How do these values affect the actions, beliefs and decisions of the characters?
- The author opens the novel with the quote by George Santanya: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." What are the mistakes in America's past? Are we repeating the mistakes of the past today? The author ends each chapter with a quotation. Which quotations are most moving to you? Which quotations reflect your beliefs and philosophies?
- Patrick meets many men who have been important in helping to shape America's politics and foreign policies. The author has tried to remain true to the research about these men in crafting his story. (In fact, the author encourages readers to do further research on their own by supplying his extensive bibliography.) Which men were the most influential in shaping Patrick's beliefs? What

things were surprising to you about the historical personages in the novel?

Narration

The reader sees the world through Patrick's eyes. Like real people, first-person narrators are subject to errors in judgment. They may misinterpret the meaning of events, misunderstand other characters' motivations, or lack the self-insight necessary to understand their own motivations.

Patrick retells his story so that he can get closure and understand why his life has turned out so badly.

What are Patrick's limitations as a narrator and an interpreter of events?

- What are Patrick's core beliefs about the world and life at the end of 1950?
- Once Patrick begins to work for the CIA, his perspective about our government and the world begins to change. What experiences most influence Patrick's career path?
- Patrick begins his career as a patriotic young man but ends up as the gunman on the grassy knoll. What is his philosophy of life in each chapter, and how does his philosophy change as he grows older and more experienced?
- How does Patrick's voice as a narrator change as he travels from a world of idealism and naiveté to a darker world of experience and knowledge?

Literary Elements

- Patrick mentions hubris after helping to orchestrate regime change in Guatemala. *HUBRIS*, originating from Ancient Greece, was considered a crime and a great sin in the Greek world. A hero possess-

ing hubris is motivated by pride which leads to the hero's downfall. In modern usage, hubris has come to mean self-pride, self-confidence, or reckless arrogance.

- What connections can you make about hubris within the CIA? The Kennedy White House? The FBI? The mob?
 - How does Kennedy's hubris as president concern Patrick?
 - How does hubris bring about Patrick's downfall?
- The author uses Shakespeare as a motif throughout the novel.
 - One of Shakespeare's favorite themes is *appearances are deceiving*. What are Patrick's illusions and how do they prevent him from seeing the reality of his situation and bring him to disaster?
 - The author makes several references to Shakespeare's plays—*Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Julius Caesar*. How do these references create verbal and dramatic irony in the novel?
 - The criteria for a classical tragic hero are as follows: he must be basically a good man, he must have a tragic flaw, he must act in such a way as to cause his own ruin, and in the moment when all is lost, he must gain wisdom or insight about himself and his life. Additionally, a tragedy occurs when FATE collides with the TRAGIC FLAW of the hero. Is Patrick a tragic hero? What is Patrick's tragic flaw? Were his actions based on free will or fate? Does he gain wisdom or insight about his life?
 - According to Aristotle's *Poetics*, the end of a tragedy is *katharsis* (purgation, cleansing) of tragic emotions. Generally

catharsis occurs when the reader understands the moral failure of the hero. The readers or audience experience a "moral uplifting" when they examine their own morals as a result of their reading experience.

- Is the ending satisfying?
 - Does the reader experience a moral uplifting—but for the grace of God, go I—by Patrick's story?
- According to Aristotle, history simply relates what has happened. Tragedy, on the other hand, is universal and dramatizes what may happen. Historical events may be studied only for their relevance in a particular place and time. Tragedy, however, involves cause and effect and may happen at any time or place in the world. Catharsis occurs because the audience can envision themselves within this cause and effect chain.
 - Is this novel simply an account of an historical event? Or is it a novel which presents a chain of events that call into question the mores and actions of leaders and the consequences for future generations?
 - Why do you think the American public continues to be interested in the Kennedy assassination? What do you think led to the assassination of JFK?

Themes

The themes embodied in the novel encompass not only cultural and political values but also social and personal values.

To what extent do our social and personal values shape our nation's cultural and political values?

THREAT OF COMMUNISM

Let us not be deceived—we are today in the midst of a cold war. Our enemies are to be found abroad and at home. Let us never forget this: Our unrest is the heart of their success. The peace of the



world is the hope and the goal of our political system; it is the despair and defeat of those who stand against us... —Bernard M. Baruch (52)

It was horrifying enough if, like Alger Hiss, they [Communist spies] had infiltrated our State Department and were helping to create our foreign policy. (70)

The Red Scare fueled "witch hunts" and blackballing during the late 1940s and the 1950s. Was the threat of Communism against American ideals real or exaggerated? What does Patrick's perspective reveal about the effectiveness of the Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy administrations' responses to a pervasive attack on our nation's ideals and security?

PATRIOTISM

Our country! In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right; but our country right or wrong. —Stephen Decatur (148)

I know that the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord's side. —President Abraham Lincoln (128)

To what extent should evidence of patriotism determine our choice of leaders? Does American culture still value patriotism as an ideal of character? To what extent did the Vietnam War call into question American patriotism?

IDEAL GOVERNMENT

... in times of war, the truth is so precious that it must at all times be accompanied by a bodyguard of lies. —Winston Churchill (86)

Remember this above all else! When you commit the flag, you commit it to win! —President Eisenhower (163)

Is the United States government justified in initiating subversive and unlawful actions to counter

an enemy? Can a democratic government be both powerful and truthful?

DECEPTION

The great majority of mankind are satisfied with appearances, as though they were realities, and are often even more influenced by the things that seem than by those that are. —Machiavelli (52)

He who controls the past controls the future; and he who controls the present, controls the past. —George Orwell" (559)

To what extent is the influence of government over the populace based on deception? Which characters in the novel were caught up or defeated by self-deception?

FATE VS. SELF DETERMINISM

The events which we see, and which look like freaks of chance, are only the last steps in long lines of causations. —Alfred North Whitehead (389)

All events are secretly interrelated...the sweep of all we are doing reaches beyond the horizon of our comprehension. —Abraham Joshua Heschel (389)

Can individuals change the course of history? At what point did Patrick's fate become inevitable?

ENDURING LOVE

Without a solid foundation in morality, that leader cannot lead! America cannot elect, nor can it follow an immoral man as president. —J. Edgar Hoover (82)

Maybe all of this would be over one day, and I could safely see her again. Wouldn't that be wonderful? (602)

Is an enduring intimate relationship important for our leaders? To what extent does an enduring intimate relationship contribute to an individual's moral choices and quality of life? To what extent must that relationship be

sacrificed in order to make difficult choices or to be a leader of men?

Characters

There are only six fictional characters in the novel: Patrick McCarthy, Pam McCarthy, Chase Newman, Grant Grantham, Derek Ruger and The Preacher. The author intersperses the fictional lives of these characters with actual historical people. Each chapter unfolds by focusing on Patrick's interactions with one or more of these characters.

PAM:

1. How does Pam's view of the world differ from Patrick's? How does Pam's relationship with Patrick give the reader insight into Patrick's character?
2. How does Pam's role in the narration add perspective into the personal lives of two of America's most iconic historical figures? How is the Kennedy relationship a foil (mirror/contrast) for the McCarthy relationship? What are the pivotal events in the two marriages and how are they parallel?
3. How does Patrick's personal knowledge of Jack and Jackie's lives influence his decision to become part of the assassination?
4. Patrick says many times that he loves his wife and son, yet he sacrifices his family in the end. Could Pam have prevented Patrick's destructive path?

CHASE:

Chase comes from money and privilege, yet he seems to be the most morally centered of all the characters.

1. How does Chase influence Patrick? How does Chase's role as a reporter influence the narration of the novel?
2. How does Chase's relationship with Grant foreshadow Grant's final deceit of Patrick?
3. At what point does Chase realize that Patrick may have

compromised his principles? Why doesn't he confront Patrick?

4. How does Chase bring to the forefront the dilemma of the media in reporting news?

GRANT:

From the beginning of the novel, Grant provides a contrast to Patrick's character. Though Patrick recognizes Grant's moral flaws, he still allows Grant to manipulate him and later influence his critical decision to join the conspiracy. Why?

1. At what point does Patrick recognize that he has been duped by Grant and attempt to change the course of his relationship with Grant?
2. How does Grant represent an important influence on American political policies?

DEREK RUGER:

1. Is Ruger more than a one-dimensional villain? Is he a believable villain?
2. What is revealed about Patrick's character in his interactions with Ruger?
3. How does Patrick cope with Ruger's pathologically violent behavior? How does that foreshadow Patrick's breakdown in Vietnam?

THE PREACHER:

1. Why have Patrick and The Preacher forged a deep friendship?
2. In his conversations with The Preacher, Patrick reveals at least two reasons why Lee Harvey Oswald was unlikely to have been the gunman in the Texas Book Depository. What about Lee's childhood points to discrepancies in the Warren Commission Report?
3. How does the Preacher provide catharsis for Patrick?
4. At what point does the reader recognize the plot twist at the end of the novel?



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"I thought that it would be bound in black and put away on dark library shelves."

-Jackie Kennedy, referring to a prominent research book about her husband's murder

It has taken eighteen years to write this fact-based story, supported by over 122,000 pages of research. Forty-six years have been spent researching this story, beginning the night of November 22, 1963. (I personally cajoled my father into stopping by the Government Printing Office in Washington, D.C. in September, 1964 the first day the Warren Commission Report was released for sale to the public.)

I invite readers to do their own research into the storyline and to draw their own conclusions. Taking into account literary license, the story's details can be verified as to dates, times, places, personages, and conversations in their proper historical context.

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The events which we see, and which look like freaks of chance, are only the last steps in long lines of causation.

— Alfred North Whitehead —

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Currently, over 400,000 blogs theorize and daily debate the details of the Kennedy assassination.

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