

Conspiracy Theories Surrounding the Assassination of Pres. John F. Kennedy

Tim Yoder

The Assassination of President John F. Kennedy

On November 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was riding in a motorcade through the streets of Dallas, Texas. Also in the presidential limousine were the First Lady Jackie Kennedy, Texan Governor and Mrs. John Connally, and two Secret Service agents. Riding in other cars in the motorcade were Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, Texan Senator Yarborough, and more Secret Service agents.

After the procession left the downtown area, it entered Dealey Plaza and was passing the Texas School Book Depository when gunshots rang out at about 12:30 P.M. President Kennedy and Governor Connally were both hit by bullets. Their limousine raced to Parkland Memorial Hospital four miles away where the trauma team worked feverishly to save the shooting victims. Governor Connally was stabilized, but President Kennedy was pronounced dead at 1:00 P.M.

The President's body was taken to the airport and placed on *Air Force One*. Before the plane took off on its return to Washington, D.C., Lyndon B. Johnson was sworn in as the 36th President of the United States.

Less than an hour earlier Lee Harvey Oswald, an employee at the Texas School Book Depository, was arrested by Dallas police for the assassination of President Kennedy and the killing of a Dallas policeman. Two days later, as Oswald was in the process of being transferred from police headquarters to the county jail, he was shot by Jack Ruby on live national television. He died two hours later at Parkland Memorial Hospital.

On November 29, 1963, President Lyndon B. Johnson established the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy. The Warren Commission, as it came to be known, presented its 888-page final report in September of 1964. It concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in killing President Kennedy and that Jack Ruby acted alone when he killed Oswald.

Controversy has surrounded the Warren Commission's findings ever since they were made public. Among other things, the commission was accused of violating basic procedures for criminal investigations, failing to collect all the available evidence and not fully analyzing the evidence it had collected, misrepresenting the results of its own ballistics and rifle tests, failing to take testimony from a number of important witnesses, and ignoring Jack Ruby's ties to organized crime.

Another federal investigation into the Kennedy assassination was conducted in 1978 by the U.S. House Select Committee on Assassinations. Re-examining the evidence considered by the Warren Commission and analyzing evidence that had not yet come to light in 1963, this committee concluded that a plot or conspiracy was involved in the assassination of President Kennedy. The committee was unable, however, to identify other gunmen or participants of a wider conspiracy.

A number of conspiracy theories have emerged since the assassination of President Kennedy. You will be examining the basic components of twelve of the theories and discussing the merits of each one. Each theory is paired with another theory on your bracket sheet. After determining which theory is more likely to be true in each bracket, you will advance that theory to the next bracket. In the end, one theory will emerge as the one you determine to be the most believable. At that point, answer the final question on the bracket sheet.

The Federal Reserve Bank Theory

- On June 4, 1963, President Kennedy signed Executive Order 11110 which gave the Secretary of the Treasury the power to issue silver certificates.
- Some believed this move gave the U.S. Treasury power over the Federal Reserve Bank.
- International bankers associated with the Federal Reserve Bank were upset at having their power diminished, so they arranged for President Kennedy to be assassinated.

The Zero Game Theory

- John F. Kennedy was elected President in 1960.
- At that time, every president who had been elected in a year ending in zero since 1840 had died in office: William Henry Harrison, 1840; Abraham Lincoln, 1860; James A. Garfield, 1880; William McKinley, 1900; Warren G. Harding, 1920; and Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1940.
- The deaths were arranged for mystical reasons of numerology, and apparently someone wanted the streak to continue, which led to the death of President Kennedy.

The Mafia Theory

- President Kennedy's brother, U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy, was leading a vigorous war against organized crime and had put over 250 key Mafia leaders in jail.
- Through wiretaps and informants, the FBI learned that senior mafia figures hated the Kennedy brothers and wanted them dead.
- Lee Harvey Oswald's killer, Jack Ruby, had known ties to organized crime.
- Records show a 25-fold increase in the number of out-of-state phone calls Jack Ruby made to associates of major crime bosses in the months preceding the assassination.

The UFO Cover-up Theory

- President Kennedy wrote a letter to the CIA demanding to see secret UFO files.
- The CIA director wrote a note that said, “As you must know, Lancer (President Kennedy’s Secret Service code name) has made some inquiries regarding our activities, which we cannot allow.”
- Robert Wood, former Deputy Director of defense contractor McDonnell Douglas, stated, “The most important idea that people have not grasped at all is that this program started in early 1942. The second most important idea is that the program is not under the control of the president, and when the president was about to leak it, they bumped him off.”

The Secret Service Theory

- It is the responsibility of the Secret Service to provide security for the President of the United States. They obviously did not succeed in their mission in Dallas.
- The House Select Committee on Assassinations formed the following conclusions from its investigation:
 - The Secret Service did not provide adequate protection for President Kennedy in Dallas.
 - The Secret Service had received information that was not properly investigated, analyzed, or used to prepare for the President’s trip to Dallas.
 - The Secret Service agents in the motorcade had not taken precautions to protect the President from a sniper.
- Abraham Bolden, the first African American on the White House Secret Service detail, made this statement: “President Kennedy alienated Southerners and conservatives around the country, most of whom were already suspicious of him. In this, the Secret Service reflected the more backward elements of America. Many of the agents with whom I worked were products of the South.... I heard some members of the White House detail say that if shots were fired at the president, they'd take no action to protect him. A few agents vowed that they would quit the Secret Service rather than give up their lives for Kennedy.”
- When the Assassination Records Review Board requested records in the 1990s about the assassination of President Kennedy, it was told by the Secret Service that all records concerning President Kennedy’s trips from September 24 through November 8, 1963, had been destroyed.

The Israeli Theory

- Israel was angry with President Kennedy for standing in the way of Israel building nuclear weapons.
- Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion supposedly held a grudge against Joe Kennedy, the President's father, believing he was anti-Semitic and supportive of Hitler in the 1930s and 40s.
- Former Israeli spy Mordechai Vanunu has stated that Israel was responsible for the Kennedy assassination.
- Some believe that President Johnson's reversal of the nuclear policy for Israel indicates that Israel got what it wanted as a result of President Kennedy's assassination.

The CIA Theory

- Members of the CIA were disgruntled with President Kennedy for giving away Cuba, a country in which they had worked hard to salvage from Communism.
- Members of the CIA wanted to prevent President Kennedy from doing the same with Vietnam.
- Members of the CIA were upset with President Kennedy's firings of CIA officials after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, including the firing of CIA director Allen Dulles.
- A CIA agent had been involved with Lee Harvey Oswald before the assassination in connection with Cuban groups who were against Castro.
- The CIA did not inform Dallas authorities that Oswald was a possible threat to President Kennedy.
- Evidence exists that indicates that the CIA tampered with their Oswald files before and after the assassination.

The Cuban Government Theory

- Cuban leader Fidel Castro was upset with President Kennedy because of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.
- Numerous attempts on Castro's life had been made by the CIA.
- The CIA had planned and funded the attack on Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in an attempt to topple Castro.
- Castro realized that he was in a kill-or-be-killed situation, so he ordered the assassination of President Kennedy.
- In a 1968 interview with Howard K. Smith of ABC, Lyndon B. Johnson stated that "Kennedy was trying to get to Castro, but Castro got to him first."

The Soviet Union / KGB Theory

- Soviet Premier Krushchev hated President Kennedy because of how the Cuban Missile Crisis turned out in 1962. It was humiliating for the Soviets to be forced to remove their missiles from Cuba.
- The KGB was the secret police / intelligence agency of the Soviet Union.
- Lee Harvey Oswald had spent two years in Russia and married the niece of a KGB colonel.
- Former Soviet intelligence officer General Ion Mihai Pacepa has stated that Lee Harvey Oswald was a KGB agent who was programmed to kill President Kennedy.

The Cuban Exiles Theory

- Thousands of Cubans left Cuba and moved to the United States after Fidel Castro came to power in 1959.
- Many of the exiles hoped Castro would be overthrown so they could return to Cuba.
- The Cuban exiles became bitter toward President Kennedy for his refusal to allow the U.S. military to participate in the failed CIA-sponsored Bay of Pigs Invasion in 1961 which was designed to take Castro out of power.
- President Kennedy's approval rate among the exiles reached an all-time low by 1963 because of what they perceived as an insufficiently aggressive policy toward Cuba.
- The following statement by Cuban exile Nestor Castellanos was recorded in October of 1963: "We're waiting for Kennedy the 22nd, buddy. We're going to see him in one way or the other. We're going to give him the works when he gets in Dallas. Mr. good ol' Kennedy. I wouldn't even call him President Kennedy. He stinks."

The Right-Wing Extremist Theory

- President Kennedy was hated by racists who were concerned about his proposed civil rights legislation.
- Other extremists were disturbed by their perceived failure of President Kennedy to stand up to communistic threats.
- Two weeks before the assassination, Joseph Milteer, one of the extremists of the time, predicted that President Kennedy would be killed by gunfire from a high building.

The Lyndon Johnson B. Theory

- Vice-President Lyndon B. Johnson had a lot to gain from a fast-track ascension to the presidency.
- Johnson had heard rumors that he was going to be dropped as the Democratic vice-presidential candidate in the 1964 election.
- Johnson was afraid that he and a business partner were about to be indicted for running a scam by which they received \$21 million a year in federal agricultural subsidies for growing and storing crops of cotton that never existed.
- President Kennedy wanted to wind down the Vietnam War, and that would cut into Johnson's profits from his investments in war-time industries like Bell Helicopter and Dow Chemical. Johnson's escalation of the war after he got into office reaped him millions of dollars from the sale of helicopters, napalm, and agent orange from these companies.
- At a social gathering the night before the assassination, a friend of Johnson reported him saying, "After tomorrow the Kennedys will never embarrass me again—that's no threat—that's a promise."

