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TRUTH & RECONCILIATION

DEMAND THE TRUTH

The JFK Records Act, which was enacted by Congress in 1992, mandated that all documents relating to the JFK assassination be released within 25 years, which would have been in 2017. However, President Trump unlawfully postponed the release until October 2021, and then, as has been widely reported, President Biden postponed it—again unlawfully—until December 2022, with a partial release to occur on December 16th, 2021. In addition, documents and testimony from the 1977-1979 House Select Committee on Assassinations, which concluded that there was a probable conspiracy in the JFK assassination, are being withheld from public view until 2029. The Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) seeks the release of these documents from local, state and national government agencies, as well as those related to the three other major assassinations of the 1960s.

This John Fitzgerald Kennedy Report is presented by the <u>Truth & Reconciliation Committee</u>, which was formed in 2019 by members of the Kennedy and King families, Daniel Ellsberg, Martin Sheen, Rob Reiner, David Crosby, Reverend James Lawson, Jr., Oliver Stone, Adam Walinsky, James Galbraith, David Talbot, and other public figures. The TRC is dedicated to helping America confront the truth of the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and Robert F. Kennedy, all of which changed the course of American and world history and adversely affect us to this day. The subsequent cover-ups and failures to disclose critical case files have added to the public's distrust of both the government and the media, a situation that has helped create the dysfunction in our current political environment.

Written by respected journalists and researchers, this report relies on documented evidence to refute the official government story of these assassinations. As with other Truth and Reconciliation movements, our goal is not to punish the perpetrators but to set the historical record straight and thereby help bring about a new era of understanding for current and future generations.

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY:

His Assassination and Why it Matters

Despite a trove of new research and information emerging over the last 58 years, there are many people who still believe that the central questions—who killed President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, and why—remain unanswerable. Others cling to the Lee Harvey Oswald "lone nut" theory proffered by the Warren Commission. However, both these groups tend to agree that whatever the facts may be, the story is ancient history with little contemporary relevance, stuff for conspiracy-obsessed people with nothing better to do.

Nothing could be further from the truth, for the assassination of JFK is the foundational event of modern American history, the Pandora's Box from which decades of tragedy have sprung.

JFK PRESSURED TO WAGE WAR

From the day he was sworn in as president on January 20, 1961, John F. Kennedy was relentlessly pressured by the Pentagon, the Central Intelligence Agency, and some of his own advisers to wage war: clandestine, conventional, and, most troublingly, nuclear.

To get to the bottom of why and by whom he was assassinated on November 22, 1963, one needs to comprehend this pressure and the reasons why Kennedy consistently resisted it, as well as the consequences of that resistance. These issues are key to understanding the current state of our world today and why, ever since JFK's death, the United States has been waging endless wars abroad and has created a national security surveillance state at home.

It's important to remember that Lieutenant John Kennedy was a World War II hero, who was badly injured while saving several of his men in the treacherous waters of the South Pacific after their PT boat was sunk by a Japanese destroyer. His older brother, Joe, died in the war, as did several of JFK's fellow PT boat crew members.

As a result, Kennedy was extremely sensitive to the terrors of war, and when he first ran for Congress in Massachusetts in 1946, he made it clear that avoiding another war was his number one priority. Senator Edward Kennedy told author David Talbot that it was JFK's horror of war that motivated him to run for president. This commitment remained with him and was strengthened throughout his brief presidency until the day he died, fighting for peace.

¹ Brothers, David Talbot, Free Press, 2007

In March 1962, national security hardliners, including every member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, presented the president with what they believed would be a convincing pretext for a U.S. invasion of Cuba. Code-named <u>Operation Northwoods</u>, this "false-flag" plan called for agents of the government to sink boats carrying Cuban refugees and to launch a terrorism campaign in Miami, Washington D.C., and other U.S. locations—all of which would be blamed on the Castro government. The idea was that the public would be so outraged, it would support the plan for an invasion.⁴

Kennedy was understandably appalled, and rejected the plan. He had already begun to sense that his life was in danger and that the CIA and the Pentagon were tightening a noose around his neck, but he refused to yield. The Cuban Missile Crisis, in October 1962, was another situation in which JFK refused to bomb and invade Cuba as the military desired. The Soviets had placed offensive nuclear missiles and more than 40,000 support troops in Cuba in order to prevent another U.S.-led invasion—an aggressive act that was understandably unacceptable to the U.S. government. While urged by the Joint Chiefs to order a preemptive nuclear strike on Cuba, JFK knew that a diplomatic solution was the only way to prevent a nuclear holocaust and the loss of millions of lives. Daniel Ellsberg, a former Pentagon and Rand Corporation analyst, reported a coup atmosphere in the Pentagon as Kennedy chose to settle rather than attack.

In the end, after 13 incredibly tense days of brinksmanship, Kennedy and Khrushchev miraculously found a way to resolve the crisis without the use of doomsday weapons.

KENNEDY & EUROPE

Increasingly suspicious of the military and intelligence officials around him, JFK continued to oppose the use of nuclear weapons and military invasions. In 1961, he refused to accede to the Joint Chiefs' insistence on using nuclear weapons in a dispute with the Soviet Union over Berlin. Walking out of a meeting with his top military advisors, Kennedy threw his hands in the air and declared, "These people are crazy."⁵

By 1963, Italy's political situation had become another area of major discord. JFK and the CIA worked at cross-purposes, with Kennedy supporting a center-left coalition while the CIA supported the ruling conservative coalition. Similar political conflicts were occurring throughout Europe and the rest of the world.

⁴ Pentagon Proposed Pretexts for Cuba Invasion in 1962, FOIA documents at National Security Archive

⁵ Richard Reeves, President Kennedy: Profile of Power, Simon & Schuster, 1994, p. 222

KENNEDY & SOUTHEAST ASIA

President Kennedy had long been committed to not sending ground troops to Southeast Asia. In October 1963, he signed the National Security Action Memorandum 263 calling for the withdrawal of 1,000 U. S. military troops from Vietnam by the end of the year. He also told Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and other associates about his commitment to a complete withdrawal by the end of 1965. Three days after his assassination, President Kennedy's Vietnamese withdrawal plans were reversed by President Johnson. Within a short period, hundreds of thousands of American combat troops were sent to Vietnam.

President Kennedy had also resisted strong Pentagon pressure to send ground combat troops to neighboring Laos as the Joint Chiefs had insisted. He knew that Laos and Vietnam were linked issues, and following his murder, Laos was indeed drawn tragically into the Vietnam War.

1963: THE FATEFUL YEAR

In June 1963, JFK gave an historic speech at American University in which he called for the total abolishment of nuclear weapons, as well as an end to the Cold War— "a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war." A few months later he signed a Limited Test Ban Treaty with Nikita Khrushchev.

During this year, Kennedy was secretly engaged in negotiations to reduce nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons testing with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev via Pope John XXIII¹⁰ and Saturday Evening Post editor and anti-nuclear weapons advocate Norman Cousins.¹¹ He was also beginning back-channel discussions, with other intermediaries, aimed at easing tensions with Cuba's Castro. Deeply disturbed by the potential nuclear catastrophe of the Cuban missile crisis, Kennedy was determined to ensure that such a near-miss never happened again. He knew that fault lay on both sides and that one slipup or miscommunication could initiate a nuclear Armageddon, which is why he wanted to open lines of communications with America's enemies.

These clear refusals by Kennedy to go to war with Cuba and his commitment to emphasize peace and negotiated solutions to conflicts, to order the withdrawal of all military personnel from Vietnam, to call for an end to the Cold War, and to engage in private, back-channel communications with Cold War adversaries marked him as an enemy of the national security state. In fact, such sentiments were considered treasonous by CIA leaders and Pentagon generals. He and they were clearly on a collision course.

⁷ See James K. Galbraith, "Exit Strategy," Boston Review, October/November 2003

⁸ American University Commencement Address, President Kennedy, June 10, 1963

⁹ President Kennedy Radio and TV Address to the American People on the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, July 26, 1963; Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space, and Under Water, signed at Moscow August 5, 1963, entered into force October 10, 1963

¹⁰ See Norman Cousins, The Improbable Triumvirate: John F. Kennedy, Pope John, Nikita Khrushchev - An Asterisk to the History of a Hopeful Year, 1962-1963, W.W. Norton & Co., 1972

¹¹ Pierre Salinger, With Kennedy, Doubleday & Co., 1966, p.198

After experiencing the Bay of Pigs, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and other military cliffhangers, Kennedy became even more committed to diplomacy over military solutions. He came to regard the military and intelligence officials who advised him as untrustworthy and callous about the potential carnage of war. And he was well aware that his growing resistance to war had fractured his own government and put his very life at risk. On numerous occasions, JFK spoke of the possibility of a military coup against him, and even assassination. He urged director John Frankenheimer to make the movie, "Seven Days in May," as a warning to the American people about the possibility of such a violent regime change.

WHO KILLED JFK?

Soon after President Kennedy's assassination in Dallas, President Johnson appointed the Warren Commission ostensibly to get to the bottom of who killed Kennedy and why. But the Commission appeared more interested in putting the public's mind at ease than in finding the truth. Over time, researchers who analyzed the report were stunned by the inaccuracies, important evidence that was ignored, and testimony that was changed. Named for its chairperson, Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren, the panel could just as easily been called the Dulles Commission after its most active member, former CIA director and Kennedy enemy, Allen Dulles. Kennedy and Dulles had intractable differences, and Kennedy had actually fired him after the Bay of Pigs fiasco.

The Warren Report, issued in September 1964, asserted that President Kennedy had been shot by an ex-Marine named Lee Harvey Oswald, a lone assassin who fired three bullets from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository. But that claim was patently false for many reasons. At that point, Kennedy's limousine was already more than 150 feet past the building—and still moving away. Also, there were several oak trees and a large road sign in the line of fire. Any lone assassin in that position would certainly have taken the much easier shot as the limousine approached to within 50 feet on Houston Street.

More than 40 witnesses stated that shots were fired from the grassy knoll in front of the President's motorcade, but all of them were either ignored or pressured to change their testimony by the FBI or Warren Commission attorneys. Such was also the case with eyewitnesses Kenny O'Donnell and Dave Powers, close friends and associates of Kennedy, who had been riding in the limousine behind the President's.

To protect the lone-assassin narrative, the overriding requirement of which was that only three bullets had been fired, all from behind the President, Warren Commission attorney Arlen Spector made a bizarre claim. He posited that one of these bullets, later dismissively called the "the magic bullet," somehow passed through Kennedy's body and zigzagged up and down, and left and right, and ultimately struck Texas Governor John

Connally, who was sitting in the front seat. Spector claimed said that the shot caused seven wounds. One problem was that this alleged "magic bullet" was later found on a stretcher in Parkland Hospital in pristine condition. ¹² Even Connally insisted until his death that he was struck by a different bullet than any of those that hit JFK. Also, the Warren Commission ignored physical evidence of additional bullet holes observed in the limousine and on the adjacent roadside.

The Commission's conclusion was an absurd ballistic fairytale that was visually shattered by the famous Zapruder film, which clearly shows the President being shot from his front right. Shots were also fired from behind, but as Kennedy's right temple explodes, he is violently thrown back and to his left, indicating he was killed by the shot from the front, not a shot from the School Book Depository behind. This clear video evidence alone is ample proof of a conspiracy.¹³

Apparently, First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy also believed this. Shown climbing onto the trunk of the car to retrieve a piece of her husband's skull, she later told friends she believed that her husband had been ambushed by multiple conspirators. In presentations before Congressional committees, renowned forensic coroner, Dr. Cyril Wecht, further demolished the Warren Report's insistence that it was three bullets from the TSBD behind the President that killed him.

There was also confirmation of the conspiracy from two of the Parkland Hospital emergency room surgeons, Dr. Charles Crenshaw and Dr. Robert McLelland. Silenced for years by official pressure, these doctors eventually revealed that they had seen with their own eyes that President Kennedy had been shot from the front as well as the rear. Over the years, numerous other Parkland and Bethesda doctors have come forth and told of having seen multiple frontal wounds.

Particularly telling is the fact that no Oswald fingerprints were found on the alleged assassin's rifle; nor was there any gunpowder residue on his cheek when Oswald was tested by Dallas police. And there is strong exculpatory evidence that Oswald had nothing to do with the killing of Officer J.D. Tippit—he was shot nearby 45 minutes after the assassination—for which Oswald was also charged.

¹² See Vincent J. Salandria, "The Warren Report?" Liberation, March 1965

¹³ Zapruder Film in slow motion (1:33)

WHO WAS LEE HARVEY OSWALD?

The Warren Commission described the 24-year old Oswald as a "lone nut assassin." But there's more than enough reason to believe that he had been engaged by the U.S. intelligence community. As stated by Senator Richard Schweiker, who investigated the Kennedy assassination in the 1970s while serving on the Church Committee, Lee Harvey Oswald had the "fingerprints of intelligence" all over him.

Oswald served in the Marines as a radar technology specialist at the Naval Air Station Atsugi in Japan, which housed the CIA's super-secret U-2 spy planes. He carried a high-level security clearance (a fact suppressed by the Warren Commission) and was trained in the Russian language. When he left the Marines, he apparently became one of several fake defectors to the Soviet Union on behalf of U.S. Intelligence. After denouncing the United States, publicly rejecting his American citizenship while retaining it privately, Oswald worked at a Soviet factory in Minsk and married a Russian woman. The two of them returned to the U.S. courtesy of a loan from the American Embassy in Moscow. Oswald and his wife, Marina, were met at the dock in Hoboken, New Jersey by Spas T. Raikin, an anti-Communist with extensive intelligence connections, who, according to the Warren Report¹⁵, had been recommended by the State Department.

If Lee Harvey Oswald had truly defected to the Soviet Union on his own at the height of the Cold War, it defies reason that he would ever have been allowed back into the United States with such ease and government support and later been hired (as shown below) by several companies led by fervent anti-communists. James W. Douglass, in JFK and the Unspeakable: Why He Died and Why It Matters—considered by many to be the most important book on the subject—asks the key question: Why was Lee Harvey Oswald so tolerated and supported by the very government he allegedly betrayed?

And Oswald's smooth reentry into America is not the only puzzling part of this story.

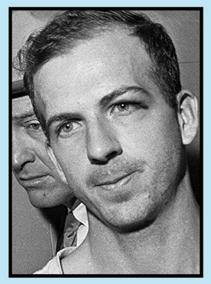
Oswald moved to Fort Worth, Texas where, at the request of the Dallas CIA Domestic Contacts Service chief, he was befriended by George de Mohrenschildt, a vehement anti-communist White Russian, who was also a CIA asset. Within days, de Mohrenschildt secured employment for Oswald at a photography and graphics company that worked on top-secret maps for the military related to U-2 spy missions over Cuba and elsewhere. Oswald was then shepherded around the Dallas area by de Mohrenschildt and introduced to many other anti-Communist White Russians. One day in 1977, just hours before he was to meet with House Select Committee on Assassinations investigator, Gaeton Fonzi, de Mohrenschildt allegedly took his own life. He had recently confessed that he had contacted Oswald on behalf of the CIA.

¹⁴ Gerald D. McKnight, <u>Breach of Trust: How the Warren Commission Failed the Nation and Why</u>, Univ. Of Kansas Press, 2005, <u>review by James</u> DiEugenio

¹⁵ Douglass, op. cit., p. 46

In April 1963, Oswald moved to New Orleans and got a job at the Reily Coffee Company, which was owned by two brothers, William and Eustis Reily, who had known CIA affiliations. The company, conveniently situated in close proximity to FBI, CIA, Secret Service, and Naval Intelligence offices, was also just around the corner from the office of Guy Banister, the former Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Chicago bureau reporting to FBI Director, J. Edgar Hoover. Banister was working in New Orleans as a covert action coordinator for various U.S. intelligence services, supplying weapons, money, and training to anti-Castro paramilitaries at secret facilities near the city. Oswald also went to work with Banister and the CIA paramilitaries.

From this time until the assassination, Oswald engaged in all sorts of contradictory activities— one day portraying himself as pro-Castro, the next day as anti—with many of these theatrical performances directed from Banister's office. It was as if Oswald, on the orders of his intelligence handlers, were being set up as a future "assassin" or "patsy," while at the same time enacting multiple conflicting roles to confound anyone intent on deciphering the reasons behind his actions.



James Douglass argues persuasively that Oswald "seems to have been working with both the CIA and FBI" as a provocateur for the former and an informant for the latter. Jim and Elsie Wilcott, who worked at the CIA Tokyo Station from 1960 to 1964, recounted in a 1978 interview with the San Francisco Chronicle that, "It was common knowledge in the Tokyo CIA station that Oswald worked for the agency (CIA)." ¹⁶

A wealth of evidence depicts a young Oswald being moved around the globe by the CIA like a chess pawn, and when the game was done, the pawn was eliminated in the Dallas police headquarters by Jack Ruby, who himself had known intelligence and Mafia ties. Moreover, it has come to light that Ruby and Oswald had known

each other and worked together for several years. Author John Armstrong reported more than 30 people claiming to have seen Lee Harvey Oswald and Jacky Ruby together.¹⁷

¹⁶ See James and Elsie Wilcott: CIA Profile in Courage, excerpt from JFK and the Unspeakable, pp. 144-148, 421-422

¹⁷John Armstrong, *Harvey and Lee*, Quasar

OTHER INTELLIGENCE HANDLERS & COLLABORATORS

When de Mohrenschildt exited the picture, Ruth and Michael Paine—a couple introduced to Oswald by the CIA asset—entered the scene right on cue. Ruth Paine conveniently arranged employment for Oswald at the Texas Book Depository, where he began work on October 16, 1963.¹⁸

The Paines became critically important witnesses against Oswald during the Warren Commission investigation. Allen Dulles questioned them, studiously avoiding any revealing questions, including ones that might indicate his own close personal connections to the Paine family. For instance, Michael Paine's mother, Ruth Paine Forbes Young, was a dear friend of Dulles' long-time mistress, Mary Bancroft, who worked with Dulles as a spy in Switzerland during World War II. Bancroft and Dulles had even been guests at Ruth Paine Forbes Young's private island off Cape Cod.

Thirty years after the assassination, a declassified document indicated that Ruth Paine's sister Sylvia worked for the CIA. Their father traveled throughout Latin America on a contract with the Agency for International Development (whose CIA front activities are well-documented) and filed reports that went to the CIA. Ruth's husband Michael's stepfather, Arthur Young, was the inventor of the Bell helicopter, a military workhorse during the Vietnam War, and Michael held a high-security job working with his stepfather at the military contractor. Even the owner of the Texas School Book Depository, D. Harold Byrd, where Oswald worked for the month before the assassination, had strong ties to the anti-communist community in Dallas. Byrd, a right-wing oilman, defense contractor and founder of the national Civil Air Patrol (in which Oswald had served as a teenager in New Orleans), was a "Kennedy-hater," according to author Russ Baker.

It is now apparent to anyone paying close attention that a very intricate and deadly game was being played at high levels in the shadows. It's common knowledge that Oswald was blamed for the murders of President Kennedy and Officer Tippit. But if one follows the trail of that day's events, it becomes obvious that government forces were at work, and Oswald was likely nothing more than the "patsy" he claimed to be while in police custody.

WHO HAD THE POWER TO WITHDRAW THE PRESIDENT'S SECURITY AND COVER UP THE CRIME?

To answer the essential question is to finger the conspirators and to expose, in the words of first-generation researcher Vincent Salandria, "the false mystery concealing state crimes." Reflecting on the coverup, he asked, "What would an honest government do?"

One thing is certain: neither Oswald, the Mafia, nor anti-Castro Cubans would have had the power to interfere with Presidential security. But we do know several entities that did. First, Dallas Sheriff Bill Decker ordered all his deputies "to take no part whatsoever in the security of that motorcade." Likewise, Police Chief Jesse Curry withheld Dallas police protection from Dealey Plaza. Both lawmen were responding to orders they received from the Secret Service, which puzzlingly withdrew most of the police motorcycle escorts from beside the president's limousine, where they usually ride (as they did the day before, in Houston). At the last minute, they even removed agents from the back of the car where they were normally stationed to obstruct gunfire.

The Secret Service freely admitted there were no agents on the ground in Dealey Plaza to protect Kennedy. We know from extensive witness testimony that before, during, and after the assassination, there were people in Dealey Plaza impersonating Secret Service agents. One of them physically barred a policeman and curious onlookers from advancing toward the spot where they suspected some of the shots originated, the raised embankment that came to be known as the Grassy Knoll.

Also, in a blatant violation of security protocol, the Secret Service had approved the fateful, dogleg turn from Main Street onto Elm Street, where the President's driver, Secret Service agent William Greer, proceeded at a snail's pace and nearly came to a full stop before the final shot to the head. Greer's actions stood in stark contrast to his Secret Service training, in which agents are instructed to drive off at maximum speed if shot-like sounds are heard. Instead, he hit the brakes and turned around, as if to ascertain that Kennedy had been mortally wounded, before speeding away. This sequence of events was proffered by the House Select Committee on Assassinations, not by some conspiracy theorist.²¹

Many factors point overwhelmingly to powerful forces within the government and not to rogue actors: the evidence and witness accounts that were manipulated, inquiries that were stopped, press coverage that was distorted, legitimate researchers who were defamed, and the many witnesses who met violent deaths. And who could have

¹⁹ Vincent Salandria, <u>The JFK Assassination: A False Mystery Concealing State Crimes</u>, presentation at the Coalition on Political Assassinations, November 20, 1998

²⁰ Dallas Deputy Sheriff Roger Dean Craig, When They Kill A President, 1971

Douglass, op. cit., pp. 270-277 and endnote 75 of James Douglass' 2009 COPA Keynote Address. Secret Service Final Survey Report for the November 21, 1963, visit by President Kennedy to Houston, cited in Appendix to Hearings before the HSCA, vol. 11, p.529

*Talbot, Devil's Chessboard.

squelched the testimony of the multiple doctors and medical personnel who insisted that the president had been shot from the front in addition to from behind—facts that directly contradict the official story? Such a systematic cover-up could hardly have been orchestrated by lone individuals with no institutional support.

For nearly six decades, engaged citizens, independent historians and journalists, and Congressional investigators have amassed a detailed case for conspiracy in the murder of John F. Kennedy—a foul crime that tragically altered the course of American history. The only Americans still in resolute denial of the facts are those in power.

EPILOGUE

BY JAMES DOUGLASS

"John F. Kennedy, the son of a millionaire ambassador, was born, raised, and educated to rule the system. When he was elected President, Kennedy's `n as head of the greatest national security state in history. In spite of all odds, he became a peacemaker and, thus, a traitor to the system...



"Why did John Kennedy choose life in

the midst of death and by continuing to choose life thus condemn himself to death? I have puzzled over that question while studying the various biographies of Kennedy. In reading his story, one is struck by his devotion to his children. There is no mistaking the depth of love he had for Caroline and John, and the overwhelming pain he and Jacqueline experienced at the death of their son Patrick. Robert Kennedy in his book *Thirteen Days* has described how his brother saw the Cuban Missile Crisis in terms of the future of his children and all children. The heroic peacemaking of his final months, with his acceptance of its likely cost in his own death, was, I suspect, partly a result of the universal life he saw in and through them. I think he believed profoundly the words that he gave in his American University address as his foundation for rejecting the Cold War:

'Our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal.'"22

²² James Douglass, "The Assassinations of Martin Luther King and John F. Kennedy in the Light of the Fourth Gospel," Sewanee Theological Review, 1998



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

We encourage you to contact your Senators, members of Congress, and President Biden to demand the release of all documents and testimony from the assassinations of President Kennedy as well as those being held in national, state and local government institutions relating to the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and Robert F. Kennedy.

Please visit the <u>Truth and Reconciliation Committee</u>'s website and sign our petition to reopen these cases and create a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

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