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### JFK's Assassination: A Never-Ending Conspiracy

John F. Kennedy is considered one of the most universally beloved presidents. However, his time in office didn't result in many historic achievements. His most notable accomplishment is the resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. There were multiple significant events in American history that JFK played a role in, but never got to see through. He was alive at the beginning of the space race, but never saw the man put on the moon. He fought for the Civil Rights Act, but it was his successor who succeeded in having it signed into law. Despite this, Kennedy remains the most admired president of the last six decades. Maybe it was his youth and energy, as he was the youngest man to be elected president at the age of 43. Maybe it was that he was the first president to use television to speak directly to the American people, and they felt a connection to him. Either way, his approval ratings were quite high, and remain that way today.

Therefore, when John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963 in Dallas, Texas, the initial public reaction was shock and despair. Everyone remembers where they were and what they were doing when they heard the news. Everyone accepted the event as a tragedy, regardless of party affiliation or whether they supported Kennedy or not. People wept. School was dismissed early. Crowds gathered to watch the funeral. Many people were greatly moved by the president's death. It's not that JFK was the first president to be assassinated, because there were three before him. Abraham Lincoln was killed because John Wilkes Booth wanted to throw the government into chaos to restore the Confederacy. Anarchist Leon F. Czolgosz shot William

McKinley because he believed him to be the “enemy of the people.” These are facts, agreed upon by historians as the truth. There are no questions left concerning the assassinations of the other three presidents. But many aspects of JFK’s tragic death remain a mystery.

Everyone has heard the story. Riding in an open motorcade on his way to give a speech in downtown Dallas, John F. Kennedy was shot twice by Lee Harvey Oswald, who was on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository. Oswald was motivated by his commitment to communism, since he had defected to the Soviet Union after his discharge from the Marines. Two days later, Oswald was killed by Jack Ruby, who was so upset by the president’s murder that he had to take matters into his own hands. The Warren Commission, established to investigate the assassination, declared that the president’s death was not related to any conspiracy. Oswald and Ruby both acted alone, and were not part of any larger scheme. Everything was tied together with a nice little bow. But as time passed, people began to poke holes in their story.

Lee Harvey Oswald fired three shots. The first was a miss, striking the curb and injuring a bystander. The third hit JFK in the back of the head. However, the path of the second bullet is puzzling. Supposedly, it passed first through JFK’s throat, then shot through Texas governor John Connally’s back, arm, and thigh. When recovered, the bullet was perfectly intact. People thought this was so unbelievable that it is now referred to as the “magic bullet theory.” This raised a variety of questions. Were the president and the governor hit by different bullets? Did Oswald fire more than three shots? That was deemed impossible, because Oswald wouldn’t have been able to reload his gun in time to have fired two separate bullets. JFK and Connally were shot only seconds apart. When interviewed, Connally stated, “There is my absolute knowledge, and Nellie’s too, that one bullet caused the President’s first wound, and that an entirely separate shot

struck me.” Although, proclaiming the magic bullet theory to be false calls into question the declarations of the Warren Commission. For anything to make sense, Oswald would have had to have an accomplice. There would have to have been multiple gunmen. It’s theorized that a second shooter may have been located on the grassy knoll to the right of the motorcade. Witnesses to the event disagreed upon the direction of the sound of the gunshots, and some even claimed they heard shots from that area.

Associated with this theory is the “umbrella man,” a mysterious figure standing right next to where JFK’s car was when the shots were fired. This man can be seen in the Zapruder film, which documented the assassination, and various other images. November 22, 1963 was a beautiful day. There was not a cloud to be seen, and therefore, no need for an umbrella. Could it have been some sort of weapon? Or was it a signal for the gunmen? In 1976, another committee, the House Select Committee on Assassinations, was established to reinvestigate the event. Louie Steven Witt testified to the committee that he was the umbrella man, and he was only there to heckle the president, not kill him. He even brought the umbrella. But it all seems a little too convenient. Every photo of the umbrella man is blurry and from a distance, there is no way to identify the person. The only evidence is Witt’s words.

A major point of contention regarding the Kennedy assassination is why. If JFK wasn’t shot by Lee Harvey Oswald as a result of communist sympathies, then who wanted him dead? Some believe the entire ordeal was a government conspiracy executed by the CIA, because the president and the CIA weren’t necessarily on the best of terms. After the Bay of Pigs invasion, JFK described a desire to “splinter the CIA into a thousand pieces and scatter it into the winds.” Furthermore, during the investigation of the assassination, the agency hid relevant information from officials. Another theory is that Oswald was hired by the Cuban government. This is fueled

by the fact that only two months before the assassination, Oswald had taken a short trip to Mexico city. Other supposed culprits include the mob and U.S. Senator Ted Cruz's father. A Daily Mail article claims that JFK was killed by aliens. There are a variety of theories out there, although some may be more plausible than others. All it takes is one person with one crazy idea.

The reason that the Kennedy assassination still has such a strong grip on the American public is that the truth is still hidden. Very few people know what actually happened and those alive to witness it have had unanswered questions for decades. Even members of Kennedy's own family remain in the dark about JFK's death. Conspiracy theories run rampant because that is all that we have: theories. While some documents have been declassified, the government is still keeping secrets regarding the assassination, and have given little explanation as to why. Each year that passes only adds fuel to the conspiracy theorists' fire. Even after all this time, why does the government still feel the need to keep things hidden? As we mark the 60th anniversary of the tragic event, it appears that the JFK assassination is destined to stay a never-ending conspiracy theory.

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