

JFK'S ASSASSINATION

Does Recently Released CIA Data Solve
the Biggest Mystery of the 20th Century?

BY AVA ROOSEVELT

Each November 22, for over half of a century, marks the anniversary of the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the youngest and only Catholic President of United States, and the only Kennedy to reside in the White House. His death shuttered the dreams of millions world-wide, including those in Poland where I stood, a mere child, holding my father's hand only to comprehend years later why everyone sobbed.

Countless investigations conducted by the FBI, the Warren Commission, the United States House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA), numerous films and documentaries with far reaching theories (including JFK's accidental shooting by Secret Service Agent George Hickey) yielded no conclusive results. The mystery remains unsolved except for one undisputed fact. Lee Harvey Oswald a man who fired the shots that killed the president, was silenced, shot to death by Jack Ruby fueling the speculation that Oswald was not acting alone and that Kennedy's assassination was most probably a result of a conspiracy.

MY THEORETICAL Q&A WITH JFK

Your well-known determination to become the president dates to your teens. The tragic death of your brother Joe Jr, the heir apparent to your father's political ambitions, paved the journey to your presidency.

Fate dealt you a trump card extraordinaire and you played it well. Did you ever feel guilty for stepping into the shoes of the man many idolized, you included, and for following his destiny?

Luckily, you didn't live to see the pursuant assassination of your brother Robert F. Kennedy and Ted Kennedy's Chappaquiddick scandal, which forever sealed, your father, Joseph Patrick "Joe" Kennedy, Sr's dream to see another of his sons in the White House. A master manipulator and a father of 'political PR' in the US, Joe Sr, spent his life cleansing the Kennedy name of any innuendos pertaining to its less-than-perfect-Irish immigrant background but despite his vast fortune could not stop the Kennedy course.

Were you given a choice, and you had lived, would you have followed in your father's steps to see your own children aspire to political office, or would you have let them live lives less exposed to the possibility of perpetuating the Kennedy curse? Given the tragic death of your son John, and your daughter Caroline's ambassadorship to Japan is there such a thing as controlling one's destiny with the limitless financial resources at one's disposal?

The Bay of Pigs Invasion, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Space Race—Project Apollo (which later culminated in the moon landings), the building of the Berlin Wall, the African-American Civil Rights Movement, and the far less-popular increased US involvement in the Vietnam War challenged your presidency from the moment you took office.

I wonder what it took, in light of your numerous physical disabilities to step up to the prospect of changing the landscape of the nation, the world, and the space.



John Fitzgerald Kennedy in the oval office (circa 1961)

With his movie-star looks and unlike many politician, JFK never pretended to be a commoner. He could do no wrong even while philandering. He was enormously wealthy yet understood the poor. He shared Martin Luther King's dream and like King, might have died because of it. He married to fuel the myth of his nearly-aristocratic-pedigree. The man who accompanied Jackie Kennedy to Paris, was idolized by American youth, beloved by millions and he managed to elevate the American presidency to the status of Camelot.

Which one of your accomplishments gave you the most joy, made you the most proud? I would give everything to know what was going through your mind as your presidential motorcade turned the corner into Dealey Plaza, which within seconds become the place of your last public appearance.

As those responsible for JFK's death might never be brought to justice, I wonder which of the president's vast accomplishments concluded in the first thousand days of his presidency (and those voted into the law posthumously) might have led to the evil act to silence the voice of inspiration, the zeal for achievement, the courage in face of adversities, the hope, pride and unity of one nation and millions of Americans.

Mr. President, do you think the path to greatness must always be bathed in blood? What would you do differently, given a choice, which might have spared your life? Or would you not alter any of your actions despite the risks?

Mr. President, as truth has the tendency eventually to reveal itself, you will be happy to know that on September 16th, 2015, the CIA's Historical review released yours and LBJ's presidential briefings, thus declassifying the CIA's knowledge of Lee Harvey Oswald's visits to both, the Cuban and the Soviet Embassy, less than two months prior to your assassination. Neither you (during your life time) nor LBJ (after your assassination) were briefed to that effect. How I wish to be able to have your insight today! Instead, I am sitting here with Jefferson



50 years ago a 10-mile drive through Dallas and a speech on national security at the Trade Mart awaited President John F. Kennedy, as he, first lady Jacqueline Kennedy, Texas Gov. John Connally and Nellie Connally, departed Love Field on Nov. 22, 1963. Less than a hour later, three gunshots would shatter the president's plans, and plunge the nation into profound grief. (Tom Dillard/Dallas Morning News/MCT)

Morley, a former Washington Post reporter and author of *Our Man In Mexico*, who is known to be one of the utmost experts in matters relating to your untimely death.

MY Q&A WITH JEFFERSON MORELY

Ava: Jeff, do you believe that the CIA's release of JFK and LBJ presidential briefings confirms the speculation that the CIA's cover-up is further-reaching than originally thought?

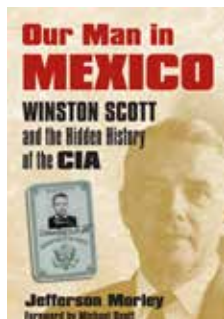
JM: It isn't speculation that the CIA had covered up material facts in the death of the president. That fact was confirmed 40 years ago. In 1975, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence discovered that the CIA was plotting to kill Fidel Castro in November 1963 and didn't disclose the fact to the Warren Commission.

What the CIA's release of the November 25, 1963 presidential briefing confirmed was an important detail about the JFK cover-up: namely which CIA components were hiding material facts from the White House and law enforcement within 72 hours of JFK's death. Those components were the 1) Directorate of Operations and 2) the Counterintelligence Staff. It was in those CIA offices that the JFK assassination cover-up originated. That is fact, not speculation.

Ava: As the plaintiff in *Morley v. CIA*, a lawsuit in Washington federal court seeking still-secret JFK assassination records, do you reason the CIA's release is a direct result of your suit?

JM: It is possible but probably not directly. My lawsuit, seeking the records of CIA officer George Joannides, was covered by the New York Times, Fox News, Associated Press, Huffington Post and dozens of news sites around the country. This widespread coverage has called attention to the extreme and bizarre secrecy measures the CIA still invokes around the JFK story.

That coverage, in turn, might have increased incentives for disclosure. By engaging in a high profile release of JFK-related material,



the Agency seeks to refute the impression that it has something to hide. It burnishes its reputation as a responsible custodian of long-secret materials from that era.

But remember this, the CIA had long contended in sworn federal court filings that the release of the presidential daily briefings for JFK and LBJ would harm U.S. national security. We know now that those assertions, made under oath, were false. Something caused the CIA to change its collective mind but I don't know what it was.

Ava: Over 50 years passed since Lee Harvey Oswald was named as the assassin of President Kennedy, inspiring vast speculations about who might have been behind him. In your opinion, are Fidel Castro and the Mob the most likely suspects? If not, who else?

JM: As a journalist I don't like to speculate. It gets you in trouble with your readers and your bosses. I prefer to write about facts. It is safer.

The "Mafia did it" theory depends on speculative assertions about the ability of organized crime figures to manipulate Lee Oswald. These assertions are not fact-based, in my view. The ability of organized crime figures to manipulate Jack Ruby is less speculative. (For example, see JFK Facts for the story that Ruby's friend Gail Raven told me about why Ruby did what he did.)

So, if organized crime figures were involved in the events of November 1963, I think it is more likely that they were involved in the assassination of Oswald than in the assassination of the president.

The claims that the Castro government was behind Kennedy's assassination are not credible in my view. The CIA paid for the first JFK conspiracy theory to reach public print. This theory was first publicized by the Miami-based Cuban Student Directorate (DRE), which was funded by the CIA. The day after the assassination, the DRE charged that Oswald and Castro were "the presumed assassins."

If and when the CIA acknowledges the role of George Joannides, chief of psychological warfare operations in Miami in 1963, in gen-

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— Jefferson Morley

erating this conspiracy theory, we will be in a better position to judge the DRE’s claims. Until then, the available evidence indicates the “Castro did it” theory originated, not as a factual proposition, but as a propaganda ploy generated by CIA assets.

Ava: What would motivate the CIA to keep the extent of their knowledge about Lee Harvey Oswald’s activities secret for so long?

JM: Fear. Fear of losing credibility and fear of losing budget appropriations.

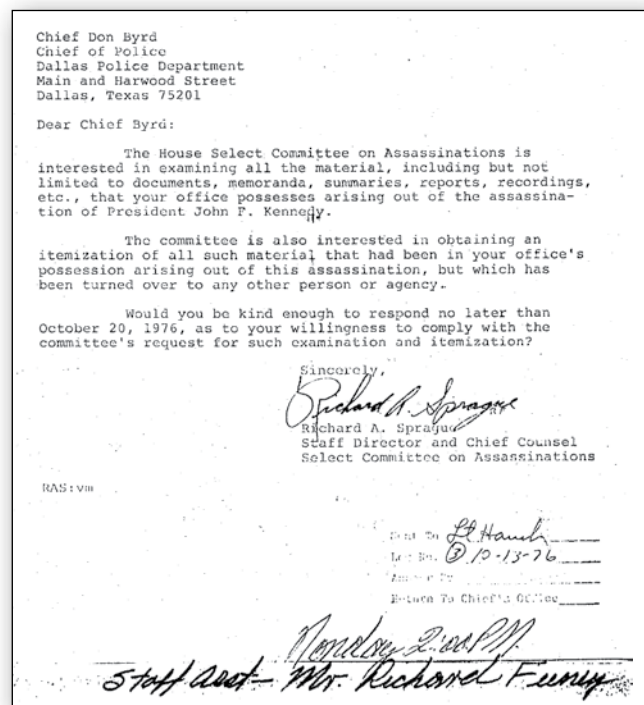
Naturally, the CIA is loath to admit that a half dozen senior undercover officers reporting to deputy director Richard Helms and Counterintelligence Chief James Angleton were fully informed of Lee Oswald’s travels, politics, and foreign contacts by October 10, 1963.

If they were ever to admit this fact—and it is fact—then they will have to explain the epic intelligence failure that culminated in Dallas. And the day they do that is the day Congress starts thinking about cutting their budget in the next fiscal year. So they don’t go there.

That’s why I doubt very much that your publication will hear from any CIA spokesman denying or even disputing anything I say in this interview. They don’t want to address the JFK facts—and for good reason.

Ava: Could it be that the CIA was embarrassed by their contact with the future assassin similar to the Dallas F.B.I. officials who, after the assassination, destroyed a handwritten note Oswald had previously left for an F.B.I. agent?

JM: Precisely.



House Select Committee on Assassinations request to examine all materials related to the Kennedy Assassination, 10/07/76

Ava: You spent a decade in search of the truth that seems as elusive as it was over fifty years ago. Are there any new facts that could collaborate array of theories as to who and why would want to extinguish the light of hope and take the life of President Kennedy?

JM: I don’t think anyone else should start with the premise that the American people need to theorize about who killed JFK and beseech the government to bless one theory or another. That is misguided legally, politically and morally.

The U.S. government has an obligation to obey the law. The death of JFK is, legally speaking, an open homicide case. The government was obliged by the 1992 JFK Records Act to release all assassination-related records “immediately.” Twenty three years later, it still has not done so.

As first reported on JFK Facts last year, the U.S. government retains 3,600 assassination-related records that have never been made public. More than 1,100 of those records are held by the CIA. To be sure, most of these files are not relevant to the JFK story. But some are highly relevant. (See my story, “7 JFK files the CIA still keeps secret” on JFK Facts.)

Those 3,600 records are scheduled to be released in October 2017. If and when these files are made public—in their entirety, without redactions—then we can start talking about theories. Until then, we need to stick to the facts and the law. The facts are contained in the still-hidden JFK records and the law requires their release.



My only JFK theory is that this will happen in October 2017. This theory, I concede, has yet to be proven. ●

Jefferson Morley is a former editor at The Washington Post and the author of Our Man in Mexico: Winston Scott and the Hidden History of the CIA. He writes about JFK’s assassination at JFKfacts.org.