

Conspiracy Theories involving the Assassination of U.S President John F. Kennedy

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It is commonly said that there are only two guarantees in life: death and taxes. No matter what we do in our lives, how much money we make, or how much power we obtain, there is truly no escaping the former. The world was painfully reminded of this fact on November 22nd, 1963 when United States President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas by a lone gunman named Lee Harvey Oswald. Just over one thousand days into his presidency, Kennedy was the 4th sitting president to be assassinated and is the most recent president to be killed while in office. Kennedy's assassination has produced many conspiracy theories over the years, with many believing that Oswald didn't act alone and was killed in an attempt to cover up a much larger scheme.

Kennedy's tenure as president came during the height of the Cold War, with political tension between the United States and the Soviet Union threatening to spill over into nuclear warfare during the Cuban Missile Crisis. With a vast majority of the U.S politically split, Kennedy certainly had a large group of people who would have wanted him dead. Lee Harvey Oswald was one of those people, and as President Kennedy drove down Elm Street at roughly 12:30 P.M, Oswald fired three shots from his Mannlicher-Carcano rifle from the southeast-corner window on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository, killing Kennedy and injuring Texas Governor John Connally. There is no denying that Oswald was the man who murdered Kennedy, as there are multiple eye witness accounts and forensics reports that put Harvey at the scene, and confirm his rifle as the murder weapon. The conspiracies arise from the fact that Oswald was killed two days after the assassination while in police custody, having never given a full confession or statement in regards to the assassination. There are three parties that have been the center of these conspiracies, the Soviet Union, Cuba, and the C.I.A.

Firstly, the most popular conspiracy theory surrounding Kennedy's assassination is that Oswald carried out the shooting on behalf of the United States' own Central Intelligence Agency. This theory is supported by two main arguments, that the C.I.A had a strong motive to want Kennedy dead, and their heavy involvement in the investigation into the assassination. Theorists argue that the C.I.A could have carried out the assassination in retaliation for Kennedy refusing to lend U.S military support in the infamous Bay of Pigs invasion, a botched C.I.A invasion of Cuba in an attempt to overthrow communist dictator Fidel Castro. Theorists also believe that the C.I.A, who helped lead the investigation into Oswald, were able to cover their tracks and cover-up the truth from the inside. Others believe that Oswald may have been working under the orders of Castro or Nikita Khrushchev, the leader of the Soviet Union. Those who believe the Soviets were behind the shooting point towards Oswald's history with the Soviet Union and timely meeting with KGB officials in the weeks leading up to the assassination.

Others believe Castro could have ordered the hit on Kennedy after the many failed attempts on the dictator's own life.

Taking a deeper look into the details of these conspiracy theories, there are certainly some compelling arguments to be entertained. Firstly, when looking into the supporting arguments for the C.I.A based theories, it is certainly plausible that a lot of the higher ups within the agency held a deep resentment towards President Kennedy for his lack of support at the Bay of Pigs. However, it is much harder to believe that the C.I.A would have been able to completely cover up the inside job. Although the Warren Commission's didn't use any independent investigators, and solely relied on information and investigators from the F.B.I and C.I.A, too many important and powerful people would have to have been in on it to cover it up. While this conspiracy theory is certainly intriguing and does cause many to question whether the C.I.A truly could have been involved, it is my belief that this conspiracy would have been too complex and too massive to keep completely under wraps.

In regards to the theory that the Soviet Union or Cuba could have been involved, there are some compelling reasons to believe Oswald could have been acting as an agent for one of the two communist countries. Firstly, let's look at the theory surrounding the possibility of Soviet Involvement. A big part of this theory is Oswald's history with the USSR, seeing as Oswald was a former U.S Marine who defected to the Soviet Union in 1959, wishing to renounce his U.S citizenship and live as a communist. Oswald lived in the USSR and Belarus for about a year before returning to the states, but in the weeks leading up to the assassination, Oswald traveled to Mexico City to visit the Soviet Embassy. Oswald met with Consul Valery Vladimirovich Kostikov, a Kremlin officer involved in the KGB branch responsible for sabotage and assassination. While these two things make for a plausible and intriguing conspiracy theory, there are some parts of the puzzle that don't quite add up. For example, the Warren Commission released a statement saying that recorded phone conversations between Oswald and the Soviets were over Oswald being able to obtain a visa to be able to travel through Cuba and the USSR, in which Oswald was denied. It is inferred that Oswald was attempting to obtain this visa to be able to make a quick escape to either Cuba or the USSR after the assassination, so why would they deny him an escape route and risk him being caught and revealing their involvement?

On the Cuban side of things, Fidel Castro had every reason to want Kennedy dead, as the President hadn't made a particularly strong effort to hide his support for the Anti-Castro regime in Cuba. Castro however denied all allegations that he had anything to do with the assassination, claiming that he would not be foolish enough to do something to warrant retaliation from the United States. I am inclined to believe Castro in this instance, because the Cuban leader was a lot of things, but an idiot was not one of them. Castro cherished his power and control over Cuba, and it wouldn't make sense for him to risk war with the United States after the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the U.S being determined to avoid military involvement on the island.

In conclusion, while there were certainly reasons for the C.I.A, Cuba, and the Soviets to want Kennedy dead, it simply does not appear that any of these parties had any direct involvement in the killing of President Kennedy. Instead, I find it more likely that Oswald acted out of a need to please the Soviets and hatred towards American ideals, all of his own free will.