



THE **F**AKE
HISTORY OF
AMERICA

BEFORE

& AFTER THE ASSASSINATION



James K. Lambert

Cover Photos:

TOP : BEFORE

A frame taken from home movie footage of President Kennedy's arrival at Love Field in Dallas, less than an hour before he was shot. The footage can be seen in the Navy-produced documentary short, *The Last Two Days* (1963).

Notice how the Confederate Battle flag and the Texas flag completely overshadow the American flag, which looks like it was hastily found and thrown onto the Texas flag pole at the last minute. Kennedy had won the Southern States — the States of the Confederacy — just barely and arguably thanks to the presence of Vice President Johnson, a Texan, on the ticket. This quick stop in Dallas was part of a multi-city trip to Texas that was designed to shore up support for his coming reelection race in 1964 and many Confederate flag-wavers were still members of the Democrat Party's coalition at the time.

BOTTOM : AFTER

Taken by White House Photographer Cecil W. Stoughton, November 22, 1963, aboard Air Force One, just over two hours after the 35th President was fatally shot.

Federal District Judge Sarah Hughes administered the oath of office to her friend, Lyndon B. Johnson, the 36th President of the United States, on the tarmac at Love Field. JFK's widow, Jacqueline was still wearing her blood-soaked outfit as she looked on. This solemn moment, according to fakest of fake history true believers, was the culmination of a coup d'état and the beginning of a multi-generational conspiracy so vast it boggles the mind.

For my boys, Noah & Jude,

May you and your generation learn something
from history that others have missed.

Love you,
Daddy

There is no inevitability, so long as there is a willingness to contemplate what is happening.



Marshall McLuhan was the OG Media Theorist; the first to encouraged people to consider how the media we consume shapes the way we think and live. He coined the term, “the medium is the message,” to explain how people who experience the world through different forms of media (e.g. print vs television) perceive reality in different ways. He also coined, “the global village,” to describe how the interconnected world was creating a global culture and making people feel like they had a right to be in everyone else’s business, which he personally disparaged. McLuhan

Photo:

President John F. Kennedy and First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy arriving at Love Field in Dallas, on the last leg of their two day tour through major Texas cities. In less than an hour, the unthinkable would pass into history.

Taken by White House Photographer Cecil W. Stoughton.



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Photo:

Far from being universally beloved and admired while in office, President Kennedy had many reasonable and unreasonable critics opposing him. Some of his most extreme opponents and fear mongers could be found in Dallas, where wanted fliers accusing him of treason were being handed out on the streets prior to his arrival.

Following Page Photo:

Arriving at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, the new President, Lyndon Johnson spoke to the people, asking, “for your help, and Gods,” as President Kennedy’s body was removed from Air Force One.

Taken by White House Photographs Cecil Stoughton and Dan Lewis.



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President John F. Kennedy's body Lay in State at the U.S. Capitol Rotunda before his funeral. First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy and her daughter, Caroline Kennedy (both kneeling at left), kiss President Kennedy's flag-draped casket; mourners line the wall

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Chapter One



HISTORY
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US

NOTHING

One of the people Jackie Kennedy asked to give a eulogy for her husband was Chief Justice Earl Warren. Echoing the pessimistic sentiments of German Philosopher Georg Hegel and the prophetic author of *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley, Warren acknowledged: “It has been said that the only thing we learn from history is that we do not learn.” Hoping to light a candle in the darkness, he added, “But surely we can learn, if we have the will to do so. Surely, there is a lesson to be learned from this tragic event.”

Given all that has happened since then, including the vilification of Warren for leading the commission that found no conspiracy in President Kennedy’s murder, I cannot share his optimism. Yes, individuals have the capacity to learn, but it takes more than will to do so. And we are far more inclined to validate preexisting beliefs and feelings by making selective connections between facts and falsehoods, than to engage in genuine learning. We do not want to be taught, as much as we want to pretend we were right all along. This confirmation bias grows stronger and more impervious to reality the deeper you drill down to the core of a person’s worldview. Sure, you may, with great effort, get a committed racist to admit that a particular stereotype they held onto for years is not valid, but you will find it nearly impossible to stop them from believing the pseudoscience claim that there are different human races, because this is central to their misconception of reality. Similarly, you may in time convince a die hard conspiracy theorist that a particular piece of evidence does not support their belief that Oswald was, “just a patsy,” but you are unlikely to have the time and energy necessary to ever get them to accept the fact that Oswald acted alone, or to keep them from approaching other events with a bias toward conspiratorial explanations. It is too great a blow to their belief system; their ego; their group affiliations and identity; “their truth.”

If you are hoping to turn a friend or loved one from the conspiratorial path they are on, you may want to check out the work of Mick West, creator of Metabunk.org and author of, *Escaping the Rabbit Hole: How to Debunk Conspiracy Theories Using Facts, Logic, and Respect*. West’s patient and courteous approach is a sensible one for such endeavors, but I profoundly disagree with his overall view of the problem. As West sees it:

...the reality is that we are all conspiracy theorists, one way or another. We all know that conspiracies exist; we all suspect people in power of being involved in many kinds of conspiracies, even if it's only something as banal as accepting campaign contributions to vote a certain way on certain types of legislation.

West is right that conspiracists exist on a, “spectrum”¹ and most are not so far gone that they are actually psychotic, but this scale should not begin with everyone who has ever speculated that someone in power has done something illegal. That is not a, “conspiracy theory,” anymore than suspecting that your neighbor harmed his wife is the equivalent of organizing a lynch mob to execute him. The conspiracy theorist (CTer) mindset has a strong, cult-like, religious spirit, that appeals to an Inquisitionist, “Burn Them at the Stake!”

1: West uses a 10 point scale, based on his own experiences debunking conspiracy theories and talking with conspiracy theorists, and he admits that it is subjective. He begins with “Big Pharma” at number 1, describing it as, “The theory that pharmaceutical companies conspire to maximize profits by selling drugs that people do not actually need.” I suspect that if you walked up to a hundred random people and asked them to name a conspiracy theory, this would not be on the list, and it certainly does not fit what I mean by the term. I was also surprised by the fact that West only mentions Jew-related conspiracy lies in passing and they do not make it on his scale; nor does he ever discuss Holocaust denial. The most extreme beliefs on his scale are “Flat Earth” at 9 and “Reptile Overlords” at 10. Nevertheless, as a practical guide for how you might get through to a conspiracy true believer his work is valuable.

certainty. Conspiracy theorizing is an ideological approach to reality based on fear and false assumptions about the way the world works, rooted in a, “My Tribe and Your Tribe,” mentality, much like racism, and it is therefore not surprising to find that conspiracist thinking and bigotry have long been linked together.

All the branches of today’s conspiracy family tree go back to the same root structure, the medieval lies that assumed “The Jews” were a primary source of evil in the world, and no matter how conspiracy theories evolve they never move far away from Jew hating advocates or connections. This is not to say that all conspiracy theorists are anti-semites, but conspiracy theorizing would not be what it is today without anti-semitism, and so long as conspiracy theorists exist there will be a gravitational pull drawing believers back to Jew hating as “The” hidden force behind all the other hidden forces that allegedly control events. The culmination of this thinking (so far) was found in Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, which left millions of people throughout the world convinced that bigotry in general, and Jew hating in particular, is intellectually and morally bankrupt. Nevertheless, few of these people have confronted the conspiracist nature of Hitler’s regime and the lessons this should have taught us about the dangers of conspiracy theories in

general. Subsequently, conspiracists today, who are telling the same basic stories from 100 or 900 years ago, are more likely to see the Illuminati, Wall Street, Hollywood, Freemasons, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Deep State, celebrity pedophiles, shape-shifting lizards, or some other boogymen at the top of the pyramid, rather than Jews. But there are always a few people in any such congregation who remain convinced that it really is The Jews, and more still who invoke Jewish whistles that resonate in very ugly tones.²

2: In 2020, Marjorie “I’m not really a QAnon follower” Taylor Greene, made headlines for claiming that a, “Jewish space laser,” started California wildfires in 2018. What she actually said was more convoluted than that, but she did implicate, “Rothschild Inc,” as a central part of the alleged crime. The Rothschild family has long been a staple of Jew hating conspiracy stories. Even more disturbing is the way that relatively mainstream figures on the American right today constantly implicate and invoking George Soros, a Jewish billionaire and Holocaust survivor, in nearly every alleged plot they can dream up, and it only seems to help them with their electoral base.

In post-World War II America — a time of profound paranoia, after the creation of The A-Bomb and the dawn of the Cold War — no event has done more to popularize the conspiracist mindset and inspire the creation of fake history tales than the assassination of President Kennedy. It has been the primary gateway drug into the conspiracy worldview for more than half a century, with everyone aware of the controversy and a majority continuing to believe there is some hidden truth, yet to be found. With the growth of online communities, a number of people are now being sucked in by false claims about the metal in the Twin Towers or the use of “crisis actors” at mass murder scenes, and similar lies, but the presumed proof that conspiracy theories are not necessarily false or crazy remains the widespread acceptance of the, “JFK Coverup.” After all, if a majority of Americans are willing to agree that, “The Government” or “The Establishment,” is so corrupt and yet so well organized that they can keep an endless facade standing between the American public and the truth about President Kennedy’s murder for multiple generations, what other Potemkin Villages are “They” capable of making? How can the common man or woman trust anything? A very distorted picture of the “mysterious” JFK case sits at the back of our minds, constantly reenforced in popular culture and reshaping the way we assess everything from the Vietnam War and Watergate to 9-11 and the 2020 Election. Yes, there were things to be learned from John Kennedy’s death, but they were largely discarded by the general public in favor of the fake history and misconceptions that charlatans have to offer us. Subsequently, the assassination has become a foundational myth of post-war America, contributing heavily to a profound distrust of our institutions and one another, while leading some to conclude that the American Republic died along

with President Kennedy. In much the same way that Jewish conspiracy nonsense continues to be adapted to new events, JFK’s legacy is constantly being contorted into impossible shapes that fit any holes in history you care to imagine.

You need not agree about what super villains, “rule the world,” or the country, or whatever you think they do. Regardless of your personal version of, “The Conspiracy,” you need only reject, “the official story,” to be in the club; a fellow seeker of truth and justice. Over time, however, the proponents of fake JFK history have also latched on to factoids that help them unite into a community and pretend they alone know what is “really” going on. For example: many can tell you how President Kennedy tried to warn us about an amorphous threat to democracy in his, “Secret Society” speech, and how this got him killed. Similarly, these otherwise everyday citizens take it for granted that “CIA Dispatch 1035-960” created, popularized, or weaponized the term, “conspiracy theorist,” with the express purpose of making, “critical thinkers,” look crazy. And, “Did you know that future President George H. W. Bush said he couldn’t remember where he was the day of the assassination?” So say the history deniers who wish to believe that Bush was in Dealey Plaza that day, working for, or possibly with, the CIA. The more they can immerse themselves into a disingenuous world of phony details, the more real they can make that world feel.

Such thinking is not confined to CTers; it is widespread throughout the ideological spectrum. All schools of thought run the risk of confusing thoughtful examinations with defensive rationalizations and replacing the pursuit of knowledge with the preservation of the school. Any group of people, when threatened with the prospect of self examination, can reflexively employ fakery to

bolster their beliefs. When it comes to the subject of JFK in particular, however, it is the political right in America today where fakery has become widely accepted as though it were actual history. The idea that President Kennedy would be a conservative, just like them, and even all-in for Trump, has become an article of MEGA reactionary dogma. JFK couldn't possibly stand with the ultra-radical, progressive, Marxist, unpatriotic, far out liberals of today, could he? This too is a consequence of President Kennedy's untimely death and his ascent into the American Pantheon. Most everyone wants to bath beneath the light of his mythology, no matter how much they need to avoid reality to do this.



Like George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, it is easy to imagine John Kennedy as an iconic symbol of America — a flag anyone can wrap themselves in — rather than a man with particular politics, beliefs, and shortcomings.

John, or Jack, as his loved ones called him, came from a family that had prospered as few ever will, thanks to this country, and he loved it dearly. He put his life on the line fighting for the United States in the Pacific despite health problems that should have disqualified him for duty. Jack served in the House and the Senate, and finally the Presidency, always extolling the virtues and promise of America. He was a true patriot, who did not reflexively repeat nationalistic slogans or pretend that we could do no wrong, but understood the ability we had to see a better future and make meaningful progress toward it, together. As he wrote to the nation's youth in the foreword to the American Heritage Illustrated History of the United States (1963):

The history of our nation tells us that every action taken against the freedom of conscience and expression, against equality before the law and equality of opportunity, against the ordinary men and women of the country is an action taken against the American tradition. And it tells us that every action taken for a larger freedom more equal and spacious society is one more step toward the realization of what Herbert Croly³ once called “the promise of American life.”

For JFK, America was a guiding light to follow on our endless quest, rather than a final destination, or some lost greatness that we need to restore. This is not unlike Amanda Gorman's vision, so

3: Herbert David Croly (1869–1930) was a key figure in the progressive movement of the early twentieth century, whose ideas influenced leading figures like President Theodor Roosevelt and Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, as well as the general public. He was the cofounder of The New Republic magazine and he saw his idea of “progressive democracy” as a synthesis of Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson's thinking, updated for the present day.

eloquently put in her poem, “The Hill We Climb,” given at President Biden’s 2021 Inauguration, which President Kennedy surely would have enjoyed.⁴ To think that such a man as this would have any sympathy for the January 6 Insurrectionists, or the draft-dodging, narcissistic, Reality TV Star turned Conspiracy Theorists-in-Chief who inspired them, is absurd. But this is the kind of unreasoning that fake history allows true believers to employ, and it is all the more tragic when you realize that Kennedy’s death made the cancerous growth of these delusions possible.

Obviously, no historical event is an island unto itself and there were countless people and episodes, before and after November 22, 1963, that played off one another in unpredictable and incalculable ways to help get us where we are today. Kurt Andersen presents some good arguments about why our post-millennial era seems to be losing touch with reality at an alarming rate in his book, *Fantasyland: How America Went Haywire: A 500-Year History*. He traces our penchant for magical thinking back to the first Virginia settlers, who refused to stop believing they had found a land rich with gold, despite all the evidence to the contrary, year after year. Followed closely by the Puritans, who refused to conform to church authorities in England, but were more than happy to make others conform to their authority and burn witches as they saw fit. Andersen tracks these lines down to the present, with a heavy emphasis on the rise of Christian Fundamentalism in the Republican Party and the virtual worlds made possible by computers, to explain the buffet of conspiratorial, spiritually vapid, and scientifically unfalsifiable pseudo-sciences spread out before us. The book also repeatedly cites Senator Daniel

Patrick Moynihan’s famous observation, “Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not to his own facts,” to remind us how we are losing sight of this vital distinction. Verifiable facts must be verified outside your own mind, in order to prove they are truly factual. Your feelings, no matter how deeply they are held, cannot change an actual fact. And no matter how many people agree with you, facts remain immune to popularity contests.

I do, however, think there is something even more essential to the problem that Andersen misses and Yuval Noah Harari’s brilliant book, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, helps explain.

Any large-scale human cooperation – whether a modern state, a medieval church, an ancient city or an archaic tribe – is rooted in common myths that exist only in peoples

4: JFK was the first President to have a poet recite at his inauguration in 1961. Robert Frost, who was then in his late 80s, and very well known, had predicted that Senator Kennedy would be the next occupant of the White House before Kennedy even announced that he was running. Frost recited a piece he wrote in the 1930s, which was first published in 1942. “The Gift Outright” is arguably a racist, manifest destiny vision of the United States that proclaims, “This land was ours before we were the land’s,” more than suggesting that Europeans settlers were morally right to conquer it. Nevertheless, it is also a hopeful vision about what we might yet do with this young nation. Frost also wrote a “Dedication” poem to read first, but he could not make out the typed page because of the bright glare of the sun shining off fresh snow. The unread “Dedication” suggested that President Kennedy was going to be a great leader, for a great new age.

collective imagination... Two lawyers who have never met can nevertheless combine efforts to defend a complete stranger because they both believe in the existence of laws.

In other words, most everything we do is dependent on our capacity for fantasy; our willingness to believe in imaginary things. Given this fact, the growth of technology may only serve to create a more comfortable hiding place in which to ignore what is actually happening. Fantasyworld may be the inevitable, global consequence of the Internet's much promised, "Information Age," regardless of the perception that America currently appears to be ahead of the curve on this dangerous trend. Which brings me back to Aldous Huxley, who first depicted a dystopian future of endless, shallow pleasures, and meaningless lives, in the 1930s. An ironic, "brave new world," indeed,⁵ but perhaps not too far off the mark?

The line between actual history, biased as it maybe, and deliberately fake history, is not always clear and few have the time or inclination to search for it. In point of fact, there was no such thing as "history" for the vast majority of the time that human beings walked the earth, which offers

5: The other iconic figure of dystopian literature, George Orwell, painted a far more bleak vision of the future in his novel, 1984, where extreme violence keeps the people in line. But, Orwell arguably held a less cynical view of humanity than Huxley. "Freedom," scribbles the book's lead character in his diary, "is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows." In other words, if people are free to determine the truth, they will.

some insight as to why people are not innately capable of deciphering it. Yes, plenty of things happened in the pre-historic era, but humans had no writing, no means of passing down factual records or documenting anything. They had myths and legends, which may contain true elements within them, but limited means to determine their validity beyond the moral and cultural lessons they offered. Since everything was spoken and dependent on memory, stories could also shift to conform to new ideas and realities as subsequent generations came along and encountered new problems; allowing societies to evolve, as lifeforms do, imperceptibly. History, as a concept and a discipline, has been around for far less time than agriculture and typically its practitioners have not been all that rigorous about accuracy or accommodating in their scope. This has left many to conclude that history is just, "his story." Just another myth or legend, under a different name. But that is a misreading of the word, which has its origins in the Greek, *histōr*: "knowing, expert; witness," *historia*: "a learning or knowing by inquiry; an account of one's inquiries; knowledge, account, historical account, record, narrative," and *historein*: "be witness or expert; give testimony, recount; find out, search, inquire." History is more akin to science, than to literature. It presupposes that there are facts and we can gain genuine knowledge of them, and through them.

It is true that ethnic, economic, religious, and political groups have tried to subvert history, and made up completely false versions of it, in order to make themselves look good and others look bad. Nevertheless, history, like journalism, is a concept that has earned its legitimacy in recent

times, thanks to disciplined codes of conduct and increased access to information. Our current ability to expose the lies perpetrated by groups with an agenda other than the truth was made possible by these changes. Our present drift into a “post-fact” society, where the very nature of truth is in doubt and, “We believe what We believe, because We believe it,” isn’t exactly new, but more a return to something very old and arguably far more natural. Just as each new generation is born illiterate and ill-equipped to live in the man-made world our ancestors created for us, we do not have an intuitive understanding of the past and the lessons it has to offer. But unlike reading, which is relatively easy to teach, history, and the analytical skills necessary to benefit from it, are neither taught, nor valued at the level necessary to safely maintain a technologically advanced and vast republic like ours.

In one of President Kennedy’s most famous speeches, the “Commencement Address at American University, Washington, D.C.,” he assured those in attendance, and us in the future, that we are up to the challenges we face:

Let us examine our attitude toward peace itself. Too many of us think it is impossible. Too many think it unreal. But that is a dangerous, defeatist belief. It leads to the conclusion that war is inevitable--that mankind is doomed--that we are gripped by forces we cannot control.

We need not accept that view. Our problems are manmade--therefore, they can be solved by man. And man can be as big as he wants. No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings. Man’s reason and spirit have often solved the seemingly unsolvable--and we believe they can do it again.

Perhaps he was right and perhaps he was not. No one can know for sure what human beings are capable of, or if we will get the chance to live up to our full potential before forces beyond our control, or of our own making, bring the human race to a full stop. What we can say, is that it is easier to make problems than to solve them, just as it is easier to choose violence than to make peace, or to choose, “his story,” over history, so we may yet dig a hole too deep for us to escape from. We can also conclude that no repackaged version of magical thinking, pseudoscience, conspiracy theories, or fake history will bring us the insights we need to solve the problems that we, as human beings, share in common.

So let us not be blind to our differences, but let us also direct attention to our common interests and the means by which those differences can be resolved.

Let us accept the fact that unrealistic thinking is not only unhelpful, it is a source of real danger, to our mortality and that of our children. So, if you wish to make the world a better place, why not begin by rejecting these transparent pitfalls?

Having once been a conspiracy theorist myself, I will refrain from pointing fingers and claiming that people who feel comfortable with fakery necessarily have low intelligence, less education, a sense of powerlessness, or a desire to feel special and connected to an important community (even if these things are sometimes true). Instead, I will say that conspiracists have a vain faith in the value of doing, “your own research,” and a disregard for the collaborative nature of knowledge. I am also confident that we all have the intelligence, education, and ability necessary to fool ourselves and choose a paranoid path over a practical one. Even Einstein could have been fooled by Einstein. That is why it is vital that we get outside the echo

chambers we tent to hide in and stop belittling the institutional safeguards — like the scientific method, professional journalism and academic standards, the division of governmental power, private property, and the vote — which took proceeding generations so long to achieve. These mechanisms are not perfect, nothing is, but their improvement lays within them, not without them. To paraphrase TR: Merely pointing out where the strong man stumbles does not make you strong or less likely to fall flat on your face.

To be clear, I do not pretend to have the definitive answer to all historical questions, many of which are too complex, too obscure, or too subjective to address in absolute terms. Differing perspectives and criteria will always play a role in how each of us understands the past, but that does not mean that every position is relatively true or equally valid. For example, if we ask, “Was President Kennedy a great President?” we need to define our understanding of greatness and how we prioritize the challenges his administration faced. How do we weigh Civil Right vs. the Cold War, or overall



Members of the Warren Commission, each of whom greatly valued their reputations, presenting their findings to President Johnson. The stack of paper Chief Justice Warren and LBJ are holding is the summary, first volume. There are twenty-five more volumes of evidence that accompanied it.

economic growth vs. wealth distribution? Does his personal life play a role? His inspirational rhetoric, or only his actions? Depending on your measuring stick, a variety of answers could be reasonably correct and genuinely valuable. On the other hand, when the John Birch Society published a two part phony analysis of the assassination in the 1964 February and March issues of their magazine, *American Opinion*, entitled, "Marxism In Dallas," there was nothing of substance to measure, let alone reasonably assess in any way. The Birchers not only accused Moscow of masterminding the crime, they insisted that President Kennedy was actually a Soviet Agent all along. The plan, as the Birchers imagined it, was to use JFK's death to justify a military crackdown on, "right-wing extremists," which the article defined as, "the Bolshevik's code-word for informed and loyal Americans." Only when Oswald failed to escape to Mexico did the plan allegedly fall apart, necessitating the need for the Warren Commission to cover up, "the truth." Similarly, when today's Q Cultists insist that JFK tried to warn everyone about the international ring of Satanic pedophiles, before the, "Deep State," took him out, and Donald Trump is going to complete what the Kennedys failed to accomplish, there is no room for reasonable debate on any of their delusional points and nothing we can hope to learn from following their haphazard trail of breadcrumbs. It's like asking, "Why was the Holocaust faked?" You can't glean anything from history by denying history.

If my efforts aid any readers in pulling themselves away from the siren song of conspiracism, great, but I know those people are unlikely to look at the arguments I present, let alone thoughtfully

consider them. I do hope the average reader will gain a healthier perspective on history from this book and be less apt to venture into the deadly waters of misinformation and lies in the first place. At the very least, before you go chasing after some "new" or "hidden" truth in the bowels of the Internet that allegedly refutes, "the official story," try looking at what the official findings actually say, and how those conclusions were reached. For example, in the case of the Warren Report,⁶ about 300 people worked for the commission that made it, in various capacities, and it took nine months to produce, with one of the most powerful, independent, and well-respected Chief Justices in history overseeing everything. Nevertheless, people continue to tell me how the investigation of President Kennedy's murder was, "rushed," and the report is nothing but, "a white wash" or "propaganda," while simultaneously asking me questions about the case that demonstrate they have never bothered to read the actual report. Getting your history from conspiracy theorists and history deniers is like serving on a jury and asking a self-serving, ambulance-chasing, unscrupulous defense lawyer to present both the case for the prosecution and the defense. The state would never get a single conviction with the cards so stacked against it and you cannot understand history with such an approach.


I have spent a large portion of my life learning about past events and conspiracy theories, particularly those surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy. I also have a MFA in mass media studies, with a focus on nonfiction filmmaking, and more than a dozen years of teaching experience presenting history, mostly as it relates to movies and the growth of media in general. And I have

engaged with countless conspiracy true believers, in person and online; some of which you can see in my documentary, *Conspiracy Theorists Lie* (2015). I can say, with absolute certainty, that the human experience is too complexed, with far too many competing interests and variables, to be reduced to a series of ever-expanding conspiracies, or one, all-encompassing conspiracy, controlled by a few elite puppet masters. As the writer Donald E. Westlake once put it, “Life is a slow-motion avalanche, and none of us are steering.” Even those with enormous power and influence over hundreds of millions of people are ultimately crushed under the weight of events far more than they are in control of them, and even those with no perceived power can upset the best laid plans of empires, by choice or by accident. I wish someone had made this clear to me when I was young, but I probably wouldn’t have listened to them anyway.

For those willing to reconsider their previous conceptions of history and take a fresh look at the means by which the past flowed into the present, the following chapters offer a great many questions worth considering, even if you do not care for all my conclusions.

6: The actual name of the commission set up at the request of President Johnson and headed by Chief Justice Warren was, “The President’s Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy,” but it quickly became known as the, “Warren Commission,” with the final commission report being commonly referred to as the, “Warren Report.”





...it is far better to grasp the Universe as it really is than to persist in delusion, however satisfying and reassuring. Which attitude is better geared for our long-term survival? Which gives us more leverage on our future? And if our naïve self-confidence is a little undermined in the process, is that altogether such a loss? Is there not cause to welcome it as a maturing and character-building experience?

Carl Sagan was an American astronomer, astrophysicist, professor, science popularizer, and advocate for space exploration. He was also a prolific writer of more than 20 books, including, "The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark," where Sagan argued that scientific thinking is essential for the survival of democracy and the advancement of human civilization. He emphasized the importance of evidence-based reasoning, because, "Science is more than a body of knowledge; it is a way of thinking. I have a foreboding of an America in my children's or grandchildren's time... when, clutching our crystals and nervously consulting our horoscopes, our critical faculties in decline, unable to distinguish between what feels good and what's true, we slide, almost without noticing, back into superstition and darkness. ...We might get away with it for a while, but sooner or later this combustible mixture of ignorance and power is going to blow up in our faces."

Photo:

John F. Kennedy with his older brother, Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr., both of whom served in the Navy during World War II. When Joe, Jr. was born, their grandfather, the first Irish Catholic Mayor of Boston, John Francis “Honey Fitz” Fitzgerald, proclaimed that little Joe was going to be the first Irish Catholic President of the United States and everyone in the family took it for granted that Joe, Jr. would have a great political career. Their father, Joseph, Sr. had dreamed of the White House for himself, but as soon as the war was over he was determined to do everything he could to get his eldest son there. On August 12, 1944, the B-24 bomber Joe, Jr. was piloting exploded over the English Channel and the mantle of responsibility fell to the next in line. John, who had never been taken very seriously before, quickly grew to be the symbol of the family, eclipsing even his father in the public eye and turning his elder brother into little more than a footnote.



Chapter Two

KENNEDY



DEMOCRATS