

A Thanksgiving for JFK

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If he had lived, President John F. Kennedy would have been 100 years old this year. At Thanksgiving dinner tomorrow, his family would be raising a glass in his honor.

But as we all know, he was murdered in Dallas, Texas on this date – November 22nd – in 1963. A true war hero twice over, he risked his life to save his men in World War II, and then, after a radical turn toward peace-making in the last year of his life, he died in his own country at the hands of his domestic enemies as a soldier in a non-violent struggle for peace and reconciliation for all people across the world.

But we can still celebrate, mourn, and offer thanksgiving for his courageous witness. When we gather tomorrow to give thanks, we should remember today – the profound significance of the date – and the absent presence of a man whose death, dark and bloody as it was, is a sign of hope in these dark times. For if John Kennedy had not had the spiritual conscience to secretly carry-on a back channel letter correspondence with Nikita Khrushchev, facilitated by Pope John XXIII, we very well might not be here, having been incinerated in a nuclear holocaust.

Hope? Not because he was assassinated, but why he was assassinated.



While there is much media focus on the release of more of the JFK files, they are beside the point. They were withheld all these years to dribble out the clock on an endless pseudo-debate about who killed President Kennedy. We know who killed him: the national security state, led by the CIA, killed him, not Lee Harvey Oswald. It was a coup d'état purposely conducted in plain sight to send a message that every president since has heeded: Your job is to make war and threaten nuclear annihilation for the Deep State elites. Follow orders or else. They have followed.

If you find my assertion about the CIA audacious and absurd, first read James Douglass's *JFK and the Unspeakable: Why He Died and Why It Matters*, a book widely regarded as the best book on the assassination and its meaning. Read it very closely and slowly. Check all his sources, read his endnotes, and analyze his logic. Approach his meticulous research as if you agreed with Gandhi's saying that truth is God and God is truth. Try to refute Douglass. You will be stymied. Then read David Talbot's *The Devil's Chessboard: Allen Dulles, the CIA, and the Rise of America's Secret Government* for further clarification. You will come away from these two books profoundly shaken to your core. Be a truth-seeker, if you are not one already.

Or if you prefer, call me a "conspiracy theorist," as the CIA wants, since it was the Agency that produced CIA Dispatch # 1035-960. "Most Americans," writes Professor Lance deHaven-Smith of Florida State University, "will be shocked to learn that the conspiracy theory label was popularized as a pejorative term by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in a propaganda campaign initiated in 1967." This program was aimed at critics of the Warren Commission. The CIA requested that its own people and corporate media accomplices, including all its journalist assets, besmirch the good names of anyone who dared to point out the absurdities in the government claim that Lee Harvey Oswald, a man working for the CIA as a fall guy, could have killed Kennedy. Critics were branded as communists. "In the shadow of McCarthyism and the Cold War," deHaven-Smith continues, "this warning about communist influence was delivered simultaneously to hundreds of well-positioned members of the press in a global CIA propaganda network, infusing the conspiracy-theory label with powerfully negative associations."

So be careful how you use the term, if you don't want to be working with the assassins to silence their critics.

But my intention here is not to debate the obvious. In a season of thanksgiving and hope, I want to remind you to remember and honor JFK. Because he knew the horror of war and grasped the systemic evil of its proponents within his own government, John Kennedy grew out of the war machine – in James Douglass's words in *JFK and the Unspeakable*, when he was assassinated, JFK "was turning, Teshuvah, 'turning,' the rabbinic word for repentance," against war and toward peace as his actions in the last year of his life make crystal clear. As a result, the unspeakable deep-state forces murdered him. He knew they would, but as a man of great courage, he knew he must follow the words of Abraham Lincoln dear to his heart: "I know there is a God – and I see a storm coming. If he has a place for me, I believe that I am ready."

Hope comes from facing the truth, not from fleeing from it. The Trappist monk, Thomas Merton, called our denial of the truth about JFK and his turn toward peace that led to his murder by forces within his own government, the "unspeakable": "the void that gets into the language of public and official declarations at the very moment when they are pronounced, and makes them ring dead with the hollowness of the abyss." We are living in that abyss today. But we can still speak; we can refuse to be silenced. And in speaking up we will find hope.

Jim Douglass asks: "How can we take hope from a peacemaking president's assassination by his own national security state?"

He answers:

"The story of why John Kennedy died encircles the earth. Because JFK chose peace on earth at the height of the Cold War, he was executed. But he turned toward peace, in spite of the consequences to himself, humanity is still alive and struggling. That is hopeful, especially if we understand what he went through and what he has given us as his vision."

His life's story is the story of the courage to change radically and turn toward truth and peace-making no matter what the cost.

We should all raise our glasses in a Thanksgiving toast to John Kennedy. In his story is ours; the hope he bequeathed to us through his courageous death is one of hope for life. Our gratitude to JFK must follow with our commitment to oppose the killers in our own government who want to silence us all, now and forevermore.

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