

Killing the Dream 50 Years On. April-June 1968, the Murder of MLK and RFK

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Being a politically, among other things, naive young man circa 1968, this writer did not understand what in the hell was going on that year. Having read the Playboy interview with Jim Garrison in '67, before of course I got into my main reasons for buying the magazine, I was into the conspiracy theory of JFK's murder.

Garrison laid it out pretty well, and I should have 'known better' when MLK was shot down. That was in April, and now it was a hot and sticky June 5th morning. My college term, the first one for me, was now over and I was ready to enjoy the Brooklyn beaches and lovely Brooklyn girls, IF so lucky. The Democratic primary campaign was in full swing, and quite honestly my ignorance of things political was showing. I knew that many friends from Brooklyn College had worked for Eugene McCarthy, with some of them moving over to now work for Bobby as RFK was referred to. The Vietnam 'thing' was still far removed from me, as I had my 'cherished' student deferment. Nobody I hung out with had been drafted, though two of my friends did sign up for the Air Force. We all saw the 'War' being covered each and every night on the television news, and I only read the newspaper for the sports and horoscope. Such was my life that June 5th morning.

Turning on the FM radio to hear some rock and roll music, the news came across that *Bobby* had been shot. The DJ put on Jackie DeShannon's 1965 hit song 'What the world needs now is Love'. I remember sitting by our bedroom window and looking out. Too much to take that hot and sticky June morning. The radio and television shows had been interrupted to cover what had happened late last night at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. No going to the beach today for me. No, I just stayed around the block and hung out with my friends, all of us trying to make some sense of it all. The television news told us that some Arab had killed Kennedy because of some political gripe about the Palestinian problem in Israel. Sadly, I knew *nothing* of all this.

All I knew of *Bobby* was that he had come out against the Vietnam War and wanted to end it, as did McCarthy before him. LBJ had announced he was not running, and former Vice President Richard Nixon looked like the candidate for the Republicans. Nixon was not a favorite of many of my young peers, except of course the few who still supported the war. I knew he said he wanted to end it but his party had a recent history, with Goldwater in 1964, of being ready to A Bomb the enemy. That is what I naively knew of all of this.

The next morning the news came out that *Bobby* was dead. Two major civil and human rights leaders were shot down, only less than five years after JFK's murder. Something was not right here. I needed to find out, but few in the media would ever insinuate that both murders were the work of conspiracies.

No, the real 'Deep State', which controlled both the two political parties and the mainstream media (sound familiar?) had decided it was time for the country to first mourn and then 'Move on'. Well, perhaps conspiracy theories had been put on ice for awhile, but the nation only became more divided over Vietnam. That is when this writer 'broke his cherry' and began the slow process of growing up politically.

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