# THE ASSASSINATION OFJFK

22 November 1963



## Dallas 1963

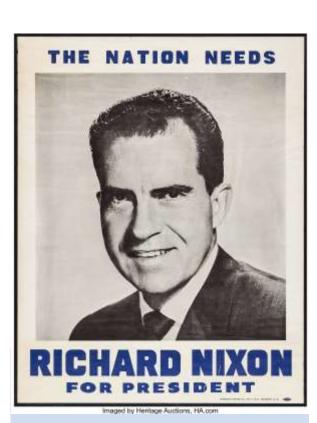
A city transformed by oil & industry Regional capital of finance & business



## Protestant & Republican

### Dallas voted for Nixon in 1960 (63%)

JFK elected president with the shortest of margin (118 000 votes)





## Kennedy unpopular in Texas

His policies against racial segregation

Deemed soft towards the Soviet Union and its ally (Cuba)

Kennedy campaigning for his re-election



## Dallas

Pop: 800,000

# Racial segregation Strong far-right



Kennedy-Johnson: a precarious « ticket »

## Dislike for the other Johnson: Kennedy's vice-president after 1964?

A visit to Texas: Johnson's idea

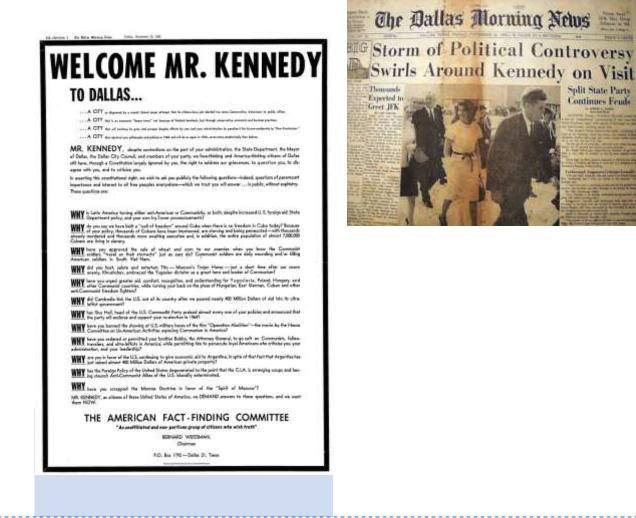


*"Welcome Mr. Kennedy!"* 

#### Black frame: a sign of mourning

#### "Mr. Kennedy" vs. Mr. President

Ad signed by The American Fact-Finding Committee (affiliated with John Birch Society: American ultra conservative & anti-communist advocacy group)



Split State Parts

Continues Feuds

# Mayor of Dallas: Earle Cabell

The brother of a general sacked by Kennedy following the Bay of Pigs failed invasion

Concerns amongst Democrats: should Dallas be avoided? Kennedy: NO!



# A successful visit so far...

11.40am: JFK and "Jackie" welcomed at the Dallas airport

A parade through the streets of Dallas



# Itinerary inspected by agents of *Secret Service*

## Founded in 1864

Initial mission: to investigate counterfeiters

Missions **to protect** the President of the U.S. as of 1898 (Spanish-American War)



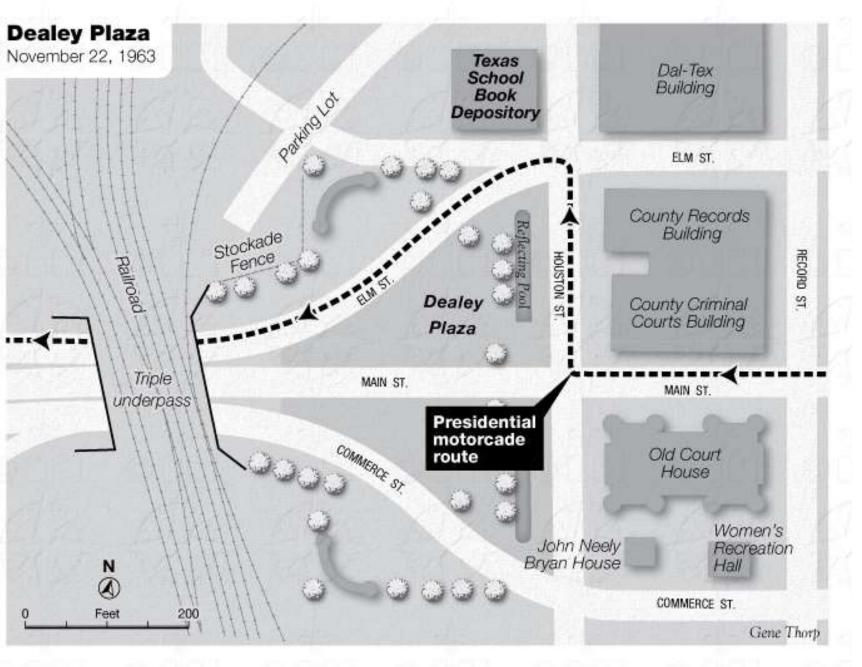
# 1902: assassination of President McKinley

Secret Service's sole mission: to protect the President and his family

600 agents in 1963 Dark suit, sunglasses & short hair

70 agents in Dallas to protect Kennedy and the *First Lady* 





# Itinerary slightly modified

#### A shortened parade

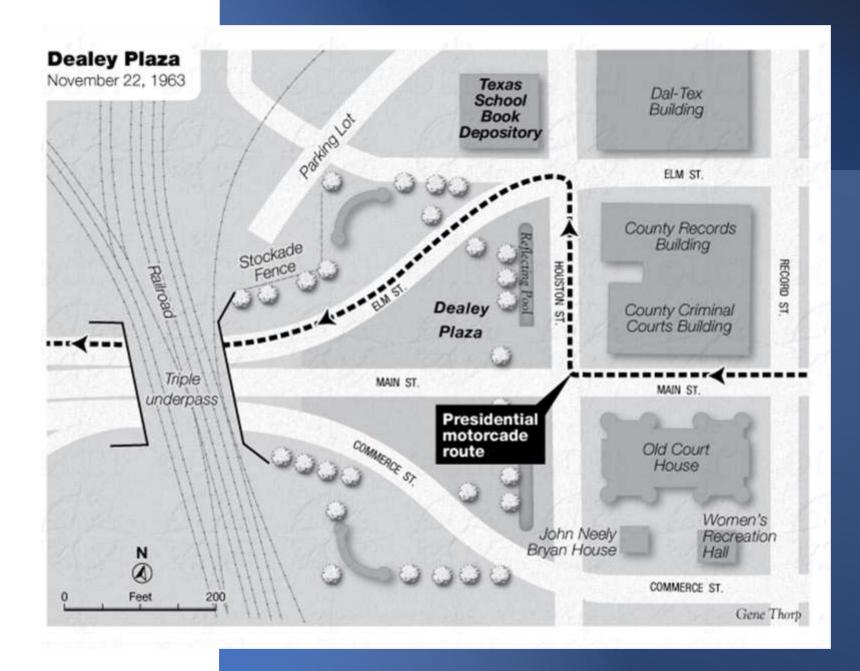
*Elm Street* instead of *Main Street* (easier access to a highway)

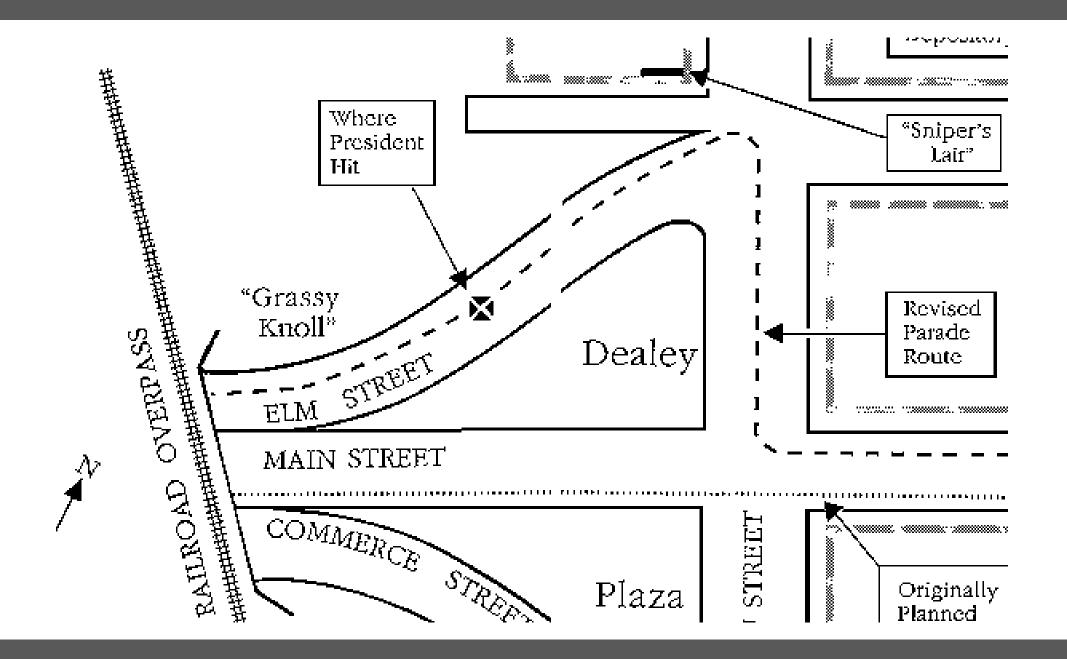
The presidential motorcade to slow down before a left turn on *Elm Street* 



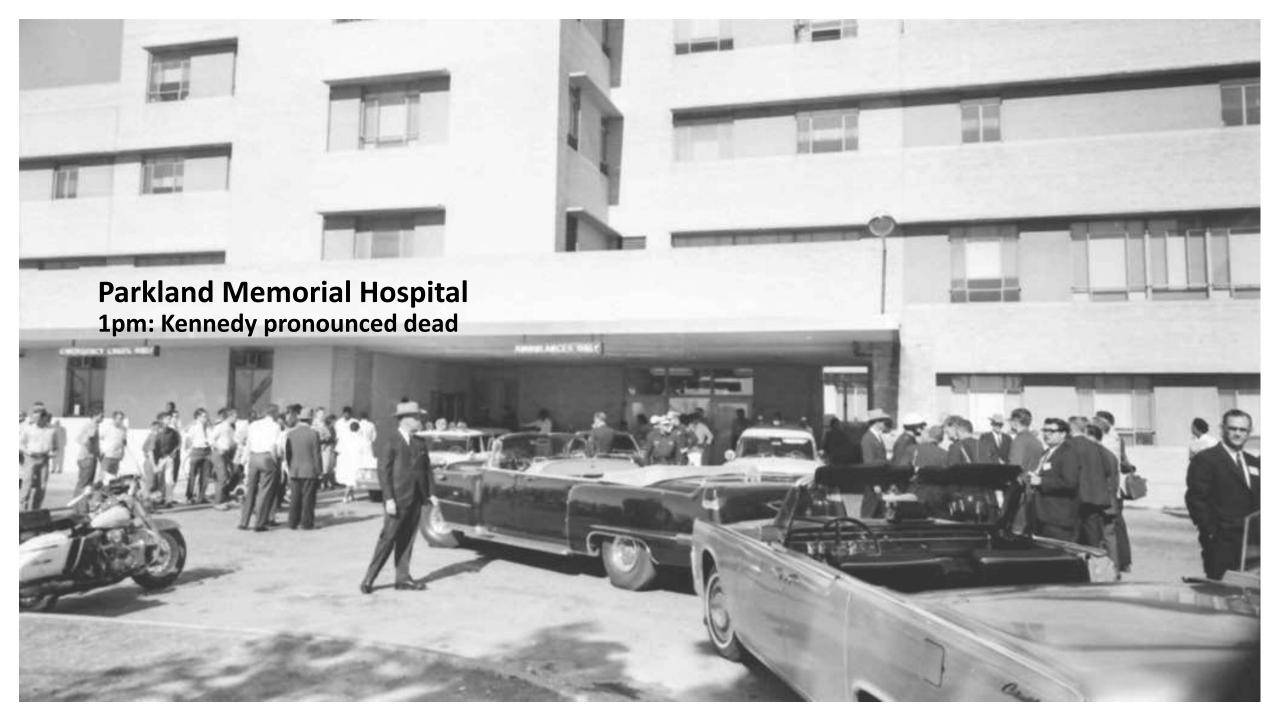












Malcolm Kilduff

#### **Assistant White House Press Secretary**

Lyndon Johnson: "I think I had better get out of here ... before you announce it. We don't know whether this is a worldwide conspiracy, whether they are after me as well as they were after President Kennedy..."





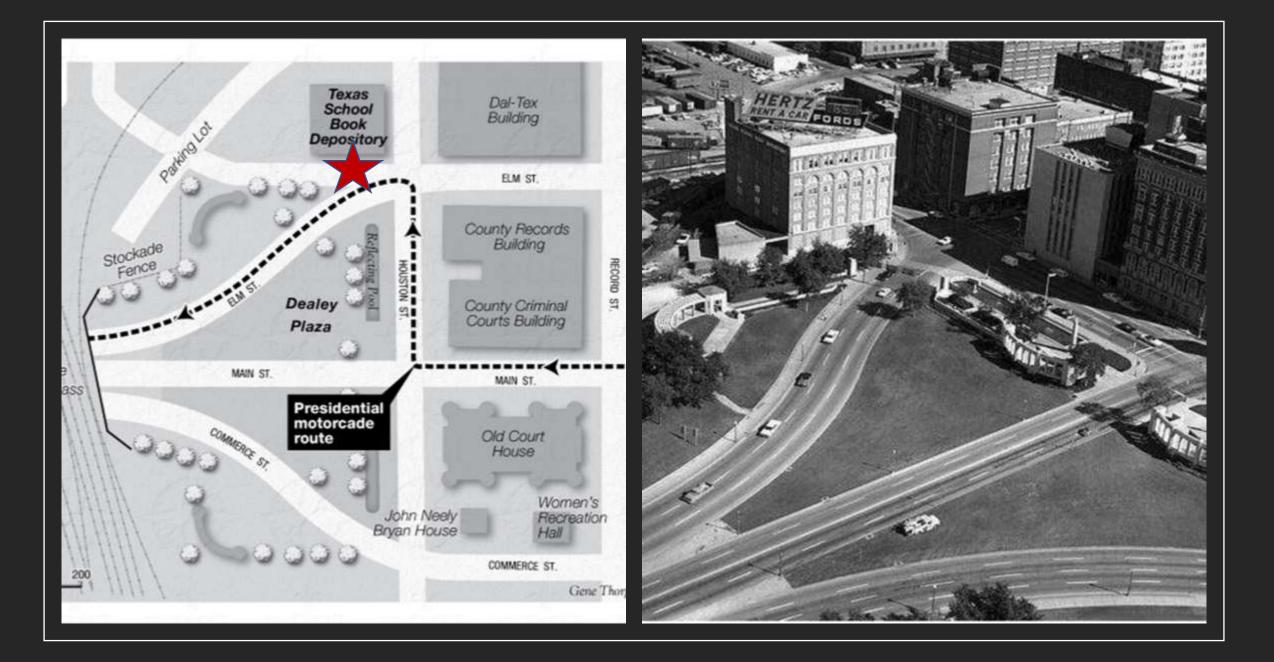
# Controversy surrounding the autopsy

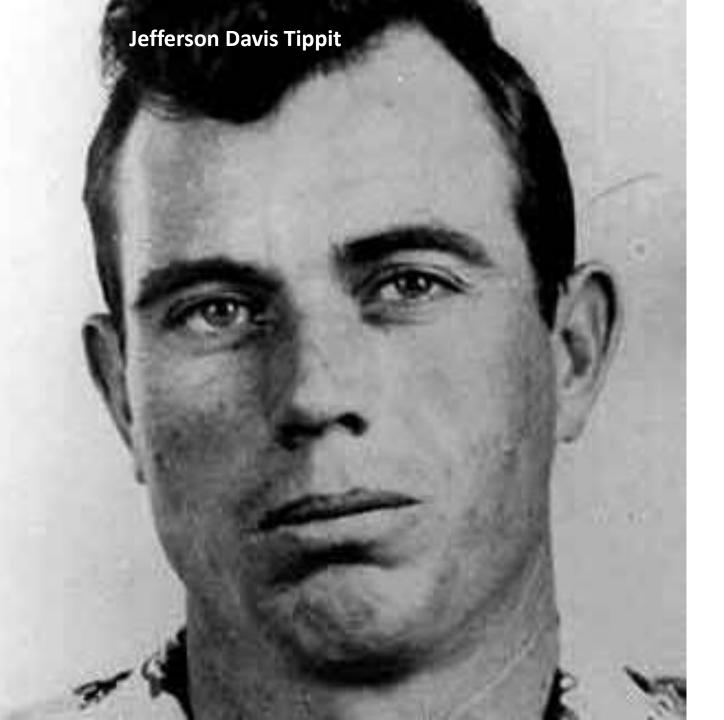
Texas law: autopsy to be performed in Texas when homicide in Texas

Secret Service opposed to autopsy in Texas Suspicious behavior? "I want them to see what they have done to my husband"

2.30pm: Lyndon Johnson's swearing in







# Early investigation

Texas School Book Depository (5<sup>th</sup> floor): **3** bullet casings A paper bag Leftovers from a meal (chicken, empty bottle of Coca-Cola, empty pack of cigarettes) Hidden sniper riffle Half-open window

**12.45pm**: suspect's description White man, average size, dark hair, in his 30s

1.16pm: a police officer shot

#### Jesse Edward Curry (Dallas Chief of Police)

### The investigation

### Multiple actors

A murder in 1963: not a federal crime

Dallas police officially in charge under the "gaze" of the *district attorney* 

Early involvement of federal branches of police & judiciary

# Attorney General: Robert Kennedy

The **FBI** (*Federal Bureau of Investigation*)

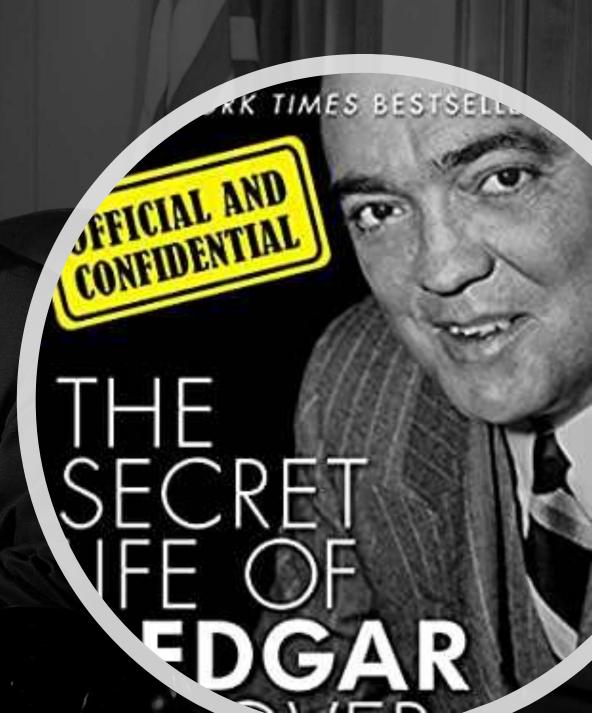
## **Charles Bonaparte**

A permanent police under the control of the Department of Justice (1908)

# John Edgar Hoover

Appointed in 1924 A close friend of Lyndon Johnson

A system of surveillance (illegal): public and private information on every U.S. politician



The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

A foreign intelligence service

Its charter forbids its agents to intervene in the U.S.

Rule NEVER followed!



2pm

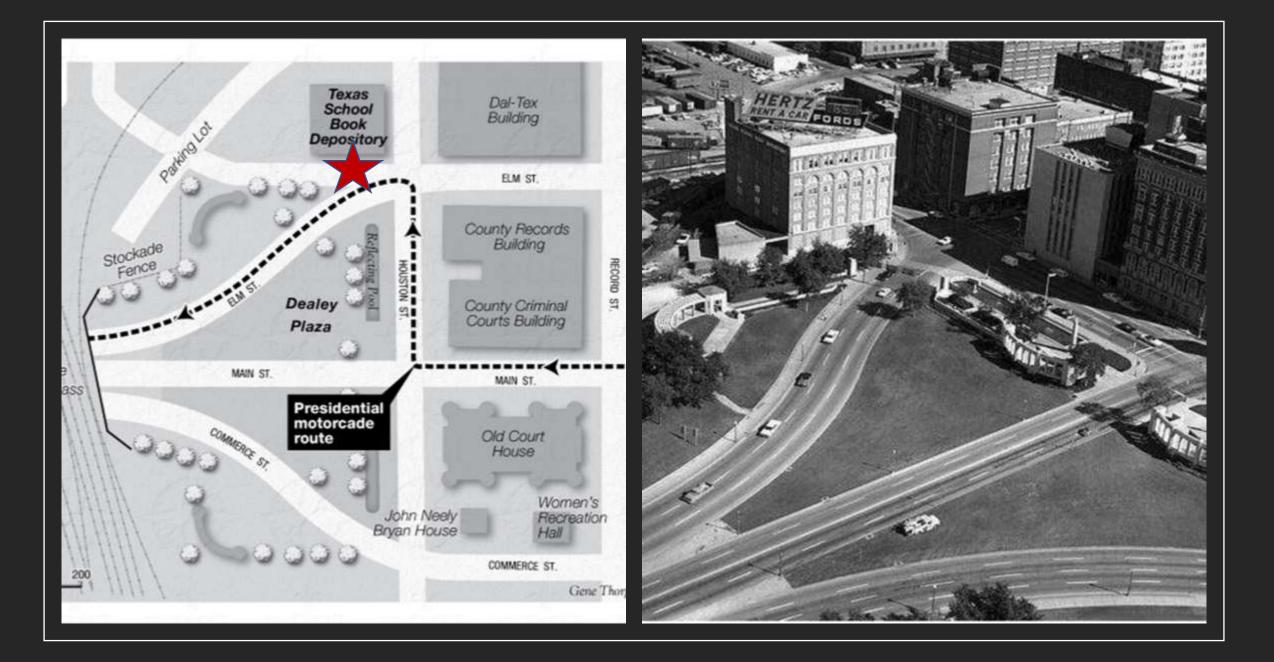
## A young man arrested



## Lee Harvey Oswald

## Age 23

Storekeeper at the Texas School Book Depository





## Lee Harvey Oswald

Suspected of murdering police officer Tippit (later formally identified by witnesses)

Revolver and fake identification (Alek J. Hidell)



## **Evidence** pointing towards Oswald

- Sniper riffle found (5<sup>th</sup> floor) bought purchased by mail by someone named *"Hidell"*
- 2. Delivered at a P.O. Box used by... Oswald
  - 3. Purchase order completed by Oswald (graphology)



## Oswald's wife, Marina, interrogated

### Confirmation Oswald owned a **sniper riffle** similar to the one found at the *Texas School Book Depository*

Witness declared having seen Oswald carrying a long object in a brown **paper bag** 

23 November, 1.30am: Oswald arraigned

### Photos

### Oswald carrying a riffle similar to the one found and holding communists newspapers

Fakes?

Marina confirmed she took the photos...

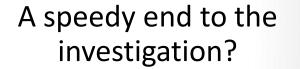
## Early conclusions

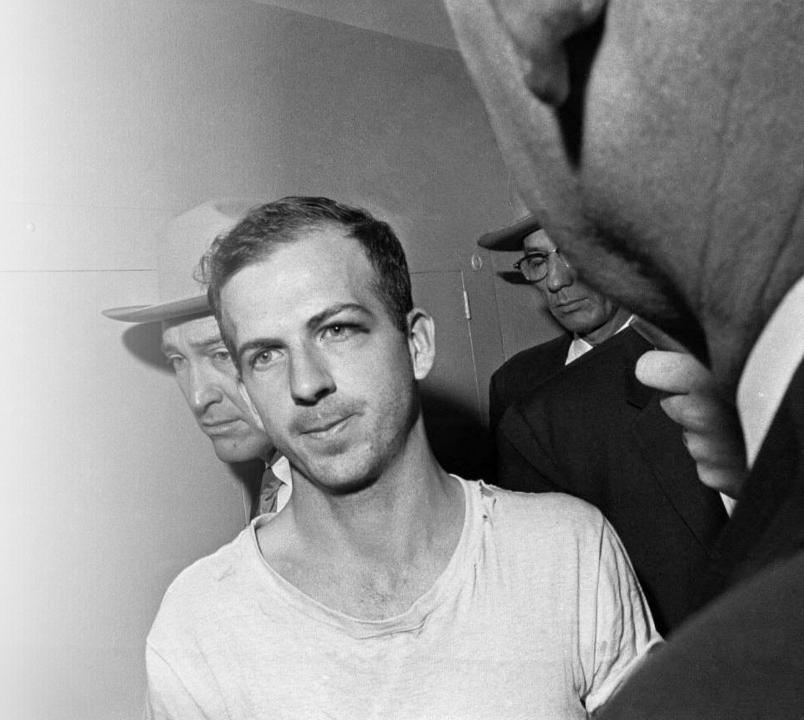
Oswald: a communist & Castro supporter

A former *marine* who left the army and lived in the Soviet Union (Minsk)

Oswald shot Kennedy and acted alone

Oswald: « I am just a patsy »









### 24 November, 11.20am

#### Oswald shot to death

Who shot Oswald? Jack Ruby Close to the local mafia What motives? Acted alone to avenge Kennedy and to avoid the ordeal of a public trial







## 25 November: JFK's funeral

### The funeral of Abraham Lincoln as a model

3 days of national mourning

Jackie: the image of the young widow, dignified







The assassination of JFK: a **conspiracy**? A formal investigation in Congress? Who benefited from the crime?

## Johnson's reaction: executive order 11130 appointing a presidential Commission (Warren Commission)

Earl Warren: Chief Justice Supreme Court to preside over the Commission

## 27 September 1964

## **Conclusions**: Oswald and Ruby acted alone

**NO conspiracy** to assassinate JFK

24 November 1964: 26 volumes published

PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE Assassination of President Kennedy 200 Maryland Ave. N.E. Wishington, D.C. 2002 Telephone 543–1400

September 24, 1964

J. LEE RANKIN, General Council

The President The White House Washington, D. C.

WAXAS

ST & BUMPLL

BRICLOY

Dear Mr. President:

Your Commission to investigate the assassination of President Kennedy on November 22, 1963, having completed its assignment in accordance with Executive Order No. 11130 of November 29, 1963, herewith submits its final report.



## 3 November 1964

Lyndon Johnson elected president (58% of popular vote)





## Growing doubts...

How was Oswald able to shoot twice successfully at the presidential motorcade from the 5th floor of a building?

Oswald identified and arrested so very quickly (2 hours following the assassination)

Total lack of protection within the police station leading to Oswald's murder



Did Ruby shoot Oswald to prevent him from talking & protect those who plotted the assassination?



# THE WARREN REPORT

The Official Report on the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy Skepticism

The appointment of **Allen Dulles** (Warren Commission): hated Kennedy who had sacked him following the Bay of Pigs fiasco

## The investigation led by the FBI

## No investigators appointed by the Commission

Hoover's dislike for the Kennedy brothers

A cascade of **counterinvestigations** and publications



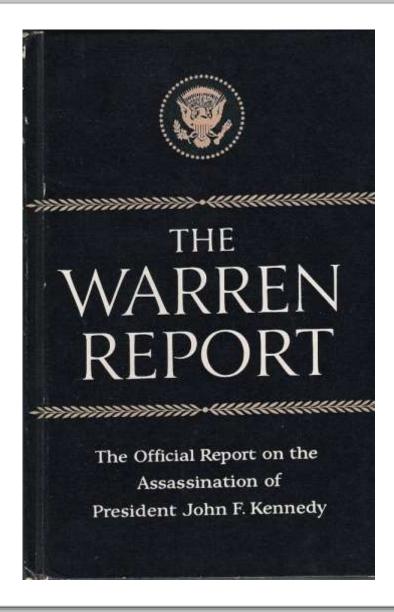
## **Troubling facts**

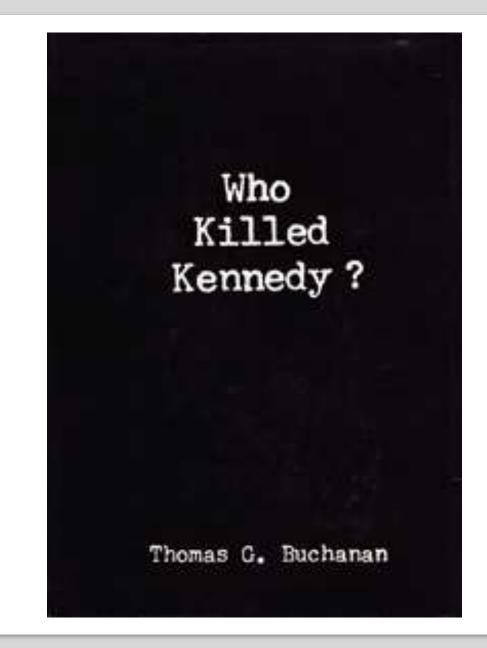
Multiple contradictions

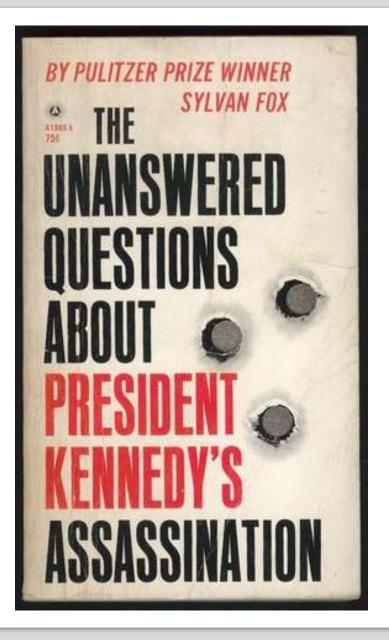
Testimonies not in line with the official version **not included** in the final report

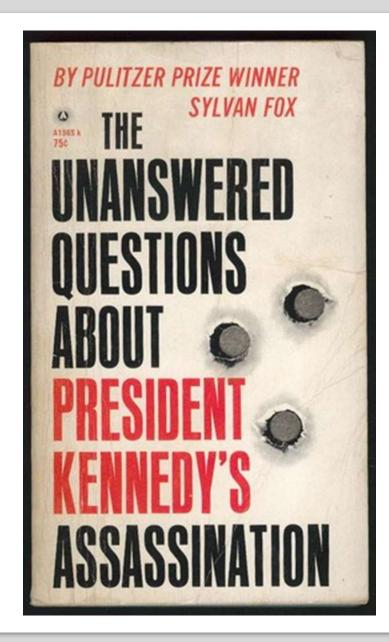
Forensic ballistics & medical conclusions: **no counter-expertise** 

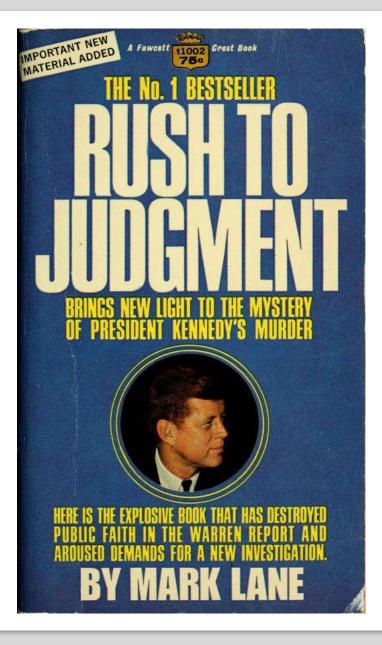
Ruby's statements about "conspiracies" not investigated











## Summer 1966: a new investigation

New Orleans *District Attorney* Earling Carothers "Jim" Garrison

Lawyer, former FBI agent His conclusion: Kennedy was the victim of conspiracy

Violent criticisms



**Louis Stokes** 

### A second official report

**1976**: the **U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Assassinations** (HSCA)

Conclusions in 1978: Martin Luther King & JFK likely assassinated as a result of "conspiracies"

FBI requested to resume its investigation (never seriously done!)



## **Films** amongst incriminating evidence

The famous footage shot by **Abraham Zapruder** ("Zapruder film")



### **Reasonable doubts**

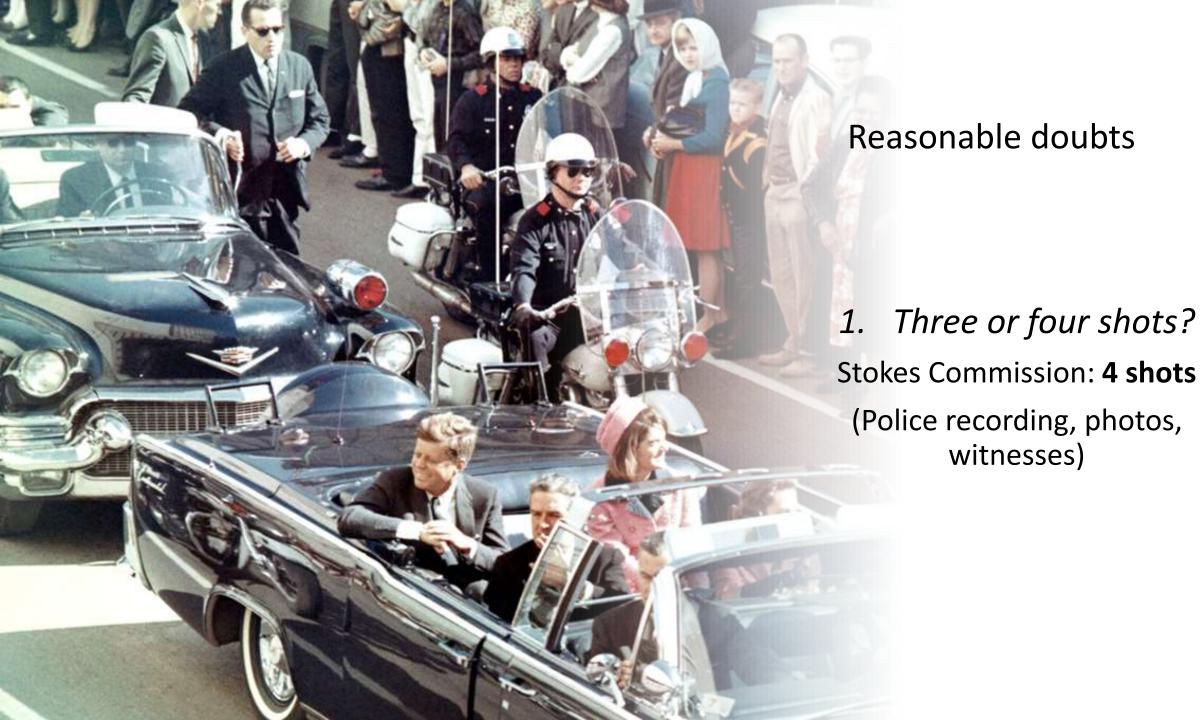
## 1. Three or four shots?

Warren Commission: Oswald shot Kennedy 3 times

Zapruder film: the shooting lasted **6 seconds** 

3 shots within 6 seconds with a deficient rifle: an exploit!





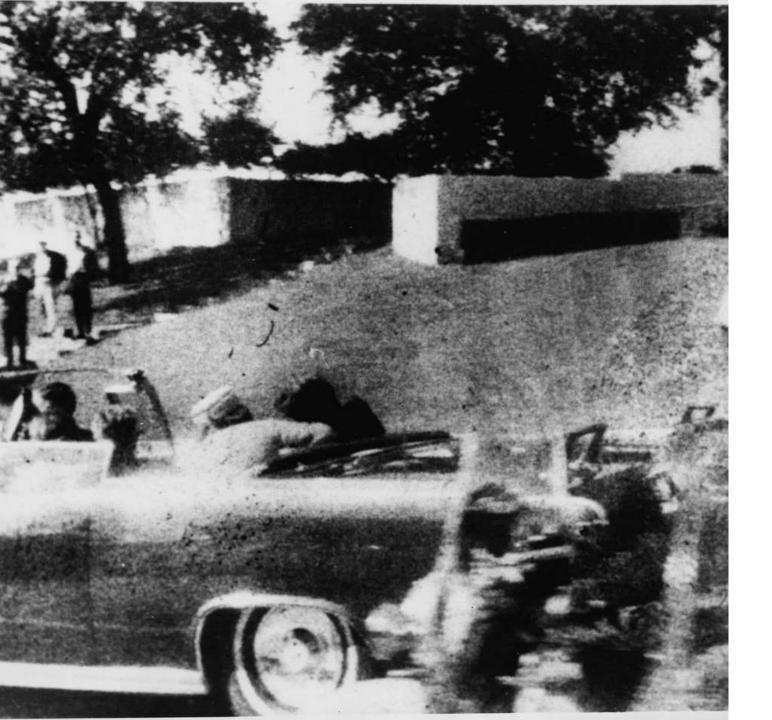


## 2. The *"magic bullet"*

Warren Commission: first bullet hit Kennedy in the back before hitting the governor in the wrist then the thigh...

Bullet was intact (no alteration)

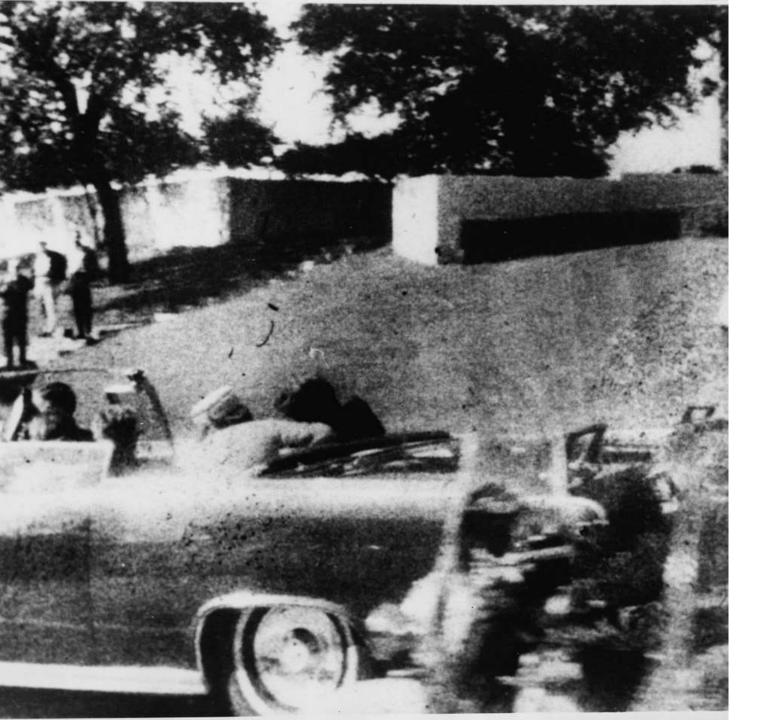
Extraordinary exceptions to all the forensic ballistic rules



## 3. Where did the shot come from?

Zapruder film: sudden jerky movement towards the back at the time of the fatal shot



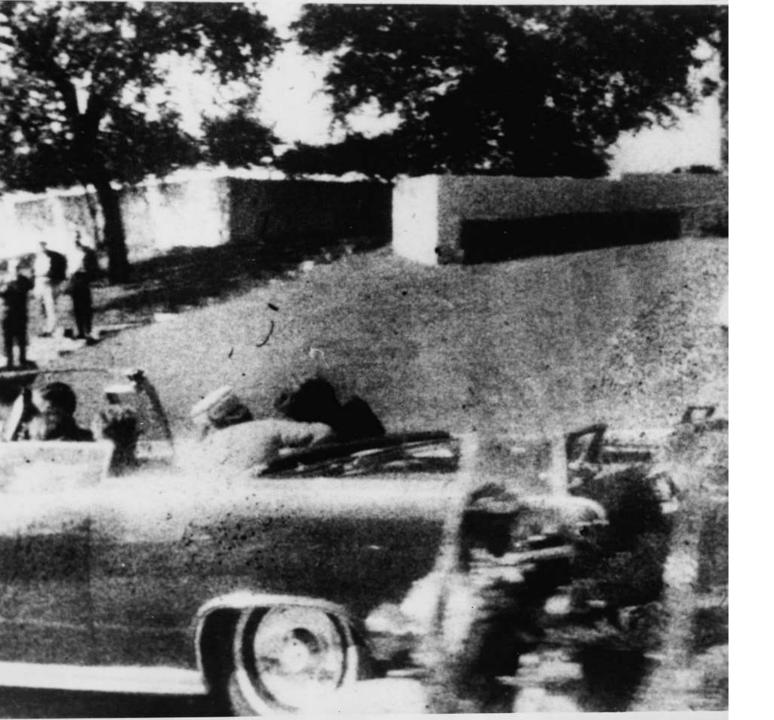


## 3. Where did the shot come from?

Zapruder film: sudden jerky movement towards the back at the time of the fatal shot **as if a frontal shot** 

Fact not produced by the Warren Commission

Film made public in 1970: jerky movement reversed!



## 3. Where did the shot come from?

### Witnesses: a second shooter

## 4. Did Oswald shoot the president?

### **Stokes Commission**: 4 shots Oswald could not have acted alone

Warren Commission: 3 shots Negative "paraffin test" (no trace of powder on Oswald's hands and face

Oswald helped in his flight from the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of *Texas School Book Depository*?



5. Oswald: what motive?

#### Warren Commission: Oswald acted alone Pro-Castro supporter

Stokes Commission: doubts over Oswald pro-Castro feelings Oswald: ideal candidate to infiltrate pro-Castro groups Oswald being manipulated?



## 6. Oswald's assassination

Warren Commission: Ruby acted alone for personal reasons without any help

Ruby got help to enter the police station by a back door

# 7. Jack Ruby's personality

#### Warren Commission: Ruby's past and motives little investigated

Likely worked for the local mafia

Well introduced amongst police circles (recognized seconds following him shooting Oswald!)



#### Theories

Doubts and unanswered questions: numerous conspiracy theories



# Murder commissioned by Lyndon Johnson?

F

The least likely theory

Crime organized by the CIA FBI complicit to keep a lid on the investigation

> "Jim" Garrison's thesis Oliver Stone's JFK (1991)

Suspicious individuals employed by the CIA

The efforts of the CIA and the FBI to hide facts and discredit all those who did not agree with Warren Commission

The high mortality rate amongst witnesses



## The mafia avenging itself

Joe Kennedy (JFK's father) made a fortune in financial speculation and traffic of alcohol

Ties with leaders of the American mafia

Mafia contributed financially to JFK's election





## Mafia disappointed

#### **Robert Kennedy** as *attorney general*: fight against organized crime as a priority

Policy of appeasement towards Cuba: little hope of regaining its footing on the island

#### General de Gaulle's analysis

A "OAS-type of operation"

The OAS (Organisation Armée Secrète – Secret Armed Organization): a French dissident paramilitary organization during the Algerian War

## JFK: many enemies

The Far-Right: policies against racial segregation and efforts to achieve a *détente* with the Soviet Union

Oil industry & industrialists: fiscal policy

The Military, the anti-Castro and those involved in covert operations against Cuba



## JFK: many enemies

The Military: Kennedy's indecision (Vietnam) Reduction of military budget

The organized crime

The CIA: the sacking of those responsible for the failed Bay of Pigs invasion



#### Who did it?

Involvement of high-ranking government officials unlikely

CIA, anti-Castro groups, police, FBI, mafia collaborated in New Orleans

To get rid of Fidel Castro and tougher policy towards the Soviet Union

# Oswald: a convenient scapegoat

Oswald manipulated To be eliminated following the shooting Oswald responsible for the murder of police officer Tippit?

Was Oswald supposed to be eliminated at the theater (lack to time)?

