

"A Defining Moment" Sixty Years after the Assassination of John F. Kennedy

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Dr. Richard Gay

Welcome to *30 Brave Minutes*, a podcast of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. In *30 Brave Minutes*, we'll give you something interesting to think about. I'm Richard Gay, Dean of the College, and with me are Drs. Joanna Hersey and Ashley Allen. Today, we're going to be talking about the JFK assassinations, with us are Dr. Josiah Marineau, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, and Dr. James Hudson, Assistant Professor in History.

Now get ready for *30 Brave Minutes*!

Thank you so much for joining us today guys!

Dr. Josiah Marineau

Thank you for having us!

Dr. James Hudson

Thank you, it's great to be here.

Dr. Richard Gay

We really appreciate it, I understand it's sixty years ago that the JFK assassination took place, could you take a minute and tell us about some of the main actors involved in this?

Dr. James Hudson

I guess I'll start. In terms of President Kennedy himself, he came from a very wealthy and politically active family. His maternal grandfather John Fitzgerald, he was named after, was mayor of Boston in the early 20th century. All four of his grandparents were descended from Irish immigrants, he had several siblings, but his oldest brother Joseph Junior was actually killed in World War II during a top secret aerial reconnaissance mission. His father, Joseph Kennedy, was a prominent business man and philanthropist and he had political aspirations for all his children. And then John, could have been 4F because of various health problems that he had, even before the war, but he really wanted to serve in the war, and used his father's connections to get a commission in the Navy. Early in his naval career he had an affair with a Danish-American journalist Inga Arvad, who many believe was a German spy. So even early in his career there's some interesting connections going on.

Kennedy was a crewman on a PT boat, and in August 1943, his PT109 collided with a Japanese destroyer near the Solomon Islands, and he received a Navy Marine Corps Medal for Heroism in rescuing his shipmates. After the war, he served in the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate. In 1953 he married Jacqueline Bouvier, with whom he had four children. While he was a Senator he published *Profiles in Courage*, which won the Pulitzer Prize, it may have been ghostwritten by his speechwriter.

Dr. Josiah Marineau

Would that be Ted Sorensen?

Dr. James Hudson

Yeah. He was the youngest President at the time of his inauguration at 43, he was the first Irish-American, first Catholic President. He campaigned on this really, I think, this optimistic program, I think, targeted at a younger generation of voters called the New Frontier Campaign, as an example for the U.S. I think his youth and optimism won people over.

Dr. Gay

Well, what was his Presidency like?

Dr. Josiah Marineau

So, his Presidency is memorable for a number of reasons, the most obvious reason is how it ends. One of the reasons why Kennedy is such a fixture in the American political imagination is because of the way he was assassinated. But the beginning of his Presidency was suffused with a lot of hope, so as James was just saying, his campaign theme was this notion of a new frontier. So this is 1950-1960, the U.S. has just gone through a decade of very high economic growth, and so there was a real sense of prosperity and hope for the future. And his campaign I think for a lot of people was really seen as capturing that, because he was so young. He was the youngest President, as was just said, he was 43 by the time he was inaugurated, so he was a youthful President, had a very, kind of, good-looking wife, he looked very healthy. Now we know in retrospect he had some very serious health problems, but he seemed to really capture this hope for the country, that the United States was getting into.

So his Presidency only lasts a little over a thousand days, it's interesting, political scientists have a little more of a skeptical view of it in some ways, than the popular imagination, popular memory. But some of the highlights was, he got the country through a period of intense negotiation with the Soviet Union, this is the Cuban Missile Crisis, where he almost goes to war against the Soviets because of the presence of nuclear weapons in Communist-controlled Cuba. So that was the closest the United States has ever gotten to an actual nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union, it's the closest ever since, until recent memory.

Dr. Richard Gay

So his presidency is sometimes looked at as a golden age, and that's why it's referred to as Camelot?

Dr. Josiah Marineau

It was referred to as that. So the people that he brought into office with him were seen as some of the brightest and hardest working, meritocrats. So Robert McNamara becomes the Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara worked for General Motors, and he really kind of revolutionized the way cars were produced, and the thought was these new, smart, young, successful people were going to go into government and kind of carry on that success. So this idea of the White House and the government being like a citadel of competence and something that you can trust, is really part of the Kennedy legacy.

Dr. Joanna Hersey

So tell us now about Lee Harvey Oswald.

Dr. James Hudson

Sure. So, in every contrast to Kennedy, Lee Harvey Oswald grew up with a troubled childhood. His father died of a heart attack soon after he was born, he spent time as a kid living in Fort Worth, Texas, New York, and New Orleans. By the age of twelve he was in juvenile detention, and labelled as emotionally disturbed. He may have had a learning disability but he was apparently a voracious reader, and developed an avid interest in Marxist and Socialist literature as early as the age of fifteen apparently.

At age seventeen he joined the Marine Corps, where he also had difficulty with authority, he was court marshaled twice, sent to the brig, he was radar operator. So there's three classifications of marksmanship in the Marine Corps, and I know this because I served in the Marine Corps myself, expert, sharpshooter, and marksman. Oswald was not an expert, he was a sharpshooter and then qualified as a marksman, the lowest one, what we call 'pizza box.' I was a pizza box myself.

Dr. Josiah Marineau

I think I was a sharpshooter.

Dr. James Hudson

And the Marine Corps rifle range is very rigorous, and the rifles that Oswald trained with, most likely the M1 or perhaps even the M14, were autoloading rifles. The weapon that Oswald used in the assassination was a bolt-action rifle, that he had to re-chamber a round every time it was fired. And so this raised the question of if, in fact, he had the skills to fire three quick

shots in succession, using a bolt-action rifle on a moving target, 265 feet away. It would have taken Oswald or an expert shot at least 2.3 seconds to reload his weapon between firing three shots, and this doesn't exactly line up with the timing of the shots. So it's highly debated.

After Oswald served in the Marines, he defected to the Soviet Union in October 1959, where he met and married Marina Prusakova, with whom he had two children. While in the Soviet Union, Oswald attempted to renounce his American citizenship, he worked at a factory in Minsk as a lathe operator at an electronics factory. His standard of living in Minsk was quite higher than the average worker there. He was under constant surveillance, some of the former KGB agents that were charged with observing him in the Frontline documentary, "Who Was Lee Harvey Oswald," were interviewed for that, said he was pretty unremarkable as a subject of surveillance, not very interesting, if we are thinking of any conspiracy with the Soviets.

The Oswalds returned to the U.S. in 1962, and we're getting closer to the date of the shooting, and settled in Dallas Fort-Worth. When the Oswalds returned to the U.S. they were met at the airport by his brother Robert, who was also interviewed in the Frontline piece, and said that Oswald was really surprised not to see any media or press there to greet him, you know, because he had lived this life as a semi-celebrity, married a Russian woman, but nobody was there, and Oswald was disappointed by that.

In April 1963, Oswald attempted to assassinate former Major General Edwin Walker at his residence but failed to hit him. Walker was a known anti-Communist, segregationist, and member of the John Burch Society. In late September, Oswald travelled to Mexico City where he met with officials from the Cuban embassy, and expressed his wish to visit Cuba and return to the Soviet Union.

Dr. Richard Gay

Hmmm, interesting stuff, thank you.

Dr. Ashley Allen

So, I just wanted to say, it sounds like he's an ideal villain in this story.

Dr. Josiah Marineau

So he's kind of, when I read about Lee Harvey Oswald, what comes to mind to me, is he is someone who we would never have heard about, except for the fact that he assassinated a President.

Dr. James Husdon

Right...sure.

Dr. Josiah Marineau

Now, he did have a knack for showing up in places and making himself known, but he would just be, not even a footnote in history, aside from the fact that he perpetrated this terrible crime. But he was unique for having defected, in the 50s and 60s, it was not very common for people from the West to go to the Soviet Union, and this kind of gets to some of the conspiracy theory things that James is referring to, so if someone from the United States goes to the Soviet Union and tried to renounce their citizenship, that person is going to be on the radar of U.S. intelligence services, especially if the person tries to come back. And so there's lots of speculation about whether he was like a false defector, quote unquote, like maybe he was sent by the CIA to go to the Soviet Union and then return. That kind of thing is alleged to have happened, but my read on Lee Harvey Oswald is he was actually an unstable person, he could not hold down a job, he was very erratic in his personal behavior. This is the last kind of person that a government is going to rely upon to carry out something sensitive like an assassination of a rival country's leadership

Dr. James Hudson

Yeah, that's my assessment of him as well. He, I think, very much wanted to be the center of attention...but he didn't really...

Dr. Josiah Marineau

Exactly. He seemed to have an inferiority complex....

Dr. James Hudson

Yeah.

Dr. Josiah Marineau

Or he thought that he was going to get back at the system for not giving him the recognition that he deserved, or again, this kind of inferiority complex.

Dr. Joanna Hersey

Can we go over the basic facts of the day?

Dr. Josiah Marineau

Right, so Kennedy, this is in '63, he's up for reelection in the next year, and Texas was one of the key states that Kennedy would need to win, in order to get reelected as President. What was happening in Texas at the time, so of course, his Vice President at the time is a man named Lyndon Baines Johnson, who is from Texas, he was a Texas Senator for twelve years, and he was going to Texas to try and shore up some kind of dispute that was taking place between the Texas democratic party leadership. So he arrives on the 21st, he does a few

tours in San Antonio and Houston, then he flies into Dallas on the morning of the 22nd. And he's going to Dallas to attend a luncheon at something called the Trade Mart.

He arrives, and he's kind of known by the Secret Service as being a little bit too forward, he wants to mix with the public, so he's supposed to drive from Love Field to the Trade Mart, it's about a ten mile drive, and they were going to go through downtown Dallas. The route they were going to take had actually been published in a Dallas newspaper in the days prior to his arrival, so it was known where he was going to be. He ends up driving through downtown Dallas, and then they divert through something called Dealey Plaza, which is this last plaza before you get to the interstate and the Trade Mart. He drives through Dealey Plaza, there is a building called the Texas Schoolbook Depository, and then within a few seconds of arriving at Dealey Plaza, driving through, shots begin to ring out.

The first shot, and there's a little bit of dispute on the ordering of the shots but the first shot is thought to have missed completely, and maybe hit some debris, one of the viewers of the parade had some very minor wounds from like grass or rocks hitting, and getting scraped, and then two shots hit the vehicle in which Kennedy was traveling. The first shot goes through Kennedy's neck, you can see this occur on something called the Zapruder film, which is probably the most viewed film in history. It's probably about a minute long, and it captures on film the assassination of JFK. You can see the first shot when Kennedy slumps forward, his arms start to rise, because of the reaction to the shot going thorough his neck, and that shot seems to have gotten through him and into the person in front of him, the Texas Governor John Connally. John Connally, it kind of ricochets thorough his body.

He probably would have survived that first shot, had that been the only shot that hit him. The second shot hits him in the upper rear, right part of his skull, and that's what kills President Kennedy. It literally causes his skull to explode. And you can capture this, in cartographic detail, on the Zapruder film if you take the time to watch it. This happens very quickly, it's a matter of seconds, as James was just explaining. The Secret Service don't know what's happening, the tragedy is his car was uncovered. It was uncovered because there was a light rain that Friday morning, but by the time the parade had started, the rain had stopped. It was a beautiful day, so the car was uncovered.

After Kennedy is shot, they go to Parkland Memorial Hospital, and within, essentially the doctors knew he was not going to survive the injury, but by 1PM he was declared officially deceased by the doctors at the hospital.

Dr. Ashley Allen

Okay, so what made JFK's assassination so uniquely devastating for many Americans at that time?

Dr. James Hudson

I think the fact that he was so young, and killed in such a violent way, I think was really shocking and tragic for a lot of people. It was covered on television.

Dr. Ashley Allen

Right.

Dr. James Hudson

And who hasn't seen that, Walter Cronkite's address to the nation, and Walter Cronkite breaking down, Cronkite was like the father of the news, you know, and even he lost his composure over it. You know, even Oswald's assassination of Jack Ruby was on television, so it was a televised, media-covered event, I think that's what was unique about it, it was the first of a series of major assassinations in the 1960s, Malcolm X in 1965 and then MLK and RFK in 1968. Kennedy was the fourth president assassinated, the most recent to have died in office, and it was a defining moment for anyone alive at that time. Everyone remembers where they were and what they were doing, like Pearl Harbor. The journalist Dan Rather is quoted as saying that the assassination "will be talked about one hundred years from now, a thousand years from now, in somewhat the same way as people discuss the Iliad, different people read Homer's description of the war and come to different conclusions and so it shall be for Kennedy's death."

In addition to these assassinations, this is a time when the U.S. was becoming increasingly involved in Vietnam, which started in Kennedy's administration, and then his successor, President Johnson, escalated, as well as various inner-city conflicts, the anti-war movement, student protests, Civil Rights, and things like that.

Chancellor Cummings

*This is Chancellor Robin Cummings and I want to thank you for listening to 30 Brave Minutes. Our faculty and students provide expertise, energy, and passion driving our region forward. Our commitment to southeastern North Carolina has never been stronger through our teaching, our research, and our community outreach. I want to encourage you to consider making a tax-deductible contribution to the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. With your help, we will continue our impact for generations to come. You can donate online at [www.uncp.edu/give](http://www.uncp.edu/give). Thanks again for listening. Now back for more 30 Brave Minutes.*

Dr. Richard Gay

Was there any speculation that if he had only lived, Vietnam wouldn't have happened?

Dr. Josiah Marineau

There's a lot of counter-factual thoughts about that, and obviously we won't know, but we also forget how many U.S. troops were actually in Vietnam when Kennedy was assassinated. Now they weren't considered combat troops, they were considered advisors, but there were thousands, tens of thousands, I think there was around 13,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam by the time he was assassinated in '63. So, now of course whether he would have escalated in the same way that Johnson did we'll never know, but again this is one thing that political scientists tend to come down a little harder on, that his decision to escalate in Vietnam was not a given, his role in the removal of the Vietnamese President, a man named Ngo Dinh Diem, was another kind of thing the U.S. does that escalates our involvement in the country. So, we won't know, but he was pretty involved in Vietnam, much more than the public was aware of at that time.

Dr. Richard Gay

Thank you for that. Let's go back to the assassination itself, what happened in the weeks and days after the event took place?

Dr. Josiah Marineau

Well, the first thing is, we didn't have a President, and I think we assume nowadays that it's always obvious that the Vice President assumes the role of the Presidency. It's actually not, at least it wasn't at the time. It wasn't nearly as clear, and so especially after FDR dies in office in 1945, and then Truman succeeds him. So the question of who becomes President, that was still relatively clear, and then the question of when. So, okay, if Johnson who is the Vice President is going to become President, when is that going to happen? Should he do it in Dallas, because he's in Dallas, he was in the car behind Kennedy when Kennedy was killed. Does he get inaugurated, or get sworn in, in Dallas, or does he wait to come back to Washington, D.C., in other words, should Kennedy return to D.C. still as President, at least in a symbolic sense. For various reasons, that were controversial for the Kennedy family, Johnson decides to be sworn in, in Dallas, so he is sworn in at 2:38PM on that Friday afternoon. A federal judge in the Dallas area is asked to come swear him in, and she does so on Air Force One, and there's an iconic photograph of Johnson taking the oath of office, standing next to Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy, wearing the same outfit she was wearing when the President was shot, and actually still having some of the blood and the debris on her outfit from that shooting. So it's a very iconic, very sad photo, because she is obviously just stricken with grief and shock of what's just taken place.

So we need a new President, he gets sworn in, and then the question of what to do with Kennedy's remains. There is an autopsy that night, to determine the exact cause of death and to determine the facts of the angles of the shots and what not. This becomes another sticking



point for some of the conspiracy theories, there is a thought that the autopsy was rushed, and that the people who performed it were not sufficiently qualified for the most important homicide of that year, so there is some details about that.

And then, the funeral, on November 25th, where you have 1200 people attending the funeral from over 90 countries at St. Matthews Cathedral in Washington D.C. and then another iconic moment of JFK junior saluting his father's casket as it passes on the way to Arlington National Cemetery where Kennedy was laid to rest. Nowadays there's an eternal flame that's burning over his casket, that was put in place in '67, but that funeral and that photo in particular, again is one of those lingering memories that we have of his funeral.

Dr. Richard Gay

Absolutely, and I just think of the courage it took for all of the parties in the aftermath to be able to continue to function, because clearly everyone was in shock, and could you imagine taking the oath of office immediately after witnessing something like that? Or being the spouse?

Dr. Josiah Marineau

And for Johnson, this becomes a real problem, because his cabinet members, are all Kennedy people, they were not Johnson people, and there was a big cultural distinction between the two. So it makes it difficult for Johnson to function in office for those first few years.

Dr. Joanna Hersey

Let's come back to Jack Ruby, because you brought him up before, who was he and what was that piece of the story?

Dr. James Hudson

Jack Ruby was a Dallas nightclub owner who had possible connections to the mob and the Chicago Outfit, this Chicago mafia organization, and led many to believe that he was part of an assassination plot to kill the President and his assassin after the shooting took place. Ruby was the part owner and operator of a nightclub called the Carousel Lounge in Dallas. Two days after the assassination, in the morning of November 24th, Dallas police were escorting Oswald in the police basement, and Ruby appeared and fired one shot at Oswald's abdomen, at point blank range, mortally wounding Oswald, and the fact that Oswald's detention was managed by the Dallas Police Department, and not the Secret Service, or the federal government, was due to the fact that killing a sitting was actually not considered a Federal crime at this time, which is unfortunate. By the time John Hinkley attempted to assassinate

Ronald Regan in 1981 this had changed, because Hinkley was tried by the Federal Government.

And an interesting story from my life is that my father, on New Years, 1963, went with a friend of his named Jim Young, to the Carousel Lounge, and they met Jack Ruby.

Drs. Allen and Hersey

Wow.

Dr. James Hudson

And they were these young kids from, you know, the middle of nowhere, from small-town Texas, and apparently were getting harassed by some locals, and this guy comes out and tells them to leave the kids alone, and he ended up being very friendly to my dad, and his friend, and took them up to the roof of the place, showed them the Dallas skyline. Dad always talked about how he had these dachshunds with him, and that's been verified, he had these dogs, and that story loomed large in my family. And then the following fall, when the shooting happened, my dad, was playing football at Texas Tech and he played in one of the only few college football games that was played that following Saturday.

Dr. Ashley Allen

Yeah, just as an aside, Dr. Vela had been at the Carousel, literally the day before, and saw Jack Ruby there, it was pretty interesting.

Dr. Josiah Marineau

The day before he shot Lee Harvey Oswald, or the day before the assassination?

Dr. Ashley Allen

The day before the assassination. That's interesting.

Dr. Josiah Marineau

Interesting.

Dr. Joanna Hersey

And I think it reminds us, when we listen today, it strikes us as so strange, the lack of security. This is such a normal part of our lives now, especially those of us that work with public leaders in any way, and the fact that these two people could be shot in this way, I think it's maybe surprising to some of our younger listeners, that, you know, we used to be able to take bottles of wine onto airplanes!

Dr. Josiah Marineau

Right.

Dr. Joanna Hersey

The world has changed a lot, in that regard, is that something that strikes you when you teach about this and discuss it?

Dr. Josiah Marineau

I don't use this specific example, I do tell my students I used to be able to walk to the gate of the airport to escort my grandparents when they were flying home.

Dr. Joanna Hersey

Yes!

Dr. Josiah Marineau

So, these kinds of events really do reshape American society, in a way that reverberates down future generations, to the extent that we often kind of take for granted the changes that result from these events.

Dr. James Hudson

Just the violence involved in that event, I think, reveals a lot about some of the core problems that have haunted our society since then. The availability of guns, just in 2011, another member of our government, Gabrielle Giffords, was shot in the head at a public event. So guns and guns-related violence I think are an unfortunate fact of life in American society, and I think the assassination of our President in 1963 is but one of many tragic examples of that.

Dr. Richard Gay

And you guys have already given several examples of how we've sort of, grown up, after this, right? Like we now have processes for who becomes President and probably when, now, so you guys have alluded to things that we just didn't know how to address at the time because we'd never had to do it before. I think it goes back to that idea of the golden age too, right? Because, thinking of it as this sort of charmed, again Camelot image, it just creates such a shock for all of us and here we are sixty years later, reliving it, right, and talking about our colleagues, who were there, or family members who met some of the protagonists in the aftermath. So, let's talk a little bit about the Warren Commission, so what did they do?

Dr. James Hudson

So the Warren Commission was established by President Johnson, headed by Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Earl Warren, to investigate the assassination. It was a ten month long

investigation, and it resulted in an 800 page report, delivered in September 1964, it concluded that Oswald and Ruby acted alone. It concluded that a single bullet struck Kennedy and Connally though some have found this conclusion improbable, the magic bullet theory, it left a highly controversial legacy, and then there's this new book that just came out, *The Final Witness*, by Paul Landis, one of the Kennedy secret service agents that as feet away when the event happened, saw the President shot, and Landis claimed that he discovered another bullet near the President's body, behind where he was seated in the limo and that he took it when they arrived at Parkland Hospital and placed it on Kennedy's gurney. Were did this bullet come from? Why was it behind the President and not in front of him if the shots were coming from behind him, and so this further calls into question the lone gunman theory. Maybe there was another shooter.

Dr. Richard Gay

Coming in from another direction?

Dr. James Hudson

Right. Yeah.

Dr. Richard Gay

I think that's a book that many of us will be looking into in the future, need to check it out. So we've been talking a little bit about how this was such a momentous event in American history, so talk about how it reshaped American politics?

Dr. Josiah Marineau

Well it was really a turning point in American politics, if you look at measures of trust in the government, in the early 60s, late 50s, trust in government was around 75%, pretty high seventies, or midrange seventies. And if you look at what's happened since then, it's with a couple short periods of exception, it's just gone down. So nowadays, trust in government is around 16%, so it's very different from where things were in 1960. There are a lot of reasons for that, but Kennedy's assassination is one of those turning points in history, where you start seeing trust go down, and the reason for that gets to what James was just saying about some of the concerns about the Warren Commission.

And there was a strong belief for a lot of people, that Lee Harvey Oswald did not act alone, and that somehow other governments were colluding in that, maybe it was the Cubans, maybe it was the Soviets, or perhaps maybe there were rogue elements of our own government that were collaborating with Lee Harvey Oswald, maybe encouraging him, or at the very least, helping to cover up any information that could have detracted from the official narrative as presented by the Warren commission. You also have other things, that James

was just referring to, that kind of help to catalyze this shift in attitudes towards the government, the war in Vietnam, this idea that the government is not being truthful with its citizens. You have other assassinations like Martin Luther King Jr., Robert Kennedy getting killed in 1968, and it leads to this trend of people not really thinking that the government is on their side. And again there's a lot of reasons for that, but Kennedy's assassination and the belief that there was a cover-up, the belief that Lee Harvey Oswald was not acting alone, is one of those main factors.

Dr. Richard Gay

Fascinating. I keep thinking about 'don't look at the man behind the curtain' from the Wizard of Oz.

Dr. Josiah Marineau

Right, exactly, and the man behind the curtain that it might be in this case, people talk about this grassy knoll, and there is a single photograph, of the moment when the first bullet struck Kennedy, and he's slumped over, he's about to be struck by the second bullet, and some people claim that there's an individual, it's a black and white photograph, it's a little blurry, but people claim that there's a so-called badge man, that's standing off in the distance that you can see in the photograph, at least they claim to see, and people suggest that this is the supposed second gunman that shot Kennedy. Never been proved, but there's been a lot of writing and a lot of speculation about it.

Dr. James Hudson

Yeah, and just the conspiratorial element, there was the 1991 film JFK with Kevin Costner which was I think really overblown in terms of conspiracy theory, but one thing that that movie did do, was that shortly after, Congress passed the JFK records act which required the National Archives to release all materials relevant to the assassination within twenty-five years, and only last summer, July 2023, has 99% of all documents pertaining to the assassination been released.

Dr. Richard Gay

That one percent could say a lot [laughs].

Dr. Josiah Marineau

Yeah exactly, that's where all the details are hidden.

Dr. James Hudson

I mean I remember visiting Dealey Plaza as a boy, you know I grew up in Texas, and it was at night, and I don't think it really changed a lot. In 1993 the site was designated by the National

Parks Service as a historical landmark and sixth floor of the Schoolbook Depository is a great museum, the Sixth Floor Museum, which I have also visited, it's a first rate museum that covers every aspect of the assassination. Dealey Plaza's just a very interesting part of Dallas, it probably would've been completely changed or bulldozed had not the assassination taken place there, so it's kind of a hallowed ground, many tourists visit there every year.

Dr. Joanna Hersey

What are some things that your students say when you're looking at these historical things, how does it look like to them?

Dr. James Hudson

Well for me, I mean I study Chinese History, and regardless of where and when you're studying, violence is always a part of the equation. What I've just tried to tell my students even recently with things that have been going on in the world, violence is never the way to solve conflict, never.

Dr. Josiah Marineau

The way I think about it is, and we've touched on this before, that for people of that generation, everyone who was alive on November 22, 1963, they know where they were, when they heard about the Kennedy assassination. It's a defining moment. I was not alive then, for me the corollary is 9-11, I was a freshman in college, I remember coming down the stairs, this is in Alaska, and I saw the TV on with the twin towers which had not yet collapsed. So there are events that happen in our lifetimes that become sort of defining events.

For students nowadays, when I ask them this question, they often will say Covid-19, and how that is going to be something that's reshaped their lives in a way, of course that's a much longer period of time obviously than a single event like 9-11 or the assassination, but Covid-19 is one of those events that again, its going to reshape people's lives. It's changing how they think about government, how they think about society, and that's what I say, for students this event was like that. People knew where they were, and it forever reshaped that generation and how it saw its relationship to government. And again, we're still living in the aftermath of that event.

Dr. Joanna Hersey

And that's the value for our students in learning the different histories, is really seeing that connection, between the generations and how we view our society.

Dr. Josiah Marineau

Exactly. It shows that things change, and not always for the better, they can change for the worse, or as they can also we can overcome the challenges that result from previous events.

Dr. Richard Gay

Well, thank you so much for joining us today, this has been a great conversation, I feel like I personally learned a lot, so thank you for that, you're both great storytellers, I really enjoyed the conversation, thanks so much for joining us guys.

Dr. James Hudson

Thank you, my pleasure.

Dr. Josiah Marineau

I appreciate the conversation.

*This podcast was edited and transcribed by Joanna Hersey and our theme music was composed by UNCP Music Department alum, Riley Morton.*

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