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# Was Castro Behind the JFK Assassination?

By [Donald E. Wilkes, Jr.](#)

The miracle was that Fidel Castro died in his own bed. Never has a defiant antagonist of the United States of America met a more unlikely fate: a peaceful death. Hated, reviled and targeted by the greatest military empire in the history of the world, Castro launched a one-party socialist experiment in Cuba, which was so antithetical to Washington's vision of a neoliberal world order that the empire struck back hard. The CIA and its paid agents began plotting Castro's violent demise in 1959 and continued to do so through the year 2000, concocting hundreds of conspiracies to kill him, 638 times by one well-informed Cuban intelligence official's account. And the empire struck out every time.

—Jeff Morley

## The *National Enquirer's* Claim that Castro Killed JFK

Fidel Castro, the communist dictator who ruled Cuba with an iron fist for 55 years, died last Nov. 25. His death has resulted in a renewed debate about whether Castro played a role in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, who while riding in an open limousine was killed by hidden sniper fire in Dealey Plaza in Dallas, TX on Nov. 22, 1963.

A month after Fidel Castro's death, on Dec. 19, 2016, the tabloid *National Enquirer* published an article tinglingly titled "Dying Castro Admitted Killing JFK!" The article's sensationalistic subtitle proclaimed "Chilling New Evidence Blows Assassination Wide Open After 53 Years."



The article claims that:

- “Castro finally admitted he ordered President John F. Kennedy’s assassination.”
- Castro made the confession “shortly before his death into the ear of a trusted confidante.” At the time “he could barely speak above a whisper.”
- Castro gave the assassination order because “he wanted to settle the score with JFK for the bungled CIA-backed Bay of Pigs invasion on Apr. 17, 1961, and multiple attempts [by the CIA] to assassinate him.”
- The *Enquirer* found out about Castro’s “deathbed confession” from “an American intelligence source with knowledge of the dramatic scene.”
- The “bombshell revelation” that Castro admitted he was responsible for the JFK assassination is corroborated by “declassified top-secret documents” in an “official” FBI report “which reveals Kennedy’s accused killer Lee Harvey Oswald... was in fact a patsy!”
- Castro “dispatched teams of assassins to the U.S. for the purpose of assassinating President Kennedy.” They included “a Cuban-born mercenary, Herminio Diaz, who was specifically handpicked by Castro for his skills as an expert marksman.”
- “[S]ecretly spirited into America,” it was Diaz, hidden in the bushes on the grassy knoll in Dealey Plaza in Dallas, who actually killed JFK, firing “three times with a high-powered rifle that had been provided by local Cuban agents.”
- After the assassination, Diaz “escape[d] undetected from Dealey Plaza” and with the aid of “pro-Castro activists” made his way back to Cuba “on board a trawler.”

- “Diaz, who has since died, bragged about his role in JFK’s assassination to an associate who later spilled the beans.”

## **Assessment**

In labeling Lee Harvey Oswald as a patsy, the Dec. 19 *Enquirer* article flatly contradicts another *Enquirer* article published only months earlier. That article, which appeared on Apr. 20, 2016, described Oswald not as the fall guy for a presidential murder but as “the man who murdered America’s 35th president” and as the hands-on killer who “blew President John F. Kennedy’s brains out!” (That article also infamously—and falsely—claimed that Texas Senator Ted Cruz’s father was linked to the JFK assassination because he had been a “pal” of Oswald in New Orleans three months before the assassination.)

The irreconcilable conflict between the two *Enquirer* articles is understandable if the Dec. 19 article is based on new information derived from reliable sources. But it is not. How can we rely on information vaguely attributed to someone who is supposedly “an American intelligence source” and who, we are told, admits he was not present when Castro died but nonetheless claims to have trustworthy hearsay information about Castro’s final moments? How can we be expected to believe that such a “source” exists, or that he is telling the truth, or that his hearsay information about Castro’s confession is accurate?

The so-called FBI report does not corroborate the Castro confession claim because the report itself is worthless as an information source. The article quotes alleged snippets from the report and reproduces verbatim two typed sentences in the report, but we do not really know what else is in the report. We know nothing about the report’s provenance. What is the date of the report? Who prepared it? How and when was it first located and where is it now? Does it consist of hearsay or double hearsay? Is it an example of disinformation or a forgery? And if the FBI report truly is a

“bombshell,” wouldn’t we have heard about it from the government or the active JFK assassination research community?

The *Enquirer* article is not only uncorroborated but false. Fidel Castro was not responsible for the JFK assassination. Therefore, he could not possibly have made the alleged deathbed confession. And because Castro was not behind the assassination, the FBI report could not possibly prove he was. But before explaining why we can be confident that Castro did not play a role in the assassination, we must briefly examine the background of the Castro-was-behind-the-assassination theory.

### **The Theory That Castro Was Responsible for the Assassination**

The *Enquirer’s* claim that Castro was responsible for the JFK assassination is not new. The first public allegation that Castro was behind the assassination occurred the day after the assassination, when an anti-Castro student exile group here in the United States that was secretly funded and run by the CIA published a special edition of its English language newspaper *Trinchera* (“Trench”) suggesting that Lee Harvey Oswald had killed the President on behalf of Fidel Castro and featuring large side-by-side photos of Castro and Oswald jointly captioned “The Presumed Assassins.”

*Trinchera’s* assertions were not fact-based; they were part of the CIA’s clandestine anti-Castro campaign to, among other things, smear Castro by propagating derogatory disinformation about him. The base falseness of the allegation and its convenient timing are sure indications that the CIA was attempting to make Castro the false sponsor of the assassination. (In intelligence lingo, a false sponsor is a person who will be publicly blamed for a covert operation after it takes place, thereby diverting attention away from the individuals who actually carried out the operation.) Thus, the theory that Castro was behind the assassination originated in

disinformation disseminated by a CIA front group within 24 hours of the President's murder.

The theory that Fidel Castro is to be blamed for the JFK assassination usually takes one of two forms: the Castro-did-it theory (under which Castro hired and sent the assassins to Dallas) and the Castro-knew-about-it theory (under which Castro did not order the assassination but did know about it in advance and failed to warn JFK).

The Castro-was-responsible-for-the-assassination notion has been one of the major JFK assassination theories since at least the 1970s, when the CIA assassination plots against Castro (some of which were CIA-Mafia plots) became public knowledge and certain researchers began suggesting that the assassination might have been a "blowback" from those plots.

In recent years, many of the assassination researchers who blame Castro have backed away from the Castro-did-it theory and instead embraced the Castro-knew-about-it theory. They freely admit that Castro did not arrange the assassination but insist that Castro knew in advance that JFK would be murdered and could have warned him, but deliberately did not.

Two well-argued but ultimately unpersuasive books backing the theory that Castro knew in advance are *Castro's Secrets* (2012), by Brian Latell, a retired CIA analyst, and journalist Philip Shenon's *A Cruel and Shocking Act* (2013). Shenon's book extends the theory by claiming that in October 1963, at a twist party in Mexico City (yes, a twist party!), agents of Castro, perhaps without his knowledge, encouraged Oswald to kill JFK.

Two books giving the Cuban government's side are *ZR Rifle* (1994), by Claudia Furiati, and *JFK: The Cuba Files* (2006), by Fabian Escalante. These two books claim that the JFK assassination was the

result of a conspiracy involving the CIA, the Mafia and anti-Castro Cuban exiles. Escalante was the talented head of Fidel Castro's personal security detail who amazingly foiled the countless ingenious attempts by the CIA to assassinate the Cuban leader.

### **Why the Castro-Was-Responsible Theory Must be Rejected**

Whoever was behind JFK's murder, it was not Fidel Castro. Here are a few of the many reasons we can rest assured of this.

First, neither the FBI nor the CIA has ever claimed that Castro was behind the assassination or that they had evidence he was behind it. The directors and top echelons of both the FBI and the CIA hated Castro and wanted him dead or deposed and his regime overthrown. If there was evidence that he, a hostile communist tyrant allied with the Soviet Union, had played a role in the brazen public murder of an American President, they would have produced it with alacrity. And if there had been proof permitting the assassination to be pinned on Castro, unquestionably the United States of America would in a fury have unleashed its overwhelming military might to destroy the entire Cuban government and obliterate Castro's regime. Eminent JFK assassination researcher Jeff Morley understates this truth when he observes: "If there was any evidence of Cuban involvement, the United States government would have exploited it for diplomatic and geopolitical advantage."

(Of course, if there was proof that Castro was involved, but the FBI and the CIA overlooked it or concealed it, then the leadership of both agencies should have been sacked and the agencies themselves abolished.)

Second, both of the principal government investigations of the JFK assassination reached the conclusion that Castro's Cuba was not responsible.

The Warren Commission put it this way: "The Commission has found no evidence that Oswald was employed, persuaded or encouraged by any foreign government to assassinate President Kennedy, or that he was an agent of any foreign government." (Warren Report, p. 21 [1964]). The U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Assassinations, which reinvestigated the JFK assassination 15 years later, agreed: "The committee believes, on the basis of the evidence available to it, that the Cuban Government was not involved in the assassination of President Kennedy." (HSCA Final Report, p. 1 [1979]).

Third, the purported evidence of Castro's involvement consists almost entirely of (1) uncorroborated, unverifiable and often highly unlikely allegations made by untrustworthy government informers or by anti-Castro zealots with an ax to grind, and (2) suspicious, misleading or altered or forged documents.

The Castro-did-it theory contradicts at least two important Warren Report conclusions—namely, that there was no foreign conspiracy to assassinate JFK, and that Oswald fired all the shots in Dealey Plaza. The Castro-knew-about-it theory contradicts an important conclusion which, although not explicitly stated, is implicit in the Warren Report—namely, that no other person knew in advance that lone wolf Oswald planned to murder JFK.

Oddly, however, practically all the assassination researchers who pin the assassination on Castro remain true believers of much of the discredited Warren Report. Those who believe in the Castro-knew-about-it theory are wedded to the following outmoded concepts set out in the Report: that Oswald was the sole assassin; that he was a mental case and a loner; that he fired all the shots in Dealey Plaza; and that he possessed superlative shooting skills putting Robin Hood, William Tell, and Annie Oakley to shame. The believers in the Castro-did-it theory agree with the Warren Report's outdated view that Oswald was a left-winger (either a Communist or Marxist) and



that he was not a U.S. intelligence agency operative or FBI informer.

Those who stubbornly still blame the assassination on left-wing Castro (a Communist) or Oswald (supposedly a leftist) are out of touch with the realities of what is now known nearly 54 years after the assassination. They have not kept abreast of either the mountains of evidence uncovered by private assassination researchers since the 1970s or the contents of the hundreds of thousands of pages of government documents released or declassified over the years. This newly discovered evidence sweepingly undermines the Warren Report, particularly its key determinations that there was only a single assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, who acted alone; that Oswald was a misfit; that Oswald was a pro-Castroite creature of the far political left; and that Oswald was not an American intelligence asset or an FBI informer.

## **Conclusion**

Attributing the assassination to leftists rather than rightists is now as anachronistic as the view that JFK's murder was carried out by a lone gunman. As former Cuban law professor Arnaldo M. Fernandez correctly notes, at present "the dominant view of the JFK research community depicts Kennedy as a victim of a plot by his enemies on the right."

Unsurprisingly, the majority of the authors or bloggers who obstinately continue to blame Castro are, with few exceptions, right-wingers or spokesmen for conservative organizations or causes. This strongly suggests that the claim that Fidel Castro is to blame for the assassination of President Kennedy is based more on politics than facts.

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