

John F. Kennedy

Whirlwind

Thirty-Fifth, 1961-1963



Nicknames: "Jack", "Rat Face", "The King of Camelot"

Birth: May 29th, 1917, Brookline, Massachusetts

Death: November 22nd, 1963, Dallas, Texas

Significant Events During Kennedy's Partial Term: Freedom Riders ... Kennedy Recommends Bomb Shelters ... Cesar Chavez/UFW ... Battle of Oxford ... Cuban Missile Crisis ... Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" ... March on Washington ... JFK Assassinated

Quotes: *"Jack has a clever, individual mind. When he learns the right place for humor and learns to use his individual way of looking at things as an asset instead of handicap, his natural gift of an individual outlook and witty expression are going to help him...Jack is not as able academically as his high IQ might lead us to think."* -- JFK's headmaster at Choate prep school

"Native knows posit. He can pilot. Alive need small boat."

-- Message JFK scratched on a coconut shell after his boat was sunk in WW II

"I sincerely fear for my country if Jack Kennedy should be elected President. The fellow has absolutely no principles. Money and gall are all the Kennedys have."

-- Senator Barry Goldwater, who had a little of both himself

"No man entering upon this office, regardless of his party, regardless of his previous service in Washington, could fail to be staggered upon learning, even in this brief ten-day period, the harsh enormity of the trials through which we must pass in the next four years. Each day the crises multiply. Each day their solution grows more difficult. Each day we draw nearer the hour of maximum danger, as weapons spread and hostile forces grow stronger." -- JFK, shortly after taking office.

"It shall be the policy of this nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union." -- JFK

"One hundred years of delay have passed since President Lincoln freed the slaves, yet their heirs, their grandsons, are not fully free. They are not yet freed from the bonds of injustice. They are not yet freed from social and economic oppression, and this nation, for all its hopes and all its boasts, will not be fully free until all its citizens are free." -- JFK, 1963

"If an American, because his skin is dark, cannot eat lunch in a restaurant open to the public, if he cannot send his children to the best public school available, if he cannot vote for the public officials who represent him, if in short, he cannot enjoy the full and free life which all of us want, then who among us would be content to have the color of his skin changed and stand in his place? Who among us would then be content with the counsels of patience and delay? We preach freedom around the world, and we mean it, and we cherish our freedom here at home; but are we to say to the world and, much more importantly, to each other that this is a land of the free except for the Negroes; that we have no class or caste system, no ghettos, no master race except with respect to Negroes?" -- JFK

"What kind of peace do we seek? Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war. Not the peace of the grave or the security of the slave. I am talking about genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living, the kind that enables men and nations to grow and to hope to build a better life for their children – not merely peace for Americans, but peace for all men and women; not merely peace in our time, but peace for all time." -- JFK, 1963

"It should be clear by now that a nation can be no stronger abroad than she is at home. Only an America which practices what it preaches about equal rights and social justice will be respected by those whose choice affects our future."

-- JFK, from the speech he was to deliver in Dallas on the day he was assassinated

"If anybody really wanted to shoot the President...it's not a very difficult job...Get on a high building some day with a telescopic rifle and there is nothing anyone can do to defend against such an attempt."
-- John F. Kennedy, November 22nd, 1963, three hours before he was shot in just such a fashion

"He was, perhaps, a step or two ahead of the people at times. But as an American who understood America, who brought form to its amorphous yearnings, who gave direction to its efforts, John Kennedy walked with the people." -- Senator Hubert H. Humphrey

"Kennedy, in the supercilious arrogance which Harvard inculcates in lace-curtain Irish, doggedly mispronounced ordinary words...This was the true Rooseveltian contempt for the common man. He seems afraid to be taken for a valid American." -- Westbrook Pegler

How his term ended: Assassinated

Other Professions: Soldier, Newspaper Reporter, Author

Worst Mistake: Kennedy may have been an adulterer. If true (it is widely reported to be the case, but there is no known evidence proving it), Kennedy carried on affairs with several different women, among them Marilyn Monroe.

Saving Grace: After their boat (PT 109) was rammed by a Japanese ship during World War II, Kennedy towed a badly burned comrade three or four miles by the man's life jacket strap through the water to the nearest island (although he himself had suffered a serious back injury). Each evening for six days, Kennedy swam through shark-infested waters to nearby islands seeking help.

Notes: During the PT 109 affair, Kennedy and his men had been given up as lost and their families had been notified of their deaths.

Kennedy covered the United Nations Organizational meetings in San Francisco as a reporter for Hearst newspapers. He also reported on British elections, then returned to the U.S., gave up newspaper work, and went into politics. His brother Joe, who had been considered the most likely in the family to go far in politics, had been killed in WWII, and JFK apparently thought he should now be the one to take up that baton, or cross.

At forty-three, Kennedy was the youngest person to be elected President (Theodore Roosevelt had been a year younger when he took office in 1901, but Roosevelt had not been elected to the post — he took over due to the assassination of William McKinley). Roosevelt was forty-six when he *was* elected, in 1904.

The Peace Corps was a Kennedy brain child.

The Cuban Missile Crisis was not really as much a victory for the U.S. as it has been made out to be. In actuality, Russia seemingly got as much as they gave: While it is true that they agreed to pull their missiles out of Cuba, they only did so after Kennedy had agreed to not

attack Cuba, and also to remove American missiles from Turkey, which were aimed at Russia. And what provoked Russia in the first place to think that perhaps they could succeed in Cuba, and that they needed to come to Cuba's defense? The Bay of Pigs fiasco (which had been planned by Eisenhower while he was in office, but carried out by Kennedy). The U.S. had bungled that affair so badly that it seemed vulnerable. And America's hostility towards Cuba was so obvious as a result that Russia felt the need to bolster its ally.

JFK called his vision for American--his mission statement, if you will-- "The New Frontier."

After Kennedy's assassination, adultery charges abounded. The most "celebrated" of these revolves around Marilyn Monroe, who died mysteriously in 1962. Women who have claimed to have had a sexual relationship with Kennedy while he was married include Blaze Starr, a stripper (a school friend claimed that Kennedy lost his virginity while a teenager in a Harlem brothel), a painter named Mary Pinchot Meyer who died mysteriously in 1964, and a woman with Mafia connections.

A 1979 Government committee concluded that there was a 95% probability that there was a second shooter (besides Lee Harvey Oswald) involved in Kennedy's assassination. This second gunman is thought to have shot at Kennedy from the infamous "grassy knoll" in front of the limousine in which the Kennedys (and others) were riding. The Committee's conclusion: A conspiracy was likely. As to who was *behind* the assassination, the most likely suspects include Cuba's Fidel Castro, the Mafia, and the U.S. Intelligence community (Kennedy had spoken of getting America out of Vietnam, a course of action some of the spooks or their sponsors may have been dead set against).

It is believed by some that the Mafia hired Jack Ruby to kill Lee Harvey Oswald before Oswald could "talk." Ruby then died in 1967 of pulmonary embolism at Parkland Hospital in Dallas, the same place Lee Harvey Oswald had died in 1963, and where Kennedy was taken after he was shot.

Monroe, Oswald, Meyer, and Ruby all dead within five years of Kennedy's assassination. Coincidence?