

John F. Kennedy 55 Years On: Casting Light on the JFK Assassination, 9/11 and Other 21st Century Crimes

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*Fifty-five years ago, on November 22, 1963, **John F. Kennedy** was assassinated. Although there has been a great deal written about this event over the years, I want to draw attention to one exceptionally important article, originally delivered as a talk on November 20, 1998. **Vincent Salandria** gave this talk in Dallas at the invitation of the Coalition on Political Assassinations. (See Sources.)*

Salandria had been a high school teacher at the time of the assassination (he later became a lawyer) and was one of the first people in the US to write essays expressing dissent from the government narrative of lone gunman **Lee Harvey Oswald**, maverick leftist.

In his 1998 talk Salandria went through over a dozen of the famous obstacles to the government story—the grassy knoll witnesses, the “magic bullet,” the testimony of the doctors at Parkland Hospital, and so on—but he did not let himself get sidetracked into detailed debates on any of these. By 1998 he had already seen, and participated in, 35 years of such debates. He had long ago concluded that, “the national security state at the very highest level of its power killed President John F. Kennedy for his efforts at seeking to develop a modus vivendi with the Soviets and with socialist Cuba.”

In 1998 he felt it was time to warn researchers about the danger of wasting time in “false debates,” where the essential facts had clearly been established and the wrangling served only the purposes of the assassins. Rather than repeat the debates, Salandria decided in 1998 to outline his basic approach. I will call this the Salandria Approach. I draw attention to it because I believe it helps us find our feet when we tackle not only the JFK killing but many of the killings in the 21st century’s War on Terror.

Here are Salandria’s words:

I began to sift through the myriad facts regarding the assassination which our government and the US media offered us. What I did was to examine the data in a different fashion from the approach adopted by our news media. I chose to assess how an innocent civilian-controlled US government would have reacted to those data. I also envisioned how a guilty US national security state which may have gained control of and may have become semi-autonomous to the civilian US governmental structure would have reacted to the data of the assassination.”

He adds that,

only a guilty government seeking to serve the interests of the assassins would consistently resort to accepting one improbable conclusion after another while rejecting a long series of probable conclusions.”

Let us take two cases from Salandria’s list of over one dozen in order to see what he was getting at.

The Grassy Knoll

Dozens of witnesses thought there were shots from an extended grassy rise, containing several structures, situated west of the famous Texas School Book Depository Building. Salandria, refusing to get drawn into the familiar debate, says:

Let us assume *arguendo* [for the sake of argument] that all of the eyewitnesses who had concluded that shots were fired from the grassy knoll were dead wrong. But an innocent government could not and would not at that time have concluded that these good citizens were wrong and would not have immediately rushed to declare a far-fetched single assassin theory as fact.”

Note that Salandria’s emphasis is not on the details of the grassy knoll discussion but on the method the government followed in its investigation. And he is right, both about the immediate claim that Oswald acted alone— presented, as he explains, by a government representative on November 22 itself—and about the identical statement presented later by the Warren Commission.

In both cases the claim flew in the face of the eyewitness evidence. For example, despite the fact that there are references to dozens of witnesses to shots from the grassy knoll in the 26 volumes of evidence appended to the Warren Report, the Commission itself displayed little interest in them. And when the Commission dismissed every single one of the grassy knoll witnesses to protect its lone gunman theory it did so without bothering to make a sustained argument.

It chose instead to play a credibility game. It pronounced:

No credible evidence suggests that the shots were fired from the railroad bridge over the Triple Underpass, the nearby railroad yards or any place other than the Texas School Book Depository Building” WARREN REPORT, P. 61

In other words, the Commission decided to gather together into one great agglomeration the credibility of its seven well dressed and high-ranking white men associated with government and use this to crush the credibility of the “good citizens” who were present in the Plaza and witnessed, with their senses, the unfolding of events.

It was a breathtaking move. But in what way could it be said to characterize an innocent government? How could any serious investigator pretend to solve an evidential problem by playing a credibility game? Standard practice in a homicide investigation would be to find all witnesses, to interview them, and to record their statements impartially, making sure to ask each one of them where they thought the shots came from and why they reached their conclusion. How would the opinions of congressmen, spies and the like possibly be relevant to the case when these gentlemen declined to offer adequate counter-evidence or to give a

serious argument to support their peculiar conclusion?

Readers who have never had the opportunity to see and hear for themselves the good citizens in question may benefit from Mark Lane's documentary:

Well, where, in such a case, does the Salandria Approach lead us? We have no choice but to conclude that the Warren Commission's investigation was not what we would expect from "an innocent civilian-controlled US government."

It was more characteristic of "a guilty government seeking to serve the interests of the assassins." There was a predetermined perpetrator and an insistence on the guilt of this perpetrator, while evidence suggestive of a conspiracy was systematically ignored, distorted or suppressed.

Suppose we were to apply the Salandria Approach to events of the 21st century—to the eyewitnesses at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, for example? We have over 150 witnesses who reported that they saw, heard or felt explosions at the time of the beginning of destruction of the Twin Towers. (See Sources for assertions in this and the following paragraph.)

Their testimony constitutes very significant support for the theory that the Trade Center was blown up and did not undergo collapse from structural failure caused by airplane collision. We are not simply talking about loud sounds here. We are talking about sounds that experienced firefighters suspected were caused by bombs. We are talking about patterns of explosions seen pulverizing the buildings. We are talking, in some cases, about witnesses who say these explosions threw them through the air. Now, avoiding the debates about the details of this testimony, let us follow Salandria and ask: What did the government's 9/11 Commission do with these eyewitness accounts, all of which were in its possession?

The answer is that it called for no comprehensive search for eyewitnesses (neither did the FBI, as far as I can discover), nor did it have such witnesses asked the appropriate questions. It devoted to these witnesses a single line in the roughly 585 pages of its Report. And that single line is both dismissive and extremely misleading.

What about the National Institute of Standards and Technology, assigned by government the task of looking in detail at the destruction of the Trade Center and sorting out the reasons for its destruction? In the thousands of pages of its reports on the Twin Towers we find not a single mention of the explosion witnesses. Despite NIST's pride in its interviewing techniques, and despite its access to all the relevant information, it somehow missed over 150 witnesses. It made no attempt to find them, to sort out their testimony, or to discover how their words might illumine the mystery of the so-called "collapses."

We should recall that the efforts of the 9/11 Commission and NIST were mere follow-through. A strenuous attempt to promote the structural failure hypothesis was begun on the very day of September 11, 2001, in the absence of serious evidence in its favour and in bold contradiction to what large numbers of witnesses were saying. (Sources)

When we adopt the Salandria Approach we must, to paraphrase Salandria, conclude that, "an innocent government could not and would not at that time have concluded that these good citizens were wrong and would not have immediately rushed to declare a far-fetched

[structural failure] theory as fact.”

The Magic Bullet

In his essay Salandria explains the absurdity of the single bullet (“magic bullet”) theory, according to which one bullet passed entirely through the president’s body and then caused all of Governor Connally’s wounds, emerging after its adventure in near-pristine condition. This bullet evidently had no difficulty changing direction in mid-air, nor did it balk at losing mass in Connally’s body and then regaining this mass at the end of its journey. Salandria concludes:

“our Cold War government in the context of the assassination had declared a moratorium on the science of physics.”

Remember: the issue before us is not merely the single bullet theory itself but the behavior of government representatives in investigating this hypothesis. So it is in those moments when we read the Warren Commission transcripts and watch counsel Arlen Specter leading and pressuring witnesses into accepting the single bullet theory that we realize we are seeing the handiwork of a guilty state.

Now, what might we find if we were to apply the Salandria Approach to the destruction of the World Trade Center? To restrict ourselves, for the sake of this discussion, to World Trade 7, what would the approach of an innocent government to this building destruction look like? Would we not expect a thorough search for eyewitnesses?

Would not all of the recoverable steel be preserved carefully and made accessible to civilian experts? Would there not be a serious attempt to explain evidence of corrosion and vaporization of the steel? Would there not be the most rigorous examination of the Trade Center dust, searching for evidence that would allow ascertainment of temperatures reached during the building’s destruction and searching as well for residue of explosives and incendiaries?

Would there not be frank astonishment at the fact that the descent of this 47-storey building, not hit by a plane, began rapidly, symmetrically, and at free fall acceleration? Would not physicists openly debate this astounding event, troubled by the fact that the vertical columns of this well constructed steel-framed high-rise offered no resistance whatsoever when, for mysterious reasons, the collapse began?

Surely an innocent government sincerely probing for the truth would not choose, instead of taking the path outlined above, to construct a computer simulation that, even with manipulation, could not replicate the historical event clearly preserved on video? Surely investigators would not bring the simulation to an abrupt end before it was able to represent total collapse, and surely they would not refuse to release the complete data set used in their simulation, claiming it might compromise national security? (Sources)

When we ask these questions and contemplate the answers we see at once what game NIST has been playing in its account of World Trade 7. In the 21st century there is, perhaps, no more obvious demonstration that the US government, for the sake of its War on Terror, has “declared a moratorium on the science of physics.”

There is an entire organization, Architects & Engineers for 9/11 Truth, which has taken as its

task for over a decade the pointing out of such violations of the laws of physics in the US government's account of the September 11, 2001 crime. The organization is to be praised for its creativity and persistence. Yet the false debate continues, and the intelligentsia continues to insist that the Emperor is well dressed, thank you very much.

Political Implications of Grassy Knolls and Magic Bullets

There is something I have always found arresting about the grassy knoll, and my concerns extend to the suppressed witnesses of September 11. In both cases we have ordinary folks—people like ourselves—who are, supposedly, citizens of a democracy. They are also, as far as we can tell, of sound mind and body, able to perceive with their senses and assess with their minds. Yet, all of a sudden, when their bodies and minds tell them something that conflicts with a government dictum, they are considered by government of no more political competence than cattle. I find it hard to think of a greater insult to these “good citizens” and to the notion of democracy, and I find it hard to think of a more brash assertion of the principle of authority.

This is why witnesses from the grassy knoll and the World Trade Center should be at the centre of the current debate about state deception and its relation to democracy.

As for magic bullets in Dealey Plaza and the mysterious collapse of World Trade 7, they are, I suggest, of comparable political importance to the abused witnesses. We face a collection of gentlemen in suits and ties (seven gentlemen in the Warren Commission and ten in the 9/11 Commission) telling us that their stories are more potent than the laws of the universe. How poor must be our self-confidence that we can put up with this guff? How defective must be our educational systems if they produce citizens who accept this?

Here we are, then, at the 55th anniversary of the murder of a president who was moving away from Cold War thinking and entering a different path. As we reflect on the direction in which his assassins have steered the United States of America, to the detriment of all of us, US citizens and otherwise, let us reflect on Salandria's words:

By coming to understand the true answer to the historical question of who killed President Kennedy and why, we will have developed a delicate and precisely accurate prism through which we can examine how power works in this militarized country. By understanding the nature of this monumental crime, we will become equipped to organize the struggle through which we can make this country a civilian republic in more than name only.”

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Sources

The Salandria essay that is the basis of my article, "The JFK Assassination: A False Mystery Concealing State Crimes," can be found [here](#).

Both the [Warren Report](#) and the [26 volumes of evidence](#) can be found at the Mary Ferrell Foundation website.

3. The list of 156 eyewitnesses to explosions in the Twin Towers can be found [here](#). A discussion of the method used to arrive at the list as well as the treatment of these witnesses by the 9/11 Commission and NIST can be found in my article, "Eyewitness Evidence of Explosions in the Twin Towers" in The 9/11 Toronto Report, ed. James Gourley, International Center for 9/11 Studies, 2012.

For a discussion of the destruction of World Trade 7 see the website of [Architects & Engineers for 9/11 Truth](#) & especially Ted Walter's publication, [Beyond Misinformation](#).

For the dismissal of evidence of controlled demolition from the earliest moment see Ted Walter's recent article, ["Dick Cheney and Rudy Giuliani: The First Government Officials to Dismiss the Idea of Controlled Demolition on 9/11."](#)

For a discussion of Kennedy's turn away from the Cold War see James Douglass's brilliant *JFK and the Unspeakable: Why He Died and Why It Matters*(New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008).

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