

ENGLISH LEARNING
FOR CURIOUS
MINDS



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Episode #352

Lee Harvey Oswald | The Man Who Killed A President

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[00:00:05] Hello, hello hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:00:12] The show where you can listen to fascinating stories, and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same time as improving your English.

[00:00:20] I'm Alastair Budge, and today we are talking about Lee Harvey Oswald, the man who assassinated an American president.

[00:00:29] He was a former [marine](#)¹ who [defected](#)² to the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

[00:00:34] A strange man with a complicated past who, to this day, is still the source of conspiracy theories about what actually happened on that day in 1963.

¹ a member of a special unit of the armed forces

² left his country to join the enemy

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[00:00:45] In this episode we'll take a look at the early life of Lee Harvey Oswald, the type of man he was, his time in the Soviet Union and, of course, the event he was most famous for, the assassination of JFK.

[00:00:59] As you will no doubt know, there are plenty of conspiracy theories about whether it was actually Oswald who killed him, too many to go into in this episode in fact.

[00:01:09] So, we'll have a follow-up episode where we are going to look at all of these theories, and I'll leave you to decide whether there's any truth to them.

[00:01:17] OK, let's get into it and talk about Lee Harvey Oswald.

[00:01:25] It was a sunny November afternoon in 1963.

[00:01:30] The city of Dallas was in a **jubilant**³ mood because the young, **charismatic**⁴ and handsome President of the United States was in town.

[00:01:40] In Dealey Plaza, a park in downtown Dallas, crowds were gathering, excited for the arrival of the 46-year-old John F. Kennedy.

[00:01:52] Dealey Plaza is a flat, open area filled with trees.

[00:01:56] There's a bridge heading to the motorway on one side, and on the other, several buildings overlooking the park.

³ very happy

⁴ attractive, charming

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[00:02:04] Throughout the morning, people **lined**⁵ the street, and sat waiting on the grassy banks.

[00:02:11] Finally, at 12:30pm the President's convertible **limousine**⁶ turned into Dealey Plaza and a buzz of excitement **washed**⁷ over the park.

[00:02:22] The limo slowed, and Kennedy smiled and waved to the crowds, his wife and popular First Lady, Jackie, sat beside him.

[00:02:33] Also in the car were the Governor of Texas, John Connolly, and his wife Nellie.

[00:02:39] As they rounded the corner into the park, Nellie Connally turned to Kennedy and said: "Mr. President, you can't say Dallas doesn't love you."

[00:02:50] It's believed that Kennedy replied, "No, you certainly can't" - not knowing that they were to be his last words.

[00:03:00] Then suddenly, as Kennedy waved, there was a **popping**⁸ noise.

⁵ waited in a line

⁶ a large, expensive car driven by a paid driver

⁷ felt by everyone

⁸ sudden explosive sound

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[00:03:05] Most in the crowd thought it was [fireworks](#)⁹, or a car [backfiring](#)¹⁰, and continued waving, and taking photographs.

[00:03:13] But there was another shot, and the President reached up, holding his neck.

[00:03:20] There was [confusion](#)¹¹ for a moment, and some in the crowd dropped to the floor, [taking cover](#)¹².

[00:03:25] Excitement turned to panic, and people began running for safety.

[00:03:31] Then, a third shot hit Kennedy directly in the head, [rocked](#)¹³ his body backwards and sent blood and brain flying across the [limousine](#).

[00:03:42] [Instinctively](#)¹⁴, Jackie Kennedy jumped up and [leaned](#)¹⁵ over the back of the [limousine](#), trying to [retrieve](#)¹⁶ the back of her husband's [skull](#)¹⁷.

⁹ devices that made a show of light and noise by the burning of explosive materials

¹⁰ making a loud noise as part of gas explodes

¹¹ chaos, disorder

¹² getting to a safe position

¹³ moved from one side to the other

¹⁴ without thinking about it

¹⁵ bent or turned her body

¹⁶ hold

¹⁷ the bones of the head

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[00:03:51] The [limousine tore off¹⁸](#), accelerated very quickly, in the direction of the [underpass¹⁹](#) towards the freeway.

[00:03:58] In a [panic²⁰](#), the crowd began to [run for cover²¹](#), and others turned, looking up.

[00:04:04] Police raced up the [grassy knoll²²](#), looking for the shooter.

[00:04:09] [Witnesses²³](#) pointed in the direction they thought the shots had come from.

[00:04:14] Looking up, they saw a tall red-brick building: the Texas School Book [Depository²⁴](#).

[00:04:23] Just half an hour later, at 1:00pm, John F. Kennedy was [pronounced²⁵](#) dead at the Parkland Memorial Hospital.

[00:04:31] The President was dead - but who had pulled the [trigger²⁶](#)?

¹⁸ accelerated very quickly

¹⁹ a road tunnel

²⁰ state of confusion and fear

²¹ run to find a safe place

²² small hill with grass

²³ people who had seen the event

²⁴ a large building for storing things

²⁵ announced formally that he was

²⁶ the handle or part of the gun that causes it to fire

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[00:04:37] To understand who, and more importantly why, we need to go back almost exactly 24 years, to the 18th of October, 1939, in New Orleans.

[00:04:49] This was the date that a lady called Marguerite Frances Claverie gave birth to a son, Lee Harvey Oswald.

[00:04:59] His father, Robert, died two months before Lee was born, so the young boy grew up without a father and didn't exactly have the easiest of [upbringings](#)²⁷.

[00:05:10] His mother became an alcoholic, and the family moved around a lot.

[00:05:15] In fact, it's believed that by the time he left school Oswald had lived in 22 different places and gone to 12 different schools.

[00:05:26] Not an easy start, and this led to Oswald [skipping](#)²⁸ school, "[truanting](#)²⁹" the word is.

[00:05:33] When Oswald began [truanting](#), he was seen by a psychiatrist at a [juvenile](#)³⁰ reform centre, who concluded that the young boy had "personality pattern disturbance with [schizoid](#)³¹ features and passive-aggressive tendencies."

²⁷ the treatment and instructions he received as a child

²⁸ leaving or staying away from school

²⁹ leaving or staying away from school

³⁰ relating to young people or teenagers

³¹ related to a type of mental illness

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[00:05:48] The doctor went on: “Lee has to be seen as an emotionally, quite disturbed youngster who suffers under the impact of really existing emotional isolation and deprivation, lack of affection, absence of family life and rejection by a self-involved and conflicted mother.”

[00:06:07] At age 12, Oswald threatened a family member with a knife.

[00:06:12] And by October of 1956, when he was 17, he dropped out of high school and joined the U.S. [Marines](#)³².

[00:06:21] But he didn't really [take to](#)³³, or enjoy his time there, and was described by a fellow [Marine](#) as “lonely, [aloof](#)³⁴, and always hating the [outfit](#)³⁵.”

[00:06:33] Importantly, for our story, and for American history, he qualified as a [marksman](#)³⁶, meaning someone trained to shoot a gun.

³² members of a special unit of the armed forces

³³ enjoy his time there, like it

³⁴ not friendly

³⁵ the set of clothes, uniform

³⁶ someone trained to shoot a gun

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[00:06:42] Despite being a US [Marine](#), and a soldier during the Cold War, the battle between Capitalism and Socialism, Oswald developed left-wing views, and began [voicing](#)³⁷ pro-Soviet [sentiment](#)³⁸.

[00:06:57] In fact, he was known among his fellow [Marines](#) as “Osvaldovich”, in reference to his left-wing beliefs.

[00:07:05] One [Marine](#) said of Oswald that “If you complained about, ‘Oh, we’ve got to go on a march this morning’ or ‘oh, we’ve got to do this this morning,’ [scrub](#)³⁹ [barracks](#)⁴⁰ or whatever we had to do... he would say that that was the capitalist form of government making us do these things. Karl Marx and his form of government would [alleviate](#)⁴¹ that.”

[00:07:25] As strange as a communist US [Marine](#) might sound, perhaps this was Oswald - the [neglected](#)⁴² and [isolated](#)⁴³ child, remember - it was him searching for the [belonging](#)⁴⁴ he hadn’t found in family life, school or the [Marines](#).

³⁷ Expressing openly

³⁸ thoughts, opinions

³⁹ clean

⁴⁰ the buildings where soldiers lived

⁴¹ make it less bad

⁴² not having received proper attention

⁴³ lonely

⁴⁴ the feeling of being part of something

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[00:07:44] In his diary, Oswald admitted as much, writing “I was looking for a key to my environment, and then I discovered socialist literature”

[00:07:54] He even taught himself some basic Russian from a grammar book, something that would come in **handy**⁴⁵ later on.

[00:08:01] On the 11th of September, 1959, not even 3 years after **enlisting**⁴⁶, he was **discharged**⁴⁷ from the **Marines**, he left the army.

[00:08:11] Just nine days later, at the height of the Cold War, Oswald took his pro-Soviet studying to the next level and **boarded**⁴⁸ a boat from New Orleans to France.

[00:08:24] From there he went to Southampton, in England, then flew to Helsinki, was issued a Soviet visa a few days later, then crossed the border into the Soviet Union and arrived in Moscow on the 16th of October.

[00:08:39] But Oswald had a problem - a big one.

[00:08:43] His visa was only valid for a week, so what did he do?

⁴⁵ useful

⁴⁶ joining the army

⁴⁷ left (the army)

⁴⁸ got on

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[00:08:48] He immediately tried to get Soviet citizenship, to become a citizen of the Soviet Union. He [figured](#)⁴⁹ that he would be welcomed with open arms, he would be welcomed into this communist [utopia](#)⁵⁰.

[00:09:01] But unfortunately for Oswald, things went somewhat differently.

[00:09:07] According to his personal diary, when Oswald met with a Russian visa official and asked to become a citizen of the 'Great Soviet Union', in his words, he was told that the 'USSR is only great in literature' and that he should go home.

[00:09:25] Oswald was [crushed](#)⁵¹, he was [devastated](#)⁵².

[00:09:29] He had spent years learning about communist theory and Soviet society, he had tried to learn Russian, even saved up his [wages](#)⁵³ from the [Marines](#) to make the long journey across the Iron Curtain only to be rejected once he arrived.

⁴⁹ thought

⁵⁰ perfect society

⁵¹ felt extremely disappointed

⁵² felt extremely disappointed

⁵³ the money he earned

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[00:09:46] As he wrote in his diary, “my **fondest**⁵⁴ dreams are **shattered**⁵⁵ because of a **petty**⁵⁶ official.”

[00:09:54] **Distraught**⁵⁷, three days after his 20th birthday, and less than a week after arriving in the Soviet Union, Oswald attempted suicide, he tried to kill himself.

[00:10:06] According to his diary, his plan was: “ End it. **Soak**⁵⁸ wrist in cold water to **numb**⁵⁹ the pain. Then **slash**⁶⁰ my left wrist.”

[00:10:17] He survived, and after a **stint**⁶¹, a short period, in hospital, he was released and allowed to stay in the USSR because the Soviet authorities feared he would cause an international incident if he tried to kill himself again.

[00:10:32] They sent him to Minsk, now the capital of Belarus, where he was given work at a radio and TV factory and an apartment in the city centre.

⁵⁴ the ones he wanted the most to happen, dearest

⁵⁵ broken into small pieces

⁵⁶ unimportant

⁵⁷ very worried and upset

⁵⁸ sink, wet

⁵⁹ make it less bad

⁶⁰ cut with a sharp object

⁶¹ short period

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[00:10:43] He enjoyed a relatively comfortable standard of living compared to working-class Soviet standards, but he was kept under strict [surveillance](#)⁶² by the intelligence services.

[00:10:54] Strangely enough, Stanislau Shushkevich, the man who would go on to become Belarus' first post-Soviet head of state, also worked at the same factory as Oswald and was even [assigned](#)⁶³ to help him improve his Russian.

[00:11:08] In Minsk, Oswald met a lady called Marina Nikolayevna Prusakova, and they married on April 30th of 1961.

[00:11:18] According to a man called Peter Savodnik, who wrote a book about Oswald's time in Minsk, Oswald [defection](#)⁶⁴ was as psychological as it was ideological, or political.

[00:11:31] Though Oswald did want to be in the USSR and [do his part](#)⁶⁵ for communism, Savodnik argues that "he went there because he didn't fit in anywhere else, he was a [desperate](#)⁶⁶ and lonely young man who believed that in Russia he would be rescued."

⁶² close watch or observation

⁶³ chosen, appointed

⁶⁴ the act of leaving his country to join the enemy

⁶⁵ do what he was able to do

⁶⁶ very worried, hopeless

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[00:11:48] Oswald was, it seems, still looking, **yearning**⁶⁷ for somewhere he could feel at home.

[00:11:55] But Soviet life began to **wear on**⁶⁸ the young man, and in February of 1962, he wrote to the U.S Embassy to report that the Soviet authorities were holding him and his wife **against their will**⁶⁹, and that he wanted to return to the United States.

[00:12:13] Because he had never formally **renounced**⁷⁰ his American citizenship, in June of 1962, Oswald was given a temporary US passport, allowed to return to his homeland and arrived in New York with his Soviet wife and three-month old daughter.

[00:12:31] The family quickly moved to Dallas, in Texas, and Oswald travelled to New Orleans to look for work.

[00:12:39] Struggling to **hold a job down**⁷¹, he began engaging in political activity, claiming that he was a representative of a pro-Castro organisation called the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

⁶⁷ wanting it very much

⁶⁸ be very tiring and upsetting, be a burden

⁶⁹ although they didn't want it

⁷⁰ rejected

⁷¹ manage to keep a job

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[00:12:51] The New York headquarters of this organisation, however, [denied](#)⁷² having any knowledge of him.

[00:12:57] One can only imagine what must have been going on in his head at the time, but we do know for sure what he did next.

[00:13:05] In March of 1963, less than a year after returning home, back to the United States, he used an [alias](#)⁷³, or fake name, and bought two guns: a [rifle](#)⁷⁴, and a [revolver](#)⁷⁵.

[00:13:18] Now, many people aren't aware of this next part.

[00:13:22] But Oswald actually had a [test run](#)⁷⁶, a practice, to try out his new weapon.

[00:13:29] Around a month after buying his [rifle](#), and just months before he would shoot Kennedy, Oswald took his [rifle](#) to the home of an American [general](#)⁷⁷, a man called Major General Edwin Walker, and shot through a window as Walker sat at his desk.

⁷² said that it wasn't true

⁷³ fake name

⁷⁴ a long type of gun

⁷⁵ a small type of gun

⁷⁶ practice

⁷⁷ an officer of high rank

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[00:13:48] Walker, who was a very **vocal**⁷⁸ anti-communist voice in American society, escaped without any injuries.

[00:13:56] The **assailant**⁷⁹ was never caught, and it was only after Oswald's death that it was revealed to have been him.

[00:14:04] When he returned to New Orleans, he took part in a local radio debate and proudly declared himself a Marxist, and in August of 1963 he was arrested for distributing pro-Castro **propaganda**⁸⁰.

[00:14:19] Strangely enough, he was still given a full foreign travel passport – despite the fact that he was known to the American authorities and had been **interrogated**⁸¹ by the F.B.I and C.I.A when he returned from the USSR.

[00:14:35] Using this new passport, Oswald travelled to Mexico for a few weeks, where he visited the Soviet and Cuban embassies and tried to arrange to travel to the Soviet Union via Cuba.

⁷⁸ expressing his opinions openly

⁷⁹ person who had attacked him

⁸⁰ information used to affect people's opinions

⁸¹ asked many questions

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[00:14:48] When he returned to the U.S, he was still looking for work, that was, until a Russian-speaking friend who had been helping Oswald's wife [mentioned](#)⁸² that a neighbour knew of a job opportunity - at a book [depository](#) in Dallas.

[00:15:04] Little did the neighbour know that their kind offer had unknowingly [set the scene](#)⁸³ for the assassination of the President of the United States.

[00:15:15] In Dallas, Oswald rented a single room under the name O H Lee and began working at the book [depository](#), or [warehouse](#)⁸⁴, only returning to see his family in the suburbs on weekends.

[00:15:29] According to the owner of the [boarding house](#)⁸⁵ where he stayed during the week, Oswald didn't interact with many of the other residents, only worked and made phone calls.

[00:15:39] "They were local phone calls and he always made them in a foreign language." they said. "I think it was German, or maybe Russian. He was really

⁸² spoke about it

⁸³ created the conditions

⁸⁴ a large building for storing or keeping things

⁸⁵ a private house in which he rented a room

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[considerate](#)⁸⁶ about it. If other people were wanting to phone he would wait. He was just about as good a [tenant](#)⁸⁷ as we could wish to have.”

[00:15:55] In November of 1963, it was announced that President Kennedy would be visiting Dallas, and several local newspapers published the route that the President’s [motorcade](#)⁸⁸ would be taking.

[00:16:09] It passed, of course, the Texas School Book [Depository](#) - Oswald’s place of work.

[00:16:17] On the night of Thursday the 21st, Oswald unexpectedly returned to his family home and spent the night - something that he only ever really did at weekends.

[00:16:29] The next morning, on Friday the 22nd, Oswald’s 19-year-old neighbour, Wesley Frazier, gave him a lift to work.

[00:16:38] Frazier noticed that Oswald was carrying a long, heavy [parcel](#)⁸⁹.

[00:16:44] It was, Oswald told him, “just some [window blinds](#)⁹⁰ which I’m taking downtown to get fixed.”

⁸⁶ kind and helpful

⁸⁷ a person who pays rent to stay in a house

⁸⁸ series of cars carrying or accompanying an important person

⁸⁹ a container for pieces of paper

⁹⁰ window coverings

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[00:16:51] At 12:30pm that afternoon, on the 22nd of November, Oswald [set up](#)⁹¹ his [rifle](#) on the sixth floor of the [depository](#) building.

[00:17:03] He waited for the [motorcade](#) to pass, and fired three shots that killed President Kennedy as his car passed through Dealey Plaza.

[00:17:12] Well, as we will discuss in the next episode, that's the official story.

[00:17:18] As the President's car [sped](#)⁹² away and the crowd down in the plaza tried to make sense of what was going on, Oswald [fled](#)⁹³ the scene and took a bus.

[00:17:28] But as there was such a [buzz](#)⁹⁴ of police activity in Dealey Plaza, the city quickly filled with traffic.

[00:17:35] Oswald got out and took a taxi back to his [boarding house](#), sitting in the front seat as was common in the Soviet Union.

[00:17:44] The driver, who hadn't yet heard the news of the President's assassination, asked Oswald what all the police [sirens](#)⁹⁵ were for, not knowing that he was sitting next to the assassin.

⁹¹ placed it in position

⁹² moved quickly

⁹³ ran to escape from danger

⁹⁴ noise

⁹⁵ devices that made a loud warning noise

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[00:17:57] Oswald said nothing, and stayed silent for the entire journey.

[00:18:02] The driver would later say that he thought Oswald was “a [wino](#)⁹⁶ two days off the bottle,” meaning an alcoholic experiencing [withdrawal symptoms](#)⁹⁷.

[00:18:13] He dropped him off a few minutes from the [boarding house](#), and after checking [the coast was clear](#)⁹⁸, after checking the police weren’t following him, Oswald went inside.

[00:18:24] The only person there was a housekeeper, Earlene Roberts, who was sitting watching the television, having heard the news of the President’s assassination just minutes before.

[00:18:35] Around 1pm Oswald, or “Mr. Lee” as he was known to the other residents, arrived and [rushed](#)⁹⁹ across the living-room into his bedroom.

[00:18:45] “You’re in a hurry, aren’t you?” Roberts asked him, but Oswald did not respond.

⁹⁶ a person who drunk a lot

⁹⁷ unpleasant reactions caused by the lack of alcohol for someone who has made it a habit

⁹⁸ that no one was watching for him

⁹⁹ moved quickly

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[00:18:51] He left again moments later in a different jacket, a [pistol¹⁰⁰](#) [stuffed¹⁰¹](#) into the [waistband¹⁰²](#) of his trousers.

[00:18:59] Back at the Texas Book [Depository](#), where police officers were now searching, certain that that was where the shots had come from, the [supervisor¹⁰³](#) told police

[00:19:09] that only one man was missing: Lee Harvey Oswald.

[00:19:15] At 1.15pm Oswald was stopped by a Dallas police [patrolman¹⁰⁴](#) named J.D Tippit, who thought he matched the suspect's description already being passed around on the police radio.

[00:19:28] Oswald shot and killed Tippit with his [revolver](#), and around half an hour later, at 1.45pm, Oswald was captured in the Texas Theatre.

[00:19:40] By 7pm, less than 7 hours after he had pulled the [trigger](#), he had been formally charged with the murder of President Kennedy, and by then news of Kennedy's assassination had spread around the world.

¹⁰⁰ small gun

¹⁰¹ put

¹⁰² a piece of cloth fitting around his waist

¹⁰³ the person who was in charge of that area of work

¹⁰⁴ a police officer who was watching the area

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[00:19:56] Oswald, the **outcast¹⁰⁵ Marine** who had defected to the Soviet Union, had shot dead the President of the United States.

[00:20:06] So why did he do it?

[00:20:09] According to one of Oswald's friends, Paul Gregory, he didn't even particularly dislike Kennedy.

[00:20:16] In fact, the family kept a copy of Time Magazine with Kennedy on the front cover on display in their home.

[00:20:23] Priscilla McMillan, a friend of Oswald's wife, even said that "Lee liked Kennedy."

[00:20:29] "He liked him in civil rights. He disliked him for the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba," she said. "But insofar as he spoke about Kennedy, it was to **praise¹⁰⁶** him."

[00:20:39] As we'll see in the next episode, there are many, many different theories as to why - and indeed how - Oswald killed Kennedy.

[00:20:50] But if we accept the official version of events for a moment, perhaps Oswald, despite actually quite admiring Kennedy on a personal level, decided that killing him was the best way to send a political, or **ideological¹⁰⁷** message.

¹⁰⁵ the one who was rejected

¹⁰⁶ express his warm approval

¹⁰⁷ related to his opinions or ideas

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[00:21:07] With Cold War tensions at their **peak**¹⁰⁸ in 1963, maybe Oswald thought that killing the symbol of American power - the president - would please the Soviet Union and that he would, finally, find the place he **belonged**¹⁰⁹, the place he had been searching for his entire life.

[00:21:27] But as you probably know, this is not the end of the story of Lee Harvey Oswald.

[00:21:34] On the morning of the 24th, less than 48 hours after shooting JFK, Oswald was being **led**¹¹⁰ through the underground car park of the Dallas police station to be transferred to an **interrogation office**¹¹¹.

[00:21:48] The small space was filled with a crowd of reporters and police officers, and there was very little security.

[00:21:56] Nonetheless, Oswald was taken through the crowd with two officers by his side.

¹⁰⁸ highest point

¹⁰⁹ could call his own

¹¹⁰ taken

¹¹¹ office where he would be questioned

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[00:22:03] James Leavelle, one of the Dallas police officers who was at his side, later said, “I put the [handcuffs¹¹²](#) on him, and in the process of doing that, I more [in jest¹¹³](#) kind of said, ‘Lee, if anybody shoots at you, I hope they’re as good a shot as you are.’”

[00:22:20] Oswald, he said, “kind of laughed and he said, ‘Oh, you’re being [melodramatic¹¹⁴](#)’, or something to that effect. ‘Nobody’s going to shoot at me.’”

[00:22:30] Anyway, as Oswald [emerged¹¹⁵](#) from the station, a man named Jack Ruby, a nightclub owner with [ties¹¹⁶](#) to the Chicago [underworld¹¹⁷](#), approached Oswald and shot him in the stomach.

[00:22:45] Everyone stood around in shock for a second, as Oswald screamed and fell to the floor.

[00:22:53] He was taken to Parkland Memorial hospital - the same hospital where Kennedy died just two days before.

[00:23:01] At 1.07pm, Oswald was [pronounced](#) dead.

¹¹² a pair of linked metal rings for securing his wrists

¹¹³ as a joke

¹¹⁴ showing much stronger emotions that was necessary

¹¹⁵ got out

¹¹⁶ connections

¹¹⁷ criminal world

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[00:23:08] As the **incident**¹¹⁸ was being broadcast on television, millions of Americans watched Oswald's assassination live.

[00:23:17] As you may know, I've just given you the official version of events.

[00:23:22] That Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone was the final conclusion of the Warren Commission - the body set up to investigate the assassination.

[00:23:31] Yet the assassination of John F. Kennedy [and Oswald's role in it] is perhaps the most popular conspiracy theory of all time.

[00:23:40] It is, you could say, the mother of all conspiracy theories - the one that even the most rational, trusting people believe has some truth to it.

[00:23:52] For many people, something about that day in 1963 **smelled fishy**¹¹⁹, it just wasn't quite right.

[00:24:01] Whether it be Oswald's time in the Soviet Union, and conspiracies that he was a Soviet **hitman**¹²⁰ sent to strike a **blow**¹²¹ in the Cold War, or Jack Ruby's mafia connections - indeed, Kennedy's supposed mafia connections.

¹¹⁸ event, happening

¹¹⁹ wasn't quite right

¹²⁰ a paid killer

¹²¹ hit, something that would cause damage

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[00:24:15] Or even the fact that he was walked through an open car park with [minimal](#)¹²² security just days after assassinating the President of the United States.

[00:24:26] Many Americans don't believe the Warren Commission's findings; that a [lone](#)¹²³ gunman, one man alone, could kill the President.

[00:24:35] A Gallup poll from March of 2001 found that 81 percent of Americans believed there were other people involved in Kennedy's death.

[00:24:45] Just 13 percent believed that Oswald acted alone.

[00:24:51] Indeed, the focus of the next episode, a follow-up to this one, will be some of the most widely-believed conspiracy theories about what really happened on that [fateful](#)¹²⁴ November afternoon.

[00:25:04] But it is important to remember that Oswald was, at the very least, involved.

[00:25:10] He was a US [Marine](#) who [defected](#) to the Soviet Union, afterall.

[00:25:15] A trained [marksman](#) who hated American capitalism and everything it represented.

¹²² very little

¹²³ Alone, just one

¹²⁴ very important, having important sequences

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[00:25:21] A man who, wherever he went in the world, never seemed to quite [fit in](#)¹²⁵ and lived a mysterious life, travelling around and interacting with political radicals, Soviet and Cuban spies.

[00:25:35] Some say he was personally instructed to kill Kennedy by the leader of the Soviet Union, others say Oswald was the gunman in the biggest mob killing of all time.

[00:25:47] There are few who debate that Lee Harvey Oswald pulled the [trigger](#), but to the question of “why”, and “with whose help?”, well that is a question that seems like it might never truly be [solved](#)¹²⁶.

[00:26:04] OK then, that is it for today’s episode on Lee Harvey Oswald - the man who killed the president.

[00:26:11] I hope it was an interesting one, and whether you knew a lot about Lee Harvey Oswald, or you didn’t know much about his [backstory](#)¹²⁷ at all, well I hope you learned something new.

[00:26:21] As always, I would love to know what you thought of this episode.

[00:26:25] Why do you think Lee Harvey Oswald killed John F. Kennedy?

[00:26:29] Do you believe he was the only person involved?

¹²⁵ be socially accepted and included

¹²⁶ answered, explained

¹²⁷ history, background

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[00:26:32] How might the world have been different if the [bullets¹²⁸](#) had missed?

[00:26:37] I would love to know, so let's get this discussion started.

[00:26:40] You can head right into our community forum, which is at community.leonardoenglish.com and get chatting away to other curious minds.

[00:26:48] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:26:53] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

[END OF EPISODE]

¹²⁸ metal shots, gun ammunition

Key vocabulary

Word	Definition
Marine	a member of a special unit of the armed forces
Defected	left his country to join the enemy
Jubilant	very happy
Charismatic	attractive, charming
Lined	waited in a line
Limousine	a large, expensive car driven by a paid driver
Washed	felt by everyone
Popping	sudden explosive sound
Fireworks	devices that made a show of light and noise by the burning of explosive materials
Backfiring	making a loud noise as part of gas explodes
Confusion	chaos, disorder
Taking cover	getting to a safe position

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Rocked	moved from one side to the other
Instinctively	without thinking about it
Leaned	bent or turned her body
Retrieve	hold
Skull	the bones of the head
Tore off	accelerated very quickly
Underpass	a road tunnel
Panic	state of confusion and fear
Run for cover	run to find a safe place
Grassy knoll	small hill with grass
Witnesses	people who had seen the event
Depository	a large building for storing things
Pronounced	announced formally that he was
Trigger	the handle or part of the gun that causes it to fire
Upbringings	the treatment and instructions he received as a child

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Skipping	leaving or staying away from school
Truanti	leaving or staying away from school
Juvenile	relating to young people or teenagers
Schizoid	related to a type of mental illness
Marines	members of a special unit of the armed forces
Take to	enjoy his time there, like it
Aloof	not friendly
Outfit	the set of clothes, uniform
Marksman	someone trained to shoot a gun
Voicing	expressing openly
Sentiment	thoughts, opinions
Scrub	clean
Barracks	the buildings where soldiers lived
Alleviate	make it less bad
Neglected	not having received proper attention

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Isolated	lonely
Belonging	the feeling of being part of something
Handy	useful
Enlisting	joining the army
Discharged	left (the army)
Boarded	got on
Figured	thought
Utopia	perfect society
Crushed	felt extremely disappointed
Devastated	felt extremely disappointed
Wages	the money he earned
Fondest	the ones he wanted the most to happen, dearest
Shattered	broken into small pieces
Petty	unimportant
Distraught	very worried and upset

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Soak	sink, wet
Numb	make it less bad
Slash	cut with a sharp object
Stint	short period
Surveillance	close watch or observation
Assigned	chosen, appointed
Defection	the act of leaving his country to join the enemy
Do his part	do what he was able to do
Desperate	very worried, hopeless
Yearning	wanting it very much
Wear on	be very tiring and upsetting, be a burden
Against their will	although they didn't want it
Renounced	rejected
Hold a job down	manage to keep a job
Denied	said that it wasn't true

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Alias	fake name
Rifle	a long type of gun
Revolver	a small type of gun
Test run	practice
General	an officer of high rank
Vocal	expressing his opinions openly
Assailant	person who had attacked him
Propaganda	information used to affect people's opinions
Interrogated	asked many questions
Mentioned	spoke about it
Set the scene	created the conditions
Warehouse	a large building for storing or keeping things
Boarding house	a private house in which he rented a room
Considerate	kind and helpful
Tenant	a person who pays rent to stay in a house

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Motorcade	series of cars carrying or accompanying an important person
Parcel	a container for pieces of paper
Window blinds	window coverings
Set up	placed it in position
Sped	moved quickly
Fled	ran to escape from danger
Buzz	noise
Sirens	devices that made a loud warning noise
Wino	a person who drunk a lot
Withdrawal symptoms	unpleasant reactions caused by the lack of alcohol for someone who has made it a habit
The coast was clear	that no one was watching for him
Rushed	moved quickly
Pistol	small gun
Stuffed	put
Waistband	a piece of cloth fitting around his waist

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Supervisor	the person who was in charge of that area of work
Patrolman	a police officer who was watching the area
Outcast	the one who was rejected
Praise	express his warm approval
Ideological	related to his opinions or ideas
Peak	highest point
Belonged	could call his own
Led	taken
Interrogation office	office where he would be questioned
Handcuffs	a pair of linked metal rings for securing his wrists
In jest	as a joke
Melodramatic	showing much stronger emotions that was necessary
Emerged	got out
Ties	connections
Underworld	criminal world

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Incident	event, happening
Smelled fishy	wasn't quite right
Hitman	a paid killer
Blow	hit, something that would cause damage
Minimal	very little
Lone	alone, just one
Fateful	very important, having important sequences
Fit in	be socially accepted and included
Solved	answered, explained
Backstory	history, background
Bullets	metal shots, gun ammunition

We'd love to get your feedback on this episode.

What did you like? What could we do better?

What did you struggle to understand?

Let us know in the forum community.leonardoenglish.com