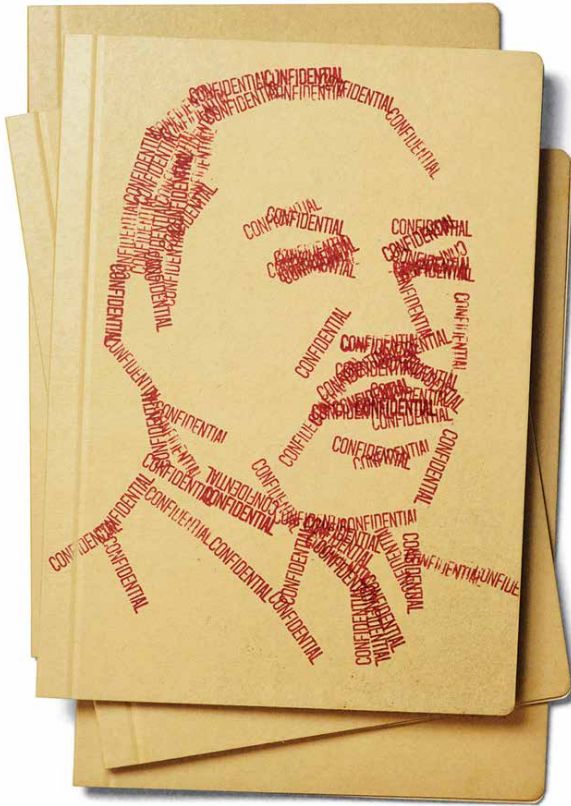


AMERICA THE REWRITE

(The Podcast)

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“Who lives, who dies, who tells your story?”

-Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton*

AMERICA THE REWRITE

revisits the seminal moments of the last century armed with new and essential information garnered from millions of declassified documents. Using files from the enormous Freedom Of Information Act databases, as well as other previously-unavailable sources, each season deconstructs a historical event and then reconstructs it with formerly Top Secret information. Everything from the C.I.A.’s meddling in foreign elections to the assassination of President Kennedy is revised using factual data released in the years since their histories were codified.

Listen to the first two episodes here:

<http://traffic.libsyn.com/america therewrite/America The Rewrite.mp3>

SEASON 1 - THE VERY STRANGE CASE OF THE FOUR ZAPRUDER FILMS

The five-episode first season of America The Rewrite chronicles the very strange tale of the four Zapruder films - the original and three first generation prints that were made the day President Kennedy was assassinated in 1963.

What most people don’t realize is that the Zapruder film was not broadcast on television until 1975. So Americans didn’t see the most crucial piece of evidence in the president’s assassination until late night talk show host Geraldo Rivera aired a bootleg copy on ABC, *twelve years* after the assassination.

So how did that happen? How did the Zapruder Film just get buried like that? Where’d it go? Who had seen it? What happened to it along its strange, incredible journey to Geraldo’s talk show? And how is it possible that America’s collective memory holds that they had seen the film, even once they’ve been shown evidence to the contrary?

We follow the film from Zapruder’s camera to Geraldo’s TV show and beyond, culminating in the films’ inclusion in Oliver Stone’s masterpiece (JFK) and the legislation that Stone’s movie inspired. We end with the passing of the JFK Records act and a call for President Trump to release the final documents that by law were supposed to be made public in October of 2017.

SEASON 1 - EPISODE BREAKDOWN CONT'D

1963

Episode 1 (Pilot) chronicles the assassination of JFK through the lens of the Zapruder film and its journey into sequestration. Using archival audio as well as current interviews, our host sets up the season and follows the film through the Secret Service's acquisition of the film and the bidding war Life Magazine ultimately won for control of the film. We also examine the role between publisher Henry Luce, The White House, and the CIA -- information that wasn't available for nearly two decades after the crime.

Interviewees include Dan Rather (CBS News), Dick Stolley (Life Magazine), Alexandra Zapruder (granddaughter of the filmmaker) and Oliver Stone, among others.

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1964 - 1967

Episode 2 opens with audio of a rare and surprising phone call between J. Edgar Hoover and LBJ in which they discuss "Creating a Commission" to uphold the conclusions of Hoover's investigation. "We don't want a rash of investigations" explains the president, which Hoover agrees would "terrible." We then examine the fascinating role The Zapruder Film played in The Warren Report, and its crucial function in the development of Senator Orin Hatch's outlandish "Single Bullet Theory." We also introduce Josiah "Tink" Thompson, a professor at Yale who found himself in the employ of Life Magazine, where he was tasked with examining the damage done to the original Zapruder film. We discover that Tink Thompson was the first person to bootleg the film, and the legal battle he fought to publish still frames from the movie remains the defining argument for the doctrine of Fair Use in the 9th circuit.

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1968 - 1975

Episode 3 examines the effects of the film on Jim Garrison's jury. Since Oswald was arrested in New Orleans just months before the assassination, and is known to have run with former FBI agents, as well as assets of the CIA, New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison felt he had a case. In what is the most famous conspiracy circus of all time, Garrison brought charges against local business man (whom we discover through the FOIA releases in the 1990's was a seasoned CIA informant) Clay Shaw. While Garrison's trial dragged on for years, the relevance to our story is that it was the first time the Zapruder film was ever shown publicly - to a judge and 12 jurors who could never shake the film's conclusions. One thing they were certain of, though, was that Garrison had no proof whatsoever that Clay Shaw was involved in Kennedy's killing. Garrison illegally authorized the bootlegging of over 100 copies of the film, and it was one of these that wound its way through seven years of history to finally be broadcast on Geraldo Rivera's late night talk show, waking America up to the idea that Kennedy was clearly shot from the front, thereby eliminating the Single Bullet Theory.

SEASON 1 - EPISODE BREAKDOWN [CONT'D]

1975 - 1988

Episode 4 chronicles the film's journey through the 1975 Rockefeller Commission, the 1976 report of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the 1979 report of the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA). Digging deep into the Intelligence community's "Family Jewels" (see season 2), the United States Congress discovered that the CIA paid the mafia \$150,000 to assassinate Fidel Castro before JFK's death and that the CIA had been running covert operations out of New Orleans since before the Bay of Pigs, when Cuban training camps were installed in the woods north of Lake Pontchartrain. So for years, we now know, the CIA had financed a network of spies and shady former federales and arms dealers and Klansmen and Cuban exiles out of New Orleans, prompting Jim Garrison's suspicions. Polls show that 93% of American's believed the Warren Commission's findings that there was not a conspiracy to kill JFK. By the mid 1970s just 31% of American's believed in the Warren Commission's conclusions. Due to the Zapruder film's nascent availability and the findings of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, the verdict in the court of public opinion changed dramatically.

1988-2017

Episode 5 follows the film into the present, and describes the impact of another movie that includes Zapruder's film. In 1988, Jim Garrison's publisher gave a copy of his book to filmmaker Oliver Stone. The resulting film, *JFK* was released in 1991 and considered by many to be Stone's masterpiece. It swayed the court of public opinion even further. The film's fictionalization of the narrative (creative license, as Stone saw it), became *the* narrative for tens of millions of movie-goers worldwide. More importantly, the controversial film was the dominant inspiration of legislation to release the millions of sealed documents related to Kennedy's murder. In 1992, the President John F. Kennedy Records Collection Act was passed, mitigating the release of the entirety of assassination records by October 2017.

On April 26, 2018 the National Archives released the final 19,045 documents in accordance with President Trump's order. These releases include FBI, CIA, and other agency documents (both formerly withheld in part and formerly withheld in full) identified by the Assassination Records Review Board as assassination records. These documents still contain redactions that won't be revealed until 2020. The first season of our podcast ends with a call for Congress to release the remaining unredacted documents.

SEASON 2 - THE FAMILY JEWELS

June 2007. The full "Family Jewels" report is released by the Central Intelligence Agency. The 35 year old document details 25 years of Agency misdeeds. The 702-page collection was delivered by CIA officers to the National Archives 15 years after the Archives filed a Freedom of Information request for the documents, and contains a laundry list of the Agencies illegal actions both domestic and foreign.

SEASON 3 - THE BAY OF PIGS

Eisenhower authorized the CIA to conduct a covert operation to rid the island of Cuba of its self-appointed leader. The CIA formulated a plan to recruit Cuban exiles living in the Miami area. It would train and equip the exiles to infiltrate Cuba and start a revolution to ignite an uprising across the island and overthrow Castro. At least that was the intended outcome. Top US Government officials watched as their decisions led to an entirely different outcome: one that would leave a covert operation exposed, embarrass the new Kennedy administration, end the career of the longest serving Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles, and, ultimately, leave Fidel Castro in power for decades to come.

SEASON 4 - THE DULLES BROTHERS

Anyone wanting to know why the United States is hated across much of the world need look no farther than the Dulles Brothers, whose government-sanctioned murder, casual elimination of “inconvenient” regimes, relentless prioritization of American corporate interests and cynical arrogance epitomized the worst of American geopolitics. John Foster Dulles and his brother, Allen, were scions of the American establishment. Their grandfather John Watson Foster served as secretary of state, as had their uncle Robert Lansing. Both brothers were lawyers, and partners in the immensely powerful firm of Sullivan & Cromwell, whose New York offices were for decades an important link between big business and American policy making. John Foster Dulles served as secretary of state from 1953 to 1959; his brother ran the C.I.A. The brother’s United Fruit Company defined the modern multinational corporation at its most effective — and, as it turned out, its most pernicious. It coddled dictators while using a mix of paternalism and violence to control its workers. As for repressive regimes, they were United Fruit’s best friends, with coups d’état among its specialties. United Fruit had possibly launched more exercises in ‘regime change’ on the banana’s behalf than had even been carried out in the name of oil.

SEASON 5 - OPERATION PAPERCLIP

While other American agencies were hunting down Nazi war criminals for arrest, the U.S. intelligence community was smuggling them into America, unpunished, for their use against the Soviets. The most important of these is Reinhard Gehlen, Hitler’s master spy who had built up an intelligence network in the Soviet Union. With full U.S. blessing, he creates the "Gehlen Organization," a band of refugee Nazi spies who reactivate their networks in Russia. These include SS intelligence officers Alfred Six and Emil Augsburg (who massacred Jews in the Holocaust), Klaus Barbie (the "Butcher of Lyon"), Otto von Bolschwing (the Holocaust mastermind who worked with Eichmann) and SS Colonel Otto Skorzeny (a personal friend of Hitler’s). The Gehlen Organization supplies the U.S. with its only intelligence on the Soviet Union for the next ten years, serving as a bridge between the abolishment of the OSS and the creation of the CIA. However, much of the "intelligence" the former Nazis provide is bogus.

SEASON 6 - OPERATION CHAOS

The CIA has been illegally spying on American citizens since 1959, but with Operation CHAOS, President Johnson dramatically boosts the effort. CIA agents go undercover as student radicals to spy on and disrupt campus organizations protesting the Vietnam War. They are searching for Russian instigators, which they never find. CHAOS will eventually spy on 7,000 individuals and 1,000 organizations.

SEASON 7 - THE IRAN/CONTRA SCANDAL

Although the details have long been known, the Iran/Contra scandal finally captures the media’s attention in 1986. Congress holds hearings, and several key figures (like Oliver North) lie under oath to protect the intelligence community. CIA Director William Casey dies of brain cancer before Congress can question him. All reforms enacted by Congress after the scandal are purely cosmetic.

SEASON 8 - THE HOOVER FILES

We use the 1983 release of the secret files of J. Edgar Hoover as a window into inarguably the strangest and most powerful law enforcement official of all time. By 1960, the FBI had open, “subversive” files on some 432,000 Americans. Hoover deemed the most sensitive files as “personal and confidential” and kept them in his office, where his secretary, Helen Gandy, could watch them. Today, with few exceptions, Hoover’s FBI files are open for any American to see at the National Archives. They make fascinating reading and paint a stark portrait of power run amok.

SEASON 9 - THE BURGLARY

No, not *that* burglary.

The complete collection of political documents ripped off from the F.B.I. office in Media, Pa., March 8, 1971" was published for the first time in march of 1971. The documents revealed the COINTELPRO operation, and ultimately led to the Church Committee and the cessation of this operation by the FBI. Noam Chomsky has stated:

According to its analysis of the documents in this FBI office, 1 percent were devoted to organized crime, mostly gambling; 30 percent were "manuals, routine forms, and similar procedural matter"; 40 percent were devoted to political surveillance and the like, including two cases involving right-wing groups, ten concerning immigrants, and over 200 on left or liberal groups. Another 14 percent of the documents concerned draft resistance and "leaving the military without government permission." The remainder concerned bank robberies, murder, rape, and interstate theft.

The theft resulted in the exposure of some of the FBI's most self-incriminating documents, including several documents detailing the FBI's use of postal workers, switchboard operators, etc., in order to spy on black college students and various non-violent black activist groups.

Some 40 years after their successful infiltration, some of the perpetrators decided to go public. In 2014, Betty Medsger's book *The Burglary: The Discovery of J. Edgar Hoover's Secret F.B.I.* was released, which contains the burglars' description of the burglary and revealed the identities of five of the eight burglars.

SEASON 10 - THE DRAGON LADY

CIA pilot Gary Powers was flying the top secret U2 spy plane - code named The Dragon Lady - at 90,000 feet over Russia when a concussive bomb blew it out of the sky, sending the pilot parachuting into his capture. How did the Russians' have enough information about the plane to disable its flight? Could it be the recent American defector - and former U2 radar operator - Lee Harvey Oswald provided them information about the plane upon his arrival in Moscow the previous summer? Steven Spielberg's *Bridge of Spies* chronicles the lengths to which the US Government went to secure Gary Powers release from Soviet prison, but ignores the more fascinating story of how Powers' got there in the first place.

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