

In Memoriam: J.F.K.

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The few weeks that have elapsed since the assassination of President John F. Kennedy have done nothing to dim the horror of that tragic Friday noon. When the chilling news flashed through the country, most Americans asked themselves the most unanswerable of all questions: why? Why—in the most civilized country in the world, with the longest history of democratic process—is the head of state removed by violence? Why—in the Ultimate Plan—is a young, deranged punk with a mail-order rifle permitted to snuff out the life of the man that the majority of people in this country had elected as their leader? Why?

All that sad weekend millions of Americans listened to radio reports and watched the same news films on television, even though it was known the terrible fact would be unchanged the fourth, fifth, or sixth time the same story unfolded. It was as though some hint could be found to the Why question in the numberless retelling of the story. But the hint never came, and the answer will always elude us.

But now that the deed is done and the body of John F. Kennedy is at rest, perhaps we can take a moral step forward as a result of the assassination. We can determine to hate hate as much as the haters hated him and the socially oriented program he stood for. We can strive to eliminate the curse of extremism from our midst which created the poisonous atmosphere that nourished that deranged mind in Dallas.

We do honor the memory of John F. Kennedy by extirpating in ourselves, as a starter, those unreasonable impulses of enmity that grow to frenzied passions. We can calm the extreme statement that creates the rationale for acts of violence. In memory of J.F.K., we can resubscribe to the moral system he represented.

“Teach us, O Lord, to hate evil.”

—D.N.G.

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