

The Age of Incompletions

By Jeff Davidson

The tendency of people to not complete things, in part, may be traceable to recent sociocultural developments. In many ways, we are living in what I call the age of incompletions. Simply being alive during this age may, in one form or another, impede your ability to get things done, particularly to get one thing done after another. This is heady and takes several pages, but if you're dedicated to becoming more adept at getting things done, you need to understand this phenomenon.

I'm not sure when this age started, but 1963 was certainly a pivotal year. This might have been before you were born, so I'll take you back to November of that year. President John F. Kennedy was shot. The case was solved 30 years later in 1993 and presented in *Case Closed*, by Gerald Posner.

CASE CLOSED, HARDLY ANYONE KNOWS

In the book *Case Closed*, Gerald Posner walks the reader through every conceivable detail of the case. He shows conclusively why, acting alone, it was Lee Harvey Oswald who fired the gun. He explains how the "magic bullet" took the angles it was supposed to. Noted historian William Manchester, after reading Posner's book, said that he couldn't imagine anyone having any further doubt about the fact that Lee Harvey Oswald, on his own, shot and killed John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

I read *Case Closed* cover-to-cover and concur. *U.S. News & World Report* concluded that Posner's work was so thorough and so convincing that the magazine would never feature another "who shot JFK?" book review again. What's more, modern day testing, using the latest technology, and presented on the Learning Channel, the History Channel, and PBS, has consistently supported everything that Posner concluded 21 years earlier. Yet, new mythology and conspiracy theories about who killed John F. Kennedy will be concocted and added to the glut of information you can't use, information which serves no one.

Currently, the "who shot JFK?" industry earns more \$250 million a year, with the potential to go higher, constantly fed by more TV news magazine "investigations," authors, books, and tours.

MISINFORMATION THAT WON'T DIE

Don't regard the misinformation surrounding JFK's death lightly. The nature of society changed as nearly an entire generation suspected that a conspiracy, perhaps a government-led conspiracy, might have brought down the leader of the free

world in broad daylight. Who knew what cynicism about government, the press, and truth itself ensued?

Finally, 30 years later, when Posner assembled the irrefutable evidence about the only single assassin responsible, hardly anyone knew, or worse, actually cared.

As late as 2014, a majority of the U.S. population still believes that President Kennedy's assassination was the result of some type of conspiracy. The case has been long solved, but there is no sense of national closure.

I submit to you, that the nature of your life changed as a result of the misinformation, unreality, and cultural incompleteness that has glutted society's receptors. This situation represents more than simply a mystery for the uninformed. This potentially signals the start of Baby Boomers and Gen Xers unwittingly entering the era of incompletions.

How has that impacted our psyches? Aren't we supposed to be able to get to the root of such events, especially those that shook a generation, a nation, and the world?

What unrecognized psychological scars has the incompleteness of the JFK assassination stamped into the cerebrum of an otherwise free-thinking, progressive, optimistic generation? When major cases aren't closed, everyone suffers, even if in small and undistinguishable ways.

FROM INTELLIGENT INQUIRY TO MEDIA-INDUCED UNTRUTHFULNESS

Fast forward from 1963, to 15 years later in 1978 and the death of Elvis Presley of Memphis, Tennessee. Unquestionably he died as a result of a self-induced pharmaceutical drug overdose, which resulted in heart failure. The coroners' reports reveals this as do reputable follow-up inquiries and analysis. Still, many people from that era, and many thereafter, think Elvis died as a result of a conspiracy.

Some people believe that Elvis never really died, that he's alive and well (he'd be 82 today), and showing up in random locations captured by the ever-present photographers of the *Enquirer*, *Globe* or *Star*.

Regardless of what you think about Elvis, his death, even amidst the jokes, and everything that's been made about it since then, the pervasive message is that no case is ever really solved. Everything lingers on and on and on.

The results of the 2000 presidential election in Florida, with its endless motions filed, court appeals and legal procedures, has spawned debates, arguments, and accusations that exist to this day and no doubt will linger on for years. No conclusions,

no consensus, no closure. Just additional coverage. The media wins, the pundits win, one candidate or another wins, but everyone else loses.

ALL OF HISTORY UP FOR GRABS

The contemporary turf wars fought in the age of incompletions, particularly in the political arena, now retroactively extend to virtually everything that has ever happened, whether you're assessing U.S. history, the formation of our nation, world history, the origins of Islam, or the origins of Christianity.

At one time, it was widely held that dropping the atomic bomb on Japan hastened the end of WWII, saved a minimum of 60,000 U.S. troops who would have been needed to fight a ground war in Japan, and provided the world with the closure it so sorely needed after six years of global destruction.

Since that time, the arguments about the U.S. being the over-aggressor, the only nation to ever drop an atomic bomb on another, and the inhumanity of it all, have risen to the forefront of many people's consciousness. Some people pick up scraps of evidence that point to there having been no need for the United States to have dropped the bomb, as if the casualty rate of invading mainland Japan would have been minimal.

Some say Japan was on its last legs (yet even after one atom bomb was dropped it still would not surrender!), U.S. intentions were racially motivated (although the bomb was originally designed to use on the now-surrendered Germans), the hawks had their way, and so forth.

What had been regarded by many people as closure to the most terrible event, World War II, that the earth had ever encountered in which 44,500,000 perished, is now the subject of endless debate in some circles. Not that such debate isn't healthy, quite the contrary, especially for an action of such magnitude.

EVERY INCH CONTESTED

When every inch of political terrain is contested everywhere around the clock, and when all public discourse is subject to interpretation, reinterpretation and revision, and essentially nothing is final, it begins to wear on humanity and notably trickles down to the level of the individual. You, an otherwise confident professional, have reached adulthood in an era and in a culture where incompleteness more often than not, is the norm. Nothing is ever settled and that is a cultural shame.

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