

There is a man who is a head of state. He is a very powerful man and is well liked by his subjects. The people love him. Then he is suddenly, inexplicably murdered. Someone is blamed for the murder, but the entire country knows the accused are innocent and are tools used in a cover-up. Does this situation sound bizarre? Does it sound like some work of fiction? Well, it is. It is the beginning of William Shakespeare's Macbeth. However, it is much more than that. It is real life. It is the circumstances that surrounded one of the most surreal periods of time in United States history. It is the situation surrounding the assassination of one of the US's most revered Presidents, John F. Kennedy. These circumstances suggest that the events which occur in the play Macbeth are still possible. It is possible for the circumstances surrounding Macbeth to be repeated in modern day America because no protection provides absolute safety, some men are still willing to do what Macbeth did, and the act could still be covered up.

No amount of protection provides absolute safety. In today's world, it is easier than ever to kill someone. Any person can buy a cheap pistol and kill someone. It is also easier to kill without being caught. There are long range rifles and remote control explosives that can be used as the murder weapon while the actual perpetrator is far away. Also, it is easier than ever to find a professional assassin who will kill anyone for the right amount of money. These latter methods could allow a person to commit murder and easily get away with it. Even though the actual murderer may be caught, the person financing the operation could get away untouched.

In Macbeth, Duncan was well protected by his guards. However, he was still murdered. The guards were overcome through a simple trick. "The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms\ Do mock their charge with snores. I have drugged their possets..." says Lady Macbeth. She had drugged their drinks, and instead of guarding Duncan, they were asleep. Macbeth was easily able to sneak past them and kill Duncan. Every precaution available had been taken to insure Duncan's protection. It is not an easy task to get past two armed bodyguards in a cramped area. However, through some deceit, Macbeth was able to accomplish this. This reaffirms the statement that no protection is absolute.

Perhaps the best example that no protection is infallible occurs in the aforementioned situation involving President Kennedy. Kennedy was in a moving vehicle. There were two Secret Service men directly behind him and countless others in the crowd. Dallas Police Department officers were placed throughout the area. Dealy Plaza, the site of the tragedy, was crowded, with many obstructions such as trees, signs, and an overpass. Protection was tight. The day was beautiful. The sun was shining. The setting was not right for assassination. However, it still occurred. Kennedy was killed and the entire nation stunned. There was a Secret Service agent very close, yet he was not able to stop the fatal bullet. The limousine driver did not speed up in time to get the President out of danger. The agents in the crowd were unable to prevent the deadly shots. With that many people, with all those pre-cautions, President Kennedy was still killed, proving that protection can be penetrated.

Since the beginning of time, man has wanted power. It is in his basic nature. It is what drives him. The history of the world serves to prove this fact. Adam and Eve wanted power equal to God's so they ate the apple. Caesar struggled to become king and to gain power and was killed for his aspirations. Napoleon had much power. He used it to conquer half of Europe. Hitler craved power so badly he plunged the world into a war that preceded the detonation of the atomic bomb. Men crave power. Some of them, like Adam and Eve, were willing to sacrifice the perfect life to gain their power. They had no jobs, no wake-up calls. They didn't even have to wear clothes! Yet they were willing to sacrifice all this for the chance that they would have power like God. So we learn from the first story of the most popular book in the world that man is willing to trade perfection for more power.

Macbeth loved power. Otherwise, he would never have murdered Duncan.

Macbeth was willing to trade anything to be king. Macbeth was willing to "...jump the life to come." if he could kill Duncan and be done with it. He was willing to risk eternal damnation for a finite term as king of a small country on a small island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. How much more tempting would it be for a man to kill to gain the position as the most powerful man in the world? The temptation would be tremendous. Macbeth had second thoughts on Duncan's murder going so far as to say "We will proceed no further in this business." He was persuaded to commit the murder after many arguments. He does this to satisfy his craving for power.

The President of the United States is the most powerful man in the world today. This is why he is also in more danger than most people. The temptation for the Vice-President to kill the President would be great. Some say that this temptation has even been realized. When Kennedy was shot, it was only a matter of hours before Vice-President Lyndon Johnson was sworn into the vacant office. Was it possible that Johnson had Kennedy killed? It is obvious that a massive cover-up was managed. The cover-up was arranged by someone in power. Who has more power than the President? Johnson could easily have arranged such a massive smoke-screen. Men have killed for less and Johnson was in a position to profit from the Presidency. He gained large sums of money from his construction company in Vietnam. It can be argued that Johnson prolonged the war purposely so he could reap more benefits from the war in Asia. Whatever happened, Johnson was rewarded with much power after the assassination of Kennedy.

Nobody wants to tell the truth if it might get them in trouble. A small child does something wrong, they will usually deny having done it. Teenagers often lie to cover-up their late night parties. Government officials lie to avoid scandals. They are all liars. The only difference is the complexity of the lie and the number of people affected by it. A small child cannot lie very well. Teenagers are somewhat better at it. However, they are mere amateurs compared to professional politicians. This is true for several reasons. Politicians have the means to pay people to lie for them. Sometimes they can threaten to expose other's embarrassing secrets if they do not cooperate. There are other techniques that these people use to hide the truth. However, the fact remains that the more powerful the person, the better the cover-up.

Macbeth was reasonably able to conceal the murder of Duncan. He did this in textbook fashion. First, he found a scapegoat, Duncan's guards. Lady Macbeth cast the suspicion on them by making sure "Their hand and faces were all badged with blood,\ So were their daggers, which unwiped we found\ Upon their pillow." Then Macbeth killed them, cutting off any chance they may have had of defending themselves, claiming "The expedition of my violent love\ Outrun the pauser of reason." He had provided the perfect patsy. They were covered with Duncan's blood, as were their knives. It would have been difficult to defend themselves against this evidence even if they were still alive. But when they were dead, no defense could be offered and they were assumed guilty. So, if Macbeth had quit with this one murder, he would have gotten away with his crime with no consequences.

Who could have known that almost the same exact circumstances would be repeated some 800 years later. After President Kennedy was shot, there had to be a cover up. Someone had to shoulder the blame. Someone had to take the fall. Whether voluntarily or not, Lee Harvey Oswald was the man blamed with the murder of JFK. His palm-print was on the rifle that fired the fatal shot. He was seen leaving the building from which the shots supposedly came. Oswald was set up as the murderer from the beginning, the lone nut who killed the President. And like the fall guys in Macbeth, he was murdered before he was given a chance to defend himself. This provides the perfect cover-up to be presented to the American people. Oswald acted alone. He was crazy. This provided a plausible motive and excluded any chance of a possible conspiracy scandal. The story presented to the American public fit perfectly into the psychological make-up that was supposedly Oswald. He was simply acting like he was supposed to and this explained the murder of Kennedy. In the years following the assassination, more truth about the

event has surfaced, rendering the Oswald character impossible. The people orchestrating the Kennedy cover-up made the same mistake Macbeth made. They were unwilling to leave their story alone. They tried to make themselves more secure by killing key witnesses and doctoring evidence, but what they believed would make them safer, most probably aroused suspicions and their entire story became unbelievable. The conspirators in both situations discredited their entire story by trying to secure themselves.

Assassinating the President is a difficult thing to do. It doesn't happen very often. However, it can be done. If a person plans the crime, and executes it according to plan, he can succeed in killing the President. The protection afforded the President is tremendous but not infallible. Men are willing to commit this crime in order to gain power. If a proper cover-up is planned and executed, then it is effective. If all of these obstacles are overcome properly, a man can assume the Presidency while not one hint of blame is ever thrown his way. All of this has been proven in this paper. It is possible for the plot of Macbeth to be repeated in today's world because no protection provides absolute security, men are still willing to do what Macbeth did, and the deed could still be covered up.