

## Lingering Doubts and Questions About Trump Assassination

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**Glenn Greenwald (GG):** Perhaps it's how many other significant events are going on, but it certainly seems to me as though the media is very eager to forget about the fact that 48 hours ago or so, at a rally in Pennsylvania, Donald Trump came about an inch or an inch and a half away from being assassinated by an assassin's bullet that had he just not moved an inch or so away right at that exact moment, would have entered his skull and likely have killed him. Obviously, this is an extremely consequential event for so many reasons, and there are all kinds of unanswered questions, but I also think a lot of revealing reactions to what happened, many of which I hope to cover tonight and obviously throughout the week. So let's begin first by showing you what happened for those of you who may not have seen it – just the most relevant part. So here is the video that shows Trump speaking at his rally. And then you'll hear the shots fired by an assassin who for some reason, was able to climb up a roof very, very close to where this rally was with an open aim, right at the place where Donald Trump was speaking, without anyone from the Secret Service or other police detecting what he was doing until the very last second. And you'll see, I think the notable thing right here is right as the shots rang out, Trump instinctively turned away, and when doing so, he moved his head and his shoulders an inch to his left. And had he not done that, that bullet wouldn't have grazed his ear – or, as Eric Trump said tonight – removed half of his ear. We still don't have a clear medical analysis of what exactly happened with Trump's ear. But had he not moved – and you'll see this in this video – the bullet absolutely would have entered his head and almost certainly would have either done great damage or killed him.

**Donald Trump (DT):** If you want to really see something, take a look at what happened over

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**GG:** All right. So that's the event itself. Now here's the aftermath of what Trump did. And, well, let me just show it to you first. This is what produced the obviously instantly iconic photo of Trump raising his fist in the air while there's blood splashed on his right cheek and with blood coming out of his right ear as well while the Secret Service tried to circle him and

basically imprison him, cover him, and take him to his car, he insisted instead that they stop so that he could do this.

**DT:** No, wait wait wait.

**GG:** Now, I'm sure you have all seen the photo that came out of that. And honestly, I have to say that what Trump did there really surprised me. I never thought about Trump as a particularly physically courageous person before. Like so many politicians, he managed to evade the draft and not fight in any wars, including the war in Vietnam, which his generation was drafted to fight in. He had a medical excuse. Trump obviously depends upon an image of great strength, but I've never really seen evidence before of that level of courage. He's obviously willing to confront and to endure all sorts of extremely serious attacks, everything that the establishment has to muster. They accused him of being in league with the Kremlin. When that didn't work, they did everything to sabotage his presidency, including getting him banned from social media. They impeached him twice. Republican senators threatened to convict him and ban him from politics through that second impeachment, on his way out the door, if he did things he promised, like pardoning Julian Assange or Edward Snowden or declassifying JFK documents and so much more. Since then, they obviously have indicted him. Not once, not twice, not three times, but four times, and managed to obtain a felony conviction for him in Manhattan, where obviously it's very easy to do, though, in a case that never would have been brought against anyone not named Donald Trump, certainly not as a felony conviction. They impose millions and millions of dollars, tens of millions of dollars of jury verdicts against him in this E. Jean Carroll case in which basically they had to change the law to allow her to bring because of how many decades ago this incident "Bergdorf Goodman" was alleged to have happened. They essentially charged The Trump Organisation with fraud and were able to shut down the company he spent his entire life building, and obviously he knew that if he had just walked away in 2020, none of that was going to happen. Well, that happened because the establishment cannot and will not tolerate anybody that they perceive, rightly or wrongly, as being a threat to their dogma. And therefore, look at what Donald Trump went through his entire life in the not exactly gentle world of Manhattan real estate and casino gambling and so many other businesses not exactly known for their law abiding nature and never once had criminal convictions against him or the bankrupting of his organisation.

All of this happened, obviously coinciding with, and I would say, due to the fact that he was seeking and obtained major political power while oftentimes deliberately violating the protocols imposed by establishment authority and running on a campaign of challenging their dogma. All that said, it takes a kind of moral courage to be willing to continuously endure all of that and then again seek the presidency knowing that that would intensify, which is exactly what has happened. But I didn't really expect the kind of physical courage of this kind. And I think it should be minimised. I want to just spend a second on this because obviously he was the target of this assassination attempt. There were bullets flying while he was completely unprotected on a stage. In fact, one of the bullets hit him and caused him to bleed. And in that situation, he basically was put on the ground by the Secret Service, but he insisted on getting

up. And he said to them: "wait, wait, wait". And demanded that they give him space to put his fist defiantly in the air to chant: "fight, fight, fight!" – to have that connection with the crowd, to create that image, not knowing whether or not the shooter had been neutralised. Not knowing whether there were other shooters. I would submit that most people, after being shot out that way and being hit by one of the bullets, would just – and I wouldn't even condemn a person for doing it, I would just think instinctively the automatic impulse would be to seek cover for as long as you had to, to be absolutely guaranteed that you are no longer in danger. And yet, really, maybe 15 seconds after one of the bullets hit his ear or grazed his ear, whatever the right word is, we'll find out soon – but obviously caused him to be bleeding, and in that situation, you're going to assume that something serious has happened to you. He pushed the Secret Service out of the way and basically was telling the crowd, this is not going to stop him. We're going to fight.

Now, whatever you think of Donald Trump, not only did that surprise me, but that really did display a sort of instinctive courage that I think would be surprising for anybody to display. Obviously, people in the military who go to war are trained for that sort of thing. But for people who aren't, and even for people who are, I think it's not an easy thing to do. And I also think it was an important thing to do, because it could have created the image of Trump sort of scampering away. And instead it created this image – obviously contrasting with Biden's worst political vulnerability as this old, fragile man who's weak and barely knows who he is – of Trump reacting in the moment and engaging with that environment, to create that kind of threat, to create one of the most iconic photos in American political history, undoubtedly. You couldn't have created a better photo to make Trump look better than that photo that was captured of him, with the American flag behind him and his fist raised in the air while covered with blood.

Now, there's obviously a very serious question here of how it was possible for a shooting of this kind to happen, given the amount of Secret Service assigned to Trump, not only as a former president of the United States, but obviously as a frontrunner for the presidency in 2024. It's virtually unthinkable. If the would-be-assassin had used some sort of very exotic and unexpected means of trying to kill Trump – say, the way that the 9/11 hijackers used on that day to hijack planes and fly them into buildings in ways that nobody could have anticipated previously, they didn't sneak guns onto the plane, they didn't sneak knives onto the plane, they trained for months to be able to fly planes, and then used box cutters to slit the throats of flight attendants and passengers, and ultimately the pilots, and then took control of the plane. That's something that nobody really could have anticipated. Which isn't to say that people didn't have advanced knowledge, it just means that that was a very inventive way of killing people and attacking the United States. This, by contrast, was the most primitive, the crudest and most obvious way possible.

Here is a map, published by the New York Times, so you can just see how preposterous this all seems. So there you see the stage where Trump was when he was speaking. There it is in yellow. And here was the location of the gunman and where his body ended up laying once the snipers who were here shot him and killed him. And then here is the location where one

of the participants at this rally ended up being wounded. So you can pretty much see that there is a direct line of fire, a direct line of sight from this location on the roof right to the stage where somebody who is supposed to be protected at all costs is speaking. And it's not like he moved around to some unexpected place. This was the place he was always going to speak. They don't just let presidents, former presidents and major presidential candidates wander around aimlessly. This is the place where he goes, and that's the place where he was going to speak. And you can see, as many of the people pointed out – this is in Butler, Pennsylvania. It's not a big town at all. It's a small, mostly rural town, a farming town. You can see there are barns here. And then there's this building here that the shooter climbed on top of. And there are a few more over here on the right that you can't see. So that's pretty much it. So if you were going to look at where potential dangers might emanate from this Trump rally, the building that the shooter climbed on top of, lay down, aimed, and then fired – took all that time to do so – is, if not the most obvious place to safeguard, certainly one of them. Now, we've heard almost nothing from the Secret Service by way of explanation. They have put out through the press the fact that the perimeter for which they're responsible was more limited, basically just to this and that anything outside of it was the responsibility of the local police, which also makes no sense. The Secret Service just arbitrarily creates a small square and says, we're only going to safeguard the president for threats that emanate from here, but not 30ft over from that obvious building and the roof that gives any kind of a shooter clear sight. There's been almost no accountability from the Secret Service. There's been a lot of controversy surrounding the Secret Service prior to this incident, including questions of whether the head of the Secret Service appointed by Biden was actually competent for the job and whether she is a partisan. She was the one who was responsible for the deletion of a lot of January 6th footage. And certainly there's no evidence to suggest this is true. But in any instance where there's a presidential assassination or an attempted presidential assassination, the question immediately arises whether or not the person who actually pulled the trigger was working with other people or other groups or other agencies from a foreign government or in our government. This is the question that, of course, has to be thoroughly and comprehensively examined.

When JFK was killed that was the first question that immediately arose: did somebody in our own government do this or was it a foreign government? Nobody just said, oh, look, there's Lee Harvey Oswald. I guess, case settled. In fact, we debate that to this very day. The same is true with a lot of the political assassinations of the 60s of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King and RFK Sr. and even George Wallace. And so when you have an attack of this magnitude, politically speaking, we have to understand everything we possibly can as quickly as possible about what happened here. And we actually know very, very little. The identified shooter is a 20 year old with almost no online imprint, something very rare for 20 year olds in the United States growing up in an internet culture. We hear that he had no apparent political views. He may have registered as a Republican when he first registered, but donated a small amount of money to a progressive group, none of which is particularly revealing about their motives. We know nothing about the shooter. We know nothing about how the Secret Service had what presumably they would call a lapse of this enormity. They only have one job, the Secret Service. At least these agents assigned there and that's to protect the people to whom they're

assigned, even at the expense of their own lives. I mean, I'm obviously not a professional in security or law enforcement, but you just look at this map and you instantly could identify that roof as a place where you would have to safeguard to prevent somebody who wanted to kill Donald Trump, which is the question you ask everywhere he goes, from having that line of sight.

Now there are all sorts of videos floating around the internet of people saying that they saw the shooter climb up the building and were talking about it and trying to alert law enforcement for a decent amount of time before the shooting began. Here's just one of these videos taken by an iPhone of a participant who was at the Trump rally, and you can see people pointing to and looking at the shooter on the roof as he climbs up and gets ready to begin shooting. And there's no attempt, apparently, by anyone in law enforcement, to intervene in any way. Here's one of those videos.

**Rallygoer 1:** Look, they're all pointing. Yeah, someone's on top of the roof. Look, there he is right there.

**Rallygoer 2:** Where?

**Rallygoer 1:** Right there, you see him? He's laying down, you see him?

**Rallygoer 2:** Yeah, he's laying down.

**Rallygoer 1:** What's happening? Yeah, look, there he is.

**Rallygoer 3:** Officer!

**Rallygoer 2:** He's on the roof! Right here! Right on the roof!

**GG:** That video was about 52 seconds long. These are just ordinary people attending the Trump rally. These are not law enforcement professionals, let alone Secret Service agents. And yet they were able not only to identify this person, but understand immediately that he was a threat. He climbed up this building and then laid down with the rifle, taking aim. And they were talking about it the entire time. And yet no law enforcement observed that. No Secret Service observed what these ordinary citizens going to the rally, not looking for these sorts of things, obviously, were able to spot with that much time.

From Reuters today, there is a NBC affiliate in, I believe, Pennsylvania that has this extremely interesting report. *Law enforcement spotted the Trump shooter nearly 30 minutes before shots were fired, NBC affiliate reports.* Quote, "The man who tried to assassinate former President Donald Trump on Saturday was spotted by law enforcement nearly 30 minutes before shots were fired, a local NBC affiliate reported on Monday. WPXI reported that a member of Beaver County, Pennsylvania's emergency services unit noticed a suspicious man on a roof near the rally at 5:45 p.m., called it in and took a picture of the

person." Now, all I mean to say here is exactly what I'm saying, which is that there are obvious, pressing, vital questions about the Secret Service, about the police, about how this was about to happen, about whether there was – apparently there was all kinds of sufficient grounds, and notification to believe this happened. So what happened? How was this allowed to happen? Now, I want to emphasise that I think oftentimes one of the things that people who create conspiracy theories get wrong is the level of incompetence that pervades all of our institutions. We have this idea of the Secret Service, that they're these highly trained, specialised forces, the best of the best. And what we've seen over the last two decades, at least, is a complete collapse in faith and trust in American institutions of authority; ones that had been respected for decades precisely because, among other things, including corrupt, they are pervaded with incompetence. So you won't want to believe that even law enforcement, let alone the Secret Service, would be capable of missing something of this obvious nature when it comes to the danger. But I think it's important not to put incompetence at the end of the list, as though that's not a likely explanation, but that's by no means the only explanation. Conspiracies do happen. Prisons are filled with people accused of secret conspiracies. Powerful people pull out all the time to make things happen. I'm not saying that's what happened here, but in either case or whatever case, it's shocking, it's stunning, that something of this magnitude took place and the way that it took place. And so I think what is really worth underscoring is how many questions we need answers to about the shooter, about the person's motives, about any connections that may have had. We're told that the FBI can't get into his phone yet because of a password put over it. Talking about the FBI, the NSA, who have the most powerful and sophisticated password breaking weapons of any group in the world. Back in 2013 and 2014, ten years ago when I did the Snowden reporting, we reported on technology that was able to guess and enter a billion passwords per minute. And how they could break any even sophisticated encryption, let alone the basic kind of password that you put on an iPhone. I think they finally got access to the phone, but they were saying for the last three days that they couldn't. So we need to understand what contents are on that phone. But also we need to understand the security failure that happened here. We know nothing about that. We've barely heard from the Secret Service, and obviously we need to.

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**END**

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