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# Was FDR a Victim of Assassination?

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*While FDR was pronounced dead of a massive cerebral hemorrhage by his cardiologist, a new book from Steve Ubaney, author of the Who Murdered . . . ? series, believes the evidence tells quite a different story. Ubaney says Stalin and the president's inner circle plotted to remove FDR from postwar decisions, and he was the victim of a "meticulous, systematic poisoning."*

**By S. T. Patrick**

By March 29, 1945, the United States could sense an end to the war that had both ravaged the globe and rescued the American economy from the straits of the Great Depression. Franklin D. Roosevelt had just entered his fourth term as president. Whenever the stresses of the nation's highest office demanded a calming respite for the ailing president, an excursion to the Little White House in Warm Springs, Ga. was scheduled.

Recuperation was needed. FDR was about to attend a series of organizational meetings to charter the United Nations. In that all-important and lucrative practice of parsing and restructuring the world after a war, Roosevelt was to be the lead figure, maneuvering the chess pieces across the grandest of geopolitical boards. The general secretary of the Soviet Union, Josef Stalin, had led his country

for two decades and was about to preside over his army's victorious march through the streets of Berlin. Stalin believed that he, himself, had earned the right to helm the division of spoils emanating from the Second World War.

On the **afternoon of April 12, Roosevelt**, who felt increasingly ill, said, "I have a terrible **headache**," and slumped forward in his chair, unconscious. After being carried to his bedroom, FDR was pronounced dead of a massive cerebral hemorrhage by his **cardiologist Dr. Howard Bruenn**. Vice President Harry Truman, an unassuming machine politician from Kansas City, became FDR's successor.

Stalin must have seen a clearer path upon FDR's death. In fact, it would be the **beginning of a remarkably fatal 18 days**. Italian **Prime Minister Benito Mussolini was assassinated on April 28** and Stalin was led to believe that the German Chancellor **Adolf Hitler had committed suicide on April 30**. Churchill's Conservative Party would soon lose an election, forcing the resignation of the prime minister, and France's Charles de Gaulle had neither the financial stability nor the military fortitude to demand a powerful seat at the table of postwar politics.

While many characterize FDR's death as the culmination of an adulthood riddled with health emergencies, author Steve Ubaney believes the evidence tells quite a different story. Ubaney is the author of the *Who Murdered . . . ?* book series. His volumes *Who Murdered Elvis?* and *Who Murdered FDR?* have questioned the official causes of death, and his upcoming *Who Murdered JFK?* will focus on the 2017-2018 JFK records releases. Ubaney believes the evidence shows that FDR was not solely suffering from the physical difficulties of a man who had contracted polio, a paralytic illness, in 1921 at the age of 39. Ubaney describes a situation in which Roosevelt was the **victim of a meticulous, systematic poisoning that began around the time of the Tehran Conference in December 1943**.

When examining the suspects, Ubaney writes as an investigator, examining means, motive, and opportunity. No one is off limits. He examines Eleanor Roosevelt's growing anger over FDR's trysts with Missy LeHand, his personal secretary, and Lucy Mercer, Eleanor's social secretary. FDR was so fond of LeHand that he included her in his will after she suffered a stroke. Mercer was with FDR in Warm Springs when he died. FDR had refused his wife's request for a divorce, leaving her fastened to a loveless marriage.

**Harry Hopkins, FDR's chief diplomatic advisor and friend**, is the book's most interesting character. Long treated by Roosevelt biographers as the heroic architect of New Deal implementation, Ubaney **details Hopkins's ties to Soviet intelligence**, going so far as to **label** him "a Soviet **spy** and operative." Hopkins had always been closer to the Soviets than many American diplomats had wished him to be. When FDR was going through a more difficult stint of immobility, Hopkins would act as the mouthpiece and legs of the president.

**Ubaney writes that Hopkins was "the most important man that no one ever knew."**

Elizabeth Schoumatoff and Nicholas Robbins were also present in Warm Springs when FDR died. Schoumatoff, a friend of Mercer, was a Russian-born painter tasked with capturing FDR's likeness in his fourth term. Robbins was a photographer and longtime friend of Schoumatoff. Both shared Russian backgrounds, ties to high-level anti-FDR financiers, and a presence in Warm Springs.

When Ubaney discusses the practicalities of poisoning, characters reminiscent of the board game Clue enter the story. There is Arthur Prettyman, one of FDR's personal valets, Howell Crim, the chief usher of the White House, and the cooks who prepare Roosevelt's daily meals, about which FDR had increasingly complained throughout his presidency.

After his death, many of FDR's [medical records](#) at Bethesda were either lost or stolen. We know this because **Mrs. Roosevelt had her own suspicions approximately 10 years later. She wanted a re-evaluation of her husband's medical history and the records of his death.** She soon discovered that what was not locatable could not be re-evaluated.

Though Roosevelt was only 63 when he died, he appeared much older, as many onlookers observed. The severe decline began after Tehran and then seemingly hit bottom after the Yalta Conference of February 1945. Ubaney points out that the closer FDR traveled in proximity to the Russian delegation, the worse his health deteriorated.

Ubaney writes, "Are we really expected to believe that (FDR) died of natural causes at the same time the Allied troops were closing in on Hitler's bunker? **Are we really expected to believe that Roosevelt, Hitler, and Mussolini died within 18 days by coincidence?**"

Though the lions of the Second World War were gone or removed from office, Stalin did not have [complete](#) autonomy. He had underestimated both Truman's resolve and corporate America's desire to control new markets. What he may have done, however, is end the fourth term of FDR prematurely. Ubaney admits that Stalin is the puppetmaster in the plot. The remainder of *Who Murdered FDR?* answers the questions of the players, their roles, and the strategies used to poison an American president.

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