

We May Never Know What Really Happened on July 13, 2024



By Steven Yates

July 26, 2024

[Author's note: due to a minor hardware issue I wasn't able to get this article out before now. And as the saying goes, time and events march on. Biden ended his campaign for reelection and endorsed Kamala Harris, who, if she became president, would most likely push all the leftist Bidenista policies under a more overt Diversity-Equity-Inclusion banner. Otherwise, presidency-by-hidden-committee would continue, since no one with functioning brain cells thinks Kamala is qualified to make any real decisions. With the grace of God and new Chinese-made technology, more on these and other recent developments in the next article.]

“Some say that it is too early to know what explains Trump’s near assassination. However, a good case can be made that we already know all we will ever know. The passage of time simply allows official narratives to be constructed, and they are used to muddy the waters. I support the calls for an official investigation, but government investigations are always coverups. Think the Warren Commission Report, the 9/11 Commission Report, the NISH Report. If there is an investigation, nothing will come of it, and if by chance it does the presstitutes won’t report it.” –Paul Craig Roberts, [“The Assassination Attempt,”](#) July 17, 2024

“I have certain rules I live by. My first rule: I don’t

believe anything the government tells me. Nothing. Zero.”
–George Carlin

How much do you know about the assassination attempt against Donald Trump the weekend before last? Including anything gleaned from [my piece](#), or sent out by online “influencers.” Was there a second shooter? Did Secret Service simply screw up, or was there major malfeasance (i.e., was this an attempted Deep State hit)? Given that Thomas Crooks, 20, was a Gen Z digital native, where’s his digital footprint? Are we really supposed to believe he didn’t have one?

[The kid was in a BlackRock commercial made in his school](#), since scrubbed from the Internet. What’s up with that?

Do you believe you’ll get answers from “your” government?

Now for the kicker: do you believe you’re able to deduce correct and final conclusions from “influencers” on X, Rumble, or elsewhere, who weren’t there?

Does anybody truly know what’s going on?

Back in June, a guy named David Cain (not the DC Comics villain; this David Cain publishes [Raptitude.com](#), a mindfulness and self-improvement site, not a political site) posted an article I’ve not stopped thinking about.

[“Nobody Knows What’s Going On”](#) was its title.

Cain argued compellingly that most of our beliefs about people and events outside our immediate experience are wrong most of the time. That most information circulating – especially online – is wrong, whatever its source. Usually this doesn’t hurt us, and so it isn’t disincentivized. Passing along what *looks* insightful (but is merely exciting and provides us a sense of being “in the know”) may even win accolades from those who applaud how “knowledgeable” we are.

Cain quotes George Orwell: “The most fundamental mistake of

man is that he thinks he knows what's going on. Nobody knows what's going on."

How did we get here?

In pre-technology days, the range of information that reached any ordinary person was *quite* small: limited to home, the farm, neighboring farms perhaps, what was going on in the village or town – and Scripture. Everyone knew everyone else. They knew what to expect from one another. Most played by the rules, because the consequences of not doing so were often immediate and sometimes severe.

There were two levels of knowledge, in other words. There was first-hand knowledge and there was Scripture.

First-hand knowledge was trustworthy based on empiricism. Farmers knew when to plant, when to harvest, etc. They understood land and soil, animals and plants. They passed this knowledge to their children, and it was passed to their children's children.

Scriptural knowledge was just as real. Life was doubtless difficult, because farming is labor-intensive; so is washing clothes by hand, the fate of nearly all women in those days.

But God's presence was evident in the setting sun extending its fan of multihued light across the sky, or in the wonderous balances of nature. One could read out of Genesis (especially 3:1-19) what was, for them, an adequate explanation of life's harshness; from the Gospels and Paul's epistles came the realization that *this* life was a testing ground of sorts. Upon death they would go to be with their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Scriptural knowledge was trustworthy because it was God's revelation.

One imagines diligent believers contented.

In any case, a war could be raging a few hundred miles away. They'd never know about it, because it didn't affect them.

Industrialism and its complications.

Industrial civilization changed all this.

First, "low" technology increased our ability to affect our environment. Much of this knowledge was still empirical and first-hand: instead of farming by hand, machines could be used, and their use could be taught to apprentices. With the Gutenberg press, the common man's access to Scripture increased; one result was the Protestant Revolution.

With the increasing size of organizations and the growth of national-level and then international trade, knowledge of what was going on elsewhere mattered more and more. Some needed to know if a war was raging somewhere in their region.

Second, man's increasing mastery over his surroundings led to hubris, alongside developments in the sciences that seemed to render God superfluous. That sunset and its colors? Natural phenomena only. Evolution offered a nontheistic account of nature's "balance" via natural selection and adaptation.

The thoughtful in different parts of the world (e.g., Dostoevsky in Russia, Nietzsche in Germany) pondered the perceived loss of God, because they understood it meant losing what had been the foundations of a moral view of the world for almost 2,000 years.

No one had proved God's existence. For most ordinary peasant lives, this didn't seem to matter. Food still had to be grown and taken to market; clothes had to be cleaned; animals and machinery had to be tended to; new discoveries and inventions were changing our lives.

Civilization grew more complex and anonymous. Farms were soon far away. In cities, food came from stores (a few outdoor

markets remained). You were fortunate if you knew your neighbors. Trust, which depended on the presumption that nearly everyone would play by morally-backed rules, began to diminish when it was realized that those who had risen to the top did not (nor did all the neighbors).

Those born and growing to adulthood in this new world had far fewer means of testing the narratives they received. First-hand knowledge narrowed rather than increased. Public schools were the primary means of “educating.” They encouraged conformity, not critical thinking; and this continued on into adulthood. Read John Taylor Gatto, whose discussions of how government schools prepared entire generations to live in a controlled society passed off as a *democracy* are comprehensive.

What went contrary to official narratives could be effectively hidden from most people.

Then computers happened: “high” technology. The Internet arrived, for most of us bursting on the scene in the 1990s. As a medium of communication and information distribution, it only grew.

The Internet: a blessing and a curse.

The great blessing of the Internet is its having created an environment in which anyone can research anything that interests them and post their findings on a website or blog for all the world to see.

The great curse of the Internet is its having created an environment in which anyone can research anything that interests them and post their findings on a website or blog for all the world to see.

You read those sentences right. The Internet’s blessing is also its curse.

Because as every conservative knows, freedom presupposes responsibility.

Because like it or not, industrialism and secularization diminished moral responsibility.

For decades prior to the rise of the Internet there were few penalties for official lies.

People grew careless with information, especially if they had no means of checking it first-hand but it accorded with their political beliefs. Sometimes they simply made crap up.

This was incorporated into Internet culture and explains shoddy information online.

I've been stung a handful of times. Back in the happy and carefree late 1990s, I penned an article (thankfully long gone) which included a reference to Clinton's attorney general Janet Reno referring to Christians as "cultists" during a *60 Minutes* interview:

A cultist is one who has a strong belief in the Bible and the Second Coming of Christ; who frequently attends Bible studies; who has a high level of financial giving to a Christian cause; who home schools their children; who has accumulated survival foods and has a strong belief in the Second Amendment; and who distrusts big government. Any of these may qualify but certainly more than one would cause us to look at this person as a threat, and his family as being in a risk situation that qualified for government interference.

Fighting words, from an arch-leftist?

The problem: *there was no such interview*; she never said those words.

The fact that few of us thought much of Reno, the "butcher of Waco" – I'd referred to her as "our first affirmative action attorney general" – predisposed us to believe the worst about

her. Someone put words in her mouth, and we fell for it.

A reader pointed out that the quote was bogus. I issued an *erratum* the following week.

There used to be a lot of bogus quotes from the Founding Fathers online. These are now much easier to check. Everything ever written by George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, etc., has been archived. This wasn't true back in the 1990s.

We were too trusting. I'd guesstimate that by the end of 2016, which saw the Trump upset, a lot of the earlier trust had been shattered, especially in official narratives.

The covid nightmare diminished trust still more. Does anyone reading this truly believe in The Science??? (Tony Fauci on the "vaxxes," etc., etc.)

We're now in an environment in which distrust of *most* of what reaches us ought to be our initial response. Because there is indeed "misinformation" circulating on the Internet, especially on social media platforms. Much of it is innocent, people carelessly passing along what they believe is true because it fits their preconceptions. Some of it is less innocent.

It's never been easier to "get into print," and so it's tempting for writers to take short cuts.

Nor has it ever been easier just to pass some item along without checking its veracity.

Incentives to produce more and more "content" contribute to this. I know of "influencers" who would tell me I should be sending out articles every *day*, not roughly *once a week*!

Right! I'd be online 24/7/365, and my wife would have divorced me years ago!

Writers should try to get things right, but because of innocent errors, readers should also read with a critical eye. They may forget to do this if they agree with the writer's worldview.

This definitely applies to political events with emotions running high!

Especially if we weren't there and have no first-hand experience of those events or been able to talk to anyone who does!

But in the digital dystopia we now inhabit, such claims are now the norm, regardless of which side they come from. They get circulated as if they were proven fact.

Proven facts are hard to come by in the New Normal!

"7/13/24": What do we *know*? Not a whole lot! Possibly we never will. What can we *surmise*?

Is it a proven fact that "Thomas Crooks, 20, was the sole shooter at Donald Trump at a rally in Butler, Pa., on July 13, 2024, and one of his shots drew blood from Trump's right ear"?

Or is it this: "Crooks was a patsy, because a hidden sharpshooter on the nearby water tower fired the shot"?

A few others now claim [acoustic evidence](#) supports the idea that there was a shooter *inside* the building Crooks was on! Evidence: one of the shots that injured a rally attendee was on an upward trajectory, meaning that it could not have come from Crooks' weapon.

Many people at the event reported seeing Crooks on the roof well before Secret Service did anything – according to some of my sources. A very small handful claimed to have seen a second shooter on the water tower – according to other sources.

If true, then for *them* (not for *me* writing this or *you*,

reading it!) that would constitute first-hand knowledge.

Also first-hand knowledge that Crooks's presence was known about for close to a half-hour. No one in authority did anything. A distraction, the patsy?

What we know is that after the shooting, claims about someone seen on the water tower were instantly memory-holed. The water tower vanished from all diagrams and official reportage.

Secret Service, moreover, killed Crooks on the spot. Dead kids don't talk.

There are first-hand claims (again, according to my sources), and then there's surmise.

The nuttiest theory I've seen is that Trump and his entourage engineered the whole thing to make him a martyr and boost his popularity.

He was nearly killed, and that is all that should need be said about what a few left wing nut jobs are saying.

Another odd claim is that Crooks not only wasn't the one killed but appeared in a video saying he hated Trump and that "you got the wrong guy." Just one source for that, dated a couple of days after the shooting, with no follow-up or indication of truth, makes it highly dubious to say the least.

Other claims are less deranged, e.g., that one Jonathan Willis, a police sniper positioned on a different rooftop, had Crooks in sight for three minutes but effectively told to stand down, and subsequently fired for taking Crooks out without authorization.

Not crazy, but it doesn't check out. The post was anonymous, on 4chan: another red flag. Moreover, no police agency on the scene had anyone on payroll with that name.

The claim was passed to me by someone who believed it, because

she believed there was a Deep State conspiracy to take Trump out.

Was there?

Did it include a powerful corporate entity such as BlackRock?

Simple logic: none of the usual suspects – the CIA, etc. – would have sent an untested 20-year-old to do the job. They would have sent a trained sharpshooter, while the kid on the roof served as a distraction.

Sharpshooters usually don't miss.

Trump moved his head at the last possible instant to point to something on a diagram (he doesn't ordinarily use props). Had he not done so, the bullet would have blown the back of his head off.

Divine intervention?

Trump himself may think so. His acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention contained more references to God than all his previous speeches put together.

Whether you find the idea credible depends on your worldview.

I can't *prove* any of this, of course.

What's missing is whatever connection (if there was one) between the kid, Crooks, and the on-the-ground entity positioned to take Trump out.

Probably no one reading this was there (if I'm wrong, you can tell me). Note my qualifications above (e.g., *according to my sources*).

We rely, whether we want to or not, on reports from media of various sorts: some mainstream, some not.

Only if you were there, or directly involved in investigating

the events, do you have first-hand knowledge of them. The rest is media-dependent as well as bias-prone (including in case those entrusted to investigate what happened were handed a narrative in advance), or just plain error-prone because that's the human condition.

David Cain again, from the article I cited:

Only a tiny percentage of what a given person "knows" is in this first-hand, embodied form. The rest is made of impressions gathered from anecdotes, newspapers, books, schoolteachers, blogs,...

It makes perfect sense, if you think about it, that reporting is so reliably unreliable. Why do we expect reporters to learn about a suddenly newsworthy situation, gather information about it under deadline, then confidently explain the subject to the rest of the nation after having known about it for all of a week? People form their entire worldviews out of this stuff.

Or under pressure to deliver *something* coherent in the heat of the moment!

We can't *prove*, but we *can* surmise.

We can be reasonably certain that powerful, behind-the-scenes forces want Trump gone. What we can't know are the specifics.

Summing up: a case for intelligent skepticism.

So where is this ending up?

All manner of claims are circulating about the assassination attempt on Trump, at every level of reasonability and unreasonability. Some are incompatible with others. This is typical of events that elicit "conspiracy theories," themselves a product of a low-trust environment.

I've [previously listed](#) the events we've been lied to about. My

list somehow omitted 9/11 (a reader pointed this out). It also omitted the Oklahoma City Bombing, and what really happened at the Branch Davidian compound two years before. *Mea culpa*.

Events about which we can make surmises with varying degrees of credibility. Where we go off course is in thinking we have *proof*.

Rather like science – the *real thing*, based on a careful and constantly renegotiated balance of consensus and skepticism. As opposed to *The Science*, in which those with official narratives would have us place religious adulation.

Real science is rarer than you think.

You can probably trust most first-hand knowledge, based again on empiricism. But most first-hand knowledge today is irrelevant to what gets us hot and bothered politically.

First-hand knowledge tells me the cats are asleep on the bed as I write this; I can walk into our bedroom and see them. First-hand knowledge tells me that if I touch a burner while the stove is on, it'll hurt. First-hand knowledge tells me it's sunny outside as I write this.

I have no first-hand knowledge of anything political: nothing Trumpian, nor of Biden's resignation (and present whereabouts!), nor anything the power elites are doing or even who the upper echelons are, even if I have my *suspensions* about what is really going on!

It's all second-hand. All second-hand communication by definition comes from outside our experience. Most comes from some media source. Our world is *media-saturated*.

The New Normal is a low-trust environment because of how difficult it is to determine what, and who, to believe. Because of the combination of sometimes innocent human error, the willingness of some to "go along in order to get along,"

that of others to deceive, and a few to simply peddle bullshit (in the late philosopher Harry Frankfurt's sense of that word) – there are events about which we may have *some* glimmerings of truth based on initial statements and what we can surmise.

Specific utterances from those *claiming* first-hand knowledge can be valuable, because they come before anyone has time to put an official narrative in place. The statements by rallygoers claiming they saw someone on the water tower qualify.

But we may never get the whole story. Not on this side of the grave.

7/13/24 looks likely to be added to the list of such events about which an official narrative will be recycled on CNN and MSNBC endlessly, every other consideration dismissed as “conspiracy theory.”

And now, with Biden's campaign having ended (or been ended for him – again, who knows?), the news cycles are moving on. Being replaced by the official narrative that Kamala Harris is actually qualified to sit in the White House.

I understand the temptation some might feel to throw up their hands in despair and walk away from everything political.

Two nights ago, as I finish this, I ran across a Facebook post that I've also been thinking about a great deal. Edited a little without changing the meaning:

Let's be honest, people: politics has little to no effect on our personal lives. We just use political agendas as a crutch to support our own egos.

Social media companies, entertainers, and large corporations are the real leaders of this country ... most of Washington, D.C. doesn't even know how to properly navigate computer operating systems. There are millions of individuals out there

under the age of 21 who will have or already have created computer algorithms that have flipped this world upside down and have full control over the information we see.

I urge individuals to let go of political interest and start focusing on building families and developing long-term healthy relationships with people. I love you all, and may God bless you all.

I have no idea of the author. But I'm convinced, having accidentally seen his remark, that he's touched on two important realizations: *corporate leviathans – BlackRock being one of them – control the world, and there's nothing any of us latter-day, digital-age, media-inundated peasants can do about it other than reduce, as much as possible, our contact with them.*

The advice I'd add, therefore: get offline later today, go outside and, say, go up a hill and watch the sunset. Take a loved one with you.

You might see God.

Oh, by the way: the George Orwell quote above? It's bogus. If we believe David Cain, anyway.

© 2024 Steven Yates – All Rights Reserved

E-Mail Steven Yates: freeyourmindinsc@yahoo.com

A slightly different version of this article is also available on Steven Yates's [Navigating the New Normal](#) (Substack). Subscribe to Navigating the New Normal.

I have it on excellent authority that in the wake of the counterattacks against alternative (i.e., truthful) media, *this* site is struggling to survive. Please consider making a donation to support NewsWithViews.com [here](#).

Steven Yates is a (still recovering) ex-academic with a PhD in Philosophy. He taught for more than 15 years total at several universities in the Southeastern U.S. He authored more than 20 articles, book reviews, and review essays in academic journals and anthologies. Refused tenure and unable to obtain full-time academic employment (and with an increasing number of very fundamental philosophical essays refused publication in journals), he turned to alternative platforms and heretical notions, including about academia itself. In 2012 he moved to Chile. He is married to a Chilean national.

He has a Patreon.com page. Donate [here](#) and become a Patron if you benefit from his work and believe it merits being sustained financially.

Steven Yates's book *Four Cardinal Errors: Reasons for the Decline of the American Republic* (2011) can be ordered [here](#).

His philosophical work *What Should Philosophy Do? A Theory* (2021) can be obtained [here](#) or [here](#).

His paranormal horror novel *The Shadow Over Sarnath* (2023) can be gotten [here](#).

Should you purchase any (or all) books from Amazon, please consider leaving a five-star review (if you think they merit such).