

Commentary

Jim Davidson
Syndicated Columnist

Amazing coincidences

Sometimes back, a lady in another state called me on the telephone regarding something about President Abraham Lincoln and in the course of our conversation she asked this question: "Have you ever heard of the amazing coincidences between Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy?" When I confessed that I had not, she offered to send it to me by mail. When it arrived a few days later and I read it, I was literally amazed, which I'm sure is the reason it's called "The Amazing Coincidences." I was most impressed with this article and since it was not copyrighted, I decided to include it in my book, "You Can Be The Best, which is a collection of the best stories and ideas I've run across in the past 25 years.

Sometime back I even thought about writing this with you in this column, but had decided that most people had already seen it and read pretty well written it off. However, Mr. Herman Brown, editor of the Okmulgee Daily Times in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, has changed my mind. He said, "I'm sure most people have not seen this article and I'm sure they would like to." Well, Herman, for what it's worth, here are the "Amazing Coincidences" between former presidents Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy.

Lincoln was elected in 1860. Kennedy was elected in 1960, exactly one hundred years apart. There are seven letters in each name. Both presidents were slain on Friday; both men were slain in the presence of their wives. Both president's wives lost children through death while in the White House. Both were directly concerned with civil rights. Both presidents had legalities of elections contested. Kennedy's secretary's name was Lincoln, who warned him not to go to Dallas; Lincoln's secretary's name was Kennedy, who warned him not to go to the theater.

Both of their successors' names were Johnson: Andrew Johnson and Lyndon Johnson. Each name contains thirteen letters; both men served in the U.S. Senate; both were southern democrats. Andrew Johnson was born in 1808, Lyndon Johnson was born in 1908.

Both and Oswald were both Southerners favoring unpopular ideas. Oswald shot Kennedy from a warehouse and hid in a theater; Booth shot Lincoln in a theater and

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SCALPEL...
CLAMPS...
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Commentary
Desert Storm marks tenth Anniversary

Head of the Hollar



Garry Barker
Guest Columnist

It has been 10 years now since Desert Storm, the Persian Gulf War, the massive buildup and lightning military strikes that produced an instant victory but were stopped short of achieving the ultimate goal.

The 101st Airborne was at the city limits of Baghdad, ready to crush Saddam Hussein, when then President George Bush gave in to political pressure and pulled the plug.

My son, Greg, and my youngest brother, Jon, spent about 8 months in the Saudi Arabia desert getting ready for the "mother of all battles," rubbing elbows with troops from all over the world, enduring the sand, wind, heat, cold, and the ever-present threat of chemical weapons.

The waiting was probably worse than the actual war, for the troops and for those of us whose children were entrenched in the sand. Over here, we could watch the war live on CNN, from SCUD missiles to US smart bombs, but over there the soldiers only knew what was happening wherever they happened to be.

Commanding General Norman Schwarzkopf took a page from Robert E. Lee's book, feinted one way and hit hard from another, and crumpled the demoralized Iraqi forces in one sweep. Burning oil wells, chemicals, and whatever else the troops were exposed to is still taking its toll, a bitter legacy of mysterious medical symptoms which our government tried to ignore.

Back then I made my anti-war, pro-soldier stance plain and clear. There is no such thing, to me, as "acceptable loss" of American lives to keep the price of gasoline artificially low. If you've been to the gas pump lately you know it didn't work anyway. Up until the end, President Bush did a masterful job of pulling together a political and military coalition unseen

since World War II, then unleashed the US troops and technology in an awesome display of smart bombs, Tomahawk missiles, and Apache gunships. As always, the ground troops had to finish the war, and would have really finished it had not President Bush wavered at the very moment when he should have been strongest.

Ten years later, Saddam still thumbs his nose at the world. During the Gulf War I wrote a series of editorials and poems, published in various newspapers and journals, which I later pulled together as "Desert Storms." I still can't read them to an audience.

On this 10th anniversary Greg asked me to dig out the poems for a small display. I did, sat alone with them for a long time, and remembered. This one says it best of all. It's called "Brian's Song."

My two year old grandson bangs the piano or his toy guitar and sings "My Daddy's in Subi Abn." But Brian won't talk anymore About his father

Except to say, sometimes, "Daddy gone airplane." And Daddy is gone airplane. From the Fort Campbell airstrip With his rucksack, gas mask, M-16, and desert camouflage. "Chocolate chip," the soldiers Call their brown and tan gear. Two sets, sunglasses, canteens, And live ammo, seven clips. Half a million young Americans Ready to fight and die In a holy war to protect George Bush's re-election. And our right to cheap gasoline. Not being a president Or a major shareholder in Texaco I can't share the Warlike greed, passion, and excitement. My only investment in the Saudi sands Is in mere flesh and blood. My son, Brian's father, And the only return we want on our investment Is a live soldier, home again.

Contact the author at garybarker@netscape.net or www.angelfire.com/ky/barker

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Top allergy experts offer tips for stings

For millions of Americans, summer brings the threat of insect stings and, for some, the danger of severe and sometimes life-threatening reactions. As part of a nationwide public education program of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology offers these tips:

- If you are stung and experience symptoms such as troubled breathing, hives, fainting or any symptoms other than pain, itching, redness and swelling at the sting site, you may be having a severe reaction and should seek medical attention immediately.
- If you have experienced a severe reaction, you may have insect sting allergy; a condition which puts you at a high risk of having a similar or worse reaction the next time you are stung.
- Insect sting allergy can be treated. Ask your doctor to refer you to an allergist who can evaluate you for a vaccination program that immunizes against future allergic reactions.
- A sting kit containing injectable epinephrine is emergency rescue medication only. It can stop an allergic reaction in progress but cannot treat the underlying allergy and therefore will not protect against future reactions.
- Allergic reactions to insect stings can be dangerous and sometimes fatal.
- Insect allergic individuals often change their lifestyles out of fear of stinging insects, sometimes avoiding outdoor activities altogether. Proper evaluation and treatment by an allergy specialist can alleviate much of the fear and misunderstanding associated with insect sting allergy. For a free information booklet call 1-800-23 STING.

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hid in a warehouse. Both presidents were shot from behind and in the head. Booth and Oswald were both assassinated before going on trial. They were born 100 years apart and each name, Lee Harvey Oswald and John Wilkes Booth, has 15 letters.

Well, that's the end of it, but even more importantly, what do you think about it? I'll confess that I don't know what to make of it. For me, it's highly unusual and even a little spooky. Here, I'm reminded of the words of Satchel Paige, who pitched baseball in the major leagues until he was over 50 years of age. He said, "Don't look back, something may be gaining on you." Personally, I'm grateful that we live in a world of order and the odds are chances that something like this would ever occur again have to be very remote.

As I bring my thoughts to a close in this column, I would like to say that I hope you are enjoying the various topics, ideas and concepts that I've been sharing with you. While Satchel's column has been an exception, as a general rule, I try to be conscious of what I'm saying and present my ideas from a positive point of view. This is not to say that I'm not aware of the serious problems we have in our nation today.

In fact, the first five stories on our local television newscast the other evening had to do with murder. While tragic as this is, we can thank God for the fact that murder is still news. If it ever becomes so commonplace that it is not reported, we as a nation, will be worse off than we are. What we should never forget is that there are still millions of good people and that we have tremendous opportunities in this country.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Jim Davidson is a motivational speaker and syndicated columnist. You may contact him at 2 Bentley Drive, Conway, AR 72032.

Let the fear of danger be a spur to prevent it, he that fears danger, gives advantage to the danger. -Francis Quarles

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