

**NORMA JEAN  
LOLLIS  
HILL**  
**1931-2000**



**CONTROVERSIAL  
WITNESS  
TO  
HISTORY**

Rarely is someone a witness to one of history's defining moments. In November 1963, Jean Hill was not only a primary eyewitness, but an embattled player in the intrigue into America's ultimate conspiracy controversy – the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Norma Jean Lollis was born in February 1931 in Ferguson, Oklahoma. She graduated from Wewoka High School in 1948 and enrolled at Oklahoma Baptist University, but dropped out after two years to marry Bill Hill. She eventually earned a degree in elementary education in 1955, and taught in Oklahoma City until they moved to Dallas in 1962 for Bill's job. They separated in 1963 and divorced in August 1964.

In 1963, Jean, a Dallas schoolteacher, and her friend, Mary Moorman, traveled to Dealey Plaza to get a picture of Jean's boyfriend – a Dallas Police patrolman – and the Kennedys. They positioned themselves on Elm Street in the Plaza to have a clear vantage point of the president's Lincoln as it traveled slowly to the Dallas Trade Mart.

Jean wore a bright red raincoat so her boyfriend would recognize her. She was the closest civilian to Kennedy, captured in Frame 298 of the Zapruder film, less than a second before the fatal shot. Jean, dubbed "The Lady in Red", stepped out to get the President's attention so Mary could snap his picture. At Frame 313, when Kennedy was shot, Jean was only a few feet away, leftward, and slightly behind him. A Secret Service agent told her after the attack that another agent, watching from the courthouse, saw a bullet strike "at my feet".

Jean was also one of several witnesses who immediately ran to the "grassy knoll" where she saw a "puff of smoke" and a "shadowy figure". One of Mary's surviving photos shows this figure. She told officers during her statement that she heard four to six shots, not the three bullets supposedly fired by Lee Harvey Oswald. Hill repeated her account to the Warren Commission in 1964 – and adamantly rejected their single gunman findings – based on what she saw that day. Jean stayed quiet for the next 25 years.

On the assassination's 25th anniversary, Geraldo Rivera interviewed Jean Hill. Changes in her story over time led some to consider her a "controversial witness". Others believed the fact "she received no compensation, and a lifetime of woe" added significant credibility to her testimony. Others pointed to an apparent smear campaign to undermine her credibility. The conspiracy controversy grew when Oliver Stone released "JFK" in 1991 and Hill published her book "The Last Dissenting Witness" in 1992, the only book about the assassination written by an eyewitness to the tragedy.

Jean Hill died in November 2000 at age 69 – ironically at Parkland Memorial Hospital. Millions of Americans recognize Jean Hill from Abraham Zapruder's classical film of Kennedy's assassination – the "Lady in Red" close beside the presidential limousine as the fatal shots strike President John F. Kennedy. Hill's testimony continues to be part of the controversy of the Kennedy assassination.