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(Below is the full text of a speech delivered on November 22, 1999 at Dealey Plaza, Dallas, Texas, the site of the assassination of President Kennedy, November 22, 1963)

THE HUMAN CONDITION: THE RING OF TRUTH

by  
Hal Verb

For those of you who are historians and for those of you who are not, more than 40 years ago I was invited to attend another historical site - not as well known as this one - a former home of Tom Paine and I was asked to deliver and recite a poem dedicated to him. Paine was a founder of this great country of ours - the United States of America - perhaps the most important of all our founders. In fact, he coined the actual words, "United States of America". It was at that very site Paine had lived and wrote his electrifying pamphlets, "The Crisis", which sparked the American Revolution. Had those pamphlets not succeeded none of us would probably even be here including President Kennedy's motorcade on that fateful day in November, 1963.

And I believe I am paraphrasing that great writer, Oscar Wilde, when I say here that: "It is a terrible thing to wake up one day and find out that you've been telling nothing but the truth."

It is even a more terrible truth to awake all the days of your life and live through and accept a lie - the lie that there was a single assassin who murdered President Kennedy.

Shortly I will be reading a poem I wrote and I did so sometime about the early hours of the morning (3:40 a.m. or thereabouts) but before I do let me add one more thought:

I recall the great black boxer, Joe Louis, in the 1940's, and he was asked by a reporter what he thought about his formidable opponent, Billie Conn. Before Louis replied the reporter had said to Louis about Conn that he was very adept on his feet.

Joe Louis replied: "Well, he can run - but he can't hide." Keep this in mind during my brief comments here today on this occasion recalling a momentous moment in history as we face a new millenium and an old one closes out.

"He can run but he can't hide!"

I thought of this. Consider for a moment, at least, that we are all here in a boxing ring. That ring represents the boundaries of truth. There is no way to escape it and if you are in that ring you are right there up against the truth.

We're "whistle blowers" - that's what we are, pure and simple.

And now I'd like to recite for you the poem I had written in the wee hours of the morning. I titled this, borrowing something from that great Welsh poet, Dylan Thomas, once wrote as follows:

"DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD FIGHT  
- SEE THEM RUN AND HIDE."

So, - you have enemies you say,  
But, at least, you haven't been  
a coward in the fight.

And maybe truth - though on our side -  
still has not set things right.

And, fighting the odds - you still  
want to make things rough  
for the other side?

Then call yourself a buff, and  
See them run and hide!

And so, ye buffs of the world - Unite!  
for you have nothing to lose -  
As long as you do not  
Shrink from the fight!

And, finally, I give you my absolute assurance that  
I will do everything I can to make them - the perpetrators  
of this crime of assassination - be unable to hide.

You all out there must give me your promise to make  
them - the perpetrators - no longer continue to hide!

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