



0. AN AMERICAN DEATH - Story Preface

1. MISSILES IN CUBA

2. OPERATION ANADYR

3. OPERATION MONGOOSE

4. AMERICA'S FIRST WARNING

5. THE KENNEDY BROTHERS

6. KENNY O'DONNELL

7. THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

8. EX COMM and The Crisis

9. A CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER

10. THE CRISIS WORSENS

11. EYEBALL TO EYEBALL

12. BATTLE PLANS

13. CLOSE TO THE EDGE

14. AN AMERICAN DEATH

15. A SECRET DEAL

16. THE TRUTH on ENDING the CRISIS

17. A DIFFERENT VERSION

18. KHRUSHCHEV BLINKS

19. THE AFTERMATH

This image depicts a Lockheed U-2 (nicknamed "Dragon Lady") in flight. The U.S. Air Force, which released this photo, tells us [more about this type of plane](#): "The U-2S is a single-seat, single-engine, high-altitude/near space reconnaissance and surveillance aircraft providing signals, imagery, and electronic measurements and signature intelligence...Long and narrow wings give the U-2 glider-like characteristics...Routinely flown at altitudes over 70,000 feet, the U-2 pilot must wear a full pressure suit similar to those worn by astronauts. The low-altitude handling characteristics of the aircraft and bicycle-type landing gear require precise control inputs during landing...These characteristics combine to earn the U-2 a widely accepted title as the most difficult aircraft in the world to fly."

Before Major Rudolf Anderson began his reconnaissance flight, Ex Comm members discussed what to do if American planes were attacked. Robert McNamara stated they should [fire back](#). (Advance the recording to 18:45.) No instructions to return fire, however, were given to pilots on October 27.

Approaching [San Julian Airfield](#), outside Havana, Major Anderson was shot down by Soviet surface-to-air missiles. He would not have known the area he previously surveyed was now a fully operational [SAM site](#) with operators about to grant Castro's wish.

Alekseev sent another telegram to Moscow, reporting the hit:

Castro told how a U-2 airplane had been shot down from an altitude of 21 kilometers, and that the Cuban military powers had collected its fragments and the corpse of its pilot.

JFK learned of [the shooting](#) shortly after he had agreed to a strategy that could end the crisis. It was a strategy, implemented by his brother Bobby, known only to a few people.

The secret was kept for nearly thirty years.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/AN-AMERICAN-DEATH-Cuban-Missile-Crisis>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/AN-AMERICAN-DEATH-Cuban-Missile-Crisis>

Media Stream



Major Anderson

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Security Archive, George Washington University.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Major-Anderson>



San Julian Airfield

Image online, courtesy fas.org website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/San-Julian-Airfield>



Anti-Aircraft SAM Site

Image online, courtesy the National Security Archive, George Washington University.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Anti-Aircraft-SAM-Site>



AN AMERICAN DEATH

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/>