

Remembering John Lennon

By Mike Trippitt

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MOST OF US will remember what we were doing on the day of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Some will remember what they were doing when John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

Each of us has memories that are indelibly carved into our very being, either because of the impact of what happened to us, or because the events were so shocking.

My 'Kennedy moment' was four decades ago. I was an 18-year old upper sixth former, doing my best to be cool. On the morning of 9th December 1980 my world and that of my cohorts changed. We woke up to the morning radio news that John Lennon was dead.

The former Beatle had been shot at point blank range outside his home in New York's Dakota Building by a deranged fan. Lennon was returning from an evening recording session when the gunman struck. He died soon afterwards, aged just 40 years old.

Those who had grown up with the Fab Four were stunned. For many, hopes of a reunion were dashed, and for Yoko Ono and Lennon's sons Julian and Sean life without him was cruelly dawning.

A new audience was robbed of material Lennon would have gone on to write. Ironically, his then new single "Woman" remains one of Lennon's greatest songs.

Recently I visited Liverpool and took time to see *The Beatles Story*, a museum dedicated to the lives and music of the Fab Four, both as a group and into their solo careers. For anyone interested in the popular history of our nation, let alone the music of Lennon and McCartney, its exhibits, artifacts and displays are a fascinating record of the sixties and seventies.

But poignantly, and until 4th June 2021, one exhibit stands out. Dave Milner of The Beatles Story museum explains: "*My personal favorite item is 'John Lennon's Last Piano'. John played this piano on the day that he was shot and killed. He used the instrument throughout his solo career whilst he was based at Record Plant Studio in New York City.*"

Looking at the upright piano transports me back 40 years to 8th December 1980. It is still hard to comprehend that an hour after a routine studio session tinkling those very ivories, John Lennon was killed.

As Christmas approaches and we remember Lennon's death, perhaps we should also remember what he said. In a year when racial tensions throughout the world have risen, his words resonate strong and loud:

*And so Happy Christmas
For black and for white
For yellow and red ones
Let's stop all the fight*

