

# Assassination of Archduke Ferdinand

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*A classroom play by Team HOPE*

*Cast List*

Borijove Jevtic (JEVT).....Blackhand conspirator  
Elijah Lovejoy (ANCH)..... anchor of “The History News Report”  
Margaret Fuller (R1).....reporter for “The History News Report”  
Nellie Bly (R2) ..... reporter for “The History News Report”  
Ernie Pyle (R3).....reporter for “The History News Report”

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## TEACHER NOTES

**SETTING:** A contemporary classroom. It is advised to set up the anchor in the front of the room facing the class, in front of some sort of background with “The History New Report.” You may choose to set up the different reporters conducting the interviews around the classroom and have the historical figures come to them. This way it gives the appearance of different locations. A name plate in front of each cast member is highly recommended. A 5x8 index card folded in half works great for this purpose.

**COSTUMES:** Although not necessary, any period costumes for the historical figures are a great addition. Even a simple hat or wig is excellent.

**MASKS:** Masks are an easy addition that will add to the drama and make the entire event more fun for the students. First, go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and click on “image search.” Type in the historical figure’s name and find an image of the person. Copy and paste the picture in a Word document. You may need to crop and then enlarge the photo so you get a picture large enough to be used as a mask. Portraits obviously work best for this use. Print out the picture and paste it onto a cardboard backing. You can tape a plastic spoon or popsicle stick to be used as a handle. You may decide to make masks for the student correspondents as well, using pictures of television news personalities for the masks.

*Note: If there is a historical person you cannot find a picture for, don’t despair! Almost any random “period” person’s picture (as long as it not someone easily recognizable) would work as a mask.*

**ROLES:** Encourage students to act out the roles with as much energy as possible. Do not be too terribly concerned that the sex of the historical figure matching with the sex of the student.

The teacher may decide to take a part in the play, role-modeling one of the historical figures. It is recommended that five copies of the scripts are specifically set aside for each character in the play. For each character, *highlight all their lines* in order to facilitate a faster pace of dialogue. All other students should receive an unmarked copy of the play to read as the play is performed.

**ANCHOR AND REPORTERS:** In order to facilitate the historical discussions that exist in the plays, actual famous journalist names have been used in the plays. Teachers should point out that these journalists come from different times in American history and do not necessarily reflect the period they report on. It is as if they can travel in time to deliver “The History News Report.” A teacher may also decide to substitute the names given in the script for student names if desired. A brief description of the journalists is as follows:

- **Elijah Lovejoy** (1802-1837) A minister and journalist for the *St. Louis Observer* and later editor of the abolitionist newspaper the *Alton Observer* of Alton, Illinois. In 1837, pro-slavery forces attacked his warehouse in order to destroy his printing press and he was murdered on the scene.
- **Margaret Fuller** (1810-1850) An early woman rights activist, Margaret was the first female journalist to work on the staff of a major American newspaper, *The New York Tribune*. She was a widely read literary critic who was also sent on overseas assignments to Europe.
- **Nellie Bly** (1864-1922) After writing a fiery rebuttal to a sexist column in the *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, Nellie was hired by a very impressed editor at the newspaper. She went on to become a famous investigative journalist on the plight of working women, and gained further fame for having faked insanity in order to investigate the treatment of the mentally ill.
- **Ernie Pyle** (1900-1945) An American journalist who was a roving correspondent for Scripps Howard newspaper chain. His articles were read in over 200 newspapers. He is most famous for having been a war correspondent during World War II. He led the charge for Congress to give soldiers “battle pay” while in combat. He died under heavy fire from a Japanese machine gun nest in the Pacific on April 18, 1945.

**DISCUSSION:** Use the attached worksheets to facilitate discussion before and after the play. Students who are not directly involved in the play can attempt to write preliminary answers as the play is performed. The audience should be told that they will be the primarily responsible for the discussion questions at the end of the lesson.

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# Assassination of Archduke Ferdinand

(A Report by HNR News)

*NOTE: All responses by historical figures reflect actual events and beliefs as closely as possible.*

## CAST ABBREVIATIONS

Borijove Jevtic .....JEVT  
Elijah Lovejoy .....ANCH  
Margaret Fuller..... R1  
Nellie Bly.....R2  
Ernie Pyle.....R3

**ANCH** Welcome to the History News Report, I am your anchor Elijah Lovejoy. It was a sunny morning in June 1914, in Sarajevo, Bosnia. Austria's Archduke Ferdinand, the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, was riding in an open air car through the streets of Sarajevo, touring the city and waving at its people. Suddenly, two shots rang out; the Archduke and his wife Sophie would soon be dead. A world war would be ignited. To give us and in depth eyewitness account of these momentous and tragic events, we will be interviewing Borijove Jevtic. I'm joined in studio by Margaret Fuller, Nellie Bly, and Ernie Pyle, History News Report contributors all. We will speak to Borijove Jevtic via satellite from an Austrian prison. Mr. Jevtic?

**JEVT** Yes, I am here.

**ANCH** So, you were a member of the assassination team?

**JEVT** Yes, I was a member of the Black Hand. It meant "Unity or Death."

**R2** What exactly was the purpose of the Black Hand?

**JEVT** We were Serbian nationalists. Our goal was to unite all Serbians into a "Greater Serbia" and recapture the glory of Serbia's past.

**R3** But why kill Archduke Ferdinand?

**JEVT** Bosnia has many Serbian people and the Austrian imperialists had recently taken it as their own. Archduke Ferdinand represented the Austrian invaders of "Greater Serbia" and our intention was to convince them to leave.

**R1** You were back by the Serbian government?

**JEVT** Our leader was the chief of the Intelligence Department of the Serbian army. He provided us with the plan and the weapons.

**R2** What were you given?

- JEVT** Each man was given a revolver, two bombs, and cyanide. We were instructed to commit suicide after murdering the Archduke so that the plot would not be uncovered.
- R3** That obviously didn't work out too well! Now, can you explain the plot? How did you plan to assassinate Archduke Ferdinand?
- JEVT** We received word that the Archduke and his wife would be visiting Sarajevo to view troops and see the city. They would be taking a tour of the city and this would include a parade down major streets. This was public knowledge; the parade route was even printing in the local newspaper.
- R1** So you knew exactly where the Archduke would be!
- JEVT** Yes, and the plan was to place seven members of the Black Hand on the parade route upon the avenue known as the Appel Quay. Each member was told to attempt the assassination if the car reached them and the Archduke still lived.
- ANCH** Who saw the car first?
- JEVT** Muhamed Mehmedbasic. But he lost his nerve and watched the car pass by without doing anything.
- R2** Next up?
- JEVT** Cabrinovic. As the car passed, Cabrinovic did take action, threw his grenade and it hit the side of the car. However, the Archduke had the presence of mind to throw himself back, deflecting the grenade, and it landed in the street. It exploded near the car following the Archduke and several people were injured.
- R3** What happened next?
- JEVT** The car sped away to City Hall. It was going too fast for the rest of the conspirators to attempt an attack.
- R1** What happened to Cabrinovic?
- JEVT** He did as instructed: He took the cyanide and jumped into the River Miljacka.
- R2** He died then?
- JEVT** No. The cyanide was old; it only made him vomit. And the river was only four inches deep. The crowd soon seized him and he was arrested.
- R3** That is almost too ridiculous to believe! What did the rest of the conspirators do at

that point?

**JEVT** They fled to a local park to decide what to do. They feared that Cabrinovic would give them up to the police. Frustrated, Gavrilo Princip, the gang's leader, decided to go get a sandwich.

**R2** So while this is all taking place, the leader of the group, Princip, decides to get a sandwich?

**JEVT** Yes. He went to Schiller's Delicatessen, which was just off Appel Quay. That is where I ran into him. We were old friends and I asked him about a mutual acquaintance. I learned of the plan.

**R1** Seems like the plan was dead.

**JEVT** That is what Princip thought, too. However, at City Hall, the Archduke was convinced he should go to the hospital to see the wounded people from the bomb attack. His entourage tried to convince him not to go, but he did. And they drove right down the parade route again, until they turned onto Franz Joseph Street and stopped. They stopped directly in front of Schiller's Delicatessen.

**R3** (*completely flabbergasted*) Are you kidding? They stopped in front of Princip while he ate a sandwich?

**JEVT** Yes. It was fate. One of the officers in the car shouted at the driver, "This is the wrong way! We are supposed to be on Appel Quay!" As the driver attempted to get the gears in reverse, Princip acted. He never hesitated.

**R2** Describe what he did.

**JEVT** As the car came abreast he stepped forward from the curb, drew his automatic pistol from his coat and fired two shots. The first struck the wife of the Archduke, the Archduchess Sofia, in the abdomen. She was an expectant mother. She died instantly. The second bullet struck the Archduke close to the heart.

**R3** Did he say anything?

**JEVT** He uttered only one word, 'Sofia' -- a call to his stricken wife. Then his head fell back and he collapsed. He died almost instantly.

**R1** What about Princip?

**JEVT** The officers seized Princip. They beat him over the head with the flat of their swords. They knocked him down, they kicked him, scraped the skin from his neck with the edges of their swords, tortured him, all but killed him. I was arrested and placed in the cell next to him.

**R2** What became of most of the conspirators?

**JEVT** They were all arrested and implicated in the assassination. Princip and two others soon died of tuberculosis. The rest of us faced prison sentences.

**ANCH** But the major impact of the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand was that Austria would soon uncover Serbia's role in his death. They would declare war on Serbia and invade. Russia, the protector of Serbia, declared war on Austria. Austria's friend Germany follows suit and declared war on Russia. France and Britain announced declarations of war on Germany. Europe was a powder keg ready to explode. World War I had begun. For History News Report, I am Elijah Lovejoy reporting.

Bennett, William J., *America: The Last Best Hope*, Nelson Current, Nashville: 2006, p. 523-524.

"Assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, 1914," EyeWitness to History, [www.eyewitnesstohistory.com](http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com) (1998).