Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis is a non-fiction account of the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, written by Robert F. Kennedy. The book was released in 1969, a year after his assassination. Thirteen Days details the many meetings of the John F. Kennedy cabinet and Joint Chiefs of Staff (formed into the ExComm) (Executive Committee) during the tense period after the Soviet missile build-up on Cuba was discovered.

1 – Opening scene

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First image</th>
<th>Last image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missile launching</td>
<td>Military plane taking aerial pictures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First words</th>
<th>Last words</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do the first images symbolise?

How did this crisis start?

2 – Missiles in Cuba

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First image</th>
<th>Last image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Costner (Kenneth O’Donnell) sleeping</td>
<td>Missile experts looking for a photo match on a book of pictures taken by a spy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First words</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hey !!!</td>
<td>That’s it. That’s the one we’re looking for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How did the director choose to introduce some of the characters and the main action set?

What seemed to preoccupy JFK?
The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

What was curious about the picture representing the missile?

3 – “I need to see the president”

First image
Bundy talking to O'Donnell

First words
“I need to see the president”

Last image
JFK looking at his family in the garden

Last words
Pearl Harbor

Where were the aerial pictures taken?

What did they show?

Why is it a problem for the USA? Where is Cuba?
According to the Kennedy’s, who seems to be responsible for putting missiles into Cuba?

Which dramatic war event does this reminds the Kennedy administration? Why?

4 – National security meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First image</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kennedy brothers and O'Donnell walking in a corridor</td>
<td>Kennedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First words</td>
<td>Last words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good morning gentlemen</td>
<td>We have to get those missiles out of there</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Until then, only civil servants seemed to be concerned by the problem. Who’s new around the table?

How many missiles are there in Cuba?
The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

Which part of the US territory is threatened? What casualties?

Why Cuba?

What could be the diplomatic consequences for the USA if nothing was done?

What are US options?
The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

5 – EX COMM experts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First image</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kennedy brothers and O’Donnell walking out of the White House</td>
<td>Kennedy brothers and O’Donnell in President’s office</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>First words</th>
<th>Last words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No matter what Khrushchev’s intentions are (...) I don’t see anyway around hitting him</td>
<td>JFK must go to Connecticut</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What could be the consequences if USA attacked Cuba immediately? If not?

What was the administration’s first decision?

What’s the general mood during this first meeting?

What does the joint-chief recommend?

How did Americans consider the Soviets?

What were the consequences?
What is Kennedy afraid of?
The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

6 – EX COMM options

First image
October 17th (Wednesday) / Plane landing

First words
Isn’t anybody working in Connecticut?

Last image
Mac Namara and other EX COMM members

Last words
The scenario calls for the blockade of Cuba

What other option is advocated by EX COMM? Why is it possible?

7 – Military options

First image
Soldiers on an air base loading missiles on planes ➔ U2 taking other pictures on Thursday October 18th 1962

First words
The situation is worse than we thought

Last image
O'Donnell going out, followed by press officer

Last words
Ask Bundy - I did, he said to ask you

How is the situation worsening?

How are the USA preparing for an eventual war?

What is stopping Kennedy?

How would you describe the relationship between the Kennedy administration and the US army?
8 – JFK meets Dobrynin and Gromyko

Kennedy-Gromyko meeting was planned before the crisis began. Kennedy took the opportunity to remind that according to a previous declaration (September 13th 1962), soviet military assistance is only defensive. What was Gromyko’s answer to Kennedy’s question asking if there were offensive weapons in Cuba?

How would Kennedy have reacted if Gromyko had acknowledged the fact that missiles were installed in Cuba?

9 – JFK and mayor Daley

Why is it so difficult to hide the situation to the press?

Which options is finally accepted?

What other problem emerged?
10 – Quarantine or air strike

First image
Press conference with press officer

First words
The President has a cold

Last image
Kennedy brothers and O'Donnell outside the White House

Last words
We've got bigger problems right now

Why is this blockade qualified as a quarantine?

How is this quarantine going to work?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of this option?

Which third option is proposed by the US representative at UNO?
11 – An explosive scoop

First image
A party attended by O’Donnell and US ambassador to UNO

First words
Honey I’ll be right back

How did JFK deal with the press?

12 – Plan DEFCON 3

First image
Church choral – Sunday October 21st 1962

First words
None

What does this scene tell us about Kennedy’s belief?

How do we understand that the situation is becoming tenser?

What seems to worry JFK? What did he decide?

13 – Uncertain JFK

First image
Monday, October 22, 1962 - Press officer announcing President’s address this very day.

First words
None

What problem is facing JFK before his address?

14 – President’s speech

First image
O’Donnell entering the press conference room.

First words
OK everybody I think we’re ready

What did JFK decide?
Listen to the speech and fill the gaps

Good evening, my fellow citizens:

This Government, as promised, has maintained the closest surveillance of the __________ military buildup on the island of _____. Within the past week, unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive _______________ is now in preparation on that imprisoned island. The purpose of these bases can be none other than to provide a ______________ capability against the Western Hemisphere.

(…)

Acting, therefore, in the __________ of our own security and of the entire __________ Hemisphere, and under the authority entrusted to me by the Constitution as endorsed by the Resolution of the __________, I have directed that the following initial steps be taken immediately:

First: To halt this offensive buildup a ___________________ on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba is being initiated. All ships of any kind bound for Cuba from whatever nation or port will, if found to contain cargoes of offensive __________, be turned back.

(…)

Second: I have directed the continued and increased close ____________ of Cuba and its military buildup. (…) Should these offensive military preparations __________, thus increasing the threat to the hemisphere, further action will be justified. I have directed the _________________ to prepare for any eventualities (…)

Third: It shall be the policy of this Nation to regard any ______________ launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an ____________ by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory __________ upon the Soviet Union.

What did Kennedy finally decide?
15 – Rules of intervention

First image
Tuesday October 23, 1962 – The White House

First words
None

Last image
JFK and O'Donnell in JFK's office

Last words
Those chains of command end at one place : me.

How did the Soviet respond ?

What did the American Navy set up to prevent this ?

What other measures were set up by the army ?

How was it understood by the Kennedy administration ? How did it react ?
The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days
The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

16 – Low level flight

First image
O’Donnell behind a door looking at the switchboard operators

First words
White House

Last image
Close up on pilot in war conference room

Last words
It was a cake walk Sir

Why do you think the mission was planned during daytime and not night-time?

What happened during this low level flight?

Why did the major-chief summon the pilot? What did he say?

17 – On the brink of disaster

First image
Kennedy walking in with O’Donnell and other advisors

First words
Mr President the OAS meeting starts in an hour

Last image
Costner queuing for confession

Last words
None

What is OAS?

Why does Kennedy need its approval?

What was the issue?
The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

How did the American react?

18 – Straight in the eyes

First image
Wednesday October 24th - The White House and a wall covered with clocks (the Pentagone).

First words
Gentlemen can you hear me?

Last image
An American officer looking to a soviet vessel through binoculars

Last words
We were eyeball to eyeball and I think the other fellow just blinked.

When the quarantine started, what did the soviet ships?

What will happen if the American force the sub to surface?

19 – Plan DEFCON 2

First image
A man taking a phone – the CIA man and Bundy coming to JFK

First words
Mr. President

Last image
Kennedy brothers in JFK’s office

Last words
Soviets pull theirs out of Cuba

Is the crisis finished?

What did the American army try to do?

What could the Kennedys do?
The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

20 – A moral fight

First image
A peace demonstration in front of the White House – Thursday, October 25th

First words
What do you think of the Lippman column this morning?

According to O’Donnell, how would the world understand the deal?

What were the Soviets doing at the same time?

What was the American answer?

21 – Facing world opinion

First image
US ambassador entering the meeting room in UNO

First words
We call for the world to condemn this American provocation, we people of Romania standing solidarity with the people of Cuba.

What was the Soviet strategy in UNO?

What was the new problem?

22 – Crossing the line

First image
Friday, October 26th - Soviet ship (Grozny)

First words
Hail him again

How did the army react?

How did Mac Namara react?
23 – The Russian go-between

First image
Launching of a rocket from the US base of Vandenberg

First words
Who the hell authorised this missile test?

Last image
Soviet spy leaving the café

Last words
I’ll see what I can do

Why was a nuclear war so close at that time?

Which opportunity sprung suddenly?

24 – First letter from Khrushchev

First image
The White House – Saturday October 27th at night

First words
None

Last image
O’Donnell leaving his house

Last words
OK I’ll be right there – You’re beautiful

Khrushchev sent a 10 pages back channel letter confirming the spy’s offer. What was JFK’s decision?

25 – Second letter from Khrushchev

First image
Bob Kennedy speaking to O’Donnell

First words
It looks like Fomin was a ploy after all

Last image
Kennedy and his staff.

Last words
Now gentlemen, if anyone has a great idea, now is the time.

What is going wrong?

What did Kennedy decide?
The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

26 – Major Anderson

First image
O’Donnell sitting at his desk with a phone in his hand

First words
Major Anderson there is phone call for you

Last image
Bundy talking to O’Donnell

Last words
A plane is missing Kenny. We’re presuming the pilot is dead.

At which moment did the war seem inevitable?
The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

27 – Race against the clock

First image
Civil and military staff in JFK’s meeting room

First words
None

Last image
Bob leaving

Last words
What if it was you two who invited that second letter by raising the possibility of a trade

What’s the soviet excuse for this shutdown?

What was the US army’s next move? Did it succeed?

What did the Kennedy administration decide?

28 – First agreement

First image
Advisors in JFK’s office

First words
M. President we only have 30 hours left

Last image
Bobby and O’Donnell in the car driving to the soviet embassy

Last words
Take on left

What is Kennedy’s final decision?
# The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

## 29 – Face to face

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First image</th>
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<tr>
<td>Soviet embassy in Washington where Bobby Kennedy is to meet the Soviet ambassador.</td>
<td>O’Donnell at home</td>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You smell that? They’re burning their documents. They think we’re going to war.</td>
<td>If the sun comes up tomorrow it’s only because of men of good will. That’s all there is between us and the devil.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do you understand Bobby’s proposal to the Soviet ambassador?

## 30 – A new era

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First image</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sun or nuclear mushroom rising</td>
<td>Kennedy brothers and O’Donnell outside the White House</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is radio Moscow. Premier Khrushchev has sent a message to President Kennedy today (Monday October 29th)</td>
<td>Ken we’re out here</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How did this end for each country?

**USA:**

**USSR:**

**CUBA:**
The Cuba missile Crisis – Thirteen days

CHINA:

FRANCE:

GERMANY:

What were the consequences on the Cold War?

31 – JFK’s speech

How would you analyse JFK’s leadership in this crisis?

How was the US army caricatured in this movie?

Some information on the movie