CSI: Rome - The Assassination of Julius Caesar

Did Julius Caesar know he was going to be assassinated? Was there a single killer or were dozens of men involved? What were the reasons for the assassination? You will answer these and other questions as we look back at one of history's greatest crimes. Using evidence gathered from the crime scene, testimony of those involved and later historical writings we will explain a 2,000 year old murder.

Instructions:
1. There are nine stations. At each station you will read a short summary from a witness and answer questions.

2. After you have completed all 9 stations you will answer conclusion questions. 
WARNING: If you answer these questions at the beginning you may find yourself doubting your own answer. Wait until you are finished!
Station 1
Station 1 – Senator Gistinius' Testimony

“A few days ago we in the Senate offered the great Julius Caesar deification— we offered to make him a god! There was no greater honor we could possibly have given him. He had complete control of Rome and this honor would ensure that none in this world would ever challenge him.

However, when we presented him with this honor on the floor of the Senate, he refused to even stand from his chair to receive it! There is nothing one can imagine that would be more insulting. Here we were the senate of Rome, honoring this man and he would not even rise to acknowledge it. He gave us no reason for his refusal. What were we to think? Obviously Caesar has no interest in the Senate. Clearly he intends to rule without even consulting us. Rome has been a republic for centuries but he wants to return us to empire. This man wouldn’t even stand to recognize the honor we wanted to give him.”
Station 2
Caesar's refusal to stand up as the Senate entered led to great controversy. Caesar was suffering from a type of mental illness and when he realized how he had offended them he stood up, drew back his toga to show his neck and yelled “kill me now, I won’t resist!”

But afterwards he made his disease an excuse for his behavior, saying that those with his mental illness do not usually remain steady when they stand and speak to many people and that he would be greatly embarrassed if that happened. However, what he said was not true; actually he very much wanted to rise to receive the senate; but one of his friends, as they say, or rather one of his flatterers, Cornelius Balbus, stopped him, saying: "Remember that you are Caesar, and you should be seen as their superior."
Station 3
Station 3: Warnings to Caesar

Warning from Calpurnia, Caesar’s Wife
“My Lord! You must not go to the senate house today. I have had a terrible nightmare! In it you were lying dead on the floor. Please, I beg of you, stay home today.

Warning from Spurina, Fortune-Teller
“The oracles tell of blood on this day, the Ides of March. Caesar, you must be careful today.”
Station 4
Station 4: Testimony of Augustus Caesar after the Assassination

Citizens of Rome, you have seen how corrupt and weak the senate has become. They have murdered my uncle, the great Julius Caesar. You know that everything he did was for the people of Rome! He protected us from the invaders while the senators bickered among themselves. They were simply jealous that he accomplished in a short time what they could not do in many years.

You have made the right decision in appointing me leader. Rome needs an emperor who will protect her! I will not wait for the senate to act. From now on decisions will be made quickly and with the authority that only a true emperor can provide! Never again will Rome be weak. There will always be a Caesar to lead her!
Station 5
Station 5: Testimony of Tyrannus, Caesar's Bodyguard

Three days ago Caesar fired me along with his other bodyguards. He told us he would be traveling on his own. We insisted that he keep us around to protect him. I don’t know what he is thinking. Maybe he is beginning to believe that he truly is a god and nobody can hurt him or maybe he is just simply tired of being followed all the time. This is especially strange based of the threats that have been heard from Cassius.

One of the other guards told me he heard Caesar say that he didn’t want to live anymore because of his sickness. I don’t know if this is true or not but either way it seems very odd. If Caesar simply wants his privacy I hope he will stay home because of all the whispers of conspiracy going around.
Station 6
Station 6: Marcus Brutus

In the weeks before the assassination graffiti was found on the tombs of Marcus Brutus' ancestors. While it is unclear who wrote the messages it is clear they were intended for Brutus. Brutus and Caesar were very close. Some people believe that Brutus may have been Caesar’s son. Brutus was a well respected Senator. If he chose to take part in the assassination it would gain a great deal of support.

Graffiti on Roman tomb:

Citizen Brutus,
Your grandfather helped to create this great republic. Will you sit by while this man Caesar destroys it? You must stand against this tyranny. No man should be the sole leader of Rome. The senate is what makes us a republic! Like your grandfather you must stand up and take whatever means necessary to preserve your mother Rome. If that means Caesar must be killed then so be it!
Station 7
Station 7: Cassius

Yes, it is true that Caesar pardoned me after the war. We were fighting on opposite sides and he won. He “graciously” allowed me back into the senate to serve with him. At least, that’s what he wanted people to think. If Caesar truly had forgiven me I would not have been passed by for a promotion not once, but twice.

I know that he was simply trying to buy my support. He wanted to keep me on his side because he knows that my position is right. The republic should live, not an empire. If he thinks pardoning me will make me change my mind he is crazy. Caesar’s goal is to destroy the senate and live as a king. This is Rome! We have no king! He doesn’t care about the people, he cares only about himself.

Good Romans, we cannot allow this man to destroy what our fathers have built. He must be stopped.
Station 8
Station 8: Testimony of Roman Citizen before the assassination

Dude, let me tell you, Caesar is THE MAN. He got all us poor people some serious cash. Those punk senators were all like “he’s only doing that so the people will make him emperor” and stuff but I'm like, no way, Caesar is just cool like that. All those senators do is sit around and argue all day. How about those lazy fools try getting a real job and then see what’s up? I work all day and I still ain't got enough to feed my kids.

Things are tough around here these days. These dang barbarians are always attacking and causing problems. I can’t wait for Caesar to do his thing. He is the only one who can possibly keep us safe and get Rome back on track.
Station 9

[Image of a statue of a man on a horse]
Station 9: Testimony of Luciano Garafano, Investigator

I have conducted multiple simulations of Caesar's murder. We know from the autopsy that he suffered 23 knife wounds but strangely only 5 are described in detail. It is also interesting to note that Marcus Brutus was also wounded in the attack.

We began by testing with 23 attackers. This led to complete chaos. There was simply no way for all 23 men to strike Caesar at the same time. So, this of course led to the question of how they might have timed their attacks to make it work. Were there waves of attackers perhaps with only a few men attacking at once and then more coming in? Or, possibly, was the conspiracy smaller than we believed?

If only a few were directly involved perhaps the others were used to hold back the rest of the senators. This would make some sense as many of the senators had been appointed by Caesar and would have wanted to protect him. It is also possible, however, that with only 5 attackers things could have simply happened so fast that no one had a chance to stop it. However, if Brutus was involved in the attack personally this would imply many attackers as the confusion may have led to his hand wound.