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Subject: Assassination Records Review Board Press Release
NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE DECEMBER 16, 1996 CONTACT: THOM WILBORN (202) / 24-0088,
EXT. 251 FBI WITHDRAWS PRESIDENTIAL APPEAL OF DOCUMENTS RELEASED BY JFK ASSASSINATION RECORDS
REVIEW BOARD The Assassination Records Review Board, an independent Federal agency, announced today
that the FBI has withdrawn appeals to the President opposing Review Board decisions to release previously
classified information in 21 documents pertaining to the investigation of Lee Harvey Oswald and the
assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The Review Board previously had voted to release the FBI
documents and the FBI had appealed the Board's decision to President Clinton. The FBI's decision to
withdraw the appeals is particularly gratifying since it had so vigorously opposed the release of this
information," said John R. Tunheim, Board Chairman and U.S. District Court Judge for the District of
Minnesota. "Although the FBI decision to withdraw its appeals applies only to two sets of documents, I am
hopeful that subsequent FBI appeals will also be reconsidered." The FBI has just notified the White House
that it was withdrawing appeals opposing the release of information in ten different records that had
previously been classified as "Secret." The documents include a May 1960 report discussing the
investigation of Lee Harvey Oswald and his family while Oswald was residing in Russia, foreign government
reactions to the Kennedy assassination, coverage of the assassination by foreign correspondents, critics of the
Warren Commission and former Orleans Parish District Attorney Jim Garrison's investigation of Clay Shaw.
(Shaw was later acquitted of conspiracy charges by an Orleans Parish jury.) The records have been the subject
of intensive written briefings to the President by the Review Board and the FBI. "Although the Bureau
initially had vigorously opposed release of the information, the Review Board clearly demonstrated that the
information should be released to the public," Tunheim said. The FBI had previously argued that releasing
the information would prejudice current foreign counterintelligence operations and harm foreign relations.
The Assassination Records Review Board found that public interest in the information outweighed the
evidence that the FBI offered to prevent release of the information. In a letter to Presidential Counsel Jack
Quinn, FBI General Counsel Howard Shapiro said the appeals were withdrawn "after carefully considering
the matters raised by the Assassination Records Review Board." In addition, Shapiro said, the FBI "will
also review our position with respect to all other pending appeals . . . in the not-too-distant future."
"Despite the difficulties we have faced and the lengthy delay in resolving these issues, the Board has
succeeded in its mission of getting information into the public domain," Tunheim said. "The FBI decision
to withdraw the appeals clearly demonstrates the spirit of cooperation between the Bureau and the
Record

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DeliveryPriority: N
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