

MEMORANDUM

January 23, 1997

To: Jeremy Gunn
From: Christopher Barger
Subj: Paul Hoch correspondence
File No: 4.0.6 Hoch

Paul Hoch has submitted a prolific amount of material and suggestions to the ARRB over the course of the last two-plus years. Due to the hectic nature of our work and the pursuing higher priorities within other federal agencies, we have not always responded to him in a timely and specific fashion. As he is a member of the public, and one with whom we enjoy amicable relations at that, it is important to respond to him to the best of our ability. To that end, I have reviewed our correspondence files for Hoch material and suggestions, with the intent of compiling as comprehensive a response as possible to his many suggestions.

At times, it is difficult to determine exactly what Hoch is requesting from us, because he discusses many aspects of this case in broad terms, and because at times these discussions appear to exceed our charter. What follows is a chronological list of his requests to us, my interpretation of what he wants, and suggestions as to how we could respond to him, based either on work we have already done or what we could possibly do.

Letter: November 26, 1994

This letter was written just as the Review Board was getting started in its task, and before most of the staff had even been hired. Due to the infancy of both the Board and the process by which it would come to work, the letter is one of broad topic suggestions. While it is perhaps helpful to refer to these general subject areas on occasion, there is nothing in this letter that the ARRB can specifically respond to. Additionally, due to the early submission of this letter, both the suggestions and any response from us would seem dated.

Letter: November 28, 1994

Another general discussion, focusing on any pre-assassination records the Dallas PD may have had on Lee Harvey Oswald. A possible response would be to update him on the extent of our efforts to obtain DPD records. Doug is putting together a summary of these efforts for this project.

Letter: July 8, 1995

Hoch suggests that the ARRB contact Edward Epstein and ask him about his knowledge of CIA mail intercept programs, especially given his access to CIA personnel, including James Angleton.

Contacting Epstein has been assigned to me in J-Track; regrettably, I have yet to undertake that task. (I intend on making that a priority in the coming weeks.) We could include mail intercepts in the topics we discuss with Epstein. Additionally, we could update Mr. Hoch on the extent of our work in the area of mail intercept programs, using anything we may have obtained from the USPS, CIA, and others. I will discuss this with Joe Masih.

Letter: July 17, 1995

Hoch suggests that the ARRB make evidence regarding the autopsy of President Kennedy a priority. This is a general discussion, but since we have done a great deal of work in the area of autopsy evidence, a comprehensive update on the extent of our efforts might suffice for a response. Doug is preparing a summary for me on this topic.

Letter: December 26, 1995

Hoch refers to the contention in the H.R. Haldeman book, The Nixon Diaries, that on the Watergate tapes, when President Nixon uses the phrase, "the Bay of Pigs thing," he is referring to the assassination of President Kennedy. He suggests we review CIA Watergate material which involves that phrase and any other possible connection to the assassination contained therein.

It would appear that this is one of those areas where the connection to the assassination is somewhat tenuously drawn, and might represent a "fishing expedition" of the sort which exceeds our charter. Additionally, given the sheer volume of Watergate material which is out there, such an undertaking could easily overwhelm our resources at a time when they are becoming increasingly precious. No follow up is recommended.

Letter: January 7, 1996

Hoc suggests several areas of interest involving records which might be held by foreign entities. Specifically, he suggests attempting to access records of the Swiss Police which might involve Albert Schweitzer College, both before and after the assassination, regarding Lee Harvey Oswald or the assassination. Furthermore, he suggests the ARAB. try to obtain any correspondence between Lee Harvey Oswald and the University of Turku in Turku, Finland. Obtaining records in the possession of foreign officials or entities which do not involve US Government entities is diplomatically difficult and perhaps exceeds our charter. It is suggested that we provide a summary on our dealings with

Swiss authorities and suggest that it be left to researchers to petition the University of Turku for any correspondence with Oswald.

Letter: January 20, 1996

This letter again discusses Hoch's impressions about the Board's general approach, and about broad conceptual ideas about what the Board should try to accomplish. While perhaps useful to refer to, this letter contains no issues or specific requests which need to be followed up.

Letter: April 17, 1996

This letter deals with Hoch's hope that we follow up and properly research the theories and allegations in the LaFontaines' book, Oswald Talked. A summary of our efforts to that end and the results of that effort should suffice.

Letter: May 2, 1996

Hoch specifically requests that the ARRB: a) obtain FBI document 105-1095-129; and b) designate FBI file 105-1095 assassination related. The document is possibly a 17 page memo originated by the CIA detailing anti-Castro activities and the FPCC.

The 105-1095 file is a New Orleans field office file. Phil found the corresponding HQ file, and has indicated that there are over 100 documents from that file in the pipeline at various points. As for the specific document Hoch refers to, it does not appear in any of our databases. Phil believes that if we do not specifically request it, this document will not make its way into the collection.

Letter: May 8, 1996

Hoch requests that we try to obtain FBI files relating to any interviews conducted following the assassination with a Luis Kutner or Edward Scannell Butler.

The original FBI interview with Luis Kutner was opened in full by the Board in July 1996. I have made a copy of this document and can send it to Hoch. Additionally, there were several HSCA documents regarding Kutner which have been opened in full, which I have prepared for Hoch. I am prepared to discuss with Laura some details of our dealings with Butler, and to prepare a summary for Hoch based on that discussion.

Letter: May 9, 1996

Hoch requests that we try to obtain and review files from the ATF from the time period 1963-64, as

there appears to be a dearth of these materials available to the public.

Letter: May 15, 1996

This letter deals with general concepts relating to USSS agents Siebert and O'Neill and records involving them. Nothing specific is suggested. A summary of our work in that area should suffice.

Letter: September 4, 1996

This is the letter which prompted the recent reply from Tim Wray. That letter should be sufficient response.

Letter: September 19, 1996

Hoch makes specific requests for FBI document 105-124685 and HSCA record 180-10107-10170. The latter is merely a letter to the HSCA from Hoch, and for some unexplained reason had been postponed in full. It was opened in full by the FBI in a consent release on October 16, 1996.

FBI document 105-124685 has not been reviewed by the ARRB, nor is it on the list of documents the FBI is planning to review. According to Phil Golrick, if specific action is not taken by the Board staff to review this document, it will not get into the collection. The document appears to be a possible file on a Lee Henry Oswald, which might have been opened in October 1963. The probable explanation is that the file was opened as the result of a clerical error ("Henry" instead of "Harvey"), and was maintained only until someone realized that Lee Henry and Lee Harvey were the same person. Whatever the explanation, the document should be reviewed by ARRB staff, and it is suggested that the request for this document be made.