

NOBLESVILLE HIGH SCHOOL INTERN PROJECT I-- PROJECT BRIEFING

July 15, 1996

Problem: The HSCA database currently in use by the ARRB, as provided by NARA, is not entirely accurate; this interferes with our ability to complete our mission.

If left unsolved: The ARRB could complete its mission without having reviewed and processed documents which are not currently part of the public JFK collection, thus depriving the public of information that should have been released.

Solution: Visually confirm status of documents in the public collection at NARA II in College Park.

General Procedure: A *meticulous*, document-by-document visual inspection of the public collection and consequent tracking of this inspection for ARRB use.

Background: The database of HSCA documents prepared by NARA lists each document's status as either "open" (meaning available to the public), "referred" (meaning withheld pending review by an originating or third party agency), or "postponed" (withheld but subject to ARRB review and potential release). This database is used by ARRB staff to determine which documents we need to review and prepare for the Board. (It would be unnecessary to review an already open document, for example.)

The problem is that this database is only about 90-95% accurate; that is, some documents are labeled "open" when they are in truth "referred", etc. We estimate that this means that there are hundreds of documents which should be reviewed by the ARRB but which, inadvertently, might not be.

The only way to adequately address this problem is to conduct a meticulously thorough, document-by-document review of the public collection. At this point, there are approximately 275 Hollinger boxes of material to be checked.

For each record-- open, referred, or postponed-- in the HSCA collection, NARA has created a Record Information Form (hereafter called RIF) with a tracking number and information about the document. In each box, you will find a RIF for each document, followed by one of two things. If the document is open, you will find the document itself. If the document is referred or postponed, you will find a withdrawal slip. In your packets, I have included both a sample RIF and a sample withdrawal slip so that you can familiarize yourself with them.

Review Procedure: Select a box. Go through each document, checking the RIF for the document's status. If it is listed as referred or postponed, make sure there is a withdrawal slip for it; if it is listed as open, make sure the document is in the box.

For those documents for which there are withdrawal slips, take a tracking sheet (a sample of which I have included in your packet), and in the appropriate lines or columns, mark the box number, RIF number, the agency file number, the agency to which it is referred (and the reason for its referral, if one is given). It will be of the *highest importance* that your work be accurate here; a mistake might mean that a document is missed in the shuffle. At the close of each day, return your completed sheets to your supervisor.

Final instructions: I cannot emphasize enough the importance of thoroughness and attention to detail in this project. Be very careful; double-check your work. We will be using your review of these boxes to determine which records to submit to the Board for consideration.

Additionally, I want to impress upon you the need for mature conduct. Mr. Hitchcock assures me that you are all very impressive young adults, and I have every confidence that he is correct, but please do keep this in mind: you will be working off-site among people who are not connected to the Assassination Records Review Board. Your conduct will not only reflect upon yourselves, but on both the ARRB staff and the members of the Review Board themselves. Last year's class was kept on-site for their work; we are taking a chance in going off-site with this year's class. Please justify our trust in you.

Keep in mind that you are reviewing the public collection. At no time will you have access, even accidental access, to any classified material.

You will be supervised on a daily basis by Joe Freeman, who is our Senior Analyst in charge of HSCA Records. Report your work to him, and refer questions about this project to him.

This is a formidable project; we have little expectation that it will be completed during your time here. We don't ask that you finish, only that you do the best you can with as much as you can. In the end, you should not feel

as if you left something undone if your week here ends before all the boxes have been reviewed. We are simply grateful for the work you will have done.

Thanks once more for your work. I hope you find this week to be an unforgettable experience.