

**Final Report
of the
President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Review Board
DRAFT BY TJG¹
December 29, 1997**

Introduction:

The Cost of Secrecy
Distrust
 public opinion polls

Now, as a result of the JFK Act, there is more info on JFK assassination than any other single event in history. Records are available for scholars of national security, VN, Cuba, Kennedy admin.

As best the Board is able to determine, all federal records relevant to the assassination have been placed at NARA. The information that is postponed typically is technical information or information that identifies sources that are highly peripheral (or indeed unrelated) to the assassination. The public should be assured that all information that the Board can identify as meaningfully related to the assassination is now open to the public.

Chapter 1: The Background

A. The Problem: Secrecy
 Background of the JFK assassination
 Prior government inquiries
 WC
 HSCA
 Others

 Ongoing suspicion and distrust
 classification of records

¹CAVEAT: This is a draft by TJG and does not necessarily represent the viewpoint of the Review Board or of any member of the Review Board. The final version of the Report will be a report by the Review Board and will reflect the Review Board's opinions. Statements made in this draft reflect what the author believes is likely to occur during the last few months of the Board's existence. The draft will be revised as developments warrant.

Ineffectiveness of FOIA to handle JFK records

B. The Solution: The JFK Act

Summary and discussion of the law

a. Responsibility of Agencies

- i. identifying, reviewing, and transferring records
- ii. special responsibilities of State, DOJ

b. The Assassination Records Review Board

The ARRB is an *independent* federal agency; did not conduct an investigation/did not seek a solution. Goal was to *identify, review, and clarify (where possible)* assassination records

- i. Set standards for release (see Chapter 2)
define AR
apply Section 6
- ii. Oversee compliance with the JFK Act (see Chapter 3)
- iii. Pursue additional records and information (see Chapter 4)

c. The JFK Collection at NARA

C. The Assassination Records Review Board

ARRB Members: circumstances of appointments and confirmation

Independence; professionals;

ARRB staff

Summary of major Review Board activities

meetings

hearings

extension for a fourth year

FBI appeals to the President

Compliance

Research

Chapter 2: The Standards for Release of Information

- A. The relevant provisions of Sections 6, 11
- B. Prior standards: FOIA
- C. Definition of AR
- D. Experience with agencies

Chapter 3: Overseeing Federal Agency Compliance

- A. Compliance Program description
- B. Agency by agency review (including Compliance Program and Statistics)

CIA
FBI
NARA and the Presidential Libraries
Military
Secret Service
Justice (except FBI)
State
Treasury (except Secret Service)
White House (PFIAB, NSC)
Congress (SSCI, etc.)

Chapter 4: Additional Records and Information

- A. Additional records and information from Federal agencies and former Federal officials
 - a. Formal and informal requests to agencies
 - b. Interviews with former Federal officials
see also contributions from Rankin, Ford, Hosty
- B. Assistance from the public
 - Pro bono services
 - Kodak
 - Experts
 - Records contributions
 - Lifton
 - Rankin
 - Garrison
 - Wegmann
 - Fritz
 - etc.
 - Photographs etc.
- C. Local governments
 - New Orleans DA
 - Miami/Metro-Dade
 - Connick litigation
 - Sheridan/NBC litigation
 - Manchester
 - Cusak
 - Kodak
 - Bullet fragment testing
 - Subpoenas and enforcement

Depositions
Interviews
Compliance Programs

D. Medical Evidence

Topic VII: Lessons Learned

The JFK Act
Statutory Analysis

Weaknesses of government declassification and information programs

FOIA

Mandatory review

Case study: FBI appeals to the President under the JFK Act

Case study: Requests for evidence from agencies

Weaknesses of government records policies

Case study: Secret Service records

Case study: Military records

Weaknesses of the JFK Act

Lack of clarity

Subpoena powers

Takings powers

Inability to detail personnel from other federal agencies

Unrealistic time schedule

Document-by-document tracking

Exemption of IRS

The Review Board as a model for future declassification efforts?

Leads by witnesses that turned up no useful information.

LeWinter

Prouty

Nagell

Novell

Capehart

[John Thomas Mason]

FBI agent on Hosty

filming of the autopsy, later murdered

Recommendations

Appendices

- Statistical summaries on assassination records
- List of staff reports
- List of hearings
- List of staff members
- Bios on Board Members
- List of persons who testified
- Audit report
- Index to Board filing system
- List of depositions
- Medical Evidence Report
- Record advisories
- Attempts to communicate with public
- Interns
- Budget information