

## UNITED STATES CUSTOMS SERVICE

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Overall, the Review Board is establishing a good working relationship with the United States Customs Service. The Customs Service designated the Director of the Office of Administration within the Office of Investigations as the individual in charge of overseeing its search for assassination records. Review Board staff members first met with the Director and members of his staff in July, 1995. At that meeting, Mr. London indicated that Customs had not yet begun its search for records, but that it had been aware of its obligations under the JFK Act for over a year. Soon after the July meeting, however, Customs designated an agent, Bruce Miller, to search for assassination records and to interact with the Review Board on a regular basis.

Mr. Miller met with Review Board staff members in August. He indicated that the only assassination records that Customs had located to date were those records referred to it by other agencies. Customs received at least 15 envelopes of referred documents, and it has approved full release of all of those documents. Mr. Miller is not optimistic that other Customs assassination records are extant for the following reasons:

- Before the 1980s, the Customs Service did not have its own document destruction schedule. Rather, Customs used GAO policies in effect at the time. In the 1980s, Customs adopted their own destruction schedules. The current policy states in part that Customs will destroy all documents over 20 years old. The current policy applies to both headquarters and field office files.
- However, some documents may have survived destruction. In 1975, the Customs Service headquarters moved to its present location. During the move, most divisions within Customs simply placed their files into unlabeled and *undated* boxes and shipped the boxes to the Federal Records Center in Virginia. (The Federal Records Center has since moved from Virginia to Suitland, Maryland.) If the boxes did not, in fact, have dates, Federal Records Center employees would not know if or when to destroy the documents. However, for the same reason, the Customs Service will have a difficult time determining which boxes may contain assassination records.
- Another complicating fact is that the Customs Service did not establish its central filing system until 1971.

Members of the Review Board staff will be going to Federal Records Centers with Mr. Miller to review any boxes of documents that may still be intact. In addition, Mr. Miller has promised to continue his efforts contact current and retired Customs agents who worked both at headquarters and in the field offices in New Orleans, Dallas, and Miami during the relevant time period. Finally, the Review Board has asked the Customs Service to keep track of all tasking memoranda it has issued to the various divisions within Customs in its effort to find assassination records.