

MEMORANDUM

June 17, 1997

To: FBI Team

From: Laura Denk

Subject: Informant Postponements Under the New Guidelines

From *Assassination Records Review Board Guidelines for Review of Postponements in the Segregated Collections*, at 4 (Adopted: April 23, 1997).

“The new approach to HSCA subjects is to protect informant-identifying information, without requiring the Bureau to make a showing that the informant is alive. This protection would extend to individuals characterized as **symbol-number informant, ‘PSI’s, ‘PCI’s, ‘established sources’, ‘panel sources’, and the like -- designations that indicate an ongoing relationship with the FBI.** It would *not* extend to individuals who requested that their identity be protected in an isolated contact with the FBI or to local and state law enforcement officers.”

“The presumption will be that an informant’s identity will be *released* if the informant provides ‘positive’ information about an assassination-related issue. To overcome this presumption of release for informants with ‘positive’ information, the FBI would need to make a particularized showing that the identifying information should not be released.”

The gist:

- (1) If informant provides “positive” information about assassination-related issue, release name, regardless of status of informant. If FBI resists release of name, request that the FBI provide evidence on the informant.
- (3) If informant does not provide “positive” information about an assassination-related issue, figure out whether this is an informant who qualifies for protection of informant-identifying information under the Board’s policy.

test: does the informant have a designation that indicates that he or she has an ongoing relationship with the FBI?

examples of qualifying designations

symbol number, PSI, PCI, established source, and panel source

If you do not recognize the designation, the burden is on the FBI to prove to you that the informant has an ongoing relationship with the FBI. But, please use good judgment. *If the information that you propose to release would obviously cause harm to the informant such that we would have agreed to protect it in the core files AND the informant has not provided "positive" information about an assassination related issue, you should carefully consider whether it is a good use of resources to request and evaluate evidence on the informant.*

- (4) If informant does qualify for protection under the new guidelines, protect informant identifying information without requesting that the FBI provide evidence on the informant.