

Federal Bureau of Investigation. The Review Board considered disclosure of the FBI's assassination records to be of paramount importance. Before passage of the JFK Act, the FBI sought to identify and collect all of its major files on the Kennedy assassination. The FBI effort was undertaken in connection with the anticipated Congressional testimony of FBI Director William Sessions regarding the then pending JFK Act bill to open up U.S. Government records on the Kennedy assassination.

The FBI represented to the Review Board that it searched its automated and manual indices to its central records systems and its "automated ELSUR index." (The ELSUR index "covers electronic surveillance sought by or conducted by the FBI since January 1, 1960."). The searches, encompassing "all core and related subjects," were conducted at FBI headquarters, as well as field and legat offices. (Core and related" subjects, as defined by the FBI, encompassed the major subjects associated with the assassination story, including Lee Harvey Oswald, Marina Oswald, John F. Kennedy, Marguerite Oswald, George DeMohrenschildt, Ruth and Michael Paine, Clay Shaw, and David Ferrie.).

To comply with the JFK Act, the FBI established a JFK Task Force and proceeded to transfer to NARA its "core and related" files consisting of its file on the assassination investigation. The core and related files were defined by the FBI as records most often requested under the FOIA relating to the assassination of President Kennedy. These files were collected from FBI Headquarters and from FBI field offices, including the Dallas and New Orleans offices. The FBI also began to forward to the JFK Collection various FBI files that the Bureau had made available to the HSCA.

The Review Board formally submitted to the FBI more than 50 requests for additional records. In response to the Board's requests, the FBI made its original files available if the files still existed, and provided documentation on those files that were destroyed according to the FBI's records retention schedule.

Both in January 1997 and In April 1998, the staffs of the FBI and the Review Board met to address any outstanding matters with respect to the FBI's compliance with the JFK Act. The compliance program with the FBI focused primarily on the scope of the FBI's searches under the JFK Act. The Review Board staff raised additional records issues, including the identification of any working files of top FBI officials with responsibility for overseeing the investigation of the Kennedy assassination and accounting for all relevant electronic surveillance that related to the assassination. Acting on the Review Board's concerns, the FBI requested "all FBIHQ Divisions . . . to conduct searches for any materials not retrievable through" the FBI central records system and that may have been maintained by top FBI officials.

On the issue of electronic surveillance, the FBI requested all 56 of its field offices to identify any electronic surveillance in which assassination-related figures were either speaking, or referred to, in conversations monitored by the FBI. The FBI searched its "elsur indices" under the core file subjects. The FBI certified that it identified only one instance where core subject was the target of an FBI elsur, and that was the electronic surveillance of Marina Oswald in Dallas following the assassination. All other relevant electronic surveillance identified by the FBI (from less than

10 field offices) consisted of so-called “overhears,” where a person is mentioned in a conversation.ⁱ

Nonetheless, the FBI certified that these would be reviewed and processed, as appropriate, under the JFK Act.

Because the FBI has a well-indexed, centralized file system, the FBI’s official main files on the Kennedy assassination and on key figures associated with the assassination story were readily identified and processed under the JFK Act. The bulk of FBI records relating to the assassination have been placed in the JFK Collection. However, at the time of this Report, the FBI was still processing some additional materials for inclusion in the JFK Collection..

i. *See* FBI Final Declaration of Compliance (dated August 20, 1998).