

ARRB/CIA TEAM PRESENTATION
NOBLESVILLE HIGH SCHOOL INTERNS
07 APRIL 1997

I. History of the ARRB effort in releasing relevant CIA files.

- The act that established the ARRB also required all agencies of the U.S. government to assemble all records related to the assassination of President Kennedy, and place them in the custody of the National Archives and Records Administration for inclusion in the JFK Assassination Collection. As a result, the CIA in 1992 released what it interpreted to be all of its relevant JFK assassination files. While some files had been publicly available due to numerous Freedom of Information Act requests by researchers over the years, this release represented the most comprehensive file release by the Central Intelligence Agency in its history. However, most of the documents released through the JFK Act were heavily “redacted” (portions blacked out) which often made researching and understanding the records very difficult. Additionally, many researchers felt that this initial release by the Agency was not as comprehensive as it claimed to be and did not include many records that they felt were important to their work.

II. What is currently in the “JFK Collection”

- The CIA files comprising the “JFK Collection” are primarily divided up into two segments: *The Lee Harvey Oswald “201” file* and the *“Segregated Collection.”*
- “201” files are “personality” files opened up and maintained by the CIA’s Directorate of Operations (which was then called the Directorate of Plans) on persons who are of interest to the Agency. For example, 201 files are routinely opened up on foreign officials and defectors, among others. Lee Harvey Oswald’s defection to the Soviet Union in 1959 made him a person of interest to the Agency (although it did take the Agency more than a year after his defection to open its 201 file on him). This collection contains nearly seventeen boxes of files on Oswald, and includes information on his defection to the USSR, his visit to Mexico City in September and October of 1963, and papers and correspondence related to the CIA’s investigation after the assassination. The seventeen boxes which make up this file have been reviewed in its entirety by the ARRB.
- The “Segregated Collection” is made up of the files which were reviewed as a result of the House Select Committee on Assassinations investigation from 1976-1979. This collection contains 64 boxes of files on a wide range of topics of interest to the HSCA, such as various types of information on individuals alleged to have some connection to the assassination, correspondence between the HSCA and the CIA, CIA operations in Mexico City, comprehensive files on Cuban exile activity during the JFK administration, and information on Soviet defector Yuri Nosenko, who claimed to have seen Oswald’s KGB file while

working in the USSR. The ARRB has reviewed approximately 15% of this collection to date.

III. Acquiring additional records

What else should be added to the collection?

- While the Agency's compliance with the JFK Act and their ongoing cooperation with the ARRB represents an unprecedented effort in its history, there is still a lot of work to be done in making this collection *as complete a record as possible*. Currently the ARRB staff is working in conjunction with CIA focal points in identifying and acquiring records that the staff feels either impacts somewhat directly on events surrounding the assassination or would enhance the historical understanding of the case. As would be expected, this is a long and arduous process and involves a great deal of commitment by the ARRB staff in acquiring documents which the Agency may or may not feel are relevant to the case.

IV. The review and release process.

- When the ARRB began its review of these records in early 1995, the CIA maintained the position that most of the redactions which appeared in the 1992 release of documents should be upheld. However, the Review Board, acting in line with recommendations from the staff, found many of the CIA's justifications lacking and succeeded in releasing probably close to 85% of the redactions. For the most part, negotiations with the Agency over releasing previously redacted information have gone fairly well -- as evidenced by the fact that the Review Board has avoided a Presidential appeal by the CIA over released information. (The CIA is allowed to appeal Review Board decisions that they do not agree with to the President, otherwise, ARRB decisions are legally binding.) A large percentage of the information still protected by the ARRB in these documents involve the names of CIA employees and agents, and sensitive operational details.

V. Examples of recent releases.

Two examples of documents which vividly illustrate the gains made by the ARRB in releasing information are

- the HSCA's report, "*Lee Harvey Oswald, the CIA, and Mexico City*," which outlines the CIA's operations in Mexico City during Oswald's visit in September and October of 1963, and
- The "*Mexico City Chronology*," an internal CIA document which acted as a reference aid for personnel interested in the assassination story, is a comprehensive reproduction of all of the cable traffic between Mexico City and CIA Headquarters regarding the Oswald and Kennedy cases.
- Approximately 95% of the redactions in these documents have been released.