

March 18, 1997

BY FACSIMILE & FIRST-CLASS MAIL

Ms. Sheila Allen  
Records Specialist  
United States Postal Service  
475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20260

Re: United States Postal Service Compliance with the JFK Assassination  
Records Collection Act, 44 U.S.C. § 2107

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Dear Ms. Allen:

Thank you for meeting with Joe Masih and me on March 4, 1997 so that we could review the status of the Postal Service's efforts to comply with the President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992 ("JFK Act"). Set forth below are the matters we reviewed at the March 4 meeting:

1. Postal Service's JFK Assassination Investigation File. The Postal Service has located, and forwarded to the Review Board, the original Postal Service file composed of Postal Service investigative reports immediately following the assassination of President Kennedy. We will shortly transmit this file to the JFK Collection at the National Archives and will notify you when the file is forwarded.
2. Records for the Chief Postal Inspector. The Postal Service's JFK assassination investigation file was located among archived records of the Chief Postal Inspector. Specifically, they were among 14 boxes of records archived under accession no. 28-76-28 INS. Because the SF-135 form for those records did not index or describe them, and because the JFK assassination investigation file was found among them, you agreed to locate and retrieve the balance of those records to confirm that there are no other assassination-related records among them.

3. Postal Service Records in Storage. We appreciate that you have reviewed indices to records stored by the Postal Service around the country. Specifically, you reviewed National Archives master lists of Postal Service records stored in various Federal Records Centers (the list is called an "Accession Number Master List"). At our request, you agreed to verify that the lists were comprehensive in listing all Postal Service records in storage. The issue came up because it was unclear whether the lists captured all Postal Service records, including records for the predecessor Post Office Department.<sup>1</sup> This is particularly important in connection with the list of Postal Service records stored at the Fort Worth Federal Records Center; the earliest Postal Service records we identified were from the 1970's and no earlier records were listed.

5. Missing Records. There are two sets of stored Postal Service records that the Federal Records Center in Suitland cannot locate. Their accession numbers are 028-65K-2271 and 028-68E-2568. The Review Board would still like to review these records if they can be located. You were going to check with the Federal Records Center in Suitland to see if these might have been inadvertently stored with classified materials; any other efforts the FRC can make to locate these records would be appreciated.

6. Records for the Postal Inspection Service Divisions in Dallas and New Orleans. As we saw from the Postal Service's JFK assassination investigation file, the Dallas and New Orleans offices of the Inspection Service Division were involved in the Postal Service's investigation immediately after the assassination, and their reports are in the Postal Service's JFK investigation file. The Postal Service's initial Statement of Compliance notes that the Inspection Service's Dallas field office was contacted to locate any other assassination-related files, but none were found at that office. There was no indication that the New Orleans office was contacted regarding its files. You said you would check with the New Orleans office to determine if they might have any files relating to the assassination.

7. FOIA Files Relating to the Assassination. You will determine whether the Postal Service, including counsel for the Inspection Service, has retained any files relating to FOIA requests for assassination-related documents. If so, the Review Board would like to inspect

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<sup>1</sup> You indicated that sometime in the 1970's the Post Office Department was reorganized into the current U.S. Postal Service. Current Postal Service records are denoted with the prefix 488, while the older Post Office Department records are denoted with the prefix 028. You were going to confirm that both categories of records were accounted for in your lists of storage records.

such files to determine whether they contain any assassination records.

8. Other Storage Records. In our review FRC accession lists for Postal Service records, we came across an entry entitled, "Research Notes 1957-64" (accession number 028-69C-2336). You will obtain and provide to us the SF-135 form for these records, which we hope will describe them with more specificity.

9. Mail Cover Programs Before 1965. We asked you to locate any additional records regarding certain "mail cover" programs in effect in the late 1950's and early 1960's. One program involved the opening of certain mail by the CIA (Oswald's correspondence was opened by the CIA). The other was the seizure of so-called "foreign propaganda" by the U.S. Postal Service with a notice to the intended recipient that such materials have been taken but can be returned if requested (Oswald's mail was affected by this program as well). In addition, there were mail cover programs applicable to the mail of military personnel (we are trying to determine if Oswald's mail was subject to any such program while he was in military service from 1956 to 1959). Accordingly, we asked you to ascertain whether there are any Postal Service records that discuss, or relate to, these programs and the procedures that may have been applicable to Oswald. In addition, please determine if a distinct file is kept for the subject of a mail cover program and, if so, whether there is still in existence any such file for Lee or Marina Oswald.

10. Contacting Postal Service Personnel Who Were Involved in the JFK Assassination Investigation. We discussed the possibility of contacting various Postal Service personnel who had some involvement in the Postal Service's work in investigating the assassination. The purpose for contacting them would be to develop any information that could lead to the discovery of additional records.<sup>2</sup> We strongly recommend that you locate and interview any such personnel, including any secretaries or assistants to H.D. Holmes; H.B. Montague, the Chief Inspector for the Postal Service at the time of the assassination and thereafter; L.H. Stephens, the Inspector in Charge at Fort Worth in 1963; and J.V. Staples, the Assistant Inspector at Fort Worth in 1963.

11. Final Declaration of Compliance. The Final Declaration of Compliance should take account of the additional matters we reviewed, as well as any other significant follow-up

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<sup>2</sup> In fact, you attempted to contact H.D. Holmes, the Postal Inspector who was present during the interrogation of Lee Harvey Oswald, but learned that Mr. Holmes died a few years ago.

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work. In addition, the Final Declaration of Compliance should be executed under oath in the form prescribed by 28 U.S.C. § 1746.

Please do not hesitate to contact Joe Masih or me if you have any questions or want to discuss any of these matters further.

Sincerely,

Ronald G. Haron  
Senior Attorney

cc: Mary S. Elcano, General Counsel,  
Postal Service