

Assassination Records Review Board

600 E Street NW ■ Second Floor ■ Washington, DC 20530

July 25, 1995

DELIVERY BY HAND

Mr. Eljay B. Bowron
Director
United States Secret Service
1800 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

Re: Destruction of Records Related to Protection of President Kennedy

Dear Mr. Bowron:

It has come to our attention that two or more boxes of Secret Service records related to the protection of President Kennedy were destroyed earlier this year. Any destruction of such records raises the grave possibility of a violation of The President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992, 44 U.S.C. § 2107, and it is a matter that we take with the utmost seriousness.

According to Standard Form 135, Records Transmittal and Receipt, six boxes containing the Secret Service's Protective Survey Reports from the Kennedy administration were transferred to the Federal Records Center on August 7, 1974 (Accession No. 87-75-4); our copy of the form is enclosed for your convenience. According to the SF 135 form, these records were scheduled to be "retain[ed] permanently for eventual transfer to the National Archives or a Presidential Library." The enclosed copy of SF 258 indicates that the entire accession (six boxes) was transferred to the National Archives.

In January of this year, Dr. Jeremy Gunn of the Review Board staff requested of John Machado and Ann Parker of the Secret Service that the six boxes in the accession be made available for his review to evaluate the importance of the material for the JFK Collection in the National Archives. Although four of the boxes were made available,¹ we were not provided boxes (1) and (6), the two most

¹Some important files were, however, missing from those boxes. The missing files included

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important boxes. On February 7, 1995 -- and several times thereafter -- Mr. Machado and Ms. Parker informed us that the Federal Records Center "could not locate" the two missing boxes. According to the SF 135, these two boxes contained records related to Andrews Air Force Base (presumably including the arrival of Air Force One carrying the body of the slain President) and all of the records from September 24, 1963 through the President's trip to New York City on November 8, 1963. This material presumably included the important files related to the canceling of President Kennedy's trip to Chicago (where death threats against him presumably led to the cancellation of the trip).

Although we repeatedly were told that special requests for these records had been made at the Federal Records Center, Ms. Ann Parker of the Secret Service finally informed Dr. Joan Zimmerman of the Review Board staff, on July 19, 1995 -- six months after we had first requested the boxes -- that the records were in fact destroyed in January of this year at approximately the same time that we had requested them. When we asked for a copy of the document on which she based her statement (which she called an "O-1 form"), she declined to provide it and responded that we would need to file a FOIA request to the Federal Records Center in order to obtain a copy.

In order for you and for us to fulfill our statutory obligations, we seek your cooperation in assisting us in obtaining all of the facts surrounding the destruction of these important records and ensuring that no additional Kennedy-related material is destroyed by the Secret Service (or anyone acting on its behalf). Accordingly, we request that you take the following actions immediately:

1. Instruct the appropriate Secret Service officials to provide to the Assassination Records Review Board *all* documentation related to boxes (1) and (6) in the above-referenced accession (including, without limitation, the Secret Service's copy of the Form 135; any revisions or amendments made to the 135; any destruction orders; any retention schedules or revisions of retention schedules that would relate in any way to the two boxes; any requests to have the records transferred to the Secret Service for review; any other documentation, memoranda, or e-mail messages that relate to the boxes; and any memoranda discussing the basis for changing the retention schedule). We ask that this material be provided to the Review Board staff by noon on Friday, July 28, 1995.

File 602.111 "Other Places Folder # 6 - July-Nov. 1963" (the critical months preceding the assassination).

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2. Instruct all Secret Service officials to cooperate fully, completely, and truthfully with the Assassination Records Review Board in its attempt to ascertain whether any Secret Service records related to President Kennedy have been destroyed.
3. Provide the Review Board with any information about the destruction of Secret Service records relating to President Kennedy.
4. Provide accurate copies of *all* Secret Service inventories of records, SF 135s, "O-1 forms," and records from the Johnson-Kennedy era.
5. Ensure that *no* Secret Service records related to President Kennedy or to his assassination be destroyed *until* the Review Board has received prior notice and has had an opportunity to inspect the records.

We very much appreciate your prior statements expressing your commitment to ensure that the Secret Service comply fully with the JFK Act. We trust that you will be willing to act promptly to guarantee that this matter is properly addressed. Should you have any questions, please contact the Review Board's Executive Director, David G. Marwell, at 202-724-0088.

Sincerely yours,

John R. Tunheim
Chair

cc: Mr. John Kelleher (by hand)
Chief Counsel
United States Secret Service

Mr. John Machado, Chief
Policy Analysis and Records Systems
United States Secret Service

Enclosures

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United States Secret Service

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Enclosures: SF 135, SF 258

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