

MEMO

To: Judge Jack Tunheim
From: Tom Samoluk
Subject: Your Interview With Chip Selby, Wednesday, February 18, 10:00 a.m.
Date: July 20, 2017
CC: Eileen Sullivan

Introduction

As we previously discussed, you are scheduled to be interviewed by Chip Selby on Wednesday, February 18, 1998 at 10:00 a.m. at the Review Board offices. The interview will be conducted in the Board's public reading room and will take no more than an hour of your time. (As part of the interview, Selby may also want to get some "filler" footage of you walking down the hallway.) Selby will have a full film crew of two or three people, in addition to himself.

Selby is an independent film producer making a documentary on the Warren Commission. As I know you are aware, he previously produced Reasonable Doubt, a 1988 documentary on the single bullet theory. He plans on trying to sell this Warren Commission documentary to the A&E network or The History Channel.

Eileen has been working with Selby and he has been very cooperative. He understands the parameters of what is appropriate for you to be discussing and has been easy to work with on the scheduling of the interview. Other people who have been interviewed by Selby say that he "kept to the script" during their interviews.

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Questions and Suggested Answers

Selby has submitted six questions to us that he would like to ask you during the interview. Each of Selby's questions (some are multi-part) below is followed by a suggested answer, based on the answers that you have given in the past.

Question 1

- a. How did the Assassination Records Review Board originate?
- b. What is the Board's purpose?
- c. Why was an agency like the ARRB necessary?

Suggested Answer:

The Assassination Records Review Board was created under the JFK Act which was signed by President Bush, with members nominated by President Clinton and confirmed by the Senate.

The Board is an independent federal agency overseeing the review and release of records related to the assassination of President Kennedy. Our job is to make the record as complete as possible and accessible to the American public at the National Archives.

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The Board was not created to reinvestigate the assassination. The idea behind the JFK Act and the Review Board was to make the record available and allow the public to draw their own conclusions.

The reality is that the Congress created this Board because a third of a century after the assassination there continues to be unabated interest in the assassination. The Congress decided that the many investigations into the assassination had served to raise additional questions and after the passage of 30 plus years, only in the rarest cases is there any legitimate need for continued protection of these records.

Question 2

Has all of the relevant information pertaining to the Kennedy assassination been made public?

Suggested Answer:

The Review Board is committed to ensuring that all of the assassination records are released. There are more than four million pages of assassination records available to the public at the National Archives. In a limited number of instances, and consistent with the JFK Act, the Board has decided that some information, not directly related to the assassination, should be kept closed for some additional period of time. For example, the Board has protected the name of a retired intelligence operative whose life may be endangered by disclosure for an additional five years. But, that has

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been rare.

Question 3

Did the withholding of information by government agencies affect the way in which the public perceived the Kennedy assassination? Did this withholding of information also affect the American public's trust in their government?

Suggested Answer:

The Congress clearly stated that public confidence in government was a relevant issue in dealing with the continuing interest in the Kennedy assassination and what to do about still classified records.

With each investigation into the assassination, additional records were created and kept closed, and with them, more questions about the assassination were raised among the public.

The Board has aggressively seized the opportunity to open up the assassination records, but also redefined the meaning of, and need for, secrecy in government.

Certainly had there not been millions of pages withheld from the public over the years, there would have been no need for a Review Board. Hopefully, the unprecedented powers given to this independent panel of citizens will help to restore a measure of public confidence in government.

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Question 4

Why has interest in the Kennedy assassination remained so intense?

Suggested Answer:

There are probably many factors.

The assassination of John F. Kennedy was a seminal event in our history. He was a young, handsome and charismatic leader cut down in the prime of life.

Lee Harvey Oswald's strange past added mystery to the case.

Add in the fact that the alleged assassin was murdered two days later, and you have another dimension of mystery.

Furthermore, the public has learned much about its government in the subsequent years such as deals with mobsters to assassinate Castro, things that were not known at the time of the Warren Commission investigation, and in retrospect clouded the assassination, and caused people to doubt what the government had told them about the assassination of President Kennedy.

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Finally, for many people, the Kennedy assassination is viewed as the end of innocence for America. It was followed by the long Vietnam War, the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., and Watergate. All of these tragedies served to erode public confidence in government. For many, it all began with the Kennedy assassination.

Question 5

- a. Will we ever know the whole story of the Kennedy assassination?
- b. Is it possible for us to reach some sort of consensus on the case?

Suggested Answer:

With the passage of so much time, it is unlikely that all of the public's questions can be answered, making a consensus on the case unlikely. However, the importance of the Board is that the federal government will be able to say to the public that no information about the assassination is being hidden by the government.

Question 6

In 1993, historian Michael Beschloss wrote: "If we can wring any moral out of John Kennedy's murder, it is that in the long reach of America History, the rewards of full disclosure tower over its immediate perils."

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- a. Do you agree with this?
- b. Is this the moral of the Kennedy assassination?

Suggested Answer:

When looking at the assassination of President Kennedy we must remember that it occurred at the height of the Cold War. That explains a lot about the aftermath of the assassination and how the Warren Commission investigation was conducted. The context of the assassination is important.

There will always be reason for governments to keep some information classified for some period of time. But, it comes down to a question of reasonableness and carefully balancing the public's right to know.

Hopefully, through the Board's work's we will see a way for government business to be conducted more effectively -- and more openly -- in the future.