

M E M O R A N D U M

DRAFT/TJG

To: Review Board
From: Staff
Date: [January 11, 1995]
Re: Proposed Experts Conference
cc: All Staff

Summary of Proposal

We propose that a two-day meeting of experts on assassination records be held in Washington in March to coincide with a scheduled Review Board meeting. We suggest that the meeting have two components: first, a public hearing wherein experts would offer testimony to the Board; and second, extensive meetings with the Staff (and Board members to the extent that their time permits). The five to ten experts would be drawn from prior governmental investigations of the assassination (Warren Commission and HSCA) and from the research community.

Purpose

The purpose of the Experts Conference would be for the Board and Staff to obtain the benefits of the experience and knowledge of those who have devoted a substantial amount of time to gathering and reviewing records pertaining to the JFK assassination. Through discussions with the Board and Staff, the experts would provide background briefings and engage in discussions illuminating:

First, problems that will arise in the document review process (including deciphering cryptonyms; i.d. numbers; filing systems; etc.).

Second, problems that are likely to be encountered in obtaining information from certain agencies (esp. CIA, NSA, FBI, DOD, ONI, etc.).

Third, records that we should pursue (including records held by federal, state, and local agencies and by private persons).

We seek to have a balanced and informative discussion. We are not interested in debating assassination theories, but in hearing an informed and illuminating exchange about the location of additional assassination records.

Format

We think that it would be useful to have a two-tiered structure for the conference. The first part would consist of background briefings and discussions with the Staff (and the Board to the extent that time permits). We perceive this as a one- to two-day roundtable discussion where issues pertaining to records could be raised, explained, and, if appropriate, criticized.

The second part would consist of a hearing by the Review Board. The experts would testify in a public forum to which the media would be invited. This should prove valuable to the Board and may provide a good occasion for obtaining some favorable publicity. We propose that the Board receive testimony for two hours in the morning from people who were involved in prior investigations of the JFK assassination. The two-hour afternoon session would discuss records that the official investigations did not (or could not) locate.

Experts

Although no list of experts will satisfy everyone, the following persons are widely recognized as being knowledgeable authorities:

From prior investigations:

Arlen Specter
Judge Burt Griffin
Wesley Liebler
David Belin
William T. Coleman
Robert Blakey
Robert Tanenbaum
Gaeton Fonzi
Edward Lopez

Researchers:

Gerald Posner
Jerry Rose (Fourth Decade)
Paul Hoch
John Newman
Jim Lesar
Michael Kurtz
Harold Weisberg
David Lifton
Anthony Summers

Costs

[To be developed as appropriate.] We anticipate offering participants transportation, hotel accommodations, and a per diem, but not an honorarium. The cost per person would be approximately [\$750.00?].