

Memorandum - (16) page fax, including this cover page

To: Anna Nelson

From: Tom Samoluk

Date: August 23, 1995

Re: Interview on KWHN Radio; Fri., August 25th, 7:15-7:45 a.m. (EST)

I. Introduction

You are scheduled to do a live telephone interview on Friday, August 25th from 7:15 to approximately 7:45 a.m. (EST) on Radio Station KWHN. The host and our contact is Susan Edens, (501) 782-8888. As previously arranged, she will call you at your home a few minutes before the interview is scheduled to begin. There may be calls from listeners.

This memorandum contains suggested talking points for the interview. Several of them are basic ones which we have used in the past. Updated talking points have been added to reflect the Board's recent activities. I will provide some background information (fact sheet, news releases and recent newsclips) to the radio station prior to the interview. This information is attached for your quick reference.

Please note that if the interviewer does not want to spend a lot of time on the background of the Board and is most interested in recent activities, Section III will be the most helpful.

II. Basic Talking Points

1. The ARRB is an independent federal panel, consisting of five private citizens.
2. The Board's mandate is to identify and secure the Kennedy assassination records.
3. It is up to the Board to determine which records are to be made public immediately and which ones will have postponed release dates.
4. The purpose of the law and the Board's work is to provide a full record to the American public, make it available at the National Archives, and allow interested parties to draw their own conclusions about what happened in Dallas 32 years ago.
5. The Board is not re-investigating the assassination of President Kennedy. Our focus is collecting the assassination records.

6. The Congress created the Board to have an independent, cost-effective and accountable process for the review and release of these documents.

7. The reality is that there continues to be an intense, unabated interest in the assassination, as reflected in the number of books and documentaries that are still being done. Requests from the public for federal records were showing no sign of slowing and federal agencies were continuing to devote enormous resources to the task of responding to these requests and litigating many of the requests. That costs money. It also costs money to unnecessarily keep records classified. In fact, The Washington Post recently reported just that the federal government spends an estimated \$16 billion a year to maintain a system of secrecy. The Review Board will get as many records out in the public domain as possible in the next couple of years. In the long run, the Review Board will have saved a lot of money and resources.

III. Recent Activities of the Review Board

1. The Review Board has begun the process of reviewing and releasing previously classified information. We are meeting regularly in Washington. The focus to date has been on CIA and FBI documents. These early decisions by the Board involve difficult issues related to informants and intelligences sources and methods. They are obviously sensitive issues and are important because of their relevancy to many other documents which the Board will be reviewing in the future.

2. In mid-July, the Review Board released in full (16) CIA documents, which had previously been available only in redacted form. The CIA did not appeal the Board's decisions and the President accepted them. These documents, which relate to Lee Harvey Oswald's visit to Mexico City only weeks before the assassination, are now available to the American public in their entirety for the first time.

3. In late July, the Review Board notified President Clinton that we had voted to open in full (16) FBI documents and (2) other CIA documents. The FBI documents relate to their investigation of Oswald while he was in the Soviet Union in 1960 and 1961; the Communist Party, USA reaction to the assassination; and Jack Ruby's shooting of Oswald. The CIA documents relate to Oswald's trip to Mexico City. The FBI has appealed the Board's decision to the President on all but one of the documents. The CIA had notified the Board that it will not appeal. Under the law, President Clinton has until August 30th to agree or disagree with the Board's determinations on these documents.

4. In the Board's most recent action, last week we sent notification to the President of decisions which we had made on an additional (37) CIA documents. The Board voted to open (16) documents in their entirety and (21) documents in part. The Board voted to -3-

release the overwhelming majority of information which the CIA had wanted to keep secret. However, for the first time the Board did agree with the CIA position that some information relating to sensitive intelligence sources and methods should not be publicly released at this time. We are exercising careful independent judgment, just as the Congress had envisioned. Consistent with the law, we are balancing the need to protect still sensitive government information versus the public's right to know.

5. It is worth noting that the Board has held public hearing on identifying and locating assassination records in New Orleans, Washington, Dallas and Boston to allow for public input and to assist the Board in fulfilling its mandate. Most recently in New Orleans, the Review Board obtained a significant number of original records related to the assassination investigation and prosecution of Clay Shaw by District Attorney Jim Garrison. We are continuing to pursue additional records which should be in the Collection at the National Archives.

IV. "Broader Implication" Talking Points

1. The Act which created the Review Board has given the American public an extraordinary and unprecedented opportunity to gain insight into its government and recent history.
2. The Board has the opportunity not only to make publicly available records that may clarify the facts surrounding the assassination, but also, along the way, the opportunity to redefine the meaning of, and need for, secrecy in government.
3. The unprecedented powers given to an independent panel of private citizens will also hopefully help to restore a measure of confidence in government.
4. The controversy surrounding the Kennedy assassination is unlikely to disappear even after the Board's work is completed, But, the American public will know that no information about the assassination is being hidden by the government. Perhaps we will see a way for government business to be conducted more effectively -- and more openly -- in the future.

V. Statements We Have Learned to Avoid

Based on our experiences in dealing with the media in recent months, a few statements to avoid are suggested below.

1. "People are still asking questions about the Lincoln assassination."

Based on the reaction that we have heard, this statement leads people to question the

reason for the Board's existence. They query: What is the point of having this Board if questions are still being asked about a presidential assassination which occurred more than 100 years ago? Although it puts the Board's task in some historical context, this statement is not viewed as a positive one about the Board.

2. "There will always be more questions about the assassination, even after the Board is done with its work."

We have learned that this statement, standing alone, also leads people to question the need for the Review Board. As we are all aware, it *is* likely that there will always be questions about the assassination. However, people find it easier to accept the need for the Board when the above statement is accompanied with the following point, "When the Review Board has completed its work, the American public will know that the government is not hiding any information about the assassination."

VI. Responding to Questions About Who Was Responsible for the Assassination

When asked who he thinks was responsible for the assassination, Jack has responded in the following way:

I put myself in the category of most Americans, that is, I still have many questions about what happened. I am keeping an open mind. The Review Board is not mandated to reach any conclusions about the assassination. We are charged with making the records which relate to the assassination public. Ultimately, it will be left to the American public to draw their own conclusions about what occurred 32 years ago in Dallas.

We have found that this is an effective way to maintain an unbiased public position, while taking the opportunity to restate the Board's mandate.