

NEWS RELEASE

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JUNE 5, 1998

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REVIEW BOARD RELEASES SECRET GRAND JURY RECORDS

The Assassination Records Review Board announced today that it is releasing the previously secret transcripts of more than 40 witnesses who testified before the grand jury called by former New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison in 1967. The grand jury was convened as a part of Garrison's investigation into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The grand jury investigation led to the indictment of businessman Clay Shaw, who subsequently was acquitted after a lengthy trial.

Federal Judge John R. Tunheim, Chairman of the Review Board, said that "Copies of these transcripts have been hidden for years and were available to only a select few people. Now all of the American people will be free to examine a more complete record of the Garrison prosecution of Clay Shaw."

Earlier this week the Review Board obtained the New Orleans District Attorney's original prosecution files of Clay Shaw after the U.S. Supreme Court let stand an order requiring the current New Orleans District Attorney to turn over the records to the Review Board. "With the release of both the grand jury records and the prosecution files, we have opened to the public one of the most interesting chapters in the story of the assassination of President Kennedy," Judge Tunheim announced. Earlier, the Review Board released a diary written by Clay Shaw, as well as the papers of Edward Wegmann, one of Shaw's defense attorneys.

Transcripts from the Orleans Parish Grand Jury Special Investigation include the testimony of witnesses including Marina Oswald Porter, Perry Raymond Russo, Harold Weisberg, Mark Lane, Dean Andrews, FBI Agent Regis Kennedy, Carlos Quiroga, Ruth Paine, and others. "This testimony was offered in secret by some of the most important and colorful figures in the New Orleans chapter of the assassination story," Judge Tunheim said. "Releasing such information is the mission of the Review Board."

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Dean Andrews, a New Orleans lawyer, testified to the Orleans Parish grand jury that he had provided legal advice to Lee Harvey Oswald during the summer of 1963. After the assassination of President Kennedy, Andrews testified, a person named Clay Bertrand asked him to become the defense attorney for the accused assassin, Oswald. Andrews also was the attorney for the noted New Orleans organized crime figure, Carlos Marcello. Andrews ultimately denied that Clay Bertrand was the same person as Clay Shaw.

Copies of the grand jury records will be available immediately for public inspection from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., in the Public Reading Room at the Assassination Records Review Board, 600 E Street, NW, Second Floor. After June 12 the records will be transferred to the JFK Collection at the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland.

The Assassination Records Review Board was established by the JFK Act, which was signed into law by President George Bush. The five members of the Board were appointed by President Clinton, confirmed by the U.S. Senate, and sworn in on April 11, 1994. The law gives the Review Board the mandate and the authority to identify, secure, and make available all records related to the assassination of President Kennedy. It is the responsibility of the Board to determine which records are to be made public immediately and which ones will have postponed release dates.

The Review Board consists of the following members:

The Honorable John R. Tunheim, Chair; U.S. District Court Judge, District of Minnesota.

Dr. Henry F. Graff; Professor Emeritus of History at Columbia University.

Dr. Kermit L. Hall; Dean, College of Humanities, and Professor of History at The Ohio State University.

Dr. William L. Joyce; Associate University Librarian for Rare Books and Special Collections at Princeton University.

Dr. Anna K. Nelson; Distinguished Adjunct Historian in Residence at The American University.