

**Assassination Records Review Board  
Annapolis, Maryland  
15-16 December 1997  
Final Report  
Potential Chapters/Topics**

**Introduction**

- Intrigue of the JFK assassination
- Vibrant young leader struck down in his prime
- Strange and curious circumstances
- Cold war and foreign implications
- Government interest in controlling story rather than answering questions
- Turmoil in later 1960s contributes aura to the early 1960s
- Legacy of doubts

Nevertheless, professional historians have avoided serious study of the subject

Tens of thousands of classified government records

Vast majority of Americans believed there was a conspiracy and the answers lie in government files

Now there is more information available on the JFK assassination than on any other single historical event

**Topic I: Studies of the JFK Assassination**

- JFK inquiries by the US government prior to the JFK Act
  - Warren Commission
  - Clark Panel
  - Abzug Committee
  - Church Committee
  - HSCA

- Literature on the JFK assassination
  - Popular literature (and movies)
    - Authors typically are not professionally trained historians
    - lack of rigor in analysis; use of hearsay, eye-witness testimony; picking and choosing among evidence
  - Serious scholars have avoided the subject

## **Topic II: Historical Background on Government Information and Declassification**

History of US government declassification efforts

Commissions

Coolidge Committee (1956)

Wright Commission (1957)

Moss Subcommittee (1958)

Seitz Task Force (1970)

Stilwell Commission (1985)

Moynihan Commission (1997)

Programs

FOIA

Executive Order mandatory review

Venona; Radiation; Gulf War; Prisoner of War, etc.

History of inquiries into the intelligence community

Church Committee

Pike Committee

## **Topic III: Assassination Records Review Board**

Background of the Board and the JFK Act

JFK Act background

Board members, circumstances of appointments and confirmation

ARRB staff

Major Review Board activities

meetings

hearings

extension for a fourth year

FBI appeals to the President

Connick litigation

Sheridan/NBC litigation

Manchester

Cusak

Kodak

Bullet fragment testing

Subpoenas and enforcement

Liaison with agencies

Depositions

Interviews  
Compliance Programs

**Topic IV: Federal Records and Federal Agencies under the JFK Act**

Agency by agency review (including Compliance Program and Statistics)

CIA  
FBI  
NARA and the Presidential Libraries  
Military  
Secret Service  
Justice (except FBI)  
State  
Treasury (except Secret Service)  
White House (PFIAB, NSC)  
Congress (SSCI, etc.)

**Topic V: Records from the Public and from Local Governments**

Donations and cooperation from the public

Pro bono services  
Kodak  
Experts  
Records contributions  
Lifton  
Rankin  
Garrison  
Wegmann  
Fritz  
etc.  
Photographs etc.

Local governments

New Orleans DA  
Miami/Metro-Dade

**Topic VI: Research projects and leads pursued**

Major projects

Medical evidence

Military intelligence in Dallas

Miscellaneous research projects

Requests for additional information and records from Federal agencies

**Topic VII: Lessons Learned**

Weaknesses of government declassification and information programs

FOIA

Mandatory review

Case study: FBI appeals to the President under the JFK Act

Case study: Requests for evidence from agencies

Weaknesses of government records policies

Case study: Secret Service records

Case study: Military records

Weaknesses of the JFK Act

Lack of clarity

Subpoena powers

Takings powers

Inability to detail personnel from other federal agencies

Unrealistic time schedule

Document-by-document tracking

Exemption of IRS

The Review Board as a model for future declassification efforts?

**Appendices**

Statistical summaries on assassination records

List of staff reports

Index to Board filing system

List of depositions

Medical Evidence Report