

Draft Interview Procedures

Policy issues

- When to tape
- When to transcribe
- When to depose

Interviews should be taped

- only with consent of interviewee
- consent should be on tape
- only after a complete outline has been prepared
- only after approval of team leader and TJG or DGM
- only when team leader or TJG/DGM is present (or otherwise approved)
- only for substantive interviews

Transcribing

Interviewees should not be offered transcripts until the issue has been fully vetted

Transcribe only important interviews. Consider transcribing only portions of interviews.

Interview format

- Always identify everyone who is participating in interview
- Always record date of interview
- Always get full name of interviewee
- Make it clear at the beginning why the interview is taking place (unless obvious) and who the interviewee is
(we would like to get your recollections regarding your work in Army intelligence in Dallas in 1963)
- wrap-up: is there anything else you think we should know regarding:
 - assassination
 - Oswald
 - military intelligence
 - etc.

Background

- identify scope of knowledge, activities
 - “When did you enter the military?”
 - “Were you ever stationed in Dallas?”
 - “When?”
 - “What was your position at that time?”
 - “How long did you do that?”

"When did you leave Dallas."

"When did you leave the military."

Techniques

- let the witness do the talking
- prompt the witness only **modestly** and only **after** his memory is exhausted
- always identify the **foundation** for the witnesses' statements

was he/she present

did he/she hear

did someone tell the witness

Be very wary of hearsay--it usually does little good. If it is hearsay, make sure that that is understood.

-- "did you see it?"

-- "were you present when it happened."

ONE OF THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS IN JFK ISSUES IS PEOPLES' RELIANCE ON HEARSAY TO SUPPORT THEIR THEORIES. DON'T FUEL THE HEARSAY RECORD.

(taking advantage of hearsay)

A: "Someone told me there was a program for training Marine Corps defectors."

Q: "Who told you?" "What was his role?" "Did you ever hear anyone else talk about it?" "Where else could we find more information on it?" "Did you believe it?" "Why did you believe it?"

- always **listen to the answer and then follow up**

Example 1:

A: "You know, we in intelligence always thought that the official story doesn't make any sense."

Q: "Right."

Example 2:

A: "You know, we in intelligence always thought that the official story doesn't make any sense."

Q: "What do you mean by that?" "What parts of the story didn't make sense?" "Do you have any examples?" "In what way did it not make sense?"

Example 3:

A: "I think the project was called Code 30."

Q: "When did you first become aware of the program?" "What was your involvement in the program." "Who was your commanding officer in the program?" "How much time did you work on it?" "From where was it being run?"

-- clear up possible ambiguity.

"When you say you left in September, was that September of 1963?"

"When you said you do not agree with "that," were you referring to the memorandum by _____?"

-- do not ever be seen to agree with anything the witness says that is controversial

-- do not prompt, lead the witness

-- always imagine "what will this look like in writing"

Sarcasm is always bad

Joking is usually bad

-- get out of the mode of being inferential and conversational and think: will this make sense when it appears in writing? Always think of the point of view of the person listening or reading.