
Chapter 3

The Review Process

A. Introduction

This chapter will explain the JFK Act's processing requirements of federal agencies holding assassination records, and the actions of these agencies under the JFK Act. This chapter will also explain what the JFK Act required of the Review Board regarding the processing of assassination records, and the general process developed for processing records under the JFK Act. This chapter is concerned primarily with the general mechanics of the review process under the JFK Act, as the Review Board's specific actions are thoroughly explained in other parts of this Final Report.

1. Requirements of the JFK Act on Federal Government Agencies

The JFK Act broadly describes the responsibilities of Federal Government agencies who have records related to the assassination and the various inquiries into the assassination of President Kennedy among their agency records. Generally these agencies held records on prominent figures relating to the assassination prior to the assassination, conducted assassination investigations, assisted in the investigation of the assassination, or were subject to congressional inquiries related to the assassination in the 1970s. The CIA, the FBI and the component parts of the Defense Department are the major agencies of the U.S. Government affected by the JFK Act. The National Archives, in its responsibility as the keeper of the Warren Commission records, the records of the Congress, as the parent agency of the Presidential Library system, and perhaps most importantly, as the final repository of the JFK Assassination Records Collection, was also dramatically affected by the passage of the JFK Act. Each of these agencies had peculiar problems in complying with the JFK Act (both before and after the creation of the Review Board), but the general mechanics of the review process developed by the Review Board were broad enough to address each of these problems.

2. What was done before the Review Board got rolling

The John F. Kennedy Records Collection Act officially opened (as legislated, three hundred days after the passage of the JFK Act) on August 23, 1993. The Collection was made up of records from the Warren Commission, the HSCA, the Secret Service, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the USIA, and the Criminal, Civil and Civil Rights Divisions of the Department of Justice. Many of these records were in the National Archives, opened in full before the passage of the JFK Act. As stipulated in the JFK Act, if an agency transferred records to the National Archives, opened in full prior to the passage of the Act, these records are exempt from the requirements of the JFK Act. All other assassination records are required by the JFK Act to have attached to them identification aid. The JFK Act stated that the JFK Collection should include a “central directory comprised of identification aids created for each record transmitted to the Archivist...”¹

3. What does the JFK Act require of the Review Board

B. Paper Sheet Review

1. Review Board desire to see every document at first

C. The Databases

1. Source databases

a. Development of RIF's system, floppy disc as lowest common denominator

b. Keeping data updated

2. Review Track

a. Document level control

¹Section 4(a)2(B) *President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992*, Public Law 102-625, 102nd Congress, Second Session, October 26, 1992.
