

MEMORANDUM

April 10, 1998

To: T. Jeremy Gunn

From: Ronald G. Haron

Cc: Laura Denk
Kevin Tiernan
FBI File

Subject: Meeting with FBI Regarding its Compliance Statement
under the JFK Act

On April 9, Laura, Kevin and I met with the FBI to discuss its compliance statement under the JFK Act. Representing the FBI were Carol Keeley, Acting Unit Chief, and LuAnn Wilkins, both of the JFK Task Force, and an FBI attorney. Most of the issues discussed were previewed in my March 2, 1998 letter to Ms. Keeley. Ms. Keeley was the FBI representative who addressed our questions. Set forth is a brief summary of certain issues that arose in the meeting.

1. Record Searches Generally

The FBI searched its Central Records System ("CRS") indices and its ELSUR indices at Headquarters and the Field Offices. No other indices were searched.

The FBI agreed to have copied the CRS index cards that identify the main CRS files for key assassination-related subjects -- Lee Harvey Oswald, Marina Oswald, Jack Ruby and John F. Kennedy. The index cards will be copied from FBI Headquarters, as well as the Dallas, New Orleans, Mexico City and Washington, D.C. field offices. We requested that the copies be attached to the Final Declaration of Compliance so that the public can see first hand, from the FBI's own records, what main records the FBI has relating to Oswald¹ and the assassination. For practical reasons, we have limited this request to the key subjects and offices. We have also excluded index cards that list these subjects as cross-references in other files. Otherwise, the volume would be too

¹ Ms. Keeley confirmed that the disclosure of the CRS main file cards will show, with respect to Lee Harvey Oswald, that no formal informant file (134 or 137 series file) exists for Oswald.

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great. Ms. Keeley stated that, at some future date, the original cards would be accessioned to the National Archives under its regular document retention procedures.

The FBI also agreed to copy the search slips showing the results of the ELSUR searches for these same subjects and field offices.

As part of documenting its search efforts under the JFK Act, both generally and in response to Review Board requests, the FBI has agreed that the relevant portions of its JFK Act administrative file will be placed in the JFK Collection (HQ 62-102905) (the file will first have to be reviewed to exclude non-essential personnel documentation). The FBI also has agreed that it will place in the JFK Collection a working (or "tickler") file it had relating to the House Select Committee on Assassinations, which file the FBI has consulted to identify the "HSCA subjects" to be processed as assassination records under the JFK Act.

2. Administrative Files

We raised the issue of whether indices could be provided for the 62 and 66 series files (these series contains important files, including the main JFK investigation file, Warren Commission file, Hoover telephone logs, and Tolson's chron file). Ms. Keeley stated that administrative files relevant to the assassination would have been identified through the various name searches that were conducted. Any further inventorying of administrative files appears impracticable. We were told that there are hundreds of thousands of administrative files and that a computer generated index could not be generated for all such files (the CRS was automated in 1978 and does not cover pre-1978 files, according to the FBI's compliance statement). Thus, a manual search of thousands of numbered index cards would have to be done, which would not be practical.

3. Files of Top FBI Officials

In my opinion, we still have not obtained a satisfactory explanation for whether or not the FBI has any files that were separately maintained by the top FBI officials who would have had involvement in investigating the Kennedy assassination. Ms. Keeley could not state whether or not there are such files, including whether any such files would have been separately serialized under a CRS file number or whether they might have been sent to storage without being assigned a CRS number. It is my impression that the FBI does not consider this category as essential based on their assumption that any documents on the Kennedy assassination in the working files of the officials would be in a Central Records System file. Ms. Keeley stated her opinion that this matter was not a "compliance-related" issue. (However, in Phil Golrick's January 22, 1997 letter to Ms. Keeley, we had previously raised,

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as a compliance issue, the matter of identifying any existing working files for top FBI officials). Ms. Keeley stated that, to the extent that we want an accounting of these files, we should submit a specific search request to the FBI.

We need to decide how to proceed. I believe that this category is sufficiently important that we should consider making a separate search request to the FBI, yet noting in the request that this issue was explicitly raised in our prior communication in January 1997. (In our request, we could also suggest that the FBI consult on this matter with the FBI's "archival office" referenced in the compliance statement).

4. Destruction of Records

We asked for a description of the Dallas files that were identified in the compliance statement as having been destroyed and as having Oswald and Ruby related records (these files appear to contain miscellaneous references to Oswald and Ruby and appear not to be main files relating to the assassination). Ms. Keeley said that she would check to see whether there is any further information describing these files.

5. Submission of Final Compliance Statement

Ms. Keeley asked when we would like to have the Final Declaration of Compliance submitted to the Review Board. I suggested August 1, 1998.