

MEMORANDUM

May 13, 1998

To: Jeremy Gunn
 Executive Director

From: Michelle Combs
 Associate Director for Research and Review

Subject: Meetings Between ARRB and PFIAB

February 10, 1998

Review of the PFIAB records was completed by Michelle Combs. I reviewed the microfiche of the PFIAB records from October 1962 through September 1964 and produced three additional sets of copies of relevant records from the microfiche. I had previously and repeatedly advised Mr. Randy Deitering, the Executive Director of PFIAB of the steps which would be needed to process the records as assassination records including the physical transfer of the records to the ARRB office to facilitate the referral process. With the review of the records completed, I had previously asked Mr. Deitering if I could transfer the records to the ARRB offices. I was repeatedly refused permission to remove the records from the PFIAB offices. Mr. Deitering said that PFIAB would need to review the records themselves and that he wished to consult with the PFIAB counsel Mr, Frank Fountain.

February 25, 1998

I had spoken with Mr. Deitering on the telephone and he agreed to let CIA review the records at the PFIAB office to facilitate the review process while PFIAB debated transferring custody of the records. CIA reviewed the PFIAB records on this date.

March 4, 1998

In a further effort to facilitate the review process. NSA reviewed the records at the PFIAB offices on this date.

March 12, 1998

PFIAB sent a memorandum describing the concerns of the PFIAB and their need to review the records and consult with the appropriate officials of the NSC and the office of the Counsel to the President.

March 30, 1998

Jeremy Gunn and Michelle Combs met with PFIAB Executive Director Randy Deitering and Counsel Frank Fountain to discuss the records. PFIAB raised various questions on the relevancy of the records to the assassination and whether the JFK Act applied to PFIAB at all.

The concern expressed by Mr. Deitering and Mr. Fountain was not the classification of the records but rather the status of the PFIAB as confidential advisors to the President.

May 7, 1998

At the request of Frank Fountain, Michelle Combs returned to the PFIAB offices to re-review the records for relevancy and to examine the redactions proposed by CIA, NSA, NSC, and PFIAB. I again asked to transfer the records to the ARRB offices. When Mr. Fountain refused permission, I suggested that we could bring the issue of PFIAB records before the Board at the May 12-13, 1998 meeting and ask the Board to determine the relevancy of the selected records. I pointed out to Mr. Fountain that without custody of the records, all I could do was describe them to the Board. Mr. Fountain said he would look into transferring a selection or all of the records to the Board in time for the meeting.

May 8, 1998

Mr. Fountain called Michelle Combs at 2:00pm and said that PFIAB would not turn over any records to the Review Board. He stated that since the records were presidential records, they could not be released without the express permission of President Clinton. At the request of Jeremy Gunn, I called Mr. Fountain back and asked him to put his statement in writing. He refused to put anything in writing without the permission of the Chair of the PFIAB. In response, Mr. Gunn sent the letters of March 12, 1998 to Mr. Fountain and Mr. Charles Ruff.