

Presentation to the Board
August 6, 1996

- I. Where we are in the process of CIA records
We have almost completed the Oswald 201 file.
Size
Postponements have been reviewed word by word
we are now turning to new areas for CIA records
HSCA collection now housed physically just a few yards from here
To be reviewed word by word
Scelso
Oswald in Mexico City by Hardaway and Lopez
JFK Library
Release this fall of many records related to Cuba

I am pleased to say -- in my own opinion -- I have seen no example where the Board has postponed any information that bears directly on the assassination. I believe that the story is coming out with the records that are being released.

- II Process has been slower than hoped
obstacle: requests for evidence
Agencies are entitled to have that opportunity

It is my sense that neither Congress nor the agencies anticipated this problem

On the one hand, before the name of an officer, agent or informant is released, the agencies should have an opportunity to provide evidence

This is often a difficult problem.
Relations with an agent have been discontinued. It is not as if there are reunions for CIA double agents and directories.

- III. Issue immediately before us is the CIA's sequestered collection.
Mr. Perreira has described it from the perspective of the agency.

The Review Board staff has been reviewing the record and has given the Board its own assessment of the status of the records.

There are a great number of records in the sequestered collection that are highly relevant.

(INSERT EXAMPLES)

records where the relevance to the assassination is not clear.

Question is: how should the Board review records where we are unable to ascertain any relevance to the assassination?

IV. Examples where the staff has difficulty finding a nexus to the assassination in certain records.

I will offer a few examples to provide you with a flavor of some of the issues we are confronting. The examples below are hypothetical loosely based upon the facts but altered for the purpose of highlighting the issues.

A. The “false hit” category

The HSCA requested files from CIA on a great number of persons. In many instances the agency did not know why the files were requested, and accordingly it made available files that it had on the name that had been requested. Because names are not always unique, the agency sometimes made available files on individuals who were of no interest to the HSCA and who had no identifiable relation to the assassination.

1. A very common name --- I will use as an example the name Robert Smith. The name of the true individual happens to be shared by a reasonably prominent political figure in the United States (I note that a Robert Smith is a Senator from New Hampshire.) The HSCA requested Robert Smith files because of an alleged connection between a “Robert Smith” and Lee Harvey Oswald in 1963. The Smith whose file was made available, however, was a CIA officer who died in 1956. The staff has reviewed the file and has discovered no relevance to the assassination.

B. CIA operation files or 201 files.

2. Cuban now living in the United States. CIA unsuccessfully attempted to recruit her to collect information on Cuba through her family and friends, but ultimately abandoned the effort. Neither she nor any of her hoped for contacts had any identifiable connection to the Oswald story or to the JFK assassination.

3. Cuban cultivated for operational work against Castro in whom CIA lost interest when he was not able to meet operation standards.

4. Soviet official at the Mexico City embassy during Oswald’s visit, although he never had any personal contact with him. The Mexico City portion of his file has been reviewed and released in part to NARA. The remainder of his file covers his subsequent career in a European country, where CIA monitored him closely. This portion of his career - by far the largest part of his file - has

no bearing on Oswald or the JFK assassination.

C. CIA officials

There are many personnel files of CIA officers. The files often contain medical records evaluations, recommendations, and postings. They generally do not contain any operational details.

5. CIA employee who was a Headquarters secretary for a major figure in the case. Her file consists of personnel records, medical records, and a polygraph, none of which has any identifiable bearing on the Oswald story of the JFK assassination.

a As anyone knowledgeable about the Kennedy assassination can testify, there is a bewildering number of allegations regarding CIA officials who have alleged connections to the assassination. The HSCA investigated some of these leads. Not all leads are successful.

6. A CIA officer was allegedly in Dallas on November 22. An examination of the file suggests that the individual was not in Dallas, but was in Vietnam. There is nothing in the file that contains any apparent connection to the assassination.
7. CIA official in Mexico City who was directly involved in matters related to Oswald's visit. Prior to and subsequent to the Mexico City tour, the officer was stationed at headquarters and at other locations in the world. With the exception of the portion related to Mexico City, the staff can identify no other documents that illuminate the assassination.

D. Summary of Problems.

V. Statute and Regulations

(INSERT)

VI. Staff Proposal

Essentially to divide the records between those that have an identifiable nexus to the assassination and those where the staff has, as of yet, identified no nexus to the assassination.

First, every document in the sequestered collection will be reviewed by an ARRB staff member to identify relevance. The staff will employ its relevance criteria broadly.

Second, for every records where the staff can identify a nexus, postponements will be reviewed by the Board on a word by word basis.

Third the staff will, over time, work with the Board to establish guiding criteria for identifying relevance. The focus will be on individuals and groups that have been identified as playing a role in the larger story of the assassination. Examples of individuals who have been identified as being a part of the greater story surrounding the assassination include David Atlee Phillips, Win Scott, James Angleton, etc. Groups include Cuban exile groups (DRE, Alpha 66, etc.), Minutemen, etc.

Fourth, the staff will, over time, develop guidelines for handling portions of files that have no known bearing on the assassination story.

Scenario 1: clear and unmistakable

Oswald file

This is not just about Oswald - but Oswald nevertheless remains prime target

Castro assassination plots.

Frank Sturgis

(Get examples from PD Scott)

Scenario 2: where no relevance can be found in file. The false hit is an example.

Scenario 3: where portions of file may be highly relevant, but with others not relevance to the assassination can be identified.

Where there is a 201, personnel, or security file generally irrelevant but with some relevant documents.