

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
Memorandum

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TO : Mr. Moore

DATE: 4/18/75

FROM : Mr. Heim

LJH

SUBJECT: QUINN MARTIN PRODUCTIONS
AND WARNER BROTHERS
FBI MOVIES FOR CBS-TV

Quinn Martin telephoned J. M. Murphy in your (Mr. Moore's) office Wednesday afternoon to advise that CBS has asked him to consider producing a film regarding the November, 1963, assassination of President John F. Kennedy as the next movie in the series of films regarding landmark FBI investigations which Quinn Martin Productions and Warner Brothers are producing for CBS-TV.

(The first of these movies was based on the Barker-Karpis Gang and was telecast by CBS in November, 1974. The second was a two-part film entitled "Attack on Terror: The FBI Versus the Ku Klux Klan" that was telecast in February, 1975. The Bureau lent its full cooperation in the production of both films, including permission for the use of the FBI Seal, as well as a "credit line" acknowledging our assistance.)

CBS has told Martin that two other television networks (undoubtedly NBC and ABC) have tentative plans to telecast programs regarding the Kennedy Assassination during the forthcoming 1975-76 television season.

Martin is most enthusiastic about the prospect of doing an authentic-type dramatization of the Kennedy Assassination. His purpose in calling was to "sound us out" on the idea and to solicit our full cooperation in this film. He hinted, however, that he might go ahead with the movie even if the Bureau chose not to cooperate in its production; and he pointed out that an abundance of information is readily available in the printed hearings of the Warren Commission and in other published material concerning Kennedy Assassination.

- 1 - Mr. Moore
- 1 - Mr. Cleveland
- 1 - Mr. Gebhardt

- 1 - Mr. Mintz
- 1 - Mr. Wannall
- 1 - Mr. White

MAY 2 1975

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High priority

Mr. Tolson

Mr. Heim to Mr. Moore Memorandum
RE: QUINN MARTIN PRODUCTIONS
AND WARNER BROTHERS
FBI MOVIES FOR CBS-TV

COOPERATION IN FILM DISCUSSED WITH OTHERS AT FBIHQ:

In view of the intense international interest that continues to be shown the Kennedy Assassination, as well as the important and unique considerations involved in this request, yesterday the External Affairs Division discussed Quinn Martin's overture with representatives of other interested Headquarters Divisions. In these discussions, the feeling was unanimous that the FBI should not accede to Martin's request. The following are among the reasons cited for taking this position:

(1) The Warren Commission was established by President Johnson as the premier authority in the Kennedy Assassination. The FBI was among the agencies that cooperated closely with the Warren Commission, furnishing copies of our reports to the Commission and conducting investigation, as well as examinations, which the Commission requested. (Secret Service, the Dallas Police Department and CIA were among others prominently involved.) In view of the fact that our role, though highly important, was essentially a supportive one, unilateral action on our part in cooperating in a filmed dramatization of the Kennedy Assassination could evoke protests and criticisms.

(2) Invasion of privacy is an unavoidable consideration in such a film. Members of the families of two former Presidents (Johnson and Kennedy), as well as Mr. and Mrs. John Connally and the family of Lee Harvey Oswald, are among the many persons whose privacy is involved. Oswald's mother, in particular, is known to be prone to file law suits and can be expected to do so against any major network that telecasts a dramatization of her son's involvement in this crime.

(3) An avalanche of requests under the Freedom of Information Act for data regarding our investigation of the Kennedy Assassination could be expected if we cooperated in the production of such a film. Up to this point, such FOIA requests (such as one received from well-known FBI antagonist Mark Lane) have been declined on the basis of privacy--which basis for declination would be considerably weakened by our participation in a filmed dramatization of the Assassination investigation.

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Mr. Heim to Mr. [redacted] Memorandum
RE: QUINN MARTIN PRODUCTIONS
AND WARNER BROTHERS
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(4) The Rockefeller Commission currently is conducting hearings regarding the CIA--which proceedings include CIA's involvement in the Kennedy Assassination case. There is a possibility that this aspect of the Commission's hearings may ultimately result in the FBI's being drawn into the hearings--thereby raising questions regarding our agreeing to participate in the production of a film regarding the Assassination case. (The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Operations also plans to inquire into allegations of CIA involvement in the assassination--according to a report published in "The Washington Post" last month.)

(5) Last month, "TV Guide" featured an article by Mr. Kelley in which he stated, "Extensive publicity regarding a crime, particularly a spectacular crime, can trigger more of the same....many persons in our society are, for one reason or another, psychologically primed to explode into criminal action." These words certainly apply to the unknown number of potential political assassins who are at large in the United States. Since 1976 is a Presidential election year--and since CBS undoubtedly would telecast this film in the Fall of 1975 and probably would rerun it in 1976--the danger that it might plant the seed of an idea in the mind of an unstable person, or otherwise be a contributing factor in an act of violence against a major candidate, is undeniable.

(6) The Kennedy Assassination has been a focal point of rumor, conjecture, and controversy since November, 1963. The proposed film--particularly if the FBI cooperates in its production--undoubtedly will be used by critics of the Warren Commission and other self-appointed Kennedy Assassination "experts" to launch new barrages of criticism and controversy.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Mr. Murphy return Quinn Martin's telephone call and tell him we are unable to cooperate in this film for the reasons cited above. Martin should be told that we will be glad to discuss cooperating in the production of a TV-movie concerning another case (such as the Rudolph Abel or the Kurt Ludwig espionage cases); however, that we cannot participate--nor permit the use of the FBI Seal--in a film involving the Kennedy Assassination.

MBC
[Signature]
[Signature]
[Signature] agree
[Signature]