

Robert F. Kennedy Assassination: Fund for Responsible Inquiry

Two supreme issues are at stake in the outstanding unanswered questions concerning the Robert F. Kennedy assassination: 1.) Did Robert Kennedy die as a result of random accident or of sophisticated plan?; and 2.) What are the implications of the breakdown of competence, integrity and accountability in the institutional-law enforcement response to this international tragedy? Both issues require answers, and a great deal can yet be done to achieve them, and to force an impartial public reopening of the case. The demands of such initiatives are minor in comparison with the scale of the issues involved and the prospects of significant results.

Three promising categories of ongoing effort on this matter are the following:

- 1.) Legal-Institutional. The predominant withholding of official information on this case can be breached if serious efforts are made to win either the voluntary or involuntary release of case information. (E.G. crime scene data, 10 volume report) As the withholding agencies are in violation of their own past pledges and lack plausible justification for the coverup, efforts to perpetuate it should fail in the long run if they are challenged with determination. Resistance to reasonable requests can be documented and exposed. Voluntary release of information may be achieved by systematic approaches to the relevant agencies, as well as by enlistment of institutional and political help from figures who support government accountability and the public's right to know. Involuntary release of information may be achieved by legal means. The most obvious of these is an expanded federal Freedom of Information Act lawsuit, but other legal devices may also be available.
- 2.) Research-Investigative. Much remains to be done in evaluating existing documentary, scientific and published information concerning both crime-scene and other aspects of this case. In addition, some kinds of new information can be gathered in relatively straightforward ways and would add significantly to the current base of information on the case. Certain tests and scientific studies may also be performed even without official cooperation. Some of these tasks can be pursued only in Los Angeles; others, anywhere. Effective documentation of the results is important both for ongoing work and outside communication.
- 3.) Academic. Given the status and impact of this crime as an event in American politics and history, its relevance to various academic disciplines should not require justification. Though lacking in the past, serious academic attention to the issues posed here could have significant value in stimulating quality work and in underlining the gravity and import of the existing unanswered questions. Academic concerns about this assassination also embrace the matter of the proper reposing and deposit of major archival collections on a landmark historical event and its aftermath. University courses and scholarship exist on the John Kennedy assassination and similar events, and the same approaches are applicable to this case. Some beginnings have been made in this area in the past year.

The categories of initiative listed above each tie in with the others in important ways. In addition, other possible kinds of effort are also possible, relating to the media, expanded awareness, various spinoff projects, and other options. The extent and speed of success will vary with the level of support and the focus and care of the efforts undertaken; even at modest levels of activity, however, some useful results may be promoted or achieved. An organized "Fund for Responsible Inquiry" can assist these initiatives.

Robert F. Kennedy Assassination Efforts: Costs and Structure

1.) Recent - Expenses for full-time research and related activities on the case from September 1983 to April 1984 amount to approximately \$3,500. Since the activity was full-time, this amount includes out-of-pocket and living expenses during this period. It reflects telephone, photocopy, supplies, mailing, incidental and transportation costs, including round-trip travel expenses from Washington to Los Angeles by car. These expenses have been, or are being, personally absorbed. Not reflected in these sums are the value of some free services or assistance secured, including photocopying at cost, partial use of a Washington D.C. WATS line, personal car in use, and free housing and board in Washington and Los Angeles.

2.) Projected - An estimated scale of monthly expenses for ongoing part-time coordinated work in some areas is as follows:

Telephones	\$100	
Photocopying	40	
Mail, postage	40	
Transportation	60	
Legal expenses (<u>pro bono</u>)	30	
Consultant fees, expenses	15	
Supplies, incidental	15	
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Total	\$300	(\$3,600 annual)

3.) Comments - Some organized format or structure is desirable for support of continued efforts on this case in the coming period. Such a structure would both help order ongoing work and provide a channel for funnelling the support and concern of interested citizens. Ideally it should include: a bank account with three directors, expenditure records, tax exemption arrangement, and no or minimum overhead. The effort envisaged in the above is continued deliberate and strategically-focused work to win convincing answers (including a formal and impartial reopening) to the basic unanswered questions of the Robert Kennedy assassination. Legal, research, and other avenues would be pursued.

Effective efforts on this case can proceed at various levels of intensity and breadth. Higher and lower levels than those envisaged here are also feasible. The above projection allows for various inputs of part-time effort by persons with other full-time commitments. Such a level of work would sustain some current initiatives and help in catalyzing other efforts and spinoffs in a number of areas. The proportions of estimated cost in different categories are tentative, and depend on the shape and direction of ongoing effort. The figures reflect only expenses, and do not envisage personal compensation except in incidental consultant cases.