

investigation continued until 1974.

FBI spokesman Tron W. Brekke said the files "should be viewed in their historical context and should in no way infer that the FBI currently initiates investigations utilizing the standards of that era."

Before King's April 4, 1968, assassination, the FBI had used wiretaps to gather detailed information about his private life and extramarital affairs and had leaked it to reporters and government officials in attempts to discredit him.

The FBI files, heavily censored to remove information considered by the FBI to infringe on the privacy rights of others, include several instances in which the bureau used sexual information in an attempt to undermine Abernathy.

The bureau released 1,169 pages of Abernathy files, in contrast to its 16,000-page pre-assassination file on King. There is no evidence in the files that Abernathy ever was the target of an FBI wiretap.

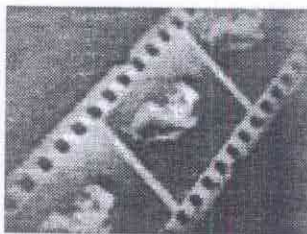
2 August 1999

Zapruder Heirs To Get \$16M for Film

By DEB RIECHMANN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Arbitrators declared the government must pay the heirs of Abraham Zapruder \$16 million for film that Zapruder took of the assassination of President Kennedy, the Justice Department said.



A three-member arbitration decided the monetary sum on a divided, 2-1 vote, said spokeswoman Chris Watney.

The Zapruder family had asked for \$30 million. The government offered a million. A three-member arbitration board was established when lawyers on both sides failed to agree on the level of compensation for the film, which was owned by the Zapruder family but held in storage by the National Archives.

"Today's decision by the arbitration panel secures the original Zapruder film for the public and guarantees that it will be preserved in the National Archives, where it belongs," David W. Ogden, acting assistant attorney general for the Civil Division, said in a statement.

"The resolution of these issues ensures that this evidence of one of the most tragic events in American history will be protected for scholarly and research uses," Ogden said.

There was no immediate reaction from the Zapruder family or its lawyers.

The Constitution requires the government to provide "just compensation to the owners of private property that is taken for the public good," the department noted in a statement. The government had to compensate the Zapruder family because the Assassination Records Review Board in 1997 declared the film the permanent possession of the people of the United States.

The Zapruder family had said the film should be valued like the works of Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh or pop artist Andy Warhol whose "Orange Marilyn" silkscreen of Marilyn Monroe sold for \$17.3 million last year.

Government appraisers had said that without projection, the Zapruder film was a strip of celluloid wound around a plastic reel. They said that when Sotheby's auction house in New York sold 1,200 items from the estate of former first lady Jacqueline Kennedy in 1996, the highest amount paid for any one item was \$1.4 million for an antique French desk where President Kennedy signed the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

In a decision that can't be appealed, the arbitrators decided that the film was worth \$16 million. That does not include the copyright, which, at least for now, will be retained by the family.

Zapruder, a dress manufacturer, cried when he told investigators in July 1964 of how he filmed the assassination while standing on a concrete abutment along the route of the president's motorcade through Dallas.

Through the lens of his Bell & Howell movie camera, Zapruder said he heard a shot and saw Kennedy lean over and grab his left chest.

"Before I had a chance to organize my mind, I heard a second shot and then I saw his head opened up and the blood and everything came out and I started—I can hardly talk about it," Zapruder said, sobbing. Later he added: "I was still shooting the pictures until he (Kennedy) got under the underpass. I don't even know how I did it. ... I was walking toward - back toward my office and screaming, 'They killed him! They killed him! They killed him!'"

The arbitration panel could not reach unanimity on how much to pay the Zapruders.

The chairman, former federal appeals court judge Arlin M. Adams, and panel member Kenneth Feinberg, wrote, "We are comfortable that the sum of \$16 million is a fair and accurate reflection of the true value of the Zapruder film" at the time the government took ownership of it.

But acting Solicitor General Walter Dellinger disagreed. He said \$16 million was "simply too large an amount in light of the evidence in the record." He said \$3 million to \$5 million would "prove ample recognition to the value as a historical object of this strip of film."

17 August 1999

Conspiracy Revisited—Russian Records Relating to JFK Assassination

By Michael Dorman

Newsday—Long-secret documents recently handed to President Bill Clinton by Russian President Boris Yeltsin raise new questions about possible special treatment that top Soviet officials accorded Lee Harvey Oswald on his arrival in Moscow four years before President John F. Kennedy's assassination. The documents immediately generated fresh conspiracy claims from assassination theorists.

Within hours of Oswald's arrest as Kennedy's assassin in 1963, the documents also revealed, the Soviet ambassador to Washington sent a top-secret coded message to the Kremlin reporting "there is nothing that compromises us" in correspondence with Oswald and his wife. The ambassador said the Soviets might discuss this correspondence with the U.S. authorities "as a last resort." But there was no explanation of why the Soviets feared being compromised or why they would cooperate with the United States only as a last resort.

Oswald, Kennedy's accused assassin, arrived in Moscow from Finland as a tourist on Oct. 15, 1959, holding a six-day visa. He was an unknown former Marine not quite 20 years old. Yet, once he arrived, the documents show, memos about him circulated among top Soviet officials — including a deputy premier, the foreign minister and the head of the KGB spy agency.

The documents reveal that the officials approved plans to permit Oswald to stay in the Soviet Union for at least a year, to give him a job and an apartment, provide him with 5,000 rubles to furnish the apartment and 700 rubles a month in spending money.

Although some information about Oswald's defection to Moscow had previously been made available to American investigators, the level of early interest shown by high Soviet officials was not generally known.

Lem Johns, one of the Secret Service agents guarding Kennedy's motorcade in Dallas at the time of the assassination and later assistant Secret Service director in charge of protective operation, said he found the involvement of the foreign minister, deputy premier and KGB chief highly unusual. "People of that rank have a lot to worry about besides some kid tourist," he said. "They might have felt he threatened them in some way for them to show that much interest. What kind of threat did he pose? Or could there have been something else?"

Some conspiracy theorists suggested the "something else" might have been a plot by the Soviets to use Oswald in killing Kennedy. The Warren Commission and other U.S. agencies that have investigated the assassination said they found no evidence of Soviet involvement. But they apparently did not have access to all the Russian documents given to Clinton.

University of Maryland history professor, John Newman, the author of *Oswald and the CIA* and a consultant on the assassination film *JFK*, called some of the Russian documents "highly significant." Until now, he said, he and other conspiracy theorists could only speculate on Soviet conclusions.

"Now we know their conclusions that a right-wing conspiracy was responsible for the assassination, that the U.S. government wanted to consign the case to oblivion, and that the plot was designed to make it look like Oswald was employed by the KGB," Newman said.

A parallel observation on Oswald's Soviet experience came from another conspiracy theorist, Debra Conway, who heads the JFK Lancer (his Service Service code name) assassination research organization.

"My opinion is that Oswald was there for some reason," Conway said in a telephone interview from her headquarters in Lake Forest, Calif. "There had to be some type of program. Oswald was a low-level operative for our government — or at least he thought so."

A State Department translation of one of the Russian language documents shows that on the day of the assassination, Nov. 22nd, 1963, Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin sent a top-secret coded telegram marked "highest priority" from Washington to the Krem-



Lee Harvey Oswald in Russia

lin. It reported that Oswald had been arrested in the assassination and publicly identified as a former defector to the Soviet Union, "where he married Marina Nikolayevna Prusakova (b. 1941)."

The Oswald's moved to the United States in 1962, the message said. Marina Oswald applied in March, 1963, to return to the Soviet Union with their daughter, but not her husband. Dobrynin wrote that both Oswald and his wife had written Soviet officials about the request.

"The last letter from Lee Oswald was dated November 9," the coded message said. "It is possible that the U.S. authorities may ask us to familiarize them with the correspondence in our possession. The U.S. authorities are aware of the existence of this final correspondence since it was conducted through official mail. Inasmuch as there is nothing that compromises us in this correspondence, we might agree to do this as a last resort (after removing our internal correspondence with the MFA)." The MFA was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Numerous documents Yeltsin turned over the Clinton at a June summit meeting detail the high-level interest shown in Oswald upon his arrival in Moscow, where he renounced his American citizenship and asked for permanent residence. When Oswald reached Moscow, top-secret reports about him were sent to such officials as Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, Deputy Premier Mikhail Porfirovich and KGB chief Aleksandr Nikolaevich Shelepin.

Gromyko and Shelepin recommended to the Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee: "It should be advisable to grant him the right of temporary sojourn in the USSR for one year and to provide him employment and housing. In such case, the question of Oswald's permanent residency in the Soviet Union and his receiving Soviet citizenship could be resolved upon the expiration of that period."

The Central Committee approved the recommendation, granting Oswald expense money, directing "the Byelorussian Economic Council to find employment for Oswald as an electrical and the Minsk City Council of Workers Deputies to assign him a separate small apartment." Oswald later was granted permission to stay indefinitely in the Soviet Union, but he returned to the United States after three years.

The 80 documents turned over by Yeltsin also included a top-secret draft resolution prepared by Gromyko for the Central Committee, purporting to "debunk" American news reports connecting the Soviet Union and Cuba to the assassination. The Central Committee approved the resolution and instructed Dobrynin to issue a terse report to American authorities "in the event they ask you about" Oswald's activities in the Soviet Union. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev sent his deputy, Anastas Mikoyan, to represent him at Kennedy's funeral. From Washington, Mikoyan sent a top-secret coded message to the Kremlin reporting on a private conversation with former U.S. Ambassador to Moscow Llewellyn Thompson. He said Thompson told him Soviet press allegations that right-wingers were responsible for the assassination had brought American counter-assertions of "communist and Cuban connections."

The deputy premier said he told Thompson the Soviet Union did "not want to make complications" but resented such implications when the case had not even been fully investigated. Mikoyan said the U.S. government "clearly prefers to consign the whole business to oblivion as soon as possible."