

Memorandum

TO : MR. W. C. SULLIVAN *WCS*

FROM : MR. W. A. BRANIGAN *WAB*

SUBJECT: PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF WARREN COMMISSION RECORDS

- 1 - Mr. Belmont
- 1 - Mr. Callahan
- 1 - Mr. Conrad
- 1 - Mr. Rosen
- 1 - Mr. Sullivan
- 1 - Mr. Malley
- 1 - Mr. Branigan
- 1 - Mr. Stokes

DATE: 7-29-65

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Tele. Room	
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Memorandum from Mr. Rosen to Mr. Belmont dated 7-12-65 set forth facts concerning request of the Attorney General that we review pertinent documents in the possession of the National Archives relating to the assassination of President Kennedy for the purpose of recommending which of the material on file can be placed in the public domain. The Department furnished us with a set of guidelines to follow in making our review. (Copy of these guidelines is attached.) We have now completed our review of the pertinent material on file at the Archives. The purpose of this memorandum is to set forth our findings and our plans to complete this project.

We have reviewed over 2,000 documents and are prepared at this time to indicate which of these documents can go into the public domain as is. In our review we have been guided by the overriding policy favoring the fullest possible disclosure of this material. Our review has noted the reporting of some information which falls within the guidelines for excision and we are prepared to recommend the excision of such material on a page-to-page basis.

Examples of such material which falls within the guidelines are as follows:

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Guideline 1 - Statutory requirements that prohibit disclosure. Example - Records of the Family Court in New York City concerning psychiatric treatment of Oswald as a youth.

Guideline 2 - Respect of security classifications. Examples - It has been necessary to classify some of our material in order to protect sensitive informants and investigative techniques and in line with classifications afforded material by other agencies. Examples - Considerable information was obtained from long-established sensitive sources of the Legal Attache in Mexico City. An anonymous source and a trash cover furnished some information reported and classified data from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is among the material. We are, at this time, reviewing the Administrative Pages of our classified documents to determine if

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ENCLOSURE

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they may be declassified or downgraded. Where possible to do so without destroying the significance of any given document, we are preparing to recommend excision of the classified portions of such documents so that the remaining portions may be placed in the public domain.

Guideline 3a.- Data detrimental to the administration and enforcement of the laws and regulations of the U.S. Example - Information furnished by the Soviet defector Yuri Nosenko concerning his knowledge of the KGB file on Oswald. To publish this would be to inform the Soviets as to what Nosenko said.

Guideline 3b. - Information which would reveal identity of confidential sources by precluding or limiting the use of such sources hereafter. Example - This concerns records not normally produced unless a subpoena is issued, such as bank and telephone company records.

Guideline 3c. - This deals with information consisting of rumor, gossip or details of a personal nature having no significant connection with the assassination which would be a source of embarrassment to innocent persons. This is the area that gives us most difficulty in evaluating our material against the guidelines. We investigated hundreds of rumors and false reports often made maliciously or for reasons of personal aggrandizement or by demented people. In keeping with the policy of full disclosure, we are recommending leaving in the record information of a derogatory nature which we have uncovered which reflects unfavorably on people who have maliciously made false reports or charges. We have found many instances in which our rundown of false reports has uncovered derogatory data concerning the person making them. However, where a person has given us rumor, gossip or false information reflecting unfavorably on another person and which material is not related to the assassination, we are recommending excision. Example - Examples of this type of thing are the considerable derogatory data developed concerning the personal affairs of George de Mohrenschildt, a member of the Russian community in Dallas who befriended the Oswalds. De Mohrenschildt, who has been married several times, is regarded by many as a sexual delinquent. Information concerning mental treatment of a brother of Ruby; numerous instances of claimed extramarital activity and homosexual tendencies on the part of individuals not related to the assassination.

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Guideline 3d deals with the excision of material pertinent to the criminal prosecution of Jack Ruby prior to the final adjudication of that case. In this connection, we are not attempting to theorize what material, the public disclosure of which, may affect Ruby's case and we plan to tell the Department that with respect to the Ruby material, the Department will have to render a legal decision as to whether the reports in the Ruby case can be disclosed in view of the legal action pending concerning Ruby. We know in this connection that the Commission has already reported considerable information concerning Ruby which is highly derogatory.

It is interesting to note that the records reviewed which are contained in that portion of the Commission's records known as the Commission's Numbered Document File, are not in very good condition. In this connection, some 125 documents (mostly cover letters) appearing in the Archives list are missing. We intend to call this to the Attorney General's attention when we make our report to him and to stress that our review did not include a review of the listed documents which the Archives has not to date produced. Mr. John F. Simmons, the supervisor of the Security Room at the Archives where these records are maintained, stated it is likely that the missing documents are contained among a group of unfiled papers which were turned over to Archives by the Commission. These documents are contained in some seven Archives filing boxes and we do not intend to review them at this time.

In addition, we have discovered four instances in which classified letterheads which have been marked to indicate that they have been declassified are contained among the documents in support of exhibits which were published in the Commission's report. The four documents in question are not copies of the exhibits that were actually published for in each instance we rewrote the classified document in an unclassified form and advised the Commission that the original document should remain classified. The Commission published our unclassified redrafts. This will be called to the Attorney General's attention.

ACTION:

For information. Our processing of the Attorney General's request is continuing and the deadline of 3-15-65 will be met.

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and
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