

Memorandum

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| Mr. Tolson | |
| Mr. DeLoach | |
| Mr. Mohr | |
| Mr. Bishop | |
| Mr. Casper | |
| Mr. Callahan | |
| Mr. Conrad | |
| Mr. Felt | |
| Mr. Gale | |
| Mr. Rosen | |
| Mr. Sullivan | |
| Mr. Tavel | |
| Mr. Trotter | |
| Tele. Room | |
| Mr. Holmes | |
| Miss Gandy | |

DATE: April 28, 1964

TO : Mr. Mohr #13

FROM : W. S. Tavel ST

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY - BRIEFING ON FBI'S RECORDS SYSTEM

Handwritten notes:
 Bishop
 6-1-64
 [Signature]

Pursuant to the request of Mr. J. Lee Rankin, General Counsel of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, and with the Director's approval, Commission staff members Howard Willens and Samuel A. Stern were afforded a briefing on the FBI's records system on 4-27-64. Mr. Belmont, Inspector Malley, Mr. Branigan of the Domestic Intelligence Division, and Mr. Waikart, my Number One Man, were present.

Mr. Stern stated that they were principally interested in three aspects of records work: (1) how we handle name checks where Secret Service already has the name of an individual and wants background information on him; (2) information that may lead to the names of individuals who may be dangerous; and (3) information-handling techniques of intelligence agencies which might enable them to recommend improvements in Secret Service's records system.

I outlined briefly the processing steps in our records system and Mr. Belmont, at their request, explained the type of work handled by each division in the FBI. They inquired, and were informed, as to how cases are supervised at the field and Seat of Government level by the Bureau and were taken on a tour of our processing units in the Files and Communications Division. The manner of handling name check requests was explained to them in detail by Mr. Belmont.

Apparently with a view to exploring the possibility of having various intelligence agencies submit to Secret Service listings of individuals meeting specific criteria, Mr. Willens inquired whether it would be possible for the Bureau to furnish Secret Service a list of all individuals possessing a certain type or make of revolver if Secret Service were to request such a list from us. It was pointed out to Willens that our files are set up for maximum efficiency in handling the work of the FBI, which is essentially composed of the investigation of individual cases, and that, therefore, it would be extremely difficult to compile any such listing as he had referred to, particularly in view of the tremendous size of our index, comprising some 49 million

- 1-Mr. Belmont
 - 1-Mr. Sullivan (attn: Mr. Branigan)
 - 1-Mr. Malley
- WST:jmr
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Memorandum to Mr. Mohr from W. S. Tavel
Re: President's Commission on the
Assassination of President Kennedy

cards, and our total file holdings of almost 5 million files. Mr. Belmont suggested to him that a more sensible approach might be to establish desired criteria in advance and once information meeting such criteria had been furnished on a day-to-day basis to Secret Service, that agency would then be in a position to extract from its own files listings of individuals meeting such criteria. It was pointed out to him that in the absence of any criteria having been set up so far by Secret Service, the FBI has furnished information to Secret Service on criteria of potential danger which, after a thorough study, we considered reasonable. It was also pointed out that no system employing automatic data-handling equipment could supply such listings either unless the necessary information as to criteria were fed into such system in advance.

Mr. Willens and Mr. Stern, who seemed to feel that they will be required to make some type of recommendations to the Commission regarding the use of records as a preventive measure, expressed appreciation for the briefing, and Mr. Stern indicated that after digesting the information on our records system which was furnished him, he might desire to come back at a later date with more questions.

RECOMMENDATION:

Submitted for information. ✓

W. S. Tavel

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