KENNEDY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

Name Samuel Stern Date 8/22/78 Time ____

Address Wilmer, Cutler, & Pickering Place his law office

D.C.

Interview:

Former Warren Commission counsel Sam Stern was interviewed in his Washington law office on August 22, 1978. Mr. Stern stated that his duties on the Commission involved handling the investigation into Lee Oswald's background specifically, the intelligence agencies awareness of Oswald prior to the assassination. Secondly, Stern stated that he had been in charge of evaluati "the efficacy of Presidential protection," as well as preparing a history of American Presidential assassinations.

Mr. Stern stated that "at the outset we realized that there was no possible way to penetrate any offcial involvement in a cover-up or conspiracy if there was such complicity." Stern stated that he and several of his Commiss colleagues discussed what they regarded as "the fact that the agencies - the FBI and CIA - could formulate and maintain a cover-up which no one would ever penetrate. We of course did not believe that was so. And I still don't. But we realized what we were dealing with, in the power of these agencies. Fortunately, we believed they were on our side."

Mr. Stern stated that on one occasion he believed that the Commission was influenced in its investigation by what he regarded as "some type of pressure or fear of the FBI." Stern stated thatthis came about when he prepared a detailed letter to be sent to the FBI setting forth detailed questions about their past investigation and contacts with Lee Oswald. Stern stated that Earl Warren told him that the letter was too demanding and that it would cause problems vis a vis the Commission's relationship with Hoover. Stern stated that upon being told that the letter was "unacceptable" by Warren, he (Stern) met with John McCloy and explained the situation to him, hoping to gain his support. While McCloy did express agreement with Stern that the letter was necessary, Stern was once again told by Warren that "the letter went further than was desirable." Stern thereupon sent a less detailed request.

In connection with this episode, Stern stated that "one of my problems, a real difficulty, was having such limited contact with the Members of the Commission. It was all done through Rankin. And you never really knew if your viewpoint or arguments or whatever were being communicated

Interviewer Signature Mike Ewing

Typed Signature Mike Ewing

Date transcribed ____

By: ____ Form