

Dear Kathy,

12/7/95

The FBI has had a backlog of FOIA requests for years but even with the work added by the Act that created the Assassinations Records Review Board I find it difficult to believe that the backlog is three years!

From your letter referring to 800 pages it is clear they did a preliminary search and that what remains is the processing. I'll return to that. You ask my thoughts. I'd write your Senator Lieberman with copies of all communications both ways and ask Lieberman if it is the intention of the Congress that three years after receiving a request the FBI cannot even indicate when they'll get around to complying with the law.

We did discuss this some time ago but I've forgotten the details. If I did not urge you to file duplicating requests with some field offices I should have. The FBI pretends all records are at FBIHQ but that is not true. There are many that do not leave the field offices and there are also notations on field office copies not on the copies they distribute.

Almost all the information originates in the field offices so where Sidney was active is the field office you should file a request with. Like New York City, Los Angeles, Washington, New Orleans (he made that movie down there) and of the offices abroad, know as "legats" for legal attaches, at the least London and Bonn. I do not recall whether he made any in Italy but if he did much business there, include Rome. I do not know which offices covered Yugoslavia and India but he made movies in those places, too. The New Haven FBI field office can tell you where they have Legats, or did then.

The way it works, it is usually the office that generates the first record that becomes the OO or Office of Origin. Usually all information goes to or comes from it. With Sidney it could have been New York before it was Los Angeles, but perhaps not. The records when you get any will indicate that, *once you understand them.*

If you did not know it he can appear in other records. For example, Martha Dodd, daughter of our wartime ambassador to Germany, pre-war, lived with him for a while. She married Alfred K. Stern and under persecution they fled to Czechoslovakia. If the FBI was keeping tabs on Martha, which I am inclined to believe it was, he'll be in that files or those files.

Both are dead and this leads to a proper exemption of both FOIA and the Privacy Act. They are to be withheld what can defame people. But people cannot be defamed under the acts when they are dead. So you should at some point, and I suggest soon, give them a list of those you know are dead whose names may appear in the files. Do not begin with the Sterns, Brecht, for example. And be sure to send proof that Sidney is dead if you have not.

From the number they have on their letter you sent me I suspect that have started a new file for you. If you'll send me their first letter to you perhaps I can be more helpful. But I think that if this is not the identical number you ought write them and ask them if they are now claiming a backlogs of three ¹/₂ years. *sup. 4.*

If you write them again I suggest that you make it clear that you want all references to Sidney, wherever or however filed and of any and all sources. That may well require FBI referrals to other agencies, like the CIA or State.

You also want all "see" references. Like "see 100-10010-10. I'm sure there is a fat Brecht file and that Sidney should be in it. Thus, "see."

This applies to all requests if you file with the field offices. You should.

Have you asked the Army and the Navy? He was in both if you did not know.

And the CIA? Aside from the interests it could have developed it inherited the OSS records and Sidney was in the OSS Presentation Branch, which the FBI seemingly considered a "red" hot bed.

Be prepared, when you get records, for lies, distortions, presumptions, etc. along with truth and fact.

And there is no telling who the FBI regarded as a great danger to the country Sidney associated with. anywhere.

I really think you should try to get all that exists, particularly in the possible later interest of your girls the way the country is now going. I wish I could expect to still be here to go over it all with you when you get it but I grow weaker steadily. However, if I'm here and you get anything I'll take the time to see if I can be informative or helpful.

If all the correspondence is not great, please send me all of it so I can be certain if they are playing tricks with you as I suspect they may be. That could be because ~~the~~ some of the information may be embarrassing to them.

If you have not made any requests of the field and Legat office and decide to, as I think you should, I urge you to do that as soon as you can. They do not have such backlogs. And do not tell them you asked FBIHQ. If you do they'll send the records there for processing. If at some point they say there will be duplicates tell them that all duplicates are not necessarily identical and you'll gladly pay the costs because you want everything.

While I have no knowledge of it or even any reason to suspect it I would not ignore the possibility that Sidney had some kind of association with one or more the FBI may have regarded as a Russian agent. Even may have been that in his business.

He does not appear in any of the records I've gotten on myself although from time to time he lived with me.

When I learned that the publisher had forgotten to include the index I got a copy and I'm sorry I forgot to include it when I sent the book to you. Here it is. It is unread and uncorrected. I know that at one point it is a page heavy and then at another point two pages. They appear to have eliminated two pages after it was set in type. I've been able to learn nothing about that. But if what is sought is not on the page indexed it will be on the page or the second page before that. I was told this by others who have used it.

If I did not tell you, after my heart operation I decided to use what time remains to me to make as much of a record as I can for our history. That has been my purpose in the books since then, two published and at least four manuscripts besides those two. I have not been able to publish for two decades or I'd have more books out. When interest was expressed in NEVER AGAIN! I sent the rough draft chapters up as I finished them, expecting immediate publication. I did not edit, although they did some. Worse, and as a writer you'll appreciate this, I had no time for outlining what I did. I just sat down and did it. That book was completed about Thanksgiving time, 1992. It was sat on that long. You'll see what I was able to add.

By abandoning all literary concerns I've about a million words for the record for the future. As they are retyped on computers I give disks to friends in academe.

You never mentioned Jackie or Caroline. I was impressed by the first book Caroline coauthored. I never made any effort to interest any Kennedy in my work. But after reading that book on the first amendment I sent a xerox of the book ms. you are reading to one who could, if he wanted to and she wanted it, give it to her.

The same two women have a new one out. I've not yet seen it. But this does suggest to me that she is doing as her father did, and more power to her if so!

After all the revisionism and the profitable literary whoring history will record that there were two Kennedy presidencies, the second beginning after October, 1962, and that beginning that October he became one of our truly great. Despite his personal life. I was the house guest of one of his lady friends and she was a fine person with whom he could not have been more honest. If I'd been able to return to that part of the country (she is now dead, dying rather young) we were to make any oral history she was to put aside for 75 years. I'd not have had a copy.

We have a letter from Jackie or from her secretary about our offer of enormous eggs for the White House easter-egg roll. We had geese. Their eggs are large and when they are double-yolked they can weigh 3/4 pound. I used to have them, I'd harboiled them and we gave them to children's hospitals in Washington and Baltimore. If I had more than that many I gave them to others. The little boy whose father was a butcher in a then famous Washington restaurant that was our customer when we farmed attracted great attention with one one year. So when we had a surplus I offered one to Jackie for

her children. I have no further recollection but I think it was declined. With thanks.

By the way, Lil and I both declined an invitation to go to the "White House and be photographed with Ike after we won all the prizes we did in raising and cooking poultry. It was not that we disliked Ike that much. We know more about Nixon than we wanted to know and would not be part of having him returned to the vice presidency.

When Lil and I were discussing your letter she remembered something I did not and you probably do not.

Once she went up to New York with me and while I was in the city seeking a publication she remained at Fairway Close. She was wearing a coat she had crocheted. Your mother liked it so Lil made one for her and one for you, with crocheted hats to go with them. So, if you ~~can~~ remember having a crocheted coat when you were a little girl, 1965-6, now you know how you had it. Lil's crocheting was excellent when she could do it. Her knitting, too,

What size is your husband? Maybe I have one I've not worn ^{and} he might be able to use, a sweater. Lil used to love to knit and I had so many sweaters! I may have ^{given} ~~given~~ most away but if he can use one cold days, give me his size. My shirt size was 16-3. Suit, 42-4.

Write the FBI HQ as I suggest above and send a copy with a letter to Lieberman unless one of you has a better connection with the Congress. The FBI sometimes lies to it, too. I've quite a collection of such letters. But sometimes they do what they should have done.

Our love to you all,

Harold

Normally the FBI's clerical work is

efficient. If they gave your request a new number that puts it at the bottom of the list it is not by accident. I've been stonewalled by the CIA that way but the FBI could not get away with that trick on me because I had it in court.

You mention an interest in antiques. We've decided three to local Hood College where all my records and work will be. One is a cherry whatnot that one of Lil's ancestors on her father's side brought over when he came with Cornwallis; One is a ~~wood~~ drop-leaf table made when wood was smoothed by glass, before planing mills were invented; and a dining-room table with six leaves that had auxiliary legs dropping down if more than two leaves are used. It is not as old. The others came her with Lil's ancestors. The dining-room table was made by a company that went out of business during the Civil War. She is related to both sides in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, to the first governor of Maryland, and some were here awaiting European arrivals.

Katharine Weber

108 BEACON ROAD, BETHANY, CONNECTICUT 06524

December 4, 1995

Dear Harold,

I wonder if you have any thoughts about this. I requested Sidney's records from the FBI in December of 1992, though the completed request, i.e., my letter by return mail acknowledging that I would pay for photocopying of the 800 plus pages, is dated April 13, 1993. The enclosed fax copy (the easiest way here in my office that I can make a copy of a document, though it's impermanent) is the latest in my annoying correspondence with the FBI. Do I have any recourse? By the time my turn comes will I be so old and senile I won't remember who Sidney Kaufman was? Note that my simple inquiry dated October 6th wasn't answered until November 29th.

I've now read through most of your book and I remain deeply impressed with the depth and breadth of your knowledge. I do wish they had included that index, though, as I think the book itself, the physical book, is not very user-friendly, as they say. The American people, it seems to me, were unable to keep more than one thing in their minds at a time. It's no different today; O.J. Simpson is free because it seemed too difficult for people -- the jury and a large percentage of the public -- to grasp the notion that the L.A.P.D. had framed a guilty man.

I don't know if I ever told you about my odd acquaintanceship with Jackie. I knew her through her daughter, and I spent a whole long day with her once, about fifteen years ago, helping her buy a houseload of antique furniture. (We live with a lot of American primitive furniture, and Caroline had wanted her mother to see our house; that's how it evolved.) The night before she was due to come to our house for lunch and then a day of shopping (I mean, Jackie was coming for lunch! Then we were going shopping!) I had fitful waking dreams of how the day would go. In the dream, I kept blurting out directions to the chauffeur with phrases like "turn left up there at that grassy knoll," and "We take the right turn after the plaza." Then, incongruously, the actual chauffeur's actual name was Lee, as in Radziwill and Harvey Oswald. We did not speak of grassy knolls.

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But at a dinner party at Jackie's once, the journalist John Russell and I were trying to explain the Freedom of Information Act to her. She was astonished. "Does this mean," she said, eyes wide, "That any little Russian spy can get all our secrets?"

All best to
you both -

Kathy



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Washington, D. C. 20535

NOV 7 9 1980

Ms. Katherine Weber
108 Beach Road
Bethany, MO 66514

Request No. 369150-001

Dear Requester:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated October 6, 1980 regarding your request for records concerning Sidney Kautman.

Your request is still pending with the Bureau. Unfortunately, due to the many thousands of requests and millions of pages awaiting review we are unable to give you a definite date regarding the completion of your request.

Our analysts handle cases of all degrees of complexity and it is virtually impossible to estimate when a particular request will come up for review or re-review. To process your request out of turn would be unfair to the other requesters who submitted their requests prior to yours. You will be advised only after the processing of your request has been partially or fully completed.

We regret the unavoidable delays we are experiencing and want you to know we have recognized our increase workload demands. Repeated efforts by the FBI to obtain additional FOIPA resources through the annual budget process have not been successful. We therefore, do our best with the resources available to us.

Sincerely yours,

J. Kevin O'Brien

J. Kevin O'Brien, Chief
Freedom of Information-
Privacy Acts Section
Information Resources Division