

Mullen HEW contracts. Phone call from Don Jordan, Off Educ, 8 a.m. 12/4/73

Called after getting message from Russ Roberts. Orig contract 6/16/69 with Boston office, Ken Frank (not in office today). Renewed three more time, last for \$51,000. This year, on bidding, won by Gray, North, Chicago.

The original contract was "unsolicited," that is, the idea originated with Mullen. Handicapped.

Bennett personally handled all business matters and all leg work and just about everything else handled by a Mrs. Copley (phon-he says he can't spell unusual name). Question: so what was Hunt doing? (Bennett's earlier answer is getting Julie to look at the birdie.) Most relationships with Mrs. Copley.

He does not know if there were Mullen HEW contracts other than this one. He is to check to see if there are any others in the Off Educ. After speaking to Frank and another in Boston in a.m. he will call me again. He called back to report them unavailable.

The last of the Mullen contracts, renewals, really, and he calls them by phases, that being IV, seems from his description to have been an exceptional bargain for HEW. (My own opinion, RMN, too.) For \$51,000 they had Ulei, Hugh Downs, Paul Newman and others on TV, and the price included everything, even the duplicating of prints to go to TV stations.

Julie went to a few more stations than Hugh Downs. There were 900 prints made of her TV bit, sent to 835 stations. Not bad for an election year. Production and distribution on Downs was close to this.

Paul Newman they made 60 prints only. There were two others. There was also the rendering into Spanish and the distribution of 60 prints to Spanish TV stations for a mere \$3,100. Even though an old commercial or promotion message was used, this does seem to be very cheap.

He seemed to know little about Hunt. This was a little surprising because they had an inquiry from Congresswoman Green and there was all the publicity and they did know that Hunt worked on their contract. These would seem to have impelled most public information offices to gather what information possible immediately, if only to answer to the boss who had to answer to his boss up to GL.

(We talked quote a bit about aid for the handicapped. He has a son who had a stroke when an infant. It left him with a limp and somewhat limited use of an arm. He had gotten special training in Baltimore. I told him what wonderful things our neighbors had done with a son who suffered massive birth defects. The programs certainly seems to be quite worthwhile and the messages should be gotten out to those in need.)

He indicates that a considerable package of technical research had to be gathered for this contract, by the agency. They also made up the usual kits.

The bids were close when Mullen lost the contract this June. I did not ask details, of the contract or the sums. Apparently a continuation of the same work.

What I can't see is how an agency can stay in business doing all that work for so little money, especially when there is no competition.

From his account, I can see no serious objection to their not having sought competitive bids. The sum was relatively small, if that \$51,000 is a fair example, and all the work and all the cost had to be covered by that \$51,000. When the idea was Mullen's, all the original research was theirs and they had the experience of doing the original work, it does not seem unnatural or dishonest that their contract would be renewed as it was. IF these things are true.

Of course, getting Nixon favorably before the electorate on 835 TV stations, which would seem to be a larger audience than on a network, was a not inconsiderable benefit for Nixon, his re-election campaign and for all those friends Bennett had in the White House.

And there were the Hugh Downses and Paul Newmans as well as others besides the President's daughter who could have been used in an election year.

That seems to have been under the contract that ran for a year beginning 6/72 but it cannot have been. It has to have been for the previous year. Renewal date appears to have been just before the caught break-in. Hunt was working on it during the earlier break-in and was then getting federal money from Mullen. Bennett said he was indispensable on that work.

Mullen-HEW (off Educ) contracts, call from Don Jordan 12/5/73 (second)

It is apparent that although his field is audio-visuals and not p.r., Jordan is trying to be as helpful as possible, my first such experience under FOI.

What was most interesting is a comment he made, perhaps an opinion, at the end of this conversation. (He will call back when a fellow employee is in and when Harvey Leibergott is back in his Boston office.)

He had had one rather sharp argument with Hunt because Hunt had prepared an exhibit for use at conventions of the handicapped, etc. The lettering was as small as 1/2 inch, obviously entirely unsuited for a sharp, for such use or for reproduction. Jordan tried to tell him it was too small, too jammed, and the immediate purposes could be served better by a simple handout. Hunt actually argued with him and on all counts. Prior to this I had said that while it seemed to me that everything about the job was excellent, including the low cost, from what he had told me I didn't see where Hunt served any real purpose on it. He said that Hunt had handled the 'ulie Eisenhower film and then this

After that he said he was uncertain of his source, perhaps it was something in the papers when the story first broke, but he had heard or read that Hunt was using Mullen as a front. I said this did seem possible, but that if it were, it would have required some approval higher than his role, vice president, and that this was before Bennett was hired.

It was apparent to him that Hunt was not suited to this work. His experience proves both technical and emotional unsuitability and that vaunting ego.

His information on other things from Ken Frank, to whom he spoke. Frank pointed out that he has no way of knowing whether or not there are or were other Mullen contracts.

The original research was not by Mullen but by Surveys & Research, now Exo-Tech, in Washington. There were two separate contracts, each providing the cooperation of that contractor with the other. Mullen would use Surveys & Research, etc., and S & R did the studies which showed where the special training was available and presented it in a way that enabled cumpoterizing for printout while Mullen did p.r. work to get the message out ("Closer Look")

Frank project officer since ~~1972~~ 1971. Four repeats, termination date 7/15/73 (Here note Bennett's comment on if they lose it) Otis Roberts is his source on this being a sole-source procurement. (Based on the figures for the 4th phase, I think there is no reasonable question about the honesty of the contract as it related to the presentations, for the cost is so small I wonder if it could have been profitable.)

Mullen did subcontract the making and reproducing of the film. It has no motion-picture capabilities of its own. Gray, North, which is large, does, and he thinks this is what accounts for their being able to bid lower.

Mrs. Copley (phon) is no longer with Mullen, he thinks.

Wash phone book 1971-2 lists Exotech Inc at 1200 Quince Orchard Road, Gaithersburg, Md. 948-3060 (A limited WATS number, for the area only); and Exotech Schools Systems, Inc. at 525 School SW, 347-9436.

Indiscussed some of the questions about Hunt rather openly with him and told him that he was in such work aroused my curiosity. Noted neither spooking nor novel-writing, regardless of quality (he heard they were trash, too) qualifies for any kind of p.r. He agreed. He did not know about Give Us This Day so I discussed it frankly with him. At this point there was a marked drop in volume on the line and a fuzziness in his voice, which remained comprehensible enough. I did speak honestly despite noting this.