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OLC-78-3014
23 August 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT : HSCA and Proenza Files and Mexico City History

1. Yesterday evening Messrs. Joannides, Hawkins, Shepanek, and the undersigned met with Mr. Blakey of HSCA to discuss the handling of the Proenza matter and the Mexico City history. In earlier discussions with Mr. Cornwell, Blakey's deputy, we had been asked to provide the Proenza 201 file for the period from 1 September 1963 through 31 January 1964, and specified sections of the Mexico City history, designated after reviewing the table of contents of the history. We had the Proenza 201 file available (I had advised that the HSCA Spanish speaker should be present as much of it is in Spanish, but he was not with Blakey). We also had the requested sections from the Mexico City history, with portions sanitized, but which Mr. Hawkins would explain to Mr. Blakey if there were questions.

2. Blakey wanted to know what we had, asking if the Proenza operation file was there. I replied that the Proenza file was there, which had the usual 201-type information about her, but that the operation of which she was a target was not there. Blakey stated that he wanted the operation file. He was unmoved by a series of exchanges.

3. Blakey said he should see the entire three volumes of the Mexico City Station's history. I pointed out that covered about twenty years, and that only a few pages made any comment (part of which is error) about Oswald's visit to Mexico and the ensuing investigation. He said that he needed it as background for an evaluation of the Station. I replied that it would not serve that purpose. In any event, his inquiry was broadening unreasonably, and he was investigating only the five-day visit of Oswald and what followed. He said he was investigating CIA, to which I replied he was not but that he was investigating only the assassination of President Kennedy and the investigation that

CONFIDENTIAL

22319

CONFIDENTIAL

followed. I pointed out that his people had asked for the White House history of Mexico City, while what was involved was what was known as the WH Division history of the Station. We ended up asserting one another's position in terms unacceptable to each other: I said he was trying to broaden his inquiry beyond his charter, while he said I was giving the narrowest description.

4. I had stated earlier that access to the Proenza file had to be broadened to include Ed Lopez, the HSCA staffer who speaks Spanish. Except for this, in this conversation, I stated that neither set of papers could be shown below the level of himself. He made it clear that he might (read will) want staff members to read portions of the papers as well. I said that neither set of papers dealt with the purpose of his investigation, other than the few pages in the history.

5. I mentioned Blakey's earlier personal agreement with the DCI, suggesting that he might be given access under those terms. He did not respond. I suggested he might read without taking notes. He replied, wanting to take notes, which we could sanitize, but I am sure that would lead to additional problems.

6. I said that I was not authorized to provide anything other than what was brought to the meeting, noting that the other two items in the subpoena had been reviewed before the subpoena was voted. I would have to refer the matter back to those with an equity in the question. I asked Blakey if the Chairman could be contacted if desired. He said he knew how to contact him.

7. After the meeting ended, Mr. Blakey reviewed the Proenza 201 file and a piece of research on Sylvia Odio, done by Chris Hopkins. When he finished I escorted him out of the building. On the way to our automobiles, I observed that there seemed to be three very different alternatives. First, the materials could be released as he requested, which presented problems. Second, it could be released to him alone, personally, under the agreement with the DCI, which I preferred. Finally, it simply could not be released. Responding only to the final alternative, he said that the subpoena was dated for return on 6 September, at which time it would go to a vote of the House. I asked how the matter might look to the House, given the flaws in the subpoena (asking for materials already reviewed and other materials outside the HSCA charter). He said a vote would subject the DCI to criminal prosecution for criminal contempt.

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I asked if he had considered the possibility of Presidential pardon; he had not. On that rather macabre note we parted, with my undertaking to get some answer to him by COB today.


S.D. Breckinridge

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