

MEMORANDUM

June 16, 1995

To: Anne Buttimer

From: Joe Freeman

Subject: updated response to your 6/7 memo, re: status of the contributions of state and local law enforcement agencies' to JFK collection

Since I cannot go to Archives II today, I thought I'd organize my thoughts on what I've seen to date and provide you with an *interim* status report. There are some things you may wish to follow up on.

For simplicity's sake, I'm just going to go down the list (1-16) in your memo. I'll no doubt repeat some of what I've already communicated to you by E-mail. If you have additional direction for me after reviewing this memo, please advise.

1) **Miami Police Dept.** - You already have a copy of the letter Miami PD sent HSCA, stating that the Department had forwarded its entire assassination file to the Committee. While I've run across various Miami PD documents in the HSCA files, I have no way of knowing if these constitute the "entire" file alluded to in the Department's letter. As a cautionary note -- I'm uncertain as to its import, if any -- I have attached a copy of a September 1976 *Miami Magazine* which contains a curious comment from a former head of the Department's Special Investigations Section (page 25, I've highlighted it for you). There are other interesting items in this article which I'll refer to later, but it may be worth your while (in all your spare time) to send a letter to the Miami PD indicating that it's our understanding that they forwarded their complete file to HSCA, and asking for confirmation. Also, on a related matter, author Anthony Summers (*Conspiracy*) says retired Lt. Everett Kay of Miami PD holds the original tape of Joseph Milteer's famous prediction regarding the President's vulnerability to an assassination attempt.

2) **Metro-Dade Police Dept.** - I have not been able to determine whether the collection has everything Metro-Dade (or other Dade Co. entities) has to offer. The HSCA collection *does* contain a Dade County Public Safety Dept. (Organized Crime Bureau) file on Santos Trafficante given to Gaeton Fonzi. Other than that, there isn't much of substance. A Dade Co. coroner, Joseph Davis, served on HSCA's "medical experts' panel" which reviewed the autopsy and ballistics evidence. There's a fair amount of correspondence history relating to that involvement, but little else. A letter seems in order.

Other Florida collection issues:

- State Attorney's office (David Bludworth at the time) for the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit (West Palm Beach) conducted -- along with the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office -- an investigation into the suicide of George DeMohrenschildt; there are transcripts of interviews with DeMohrenschildt's daughter and household employees in the collection: I don't know if there is more the HSCA didn't get, or whether the Palm Beach County Sheriff's office has something we should secure (the Sheriff's office, for instance, took custody of DeMohrenschildt's effects at the time). There is a record of Bludworth subpoenaing author Edward Epstein, who had scheduled an interview with DeMohrenschildt on the day of his suicide, for anything Epstein had that might be related to the event.
- Another Florida State Attorney, Richard Gerstein (Eleventh Judicial Circuit, Metropolitan Dade County), conducted two investigations, the first into allegations involving a Jorge Soto Martinez, and the second into the well-known Willie Somerset/Joseph Milteer affair. An Alfonso Sepe on Gerstein's staff wrote a report on the Martinez investigation for Gerstein that he (Sepe) also gave to Jim Garrison. Sepe later became a Dade Circuit Judge. I don't know yet whether or not this report ended up in our collection (maybe via the Garrison investigation files). **I'll follow up.** Another lawyer on Gerstein's staff, Seymour Gelber, handled the Somerset/Milteer case and (according to *Miami Magazine*) "gained access to a wealth of primary materials." Gelber (later a Circuit Judge) kept a *diary* of his investigation. I don't know if the collection has a copy of the diary. **I'll follow up.** The *Miami Magazine* article says the following about the records of this investigation: "The State Attorney's office, which keeps all its records of old cases on file in a North Miami warehouse, says the records on this case, and all others pertaining to the JFK assassination, are missing, despite a thorough search. No one can account for their absence." If I have my Florida State Attorney districts straight, the HSCA later subpoenaed Gerstein's successor, **Janet Reno**, for these records, but I don't know if HSCA ever got them.
- The collection contains a **Ft. Lauderdale Police Dept.** file on a **Kenneth Burnstine** (narcotics charges). I wasn't able to make out Mr. Burnstine's connection to the assassination but, for what it's worth, the file (which looks complete) also contains a reference to a **DEA file** on Mr. Burnstine.
- Lastly, the collection contains documents referencing United States District Court, Southern District of Florida court cases involving Edward Browder and Dominick Bartone. These are gun-running cases involving Cuba, and I guess these two gentlemen are Ruby witnesses who may have been involved with running guns to Cuba with Ruby in the 50's. I don't know whether the entire documentary history of these cases are relevant to the collection or not.

3) **Tampa Police Dept.** - As I've indicated to you already, my database searches didn't locate anything from the Tampa Police Dept. There are plenty of FBI RIFs which reference Tampa, but nothing specific to the local police department. A letter seems in order.

4) **Florida Highway Patrol** - ditto.

5) **Chicago Police Dept.** - There are two groups of Chicago records in the collection. One group has to do with a JFK visit to the city that was planned for 11/1/63 but then canceled (the President was going to attend the Army-Air Force football game). The historical record is unclear as to the reasons for the visit's cancellation, but there were Secret Service concerns over a Thomas Vallee (ex-Marine with a history of mental illness who also possessed various firearms). At the Secret Service's request, the Chicago PD got a warrant to search Vallee's apartment and found some guns, etc. Subsequently, HSCA investigators were told the Chicago PD didn't really have much in the way of files on the canceled trip (correspondence and HSCA OCRs attached); that the Chicago PD was only assisting the SS. The other group of Chicago PD records looked at by the HSCA records are more broadly concerned with the Dept.'s organized crime files (Giancana, etc.). Apparently, HSCA investigators were able to *look at and take notes* on these records, but may not have actually *copied* them (relevant documents attached). The sensitivity of the Chicago PD relative to these files apparently had something to do with a pending ACLU lawsuit. As far as I can make out from my database search, the notes taken by HSCA staffers are currently in "referred" status. The question is whether or not, in 1995, the Board should request the full, unadulterated files from the Department. **Also, there are two other Chicago agencies which you may want to reach out to:**

- There was/is something called the **Illinois Legislative Investigating Commission** which HSCA staffers visited in 1978, where they "reviewed" files on Giancana, Hoffa, etc. (HSCA OCR attached).
- There was/is something called the **Chicago Crime Commission** (apparently distinct from the Chicago PD) which also had files on Mafia figures. These, too were apparently "reviewed" (as potentially distinct from *secured*) by HSCA staffers (HSCA OCR attached).

6) **New Orleans Police Dept.** - pending

7) **New Orleans Parish Sherrif** - pending

8) **Jefferson Parish** - The only thing I found in my database search emanating from Jefferson parish authorities was a 1961 arrest report for Thomas Beckham. If you think they have something more,

we need to ask them for it.

9) **Louisiana State Police** - There isn't much from the State Police: Rose Cheramie's arrest record; William Dalzell's police record and chauffeur's license application. More interestingly, there are three transcripts of HSCA interviews with former State Police employees wherein the former employees discuss the Louisiana State Police's acquisition and subsequent destruction of some portion of Guy Bannister's files (they bought a portion of the files after the FBI took what they wanted). Because they describe a document trail of sorts, I've attached these documents FYI. These latter documents are not State Police records, per se, however, and it's hard to believe the State Police don't have more documents than what showed up in my database search.

10) **Louisiana Secretary of State** - My database search didn't yield anything from this office.

11) **Louisiana State Justice Dept./AG** - ditto

12) **Dallas Police Department** - A database search for "Dallas Police Department" yields very little, but we do have a letter (attached) from the Dallas PD to Jim Braden (aka Eugene Hale Brading) in 1977 in which a representative of the Department writes: "All of the Department's investigative records relating to the assassination of President Kennedy were released to the FBI, the U.S. Secret Service, the Warren Commission, and finally to the National Archives pursuant to federal statutes." Prior to this, back in 1966, there was an exchange in the Fort Worth newspapers concerning allegations that all of the Dallas PD's files on the assassination had been taken by the FBI (copies attached). Then-Dallas Police Chief Charles Batchelor and FBI SAC Gordon Shanklin denied the charge. At that time (Nov. 66) Batchelor said the only *physical* evidence still in the Department's hands were the shirt and pants Oswald had on when he was killed. But he also claimed that *all* the police reports involving the assassination were still in Dallas PD files in their original form (though federal agencies had made and taken copies). He also claimed that all physical evidence turned over to federal authorities had either been photographed or copied by Dallas PD before it was released.

13) **Dallas County Sheriff** - pending

14) **Fort Worth Police Dept.** - Aside from one report on a lead involving Jack Ruby associates which went to the Secret Service and ended up with the Warren Commission and HSCA, the database search did not reveal any documents from the Dept.

15) **Texas Department of Public Safety** - pending

16) **Texas Secretary of State** - pending

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