

# MEMORANDUM

August 21, 1995

To: Anne Buttimer  
cc - Jeremy Gunn  
Phil Golrick

From: Joe Freeman

Subject: "William Sullivan Papers"

## REFERRED DOCUMENTS AMONG ATTACHMENTS

William Sullivan was killed on 11/9/77. At the time of his death, he had approximately 100 boxes of papers at his home in Sugar Hill, New Hampshire. Both the HSCA and the Justice Dept., for different reasons, were extremely interested in these documents. Almost immediately after Sullivan's death, the HSCA issued (though failed to deliver on the first pass) a subpoena for any assassination-related documents among these boxes (see 003366, attached; hereafter, all documents cited by Agency File Number are attached). This action poisoned relations between the Committee and the family's counsel, Joseph Casey. Subsequent "friendly" attempts to secure access to the papers were rebuffed by Casey, culminating in his being served with a subpoena on March 9, 1978 (006938).

The Committee's speed in acting was mainly a function of a memo written to Congressman Richardson Preyer (HSCA member who also happened to be Chairman of the Government Information and Individual Rights Subcommittee of the House Government Operations Committee) by Staff Director Tim Ingram (of the above-referenced subcommittee) on the day following Sullivan's death -- November 10, 1977 (003209). In the course of interviewing Sullivan a couple years previous (1975) to the formation of the HSCA, Preyer's subcommittee staff had touched on the destruction of the Hosty note and general questions regarding the FBI's investigation of President Kennedy's assassination and the Bureau's relationship with the Warren Commission. In this testimony, Sullivan outlines Hoover's antipathy for the Commission and the Director's desire to circumscribe the scope of the Commission's investigation. Sullivan also gave an imprecise but perhaps carefully calculated response to a question regarding any knowledge he might have of a CIA-Oswald connection.

This 1975 Sullivan interview is referenced at various points in the HSCA volumes and probably

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accounts, in large measure, for the HSCA's interest in his papers. A 139-page transcript of this 1975 interview is in the HSCA collection (003406, referred, at Archives I: cover memo to Blakey attached).

In his 11/10/77 memo, Ingram indicates that "it is my understanding that a number of the documents were originals for which there may be no record in the FBI central files." I came across a relatively early 5-page discussion of the Sullivan Papers issue in a HSCA Executive Session transcript, where Blakey is explaining the status of the matter to the Committee (attached at end of attachments).

Before his death, Sullivan had claimed he "didn't know a damn thing" about the JFK assassination. Family attorney Casey, regarding the HSCA subpoena as grossly insensitive, said shortly after Sullivan's death that "I know for a fact that Sullivan had no FBI papers." Clearly, the HSCA was skeptical of these statements (and the second was to be proven demonstrably untrue).

Ingram's memo references two authors who had access to Sullivan's papers before his death: Ladislav Farago (unlimited access) and Curt Gentry (limited access). Farago, in 1978, lived in Bridgewater, CT (203-354-8584). Farago is said to have taken "copious notes" on Sullivan's papers. Gentry lived in San Francisco (415-771-9176) and had more limited access to Sullivan's papers and told an HSCA investigator on 11/16/77 that he had never had any discussions with Sullivan about any assassination files Sullivan may have had or had access to (003370).

In distinct contrast to his attitude toward the HSCA, Casey cooperated fully with Justice Department inquiries into what had already become known as the "Sullivan Papers". Then-Attorney General Griffin Bell had spoken to Asst. Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti about getting a look at Sullivan's papers immediately after Sullivan's death. Civiletti contacted Casey and, during the first week of January, 1978, two Justice Department officials -- Robert Keuch and Phil Jordan -- went to Sugar Hill, New Hampshire, and spent two days going through some of Sullivan's files (located not only in Sullivan's home but also in a garage and detached shed on the property). Keuch and Jordan were looking for specific types of records (namely, papers relating to the Kearney prosecution, re: FBI break-ins) and thus did not look in every box (besides, it was a cold N.H. January and a the bulk of the records were in the unheated garage and shed). Jordan told HSCA interviewers that he couldn't say whether there was anything relevant to the HSCA's investigations (Kennedy or King) in the files.

It should be understood that there was clearly some DOJ-HSCA friction over the fact that DOJ got access and the HSCA didn't. Exacerbating this friction was the fact that Casey, in allowing access to DOJ, explicitly expressed his hope that DOJ would subsequently vouch for the fact that there were no assassination-related records among Sullivan's papers -- thereby aiding Casey in his attempt to forestall HSCA access. DOJ was, at the least, coy on this point. The HSCA interviewed Civiletti,

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Jordan and Keuch on the issue (006111, 006112, 006113). The DOJ folks took one document with them when they left Sullivan's home (apparently relating to counter-intelligence), a fact the HSCA was also intrigued by (there was some speculation that it may have been Nosenko-related).

Casey subsequently (2/7/78) advised the HSCA that he and Sullivan's two sons had searched through the papers for anything pertaining to the assassinations of JFK and MLK, and had found nothing (005173).

My search of HSCA records does not reveal any final resolution of the Sullivan Papers issue. It simply isn't clear from the record whether or not the Committee ever got access to them (even to examine, let alone copy). It may be that it did, and there was nothing of value in them. But we may want to make sure.

Phil Golrick informs me that a Sullivan memoir was published posthumously with the aid of an additional author. Phil has read this book and recalls nothing of relevance to the Kennedy assassination.

### **Possible Steps to Consider**

- 1- Given its length, I neither read nor copied the 1975 Sullivan testimony secured by the HSCA from the House Gov Ops subcommittee. It may be that all the recipients of this memo *have* read it but, if not, somebody probably should. I will await direction on whether that someone should be me, Anne, a member of the FBI team, etc. (I have read the HSCA volume references, which quote various paragraphs of the 1975 testimony).
- 2- Contact former HSCA staffers (in this case, Jim Kelley, Cliff Fenton or even Blakey) and see if they recall how this matter turned out.
- 3- If it turns out it was never resolved, contact could be made with Sullivan's widow (if still alive) or his two sons (both in law school circa 1978, according to HSCA documents).
- 4- Contact might also be made with the two authors cited above.

Freeman e:\wp-docs\082195  
File 4.16.2.6  
4.21.2.6