

341 was still classified. This is indicated by the presence of withdrawal sheets which give a very brief description of the material: "Memo three pages, Top Secret, Bill Jones to Robert Smith, July 22," for example. One can then request Mandatory Classification Review of the material that isn't there. It's a painstaking procedure. File folder titles obviously don't give an indication of the individual documents (letters, memos, etc.) within the file folder. A researcher must go through this, piece by piece. Sometimes it is obvious if you are dealing with the trade situation in lower Slobovia for 1952 that the folder might not have anything of interest. At least one can go through that much more quickly than a file that might say UFO reports, for which one would have to go through each one to find which ones were exciting.

In any event, Shandera and Moore, over a several day period, went through more than 120 boxes and had selected about 75 or 80 pages worth copying. Then Shandera discovered in one of the boxes a piece of paper between file folders which turned out to be the Cutler-Twining memo. The memo, although on original paper, obviously doesn't say what MJ-12 is. The message is pretty straightforward and simple, it does refer to an NSC/MJ-12 Special Studies Project briefing. If genuine it would suggest that there was indeed an MJ-12. But it doesn't say what MJ-12 dealt with. The paper is old, there is a water mark on the paper, it is clearly a carbon with blue ink. There is a slanted red pencil mark through the security marking in the upper right hand corner. It's clearly a simple administrative matter that a briefing will take place during an already scheduled meeting rather than after it as originally planned. I was called that evening when this memo was discovered. Moore read it to me, and described the situation of its discovery. Obviously it had no relation to anything else in the box. Believe it or not, it was in Box 189, the same designation as on the post card!! This gave much greater confidence (even though in retrospect) that this is what they were looking for.

The memo has caused a great deal of controversy, partly from the manner of its discovery, partly from the fact that many people have no idea how archives operate, partly from people intentionally misrepresenting what it says, partly from people trying to smear it at any cost. And partly because Moore and Shandera have chosen to withhold the postcards, though at least two researchers (not I) have seen them. The obvious checks that could be done with the memo have been done. That is to say there's a watermark on the memo, and the name of the company that manufactured the paper. You can see this by holding it up to the window in the office at the Archives. Photographing it gives one the opportunity to get a permanent record of both the color of the paper and the memo and the watermark. Moore contacted Fox Paper, talked to their watermark expert and determined that this onionskin paper was made only in bid lots and only between 1953 and the early 1970s. The government bought a great deal of the paper, but the bid lot limitation meant that it wouldn't show up in all kinds of stores