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The Agency's interest in the Church papers resulted from a Boise State University press release announcing that the University had acquired the late Senator Church's papers. Included in the press report was a statement that the Church collection included CIA information.

The Agency informed Mr. Steven Garfinkel, Director, Information Security Oversight Office, of this fact with a request that he make an effort to determine whether classified information was included. Mr. Garfinkel received an index of the papers which appeared to reflect that CIA, as well as Department of State and Department of Defense, information was included in the collection. Mr. Garfinkel asked for permission to review the material to determine whether classified information was included, and he offered his services and those of other Executive Branch personnel to go to Boise State to review the material. The University declined the request. It was against this background that the Agency wrote to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI). As the letter to the SSCI specifically states, the Agency's sole purpose was to seek "assistance in determining whether classified intelligence information is in fact in the collection and if so how to best deal with the issue."

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