



(U) Write Right: Seven Things *Not* To Do in a SIGINT Report

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of the Reporting Board (S12R)
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(U//FOUO) This month's "Write Right" has a special guest columnist [REDACTED] filling in for usual contributor [REDACTED]:

(U//FOUO) Sometimes being in the right place at the right time means that you see things others do not. This can be downright frightening, as members of the Reporting Board can attest. Usually, a report will be forwarded with the question, "Can we do that?!" Quite often, the answer is "no." Here is the Reporting Board's list of what not to do in a SIGINT report, based on some reports that have come our way recently.

1. (U//FOUO) **Omit the SIGINT** - You'd be surprised how many reports do. Or how many focus not on the SIGINT, but on collateral, on detailed background (going back hundreds of years in some cases), or on recommending a course of action. Give the SIGINT bottom line and well-thought-out, reasoned analysis (in comments) about what the SIGINT means, and let your customers take it from there.
2. (U//FOUO) **Release information from a target to a target** - Say you have some traffic that came from the Elbonian Ambassador's comms and you have written a report. Make sure that you do not include a tear line that is releasable to Elbonia. That's likely to make the Elbonians cranky.
3. (U//FOUO) **Write UNCLASSIFIED tear lines** - You are encouraged to sanitize to SECRET (sometimes even CONFIDENTIAL), but unless you're sitting behind a verrrry big desk, you may not sanitize below that classification. If you're wondering whether your desk is big enough, check here: [list of Original Classification Authorities](#) .
4. (U//FOUO) **Cross-reference other IC Agency reports** - Long story short: the "Third Agency Rule" says not to do this. Likewise, don't refer to "...a CIA report..." or "... FBI information..." since that inappropriately reveals the source of your collateral.
5. (U//FOUO) **Focus on the U.S.** - If your report starts out with "a U.S. Person," "a U.S. Company," or "the U.S. President," change your focus. Find the foreign intelligence and focus on that.
6. (U//FOUO) **Report on U.S. Activities** - If you think your report should have a "US_" Intelligence Source Indicator (ISI), then you should think really hard about that and what it is we do here.
7. (U//FOUO) **Disseminate to one addressee** - At a



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minimum, reports must go DNI and SECDEF. If an addressee asks you to do otherwise (this is called "Single Agency Dissemination"), resist the urge and seek guidance.

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