August 26, 2015 — Sent via U.S. mail

Dear [Name]:

This responds to your August 7, 2015, request for assistance from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS). Your request for assistance pertains to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Department of Justice’s Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI).

As you are aware, Congress created OGIS to complement existing FOIA practice and procedure; we strive to work in conjunction with the existing request and appeal process. The goal is for OGIS to allow, whenever practical, the requester to exhaust his or her remedies within the agency, including the appeal process. OGIS has no investigatory or enforcement power, nor can we compel an agency to release documents. OGIS serves as the Federal FOIA Ombudsman and our jurisdiction is limited to assisting with the FOIA process.

You contacted OGIS regarding your request to FBI for records "[Redacted]." In your correspondence to OGIS you discussed how you knew the subject of your request was listed on the FBI’s “Updated Dead List,” which was released previously under the FOIA and posted online.

On [Date], you made a request to the FBI for the records described above. On [Date], the FBI responded to your request stating the agency searched the Central Records System but did not identify responsive records. On [Date], you appealed this determination, and cited in your appeal additional information which could aid the agency to search for records, including investigators names and case numbers. On [Date], the Department of Justice’s Office of Information Policy (OIP) affirmed the FBI’s action on your request.

OGIS contacted OIP to discuss your appeal and asked if the additional information you supplied in your appeal was searched. An OIP attorney explained that additional information provided on appeal is always taken into consideration, because there are times where the information that is presented by the requester can point to different areas/divisions which could be searched. However, additional information does not always help because of the way the FBI indexes its records. The FBI’s records system is indexed to better solve crimes and not to, for example, search for a
particular memo or document. The FBI’s record system is primarily indexed by the name of a victim of a crime and/or the subject or target of an investigation. So, when the FBI conducted its search for your request it used the subject of the request (Redacted) as its search term.

In the attachments you supplied to OGIS you included several supporting documents you copied from (Redacted). If you believe that information pertaining to (Redacted) may be mentioned in the main files of another person, place or event, you may wish to submit another records request for cross-references with enough information to enable the FBI to ensure with certainty that the cross-references are identifiable to the subject of your request.

The date(s) and location(s) of any contact with the FBI or a specific crime would be most useful in trying to locate records pertaining to (Redacted) in another file.

We hope that you find this information about your request useful. Thank you for bringing this matter to OGIS. We will close your case.

Sincerely,

/s/
Dr. James Holzer, Director
Office of Government Information Services (OGIS)

Cc: Dennis Argall, Federal Bureau of Investigations, Department of Justice
    Matthew Hurd, Office of Information Policy, Department of Justice

We appreciate your feedback. Please visit https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/OGIS to take a brief anonymous survey on the service you received from OGIS.