

## OFFICE of GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES

April 4, 2016 — Sent via U.S. Mail

Dear

NATIONAL ARCHIVES and RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

8601 ADELPHI ROAD
OGIS
COLLEGE PARK, MD
20740-6001

web: www.ogis.archives.gov e-mail: ogis@nara.gov phone: 202-741-5770 toll-free: 1-877-684-6448 fax: 202-741-5769





This responds to your request for assistance from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS), which we received on February 24, 2016 via U.S. mail. Your request for assistance pertains to your records request to the Executive Office for United States Attorney (EOUSA).

OGIS was created to complement existing Freedom of Information Act (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. Please know that 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.

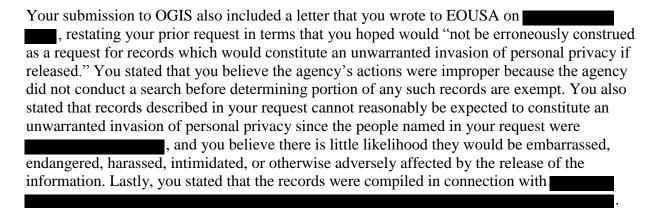
OGIS provides mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies. After opening a case, OGIS gathers information from the requester and the agency to learn more about the nature of the dispute. OGIS then decides how and whether to proceed on the request for assistance.

OGIS staff carefully reviewed the correspondence you submitted with your

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request for assistance. You submitted a FOIA request to EOUSA for	records
about . On	
EOUSA responded to your request . In its respo	nse, the
agency informed you that because the records you seek concern third	d parties,
the agency cannot release the records without authorization and cons	sent of the
third parties, proof that the subjects of your request are deceased, or	a clear
demonstration that the public interest in disclosure outweighs the pe	rsonal
privacy interests of the named individuals. The agency explained in	its letter
that records responsive to requests of this nature are generally exemp	pt from
third parties, proof that the subjects of your request are deceased, or demonstration that the public interest in disclosure outweighs the pe privacy interests of the named individuals. The agency explained in	a clear rsonal its letter



disclosure pursuant to FOIA Exemption 6 and 7(C). You appealed this response, and on OIP affirmed EOUSA's determination on modified grounds



Regarding your request for access to records about the two witnesses who testified at your trial, both FOIA and the Privacy Act of 1974 protect personal privacy of individuals in records the government might have on them or any other individual. These third party protections also apply if someone requests records from the government pertaining to *you*.

As EOUSA explained in its response to your request, the government is prohibited from releasing information about a third party without:

- his or her written consent; or
- proof of his/her death; or
- a showing of an overriding public interest in disclosure of the information.

FOIA Exemptions 6 and 7(C) protect personal privacy interests. FOIA Exemption 6, 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6), protects information about individuals in "personnel and medical files and similar files" when the disclosure of such information "would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy." FOIA Exemption 7(C), 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(7)(C), is limited to information compiled for law enforcement purposes and protects personal information when disclosure "could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy."

In considering withholding records under Exemptions 6 and 7(C), an agency must weigh the interest in public disclosure against an individual's right to privacy. Courts have consistently held that the central purpose of FOIA is to allow people to learn about the conduct of agencies, not to discover information about other individuals. The U.S. Supreme Court held that "the statutory purpose [of FOIA] is not fostered by disclosure of information about private citizens that is accumulated in various governmental files but that reveals little or nothing about an agency's own conduct." *U.S. Dep't of Justice v. Reporters Comm. for Freedom of the Press*, 489 U.S. 749, 773 (1989). For this reason, EOUSA did not conduct a search for records without first receiving one of the justifications listed above. Absent the consent of these individuals, proof of their deaths, or a showing of public interest in the information, you may wish to request

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a . The trial transcripts are in the public domain and EOUSA does not need authorization from the third parties for release of such records.

As it relates to your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, EOUSA responded to this correspondence on \_\_\_\_\_\_, and assigning it a new FOIA tracking number, \_\_\_\_\_\_. EOUSA informed OGIS that it expects to send you a response to this request by the first week of April.

I hope you find this information useful in understanding why the EOUSA responded to your request as it did. At this time, there is no further assistance OGIS can offer. Thank you for bringing this matter to OGIS. We will close your case.

Sincerely,

JAMES V.M.L. HOLZER DIRECTOR

cc: Matthew Hurd, Senior Attorney, Department of Justice, Office of Information Policy Donna Preston, FOIA Public Liaison, Executive Office of United States Attorneys