



## United States Department of Justice

OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY GENERAL

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20530

Mr. Roger Feinman  
142-10 Hoover Avenue  
Apartment No. 404  
Jamaica, New York 11435

JUL 18 1979

Dear Mr. Feinman:

The primary purpose of this letter is to inform you of the results of my effort to ascertain why it has taken my Office over three years to comply with your request of May 25, 1976, for access to records pertaining to contacts between the Office of the Attorney General and representatives of CBS NEWS during the period May through June 1967, concerning a planned television broadcast regarding the assassination of President Kennedy. Although I am now able to respond finally to your request, I do want you to know that the extreme delay of this response, as well as the failure of this Office to acknowledge in any manner your letter of June 10, 1978, inquiring as to the status of your request, is most embarrassing and disturbing to me. I hope that you will accept my sincere apologies.

I have now personally reviewed the file pertaining to your request and have found that a series of administrative errors caused your request to be thoroughly mishandled and, ultimately, neglected entirely, until I became aware of this matter after you filed suit. When your request was first received by my Office, it was assigned to a member of my staff for processing, but the first action on your request seems to have been taken only after we received your letter of June 19, 1976, concerning our lack of response. We informed you, by letter dated August 12, 1976, that records within the scope of your request, if they existed, would be located in files which would be in storage at the Federal Records Center in Suitland, Maryland. We also advised you that the files in question were being ordered and that, when they were received, we would review them and respond to you. Handwritten notations in the file indicate that several telephone calls were made thereafter in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain the files from the Federal Records Center. I am unable to explain why the files were never provided to us, nor why there appears to have been no sustained effort during the ensuing months to find some means of locating whatever material needed to be reviewed.

1A

Further notations in your file indicate that, in April 1978, a member of my staff (not the individual initially assigned to your case) attempted to obtain your telephone number, using the Fresh Meadows, New York, address which appears on your initial request, and was informed that there was no listing for you. Shortly thereafter, my clerical staff was instructed by the staff member then handling your request to close your file administratively. There is no explanation in the file why this was done. I can only assume that the staff member believed, in view of the age of your request and lack of further communication from you since June 1976, that you were no longer interested in pursuing this matter. Although it is only conjecture on my part, perhaps the decision to close your file was also partially based on a presumption that the voluminous public release by the F.B.I. of information pertaining to the assassination of President Kennedy may somehow have satisfied your request. In any event, although your letter of June 10, 1978, made it quite clear that you were in fact still interested in the processing of your request, that letter was nevertheless placed, unanswered, in the closed file and nothing further was done. Again, let me say that I am at a total loss to explain this action. I can assure you that this does not reflect the procedure customarily followed in this Office where it has been consistently emphasized that all communications from requesters are to receive careful attention and appropriate response. Although it will be small consolation to you under the circumstances, I have taken steps to ensure that the serious procedural errors committed in the handling of your request will not occur again in the future.

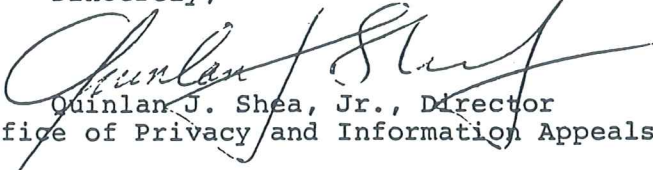
In an attempt to locate records within the scope of your request, we have now conducted a search of the files of the Office of the Attorney General and have also independently checked the Federal Records Center indices for records generated by the Office of the Attorney General during the period May 1 through June 30, 1967 (I should note that I only recently became aware of the existence of these indices, and I presume that their existence was also unknown to the staff members who handled your request). I will certainly understand your chagrin upon learning, after these many months, that we are unable to locate any records pertaining to proposed or actual meetings between the Office of the Attorney General and representatives of CBS concerning the



assassination of President Kennedy during this period. You should know, however, that this does not necessarily mean that no such meeting took place, nor does it mean that there were no communications, either within the Department or with CBS representatives, that would be responsive to your request. Records generated by, or directed to, the Office of the Attorney General are rarely maintained there and, with very few exceptions, only those documents which pertain to agency policies and interpretations of law are stored permanently at the Federal Records Center. The customary practice when an Attorney General leaves office has been that he takes all personal records (e.g., daily logs, personal correspondence, etc.) with him, and that remaining records pertaining to matters which involved various department components are transferred to those components for retention. Accordingly, it is entirely possible that records within the scope of your request exist elsewhere within the Department, quite possibly in the files of the F.B.I. I understand that the Bureau is currently processing a request from you which concerns the same subject as that of your request of May 25, 1976, but which specifies a much later time period. If you believe that records pertaining to the earlier meetings specified in your request of May 25 might exist in F.B.I. files, I suggest that you write directly to the Bureau, amending your request to include any time frames in which you are interested, and providing any information in your possession which might assist Bureau personnel in their searches.

Again, I deeply regret the delay of this response and the very real inconvenience I know it has caused you.

Sincerely,

  
Quinlan J. Shea, Jr., Director  
Office of Privacy and Information Appeals