The material already disclosed reveals a wide range of recipients, amounts and media of contribution, covering all parts of the political spectrum and involving both incumbents and contenders, successful candidates and also-rans, currently active figures and political retirees. However, the extent to which the "warrant" for disclosure should depend upon such factors is unclear. We think there is at least an analytic line to be drawn between damage to a candidate's reputation and injury (caused by such damage) to that candidate's present or future political career. Obviously, the extent of harm to a political career would vary with the person's current status as well as with the nature and circumstances of the alleged contribution; but one may well assume that any taint would do some harm to an alleged recipient's reputation.

Moreover, circumstances or allegations which suggest high culpability may factor into both sides of the privacy balance in such a way that their presence or absence would make little difference to the outcome; that is, the more culpable the behavior suggested by the circumstances or allegations revealed, the more damaging the disclosure to the candidate's reputation, but for the same reason, the public interest in having the information disclosed might be greater.[20] We do not intend to conclude the issue, however, and leave to the district court as an initial matter the determination whether and to what extent factors bearing upon potential "harm" may be pursued through discovery or should enter into a judgment of the propriety of disclosure under 7(C).

Discovery can be controlled by the trial judge or magistrate to avoid both undue prolongation of the case and premature disclosure of the very material sought to be

[20] The same point might also be made about extremely reliable information, but we leave this determination to the trial judge initially.

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protected. It could be that a more particularized affidavit or an annotated *Vaughn* index[21] would be sufficient for the trial judge to strike the proper balance. If not, the trial judge may, of course, consider the possibility of *in camera* examination.[22]

Nondisclosure of some or all of the documents might be justified, but we cannot and do not decide that now. We remand to permit presentation to the trial judge of additional facts concerning the nature and reliability of the requested information contained in the materials withheld and concerning other factors deemed relevant by the trial judge to the balancing required by 7(C).[23] *See Weisberg* v. *United States Department of Justice*, 543 F.2d 308 (D.C. Cir. 1976).

*Vacated and Remanded.*

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[21] Vaughn v. Rosen, 484 F.2d 820 (D.C. Cir. 1973), *cert. denied*, 415 U.S. 977 (1974).

[22] *See* EPA v. Mink, 410 U.S. 73, 92-93 (1973); Hayden v. Nat'l Security Agency, 608 F.2d 1381, 1386-88 (D.C. Cir. 1979); Vaughn v. Rosen, 484 F.2d at 825.

[23] The trial judge is, of course, free to rule on the merits of the arguments not reached in his opinion below. We recognize that a decision in the government's favor on the merits of exemption 3 (*supra*, note 4) might be thought to obviate a ruling on 7(C). Given the possibility of appeal, however, the trial judge may find, even if he be disposed to rule in the government's favor on exemption 3, that the most expeditious course is to wait and rule on both exemptions simultaneously. We leave this matter to his sound discretion and do not wish to imply anything concerning the merits of exemption 3.