

December 11, 1971

The Honorable John Mitchell  
Attorney General of the United States  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Mitchell:

Frankly, I am pleased and excited to receive your letter of December 8. The thought that it required only a little less than six months when the law requires promptness inspires me with the feeling of dedication to law and order of your administration of Justice. And I am, of course, flattered that you could take the time from rewriting the Constitution and preparing a political campaign for so mundane a function as fulfilling your legal role and being Attorney General.

If your letter says your predecessor was whistling through his water-pipe, I can believe that. And when I read in the papers that your Deputy doesn't understand when he is being offered a \$100,000 bribe, I can understand that the nonresponsiveness of his replies to my inquiries under 5 U.S.C. 552 are not exceptional with him.

There are, however, some things I can't understand, and I hope you can find time to explain them.

Why did it require a year and a day to tell me that the Department does not have what I asked for when, as your own letter reflects, the knowledge was mine as a matter of law? It would not seem that you are anxious to protect Mr. Clark's reputation.

Having been told before that the Department does not have what in fact it does, and with the requirement of the law being that such inquiries must be referred to other agencies, can you include the assurance that there never were any such statements as those of which I requested copies, that they have not been filed elsewhere?

Your letter opens, "This is in response to your letter of June 28." Now it happens that I addressed two appeals under 5 U.S.C. 552 to you on that date, both in response to letters of June 25 from your Deputy. The second of those letters refused requests for pictures on the alleged ground that they are exempt as part of investigatory files, when they are neither of this description nor so exempt and, even if they were, the Department had earlier waived this exemption.

I do hope you can now find time to attend to this matter and to direct that copies of the requested pictures be provided me.

Mr. Mitchell

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There are also unanswered 5 U.S.C. 552 requests, such as my still unanswered request of exactly a year ago, the last word on which came from your Department on April 7, and to which I responded on April 13. Now that you are again, seemingly, back in the Attorney General's saddle, can you please direct that all these matters be attended to, promptly and honestly?

Very truly yours,

Harold Weisberg