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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT APPEAL

Office of Information and Privacy
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Sirs:

By letter dated August 10, 1987, Mr. L. Jeffrey Ross, Chief, Freedom of Information/Privacy Act Unit, Office of Enforcement Operations, U.S. Department of Justice, released two documents to my client, Mr. Harold Weisberg. Although the first document was released in full, the second, contained several redactions made pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6) and (b)(7)(C).

These deletions are absurd. We appeal them. The material withheld on privacy grounds--the names of Charles Bronson and his lawyer--is known to everyone who has any knowledge at all about the events surrounding the discovery of the "Bronson film" in 1978. The Bronson film was the subject of prior disclosures to my client. On November 27, 1978, the Dallas Morning News ran a three-page lead story on the discovery of the Bronson film and its possible significance. Many other news stories concerning Bronson, his film, and his lawyer, John Sigalos, followed.

Even if those who made these redactions were ignorant of, or oblivious to, these facts, there is no justification for the withholdings. The document containing these deletions is a February 15, 1983 memorandum from D. Lowell Jensen, Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, to William H. Webster, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, regarding the "Department of Justice Response to the Final Report of the U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Assassinations [HSCA]." This memorandum itself notes that the HSCA recommended further study of the Bronson film. Not only does this suggest that the redacted information was publicly released in the HSCA's Final Report, but it also evidences a public interest in the subject matter which would obviously outweigh any privacy interests. The privacy interests are nonexistent anyway: Bronson did not shy from publicity, he courted it.

As to the name of Bronson's lawyer, I would be most interested if you could cite to me any example of a lawyer in private practice who did not want his name disclosed to the public in connection with a legal matter he was handling.

Please restore the deleted information forthwith.

Sincerely yours,

James H. Lesar
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