

George Lardner
Washington Post
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Dear George,

Your new breed of fresh-from-college newspeople certainly have a real sense of the immediacy of news. As I learned when I phoned you today and a man answered at the National desk. He said you were not in. I asked if you were on vacation and he said, come to think of it, maybe I didn't see him last week either. So, I asked if in your absence anyone else was covering the CIA's efforts to get FOIA amended. He said he didn't know but he guesses not. But why didn't I leave a message? What good would that do if he's on vacation, I asked. He guessed none. And I had told him that my purpose in phoning is that I had what might make a little item.

The CIA's ~~for~~ executive director, among other things, told the English sub-committee that requesters now face delays of up to three years. Enclosed.

And its information bigwheel wrote me that they destroy what they term "Corment" FOIA request files beginning in two years. Also enclosed.

I misread this as one to two years in a reply intended to get to him a little for other reasons not entirely clear in my enclosed response.

But if their claimed backlog is up to three years (and I tell you over 13 in reality) and they destroy those they do not act on beginning in two years, isn't it obvious that some get destroyed if people don't keep after them and thus are never acted upon?

The CIA has been stonewalling JFK assassination records requests for nine years, asking for more time, saying they are working on it and need more time, and now, after I caught them in a very gross lie when they phoned up a reason for refusing to give me even a status report, they stitch and say the records of my requests probably don't exist anyway.

Why in the world should the CIA be so reluctant to disclose nonexempt records relating to the assassination and its investigation, certainly two of the more significant events in recent history?

I don't think you'd be interested in what else I refer to in telling him that I caught him in a lie but I'll provide copies if you are. It is simply that he claimed regulations prohibited them from even replying to a letter if I owe them money, as I claim I do not; he sent me the alleged regulations; they neither say nor even suggest any such thing; they prove that it is their violation of their regulations that has me owing them money; and of course he can't address this because I'm correct and he is a liar.

These people don't even tell the truth by accident!

Best wishes,