

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ROGER HALL, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

Case No. 1:04-cv-814-RCL

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY,

Defendant.

**DECLARATION OF VANNA BLAINE, INFORMATION REVIEW OFFICER FOR
THE LITIGATION INFORMATION REVIEW OFFICE,
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

I, VANNA BLAINE, hereby declare and state:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. I currently serve as the Information Review Officer ("IRO") for the Litigation Information Review Office ("LIRO") at the Central Intelligence Agency ("CIA" or "Agency"). I have held this position since February 2020.

2. Prior to becoming the IRO for LIRO, I served as the Deputy IRO for LIRO beginning in April 2019, during which time I also served as the Acting IRO in the IRO's absence. Prior to becoming the Deputy IRO for LIRO, I served as the office's Litigation Production Manager for 24 months. In that capacity, I was the senior litigation analyst responsible for managing and tracking case assignments, and litigation deadlines. In this role, I also conducted second-line reviews of Agency information subject to

litigation, making classification and release determinations regarding such information when necessary. Before serving as the Production Manager, I was an Associate Information Review Officer for the Director's Area of the CIA for 11 months. In that role, I was responsible for making classification and release determinations for information originating within the Director's Area, which included, among other offices, the Office of the Director of the CIA, the Office of Congressional Affairs, the Office of Public Affairs, and the Office of General Counsel. Prior to that, I was an Associate Information Review Officer and Team Lead in LIRO for 28 months, where I performed similar review functions, routinely making classification and release determinations regarding Agency-wide information subject to pending litigation. I have held other administrative and professional positions within the CIA since 2007, and have worked in the information review and release field since 2014.

3. As the IRO for LIRO, I am currently responsible for the classification review of CIA documents and information that may be the subject of court proceedings or public requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), 5 U.S.C. § 552. I am a senior CIA official and hold original classification authority at the TOP SECRET level under written delegation of authority pursuant to section 1.3(c) of Executive Order No. 13,526, 75 Fed. Reg. 707 (Jan. 5, 2010) ("E.O. 13526"). This means I am authorized

to assess the current, proper classification of CIA information, up to and including TOP SECRET information, based on the classification criteria of E.O. 13526 and applicable regulations.

4. Through the exercise of my official duties, I have become familiar with this civil action and the underlying FOIA requests. I make the following statements based upon my personal knowledge and information made available to me in my official capacity.

II. PURPOSE OF THIS DECLARATION

5. The purpose of this declaration is to explain and justify, to the greatest extent possible on the public record, the CIA's search of its operational records.

6. On August 2, 2019, this Court ordered the CIA to "review its operational files and explain with specificity whether any additional responsive records exist and, if so, why they must be exempt from FOIA." ECF 340.

7. On August 30, 2019, the CIA filed a Motion to Reconsider in response to the Court's August 2019 order to search its operational files. ECF 342..

8. On March 31, 2020, the Court denied the CIA's Motion to Reconsider. ECF 345. Following the Court's March 31, 2020, the CIA began the process of searching its operational files.

9. On October 30, 2020, the CIA reported to the Court the search was complete and no responsive records were located.

III. ADEQUACY OF THE SEARCH

10. The CIA conducted thorough and diligent searches of relevant systems of operational records that were reasonably calculated to find documents with respect to "1,400 live sighting reports that were reportedly displayed at Congressional briefings attended by CIA employees, as well as records of imagery and reconnaissance and rescue operations."

11. In response to the Court's 2020 order, CIA information management professionals searched Agency records in operational file systems.

12. This search included an exhaustive electronic and hard copy search of Agency records. In the course of this search, CIA personnel included all relevant office databases likely to contain responsive records. Experienced CIA information management professionals cast a deliberately wide net for the requested records by employing broad search terms such as "POWs," "prisoners of war," "MIA," "missing in action," "Vietnam," "task force," "House Special POW," "image," and different combinations and variations of those search terms. The search was not limited to a particular date range and was thus conducted to include records through the date of the search.

13. The expansive search terms used generated a few records. Each of these records were retrieved from the database and Agency personnel reviewed them to determine whether the records were

responsive to the Court-ordered search with respect to "1,400 live sighting reports that were reportedly displayed at Congressional briefings attended by CIA employees, as well as records of imagery and reconnaissance and rescue operations." The Agency used a plain reading of the request to inform its responsiveness calls.

14. Following this second-level review, the Agency determined none of the potentially responsive documents retrieved using the electronic search protocols were actually responsive. In each instance, the documents the search retrieved contained at most a mere mention of one or more of the terms, but did not address the actual request.

15. In sum, CIA personnel conducted a thorough search of all relevant records systems that were reasonably calculated to uncover responsive records. The Agency did not locate records responsive to the request, despite the Agency's exhaustive search.

* * *

I hereby declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed this 21st day of December 2021.



Vanna Blaine
Information Review Officer
Litigation Information Review Office
Central Intelligence Agency