



August 1, 2024

Via FOIA Portal

Office of Information Programs and Services (A/GIS/IPS)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Room B-266
Washington, DC 20520

Freedom of Information Act Request: Pro-Hamas Activity in the Watergate Complex

Dear FOIA Officer:

America First Legal Foundation (AFL) is a national, nonprofit organization working to promote the rule of law in the United States, prevent executive overreach, and ensure due process and equal protection for all Americans, all to promote public knowledge and understanding of the law and individual rights guaranteed under the Constitution and laws of the United States. To that end, we file Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests on issues of pressing concern, then disseminate the information we obtain, making documents broadly available to the public, scholars, and the media. Using our editorial skills to turn raw materials into distinct work, we distribute that work to a national audience through traditional and social media platforms. AFL's X page has over 251,000 followers, and the X page of our Founder and President has over 682,000 followers.

I. Records Requested

- A. All records regarding the Diplomatic Security Service's (DSS) protective detail of the Watergate Complex in the District of Columbia on July 24, 2024.
- B. Records sufficient to identify all disciplinary actions taken in response to the events at Watergate Complex in the District of Columbia on July 24, 2024, including the number of agents disciplined and the type of discipline each received.
- C. All records, including electronic communications (which includes, but is not limited to, emails, text messages, Microsoft Teams chat communications, and

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320 South Madison Avenue
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other instant messaging or text messaging apps), including the words “maggots” or “crickets.”

- D. All records regarding the decision to host Prime Minister Netanyahu at the Watergate Hotel instead of the Blair House.¹
- E. All records regarding the protective detail of the Watergate Complex in the District of Columbia on July 24, 2024, including their responsibility—or lack thereof—to secure the hotel conference room where maggots were released.²
- F. All records regarding any threat to Prime Minister Netanyahu while he was at the Watergate Hotel.³

The time period for this item is July 23, 2024, through the date this request is processed.

II. Custodians

- A. Gentry Smith, Assistant Secretary, DSS
- B. Carlos F. Matus, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and Director of the Diplomatic Security Service, DSS
- C. Jackee Schools, Executive Director, DSS
- D. Andrew Wroblewski, Deputy Assistant Secretary and Assistant Director of Diplomatic Security Service Domestic Operations, DSS
- E. Paul R. Houston, Deputy Assistant Secretary and Assistant Director of the Diplomatic Security Service for Threat Investigations and Analysis, DSS
- F. All persons having a supervisory role for the protective detail of the Watergate Complex in the District of Columbia on July 24, 2024

III. Processing and Fee Waiver

Processing should strictly comply with the processing guidance in the Attorney General’s Memorandum on Freedom of Information Act Guidelines.⁴ If you have any

¹ Maureen Groppe et al., *Maggots at the Watergate, Furious Interns on Capitol Hill*, USA TODAY (July 24, 2024), <https://bit.ly/4dlVAws>.

² *Id.* (“Asked why Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was not staying there, a White House official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the ‘visit is not one of the categories that lets it be one of the Blair House uses.’ . . . Shortly after the phone conversation with USA TODAY, the official emailed back to say the Blair House is undergoing long-planned renovations, and is ‘not able to accommodate any guests right now.’”).

³ *Id.* (“Abel Trevino, a spokesperson for the center, told USA TODAY there was never any threat to Netanyahu”).

⁴ U.S. DEPT’T JUST. (Mar. 15, 2022), <https://bit.ly/3zvpxb6>.

questions about our request or believe further discussions regarding search and processing would facilitate the more efficient production of requested records, please contact us at FOIA@aflegal.org.

Per 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii) and your agency's fee waiver regulations, AFL requests a waiver of all search and duplication fees. AFL has a demonstrated ability and intention to effectively convey the information broadly to the public; our status as a representative of the news media has been recognized by other agencies; we have been granted fee waivers by the Departments of State, Defense, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Justice, Interior, and Homeland Security. As a non-profit organization, AFL has no commercial interest in this request, which is made entirely to serve the public interest. Finally, disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and of government operations. We are available to provide additional information in writing or offline to support this request. Please contact us immediately if our fee waiver is not granted in full.

IV. Conclusion

To accelerate your release of responsive records, AFL welcomes production on an agreed rolling basis. Please provide responsive records in an electronic format by email. Alternatively, please provide responsive records in native or PDF format on a USB drive to America First Legal Foundation, 611 Pennsylvania Ave SE #231, Washington, DC 20003.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

/s/ Reed Rubinstein

America First Legal Foundation