

# EXHIBIT A



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
HEADQUARTERS  
NAVAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE  
27130 TELEGRAPH ROAD  
QUANTICO VA 22134-2253

5720 2022-003844  
SER00LJF/22U0048  
February 2, 2022

Mr. Will Huntsberry  
Voice of San Diego  
110 West A St. Ste. 650  
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Mr. Huntsberry:

This responds to your January 26, 2022, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request seeking a copy of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) investigation into the death of 20 separate named individuals who died between 2020 and 2021. We received your request on January 26, 2022.

We conducted a search of the Consolidated Law Enforcement Operations Center (CLEOC) database. CLEOC identifies investigative files under the purview of this service. A search of CLEOC using the information provided in your request has identified investigations for 18 individuals. We were unable to locate any investigation for Ethyn M. Shilling and Gino Z. Alonzo.

The investigations concerning Jessica Churchwell, Xavier Maldonado-Soto, Blake A. Coolberth and Emmanuel Addomensah are currently exempt from disclosure because the investigations are still pending. Per the provisions of 5 U.S.C. § 552 (FOIA) at subsection (b)(7)(A), law enforcement records are exempt if the production of the records at the time requested reasonably can be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings.

Please be advised that although the remaining 14 NCIS investigations have recently closed, they have not yet been entered into our electronic database, Records Imaging Management System, at Headquarters for retention.

Because the records you seek require coordination with another office, your request falls within "unusual circumstances." See 5 U.S.C. 552 § (a)(6)(B)(i)-(iii). Due to these unusual circumstances, we need to extend the time limit to respond to your request beyond the ten additional days provided by the statute. Once coordination is complete, we will place your request in our routine queue, which is managed on a first-in, first-out basis based on the date of your request and currently has a backlog of approximately 12 to 16 weeks.

Regarding the 4 open investigations you may appeal our exemption within 90 days from the date of this letter. If you have created an account in FOIAonline (<https://foiaonline.gov>), you may submit an appeal directly within the web-based system. To do this, you would log into your account, retrieve your original request, and then click on the "Create New" tab in the left-hand column and select "Appeal." Fill in the basis for your appeal and select "Submit."

Alternatively, you may appeal by writing to the Judge Advocate General of the Navy (Code 14), 1322 Patterson Avenue SE, Suite 3000, Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5066. Your

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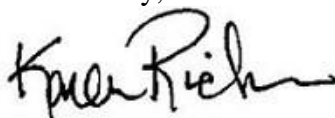
letter should state the reasons for your appeal, and include a copy of this letter along with a copy of your original request and must be postmarked (vice received) in the above office within the 90-day appeal limit. The letter of appeal and the envelope must both bear the notation: "FOIA Appeal."

If you choose not to appeal, you have the right to seek dispute resolution services. You may contact the Department of the Navy's FOIA public liaison, Mr. Chris Julka, at christopher.a.julka@navy.mil or (703) 697-0031 or the Office of Government Information Services (<https://ogis.archives.gov/>).

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If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact us at ncis\_foia@ncis.navy.mil or (571) 305-9092.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Richman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

K. RICHMAN  
Senior Associate Counsel  
Head, Government Information Sharing Unit