

John Podesta FOIA Appeal Rejected

Written by Grant Cameron

Wednesday, 17 November 2010 01:24 - Last Updated Wednesday, 17 November 2010 01:33

After almost five years the Freedom of Information Act request number 2006-0544-F dealing with the 50th birthday party for John Podesta received a "Case Closed" evaluation from the Clinton Library. In a letter dated November 3, 2010 Dana Simmons, Supervisory Archivist at the Clinton Library stated, "... the 84 photographs and 1 videotape which you appealed from FOIA 2006-0544-F, all material remains restricted in compliance with FOIA or PRA that specify what material can be released to the public."

The restriction used to withhold the material was a P6/b(6)- unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, even though the main focus of the FOIA was photos of public government officials who normally do not plead personal privacy, especially for events that occur inside the White House as this one did.

The original request was filed in February 2006 and the denial of the request was made in April 2009. An appeal to the denial was filed in April 2009 but the reply to the appeal was not mailed till November 2010 and only after a new FOIA was filed with the National Archives requesting all the paperwork related to the original Podesta FOIA, its denial and the appeal process.

There is no indication who ruled on the appeal, or what the justification for the denial of the appeal was. Questions have been sent to the Clinton Library to establish just what happened. The original 2006-0544 request, denial, and appeal can be seen at

<http://www.barackobamafo.com/?p=911>

Long delays have been common with many of the UFO related FOIAs filed with the Clinton Library. One key example of this is the fact that the main UFO Freedom of Information request (which will total over 1500 pages) has been processed by Clinton Library archivists for some time now but there has been no apparent action to release the files by Bill Clinton and his lawyer Bruce Lindsey despite the fact that the law appears to give them only 30 days once the processed files are sent to them.

As no reason was given for the denial of the appeal and the only reason given for the original denial to the photographs of the FOIA request was privacy, it leads to questions of just why the

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material is being withheld.

One possible explanation centers on the fact that the release of the photos and videotape could prove embarrassing to Bill and Hillary Clinton who hosted the X-files birthday party for John Podesta where the photos and film were taken. Podesta was a big fan of the X-files, and Bill and Hillary appeared at the party dressed up like the two main characters of the TV show. The photos might also prove embarrassing to Hillary Clinton who some are predicting could still be a candidate in a future run for the presidency.

If this is the real reason for the 100% denial of the photographs it is completely contrary to the direction of President Barack Obama who promised in a memo to all department heads on the first day of his administration, "The Freedom of Information Act should be administered with a clear presumption: In the face of doubt, openness prevails. The Government should not keep information confidential merely because public officials might be embarrassed by disclosure."

Whatever the reason, the Clinton Library is standing their ground and nothing will be released, which leads to the question of why the White House photographer would take the photos in the first place.

Lastly, and most importantly, the denial of this very simple request does not bode well for researchers who are waiting for a release of secret government files on UFOs. The reasons for withholding these documents will be much more in line with restrictions normally used to withhold documents based on national security, and therefore much more likely to be withheld.

A paper looking at some of these government considerations related to the UFO phenomena can be found at

<http://www.presidentialufo.com/articles-a-papers/190-why-is-the-government-covering-up-the-truth>