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Description of document: US Government Investigations Regarding Alleged Homosexuals at nuclear weapons facilities, 1953

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Attn: FOI/PA Request  
Record/Information Dissemination Section  
170 Marcel Drive  
Winchester, VA 22602-4843  
Fax: (540) 868-4391/4997  
[FBI eFOIA Portal](#)

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## Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

April 2, 2014

Subject: Freedom of Information Act Referral

Re: National Archives/Specific Files, FBI FOI/PA# 1120558

This is the final response from the Office of Health, Safety and Security (HSS) at the Department of Energy (DOE) to the request that you sent to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552.

During the search for documents responsive to your request, the FBI located one unclassified document and four (not 39) classified documents which originated with the DOE. The documents were forwarded to the Office of Classification within HSS and the Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence (CI) for review and a release determination. The documents were reviewed and the classified documents have been declassified. We are providing these documents to you with certain information deleted pursuant to Exemption 6 of the FOIA, 5 U.S. 552 (b)(6). Exemption 6 protects from mandatory disclosure "personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personnel privacy." The information deleted pursuant to Exemption 6 consists of names and personal information concerning several individuals.

In applying Exemption 6, the DOE considered (1) whether a significant privacy interest would be invaded; (2) whether release of the information would further the public interest by shedding light on the operations or activities of the Government; and, (3) whether in balancing the privacy interests against the public interest, disclosure would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of privacy.

The information that has been withheld is of a personal nature and the individuals to whom the information pertains have an expectation that it will remain private. Disclosure of this information could subject the individuals in question to unwanted communications and attention that would intrude into their personal lives. Moreover, disclosure of this information would not reveal any aspect about the operations or activities of the Government. In applying Exemption 6, the DOE balanced the public interest in disclosure against the privacy interest of the individuals involved and concluded that the public interest in disclosure did not outweigh the adverse impact the would have on the individuals.



Pursuant to 10 CFR 1004.7(b)(2), I am responsible for the determination to withhold information under Exemption 6.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 1004.8, an agency's response to a FOIA request, including the adequacy of its search, may be appealed in writing within 30 calendar days of receipt of a letter responding to the request. The appeal should be made to the Director, Office of Hearings and Appeals, HG-1, Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20585-1615. The written appeal, including the envelope, must clearly indicate that a Freedom of Information appeal is being made. The appeal must contain all other elements required by 10 CFR 1004.8. Judicial review will, thereafter, be available: (1) in the district where you reside; (2) in the district where you have your principle place of business; (3) in the district where the DOE records are situated; or (4) in the District of Columbia.

The above referenced number has been assigned to the request and you should refer to it in correspondence with the DOE about this matter. If you have any questions on this matter, please contact me at (301) 903-5108.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert Lingan".

Robert Lingan  
Acting Director  
Office of Security  
Office of Health, Safety and Security

cc: David M. Hardy, FBI

Enclosures

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Recd June 6-8-53 - 4:55 pm

UNITED STATES  
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

June 8, 1953

Honorable Sterling Cole  
Chairman, Joint Committee on  
Atomic Energy  
Congress of the United States

Dear Mr. Cole:

[This is with reference to your letter of May 20, 1953, in which you advise that it is your understanding that the Commission has granted "Q" clearance to seven individuals as to whom FBI field investigation (u) reports contain substantial evidence of homosexuality.] We assume that you have reference to cases which Mr. Francis Cotter of the Joint Committee Staff discussed with our Director of Security and a member of his staff on May 19, 1953.

Category (B) of the AEC Criteria lists those classes of derogatory information where the extent of activities, the attitudes, or convictions of the individual must be weighed in determining whether a presumption of security risk exists. Sub-category (B). 9 of the Criteria would apply to those cases where there are grounds sufficient to establish a reasonable belief that with respect to the individual there is:

"Manifest tendencies demonstrating unreliability or inability to keep important matters confidential; wilful or gross carelessness in revealing or disclosing to any unauthorized person restricted data or other classified matter pertaining either to projects of the Atomic Energy Commission or of any other governmental agency; abuse of trust, dishonesty; or homosexuality."

In discussing the cases with Mr. Cotter, it was pointed out that under the Commission's present security program, the information in each case must be very carefully considered to determine whether there are grounds sufficient to establish a reasonable belief that the individual is homosexual; that where substantial evidence of homosexuality is present clearance is withheld and determination of the individual's clearance eligibility is made in accordance with our security clearance procedures.

The discussion with Mr. Cotter centered on eight cases, the administrative handling of which we summarize below as A through H.

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CASE A

A was employed by the United States Engineers, Manhattan District, at Los Alamos, from November 12, 1943, to January 4, 1945, and from February 23, 1945, to May 21, 1946. She was also employed by the Zia Company at Los Alamos from November 1, 1946, to September 30, 1947, but had no access to restricted data and was not granted clearance at Los Alamos though a background investigation was conducted. The Los Alamos file on A was forwarded to Hanford on October 23, 1948.

On April 27, 1949, A was granted "Q" clearance for employment at Hanford as a clerk with the General Electric Company. This clearance was terminated on April 4, 1952, as a result of A's voluntary resignation of her employment with General Electric.

[ On December 11, 1952, the Hanford office requested the Federal Bureau of Investigation to conduct additional investigation in A's case in order that consideration might be given to reinstatement of her clearance for service with General Electric Company as a steno-typist. The reports of investigation were received in the Division of Security and were forwarded to the Hanford office on May 1, 1953. ] (u)

Because of the information reported, clearance reinstatement for A has been withheld and it is expected that her clearance eligibility will be determined by use of the Commission's security clearance procedures.

CASE B

B was first employed at the Los Alamos project on July 9, 1943. She was granted "Q" clearance by the Atomic Energy Commission on November 14, 1947, for employment as clerk with the University of California. (This clearance was granted following advice from the Commission's former Director of Security to the Manager of Operations at Los Alamos that reported information concerning B, as of that time, was not considered as being of a nature to require adverse clearance action.)

B voluntarily resigned her employment with the University of California on May 24, 1952, and her clearance was terminated. The Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory requested reinstatement of B's clearance on August 26, 1952. [ In view of the previously reported derogatory information, additional investigation was requested of the Federal Bureau of Investigation concerning B as a basis for making the required clearance determination. The reports of supplemental investigation were received (u)

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in the Division of Security and were forwarded to the Los Alamos office on May 5, 1953.

- (u) Because of the reported derogatory information in the reports of investigation, reinstatement of clearance for B has been withheld and it is expected that her eligibility for security clearance will be determined by use of the Commission's security clearance procedures.

CASE C

C has been employed at Hanford since August 20, 1944. She was granted "Q" clearance on November 26, 1948, for employment by General Electric Company as a computer in the transportation department following receipt of investigation reports from the Federal Bureau of Investigation which contained no derogatory information. (u)

- (u) As a result of information developed by FBI in connection with the supplemental investigation of A completed in April 1953, the investigation of C was reopened. This additional investigation of C thereafter conducted by FBI developed information which has raised a serious question of C's eligibility for continued security clearance. (u) It is expected that this question will be resolved by use of the Commission's security clearance procedures.

CASE D

- (u) D has been continuously employed at Hanford since May 27, 1948, and was granted "Q" clearance on September 26, 1948, for service as a laborer in the Health Estimate Department, General Electric Company, following a review of a background investigation by FBI which contained no derogatory information. (u) She is still employed in the same job though it is now called "Technical Clerk".

- (u) There has been no reported information to show that D has engaged in homosexual activity. The only information with possible derogatory implications with respect to D was reported in supplementary reports of investigation in the cases of A and C, dated in March and April, 1953, respectively, which indicate that after A left her residence with C in 1952, she lived temporarily with D. (u)

- (u) In this connection it is noted that D, when interviewed in the C case, advised that she had known A well since 1948 and described her as a quiet reserved person of good moral character. She stated that A was (u)

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closely associated with C, and as far as she knew, C kept good associations and was of good moral character. ] (u)

A review of D's file furnishes no sound basis for conclusion that she has been or is a homosexual. Additional investigation of D has been requested under the Commission's current reinvestigation program.

CASE E

(u) E was first employed at Hanford February 16, 1944, as a clerk with the Corps of Engineers, Manhattan District. She was granted "Q" clearance on January 19, 1948, for service as a payroll auditing clerk with the AEC, [following a review of investigation reports by the FBI which contained no derogatory information.] E was married in 1947 to another Hanford employee, and is presently reported to be on maternity leave, as a result of which her clearance was terminated on February 2, 1953. There has been no reported information to show that E has engaged in homosexual activity. The information with possible derogatory implications is contained in reports of investigation dated in March and April, 1953, in the cases of A and C, respectively. The reports in the A and C cases contain testimony of a confidential informant that indicates E was closely associated with C in connection with baseball team activity in 1947 or 1948; and other members of the team had reported that when the team traveled to various cities to play games, E had vigorous quarrels with another woman (no longer in the AEC program) as to who would share a room with C. In this connection it is noted that when the other woman and E were interviewed in connection with the C case, each said that C kept good associations and was of good moral character.

A review of E's file furnishes no sound basis for conclusion that she has been or is a homosexual.

CASE F

F was stationed at Los Alamos from 1944 to September 24, 1945, as a member of the Womens Army Corps. She was transferred from Los Alamos on the latter date and was separated from the military service on December 8, 1945, by reason of demobilization. She received an honorable discharge. On February 19, 1948, she made application for employment as a clerk with the University of California. F was granted "Q" clearance on June 30, 1948, and entered on duty with the University of California on July 14, 1948. F was married to another employee at Los Alamos on February 9, 1949, and in October 1950 resigned her position as secretary

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with the University of California. On March 5, 1952, she was reemployed at Los Alamos to serve as IBM operator with the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory and her "Q" clearance was reinstated on January 21, 1952.

There is no reported information to show that F has engaged in homosexual activity. There is reported information that while in the Womens Army Corps at Los Alamos she was associated with several girls who had reputations as lesbians; and that she was transferred from Los Alamos because of an alleged close friendship with a lieutenant in the Womens Army Corps. Other than the reported association, no person interviewed during the course of the investigation could furnish any information concerning F to show homosexual tendencies. As is indicated above, F has been married since February 1949 and persons interviewed by FBI in 1951 stated that F's associates at that time did not include any former members of the Womens Army Corps but instead, friends of her husband and their wives, all of whom are of good repute. ](u)

A review of F's file furnishes no sound basis for conclusion that she has been or is a homosexual. Additional investigation of F has been requested under the Commission's current reinvestigation program.

CASE G

G was employed by the University of California at Los Alamos from December 5, 1945, to June 28, 1946, when she resigned. She was reemployed by the University of California at Los Alamos and on November 4, 1947, was granted security clearance to serve in the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory. This clearance was terminated on December 17, 1947. Clearance for G was reinstated on July 19, 1948, in order that she might again be employed in the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory.

There has been no reported information to show that G has engaged in homosexual activity. A former neighbor and schoolmate when interviewed described G as being very mannish in appearance and not considered to be attractive to men. A former fellow-WAC reported that although G had boyish tendencies she never indulged in any kind of immoral act and lived a very clean life.

A review of G's file furnishes no sound basis for conclusion that she has been or is a homosexual. Additional investigation of G has been requested under the Commission's current reinvestigation program.

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CASE H

H was first employed as a nurse at the Los Alamos Medical Center on April 30, 1946. She was granted MED clearance and remained at Los Alamos until October 15, 1947, when she resigned reportedly for the purpose of accepting an assignment which offered better opportunities. H returned to Los Alamos on January 5, 1948, to again be employed as a nurse at the Los Alamos Medical Center, without access to restricted data. The Medical Center requested "Q" clearance for H on January 20, 1950, and clearance was granted for her on April 13, 1950, following review of reports of investigation by FBI which contained no derogatory information. This clearance was terminated on May 5, 1952, upon H's resignation from the Medical Center. (u)

[The only information with derogatory implications with respect to H is that contained in the supplemental report of investigation made in the case of B dated in March 1953. This report indicates that H has resided with B for several years; and that an informant stated that both H and B appeared to be "sour" on men, and that she (the informant) presumes this is due to the fact that both have had apparently unhappy marriages.] (u)

Since H is no longer employed at Los Alamos and does not require security clearance, no further action is being taken by the Commission in her case at this time.

[It will be noted that in three of these cases (A, B and F) "Q" clearance was granted despite the fact that the original FBI reports of investigation contained derogatory information indicating possible homosexual tendencies. In the case of F, this derogatory information was not considered sufficiently substantial by the Manager of Santa Fe Operations to warrant the withholding of clearance and, accordingly, the file was not referred to the Washington Headquarters for review. We feel that the judgment of the operations office in this matter was sound. The derogatory information in the cases of A and B was, however, considered to be substantial, and it would appear to be appropriate for us to state the considerations which underlay the grant of clearance in these cases.] (u)

Homosexual behavior has always been recognized as being of significance in security clearance determinations. There has been, however, some

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question as to the manner in which these cases should be handled, particularly where the reported information does not definitely establish that the individual is a homosexual. [Thus, in A's case, the then Director of Security found that the information reported by the FBI as a result of its 1947-48 investigation was not "sufficiently strong as to leave no question that the employee has been or is a lesbian".] (u) At that time it was felt that such cases should be handled primarily as personnel rather than security matters.

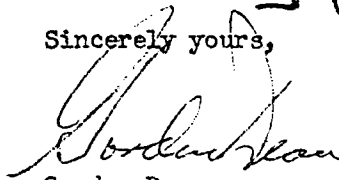
We should like to stress, however, that it is our present policy where the report of investigation indicates that there are grounds for establishing a reasonable belief that an individual is a homosexual, to withhold clearance pending determination of eligibility under our security procedures.

It is not remarkable that the AEC was not aware, until recently, of the interrelationships among some of these individuals. As you know, the Atomic Energy Commission depends almost exclusively upon the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Civil Service Commission for information concerning persons who are applicants for security clearance. Until completion of the new investigation in the A, B, and C cases in March and April 1953, there was nothing in the available reports of investigation of all these individuals which would indicate any relationship among them, with the following exceptions:

Reports made in 1947 and 1948 in the cases of A and B contain information that A and B were included among a group of girls at Los Alamos who were closely associated and who were considered to be Lesbians.

A 1948 report in the case of F contains information that F had been an associate of a group of girls at Los Alamos who were considered to be Lesbians, including one who is also mentioned in a 1947 report in the B case. ] (u)

Sincerely yours,



Gordon Dean  
Chairman

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May 8, 1953

TO: Bill Borden

FROM: Frank P. Cotter '26.

SUBJECT: Alleged Homosexuals (Lesbian) Granted Q-clearances by AEC

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SYNOPSIS

(u) [As early as 1947, the FBI reported to AEC that there was a group of women at Los Alamos who were sex deviates. This information was based on reports verified by some sixteen (plus) confidential informants.] The fact that the group existed at least in 1947 and 1948 at Los Alamos has not been disputed by AEC since AEC memoranda repeatedly recite references to the group and one memorandum even refers to the assignment of "family-type" housing to two Lesbians at Los Alamos in 1947 to eliminate the social and moral problem in a dormitory. Examination of AEC records indicates that some of these individuals continued to have Q-clearances to recent dates and some are in possession of clearances at present. This inquiry traced one girl to Hanford where she was an employee of General Electric. It was determined that she lived there with a second woman who is reported (u) by the FBI to be a Lesbian.] Both have Q-clearances. There are further allegations of additional cleared Lesbians at Hanford.

PERSONNEL INVOLVED

<u>Name</u>	<u>Clearance</u>	<u>Allegation</u>
(b)(6) [Univ. of Calif., Los Alamos]	"Q" granted 11/14/47 Employed at present	Reportedly a member of early Lesbian group. Reportedly now living with [ ] in Santa Fe & they, as a couple have adopted a child.
[Univ. of Calif., Los Alamos]	"Q" granted 1/3/49 Los Alamos; terminated voluntarily 9/19/52	Reportedly a member of the Los Alamos Lesbian group.
[Nurse, Los Alamos Hospital]	"Q" granted 4/14/50 Employed at present	See comment for [ ]
[Hanford]	"Q" granted 1/19/48 Now on maternity leave	Reported associate of [ ]

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[ Los Alamos ]	No clearance granted	Member of 1947 Lesbian group
[ AEC #48846, aka Priest Employee General Electric Co., Hanford; formerly U.S. Engineer & Zia Company, Los Alamos ]	"Q" Granted Hanford Area; 4/27/49 by AEC Hq. after hold status. Terminated voluntarily 4/4/52 Re-applied with Hanford GE - New case now open	Was in 1947 a member of Los Alamos Lesbian group - 1953 investigation alleges Lesbian activity at Hanford
[ Univ. of Calif. Los Alamos Employee Terminated & escorted from project 10/16/47 ]	No clearance ever granted	Member of Los Alamos Lesbian group. [Former WAC & arrested by FBI 10/8/47 on illegal alcohol sales and Grand Jury returned a "no bill"] (u)
[ Employee General Electric Co., Hanford ]	"Q" granted 11/26/48 Employed Hanford GE at present not a "hold" case.	1953 investigation of indicated subject a Lesbian in Hanford area.
[ Employed by U. S. Engineers on AEC from 11/26/46 to 9/30/48 ]	"Q" granted 5/24/48 and on 9/30/48 resigned voluntarily to join [ ] in Portland, Oregon	Member of early Lesbian group

DETAILS

Synopsis of AEC file -

April 27, 1949. [ ] was granted a Q-clearance by the AEC on November 12, 1943, with the United States Engineers. Following World War II, applied for transfer overseas; namely, to Okinawa, as a War Department employee, following which employment a teletype appeared in the records of the War Department stating that it was well founded "on common knowledge at this installation" that both [ ] and an associate with whom she was traveling to Okinawa, [ ] were "that way about each other." [ ] employment at Okinawa was terminated on December 23, 1946, by reason of resignation due to ill health. Following this employment, [ ] was employed at Los Alamos by the Zia Company from November 1, 1946 to September 30, 1947. She then resigned voluntarily. During 1949, she was employed by General Electric at Hanford, and recently terminated. (b)(6)

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[ ] has re-applied for a position with the General Electric Company at Hanford and as a result she has recently been investigated for a Q-clearance. [ ] Accompanying this re-investigation, the following summary statement appears in the AEC file relative to her possible sex perversion: (b)(6)

"Two former supervisors at Los Alamos stated that Subject was a close associate of [ ] who were believed to be Lesbians. (b)(6)

"Confidential Informant T-1, a former WAC and presently a civilian employee at Los Alamos, advised that Subject was one of a group of girls formerly at Los Alamos who were considered by almost everyone to be Lesbians. She stated that these girls were coarse and masculine looking and that they wore men's clothing most of the time. They were seldom seen out with men and associated only with girls in their own small group. T-1 advised that [ ] was a WAC at Los Alamos from about April 1944, to May 1946. She stated that during that time Subject and [ ] were always together and were considered to be "that way about each other." She continued that they both left the project together to go overseas with some other government agency. Subject returned to Los Alamos in about November 1946, and, according to T-1, associated almost exclusively with (b)(6)

[ ] Antos, all of whom have the reputation of being Lesbians. (b)(6)

"Confidential Informants T-2, T-3, T-4, T-5, T-6, T-7, T-8, T-9, T-10, T-11, T-12, T-13, T-14, T-15 and T-16, all advised that Subject associated almost exclusively while at Los Alamos with a group of girls, mostly ex-WACs, who were considered to be Lesbians. They stated that they had no reason to doubt Subject's loyalty to this country." (b)(6)

In addition to the above, the most recent investigation contains further information tending to verify the fact that the applicant is probably a Lesbian and recites the fact that the applicant lived with one [ ] an employee for the General Electric Company at Richland, and who was also reported to be a homosexual. (b)(6) (u)

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