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Description of document: Closing documents for Five (5) selected National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Inspector General (OIG) investigations 2002-2003

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MAY 21 2004

SUBJECT: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request

I am responding to your February 29, 2004, FOIA request for closing reports for certain NASA OIG investigations closed since January 1, 2002.

My initial determination is to provide to you redacted copies of the closing reports for the investigations you identified in your request. For all reports, case numbers are being withheld under FOIA exemption (b)(2) to protect substantial internal matters, the disclosure of which would risk circumvention of a legal requirement. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(2).

The report on the investigation described as, "Sale of Space Shuttle Columbia Disaster Debris, 8/8/2003," the names of investigative personnel are being withheld per FOIA exemption (b)(7)(C) to protect personal privacy. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(7)(C). Portions of the report have been deleted per the deliberative process privilege of FOIA exemption (b)(5) to protect the Government and the Agency decisionmaking processes. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(5). (Tab 1)

For the report on the investigation described as, "Misuse of NASA/etc., 3/5/2003," the name and identifying information about the subject and the names of investigative personnel are being withheld per FOIA exemption (b)(7)(C) to protect personal privacy. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(7)(C). Portions of the report have been deleted per the deliberative process privilege of FOIA exemption (b)(5) to protect the Government and the Agency decisionmaking processes. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(5). (Tab 2)

For the report on the investigation described as, "Misuse of NASA/Seal/Insignia/Emblem/etc., 7/18/2002," the names of investigative personnel are being withheld to protect personal privacy under FOIA exemption (b)(7)(C). 5 U.S.C. §§ (b)(7) (C). Information that could reasonably be expected to reveal the identity of confidential sources has also been deleted pursuant to FOIA exemption (b)(7)(D). 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(7)(D). The last paragraph of the report has been deleted per the deliberative process privilege of FOIA exemption (b)(5) to protect the Agency decisionmaking processes. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(5). (Tab 3)

For the report on the investigation described as, "Possible Stolen Luna [sic] Materials, Theft/Conversion of Government Property, 7/14/2003," the name and identifying information about the subject and the names of investigative personnel are being withheld

to protect personal privacy. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(7)(C). Information that could reasonably be expected to reveal the identity of confidential sources has also been deleted pursuant to FOIA exemption (b)(7)(D). 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(7)(D). Information that would reveal investigative techniques and procedures and could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law has been withheld under FOIA exemption (b)(7)(E). 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(7)(E). (Tab 4)

For the report on the investigation described as, “Potential Safety Issue Related to Welding Metal Super Alloy Fuel Lines on Shuttles, 12/17/2002,” the names of investigative personnel are being withheld to protect personal privacy under FOIA exemption (b)(7)(C). 5 U.S.C. §§ (b)(7) (C). Information that could reasonably be expected to reveal the identity of confidential sources has also been deleted pursuant to FOIA exemption (b)(7)(D). 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(7)(D). (Tab 5)

The following reports are being withheld in their entirety.

- “Misuse of NASA Seal/Insignia/Emblem/Name/Acronym, 7/28/2003,” to protect personal privacy under FOIA exemption (b)(7)(C). 5 U.S.C. §§ 552(b)(7) (C).
- “Antitrust Violations, 1/9/2003,” under FOIA exemption (b)(7)(A) to protect a pending law enforcement proceeding. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(7)(A).
- “Misuse of NASA/etc., 3/20/2003,” per FOIA exemption (b)(7)(C) to protect personal privacy, 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(7)(C); per FOIA exemption (b)(7)(D) to protect information that could reasonably be expected to reveal the identity of confidential sources, 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(7)(D); and per the deliberative process privilege of FOIA exemption (b)(5) to protect the Government and the Agency decisionmaking processes. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(5).
- “Misuse of NASA Seal/etc/, 7/14/2003,” to protect the Government’s decision-making process under the deliberative process privilege of FOIA exemption (b)(5) and to protect personal privacy under FOIA exemption (b)(7)(C). 5 U.S.C. §§ 552(b)(5) & (b)(7) (C).
- “Antitrust Violations, 4[sic]/21/2003,” under FOIA exemption (b)(4) to protect against disclosure of confidential commercial information and under the deliberative process privilege of FOIA exemption (b)(5) to protect the Government decisionmaking process. 5 U.S.C. §§ 552(b)(4) & (5).
- “Preliminary Investigation: Misuse of JPL Graphics Services, 8/19/2003,” under the deliberative process privilege of FOIA exemption (b)(5) to protect the Government decisionmaking process and under FOIA exemption (b)(7)(C) to protect personal privacy. 5 U.S.C. §§ 552(b)(5) & (b)(7) (C).
- “Bend, Oregon Alleged Theft of Purported Moon Rock, 4/12/2002,” under the deliberative process privilege of FOIA exemption (b)(5) to protect the Government

decisionmaking process and under FOIA exemption (b)(7)(C) to protect personal privacy. 5 U.S.C. §§ 552(b)(5) & (b)(7) (C).

You have the right to appeal this initial determination to the Inspector General. Under 14 CFR 1206.605 (b), the appeal must: (1) be in writing; (2) be addressed to the Inspector General, NASA Headquarters, Code W, Washington, DC 20546; (3) be identified clearly on the envelope and in the letter as an "Appeal under the Freedom of Information Act"; (4) include a copy of the request for the Agency record and a copy of the adverse initial determination; (5) to the extent possible, state the reasons why the requester believes the adverse initial determination should be reversed; and (6) be sent to the Inspector General within 30 calendar days of the date of receipt of the initial determination.

Sincerely,



Lance G. Carrington
Assistant Inspector General
for Investigations

Enclosures



August 5, 2003

Sale of Space Shuttle Columbia Disaster Debris

CASE CLOSURE: NASA OIG initiated this investigation based upon complaints that unidentified persons auctioned or sold pieces of Space Shuttle Columbia disaster debris via eBay, an Internet-based auction service; a violation of 18 USC 641, Embezzlement and Theft of Public Money, Property or Records.

Houston, TX, reported that he could not locate some of the suspects. Those he did locate were either running scams or joking about having actual pieces of the Columbia Space Shuttle; none were in possession of actual debris. In addition, [redacted] had not received any additional reports of attempted sales or auctions, so he closed the [redacted] investigation into this matter.

Continued NASA OIG reviews of eBay and other Internet-based auction sites disclosed no further incidents related to the attempted auction or sale of Columbia debris. In addition, NASA OIG received no additional reports of attempted sales or auctions.

Based on the information outlined above, and because no further action is expected on this issue, this investigation is closed.

Prepared by:
DISTR: File

1281
APPR: MAS

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Office of Inspector General
Office of Criminal Investigations

March 3, 2003

NASA-GSFC Employee

CASE CLOSING: This investigation was initiated based upon information received from [redacted] NASA Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC), regarding [redacted] GSFC. [redacted] observed [redacted] entering gate 5 at GSFC with two identical NASA identification badges. [redacted] confiscated the badge presented to him and advised [redacted] he would report the incident to his supervisor, [redacted] was then granted access to GSFC. [redacted] responded to gate 5 and identified the confiscated badge as being a photocopy of [redacted] original ID badge. The badge was relinquished to the Government Security Section.

[redacted] notified [redacted] of the incident and requested assistance from the GSFC Office of Inspector General, Office of Criminal Investigations. [redacted] and the Reporting Agent (RA) interviewed [redacted] stated that he personally reproduced the badge in January 2001 using a photocopier. [redacted] explained that the reason he created a second badge was strictly for convenience. He utilized the copied badge daily for entry to GSFC. [redacted] claims he did not present the reproduced badge for access to any other NASA center or for any other purpose. [redacted] advised that he has not reproduced any other badges, that he had not discussed reproducing his badge with anyone, and that no other persons had knowledge of or observed his reproduced badge. [redacted] apologized and professed that he had never considered his actions as a potentially serious security infraction. He also stated that he did not realize that reproducing a NASA badge could be a federal crime. [redacted] admitted that he did not ever consider the consequences of his actions, and that he was embarrassed about the level of attention the incident had caused. [redacted] stated that he had no intention of ever reproducing his badge in the future.

The RA contacted Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) [redacted] Southern Division, Greenbelt, MD. AUSA [redacted] was apprised of the incident and declined the case for prosecution.

Based on the above information, this case is closed.

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**Office of Inspector General
Office of Criminal Investigations**

July 17, 2002

Chrisite's East Space Memorabilia Auction
New York, NY

CASE CLOSING: _____ NASA Headquarters employee, provided information to the NASA Office of Inspector General (OIG), Office of Criminal Investigations (OCI), that certain space related items were scheduled to be auctioned at Christie's East. _____ believed that some unspecified items might have been stolen from NASA.

The Reporting Agent (RA) reviewed closed case files of similar allegations. The RA also interviewed Amanda Young (Young), Museum Specialist, Early Man Space Flight, National Air and Space Museum. Young was aware of the auction _____ described as well as other space auctions. There are many items Young feels should be returned to the government for historic preservation and display (i.e. flown patches, helmets, space suits and space craft parts). However, the rules governing removal of items, including flown items, were loose or non-existent during NASA's early years. Currently, there are more stringent rules governing space memorabilia.

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July 2, 2003

Possible Stolen Lunar Materials

CASE CLOSING: This case was initiated on July 23, 2002, after former NASA Office of Inspector General (OIG) Executive Officer, [redacted] received a telephone call from [redacted] owner and operator of [redacted] recognized expert in the field of space collectibles, has been receiving numerous e-mails from an account in the name of [redacted]. The e-mails state that [redacted] is in possession of a plaque containing moon rocks embedded in a plastic material. [redacted] claims the plaque was given to a former statesman of an unidentified country by then U.S. President Richard Nixon (Nixon). [redacted] also received four digital photographs from [redacted] of the purported plaque containing the lunar rocks. According to [redacted] the photos appear to show an authentic plaque Nixon utilized as a presentation gift to a foreign country. [redacted] advised that if the plaque is authentic, it could have a value of between \$5 and \$7 million.

[redacted] According to [redacted] authorities, the questioned plaque was deposited in the [redacted] on October 18, 1988. The plaque and moon rocks have remained in the museum since this date.

No further contact with the alleged subject, [redacted] has occurred since October 2002. On March 18, 2003, Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) [redacted] EDVA, declined the case.

(Attachment 1)

Based on the plaque being located in possession of the government of [redacted] no further contact with the subject, prosecution declination by AUSA [redacted] and [redacted] this case is closed and NASA OIG shall take no further action at this time.

Attachments

2163

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DISTR: File

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December 6, 2002

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

SUBJECT UNKNOWN, Potential Safety Issue Related to Welding Metal Alloy Fuel Lines on Shuttles

CASE CLOSING: Investigation was initiated based upon a NASA Hotline Complaint.

that was made to NASA Headquarters by a:

has for many years, warned the industry of the dangers of using highly technical composite metal alloys known as "super alloys," and that are unstable due to stress over use and shelf life degradation.

alleged after reading a newspaper article about cracks discovered in the NASA shuttle fuel lines that these were caused by the same problems he had been warning the industry about for decades.

At initial coordination, outlined his concerns to the Reporting Agent (RA), and he provided documentation supporting his claims based upon historical records. Prior to formally interviewing coordination was made with another reputable metallurgist (who desires to remain anonymous) who reviewed documentation, and was alarmed regarding some viable issues that addressed in previous articles he authored for scientific journals concerning super alloys.

Coordination was also made with Steve Ganz, NASA Project Engineer, Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC), Huntsville, AL, who was intimately involved with making repairs to the shuttle fuel lines. Ganz stated that the problem of cracking aboard the shuttles had nothing to do with the fuel lines, but the flowlines that basically protected the fuel lines from heat and severe vibrations at ignition and launch. Ganz stated that the flowlines are considered a non-critical part and are manufactured by molding. These connect at the bellows between the engine and the external fuel tanks. Ganz stated the fuel lines are composed of super alloys, but are unrelated to the cracks discovered aboard the shuttles.

When was subsequently interviewed, the RA communicated that the super alloy, shuttle fuel lines were not the problem that NASA engineers repaired, but the non-critical flowlines are. stated that he was misinformed about the nature of the problem, but he still had additional questions about the cracks. The RA advised that this was considered not to be a criminal matter and was closing the investigation. RA provided contact points at MSFC to further coordinate with if he desired. Based on the results that no criminal activity occurred, this investigation is considered closed.

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