Freedom of Information Request and Document Review Exercise

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The Exercises in these slides are fictional and they do not contain any classified information or any person's personally identifiable information

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Exercise #1

CONTEXT

FOIA request is from the Washington Post for documents concerning accidents allegedly connected to the Well-Made model ABC Wheelchair.

Exercise #1

Ms. Sheila Jones, Social Security number 152-57-9834, suffered injury to the head and neck following use of the Well-Made model ABC Wheelchair at the Mark Center. This is to notify you that Ms. Jones is preparing to sue Well-Made and the Department of Defense under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Exercise #2

To: Jim Hogan
From: Cindy Allard

Hogan: I spoke with Mark Herrington in DoD Office of the General Counsel re: whether the records we discussed are releasable. He thinks we have a strong argument under Exemption 7A, but wants to do some more research. I'll get back to you after I hear from him.

Exercise #3

The Chem. K. L. laboratory is responsible for conducting the analysis of samples of ricin, a highly toxic controlled substance that can cause death to humans on contact. The building has four security guards to patrol the premises. There is one guard on patrol 24 hours a day, except for Sunday, when the premises are unguarded from 1:00-3:00 A.M.

Exercise #4

As described on a complaint form:

Gerry Atric, a summer intern at Heart Healthy Foods, called the agency, and told the Compliance Branch that he saw Heart Healthy's department manager save expired products, and change the expiration date for future sale.

Exercise #5

(S)* The Headquarters Lab at the CDC is currently testing the new H2-N3 vaccine. The new vaccine is not only supposed to help build antibodies for the current flu strain, but also adapt to new strains of flu that may develop as a result of mutation. The vaccination given the test subjects has cured the flu, but once it attacks the mutated strand it has caused fatalities among the test subjects.

* Material not classified. Marked for Training Purposes Only

Exercise #6

(S)* DARPA has devised a device to make individuals invisible, known as the "Potter Thingy". The device overcomes the commonsense objections to Harry Potter's "Invisibility Cloak", mainly the absurdity inherent in the cloak's main design flaw, its lack of variability for personnel of different sizes, which leads to the inability to cloak shoes, or feet, because the cloak is not long enough. DARPA overcame this limitation by extending the device with adjustable curtains that reach around its full circumference.

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Exercise #7

CONTEXT

FOIA request is for a copy of the Oceania file located in box 91-OSD-015, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Pacific Affairs.

Exercise #7

(S)* Contrary to the common understanding that our ally Oceania has never been at war with East Asia, diplomatic cables and intelligence sources indicate that Oceania's Office of Strategic Occlusion (OSO) has conducted a clandestine campaign to undermine the capabilities of East Asia to monitor its political malcontents. This suggests that Oceania has, in fact, always been covertly at war with East Asia.

*Material not classified. Marked for Training Purposes Only

Exercise #8

(S)* Sources indicate that the remote region of Lower Slobovia known as Remotia has stationed its troops on the border with Upper Slobovia in an attempt to cause instability in the region. The troops are armed with very sharp machetes. Reports indicate they are having difficulty with cutting trails through the jungle, and that a new intervention by NATO may be needed. A recent blast at a pickled herring facility in Remotia has added a certain stench to the situation, and here at the Pentagon we are very concerned.

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Exercise #9

(C)* The DOE facility at Cortex is working on a technical method that will trigger nuclear weapons through the use of trained chimpanzees pounding away at typewriters in an attempt to create a Shakespearean play. The randomness of their efforts is considered to be an effective safeguard for the effectiveness of their explosive magnum opus.

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Exercise #10

Jane: Apologies for not getting back to you sooner – I was out taking care of a sick child. I think the agency's proposal to no longer participate in the DC area transportation benefit program should never leave the station. Therefore, I recommend that you not support it. Instead, you should support the Acme bus lines unsolicited proposal to shuttle our employees at $1 per mile.

- Mike

Exercise #10A

Mike: I agree with your conclusion; however, I do not agree with your reasoning. Are you taking your ADHD medication? Your in-depth analysis failed to account for the expected behavior changes of Federal employees that inevitably happen when commuting options change.   I don't care who benefits from what – my only concern is saving the agency money. For that reason, I will support the Acme bus lines unsolicited proposal to shuttle our employees at $1 per mile.

Create a draft memo to the troops expressing this decision, and be very general in the rationale. And wish them a very Merry Christmas.

- Jane

Exercise #11

I met with Charlie Charleston, VP of Global Quality Contracts, and Mary Maryson, secretary to the CEO. They explained that the company receives widgets from their subcontractor, Widgeteria, Inc. of Bethesda, MD, for $1,000 per box of widgets. As of last week, the FBI is investigating Widgeteria, Inc. for alleged fraud. I later spoke with John Johnson of General Counsel, who stated that they may need to initiate legal action against Widgeteria.

Exercise #12

Private Michael Fenstermacher alleges that General I.G. Winger abused her use of a government computer by using it to run her own personal business during duty hours. Additionally, it is alleged that General Winger further created a hostile environment in her division by repeatedly, in a condescending manner, mispronouncing Private Fenstermacher's name. The investigation substantiated the first allegation, and was not able to substantiate the second allegation due to a lack of evidence.

Exercise #13

General Elmo Zinger alleges that General I.G. Winger required junior personnel in her division to use a government vehicle to take her husband to work, children to school, and pet to the groomer, Spuds 'n Suds. Additionally, it is alleged that General Winger's husband, Wright, ordered the driver to take him to the local Dunkin Donuts and purchase for him a large coffee and two cream-filled chocolate donuts with sprinkles every Monday and Wednesday. The third allegation is that General Winger used government aircraft to fly Mr. Winger with her to official functions on Bora Bora. All allegations were substantiated.

Exercise #14

To: Jim

From: Mike

I just learned that OCMO is considering merging all component Agency FOIA programs within the Department, in order to save on costs. I've spoken with General Counsel, which fears this could violate the FOIA and our implementing regulations. Let's talk later – I have to pick up my anti-depressant from Walmart, and then get my daughter from school.

Exercise #15

CONTEXT

FOIA Request is for "Copy of the Army IG investigation where Major Mishap accuses me of insubordination and creating a hostile environment."

Exercise #16

CONTEXT

A request for a copy of another FOIA request. Its existence was revealed by a release of the agency's FOIA log.

Exercise #16

Dear FOIA Officer:

I am seeking records under the FOIA regarding the former Cash-for-Clunkers program, and any European made car involved. I have been driving a German-made car for 6 years. Please forward the response by FedEx. My corporate FedEx account number is 12345-6789. If any charges are involved, please bill my credit card, Visa 123-456-789-000.

Thank you, Donald Donaldson, 555 Rodeo Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90210

Exercise #17

The FBI intends to focus its efforts in FY 2018 on instances of international fraud, specifically targeting quack internet offers and illegally marketed products. The countries of specific interest will be Canada and Mexico. We will not dedicate significant resources to surveillance of activities within European countries.

Exercise #18

To: Contract Deciding Official

From: Component Office Evaluator

In conclusion, my reviewing branch feels we must recommend that the requests for extension of the timeframes for submission, and changes to the specifications of the final product, to use the alternative supplier Anderson Co. Inc., be denied.

Signed,

Ms. Component Evaluator

Exercise #19

The company has received 12 complaints of product malfunction/failure. The first complaint, regarding Mr. Michael McIntyre, was received on March 12, 2009, from Dr. Jim Hogan, at Mercy General Hospital, after Mr. McIntyre was admitted following his injury, which resulted from the product failure.

Exercise #20

The Acting Vice Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense recommends that the contract with Acme Aircraft to develop anti-meteorite systems to protect the National Capital Region be approved. Acme has developed a unique proprietary tracking system that detects the Theta ray by-products of deteriorating meteorites. The government estimate of the contract is $7.5 billion.

Exercise #21

(S)* Television reports in the country of Lower Slobovia indicate widespread unrest with the current government, to include rioting and looting. Sources indicate that Upper Slobovia is actively engaged in activities to destabilize the government of its southern neighbor. If this is true, a re-occurrence of fighting between the two fledgling dictatorships may de-stabilize the region. Analysis by TSgt Espinoza, USAF, assigned in East Prussia.

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