

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

JUDICIAL WATCH, INC.,  
425 Third Street SW, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20024,

*Plaintiff,*

V.

Civil Action No.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20530,

*Defendant.*

## COMPLAINT

Plaintiff Judicial Watch, Inc. brings this action against Defendant U.S. Department of Justice to compel compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552 (“FOIA”).

As grounds therefor, Plaintiff alleges as follows:

## JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. The Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(B) and 28 U.S.C. § 1331.
2. Venue is proper in this district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e).

## PARTIES

3. Plaintiff Judicial Watch, Inc. is a not-for-profit, educational organization incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia and headquartered at 425 Third Street SW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20024. Plaintiff seeks to promote transparency, integrity, and accountability in government and fidelity to the rule of law. As part of its mission, Plaintiff regularly requests records from federal agencies pursuant to FOIA. Plaintiff analyzes the

agencies' responses and disseminates both its findings and the requested records to the American public to inform them about "what their government is up to."

4. Defendant U.S. Department of Justice ("DOJ") is an agency of the U.S. Government and is headquartered at 950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington D.C. 20530. Defendant has possession, custody, and control of public records to which Plaintiff seeks access.

### **STATEMENT OF FACTS**

5. On June 2, 2025, Plaintiff sent a FOIA request to the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), a component of Defendant, seeking access to the following records:

1. All documents referenced by Deputy Director Dan Bongino as having been discovered in a room "hidden from us and not mentioned to us," discussed in a Fox News interview at <https://x.com/libsoftiktok/status/1928099455095427383>.
2. All internal FBI communications among officials in the offices of FBI Director Kash Patel and FBI Deputy Director Dan Bongino related to the discovery of these documents.
3. All directives sent to officials from the offices of the Director and/or Deputy Director regarding the handling and disposition of the documents referenced in Bullet 1.

6. The request was submitted via the FBI's online FOIA portal on June 2, 2025, and Plaintiff received an email acknowledging receipt of the request via the portal that same day.

7. The FBI again acknowledged receipt of the request by letter dated June 17, 2025, and advised Plaintiff that the request had been assigned tracking number 1671114-000.

8. Plaintiff has received no further communication from Defendant regarding the request.

9. As of the date of this Complaint, Defendant has failed to (i) produce the requested records or demonstrate that the requested records are lawfully exempt from production; (ii) notify Plaintiff of the scope of any responsive records it intends to produce or withhold and the

reasons for any withholdings; or (iii) inform Plaintiff that it may appeal any adequately specific, adverse determination.

**COUNT I**  
**(Violation of FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552)**

10. Plaintiff realleges paragraphs 1 through 9 as if fully stated herein.

11. Defendant is in violation of FOIA.

12. Plaintiff is being irreparably harmed by Defendant's violation of FOIA, and Plaintiff will continue to be irreparably harmed unless Defendant is compelled to comply with the law.

13. To trigger FOIA's administrative exhaustion requirement, Defendant was required to make a final determination on Plaintiff's request by July 1, 2025, at the latest. Because Defendant failed to make a final determination within the time limits set by FOIA, Plaintiff is deemed to have exhausted its administrative appeal remedies.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests that the Court: (1) order Defendant to conduct searches for any and all records responsive to Plaintiff's FOIA request and demonstrate that it employed search methods reasonably likely to lead to the discovery of records responsive to Plaintiff's FOIA request; (2) order Defendant to produce, by a date certain, any and all non-exempt records responsive to Plaintiff's FOIA request and *Vaughn* indices of any responsive records withheld under claim of exemption; (3) enjoin Defendant from continuing to withhold any and all non-exempt records responsive to Plaintiff's FOIA request; (4) grant Plaintiff an award of attorneys' fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred in this action pursuant to U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(E); and (5) grant Plaintiff such other relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Dated: November 19, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Ramona Cotca

Ramona R. Cotca

D.C. Bar No. 501159

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