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December 2, 2024

Dhruv Mehrotra
Via upload to Muckrock.com

RE: City of Portland FOAA Request - Psychics

Dear Mr. Mehrotra:

I am writing in response to your request for information from the Portland Police Department pursuant to Maine's Freedom of Access Act, 1 M.R.S.A. § 401 *et seq.* Specifically, you requested:

“- any communications (emails, letters, phone calls) with [psychic] Vicki Monroe from 2000 until the date this request is processed.
- any communications (emails, letters, phone calls) with any forensic psychics or mediums from 2000 until the date this request is processed.
- any investigatory records produced by any forensic psychic or hypnotist during the course of any investigation by the PPD since 2000.
- records reflecting the number of cases psychics or hypnosis has been used by PPD since the year 2000.”

Pursuant to Title 1 M.R.S.A. §402, “the term ‘public record’ means any written, printed or graphic matter or any mechanical or electronic data compilation from which information can be obtained, directly or after translation into a form susceptible of visual or aural comprehension, that is in the possession or custody of an agency or public official of this State or any of its political subdivisions ... and has been received or prepared for use in connection with the transaction of public or governmental business or contains information relating to the transaction of public or governmental business, except ... records that have been designated confidential by statute.”

The dissemination of police records is governed by the Criminal History Record Information Act [CHRIA], 16 M.R.S.A. §701, *et. seq.* and the Intelligence and Investigative Record Information Act [IIRIA], 16 M.R.S.A. §801, *et.seq.* and other statutes, which limit the public dissemination of confidential criminal history record information and intelligence and investigative information as well as other information designated as confidential. The CHRIA

defines “Public criminal history record information” as “...information that is not confidential criminal history record information, including information recorded pursuant to section 706.”

In addition, Section 804 of the IIRIA defines intelligence and investigative information as “information collected by criminal justice agencies or at the direction of criminal justice agencies in an effort to anticipate, prevent or monitor possible criminal activity, including operation plans of the collecting agency or another agency, or information compiled in the course of investigation of known or suspected crimes, civil violations and prospective and pending civil actions.”

Section 804 places limitations on the release of reports or records that contain intelligence and investigative information in certain cases. In most instances, intelligence and investigative information is protected from public dissemination due to the likelihood that dissemination would result in an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, interfere with on-going criminal investigations or prosecutions, disclose investigative techniques and procedures, or disclose information designated confidential by statute

In an effort to locate records which might be responsive to your request, I asked the City’s IT Department to conduct an email search including the words “psychic” and “medium” and “Vicki Monroe.” Our current email system only dates back to 2008. No emails were located responsive to your request.

With respect to the rest of your request, our electronic records management system does not have the capability to perform a search for specific terms such as “psychic” or “medium” or “hypnosis/hypnotist.” As a result, searching through the cases dating back to 2000 in which such individuals might have been consulted would require a hand search. Assuming we are talking about homicide cases as well as missing persons cases, dating from 2000 to the present, this would entail physical searches through hundreds of case files, each of which could consist of anywhere from multiple binders up to 10-12 bankers boxes full of case-related documents, hundreds if not thousands of pages per case (as an example, the Amy St. Laurent case is contained in five (5) bankers boxes). I estimate that such a search and subsequent legal review of any responsive documents would take at least two thousand hours if not more to complete, and we would not be able to provide you with any results for at least 18 months, if not longer due to the volume of this request, the volume of FOAA requests in general, and staffing issues. Because the Attorney General’s Office has the exclusive authority to prosecute homicide cases in Maine (5 M.R.S. §200-A), any of these cases involving homicides would be subjected to an additional layer of legal review, which could also prolong the response time. Moreover, you would be billed at \$25 per hour, after the first two hours (I have already spent far more than 2 hours researching this request) and the total cost, estimated to be \$50,000 or more, would be payable in advance (see 1 M.R.S. §408-A(10)).

Since you referenced the case of Amy St. Laurent specifically, I was able to access the electronic records associated with that case and search, one by one, each of the 200 documents contained in the electronic record, for the terms “psychic,” “medium,” and the names “Vicki” and “Monroe.” There was one (1) police report mentioning that a psychic (not Ms. Monroe)

had contacted the Portland PD. That report has been redacted pursuant to 16 M.R.S. §804 and is attached.

I hope this information is useful to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nicole M. Albert". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

NICOLE M. ALBERT
Associate Corporation Counsel

Attachments

cc: Maj. Robert Martin
Det. Lt. Nicholas Goodman