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Central Intelligence Agency
Inspector General

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REPORT OF INVESTIGATION



(U//FOUO) MISREPRESENTATION OF ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS BY A TECHNICAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICER (2010-10014-IG)

15 February 2013

David B. Buckley
Inspector General

[Redacted]

Assistant Inspector General
for Investigations

(b)(3) CIAAct
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[Redacted]

Special Agent

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[Redacted]

(b)(3) NatSecAct

NOTICE: The information in this report is covered by the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552a, and should be handled accordingly.

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*Office of Inspector General
Investigations Staff*

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

~~(U//FOUO)~~ MISREPRESENTATION OF ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS BY A TECHNICAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICER (2010-10014-IG)

15 February 2013

~~(S)~~ Section A – Subject:

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(U) Section B – Predication:

2. (C) Based on a separate 2008 United States Secret Service (USSS) investigation that identified an Agency contractor as possessing a degree from a known unaccredited higher education institution, OIG initiated a proactive investigation on 5 August 2008 into Agency staff claiming degrees from non-accredited institutions. OIG matched a list of unaccredited institutions against Agency BIO information to identify any individuals who had provided degree evidence to Human Resources (HR). One of the individuals identified [redacted]

[redacted] claimed bachelor's and master's degrees from [redacted] an unaccredited institution, on her Agency BIO.

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(U) Section C – Potential Violations:

3. (U) Title 18 U.S.C. § 287 (False, fictitious or fraudulent claims) provides in pertinent part:

Whoever makes or presents to any person or officer in the civil, military or naval services of the United States, or to any department or agency thereof, any claim upon or against the United States, or any department or agency thereof, knowing such claim to be false, fictitious, or fraudulent, shall be imprisoned not more than five years and shall be subject to a fine in the amount provided in this title.

4. (U) Title 18 U.S.C. § 1001 (Fraud and False Statements, Statements or entries generally) provides in pertinent part:

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this section, whoever, in any matter within the jurisdiction of the executive, legislative, or judicial branch of the Government of the United States, knowingly and willfully-

- (1) falsifies, conceals, or covers up by any trick, scheme, or device a material fact;
- (2) makes any materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or representation; or
- (3) makes or uses any false writing or document knowing the same to contain any materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or entry; shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 5 years, or both. . . .

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(U) Section D – Investigative Results:

5. (U) (Exhibit A) [redacted] was an unaccredited higher education institution [redacted]

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[redacted] was one of four institutions highlighted as a “diploma mill” in the 2004 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, *Diploma Mills: Federal Government Employees Have Obtained Degrees from Diploma Mills and Other Unaccredited Schools, Some at Government Expense*.¹ The GAO report found that [redacted] federal employees had received unaccredited degrees from [redacted] and that [redacted] would

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“structure” their payment requirements to meet federal reimbursement requirements.

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¹ In [redacted] 6 June 2011 comments in response to the Draft Report, [redacted] claimed that she was unaware of [redacted] unaccredited status until informed by OIG agents during her 4 November 2008 interview; that her HR office was similarly unaware of [redacted] unaccredited status; and that she was not aware of the 2004 GAO report.

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6. (U) (Exhibit A) [redacted] offered degrees ranging from bachelor's degrees to doctorates in business management. [redacted] provided students with credit for life experience as well as transfer credit, up to two-thirds of the credit hours required for a degree. Students were required to write a single paper³ for their advanced degrees, with no actual classes required. Students paid a one-time flat fee for tuition. [redacted] US law does not recognize any such equivalence. [redacted] was never accredited by any accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education.⁴

7. ~~(C)~~ (Exhibit B) An August 2008 review of the Agency BIO system showed that

[redacted] conferred in [redacted] respectively.⁵ Additionally, [redacted] BIO showed an associate's degree [redacted] conferred in [redacted]

8. ~~(C)~~ (Exhibit C) A review by OIG of [redacted] PARs indicate her various supervisors' understanding of her pursuit and receipt of degrees in her accomplishments. [redacted] signed each of these PARs. The PAR statements are as follows:

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|------------------|------------------|-----------|
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| (b)(3) NatSecAct | (b)(3) NatSecAct | |
| (b)(6) | (b)(6) | |
| (b)(7)(c) | (b)(7)(c) | |
| (b)(1) | (b)(1) | (b)(6) |
| (b)(3) CIAAct | (b)(3) CIAAct | (b)(7)(c) |
| (b)(3) NatSecAct | (b)(3) NatSecAct | |
| (b)(6) | (b)(6) | |
| (b)(7)(c) | (b)(7)(c) | |

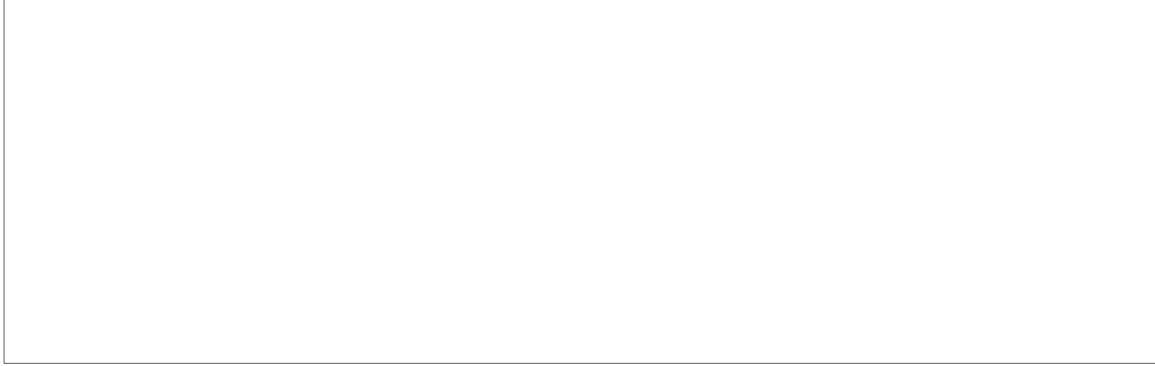
² ~~(C)~~ In her 6 June 2011 comments in response to the Draft Report, [redacted] stated that she had no knowledge of [redacted] having received her last [redacted] degree in [redacted]
³ ~~(C)~~ In her 6 June 2011 comments in response to the Draft Report, [redacted] stated that [redacted]

⁴ (U//~~FOUO~~) Per 20 U.S.C. § 1099b (Recognition of accrediting agency or association), the Secretary of Education is responsible for recognizing accrediting bodies, which in turn recognize institutions.
⁵ (U//~~FOUO~~) The original review was performed on the backend database for the BIO system. A human readable BIO profile was generated on 21 September 2009 for inclusion in the report.

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9. ~~(C)~~ (Exhibit D) A review by OIG of [redacted] submissions to human resources showed that [redacted] highlighted her [redacted] degrees and falsely claimed pursuing and obtaining degrees. Specifically:

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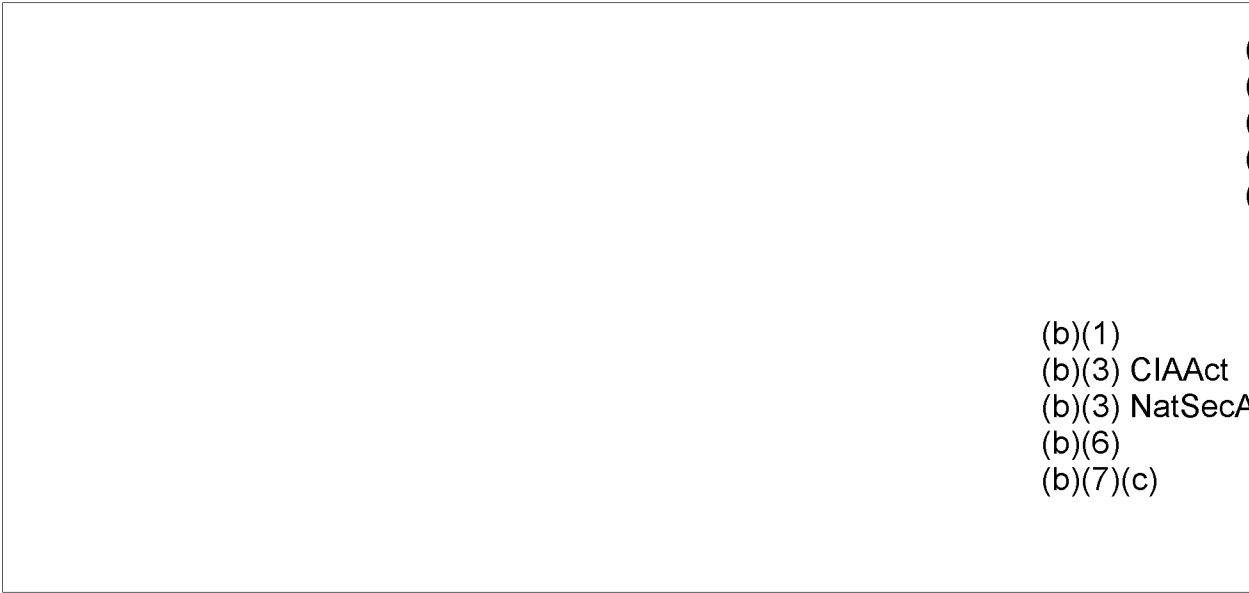
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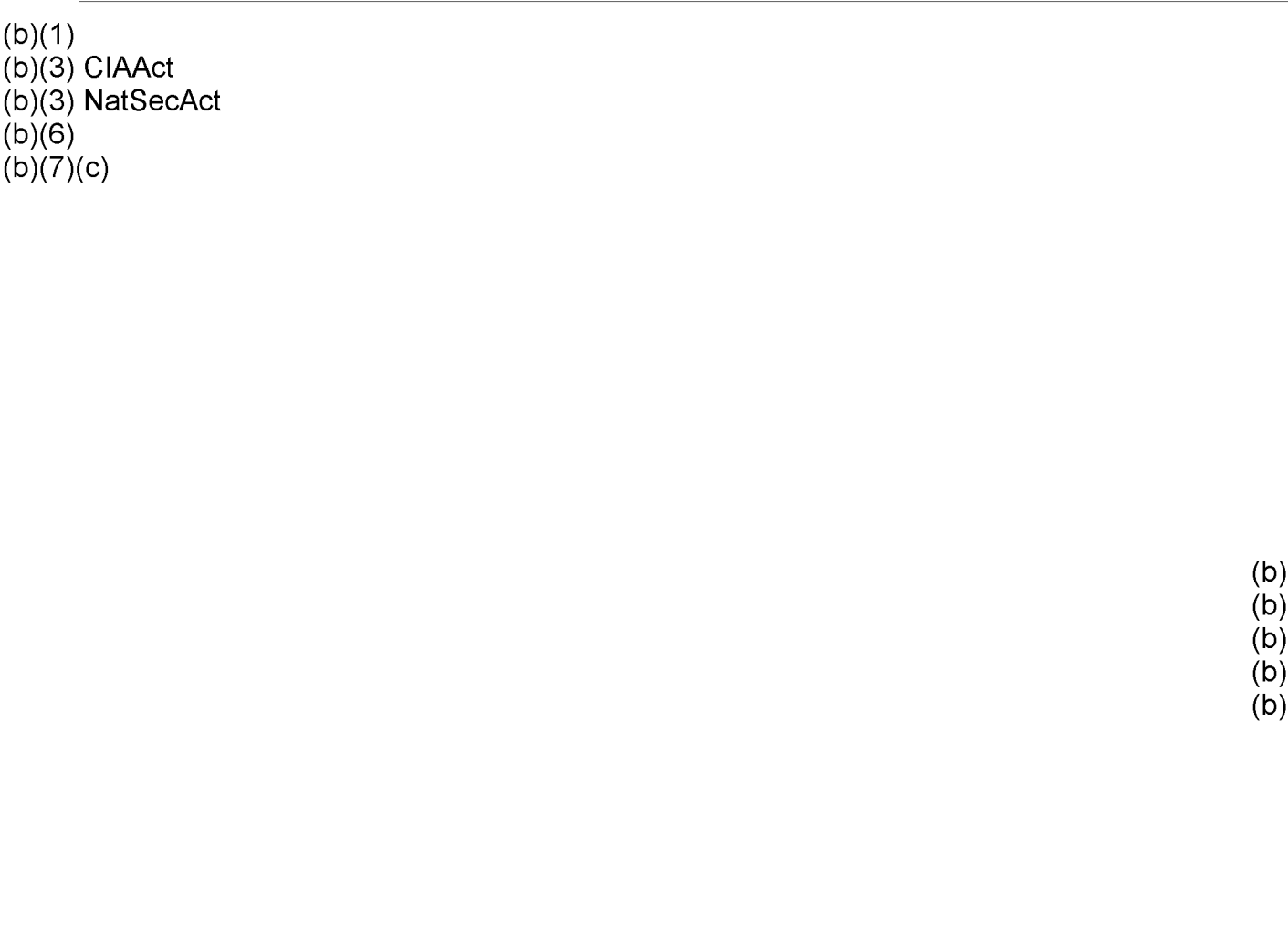
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(b)(1)
(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(3) NatSecAct
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10. ~~(c)~~ (Exhibit E) A review by OIG of [redacted] internal job applications showed that [redacted] falsely reported obtaining and pursuing degrees.⁸ Specifically:



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(b)(3) NatSecAct
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| (b)(1) (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(3) NatSecAct (b)(6) (b)(7)(c) | | (b)(1) (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(3) NatSecAct (b)(6) (b)(7)(c) |
| (b)(6) (b)(7)(c) | (b)(6) (b)(7)(c) | (b)(6) (b)(7)(c) |

11. (C) On 20 October 2008, OIG verified through their respective verification services that [redacted] had never enrolled in or attended [redacted] or the [redacted] OIG confirmed that [redacted] attended [redacted] but did not receive a degree.

12. (C) During a 14 November 2008 interview with OIG, [redacted] stated that she was unaware that [redacted] was a non-accredited institution and that she had learned this for the first time during the interview. According to [redacted] never informed her that it was not accredited or that it was seeking accreditation. [redacted] stated that she was very upset to learn her degrees are not accredited. [redacted] related that she selected [redacted]

(b)(1)
(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(3) NatSecAct
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(b)(7)(c)

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(b)(7)(c)

(b)(6) 13. (S) (Exhibit F) Subsequent to the OIG interview, [redacted] provided documentation
(b)(7)(c) from her personal files related to [redacted]. The documents show that [redacted] was admitted to [redacted] (b)(1)
[redacted] on [redacted] and completed the requirements for a bachelor's degree on [redacted] (b)(3) CIAAct
[redacted]. The documents further reflect that she was admitted to [redacted] on [redacted] and (b)(3) NatSecAct
completed the requirements for a master of science degree [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(6)
(b)(1) (b)(3) CIAAct (b)(7)(c)
(b)(3) CIAAct (b)(3) NatSecAct (b)(7)(c)
(b)(3) NatSecAct (b)(6)
(b)(6) 14. (S) During her interview with OIG, [redacted] stated that the Agency reimbursed her (b)(6)
(b)(7)(c) for all classes [redacted] and that all of her [redacted] classes were reimbursed. [redacted] (b)(7)(c)
stated that she did not recollect the cost of her degrees. [redacted] provided documentation that
her master's degree cost \$2,002, but she was not able to locate the cost of her bachelor's degree.
OIG was unable to determine how much [redacted] had been reimbursed because vouchers are
purged after six years. (b)(1)
(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(3) NatSecAct
(b)(6)
(b)(7)(c)

15. (S) A review by OIG of [redacted] SPHS/Form 444E (submitted as part of her
background investigation), [redacted] showed that she did not include her master's
degree. A review by OIG of the report on [redacted] interview with an OS investigator on (b)(1)
14 August 2000 showed that she reported receiving a master's degree [redacted] (b)(3) CIAAct
[redacted] and reported that the Agency paid for it.¹⁰ [redacted] includ (b)(3) NatSecAct
her bachelor's degree listing [redacted] in her SPHS, [redacted] (b)(6)
(b)(7)(c)

16. (S) (Exhibit G) A review by OIG of [redacted] personnel filed showed that, on (b)(1)
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(b)(3) NatSecAct (b)(7)(c) (b)(7)(c) (b)(7)(c) (b)(7)(c) (b)(7)(c) (b)(6)
(b)(7)(c)

(b)(1) 17. (S) A review by OIG of the GSE pay scale showed that the scale starts at GSE-07/1 (b)(6)
(b)(3) CIAAct (b)(7)(c) and is phased out at GSE-13/10. The GSE pay scale provides higher [redacted] with a (b)(7)(c)
(b)(6) mandatory requirement that they hold a BS [redacted] (b)(1)
(b)(7)(c) (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(3) NatSecAct (b)(3) NatSecAct
(b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(7)(c)

⁹ (S) In her 6 June 2011 comments in response to the Draft Report, [redacted] stated again that she was (b)(1)
unaware of the status of her degree at the time of the interview. (b)(3) CIAAct
¹⁰ (S) In her 6 June 2011 comments in response to the Draft Report, [redacted] stated, "at no time did I (b)(3) NatSecAct
falsely state on official documents or OS background investigator that I had obtained degrees from [redacted] (b)(6)
[redacted]. OIG reviewed the handwritten notes of the OS background investigator to ensure there (b)(7)(c)
were no transcription errors. The notes state that [redacted] received a master's degree from [redacted] (b)(6)
in two separate places during the interview. (b)(7)(c)
¹¹ (S) There was no evidence found in [redacted] security file of a background investigator evaluating the
additional education; however, [redacted] (b)(1)
(b)(3) CIAAct (b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(3) NatSecAct (b)(3) NatSecAct (b)(6) (b)(6)
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(b)(3) CIAAct
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18. (C) (Exhibit G) A review of OIG of [redacted] personnel filed showed that

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(b)(6)
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19. (C) (Exhibit H) An OIG review of written panel notes showed that panel raters

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noted

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(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(3) NatSecAct
(b)(6)
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(b)(1)
(b)(3) CIAAct
(b)(3) NatSecAct
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(U) Section E - Investigative Summary:

20. (C) OIG referred the allegations and investigative findings regarding [redacted] to the U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Virginia (EDVA) on 12 March 2009 for possible violation of Titles 18 U.S.C. § 287 (False, fictitious or fraudulent claims) and/or Title 18 U.S.C. § 1001 (Fraud and False Statements, Statements or entries generally). EDVA declined prosecution on 22 December 2009 in favor of administrative action.

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21. (C) OIG's investigation showed that [redacted] made numerous false statements and the [redacted] claiming various academic credentials from [redacted] and the [redacted] OIG confirmed [redacted] never enrolled at any of the aforementioned institutions. Additionally, [redacted] claimed a degree from [redacted] that she did not obtain. [redacted] made statements in job applications, PAR accomplishments, and resumes in apparent violation of Title 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and OIG believes they directly profited [redacted] career.

(b)(6)
(b)(7)(c)

22. (C) OIG's investigation showed that [redacted] requested and received Agency reimbursement for her degrees [redacted] inclusion in AR 18-1 (CIA University - General) of the requirement that the degree be from an accredited institution.

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(b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(7)(c) (b)(7)(c) (b)(7)(c) (b)(7)(c) (b)(7)(c)

12 (C) OIG's investigation showed that [redacted] was converted to the GSE pay schedule, resulting in an increase in her annual salary starting in [redacted] to which she was not entitled, based in part on her false statement that she was currently enrolled [redacted]

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13 (U) The evaluation sheet was labeled [redacted] but the same evaluation sheet was used for both the [redacted] and [redacted] positions.

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(U) **Section F – Recommendations:**

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[Redacted]

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(U) **Section G – Exhibits:**

- A. (U) GAO Report GAO-04-771T. Federal Employees Have Obtained Degrees from Diploma Mills and Other Unaccredited Schools, Some at Government Expense
- B. ~~(S)~~ [Redacted] BIO (b)(1)
- C. ~~(S)~~ [Redacted] Performance Appraisals (b)(3) CIAAct
- D. ~~(S)~~ [Redacted] HR Submissions (b)(3) NatSecAct
- E. ~~(S)~~ [Redacted] Job Applications (b)(6)
- F. ~~(S)~~ [Redacted] Transcripts (b)(7)(c)
- G. ~~(S)~~ [Redacted] Request to Transfer to GSE Pay Scale
- H. ~~(S)~~ [Redacted] Panel Notes

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