



United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Office of Special Investigations

B-283341

August 9, 1999

The Honorable Nancy L. Johnson
Chairman, Subcommittee on
Human Resources
Committee on Ways and Means
House of Representatives

Subject: HHS OIG: Review of Its Investigation of the Los Angeles County
District Attorney's Bureau of Family Support Operations

Dear Madam Chairman:

As you requested, we have enclosed a copy of our July 25, 1999, briefing before the Subcommittee on Human Resources. This briefing was in response to a request by Representative Howard P. "Buck" McKeon concerning whether the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted a thorough and complete investigation of possible misconduct by management of the Los Angeles District Attorney's Bureau of Family Support Operations (BFSO).

In our briefing we explained that the HHS OIG did not investigate the alleged misconduct because it believed that the information provided by a former BFSO employee was dated and that fraud had not occurred. The former employee had provided several names of BFSO employees who allegedly had either committed or witnessed acts of misconduct. HHS OIG did not interview the employees.

We will make copies of this letter available to others on request. If you have any questions, please contact Assistant Director Stephen V. Iannucci at (202) 512-6722.

Sincerely yours,

Robert H. Hast
Acting Assistant Comptroller General
for Special Investigations

Enclosure

1625-97

BRIEFING PAPER
Los Angeles County District Attorney's Bureau of Family Support Operations

For the Subcommittee on Human Resources, House Committee on Ways and Means

◆ **QUESTION**

Did the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) conduct a full investigation of possible misconduct by management of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's (DA) Bureau of Family Support Operations (BFSO)?

◆ **FINDING**

The HHS OIG did not attempt to corroborate the information provided by the former BFSO employee (source) because the Regional Inspector General (IG) determined that the information was dated and did not believe that fraud had occurred. Therefore, HHS OIG did not conduct an investigation of the alleged misconduct.

The timeline below reflects the sequence of events from the first appearance of articles in the Los Angeles Times in September 1998 to the November 1998 HHS OIG decision not to investigate the criticisms raised in the newspaper articles. Contacts with interested parties following that decision are also noted in the timeline.

◆ **TIMELINE**

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Sept & Oct 1998 | - <u>Los Angeles Times</u> wrote several articles critical of the Los Angeles County DA's BFSO. |
| 10/13/98 | - Attorney Gloria Allred (representing the source) wrote a letter to the HHS IG regarding the Los Angeles DA's BFSO. |
| 10/30/98 | - Attorney Allred visited Washington, DC, to meet with the HHS IG. She met with Inspector Matt Kochanski and Regional IG Vicky Shepherd who was in town on other business. HHS OIG agreed to review the <u>Los Angeles Times</u> articles. Attorney Allred asked to use the telephone, at which time she announced to the <u>Los Angeles Times</u> that the OIG was going to investigate the criticisms raised in the articles. Attorney Allred said she thought that the publicity would bring forth witnesses. |
| 11/2/98 | - Assistant Regional IG Vicky Roberts called Sharon Fuji, the Regional Administrator for the California Administration for Children and Families. A memo in the file states that Ms. Fuji had read the articles in the <u>Los Angeles Times</u> and requested that her agency review the Los Angeles County program and |

funding. Upon completion of the review, Ms. Fuji would then forward a copy of the report on the results of that review to the HHS IG. Per Assistant Regional IG Roberts, no report has been issued to date.

- 11/19/98 - HHS OIG interviewed the source by telephone. The source provided (1) information regarding misconduct by Los Angeles DA office employees and (2) 12 to 14 names of people who either allegedly committed acts of misconduct or witnessed such acts by fellow employees. HHS OIG did not attempt to interview these employees.
- 11/20/98 - HHS OIG interviewed BFSO Director Wayne Doss by telephone. The source had identified Mr. Doss as one of the DA office employees who had engaged in misconduct.

The following chronology of events is extracted from the case file.

- 11/25/98 - HHS OIG sent a letter to Attorney Allred advising that no investigation was warranted.
- 11/25/98 - A memorandum with this date opened and closed the investigation.
- 12/4/98 - A memorandum with this date (with Los Angeles Times articles attached) was faxed from the regional OIG to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).
- 12/14/98 - A memorandum with this date concerns a reply to a congressional representative's office.
- 12/15/98 - A memorandum with this date notes contact with the U.S. Attorney.

◆ **SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

We conducted our investigation from June to July 1999. We reviewed HHS OIG official case files, including memoranda and internal documents. We interviewed the Regional HHS IG for the Los Angeles Office; the Assistant Regional HHS IG; the attorney representing the source; the source; the Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Los Angeles Field Office of the FBI; and the Deputy Chief, Public Corruption in Government Fraud Section, U.S. Attorney's Office, Los Angeles.

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