FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/PRIVACY ACTS SECTION

SUBJECT: THE BEATLES

FILE NUMBER: 145-0
Mr. Will R. Wilson  
Assistant Attorney General  
Director, FBI  

March 11, 1969  

Mr. McKinnon  

PHONOGRAPHIC ALBUM BY  
JOHN LENNON  
INTERSTATE TRANSPORTATION  
OF OBSCENE MATTER  

This will confirm conversation on March 7, 1969, between Mr. Robert Mahoney and Special Agent Charles R. McKinnon of this Bureau.

Mr. Mahoney was advised that this Bureau has received a communication from Congressman Ancher Nelsan of Minnesota forwarding a letter sent to him from an unidentified employee of the State of Minnesota, which has identified himself in his letter as an employee of the Bureau. This album, according to this letter, contains a nude photograph of Lennon and Yoka One. He is concerned with the effect such a photograph may have on the youth in this country and requested to know what can be done to keep this photograph out of the hands of the American public.

Mr. Mahoney advised he is familiar with the phono-graphic album by John Lennon, which cover contains the nude photograph of Lennon and Yoka One. He advised that the photograph does not meet the existing criteria of obscenity from a legal standpoint and is not a violation of the Interstate Transportation of Obscene Matter Statute. Congressman Nelsen was so advised.

See letter to Congressman Ancher Nelsen dated 3/10/69.
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

March 5, 1960

Congressional Office

Sir:
The enclosed communication is sent for your consideration. Please investigate the statements contained therein and forward to me the necessary information for reply, return the enclosed correspondence with your answer.

Yours truly,

[Signature]

M. C.
Congressman, 7274
2129 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington, D.C.

Attn: "[Redacted]"

[Handwritten notes and markings]
JANUARY 31, 1969

CONGRESSMAN ANCHER NELSON

DEAR ANCHER:

YESTERDAY I RECEIVED AN ALBUM AT OUR WHICH COME TO ME BECAUSE I AM IN CHARGE OF THE

IT IS THE LATEST ALBUM OF JOHN LENNON OF THE BEATLES AND HIS LATEST FLAME YOKO ONO. THE COVER OF THE ALBUM WAS A PHOTOGRAPH OF LENNON AND ONO COMPLETELY NUDE, AND BELIEVE ME THEY DIDN’T HIDE A THING. IT IS NOW BEING SOLD TO OUR YOUTH PEOPLE ON THE RECORD STANDS. MR. NELSON, IT IS THE MOST DISCOLORED AND VULGAR DISPLAY OF GARBAGE I HAVE EVER SEEN IN MY LIFE.

ISN’T THERE SOME WAY WE CAN GET THIS ALBUM OFF THE MARKET?? IT HAS TO BE SENT IN THE MAIL TO THE STORES WHICH IN TURN SELL IT TO THE KIDS. IT DOES HAVE AN ENVELOPE OVER THE PICTURE THEN BOUGHT IN THE STORES, SO IT IS ALSO FRADULENT ADVERTISING. MOST OF THE STORE MANAGERS DO NOT KNOW THIS PICTURE IS ON THE COVER BECAUSE OF THE ENVELOPE. I AM AT THIS TIME TRYING TO GET A HOLD OF ALL OF THE LOCAL MERCHANDIS CARRYING THIS ALBUM AND TELLING THEM IN ON THAT IS REALLY ON THIS ALBUM.

YOU ASK WHY THE YOUTH OF TODAY ARE LIKE THEY ARE… THIS IS ONE OF THE PRIME REASONS. ANCHER, I SAY TO YOU, THIS HAS TO STOP…” AND I MEAN NOW!! PLEASE WRITE ME AS SOON AS YOU RECEIVE THIS LETTER AND TELL ME WHAT WE CAN DO TO GET THIS JUNK OFF OUR YOUTH MARKET.

RESPECTFULLY YOURS,
March 10, 1969

Mr. McKinnon

Honorable Ancher Nelsen
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

My dear Congressman:

I have received your communication dated March 5, 1969, along with its enclosure, a letter to you dated January 31, 1969, from [redacted].

A representative of the Department of Justice has advised that he is familiar with the photograph contained on the cover of an album by John Lennon. He stated that no violation with regard to obscenity exists concerning this photograph as it does not meet the criteria of obscenity from a legal standpoint.

Your bringing this to my attention is indeed appreciated. I am returning your letter to you as requested.

Sincerely yours,

J. Edgar Hoover

Enclosure:
1 - SAC, Minneapolis - Enclosure

NOTE TO SAC, MINNEAPOLIS:
Enclosed is a copy of a letter dated 1-31-69, from [redacted] to Congressman Ancher Nelsen for your information.

SEE NOTE PAGE TWO
NOTE:

By communication 3/5/69, Congressman Archer Nelsen (Rep. - Minnesota) forwarded a letter sent to him from an employee of a company in Minnesota. The letter stated he is an employee of a company in Minnesota. The letter stated that the latest album of John Lennon of the Beatles contains a cover of Lennon and "his latest flame" Yoko One which depicts both completely nude.

Attorney Robert Mahony has previously reviewed the photograph contained on this record album and advised that it does not meet the criteria of obscenity from a legal standpoint. This is being confirmed in writing. We have had limited but cordial relations with Congressman Nelsen.
Memorandum

TO: Mr. Bishop

FROM: M. A. Jones

SUBJECT: CONGRESSMAN CHARLES E. BENNETT (D - FLORIDA)
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION REGARDING
PROPOSED LEGISLATION PROHIBITING
THE DISSEMINATION OF OBSCENE MATERIAL
TO MINORS

By letter dated March 17th, Congressman Bennett sent a copy of H.R. 5171, which is legislation he has introduced to prohibit the dissemination of obscene material to minors. Congressman Bennett pointed out that his bill is patterned after a New York State statute which has been upheld by the Supreme Court. He also sent a copy of two other identical bills, H.R. 6186 and H.R. 7167. In his letter, Congressman Bennett requested "any information you can provide me to back up this bill." By letter of March 18th, Congressman Bennett followed up his previous letter with a request for "evidence" which would show that the rise in crime or the rise of sex crimes is attributable to pornography. He also asked if we can show that a substantial number of criminals have been exposed to pornography. He also asked if we know of any articles or research which would demonstrate a clear need for such a law as he proposes.

We have had cordial relations with Congressman Bennett over the past several years.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Director restrict our assistance in this matter to provide Congressman Bennett with appropriate reprint material, and that attached letter to this effect be sent.

Enclosure:
1 - Mr. DeLoach - Enclosure
1 - Mr. Bishop - Enclosure
1 - Mr. Rosen - Enclosure

[Signature]
56 April 69

[Notes]
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