

Mr. Walter Pincus, newsroom
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Dear Mr. Pincus,

Your this morning's story reporting Meese's return to explaining away the Iran/Contra scandal not only brings into question whether or not his word can be taken but it also reminds me that the first administration public acknowledgement of it was when he took Reggan's press conference over and got away with about as big a lie as he could have dared. Because it seemed ~~un~~reasonable he got away with it. But the fact is that his lie covered his giving North et al time to destroy incriminating records.

A reporter asked him why the FBI had not begun to investigate sooner. His response, a paraphrase, was that it would be improper for the FBI to conduct any other than a criminal investigation, that it also would be unfair to the people involved in the investigation.

Ed Meese as civil libertarian.

The truth that as attorney general he had to know is, if you take J. Edgar Hoover's word and the long FBI record, that the FBI is authorized to conduct investigations at the request of the president. On page 98 of the Warren Commission's Volume V ^{Hoover} he volunteered that "the President has a right to request the Bureau to make special investigations ..." Its simply enormous JFK assassination investigation, still ongoing, was such an investigation, at LBJ's request. It involved every headquarters division, every field office and all the foreign offices, legats.

Aside from the certainty that as attorney general Meese had to have known this when he lied, whether or not associates reminded him of it, it can't be believed that the lawyers in the White House did not know it and I'll be surprised if before then none was made for Reagan.

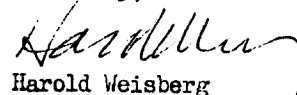
There was nothing in the world to prevent Meese from beginning by sending FBI agents in to ask questions and take possession of relevant records that were destroyed simply because Meese not only made it possible - his failure to send agents in could have been taken as a signal to shred away. Which, of course, is what happened immediately.

The FBI even has a special file classification for such investigation requests. It is No. 62 the description of which in the FBI's listings of its file classifications includes "administrative inquiry." Thus the FBIHQ main JFK assassination file is 62-109060.

I do not remember now but did not the FBI make some non-criminal investigations for Nixon?

In 1963 it was not a federal crime to kill a president.

Sincerely,


Harold Weisberg