



Comey Admits Leaking Memo to Media

During his self-contradictory testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee, fired FBI Director James Comey (shown) admitted that he leaked his memo of his Oval Office meeting with President Trump to the press. Claiming it was “recollection” of his conversation “as a private citizen,” he told the committee that he gave it to “a friend” to give to a reporter, hoping it would “prompt the appointment of a special prosecutor.”



Throughout his testimony, Comey made a point of the fact that he had made it a habit to make written records of all of his one-on-one interactions with President Trump, even though he claims never to have done so with either Bush or Obama, saying, “I was honestly concerned he [Trump] might lie about the nature of our meeting so I thought it important to document.”

Comey’s admission that he was the leaker came about half-way through his testimony Thursday when he was asked by Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine), “You mentioned that from your very first meeting with the president, you decided to write a memo memorializing the conversation. What was it about that very first meeting that made you write a memo when you have not done that with two previous presidents?” Comey replied that his decision was based on “a combination of things,” adding, “A gut feeling is an important overlay, but the circumstances, that I was alone, the subject matter and the nature of the person I was interacting with and my read of that person. Yeah, and really just gut feel, laying on top of all of that, that this is going to be important to protect this organization, that I make records of this.”

Alright, then. Comey’s “gut feeling,” and his “read” of Trump, led him, from his first meeting with Trump as president-elect, to create a written record of their conversations. His claim that his “read” of Trump played a part is important, since he claimed earlier in his testimony that he doesn’t “know the president well enough to read him well.” This was during his exchange with Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), when she was questioning him about his claim that President Trump had asked him for loyalty. She asked him to “talk for a moment about his request that you pledge loyalty and your response to that and what impact you believe that had.” Comey said, “I don’t know for sure because I don’t know the president well enough to read him well. I think it was — first of all, the relationship didn’t get off to a great start, given the conversation I had to have on January 6th.”

The January 6 conversation Comey was referring to was his first meeting with then President-elect Trump, in which he told Trump of the unconfirmed — and spurious — “dossier” claiming that Trump was under the control of Russian intelligence as the result of sexual blackmail.

That January 6 meeting is also the conversation in which — because of his “read” of the president-elect — Comey claims he felt the need to begin keeping memos of their private meetings. But here he admits that all these months after that meeting, he doesn’t “know the president well enough to read him well.”

Comey continued his answer to Feinstein, “This didn’t improve the relationship because it was very,



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very awkward. He was asking for something, and I was refusing to give it,” adding, “Again, I don’t know him well enough to know how he reacted to that exactly.”

So, it is odd that later in his testimony, when asked by Collins why he began keeping those memos right from the start, he claimed that it was the result of a “gut feeling” and his “read” of Trump. On one hand, Comey claims to have read the president-elect well enough to have decided to start keeping written records of their meetings, while on the other hand, he claims not to know Trump “well enough to read him well” or “well enough to know how he reacted to that exactly.”

After Comey told Collins that his “gut feeling” and his “read” of Trump were at the root of his decision to keep memos of their meetings, Collins asked Comey, “Did you show copies of your memos to anyone outside of the Department of Justice?” Comey said, “Yes.” Collins asked him, “And to whom did you show copies?” Without flinching, Comey boldly admitted:

I asked — the president tweeted on Friday after I got fired that I better hope there’s not tapes. I woke up in the middle of the night on Monday night because it didn’t dawn on me originally, that there might be corroboration for our conversation. There might a tape. My judgment was, I need to get that out into the public square. I asked a friend of mine to share the content of the memo with a reporter. Didn’t do it myself for a variety of reasons. I asked him to because I thought that might prompt the appointment of a special counsel. I asked a close friend to do it.

Let’s set aside the fact that it’s easy for Comey to claim — after a special counsel has already been appointed — that his hope for that outcome was his motivation for leaking a government document. Hindsight makes for great excuses.

The real issue here is not his motivation — which is questionable, at best. The issue here is that he admits leaking a government document to the press, something for which — as director of the FBI — he investigated others for doing.

Following up on Comey’s admission, Senator Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) asked him, “So you didn’t consider your memo or your sense of that conversation to be a government document? You considered it to be, somehow, your own personal document that you could share to the media as you wanted through a friend?” Comey responded, “Correct. I understood this to be my recollection recorded of my conversation with the president. As a private citizen, I thought it important to get it out.”

There is a word for that kind of excuse, but it can’t be printed here. Of course, Comey was still director of the FBI — not a private citizen — when he met with Trump and created the document. This makes the document the work product of a government employee and therefore a government document. That Comey was a private citizen when he leaked the memo is irrelevant to every point except one: he could be criminally charged as a private citizen.

Given Comey’s lack of ethics, disregard for the law, and inability to keep his facts straight and testify honestly under oath, does anyone still doubt that Trump should have fired him? If anything, Comey’s testimony shows that Trump’s major mistake where Comey is concerned is waiting so long to fire him.

Photo of James Comey testifying before Senate Intelligence Committee, June 8, 2017: AP Images



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