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Questions for the APA Board Regarding Claims in James Risen's Book *Pay Any Price*

In his new book *Pay Any Price: Greed, Power, and Endless War*, James Risen, two-time Pulitzer Prize winning *New York Times* reporter, documents apparent collaboration between APA leadership and the CIA to support psychologist participation in torture. The core of Risen's reporting drew from primary source emails among APA staff, CIA, and Bush White House officials. The APA Board has since issued a [response](#) to the book, but the Board statement misstates or ignores virtually all of Risen's reporting. Here we summarize Risen's claims and provide precise questions for the APA Board regarding these claims.

PENS Task Force

Risen Claim: APA's Director of Science Policy Geoff Mumford thanked CIA psychologist Kirk Hubbard for helping to initiate the PENS (Psychological Ethics and National Security) process:

"I also wanted to semi-publicly acknowledge your personal contribution...in getting this effort [PENS Task Force] off the ground." Mumford wrote. (p. 200)

Risen Claim: APA's Mumford stated that task force members were "very carefully selected" to represent Hubbard's and thus the CIA's views:

"Your views were well represented by very carefully selected task force members." (p. 200)

Risen Claim: NIMH federal employee Susan Brandon, who had only weeks earlier left her position at the Bush White House, served as an "observer" to the PENS meeting and contributed language to the supposedly independent PENS Report:

Mumford also noted that Susan Brandon had served as an "observer" at the PENS task force meetings and "helped craft some language related to research" for the task force report. (p. 200)

Risen Claim: RAND and CIA researcher Scott Gerwehr, Hubbard, and other intelligence professionals were asked for input on the PENS proposal in January 2005, before the proposal was approved by the Board or presented to the APA membership:

On January 3, 2005, Gerwehr and others who had been invited to the meeting in July 2004 received an email including a draft proposal for an APA task force to deal with the role of psychologists in interrogations. They were receiving the draft proposal more than a month before it was made public to APA members. (p. 199)

Background: The 2005 PENS Task Force met for 2½ days in June and ratified the next day that psychologist participation in national security interrogations was ethical. The PENS Task Force has been the subject of controversy ever since. Critics have questioned the independence of members of the Task Force (6 of 9 voting members were in the employ of military and/or intelligence agencies); how language so consistent with Bush administration policy found its way into the Task Force report; and why APA, alone among the major health professional associations permitted its members to participate in these interrogations.

Kirk Hubbard, now-retired senior behavioral scientist at the CIA, has publically admitted to bringing contract psychologists James Mitchell and Bruce Jessen to the CIA. It has been widely reported that Mitchell and Jessen were the architects of the CIA's "enhanced interrogation" torture program and that they participated in waterboarding and other torturous interrogation techniques. Hubbard has been a long-standing public supporter of this program. APA placed a science fellow in Hubbard's office and collaborated with Hubbard and the CIA in planning several conferences on interrogation-related issues.

Questions for APA: What role did Hubbard, Gerwehr, the CIA, and White House officials play in initiating and/or guiding APA ethics discussions in general, and the PENS process more specifically? Are Risen's claims, listed above, true or false? Did APA know that Hubbard supported and was involved with the enhanced interrogation program? Did APA know Hubbard was connected with Mitchell and Jessen? What evidence can be provided to substantiate APA claims?

2004 APA Ethics Meeting with CIA

Risen Claim: APA held a July 2004 private meeting with CIA and other psychologists, the purpose of which was to address ethical problems arising in "national security-related investigations." The CIA's Kirk Hubbard, who is on public record supporting the CIA's enhanced interrogation program, was a key participant. Hubbard represented both CIA and Department of Defense (DOD) interests at the meeting:

Kirk Hubbard of the CIA replied to Behnke and said that he would be in charge of representing both the CIA's and the Pentagon's interests at the meeting. "I just spoke to [senior Pentagon intelligence psychologist] Kirk Kennedy... He and I will consult on the issues that concern CIA and DOD and I will represent both of us on July 20. I'll then brief him." (pp. 198-199)

Risen Claim: In the invitation to the meeting, APA expressed to the CIA official who helped initiate the CIA's enhanced interrogation program – and others connected to that program – its support for psychologists engaged in national security interrogations.

Behnke offered sympathetically that the APA wanted to take a "positive approach, in which we convey a sensitivity to and appreciation of the important work mental health professionals are doing in the national security arena." (p. 198)

Risen Claim: In inviting these individuals, APA's ethics office and science directorate promised secrecy and immunity from ethics scrutiny for participants:

“I would like to emphasize that we will not advertise the meeting other than this letter to invitees, that we will not publish or otherwise make public the names of attendees or the substance of our discussions, and that in the meeting we will neither assess nor investigate the behavior of any individual or group.” (p. 198)

Risen Claim: This meeting was held in the wake of the Abu Ghraib revelations, but at this time there was no public knowledge that psychologists and other health professionals were involved in CIA and DOD national security interrogations:

The invitation to the lunch meeting showed that the APA was opening the door to psychologists and other behavioral science experts inside the government's national security apparatus to provide advice and guidance about how to address ... the role of psychologists in torture before the APA went to its own membership. The insiders were being given a chance to influence the APA's stance before anyone else. (p. 199)

Questions for APA: Who initially came up with the idea for the July 20, 2004 meeting? Who was invited to the meeting? Who attended? What was discussed? What decisions were made? Were any of these individuals connected in any way with the CIA (or DOD) enhanced interrogation program? How did APA know at this time that psychologists were involved in national security interrogations? Who developed the invitation list? In light of the fact that the invitation was going to senior national security psychologists immediately following the Abu Ghraib scandals, what prompted the tone of this invitation, i.e., the decision to express “appreciation” for the actions of these intelligence psychologists and the promise to forego ethics investigations based on what was reported at that meeting? What is the evidence (e.g., contemporaneous emails) to substantiate APA's claims?

Hubbard Associated with Mitchell Jessen & Associates

Risen Claim: When Mumford thanked Hubbard for his help with the PENS Task Force, Hubbard was working for Mitchell and Jessen:

At the time of the release of the task force report, Hubbard had just retired from the CIA to begin consulting for Mitchell and Jessen. “Now I do some consulting work for Mitchell and Jessen associates,” Hubbard wrote in a mass e-mail to many of his friends and colleagues in June 2005. (p. 200)

Background: As noted above, Mitchell and Jessen were the reported architects of the CIA torture program. APA was already familiar with them as they had attended two invitation-only conferences co-sponsored by the APA and the CIA.

Questions for APA: Did anyone at APA know that Hubbard consulted for Mitchell and Jessen? If so, what was the APA response? Was action taken by APA to protest this connection? Did

APA have any contact with Hubbard during the time he worked for Mitchell and Jessen? What other contacts did APA have with Mitchell and Jessen or those working for them? When? During the time Mitchell and Jessen were involved in the CIA torture program, did APA ever express concern or disgust at their actions? What is the evidence (e.g., contemporaneous emails) to substantiate APA's claims?

Why This Matters

Risen's book explains in context exactly why APA's actions were so important to the Bush administration's torture program:

Without changes to the APA's ethics code, more psychologists would likely have taken the view that they were prevented by their own professional standards from involvement [in the Bush administration torture program], and that would have made it far more difficult for the Justice Department to craft opinions that provided the legal approvals needed for the CIA to go ahead with the interrogation tactics.... If the American Psychological Association and its member psychologists had not gone along with the Bush administration, it is unclear that any other health professionals would have taken their place. (p. 195)

The APA provided the Bush administration its needed cover. (p. 197)

What is Needed Now

Risen's book makes the claim that APA leadership collaborated with the CIA to provide protection for psychologists involved in torturing other human beings. These claims, based ostensibly on primary source material by a Pulitzer Prize winning *New York Times* reporter, cannot simply be dismissed as "assumptions based on innuendo," as APA President Nadine Kaslow recently characterized them in an email accompanying the Board response to Risen's book. As a profession we desperately need clear, detailed answers, equally supported by documentary evidence. Anything less cannot repair the damage to the profession from documentary evidence of APA-CIA collaboration in protecting psychologist participation in abusive interrogations.

At this point, we believe that such answers can only come from a truly independent investigation appointed by an outside organization and led by someone with unimpeachable credibility. These investigators must be provided with free access to all relevant APA documents and evidence and the ability to interview APA staff and officers. The investigation of the Jerry Sandusky abuse allegations at Penn State provides a possible model, as does the current NFL investigation of the organization's response to domestic abuse allegations.

A Note on the APA Board Response to Risen

As stated earlier, on October 16, 2014, the APA Board issued a [response](#) to Risen's book. We believe this response, similar to past APA responses in its lack of specificity, requires examination. First, also as stated earlier, the response does not accurately report, much less rebut,

any of Risen's claims. For example, the response focuses on the book's ostensible claims about APA relations with the Defense Department. However, the bulk of Risen's claims concern APA relations with the CIA, none of which is discussed in the reply.

Second, the Board response refers to "his notion that APA had a financial motivation to support the Department of Defense (DOD) in its detainee interrogation policies" and goes on to assert that DOD funding plays no role in APA's own finances. However, Risen's book makes no mention of Association finances. Rather, he refers to the role of funding to psychology as a profession: "For America's psychologists, cooperation with interrogations was all about money and status, many critics argue" (p. 196).

Third, the remainder of the APA Board response, reiterating yet again a list of public statements by APA on torture, is irrelevant to Risen's claims of secret backroom collusion.

In sum, the Board created and then rebutted nonexistent claims, the essence of a straw man response to what are very serious allegations. Needed at this point are clear and unequivocal answers to the specific claims actually made in Risen's book. Only a truly independent investigation can provide those answers.

The Coalition for an Ethical Psychology is dedicated to putting psychology on a firm ethical foundation in support of social justice and human rights. The Coalition has been in the lead of efforts to remove psychologists from torture and abusive interrogations.

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