

**From:** Steven Reisner <[REDACTED]>  
**Date:** March 10, 2016 at 11:23:58 AM EST  
**To:** [COR@LISTS.APA.ORG](mailto:COR@LISTS.APA.ORG)  
**Subject:** Re: [COR] Fwd: [DIV42] An important Open letter to APA members  
**Reply-To:** Steven Reisner <[REDACTED]>

Hi all,

Just because something is said repeatedly and loudly does not make it so. There have been many claims against the Hoffman report, but almost no evidence to back up these claims. Hoffman, on the other hand, provided extensive evidence to support his conclusions.

Marta points out, correctly, that it is standard practice that raw data is not made available in such cases, as all of us who were interviewed by Hoffman knew and understood. (If anyone had been told that raw data would be made available, please provide the evidence.)

Those who believe they were misrepresented are free to present us with other evidence, which we must then compare with what is available in the Hoffman report and in the public domain. So far, there are many claims but almost no contradictory evidence from those named in the report. The only exception comes in the form of a few military documents that make the claim that the techniques were "prohibited" when the PENS group met. Aside from the fact that the military division thus tacitly acknowledges that the techniques were not prohibited during the period that APA members connected with the Task force were overseeing the interrogations, this 'evidence' is strongly contradicted by a host of other evidence, including the fact that certain techniques considered cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment by the United Nations Committee Against Torture have never been prohibited, have never been condemned by these psychologists, and, in fact, are permitted to this day.

Lenore's argument that Newman and Dunivin's relationship was known in some quarters and therefore does not technically violate APA policy omits the important fact that just because APA had no effective conflict of interest policy does not render such conduct appropriate or ethical. Let us remember what the conflict of interest was: certain members of APA leadership knowingly permitted the head of the Practice Directorate to secretly guide a Task Force that was charged with determining whether the current activities of his wife were ethics violations. We don't need to turn to policy to understand that this reflects an enormous problem at APA; it is only necessary to read our ethics code:

### **3.06 Conflict of Interest**

Psychologists refrain from taking on a professional role when personal, scientific, professional, legal, financial, or other interests or relationships could reasonably be expected to (1) impair their objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing their

functions as psychologists or (2) expose the person or organization with whom the professional relationship exists to harm or exploitation.

If it is the case that the Chief Legal Officer permitted such a move, then the Chief Legal Officer's judgment should be challenged. Fortunately, Council understood the magnitude of this violation and the scandal of the policy and culture that permitted it. This is why, last August, Council rightly determined that a new Conflict of Interest policy was in order - one that does not permit a staff member to influence policy that directly affects his wife's career and status. (I can't believe this needs to be said. It is Conflict of Interest 101.)

So again, it is time to turn down the rhetoric against the Hoffman report and focus on actual evidence. It is on the basis of evidence that, last August, Council set about making changes to APA's culture and policies.

For the sake of our reputation and our future, let's not be distracted from following through on our resolve. Of course, it's important to take new evidence into account, as long as we take responsibility for separating the wheat from the chaff.

Steven