

Chairman Jason Chaffetz
Opening Statement
As Delivered

We are meeting today to talk about the United State Secret Service and the accountability for the March 4, 2015 incident.

On March 4th, two senior Secret Service special agents – one had the title of Deputy Special Agent in Charge the Presidential Protection detail, Mr. Connolly and the other had the title of Assistant to the Special Agent in Charge for the Washington Field Office, that would be Mr. George Ogilvie.

The allegation and concern was they drove through a crime scene investigation of a potential bomb at the White House.

Following the incident, there were allegations the two agents were intoxicated after being at a bar downtown for a retirement party.

Most concerning, however, was the allegation neither agent was given a sobriety test, nor were the agents reprimanded in any way.

Part of the concern was, what happened in this potential bomb scene and what did they do about it? What did the supervisors know? When did they know? How did they report it up the chain of command?

Instead, everyone involved was told to go home and pretend like nothing happened.

To get a better sense of what happened on March 4, Ranking Member Cummings and I met with Secret Service Director Clancy.

Director Clancy could not answer our questions.

Next, Mr. Cummings and I scheduled a public hearing on the incident.

At the hearing, Director Clancy said could not answer the questions.

Instead, he deferred to the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, who was investigating the matter.

That investigation is now complete. We are pleased to have Mr. Roth here today to talk about the conclusions of that investigation.

Now that the facts are in, it is time for accountability.

The Inspector General determined it was more likely than not both Agents Connolly and Ogilvie's judgment was impaired by alcohol.

Since a sobriety test wasn't given to either agent the night of March 4, the IG came to this conclusion based on the facts:

- both Connolly and Ogilvie spent 5 hours in a bar running up a bar tab that included 14 drinks AFTER two hours of an open bar; and
- the objective behavior of two experienced Secret Service agents who should have known better.

The agents' impaired judgment resulted in them driving, and I quote:

“into a crime scene inches from what the rest of the Secret Service was treating as a potential explosive device and which, under different circumstances, could have endangered their own lives and those of the Uniformed Division officers responding.”

If that had been true; if that had been a real bomb, these agents would have been lucky to be alive. They were endangering the lives of too many people by doing what they had done.

Following the incident, the story of the incident began making its way up the chain of command, where it eventually reached Mr. Connolly, himself.

Though required to report what happened, Mr. Connolly chose not to.

Mr. Connolly even met with his boss - Special Agent in Charge Robert Buster - on March 6 to talk about the suspicious package incident, but made no mention of being involved in the incident himself.

Mr. Ogilvie, likewise, had a duty to self-report and chose not to.

As the Inspector General found, their failure to report “reflects either poor judgment or an affirmative desire to hide their activities.”

Relying on the honor system for reporting this type of egregious misconduct does not work when agents do not act honorably.

Senior Uniformed Division leaders also violated their duty to report by failing to inform Mr. Connolly's boss, the head of the Presidential Protective Division.

Perhaps the situation would have been dealt with earlier if the agents were given breathalyzer tests that night.

An officer on the scene told the Inspector General the watch commander decided not to administer a breathalyzer to Mr. Connolly and Mr. Ogilvie, because he was worried that to do so would be quote, 'a career killer.'

The watch commander was probably right.

Additionally, as the Inspector General stated, the watch commander's decision was likely influenced by 'the Secret Service's reputation for punishing or ignoring those who would further investigate or report violations' such as drunk driving.

And that is why the problems that led to this incident extend well beyond March 4, 2015. The ongoing concerns of the deep-seeded cultural problems within the Secret Service are pervasive and they continue.

We have thousands who serve this country honorably and patriotically. We appreciate them, but they are not above the law. The Secret Service has to abide by the law as well.

We have heard over and over again the source of morale problems within the Secret Service is that senior personnel are treated differently from the rank-and-file, and that the Uniform Division is treated differently from the Agents.

We have little doubt that because of this disparate treatment, Connolly and Ogilvie believed they could act this way and get away with it.

The culture of special treatment for senior agents must stop. This embarrassing and highly concerning pattern of misconduct and security incidents needs to end.

The Secret Service's mission is too important. I want to commend Mr. Roth and his team for their good work on this report. They acted swiftly. They put a lot of people towards it. And it's produced a very worthwhile result and that's why we are here today.

We look forward to hearing from Director Clancy on this incident and learning whether the agency plans to take disciplinary action against the individuals involved.

I have a concern that just retiring or stepping aside doesn't solve the concerns. It doesn't truly have the consequences that would be associated with such egregious behavior.

The job of the Secret Service is too important not to reprimand those who exercise shockingly poor judgment, which could put the President and his family at risk.

One of the other things we are going to explore is that in the Department of Homeland Security there are different penalties within the department itself. While there's a standard for Homeland Security there seems to be a different standard within the Secret Service and other agencies themselves. And yet, this is one of the reasons we formed the Department of

Homeland Security, to make sure they got best practices and management together so they could have this uniformity across; but it's not.

In fact one of the things the Inspector General found is that even the most senior people didn't know what the alcohol policy was. It's sort of an important thing to do. It's certainly an important thing to know.

Again we appreciate the good work of Mr. Roth and look forward to a good vibrant discussion today about the findings of him and his team.