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Counsel's Office, White House

Fielding, Fred - General Files

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Folder Title:

Scott Bloch

Withdrawn/Redacted Material

The George W. Bush Library

DOCUMENT NO.	FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
001	Email	Scott Bloch's Letter re the Integrity Committee - To: Fred Fielding - From: Clay Johnson	1	08/29/2008	P6/b6;
002	Email	Re: Update - To: Luis Reyes, et al. - From: Joie Gregor	1	10/23/2008	P6/b6;

COLLECTION TITLE:

Counsel's Office, White House

SERIES:

Fielding, Fred - General Files

FOLDER TITLE:

Scott Bloch

FRC ID:

11904

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
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PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

Deed of Gift Restrictions:

- A. Closed by Executive Order 13526 governing access to national security information.
- B. Closed by statute or by the agency which originated the document.
- C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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Records Not Subject to FOIA

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religious belief and morality. Stone was immediately hooted down, bloggers said. Who could that be?

SPECIAL COUNSEL

The Investigated Investigator

Leader of High-Profile Probes Is Under Scrutiny Himself

By ELIZABETH WILLIAMSON
Washington Post Staff Writer

When Special Counsel Scott J. Bloch put his obscure federal agency at the center of one of the furthest-reaching political investigations in the nation last week, it surprised many, but for different reasons than one might expect.

Bloch and the Office of Special Counsel aim to learn whether officials from Karl Rove on down used federal time and resources for Republican politicking, or pressured federal employees into doing the same. The team will also pursue allegations that David C. Iglesias was fired as U.S. attorney of New Mexico for his reluctance to undertake politically motivated cases and for absences related to his service as a Navy reservist.

Bloch has spent most of his tenure under investigation himself due to allegations of illegal personnel practices — and he would be investigating the executive branch at the same time that it is investigating him. What's more, as a Bush appointee who once wrote that he "sold all my mutual funds when Clinton was elected," Bloch is not quite apolitical.

"There's no conflict of interest and no law to support a theory that I have a conflict of interest," he said in an interview. "It would be inappropriate for the White House to interfere with my independence, or suggest I cannot undertake investigations that pertain to matters inside the White House. . . . I have had those throughout my tenure."

Like the office he heads, Bloch is little-known in Washington. He is a lawyer who spent a decade at a Lawrence, Kan., firm before riding into town in 2001 to become deputy director of the Justice Department's office of faith-based initiatives. In 2004, Justice Clarence Thomas swore him in as special counsel.

As federal agencies go, the Office of Special Counsel is tiny, about 100 lawyers and investigators headquartered at 17th and M streets. The agency protects federal employees from illegal employment practices and whistleblower retaliation, investigates claims of fraud and mismanagement and enforces the Hatch Act, which bans federal employees from politicking on Uncle Sam's dime. It is under this law that Bloch would pursue the White House probe.

He has not yet contacted the White House, but he has announced his intentions in the media. "We protect federal employees," he told CNN last week. "We protect the public from fraud and waste of resources, and that's what we do all day long, and this is another case."

Bloch has achieved a level of notoriety during his three-plus years as special counsel. Early on, he told a Senate panel that his office cannot protect gay federal workers from discrimination because the law does not extend to sexual orientation. Soon after, Bloch was accused of retaliating against employees who disputed his policies and of tossing out legitimate complaints and whistleblower cases to claim progress in paring the office backlog.

Other, less serious incidents have eroded morale, employees say. Last year, Bloch abruptly canceled an award



BY LEO BARNARD — THE WASHINGTON POST

Special Counsel Scott J. Bloch will look into allegations surrounding GOP politicking and a fired U.S. attorney.

ceremony for the federal whistle-blower of the year, several employees said, when he learned that the winner, a corrections official named Leroy Smith, planned to criticize the special counsel's office at a news conference afterward. Bloch said he called off the event after an employee had a death in her family.

Last summer, Bloch had to clarify the office dress code after the agency newsletter instructed employees to avoid such things as short skirts and tight pants, angering some of them.

In half a dozen inquiries by Congress, the Government Accountability Office and the Office of Personnel Management, so far "nothing has turned up," Bloch said.

He said charges that he can't handle this investigation come from organizations and individuals pursuing litigation against his office. "It's all absolute falsehood. . . . Wild falsehoods," he said. "I'm not going to stop doing my job."

Under his leadership, Bloch says, the agency has become more efficient and receptive to whistle-blowers and employees alleging unfair treatment and has built on a solid record of prosecuting those cases. He cited the work of career staff members in winning back pay and job reinstatement for a Department of Agriculture whistle-blower; exposing physician misconduct at a veterans hospital; and protecting military personnel denied employment because of service-related absences or injuries. Those latter protections, he said, apply to Iglesias, a Navy reservist.

The Office of Personnel Management has been investigating the retaliation charges against Bloch for about 18 months. Bloch and staff members loyal to him have complained about delays and disruptions, calling the inquiry a "witch hunt" and a "fishing expedition." Employees have accused Bloch of trying to prevent them from participating in the probe, charges he disputes.

"This will be a legitimate, thorough investigation. It will be fair, impartial according to the law and the facts," he told CNN. "We are an independent agency, which means that I cannot be removed from office except for malfeasance."

Staff researcher Madonna Lebling contributed to this report.

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FOLDER TITLE:

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FRC ID:

11904

OA Num.:

13497

NARA Num.:

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FOIA ID and Segment:

2014-0441-F

2014-0210-F

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Fielding, Fred F.

From: Reyes, Luis A.
Sent: Tuesday, October 21, 2008 10:34 AM
To: Fielding, Fred F.
Cc: Gregor, Joie A.; Edwards, Tobi M.
Subject: Scott Bloch's Term

Fred, fyi
Scott Bloch's term ends on December 12, 2008. He was appointed on December 13, 2003.

Wanted to let you know b/c he refers to a January 5 date in his letter implying that his term ends then - not correct.

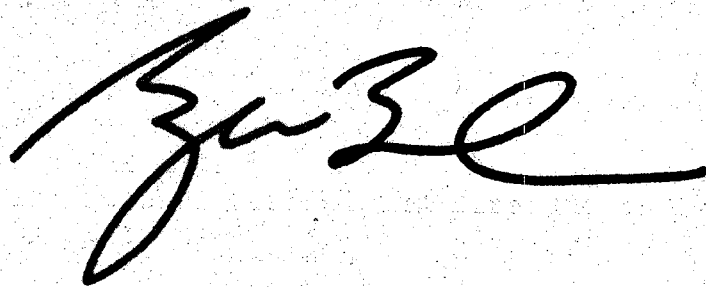
Luis A. Reyes
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Presidential Personnel
The White House
Washington
(202) 456-5296

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 23, 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR WILLIAM E. REUKAUF
Associate Special Counsel and Director of Field
Office Operations

Pursuant to the Constitution and the laws of the United States including section 3345(a) of title 5, United States Code, as amended by the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998, you are directed to perform the duties of the office of Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barack", is written across the lower half of the page.

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