

March 16, 2004

NOT SENT

George W. Bush  
President of the United States  
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

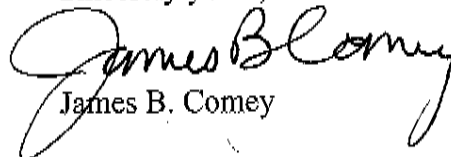
At my confirmation hearing, I was asked what I would do if I concluded that a course of action was fundamentally wrong and I could not convince my superiors of that fact. I replied:

"You are asking me to imagine an apocalyptic situation that I don't expect to encounter. I would not take this job if I thought I was going to be working with people who didn't share my love of the law and love of the institution. So I don't think I'll ever find myself in that position. I can commit to you though that -- because I talk so much about integrity and about this great group behind me -- that's what I really care about. I don't care about politics. I don't care about expediency. I don't care about friendship. I care about doing the right thing. And I would never be part of something that I believe to be fundamentally wrong. I mean obviously we all make policy judgments where people disagree, but I will do the right thing."

Over the last two weeks I have encountered just such an apocalyptic situation, where I and the Department of Justice have been asked to be part of something that is fundamentally wrong. As we have struggled over these last days to do the right thing, I have never been prouder of the Department of Justice or of the Attorney General. Sadly, although I believe this has been one of the institution's finest hours, we have been unable to right that wrong.

I would give much not to be in this position. But, as I told you during our private meeting last week, here I stand; I can do no other. Therefore, with a heavy heart and undiminished love of my country and my Department, I resign as Deputy Attorney General of the United States, effective immediately.

Sincerely yours,

  
James B. Comey