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 **NEWSLETTER** 

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**IN WRITING ≠  
RIGHT**





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### *In Writing ≠ Right*

“Just because it’s in writing, doesn’t make it right.”

Credit here goes to my good friend, former [Defense Intelligence Agency](#) survivor, and USMC Judge Advocate. And no more is it apropos than the debate I am witnessing regarding the “Signalgate” kerfuffle. When I posted last week that the news was reporting that the [DoDIG had in their possession SECRET//NOFORN evidence](#) which was reportedly leaked via Signal, many posed the argument that the SECDEF, as the Original Classification Authority, had the ability to declassify the material and hence could not possibly be culpable of transmitting classified information via unclassified means.

Cool story.

Let us pivot away from the [March 2025 Yemen strikes](#) and instead to a hypothetical strike at some point in the future...

Imagine for a minute you have a close friend, or family member, maybe even a son or daughter, whose life was jeopardized by a leak of sensitive information just prior to this theoretical future strike. And because of a mishandling of operational information, such as strike timings, orders of battle, or other pertinent details, they could have been (or actually were) KIA, MIA, or otherwise harmed. What would you say then? Would you be so quick to excuse those irresponsible actions, or those who carried them out? Would you still be so apt to cite DoD Regulation Umptyfratz in their defense? Would you still be so fixated on the proverbial tree that you missed the forest? I highly doubt it.

Hypothetical scenario discussion complete.

Walk the Talk Foundation’s very own Francesca Graham produced a phenomenal [podcast titled “Abusers vs. Eunuchs”](#) in which she outlines how the latter, the proverbial military [Eunuch](#), is quick to distance themselves from accountability



using buffers of “administrivia,” bureaucracy, and self-authored/self-protecting regulations. They are quick to deflect fault, many times calling upon their [Praetorian Guards](#) of Inspectors General and Judges Advocate to insulate themselves from responsibility. And it is here, where the Signal leak story becomes extremely relevant to the work we do at the Walk the Talk Foundation, because we continue to see an unsettling trend of leaders who abdicate responsibility to those not in positions of command. In a majority of Reprisal cases, as a perfect exemplar, we see blatant acts of retaliation go unsubstantiated by an IG because of some ticky-tack rule and/or arbitrary conclusion made by an investigator. But the IG is not completely to blame here...why? Because there exists an entity who can look at a Report of Investigation and call “BS!” A person who can read a timeline of events derived from blatant acts of retribution and say, “That is, in fact, Reprisal.” And that person is a Commander. But do they do that? Do they ever intervene and say “I copy what you’ve told me, IG/JAG, but I know what’s right and I overrule you, despite that potentially ‘harming’ the beloved institution.”? Rarely and ever-increasingly more rarely.

And when a victim/complainant goes to their leadership and/or the IG and asks why there will be no accountability and no restitution (an answer the IG provides 98% of the time, [per Congressional study](#)), the answer is too often to cover behind a rule, or a regulation, or some DoDI. But does that mean it’s *right*? Absolutely not. And more and more people are seeing that disconnect (sadly, not enough are, though).

So, we return to “Signalgate” and the argument that no rule was violated when the Secretary transmitted classified material (which was dubiously retroactively declassified at some point, according to some) via an unclassified chat app.

Was a rule violated? For sake of argument, let’s just call this a “Maybe.”

Was it *right*? Hell no, it was unequivocally not.

And if you had a son or daughter who was unnecessarily put in harm’s way because of the mishandling, I have little doubt you’d disagree.

But perhaps the most unsettling sentiments emerging from our Service members about the Signalgate discussion is not about the act itself, or the inevitable lack of accountability, but the acceptance of, and in some instances fervent defense of the unabated atrophy of our military leadership culture - to not only accept when a leader deflects responsibility, or abdicates it to their minions, but to go so far as to *encourage* and *applaud* that behavior. This is a culture shift which should cause great alarm, but for



many does not.

For too many Service members are now seemingly content with being guided not by leaders, but by regulations,  
...to be led not by Commanders, but lawyers and IGs,  
...to no longer concern themselves with what is *right*, just what is *written*.

And it is this mentality we see from our military members and leaders, current and former, which should be pause for real concern.



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- ▶ Find your Representative here: <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>
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Feel free to reach out privately at [francescagraham@walkthetalkfoundation.org](mailto:francescagraham@walkthetalkfoundation.org) or in the comments.

**PETITIONS:** [SIGN THIS PETITION](#) demanding that our leaders in Congress change the DoD's unjust administrative investigatory system.

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