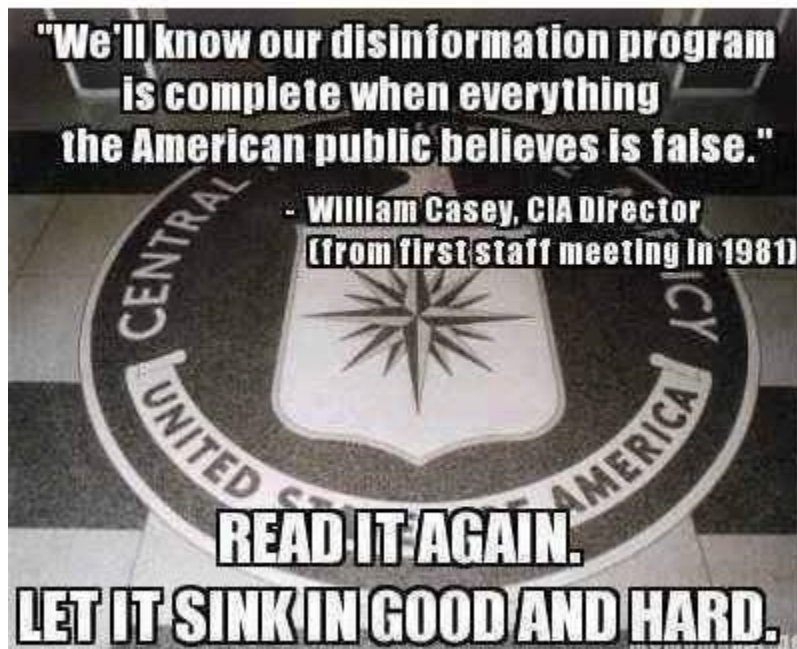


# Did William Casey (CIA Director) really say, "We'll know our disinformation program is complete when everything the American public believes is false."?



A disclaimer: I just like Quorans debunking or showing the stupidity behind some of the worst FB memes.

13 Answers



[Barbara Honegger](#)

[Written 25 Nov 2014](#)

I am the source for this quote, which was indeed said by CIA Director William Casey at an early February 1981 meeting of the newly elected President Reagan with his new cabinet secretaries to report to him on what they had learned about their agencies in the first couple of weeks of the administration.

The meeting was in the Roosevelt Room in the West Wing of the White House, not far from the Cabinet Room. I was present at the meeting as Assistant to the chief domestic policy adviser to the President. Casey first told Reagan that he had been astonished to discover that over 80 percent of the 'intelligence' that the analysis side of the CIA produced was based

on open public sources like newspapers and magazines.

As he did to all the other secretaries of their departments and agencies, Reagan asked what he saw as his goal as director for the CIA, to which he replied with this quote, which I recorded in my notes of the meeting as he said it. Shortly thereafter I told Senior White House correspondent Sarah McClendon, who was a close friend and colleague, who in turn made it public. Barbara Honegger

[bshonegg@gmail.com](mailto:bshonegg@gmail.com)

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[Greg Smith](#)

[Written 22 Sep 2014](#)

Ex-DCI Bill Casey's quote was attributed online as reported only by Mae Brussell, and so, I bounced it off Barbara Honegger because I knew she worked for Mae B back in the day, and here's what I got on the ACTUAL SOURCE (talk about luck! - I extracted actual email addresses):

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Barbara Honegger

Date: Sun, Sep 21, 2014 at 11:19 PM

Subject: Re: Conference on THE WARREN REPORT AND THE  
JFK ASSASSINATION : FIVE DECADES OF  
SIGNIFICANT DISCLOSURES

To: Greg Smith

I told Mae about it when we worked together ...

On Sun, Sep 21, 2014 at 10:32 PM, Greg Smith wrote:

Thanks Barbara! That's priceless. The web attributes it to Mae B only, and therefore, it's discounted in chat and group conversations on social media. You might want to give it better street cred? Your call!

On Sep 21, 2014, at 8:59 PM, Barbara Honegger wrote:

> Seriously -- I personally was the Source

> for that William Casey quote. He said it  
> at an early Feb. 1981 meeting in the  
> Roosevelt Room in the West Wing of  
> the White House which I attended, and  
> I immediately told my close friend and  
> political godmother Senior White House  
> Correspondent Sarah McClendon, who  
> then went public with it without naming  
> the source ...  
> On Sat, Sep 20, 2014 at 2:49 PM, Greg Smith wrote:

> Love to, but can't break away. I'll definitely get the DVD for future very intense scrutiny!  
On that note, in the words of the infamous William J. Casey, "We'll know our disinformation  
program is complete when everything the American public believes is false."

>  
> On Sep 17, 2014, at 1:25 AM, Barbara Honegger wrote:  
>> I'm going to try to go to the historic conference.  
>> Please try to as well...  
>> Barbara  
>> On Tue, Sep 16, 2014 at 8:34 PM, Jerry Policoff wrote:  
>> Re: Conference on THE WARREN REPORT AND THE  
>> JFK ASSASSINATION : FIVE DECADES OF  
>> SIGNIFICANT DISCLOSURES

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[William Petroff](#), B.A. in political science

[Updated 23 Sep 2013](#)

Who knows. He himself is long since dead and we're so far removed from the purported occurrence that anyone who could be reasonably believed to have knowledge of the alleged meeting probably wouldn't remember anything so exactly.

That being said, it's worth pointing out two things:

1. As far as I can tell, there's only one "source" for this attribution, a journalist named Mae Brussell. That's it. No one else, to my knowledge, has ever corroborated this. A single source tends to be problematic in that you have little way of knowing if it's in fact accurate; if a quote was transcribed incorrectly, or misunderstood, or made up all together, we'd be none the wiser.[1]
2. We don't have any idea of the context in which the alleged quote was said. All that there is is the single sentence which, all on its own, becomes pretty worthless unless you want to imprint pre-existing beliefs on it. Without the larger context of the statement, we have no idea whether or not it was actually said in the manner in which subsequent people have clearly intended it to come across as. For all we know, it could be the punch line of a joke or even some very worthwhile advice about trying to make disinformation so

believable to the Soviets that it's even believable to Americans, rather than something that sounds ominously dark.

[1] Adding to this was the fact that Brussell had a reputation for being something of a conspiracy theorist. While that, in and of itself, shouldn't necessarily make what she claimed wrong, it certainly means that we ought to adopt a much more stringent approach to dealing with stuff she said happened.

23.2k Views · [View Upvotes](#) · Answer requested by [David McKerracher](#)



[Geoffrey Widdison](#), Engineer, reader, thinker, dreamer. Scientist, scholar, Latter-Day Saint.  
[Updated 27 Mar 2015](#)

Almost certainly not. Look at that quote. That doesn't even sound like something a human being would say. That sounds like something a person would say in someone else's paranoid fantasies. And what's the source? Do you think we have public records of CIA staff meetings? Or do you figure that one of his staff decided to go public with that? In which case, who? And where were they reported?

It's hard to say for certain that someone *didn't* say something, but there are so many made up "quotes" floating around that I'd be unlikely to believe something like that unless I knew where it came from.

UPDATE: With the addition of Barbara Honegger's answer, we now have a source for the quote. We also have critical context around it, which makes it much more plausible. He was evidently referring to a campaign to spread false information in the public sphere in hopes that it would reach Soviet Intelligence and present them with bad data. Certainly a troubling precedent, but not as sinister as it sounds out of context.

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[Don Harmon](#)  
[Written 25 Aug](#)

No. Various false sources claim “my friend said (he or she) heard it at a meeting. . . .” but the quote appears only in fringe group blogs and websites. Is it possible? Yes, possible, but it is hard to imagine without documentation that the generally sharp Casey would say something so stupid and damning for the CIA, an organization in which he had great pride.

616 Views · [View Upvotes](#) · Answer requested by [Joseph Jeson](#)



[David Chen](#)

[Written Jan 13, 2015](#)

The best answer is here: [Barbara Honegger's answer to Did William Casey \(CIA Director\) really say, "We'll know our disinformation program is complete when everything the American public believes is false."?](#)

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[Tommy Berlin](#)

[Written Nov 15, 2014](#)

It's completely true.

Not that it matters. No conservative I know retains the ability to think off script, let alone rise above his indoctrination, and neither the script or their indoctrination allows this to be real.

So as far as they're concerned, it simply isn't possible.

Neither was David Stockman's admission that the idea of 'trickle down' was to bankrupt the federal government so they could finally do away with social security, while making themselves filthy rich...

Or Reagan being a traitor for negotiating with the Iranians BEFORE he was elected....

Or Bush II stealing the 2000 election....

Well...it's a LONG list....

Neither is global warming, Republican racism, or the fact that killing people is ok....as long as those being killed aren't conservatives and those doing the killing are making a profit.

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[Melissa Melton](#)

[Written Jan 13, 2015](#)

I love how people are still arguing this quote isn't real EVEN AFTER THE SOURCE OF THE ORIGINAL QUOTE AT THE WHITE HOUSE IN 1981 comes in here and personally vouches for hearing it with her own ears where and when... Guess the contents of the quote ARE true.

3.9k Views · [View Upvotes](#)



[Ozgur Zeren](#), Author at ViaPopuli.com

[Written Oct 22, 2014](#)

He doesnt need to have said it. CIA has run many disinformation campaigns against american public.

## [Operation Mockingbird](#)

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[Mike Leary](#), Psychotherapist in private practice, Individual-Marital-Parenting-A&D

[Written Sep 10, 2013](#)

Judge for yourself what conservatives want.

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[Ido Sarig](#)

[Written Sep 10, 2013](#)

Almost certainly not. A pointed out by others, there's a single, uncorroborated source for this - a minor radio talk show host, who did not say where she got this info, and was known as a conspiracy theorist.

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[John Gibson](#)

[Written Sep 10, 2013](#)

A short statement, out of its context, isn't really a statement at all in my opinion. Taken literally, this statement is ludicrous. Therefore, if ever uttered at all, it is very likely to have been hyperbolic sarcasm, and thusly ignorable by history. From what I saw on TV back then, this conclusion exactly matches to Casey's offbeat personality. William Casey was among the oddest of ducks, but no more so than those paranoids who ask us to "READ IT AGAIN. LET IT SINK IN GOOD AND HARD" about a goofy joke on day one of a new political term.

The only reason I even bothered to answer this, is so I could say:

If someone tells you to let it sink in good and hard, you are about to be fucked.

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[Fred Landis](#), Investigative Reporter

[Written Sep 10, 2013](#)

The American public has never been the primary target of any disinformation campaign.

The CIA once had influence in a number of English language publications abroad, some of which stories were reprinted in the US media. This was known as "blowback", and unintended in most cases.

The CIA fabricated a story that the Russians in Afghanistan made plastic bombs in the shape of

toys, to blow up children. Casey repeated this story, knowing it to be disinformation, as fact to US journalists and politicians.

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