Should Congress Plead The Fifth?
Barbara Kruljac, Casey Goedtel, Michael LaMarca, Imani Osias, Matthew Leonte, Michael Isra
Philosophy 102-39, Professor Genevieve LaForge

Introduction
Omission is the intentional withholding of information. A lie is the telling of a false claim. With these facts, should omission be considered a lie?

Resources


For Omission
- **Osama Bin Laden Mission** - The Obama Administration go ahead for the assassination was successful because it was not compromised.
- **Utilitarianism** - Will a lie of omission produce the most happiness and prevent the most pain? If so, it is morally acceptable.
- **Social Contract Theory** - Government has an obligation to be honest to it’s people, just as citizens have an obligation to be truthful with one another.

Against Omission
- **NSA/Snowden Case** - The government agency should not have omitted the fact that they were intensively spying on U.S. citizens and foreign government officials.
- **Immanuel Kant** - Honesty is a perfect duty.
  ○ **Categorical Imperative** - What would the consequences be if lying were a universal practice?
- **Social Contract Theory** – If the government permits itself to lie to its citizens, the citizens can then release themselves from the contract.

Discussion

- Should the U.S. government have omitted the mission that assassinated Osama Bin Laden? Why or why not?
- Kant and his stance on the Categorical Imperative.
- Mill and his version of Utilitarianism.

We have concluded that omission is acceptable. Essentially, Congress can plead the Fifth. However, it is dependent on the circumstances at hand, how well the situation is handled, and how effectively the solution is carried out.