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bret: we've been telling you in recent days about a federal law enforcement operation that deliberately put guns in the hands of criminals. the guns ended up in mexico and were used in crimes there, including dozens of murders. allegation of multiple agency involvement, deliberate lack of communication and a coverup. the man who has been looking for answers in accountability for operation fast and furious is house oversight and government reform chairman michael eisner. he joins us live -- chairman michael eisner. **Darrell Issa**. thank you for joining us.

thank you for bringing light to this important issue.

bret: according to a letter you and senator chuck grassley sent to the attorney general eric hold every it stated "the evidence we gathered raises the disturbing possibility that the justice department not only allowed criminals to smuggle weapons but that taxpayer dollars from other agencies may have financed those engaging in such activities." so from what you know, why was this operation launched in the first place? what was the goal?

it depends on whose perspective you are looking at. if you're kennelton at the a.f.t., you're told this is way to follow the guns and roll up bigger fish. if you are justice and can see other agencies, d.e.a. and know what they know, you know the name of bigger fish and you have paid informants as middlemen. that's where we discover that it was the u.s. dollars that at least some part was used to buy weapons.

bret: there is no evidence of what you have seen. you have seen more than we have. a.t.f. was tracking the guns, that they were actually tracking them across the border.

you are right. with only two exceptions where they put tracking devices on them, was there any physical tracking, in a few hours in one case at most. they watched them go into mexico but they didn't inform the mexican officials and they didn't have a team on the other side of the boarder to follow it. so at some point the signal disappeared.

you says the a.t.f. has been muzzled and the d.o.j. sent over false denials and buried its head in the sand in the interview over the weekend, this is a quote just released from the transcript from kenneth nelson who says, "tough agents who were involved in the case who didn't have bad motive is in doing this. they were trying to do what they thought was the right thing and guided by their supervisors." congressman, how high does this go?

the highest level of justice. when i say that, lenny brewer area of justice that has to authorize wiretaps and other activities. controlling a task force including d.e.a., f.b.i., element of the u.s. attorney office has to go to the top level of justice. we know it goes there. that is where we want answers. a.t. f., though a participant, was kept in the dark.

bret: we had a picture of the assistant attorney general there were wiretaps involved in this case. do you think this went all the way to the attorney general?

we have been told by the president and the attorney general they not only didn't authorize it, but in the case of the attorney general he claims he didn't know it till long after, frankly, justice claims i was briefed in a way i don't remember being briefed and neither was anybody nellis the room. we have an oddity that the attorney general knew or should have known long before he says he did. when he sends this letter, months go by before he says he knew of the program. it doesn't make sense to us to have a seep your senator get a letter rebuffed and congressman sending over, a chairman sending over a number of inquiries and the attorney general says he wasn't aware of it at that time. we have our doubts.

do you have indication that the motive was political in any way? there are allegations about, you know, gun control and efforts by the administration. do you have any allegation that's true?

the allegation i can make under george w. bush, u.s. attorneys were fired for not enforcing gun laws strictly enough. under this administration there seems to be a don't bother to enforce at all policy. so that disturbs us. there is less gun enforcement, illegal trans, a under administration that theoretically is more for gun control. george w. bush went out of his way to help the mexicans having a zero tolerance to illegal gun sales to end up in mexico. that should be answered by the administration. the bush policy should not have been reversed.

bret: last thing, you mentioned confidential informant. are we to believe that they knew it was a gun runner and turned the other way on the incidents?

i can't speak to the turn the other way with specificity. i can say they knew they had people who were participating in this and they did nothing to inform atf. that is disturbing that the agency we count on for gun and explosive protection was kept in the dark about these individuals. as by the way, were the a.t.f. agents in mexico city who were finding these weapons. and were unable to trace them back to the program.

bret: quickly, only 15 seconds here, what is the next step?

the next step we follow the evidence where it leads, whistle blowers and confidential informants if you will within justice coming to us. we're not getting real discovery from the administration. they are sending us sheets of paper that all black from where they have been redacted. yes, hope to get more information. administration decides coming clean is better than slow-rolling the discovery we're getting.

bret: thank you for your time. keep us apprised.

we will.

bret: another gun crime was supposed to inspire greater stability in public discourse. we'll see how it is going. with president obama get the same ridicule his predecessor did for the same -- predecessor did for the same mistake? a living, breathing intelligence that's help drive the future of business. in here, inventory can be taught to learn. machines have a voice. medical history follows you. it's the at&t network -- a network of possibilities... committed to delivering the most advanced mobile broadband experience to help move business... forward. [male announcer] when someone changes lanes without warning? or when you're distracted? when you're falling asleep at the wheel? do you know how you'll react? lexus can now precisely test the most unpredictable variable in a car -- the driver. when you pursue perfection, you don't just engineer the world's most advanced driving simulator. you engineer amazing.

bret: now some fresh pickings from the political grapevine. many people include president obama called for more civility and rhetoric in tone in the wake of the shooting of arizona congresswoman gabrielle giffords in january. at the tuson memorial, the president said it's important for us to make sure we're talking with each other and in a way that heals, not in a way that wounds. those calls are apparently fading from memory in the debt ceiling debate. wednesday the president said the issue should not be used as a gun against the head of the american people. newsweek tina brown compared republicans refusing to raise taxes to suicide bombers. this week, chris matthews said twice the g.o.p. position was terrorism. they called that extreme comparison from matthews and noted the rhetoric certainly seems to be heating up.