

## Bill Clinton -- Apology to Human-Experiment Victims

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRT0B8JPwa8>

This report I received today is a monumental document in more ways than one, (Clinton smiles and holds up a huge bound document as the audience laughs with him) but it is a very, very important piece of America's history and it will shape America's future in ways that will make us a more honorable, more successful, and more ethical country.

What this committee learned I would like to review today with a little more detail than Dr. Fadren said because I think it must be engraved on our national memory. Thousands of government sponsored experiments did take place at hospitals, universities and military bases around our nation. The goal was to understand the effects of radiation exposure on the human body.

While most of tests were ethical by any standards, some were unethical, not only by today's standards but by the standards in the time in which they were conducted. They fail both the test of our national values and the test of humanity. Informed consent means the doctor tells you the risk of the treatment you are about to undergo. In too many cases informed consent was withheld.

Americans were kept in the dark about the effects of what was being done to them. The deception extended beyond the test subjects themselves to encompass their families and the American people as a whole for these experiments were kept secret. And they were shrouded not for a compelling reason of national security but for the simple fear of embarrassment, and that was wrong.

So today on behalf of another generation of American leaders and another generation of American citizens, the United States of America offers a sincere apology to those of our citizens who were subjected to these experiments, and to their families, and to their communities. When the government does wrong we have a moral responsibility to admit it. The duty we owe to one another to tell the truth and to protect our civil citizens from excesses like these is one we can never walk away from.

Our government failed in that duty and it offers an apology to the survivors and their families and to all the American people who must, who must, be able to rely upon the United States to keep its word, to tell the truth and to do the right thing. Make no mistake, as the committee report says, there are circumstances where compensation is appropriate as a matter of ethics and principle. I am committed to seeing to it that the United States of America lives up to its responsibility.

Our greatness is measured not only in how we so frequently do right but also how we act when we know we've done the wrong thing. How we confront our mistakes, make our apologies, and take action. That's why this morning I signed an executive order instructing every arm and agency of our government that conducts, supports, or regulates research involving human beings to review immediately their procedures in light of recommendations of this report and the best knowledge and standards today and to report back to me by Christmas.