

ANATOMY OF A WHITE HOUSE SMEAR, REDUX

A couple of months ago, I summarized the Plame Affair best as I could speculate. A lot of new information has come to light, so I decided to update that narrative.

The Background—Niger Claims and Power Struggles

I'll start with some background. There are two reasons why members of the Bush Administration were reckless enough to out a NOC out of petty revenge. First, Wilson's criticisms risked exposing their elaborate plot to plant Niger forgeries. There is now a lot of circumstantial evidence that Iran-Contra operative Michael Ledeen and Harold Rhode planted the Niger forgeries with SISMI, Italian intelligence. I think the original plan was just to plant the forgeries so friendly members of SISMI could funnel the intelligence—but never the documents—to the US. But as people within the US Intelligence Community continued to question the Niger claims, the plotters finally had to produce actual documents. Which is why, in October of 2002, Elisabetta Burba, an employee of the Berlusconi-owned Panorama, received the documents.