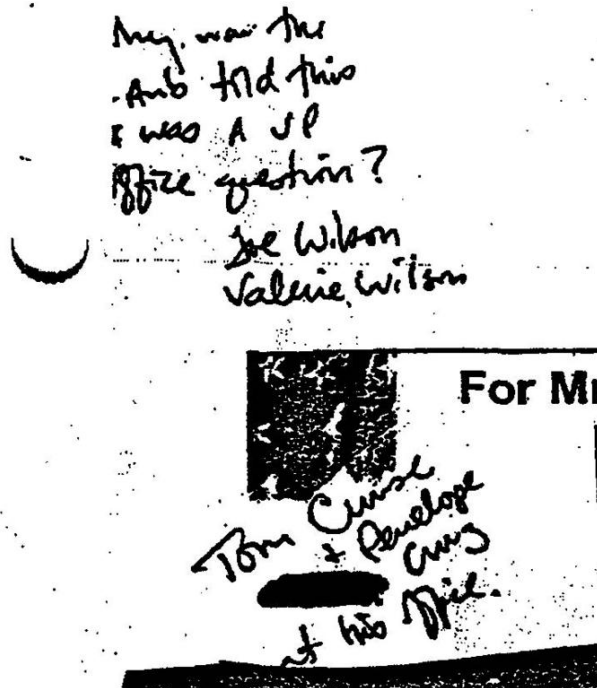


TOM CRUISE AND NATIONAL SECURITY



Here was my own personal favorite moment in the trial coverage on Wednesday. At one point, Cline was questioning Schmall about all the thing that Schmall's work, as a briefer, helped Libby do with his work. He introduced 7 of the 9 very important things that Libby will use in his memory defense. Here's the passage from the swell liveblog someone's doing.

C Allowed them to address very serious issues. Terrorism, terroistthreats, homeland security, North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Middle East.

This is really a huge condensation of what Cline was doing—he was getting a response from Schmall after each bullet item. Well, once he hit North Korea, I realized he was doing the very important dots. So I started anticipating what he was going to say next. So in the media room, it went like this:

Cline: North Korea.

Schmall: Yes

emptywheel: Iran

Cline: Iran

Schmall: Yes

emptywheel: Iraq

Cline: Iraq

Schmall: Yes

At this point David Corn, who was sitting next to me joined in. And at the end, we noted, "hey, you forgot the Turkish soliders! And Liberia." A bit of fun for the frantic liveblogger.

Now, I apologize to those in the media room if this pissed you off. But really, this defense already looks hackneyed to me. I'm sure it doesn't, yet, to the jurors. But boy, it will be. And what with the news that, instead of focusing on these very important security issues, he was instead chatting with Tom Cruise and Penelope Cruz about how badly Germany treats Scientologists, I suspect it's going to appear rather disingenuous to the American people. Perhaps if Libby had said no to the Tom Cruise meeting, we would have found Osama bin Laden.