WHY YOU DON'T HAVE THE GUYS THAT ARE PART OF THE STORY…

…Covering the story…

Not surprisingly, when David Gregory had Karl Rove on Meet the Press this morning, he never called Rove on any of Rove's misrepresentations. That's par for the course, on NBC. When Russert had Bob Novak on, he didn't call him on any of the misrepresentations, either. (Though to NBC's credit, they had Matt Cooper on to smack Karl around after Karl was gone.) Of course, both Russert (as Libby's fictional source for Plame's identity) and Gregory (as one of the people whom Ari Fleischer leaked Plame's identity to) are key players in this story. They're not exactly reporting from a position of comfort or clarity.

So it falls to me to do what Gregory ought to have done while he had Karl in front of him. Here's the transcript, with my annotations:

> MR. GREGORY:Â Let me talk about the CIA leakcase, of which you were obviously a, a central part.Â This is what thepresident said in 2003 after the identity of Valerie Plame was divulgedin a Robert Novak column.Â Watch.
>
> (Videotape, September 30, 2003)
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> PRES. GEORGE W.BUSH:Â If thereâ€™s a leak out of my administration, I want to know whoit is.Â And if the person has violated laws, that person will be takencare of.
>
> (End videotape)
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> MR. GREGORY: Robert Novak, who divulged Valerie Plameâ€™s name in his column, appearedon this program with Tim Russert back in July, and Tim asked about hisbook.Â Watch.

> (Videotape, July 15, 2007)
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> MR. RUSSERT: Then you go on to say, in the book, â€œSenior White House adviser KarlRove returned my call late that
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> afternoon [July 8th, 2003],â€the same day.Â â€œI mentioned I had heard that Wilsonâ€™s wife worked atthe CIA in the counterproliferation section and that she had suggestedWilson be sent to Niger.Â I distinctly remember Roveâ€™s reply, â€˜Oh, youknow that, too.â€™ Rove and I also discussed other aspects of Wilsonâ€™smission, but since he never has disclosed them publicly, neither haveI.â€ So you considered Roveâ€™s comments, â€œOh, you know that, too,â€ as aconfirmation?
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> MR. ROBERT NOVAK:Â Yes.
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> (End videotape)
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> MR. GREGORY:Â Were you a confirming source for Robert Novak?

Note, Gregory didn't focus on the Administration's earlier claims that Karl was not involved in the leak. Rather, he sets the bar higher, with Bush's quote that he would "take care of" (and how—can you say commutation?) anyone who "violated laws."

> MR. ROVE:Â No. And I, I remember it slightly differently.Â I remember saying, â€œIâ€™veheard that, too.â€ Let, let me say this.Â There is a civil lawsuit filedby Mr. Wilson and Ms. Plame.Â It has been tossed out at the districtcourt level.Â Theyâ€™ve announced their intention to appeal.Â I think itis better that I not add anything beyond what is already in the publicrecord until that suit is resolved.Â But, as Iâ€™mâ€”my recollection isthat I said, â€œI heard that, too.â€ Weâ€”I would point you to…

> MR. GREGORY:Â Where, where had you heard that?

Ah, the ongoing legal proceedings dodge. You'd think, at a minimum, Gregory would have pushed Rove for a commitment to come clean after the dismissal is held up on appeal.

But the more important question would be, "Karl, that line, 'I've heard that too,' exactly parallels the line that Scooter Libby claims to have used with journalists, that he had simply 'heard this news from journalists.' Is it just a freakish coincidence that your story about your involvement in this leak so perfectly resembles Libby's story—a story that a jury has already determined to be a deliberate lie?"

> MR. ROVE:Â Youâ€™ll have to wait.
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> MR. GREGORY:Â Butthatâ€™s an important distinction, because theâ€”youâ€”â€œI heard that, too,â€suggests that you heard it from somebody else rather than knowing ityourself.
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> MR. ROVE:Â Thatâ€™s correct.
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> MR. GREGORY:Â But he, he took those notes down just as you said them.

Notes? Novak has notes? In spite of the fact he has in the past Novak said he didn't have notes?

> MR. ROVE:Â Well,but Iâ€”my recollection is, â€œIâ€™ve heard that, too.â€Soâ€”but the point is,if, if, if a journalist had said to me, â€œIâ€™d like you to confirm this,â€my answer would have been, â€œI canâ€™t.Â I donâ€™t know.Â Iâ€™ve heard that,too.â€

Again, the appropriate follow-up would be, "There you are again, Karl, a story that perfectly mirrors Libby's felonious perjury." And this—not later, after Karl has safely hidden in his dark little world—would be the

appropriate time to raise the fact that Rove leaked this information to Cooper with no caveats.