

NOVAK, THAT'S BECAUSE THE TRIAL WASN'T ABOUT YOUR LEAK

I'm really fascinated that—after Dana Pig Missile got asked whether Bush authorized the leak of Valerie Wilson's identity—Bob Novak has decided to wade into the Scottie McC attack industry to try to distract attention away from that near-confirmation in Scottie McC's book that Bush authorized the leak of Valerie Wilson's identity (h/t dakine).

In Scott McClellan's purported tell-all memoir of his trials as President Bush's press secretary, he virtually ignores Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage's role leaking to me Valerie Plame's identity as a CIA employee. That fits the partisan Democratic version of the Plame affair, in keeping with the overall tenor of the book, "What Happened: Inside the Bush White House and Washington's Culture of Deception."

[snip]

In claiming he was misled about the Plame affair, McClellan mentions Armitage only twice. Armitage being the leaker undermines the Democratic theory, now accepted by McClellan, that Bush, Vice President Cheney and political adviser Karl Rove aimed to delegitimize Wilson as a war critic. The way that McClellan handles the leak leads former colleagues to suggest he could not have written this book by himself.

Thanks Novak! I've been wondering what these checks from Scottie's publisher are for! Come to find out I've secretly ghost-written Scottie's book without even knowing about it. But why is

it, I wonder, that you neglect to mention one of the villains of our "conspiracy theory," convicted felon Scooter Libby?

Novak is explicitly pissed that Scottie's book undercuts the narrative (some might call it a cover story) that Novak, Rove, Libby, Cheney, and Bush have cultivated about the leak: that it was all about Richard Armitage.

On Page 173, McClellan first mentions my Plame leak, but he does not identify Armitage as the leaker until Page 306 of the 323-page book – and then only in passing. Armitage, who was antiwar and anti-Cheney, does not fit the conspiracy theory that McClellan now buys into. When, after two years, Armitage publicly admitted that he was my source, the life went out of Wilson's campaign. In "What Happened," McClellan dwells on Rove's alleged deceptions as if the real leaker were still unknown.

Of course, Novak knows well that the Armitage story was always only a shiny object, one that distracted from the classified information—almost certainly Valerie Wilson's identity—that Cheney ordered Libby to leak to Judy Miller. It distracts from the curious conversation that Novak had with Libby during leak week, one they both apparently tried to hide, and a conversation that was still early enough for Libby to pass on the news that Valerie was a covert operative. And it distracts from the fact that the first thing Libby did on the morning that OVP went into hyper-drive researching Joe and, eventually, Valerie Wilson was to listen to Bush explain that he was concerned about the Kristoff story.

You get the feeling Novak's trying to restore the power of the shiny object that has been fading over time?