A BLOWJOB FOR LIZ "BABYDICK" CHENEY

Joe Hagan has an epic softball in the New York Magazine describing PapaDick Cheney's plan to salvage his legacy. Or rather, Liz "BabyDick" Cheney's plan to salvage Daddy's legacy, and with it, launch her own career. (At several points, the piece comes close to suggesting PapaDick's mental acuity is finally going the way of his heart.) It relies on such hard-hitting sources as Rush Limbaugh, Elliott Abrams, former Cheney press aide Pete Williams, and Michael Goldfarb saying, "You have a little crush on her … It's hard not to."

Since I've mentioned Pete Williams, this description of how much NBC loves the Cheneys is one of the best parts of the article.

> Fox is a regular pulpit, of course, but Liz is also all over NBC, where she happens to be social friends with *Meet the Press* host David Gregory (whose wife worked with Liz 's husband at the law firm Latham & Watkins), family friends with Justice Department reporter Pete Williams (Dick Cheney's press aide when he was secretary of Defense), and neighborhood friends with *Morning Joe* co-host Mika Brzezinski, daughter of Carter-administration national-security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski. When Mika criticized Dick Cheney on her show last year, the former vice-president sent her a box of chocolate cupcakes.
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> Lawrence O'Donnell, an MSNBC pundit who engaged in a particularly testy shouting match on *Good Morning America* with Liz Cheney over waterboarding, says the networks have allowed her a high degree of control over her appearances. "She had up to that point been completely accustomed to having interviews go her way and ceded on her terms," he

> observes. “She has been careful to make sure that the interviews worked that way.”

Though somehow Hagan missed the detail from the Libby trial, Cheney’s Press Secretary explaining that Cheney got to set the agenda when he appeared on Meet the Press. Under David Gregory’s watch, I guess that has only gotten to be more true.

In the whole 8-page article, there’s just this hint that BabyDick’s constant press assault might be about legal liability for war crimes rather than political legacy (even though PapaDick himself has talked about statutes of limitation expiring on events he would write about in his memoir).

> What inspired her anti-Obama campaign was the administration’s release of secret CIA memos detailing the legal rationale, approved by Dick Cheney, for waterboarding, which left open the possibility of criminal prosecutions for former Bush officials and CIA operatives. The Cheneys were apoplectic at the “unprecedented” move, and maybe even afraid of legal blowback, having already been stung by the prosecution of Cheney’s former chief of staff Scooter Libby, who became ensnared in the CIA-leak investigation of the Valerie Plame affair.

Of course, if Hagan seriously entertained the premise that this was motivated by legal blowback, he might have to look at the obvious factual problems with her arguments. (I assume, however, that Hagan put this story to bed before movement conservatives starting turning on BabyDick’s recent McCarthyism.)

And then, finally, there’s one of the two genuinely interesting tidbits in the epic article (the other describes BabyDick going AWOL

on a conference she set up in Bahrain in November 2005 to go instead to Baghdad, raising questions about what was so important in Baghdad that BabyDick had to babysit Condi—click through to read that one, which appears on page 6).

> Though outwardly genial and easygoing, Liz inspired suspicion among her colleagues, who considered her the eyes and ears of the vice-president in the department. Her job gave her a level of clearance for CIA intelligence that allowed her to have conversations with her father about national security, and Liz played information arbiter in internecine government combat. When David Wurmser, a special assistant to John Bolton at the State Department, was asked to fly to Kuwait on the eve of the Iraq War to brief Army general Jay Garner on the search for WMDs, Liz Cheney called Wurmser to warn him that her boss Armitage was going to block his efforts. "She would be very discreet," says Wurmser. "There was clearly an effort to stop [Bolton], and she thought that was necessary to convey."

What Hagan describes here, of course, is out and out insubordination (or rather, BabyDick's insubordination layered on top of Bolton's insubordination). But what he also makes clear is that not only was BabyDick wired into Bolton's shop (and with it, discussions that would have revealed the genesis of Joe Wilson's trip), but she also helped Wurmser accomplish his two-fold goal of thwarting State Department efforts to set up a broad-based Iraqi government (where OVP pressed Chalabi instead) and of setting up propaganda efforts—complete with their very own NYT shill, Judy Miller—to support claims they had found WMDs.

Not that that should be a surprise. But if you're looking for news in this big blowjob of an article, that's one tidbit of it.