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BLACK
C o m m e n t a t o r**
Commentary, analysis and investigations
on issues affecting African Americans
www.blackcommentator.com

Issue 157 – November 3 2005

*Freedom Rider
Bush and the Pirates on Trial
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The name Lewis "Scooter" Libby was not a household word until very recently. That is how many very powerful people operate, in the shadows, known only to a few. Libby is now very well known. He was chief of staff to Vice President Dick Cheney until an indictment for perjury and obstruction of justice forced him to resign.

Libby is charged with lying under oath to a grand jury in the case of the outing of CIA operative Valerie Plame. Plame's husband, Ambassador Joseph Wilson, came under attack from Cheney, Libby and the rest of the Bushmen when he revealed the administration's lies about nuclear capabilities in Iraq, lies that helped make the case for war.

On July 14, 2003, conservative columnist Robert Novak revealed Plame's name, a possible violation of the law. It was difficult for special prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald to determine if the law had been violated, but it became crystal clear that Libby was fibbing.

Valerie Plame's identity was not the only fact revealed in this melodrama. It became clearer just how cozy the Washington press corps had become with the Bush administration, and that Dick Cheney wields considerable power.

Media acquiescence gave Bush more Teflon than Ronald Reagan could ever have imagined. Bush could lie about his absence from a National Guard unit, lie about the need for war, and lie about anything else he wanted. The press gave him the go ahead to do whatever he liked without fearing that any pesky reporting would take place.

The major press figure in this case has been New York Times reporter Judith Miller. She is involved somehow in the revelation of Plame's identity. We still don't know how much because she claims she can't recall who gave her the information. Jail time must create memory loss.

Miller is not alone in her administration elbow rubbing. Libby's perjury charge stems from his claim that

The Black Commentator – Freedom Rider: Bush and the Pirates on Trial

NBC's Tim Russert revealed Plame's identity to him. The indictment indicates that special prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald didn't believe Libby's claim, but Russert should not be let off the hook so easily.

For Russert reported on the case on Meet the Press without telling his audience that he was called to testify before the grand jury. Journalists are like everyone else, doing what their bosses tell them to do. In an era where corporations show their muscle, and Bush is the ultimate corporate president, anyone who wants to stay in the good graces of the powerful is going to toe the line.

The Bushies know it better than anyone. That is why they didn't hesitate to use the press in their effort to smear Wilson. They knew they would get at least one taker and they assumed they would get away with it all unscathed.

It is important to note that it was one of Cheney's staff, not the President's, who was in the middle of this scheme. Cheney deserves the title Bush's Brain as much as Karl Rove does. When the 9/11 commission requested Bush's testimony, they were told that Cheney had to be there too.

It is too easy to dismiss such information by sneering that Bush is too stupid to speak on his own behalf. In any case neither he nor Cheney thought it was a good idea for him to be left unattended in a room full of questioners.

Dick Cheney was missing in action during the hurricane Katrina debacle because he was busy taking care of business, namely hooking up another Halliburton contract. He was also busy thinking about the possibility of being indicted. It is hard to think about "Brownie" screwing up at FEMA while also contemplating jail time.

If Cheney's right hand man was indicted, it can only mean that the prosecutor is after Cheney too. Cheney was one of the fiercest advocates of the occupation of Iraq. He is the go-to guy on disaster capitalism. If he isn't creating a disaster – Iraq – to make money, he is hoping for natural disasters to help him make even more.

Many Democrats are giddy at the thought of someone, *anyone* on the Bush team going down. Yet Democrats have no plan of attack, and now too many think that legal troubles for the White House make a clear path to victory for them. They should not be so certain.

There is finally a little justice for the Bush White House, but only a little. Republicans in Congress will never impeach Bush and the press haven't been stellar even as they report the indictment story. Bush is a lame duck, a dangerous lame duck we are stuck with for the next three years. He doesn't care about falling poll numbers when there are no more races to be run.

There will undoubtedly be more terror alerts, surprise witnesses at Saddam's trial, and more Bin Laden tapes. They are masters of distraction and propaganda and it would be foolish to think that they will change now that they are in real danger. The Republicans should be thought of as wounded animals, even more prone to attack than usual.

They may bomb Iran, Syria or both. They may find another Terry Schiavo to be the victim of their cynicism. The next Supreme Court nominee could be a Scalia/Thomas clone. There will be hell to pay in countless ways as the Bush administration continues to unravel.

We are damned if we do or don't. It would be awful not to pursue the pirates with every weapon the law allows. This cast of characters may be more dangerous when they are indicted than when they are not. As much as the thought of Cheney and Rove in orange jumpsuits brings a smile to the lip, the fear of what they will do before that happens should terrify us all.

The Black Commentator – Freedom Rider: Bush and the Pirates on Trial

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