

**THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS:
50 YEARS OF REPORTING IN
WASHINGTON**

By Robert D. Novak

Crown Forum

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REVIEWED BY

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Basically, I found the book interesting and informational. But all the hullabaloo over release of these memoirs has obscured a troubling question regarding Novak's role in the Valerie Plame Wilson leak case: that is, why didn't Novak immediately issue a statement that Karl Rove was NOT his source?

Am I the only one asking? Although Novak knew the primary source of the alleged leak to be former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, he waited almost three years before speaking out. His failure to do so early on is puzzling, as is his reference in his "outing" column to having had conversations with "two senior White House officials." Surely he knew that such a remark would unleash the liberal media and Democrats in Congress and elsewhere on a "witch hunt" seeking the identity of those two.

Meanwhile, during that three year interval, the White House, President Bush and Karl Rove were subjected to relentless attacks and harassment from the Left. Rove was forced to defend himself against unfounded accusations that he was the source of the leak. This required him to hire a lawyer at great personal expense, and waste his time and energy parading to the Courthouse to answer Grand Jury questions put to him by the special prosecutor, Patrick Fitzgerald, and telling the same story: "I did not out Valerie Plame. There was no plot by the President to hurt Joe Wilson."

Later, Fitzgerald admitted he had no evidence linking Rove to the leak. After his infamous press conference at which he announced that no indictment would be forthcoming against Rove, groans of disappointment from the Left were audible.

And President Bush? He was accused by the liberal media (David Corn of The Nation Magazine was only one of many) of having masterminded a plot to "out" Joseph Wilson's wife to "get even" with Wilson for his 2002 report for the CIA debunking intelligence that Iraq tried to buy uranium in Africa. The liberal media also gave wide, prominent coverage to a Senate speech by Harry Reid (D-NV) placing this example of left-wing paranoia on the public record. Mr. Bush was also mercilessly slandered daily by Democrats for a "lack of moral values" and "lack of integrity." Talk about the proverbial pot calling the kettle black!

Although Democrats continued publicly to parrot that the whole thing MUST have been a Republican plot, their sleazy house of cards finally completely collapsed around their ears in September 2006, when former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage

confessed publicly that HE had revealed Plame's identity to Novak. That was followed a week later by a "clarification" column from Novak, which, although welcome and helpful, did not explain why he himself had not stepped forward early on with a statement that Rove had NOT been his source. Perhaps, in a way he has explained. All those years of heavy drinking in the Washington pubs may have soaked his brain with alcohol, thereby slightly addling his thinking.

A year ago I wrote in one of my columns: "Meanwhile, don't hold your breath waiting for an apology to President Bush, Karl Rove, and the public from liberal Democrats, commentators, and journalists for this partisan ploy, which was at the least an expensive distraction from the people's bona fide business." (See "My Turn to Sound Off: Being a Liberal Means Never Having to Say You're Sorry!" Anthony J. Sacco, Sr., October 2006. Now however, it appears that the above-named groups are not the only ones who owe apologies. Novak's explanation for why he kept silent and his apology for the harm his silence caused are long overdue.