

*MY TURN TO SOUND OFF: BEING A LIBERAL MEANS  
NEVER HAVING TO SAY YOU'RE SORRY!*

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PINE BLUFFS — It's true. Being a liberal means never having to say you're sorry. Even when you're proven wrong. And even if your error damages or destroys the reputations of others.

This statement applies to liberal Senate Democrats such as minority leader Harry Reid (D-NV), Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Hillary Clinton and Charles Schumer (D-NY), the Washington, D.C. press corps, and liberal TV talk show hosts like MSNBC's Christopher Matthews and Keith Olbermann, liberal newspapers like *The New York Times*, the *Boston Globe* and *The Washington Post*, magazines like *The Nation*, and that mud-slinging left-wing website, MoveOn.org.

A case in point: the so-called Valerie Plame leak. On July 14, 2003, nationally syndicated columnist, Robert Novak wrote that Plame, wife of former diplomat and Iraq war critic Joseph Wilson, was a CIA operative. Novak, who said at the time he wouldn't reveal the name of his primary source until he [the primary source] came forward on his own, mentioned having discussions with two senior Administration officials, one of whom was Karl Rove, a close friend and political strategist of George W. Bush.

Sensing an opportunity to oust Rove, thereby weakening Republican re-election chances, commentators, journalists and Congressional Democrats jettisoned the presumption of innocence and took to the hustings, trumpeting accusations of

Republican chicanery. Just days after Novak's column appeared, David Corn of *The Nation* Magazine gave wings to the bogus theory that George Bush masterminded a plot to "out" Wilson's wife to "get even" with him for his now discredited 2002 report for the CIA debunking intelligence that Iraq had attempted to buy uranium in Africa. His inference: that Mr. Bush cannot stand criticism.

Enter the liberal media, self-appointed "fourth branch of government" turned arm of the Democrat Party. First it widely disseminated Reid's Senate floor speeches placing this latest example of left-wing paranoia on the public record. Soon liberal Democrats everywhere were reporting that Rove had "outed" Plame as part of a Republican plot to get back at Wilson; that Rove had violated provisions of the Intelligence Identities Protection Act, that there should be a Congressional investigation, and a special prosecutor appointed.

They got what they wanted. Never mind that the provisions of the aforementioned law only apply to recent undercover agents; never mind that Valerie Plame had not been undercover for years; and never mind denials from both the White House and Rove. Liberals said it, so it must be true, right?

Well, a Congressional Committee *did* investigate. So did the Justice Department. Under intense media pressure, a special prosecutor, Patrick Fitzgerald, *was* appointed on December 30, 2003, to look into this fabricated non-issue at taxpayers' expense. Karl Rove? He was required to defend himself against a specious charge, hire a lawyer at great personal expense, and spend much of his time parading back and forth before grand juries convened by Fitzgerald — at least five times — telling the same story: "I did *not* out Valerie Plame. There was *no* plot by the President to hurt Joe Wilson."

This state of affairs continued for just under three years. The special prosecutor marched before the media at least once a week, a *New York Times* reporter, Judith Miller, went to jail for a story she did not write, a steady stream of leaks ensued from Fitzgerald's office about every aspect of the case, a Washington press corps in full attack mode vigorously applied pressure to bring down the President's friend and advisor, and Democrats daily slandered the President for his "lack of moral values" and "lack of integrity," while continually calling for Rove's resignation and his prosecution.

Finally, that Congressional Committee the Democrats had demanded, issued a report detailing voluminous evidence that Iraq had tried to purchase uranium in Africa. It also questioned Mr. Wilson's investigative qualifications and what he said he'd found in Iraq.

Later, Fitzgerald was forced to admit there was no evidence linking Karl Rove to the leak, and, indeed, application of the law itself was questionable in this instance since Plame had not been an undercover operative for many years. When, last June, he called a press conference and announced that no indictment would be forthcoming against Rove, disappointed groans from the left were audible.

Although Democrats continued publicly to parrot that it *must* have been a Republican plot, alas, their sleazy house of cards finally collapsed around their ears. On September 8, 2006, former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage confessed publicly that *he* had revealed Valerie Plame's identity to Novak. On that date, United Press International (UPI) reported:

*. . . Armitage said, 'The revelation of Plame's identity, which triggered an investigation into the leak, was inadvertent,' CNN reported Friday. 'I feel terrible,' Armitage told CBS News. 'Every day*

*I think, I let down the president. I let down the secretary of state,. I let down my department, my family, and I also let down Mr. and Mrs. Wilson.'*

*Novak had revealed in a July 14, 2003 column that Plame, wife of intelligence critic Joe Wilson, was a CIA operative. Novak cited two senior administration officials, one of which was later revealed to be Karl Rove, U.S. President George Bush's chief political strategist.*

*Novak, who said he would not reveal the name of his first source until he came forward on his own, said Rove had confirmed the information.*

*Armitage said Plame's role in the CIA was mentioned in casual conversation.*

As welcome as Armitage's confession was in putting to rest allegations of a presidential vendetta, there were serious problems with it; so many that Robert Novak found it necessary to issue a clarification on September 13, 2006, in his Chicago Sun-Times column:

*When Richard Armitage finally acknowledged last week he was my source three years ago in revealing Valerie Plame Wilson as a CIA employee, the former deputy secretary of state's interviews obscured what he really did. I want to set the record straight based on firsthand knowledge.*

*First, Armitage did not, as he now indicates, merely pass on something he had heard and that he "thought" might be so. Rather, he identified to me the CIA division where Mrs. Wilson worked, and said flatly that she recommended the mission to Niger by her husband, former amb. Joseph Wilson.*

*Second, Armitage did not slip me this information in idle chitchat, as he now suggests. He made clear he considered it especially suited for my column.*

*An accurate depiction of what Armitage actually said deepens the irony of him being my source. He was a foremost internal skeptic of the administration's war policy, and I long had opposed military intervention in Iraq. Zealous foes of George W. Bush transformed me improbably into the president's lapdog. But they cannot fit Armitage*

*into the left-wing fantasy of a well-crafted White House conspiracy to destroy Joe and Valerie Wilson. The news that he, not Karl Rove was the leaker was devastating news for the left. . . .*

*Late in my hour-long interview with Armitage, I asked why the CIA had sent Wilson — lacking experience, nuclear policy or recent contact with Niger — on the African mission. He told the Washington Post last week that his answer was: "I don't know, but I think his wife worked out there." . . . He had told me unequivocally that Mrs. Wilson worked in the CIA's Counter-Proliferation Division and that she had suggested her husband's mission. . . .*

*Armitage's silence [for] the next two years caused intense pain for his colleagues in government and enabled partisan Democrats in Congress to falsely accuse Rove of being my primary source. When Armitage now says he was mute because of special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald's request, that does not explain his silence [for] three months between his claimed first realization that he was the source and Fitzgerald's appointment on Dec. 30. Armitage's tardy self-disclosure is tainted because it is deceptive.*

Deceptive? Yes. And it raises several interesting questions. First, if, as Armitage said, Fitzgerald asked him to keep silent, shouldn't we ask the question, why would Fitzgerald make such a request? To keep his investigation going at taxpayer's expense? Perhaps there's meat here for another investigation, this time of the special prosecutor, who has still not closed down his costly investigation of something which was a non-issue to begin with and did not need to be investigated. Second, none of this explains Novak's shameful silence. Shouldn't he have issued an unequivocal statement denying that Karl Rove had been his primary source? Not doing so is what opened the door to this nonsense in the first place.

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 very partisan ploy, which was, at the least, an expensive distraction from the people's bona fide business.

*Anthony Sacco, a licensed private investigator, writer, and author of two novels; The China Connection, and Little Sister Lost, holds degrees from Loyola College of Maryland and the University of Maryland Law School. His articles have appeared in the Washington Times, Baltimore Sun, Voices for the Unborn, the Catholic Review, WREN Magazine and the Wyoming Catholic Register. E-mail him at [anthonyjsacco@hotmail.com](mailto:anthonyjsacco@hotmail.com) and visit his website at [www.saccoservices.com](http://www.saccoservices.com).*