

WHO WERE THE OTHER TWO?

Chris Matthews partly confirms something I speculated last week—though he adds a bit too. Given his description of the three staffers "linked to Cheney" who tried to silence his reporting on OVP's involvement in the Niger uranium claims that got us into war, it's safe to assume Libby's call relates to that effort (and I'd bet there's a Adam Levine call, too).

Matthews says that there was a "concerted effort" – carried out by three people linked to Cheney – to kill discussion of the role Cheney's office played in trumpeting a supposed nuclear threat from Iraq.

"I thought on the 10th anniversary it would be good to celebrate the First Amendment, which gives us all our living," Matthews tells TVGuide. "We reviewed in brief the remarkable experience of covering the Clinton [scandal] and the defense of the war with Iraq. And the difference in these two cases was that although I was extremely tough on Clinton, there was never any attempt to silence me – whereas there was a concerted effort by [Vice President Cheney's office] to silence me. It came in the form of three different people calling trying to quiet me."

Libby is clearly one of the three—after all, he is paying for his criminal ways (oh wait. no he's not). He called Russert to insinuate Matthews was an anti-Semite for reporting this story. And his ties to Cheney are beyond question.

I say Levine was involved, too, bc we know Libby asked Levine what he should do about Matthews (Levine is a former Matthews staffer).

But who is the third?

The question is particularly pertinent, you see, because of the third call we know Matthews to have received from the White House around the leak: Karl Rove, the week of Novak's column, telling Tweety Plame was "fair game." Normally, you wouldn't label Rove "linked to Cheney." Unless, of course, he said he was calling Matthews at the bidding of Cheney.

In which case it would change the connotation of that "fair game" comment quite a bit, don't you think?