

DID ERIC EDELMAN LIE TO THE PLAME GRAND JURY?



And did he do it to protect Dick?

I admit. I can't help myself. By some strange force, I found myself back at Prettyman this week, wading through the million-dollar CIPA battle that Libby waged in his graymail attempts (for the record, Fitz must say "graymail" about 20 times by the second day of these hearings). And in a December 29, 2005 defense filing (I haven't scanned it yet, either because I was liveblogging all day or I'm just trying to torture Jeff) asking for further information to be declassified in response to the Jencks information they got, I found this footnote clarifying the sentence, "According to [Libby's CIA briefer, Craig] Schmall, 'Since I had no knowledge of the ambassador or his wife, I presume Libby gave me [the names Joe Wilson and Valerie Wilson].'"

Eric Edelman, whom the government recently decided not to call as a witness, contradicts Mr. Schmall on this point. According to Mr. Edelman, sometime before June 6, 2003 (when Mr. Edelman left the OVP), Mr. Schmall "identified the former envoy as Joseph Wilson" and "advised Edelman that the CIA's Counterproliferation Division sent Wilson to Niger to conduct the inquiry, not the OVP." 6/23/04 Edelman FBI 302 at 2. According to Mr. Edelman, Mr. Schmall showed him internal CIA emails about the Wilson trip. 8/6/04 Edelman Grand Jury T. at 16. In addition, Mr. Schmall may have told Mr. Edelman during this period that Ambassador Wilson's mission to Africa was suggested by his wife. 6/23/04 Edelman FBI 302 at 2; see also

7/7/04 Edelman FBI 302 at 2-3 (same);
8/6/04 Edelman Grand Jury T at 15-19
(same). Apart from the fact that Mr.
Edelman contradicts Schmall on a
significant point, the government may
have elected not to call him because he
makes clear in his grand jury testimony
that he does not recall any mention of
Ms. Wilson in his discussion with Mr.
Libby following the June 19 New Republic
article (see Indictment at 5-6 12-13) ,
and he never discussed with Mr. Libby
the nature of the "complications" to
which Mr. Libby referred. 8/6/04 Edelman
Grand Jury T. at 29-30.

Now, as to the substance of Edelman's denial
that he was talking about Plame when he
advocated leaking "information" to rebut Joe
Wilson, here's what the indictment said. It
clearly relies on a witness or some other
evidence that is not named Scooter Libby.

Shortly after publication of the article
in The New Republic, LIBBY spoke by
telephone with his then Principal Deputy
and discussed the article. That official
asked LIBBY whether information about
Wilson's trip could be shared with the
press to rebut the allegations that the
Vice President had sent Wilson. LIBBY
responded that there would be
complications at the CIA in disclosing
that information publicly, and that he
could not discuss the matter on a non-
secure telephone line.

And in his grand jury testimony, Edelman told a
story that did not directly contradict the
substance of testimony apparently given about
that conversation, but conveniently denies
everything for which there was no apparent
witness (that is, if you thought Edelman were
trustworthy, you might just think Edelman
dropped the issue after the witness stopped
following it).

That's interesting. But I'm much more interested in this part of the footnote.

According to Mr. Edelman, Mr. Schmall showed him internal CIA emails about the Wilson trip.

For those who've forgotten, I wrote a long post in July speculating that the source of Dick's knowledge that Plame worked at CPD (and that she had some role in his trip) was the emails that Valerie sent relating to Joe's trip.

This is the post I've been promising for weeks, in which I will speculate wildly as to the source of Cheney's knowledge about Plame's role at CPD and in her husband's trip. Here's the argument, in brief:

- *Cheney learns during the week of June 9 that "Defense and State expressed a strong interest in the Niger intelligence"*
- *At a time when Cheney presumably already knew that information, he tried to get CIA to repeat it in such a way that it could be published*
- *This suggests he could not use his original source for that information (either because the source refused to publish that information or because he wanted to hide the*

source itself)

- *One possible explanation (this is speculation, mind you) is that Cheney saw Valerie Wilson's emails leading up to Wilson's trip to Niger—which would have informed him of key information—and would have made it clear that Valerie's identity was protected*

My general point was that the only known document that has some of the information that Dick communicated to Libby in Libby's purportedly June 12 note (pictured above)—particularly the interest of DOD and State in the intelligence—are two emails that Valerie sent in support of Joe's trip.

Valerie Wilson's memo to Niger is one of two known documents where the DOD/State information appears

Understand something about the DOD/State talking point: it comes from CPD. The SSCI report reports CPD officials repeating that detail:

Officials from the CIA's D0 Counterproliferation Division (CPD) told Committee staff that in response to questions from the Vice President's Office and the Departments of State and Defense on the alleged Iraq-Niger uranium deal, CPD officials discussed ways to obtain additional information.
[my emphasis]

Grenier also describes learning that information from someone in CPD. He first calls "Kevin," the Deputy Chief of the unit working on Iraqi WMD (this may or may not be the JTFI). Kevin doesn't call back—someone Grenier didn't know called back, but still within CPD. And that person tells Grenier (who tells Libby) of the interest on the part of DOD/State.

Now it's possible that the people in CPD were just working from memory, from having been intimately involved. But if they learned this information from documents, there are two known documents within CPD that mention the interest of State and DOD. There is the report, written by the reports officer, forwarded to Valerie and others, about the rising interest in the Niger intelligence. From the latest SSCI:

The report was forwarded in an e-mail from a CIA reports officer to Mrs. Wilson and a number of other recipients which said that the DO had received a number of calls from the Intelligence Community about the Iraq-Niger uranium report, citing the Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and SOCOM, specifically. [my emphasis]

[Note, the report by the minority of the minority goes on to claim that CPD didn't tell SSCI about DOD/State's interest ... I guess they didn't read their own report.]

But this report doesn't use precisely the terms used in Cheney's talking point—State and DOD. Rather, it is more

specific, mentioning INR and DIA and SOCOM.

However, Valerie Wilson's cable, sent to Niger to get concurrence for Wilson's trip, does include precisely that language.

Mrs. Wilson sent a cable that was sent overseas requesting concurrence with Ambassador Wilson's travel to Niger. ... the cable drafted by Mrs. Wilson was sent ... on February 13, ... Interestingly, the cable states that "both State and DOD have requested additional clarification and indeed, the Vice President's office just asked for background information. [my emphasis]

In other words, if Cheney's talking point came from a document (and not someone's direct memory), then it may well have come from this cable.

Now cable is often (and I've confirmed that is the case here) spook-speak for email. That is, one possible source for Dick Cheney's talking points he gives to Libby (and subsequently tries to get CIA to cough up publicly via other channels) is an "internal CIA email about Wilson's trip," one written by Valerie Wilson. An email, I might add, that makes some precautions to prevent revealing Valerie's real identity.

Which is why I find it mighty interesting that, in the same grand jury appearance where Eric Edelman gives testimony that appears to dispute the sense of with one other witness or piece of evidence, as well as the testimony that (this filing makes clear) contradicts the testimony of Craig Schmall, he also claims (in yet more testimony that contradicts the testimony of

Craig Schmall) that Schmall showed him internal CIA emails from which he learned certain things about the trip.

In short, two witnesses challenge Edelman's account, so we should be mighty dubious of his testimony.

What do I think happened? If Edelman lied about Schmall showing him emails—and if he claimed those emails were the ones written by Plame—then what does it mean for the Plame leak?

In my previous post on this, I suggested that one likely motive for Dick's and Libby's attempts to get CIA to cough up information that Dick already knew was that Dick reviewed those emails via an illicit source and couldn't just leak it wildly. [It probably pays, at this point, to remind that this is all wild-arsed speculation.]

Reasons why Cheney needed a new source

There are a number of reasons why Cheney might need a new source to spread the DOD/State talking point, including:

- *McLaughlin refused to state the talking point on the record*
- *Cheney's original source wasn't someone in the CIA*
- *Cheney's original information came from a source that made it clear Plame was covert*

These are not necessarily exclusive: after all, McLaughlin may have refused to state the talking point on the record because the only source for it was classified and/or made it clear that Plame's identity was classified. Or Cheney's original source—someone

assigned outside of CIA like David Shedd or Fred Fleitz, perhaps—may have had learned the information via a source that made it clear that Plame was covert.

Now, if Cheney really saw those emails, and if Cheney needed to hide that fact, and if Edelman was as dutifully protecting Cheney as Libby ultimately was, then you might imagine that Edelman might lie about having seen those documents, to hide the fact that Cheney was the one who saw them, by some illicit means. I mean, WTF, it appears that Edelman may have been lying in everything else he said to the grand jury, why not lie to protect Cheney (well, and those other lies, if they were lies, sort of protected Cheney, too).

In other words, I'm wondering if Edelman lied to invent an alternate means for OVP to know the content of Valerie's emails, one that conveniently implicated CIA, to protect Dick.

It's all wild-arsed speculation, mind you. But it might be worth noting Edelman's current position: Undersecretary of Defense for Policy. One might call that post the "Dougie Feith Propaganda Office," in honor of Edelman's predecessor at the position. Edelman was one of the deeply conflicted people who submitted a leniency letter on behalf of Libby. And it appears that he may have been the first one to suggest leaking Plame's identity, not many days before Libby did so to Judy Miller.

There's reason to believe that Edelman might lie about this subject.