

FOX NEWS PREPARES TO GO INTO OPPOSITION BY HIRING JUDY JUDY JUDY

Fox News is preparing for what comes after the election. First came the news that Fox News was hiring Glenn Beck, replacing one of its election shows with yet more wingnuttia.

And now, they've hired someone whose greatest expertise is in laundering politically motivated leaks to give those leaks "respectability."

Fox News is expected to announce today the hiring of a new contributor, a veteran national security correspondent who has shared a Pulitzer Prize.

Her name is Judith Miller, and she is nothing if not controversial. Miller left the New York Times in 2005 after testifying in the trial of former White House aide Lewis "Scooter" Libby that he had leaked her information about a CIA operative. Miller's conduct in the case, which led to her serving 85 days in jail for initially refusing to testify, drew rebukes from the Times executive editor and some of her colleagues.

In the run-up to the Iraq war, Miller reported stories on the search for Saddam Hussein's supposed weapons of mass destruction that turned out to be untrue, some of which were cited in a Times editor's note acknowledging the flawed coverage. Miller, now with the conservative Manhattan Institute, wrote when she left the paper that she had "become a lightning rod for public fury over the intelligence failures that helped lead our country to war."

Miller will be an on-air analyst and will write for Fox's Web site. "She has a very impressive résumé," says Senior

Vice President John Moody. "We've all had stories that didn't come out exactly as we had hoped. It's certainly something she's going to be associated with for all time, and there's not much anyone can do about that, but we want to make use of the tremendous expertise she brings on a lot of other issues. . . . She has explained herself and she has nothing to apologize for."

No, I'm not surprised that Judy Judy Judy has finally ended up at the one place worthy of her, um, talents. But I would invite you to imagine why Fox wants Judy on board.

Sure, maybe she'll manufacture stories about evil threats that a President Obama (if he is elected) is ignoring (Scooter Libby: "It is fall now. You will have stories to cover—Iraqi elections and suicide bombers, biological threats and the Iranian nuclear program"). Maybe she's just there to present the thoughts of totally discredited types like John Bolton or Paul Wolfowitz as if they still had credibility. I suspect, most of all, she'll be doing something very similar to her UN Oil for Food coverage—extended series turning details everyone pretty much knew into a full-blown scandal designed to distract attention from a colossal failure.

But her presence at Fox does tell you something about the way that Fox plans to proceed during what is shaping up to be at least two years in opposition. Fox seems to be preparing for that—going into opposition—with more forethought than McCain has had running his campaign.