

## **Pardon Me by Dan Jacoby**

I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby is going to prison.

Libby was convicted of perjury and obstruction of justice, crimes committed during the special prosecutor’s investigation of the “outing” of CIA agent Valerie Plame Wilson. For his crimes, Libby has been sentenced to spend thirty months in prison.

The argument in the press now is whether George W. Bush should pardon Scooter Libby. Those who favor a pardon claim that the investigation didn’t find any “real” crime, that nobody has accused Libby of being the original source of the “outing,” and that Valerie Plame Wilson is doing quite well, thank you.

But nobody is asking why Scooter Libby lied.

This is a key question, first because anyone who lies to the FBI and to a grand jury must be covering up something serious, and second because what Libby is covering up could, if uncovered, lead to an unprecedented situation.

Prior to his indictment, Libby was the Chief of Staff to Vice President Dick Cheney. We know Cheney wanted to punish Joseph Wilson, Valerie Plame Wilson’s husband, for telling the truth about George W. Bush lies regarding Iraq and nuclear weapons. Put those two facts together, and there is an obvious conclusion.

Dick Cheney outed Valerie Plame Wilson. He knew she was a covert CIA agent. He knew that exposing her would not only end her career with the CIA but also put an entire operation out of business and put several other covert CIA operatives in jeopardy. He knew that even if his action did not specifically violate the extremely narrow law, it would certainly fall under the category of “high crimes and misdemeanors.”

And it’s a good bet that Scooter Libby knew all that too.

Men have literally fallen on their swords out of loyalty to someone they feel is more important than they are. By contrast, Libby will merely spend two and a half years in prison – hardly comparable. Meanwhile, nobody is investigating whether the Vice President of the United States should be impeached. So Libby may succeed after all.

So, should George W. Bush pardon Scooter Libby? And will he?

Clearly, he should not. If Libby’s lies and obstructions were designed to prevent the impeachment of the Vice President, they are clearly unpardonable. And he probably won’t, because as long as Libby just serves his term nobody will investigate. But if Bush does pardon Libby, people may open up that can of worms, and Bush (and Cheney!) clearly don’t want that to happen.