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Matt Cooper's Source

What Karl Rove told Time magazine's reporter.



Gary Fabiano / SIPA for Newsweek

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Judged Judy: Miller goes to jail

By Michael Isikoff

Newsweek

July 18 issue - It was 11:07 on a Friday morning, July 11, 2003, and Time magazine correspondent Matt Cooper was tapping out an e-mail to his bureau chief, Michael Duffy.

"Subject: Rove/P&C," (for personal and confidential), Cooper began.

"Spoke to Rove on double super secret background for about two mins before he went on vacation ..."

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Cooper proceeded to spell out some guidance on a story that was beginning to roil Washington. He finished, "please don't source this to rove or even WH [White House]" and suggested another reporter check with the CIA.

Story continues below ↓

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Last week, after Time turned over that e-mail, among other notes and e-mails, Cooper agreed to testify before a grand jury in the Valerie Plame case. Explaining that he had obtained last-minute "personal consent" from his source, Cooper was able to avoid a jail sentence for contempt of court. Another reporter, [Judith Miller](#) of The New York Times, refused to identify her source and chose to go to jail instead.

For two years, a federal prosecutor, Patrick Fitzgerald, has been investigating the leak of Plame's identity as an undercover CIA agent. The leak was first reported by columnist Robert Novak on July 14, 2003. Novak apparently made some arrangement with the prosecutor, but Fitzgerald continued to press other reporters for their sources, possibly to show a pattern (to prove intent) or to make a perjury case.

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(It is illegal to knowingly identify an undercover CIA officer.) Rove's words on the Plame case have always been carefully chosen. "I didn't know her name. I didn't leak her name," Rove told CNN last year when asked if he had anything to do with the Plame leak. Rove has never publicly acknowledged talking to any reporter about former ambassador Joseph Wilson and his wife. But last week, his lawyer, Robert Luskin, confirmed to NEWSWEEK that Rove did—and that **Rove was the secret source** who, at the request of both Cooper's lawyer and the prosecutor, gave Cooper permission to testify.

The controversy arose when Wilson wrote an op-ed column in The New York Times saying that he had been sent by the CIA in February 2002 to investigate charges that Iraq was trying to buy uranium from the African country of Niger. Wilson said he had found no evidence to support the claim. Wilson's column was an early attack on the evidence used by the Bush administration to justify going to war in Iraq. The White House wished to discredit Wilson and his attacks. The question for the prosecutor is whether someone in the administration, in an effort to undermine Wilson's credibility, intentionally revealed the covert identity of his wife.

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