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# Jurors wonder why others weren't also on trial

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By [Richard Willing](#), USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — A question occupied the jurors in the trial of Lewis "Scooter" Libby as they sat through 14 days of testimony and deliberated for 10 more days: Why is Libby the only person on trial?

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"There was a tremendous amount of sympathy for Mr. Libby on the jury. It was said a number of times: 'What are we doing with this guy here? Where's (White House adviser Karl) Rove? Where are these other guys?' " juror Denis Collins said Tuesday.

"I'm not saying we didn't think Mr. Libby was guilty of the things we found him guilty of. It seemed like he was, as (Libby attorney Theodore) Wells put it, he was the fall guy."

In the end, however, only Libby was charged by special prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald after an investigation to find out who leaked the identity of a covert CIA officer to reporters in the spring and summer of 2003.

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Libby's conviction on charges of "perjury and obstruction of justice is like convicting (mobster) Al Capone of tax evasion," said former State Department official Joseph Wilson. "It doesn't mean no other crimes occurred."

By the time jurors started deliberating Feb. 21, they and others knew that Libby was far from alone in discussing the undercover CIA role of Wilson's wife, Valerie Plame.

There was former White House spokesman Ari Fleischer, who told reporters that Plame worked for the agency. So did Rove, President Bush's top political adviser. And so did Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage.

All were part of Bush administration efforts to defend the White House against Wilson's criticisms. Starting in May 2003 and culminating two months later, Wilson claimed the administration trumped up reports that Iraq had sought uranium from the African nation of Niger.

Wilson was sent by the CIA to Niger in February 2002 to investigate the reports. He concluded that they were likely baseless.

Cheney, jurors were told throughout the trial, was angered by Wilson's claims that Cheney himself had dispatched Wilson and then disregarded his report. Wilson claimed Libby and others disclosed his wife's CIA job as a way of discrediting Wilson.

Deliberately divulging the identity of an undercover CIA officer can be a federal crime. The Justice Department started investigating in fall 2003. Fitzgerald was appointed as a special prosecutor that December because Libby and other top officials were targets.

After 22 months of investigating, Fitzgerald couldn't determine whether anyone had leaked Plame's identity on purpose. What he did find, however, he couldn't ignore, he said Tuesday. He had evidence that Libby, the vice president's top aide and troubleshooter, had lied to investigators. Fitzgerald said he had to bring that case.

Collins said jurors knew of the case's larger stakes, but they focused only on the specific charges.

"This wasn't about the war," said Collins, a former *Washington Post* reporter. "I don't think anybody really knew what (Libby) did in this administration. He was sort of under everybody's radar."

Instead, Collins said, the jurors had to determine the case's specifics. Did Libby intentionally mislead FBI investigators and a grand jury?



Enlarge By Jason Reed, Reuters

Denis Collins, a jury member in the criminal case against Lewis "Scooter" Libby, speaks to the media at the U.S. Federal Court in Washington.

## CIA LEAK CASE

**Verdict:** Libby found guilty

**Interactive graphic:** Key players, dates in CIA leak case



## REACTIONS TO THE CONVICTION

"I am very disappointed with the verdict. I am saddened for Scooter and his family. As I have said before, Scooter has served our nation tirelessly and with great distinction through many years of public service."

**- Vice President Cheney, Libby's former boss**

"The results are actually sad. It's sad that we had a situation where a high-level official, a person who worked in the office of the vice president, obstructed justice and lied under oath. We wish that it had not happened, but it did."

**- Special prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald, who led the CIA leak investigation**

"We believe, as we said at the time of his indictment, that (Libby) is totally innocent - totally innocent - and that he did not do anything wrong. And we intend to keep fighting to establish his innocence."

**- Theodore Wells, Libby's defense attorney**

"I will say there was a tremendous amount of sympathy for Mr. Libby on the jury. It was said a number of times, 'What are we doing with this guy here? Where's Rove? Where are these other guys?' I'm not saying we didn't think Mr. Libby was guilty of the things we found him guilty of. It seemed like he was, as Mr. Wells put it, he was the fall guy."

**- Juror Denis Collins, a former Washington Post reporter**

They believed he did.

They didn't believe Libby's claim of faulty memory. In the jury lounge on the federal courthouse's sixth floor, they posted photos of witnesses and 34 pages of summarized testimony that led them to conclude that Libby discussed Plame's identity

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often during the time he said he had forgotten it, Collins said.

Because so many of the jurors believed Libby was the fall guy, Collins said, he would have "no problem" if Bush decided to pardon Libby.

Bush's Democratic opponents didn't see it that way Tuesday. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said the president "must pledge not to pardon Libby for his criminal conduct."

In a statement released within minutes of the verdict, Reid said, "It's about time someone in the Bush administration has been held accountable for the campaign to manipulate intelligence and discredit war critics." The trial "revealed deeper truths about Vice President Cheney's role in this sordid affair."

Contributing: Ken Dilanian and David Jackson

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### Comments: (9)

 **ArizumaBrett** wrote: 1d 5h ago  
Obviously a fallen pawn. Cheney is the one who should go. While they're at it, they should send Bush packing too. It was all part of a pack of lies to save Bush's moribund presidency by going to war. It's a litmus test for the "dumb" factor. The more you believe, or believe in, Bush and Cheney, the dumber you are. Everything is dumbed down in Bush's Amerika. Massive delusion. The main problem with Clinton, Wilson, Plane? In the upside down world of Cheney/Bush and his cronies they just are too intelligent, too perceptive, too cultured to survive in bush-league Amerika.


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 **jerryp1221** wrote: 1d 6h ago  
The Jury did what they were picked for..... I certainly don't need to know their opinion about anything else. If so put me on camera and let me give my opinion too.


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 **Dave1y** wrote: 1d 8h ago  
B-b-b-but Clinton!


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 **brucebessell** wrote: 1d 10h ago  
Sounds like he is doing an admirable job... taking the fall for the MAN.


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 **Shadach** wrote: 1d 11h ago  
Remember People: Absolute power corrupts absolutely !!!


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 **JellyBean2144** wrote: 1d 14h ago  
Oh please. Sandy Berger acted very stupidly, but you are going on about him like he sold secrets to Russia (or sold weapons to Iran, like right wing hero Ollie North)  
No amount of whining is actually going to transform Berger into a traitor, so you might as well give it a rest.

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 **scouterlibre** wrote: 1d 15h ago  
The conservative moral of the story:  
At anytime, you can mislead 300,000,000 Americans but when you mislead a few FBI agents, Bubba will be your only friend.

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 **randyfromtexas** wrote: 1d 15h ago  
He is the pats for the VP and the Pres via Rowe,if Congress had a set they would start a corruption investigation leading to the impeachment of both the Vp and the Pres.



Awdie Eyes wrote: 1d 15h ago

What a joke. We've got Sandy Berger stuffing classified documents down his pants and nary a word is printed. Libby - a total patsy for Richard Armitage, the REAL leaker - goes down because of the media's love of anti-Bush hype.

Where is America's sense of proportion

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