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*Freedom Rider
Bob Woodward and the Media Liars
by Margaret Kimberley*

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The American corporate media is comprised of political operatives for the Bush administration. They have been there all along, but it is the judicial process, not their colleagues, that has brought their brazen behavior out into the open for all to see.

The Washington Post's Bob Woodward is the most recent example of a reporter who has turned out to be nothing more than a Bush spokesman. Woodward made a name for himself on the Watergate story more than 30 years ago. His reputation as the crusading, hard-hitting journalist may have been deserved in the 1970s but Woodward profited from that image years later than he should have. Despite years of being a Washington insider who long ago lost his journalistic truth seeking inclinations, Woodward's name still gave him credibility.

Now we know that Woodward is a liar, a liar on behalf of his powerful friends. Woodward is one of the journalists who were given the identity of CIA agent Valerie Plame in an effort to discredit her husband, a critic of Bush administration policy. He never said so until he was deposed under oath by special prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald.

Woodward spent months discrediting Fitzgerald personally. He saw no reason to tell anyone, including his editors at the Washington Post, that a "senior administration official" had told him Valerie Plame's identity before the now indicted Lewis Libby told anyone else.

It was bad enough that Woodward kept quiet about his involvement in a criminal investigation, but he spent months making public comments disparaging the grand jury. He made these remarks about Fitzgerald on [CNN's Larry King Live](#):

"Well this is a junkyard dog prosecutor and he goes everywhere and asks every question and turns over rocks and rocks under rocks and so forth."

A prosecutor is supposed to "look under rocks" and in this case he had to talk to journalists. Woodward

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eventually apologized for failing to mention that he would have to talk to Fitzgerald, but neither he nor his paper has said one word about Woodward's numerous statements making light of the investigation.

What did the big wigs at the Washington Post have to say when their star reporter made them look like jerks? Why, they made excuses for him of course. Len Downie, his purported boss, said that Woodward "made a mistake" by not telling him that he was a part of a story his paper was reporting. Former editor Ben Bradlee was even worse. He made this comment about Woodward's nondisclosure:

"I don't see anything wrong with that. He doesn't have to disclose every goddamn thing he knows."

It gets worse. Woodward asked colleague Walter Pincus, "not to mention him" in his reporting on the Plame case. Woodward says he told Pincus that he knew about Plame. Pincus says he thought Woodward was involved but doesn't recall being told about Plame. Just as there is no honor among thieves, there is no honor among Washington's access hungry press corps.

The Post isn't alone in failing to act the way a newspaper is supposed to do. The New York Times has no shame about the boot licking that masqueraded as reporting when they helped the administration argue in favor of the occupation of Iraq. They finally canned Judith Miller, but not before allowing her to insult readers with a bizarre, self-pitying letter on the op-ed page.

Times publisher Arthur Sulzberger felt compelled to talk about Miller, but he would have been better off if he had just shut up. He called l'affaire Miller "a rather small bore issue in the big scheme of things" and added that it "paled" in comparison to the Jayson Blair scandal.

The New York Times defends Judith Miller because she did their dirty work for them. The Times promoted the neocon plot to occupy Iraq because it represents their world view as well. They are now making lame excuses and telling intelligent people what they already know, that they should have reported the WMD story differently.

Miller, Sulzberger, Woodward and Bradlee are at the top of the corporate media food chain, and their behavior tells us why Americans aren't being told anything they ought to be told. Woodward uses his access to make a fortune writing about the Supreme Court or various presidential administrations. If a journalist's priority is writing best selling books based on the amount of access gained with the powerful, then truth telling goes out the window.

Patrick Fitzgerald has done the public a great service as he looks under rocks and puts the likes of Miller and Woodward on the hot seat. On the previously mentioned segment of Larry King Live, Woodward was asked about a rumor that he had a "bombshell" to report on the Plame case. He responded, "I wish I did have a bombshell. I don't even have a firecracker. I'm sorry." Woodward definitely had a bombshell and he saw it every time he looked in the mirror.

It isn't enough to say that the American corporate media are biased. Their first priority is staying in the good graces of the people running this country. Some act out of cynicism, while others, like Sulzburger, clearly feel an affinity with their policies and want to help promote them. It all means that the citizenry come last. If we get the truth it will be because of "junkyard dog" prosecutors, not because the media is doing its job.

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