

NOW A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE

FAIR GAME

HOW A TOP
CIA AGENT
WAS BETRAYED
BY HER OWN
GOVERNMENT

VALERIE PLAME WILSON

GAME

Betrayed by Her Own Government

Valerie Plame Wilson

With an Afterword by Laura Rozen
and a New Introduction by the Author

—
POCKET STAR BOOKS

NEW YORK LONDON TORONTO SYDNEY

The sale of this book without its cover is unauthorized. If you purchased this book without a cover, you should be aware that it was reported to the publisher as "unsold and destroyed." Neither the author nor the publisher has received payment for the sale of this "stripped book."

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed by Valerie Plame Wilson are those of the author and do not reflect the official positions or views of the CIA or any other U.S. Government Agency. Nothing in the contents should be construed as asserting or implying U.S. Government authentication of information or Agency endorsement of the author's views. Ms. Wilson's material has been reviewed by the CIA to prevent the disclosure of classified information.

The material on pages 96–98 is copyright © 2007 Monterey Institute of International Studies. All rights reserved.

CERTAIN NAMES AND IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS
IN THIS BOOK HAVE BEEN CHANGED.



Pocket Star Books
A Division of Simon & Schuster, Inc.
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

Copyright © 2007 by Valerie Wilson
Afterword copyright © 2007 by Laura Rozen
Introduction copyright © 2008 by Valerie Wilson

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book or portions thereof in any form whatsoever. For information address Simon & Schuster Subsidiary Rights Department, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.

First Pocket Star Books paperback edition November 2010

POCKET STAR BOOKS and colophon are registered trademarks of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact Simon & Schuster Special Sales at 1-866-506-1949 or business@simonandschuster.com.

The Simon & Schuster Speakers Bureau can bring authors to your live event. For more information or to book an event, contact the Simon & Schuster Speakers Bureau at 1-866-248-3049 or visit our website at www.simonspeakers.com.

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN 978-1-4516-2404-5

ISBN 978-1-4165-8336-3 (ebook)

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

All employees of the Central Intelligence Agency must sign a confidentiality agreement that requires that they submit their writings to the CIA for prepublication review. Valerie Plame Wilson, whose work for the CIA entailed covert operations, of course abided by this agreement, and her manuscript was reviewed by the CIA and returned to her with numerous redactions—cuts—that the CIA determined were necessary. Many of these cuts related to material that would disclose Ms. Wilson's dates of service, information that has already been widely disseminated.

As has been reported, Simon & Schuster and Ms. Wilson brought a legal action against the CIA; we felt that the redactions required by the CIA went beyond any reasonable requirements of national security and impaired important First Amendment rights. A federal district court has disagreed, determining, essentially, that while Ms. Wilson's dates of service may be in the public domain, they cannot be reported by Ms. Wilson. Accordingly, Ms. Wilson's portion of this book contains only that information that the CIA has deemed unclassified and has allowed her to include.

The sections of *Fair Game* that have been blacked out indicate the places where the CIA has ordered cuts. Still, even with these substantial redactions, we believe the book conveys the power of Ms. Wilson's story, if, alas, not all its details.

To enhance the reader's experience Simon & Schuster has added an afterword by reporter Laura Rozen. Drawn from interviews and public sources, it provides historical background and recounts portions of Ms. Wilson's life and career that she was unable to include herself. When the afterword is read together with *Fair Game*, a full and vivid picture of Valerie Plame Wilson emerges. Ms. Wilson has had no input or involvement in the creation of the afterword, which she has not seen before the publication of this book.

Simon & Schuster has also added an appendix of relevant documents.

We thank you for your understanding and look forward to your enjoyment of this important book.

Introduction

Joe and I got up from the small table in the bar at the sedate Four Seasons Hotel deeply shaken. We had just been speaking with our lawyer, David Smallman, about this book, *Fair Game*. We flashed each other a look but said nothing. Smallman, an intelligent and tenacious First Amendment lawyer who had shepherded this project through its significant and sometimes overwhelming complications, had just told us that this book had come within a whisper of not being published at all. It was December 2007, and we were in Washington, D.C. for a book party hosted by good friends. We were looking forward to celebrating because getting this book published represented a major victory for us and my publisher, Simon & Schuster. Smallman had just told us information that he deemed too sensitive for e-mail or telephone conversation. For months prior to the book's publication date of October 22, I had known instinctively that there was, at best, only a fifty-fifty chance there would actually be a cleared and ready manuscript. The CIA (and by implication, the Bush administration) had thrown up as many obstacles as it could along the way, and I had been sick with worry. Smallman had opted to keep his darkest concerns from me, but now that the book had been published and was on the *New York Times* Best Sellers list, he gave a more detailed picture of what had happened over the last few months. His words were depressing and unsettling. The book party, by the way, was a great success.

In March 2007 my family and I moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Although the change from Washington, D.C., was refreshing, there were still plenty of difficult days ahead related to our fight to get this book published. In April 2007 I had a lengthy telephone conversation with the CIA's Publication Review Board (PRB), the office charged with ensuring that no classified information appears in publications written by current or former Agency officers. At that point, my manuscript had been in the hands of the PRB for close to seven months, and there had been a great deal of back-and-forth over whether I would be able to confirm in print how long I had served my country as a CIA officer. The Agency would not yield on their position that I could not acknowledge any federal employment prior to January 2002. After three hours of strained conversation, we managed to cover some of the material, and I was told that they would "get back to me soon" on when we could review the balance of the manuscript. They never did.

Over the next month between unpacking boxes, getting our children settled into their new school, and finding our way around a new town, I fielded a flurry of e-mails and telephone calls from my lawyers, the CIA and their lawyers, my publisher, David Rosenthal, and Simon & Schuster. The calls always came during dinner, evenings, or on the weekend and, with so much at stake, they all needed immediate responses. My children never saw me without the phone cradled to my ear, and I heard about it—a lot. Finally, realizing that all other options to reach a fair compromise were closed, my publisher and I decided with great reluctance to sue the CIA and its bureaucratic head, the Director of National Intelligence, on First Amendment grounds. We felt that their actions had moved into censorship and we had no choice but to take the fight into the courts. At the end of May 2007 we filed our case with Judge Barbara Jones of the Southern District of New York.

In July 2007 the CIA submitted a classified brief to the judge

that neither my lawyers nor I was permitted to see. On August 1, the judge ruled in the government's favor. I happened to be in California at the time attending a niece's wedding when Smallman called me with the news. It was devastating because our arguments had been so carefully crafted and we thought our case was an especially good one. I also knew that the government would use this victory in a final attempt to suppress my book. Sure enough, when I returned home after the wedding I received a fat manila envelope from the PRB with my manuscript inside, including three final chapters that I had submitted in April covering the Libby trial, my Congressional testimony, and our move to New Mexico—all of which had occurred, of course, after I had left government service. As I nervously opened the envelope right in the small store where we have our mailbox, the manuscript fell out. My worst fears were realized; the first two chapters were nothing but black lines. Completely. Not one word had been allowed.

The only problem was that in its hour of triumph the PRB had overreached. The PRB had *already* reviewed those first two chapters and although they had redacted (censored) the passages pertaining to the single issue of my length of government service, much of the content was still intact. My lawyers informed the PRB that we planned to publish the book using these earlier redactions plus their redactions to the final three chapters. Finally, in mid-September 2007, a year after I had first submitted my manuscript to the PRB, the CIA cleared the manuscript for publication. The book went through the final edits and production in record time.

Although this protracted battle with the CIA over the publication of this book is only a small part of the story I tell, it's an important one. It sheds light on how far the Bush administration will go in its quest to silence or exact revenge on a critic. And between Joe's questioning of the reasons this administration gave for going to war with Iraq, our civil suit against Vice President Dick Cheney,

Karl Rove, Lewis I. “Scooter” Libby, Dick Armitage, and nine other “John Does” (readers should visit www.WilsonSupport.org for additional background on the case), as well as our lawsuit against the CIA on First Amendment grounds, the administration had plenty of reasons to be very angry with the Wilsons. They had already assaulted our reputations, so stopping the publication of my book was just a final attempt to crush us. And although the CIA vigorously denied that there was any “outside interference” in its decision regarding acknowledgment of my dates of service, I never had any doubt that there was a connection and influence by the White House. In February 2008 we submitted the papers to appeal the PRB decision and we still believe our case to be the strongest of its type ever brought against the CIA. Readers who would like further information and details on this case and look at court documents, they should visit www.fairgameplame.com.

In early July 2007 in the midst of all the anxious conversations over the fate of this book, President George W. Bush commuted Scooter Libby’s thirty-month prison sentence. Libby was still ordered to pay the \$250,000 fine. The president’s actions were not surprising, but certainly disappointing. Joe and I believe passionately that the president’s attempt to erase the jury’s decision on Mr. Libby short-circuited and undermined the legal process and opened the president to charges that he was party to an ongoing obstruction of justice. This was underscored and validated over Thanksgiving when excerpts from former White House press secretary Scott McClellan’s forthcoming memoir were posted online. McClellan said that he had been sent out to lie to the press corps by the president, the vice president, and the president’s chief of staff, Andrew Card, about the involvement of Scooter Libby and Karl Rove in the leak of my covert CIA identity.

In stark contrast to the pitched legal battles of the last year our move to New Mexico has brought a certain serenity. I have lived in many cities and countries around the world and have

never felt more at home or at peace in my environment. Our family has been warmly welcomed in the community. On one of our very first days in town, Joe and I were walking along the street, bundled up against the cold, but enjoying the abundant sunshine. An orange, beat-up Pinto roared by us, screeched to a halt about ten feet away, shifted abruptly into reverse, and came back down to street to where we were standing. A young man rolled down his window and shouted above the roar of his engine, “Hey man, are you the Wilsons?” We nodded, not saying a word, wondering what was next. “So cool you moved here. Thank you. Welcome to New Mexico!” And before we could even say thank you, he tore off down the street again. Joe and I cracked up. And this sort of embrace continued; people would come up to us in stores, on the sidewalk, and in restaurants to shake our hands, thanking us for speaking out and making New Mexico our home. Believe me, this was so much nicer than anonymous photographers outside of our home in Washington, D.C., taking pictures of us and our children.

I have traveled widely and exhaustively across this county in the months since my book was published, speaking to university students, civic groups, and others. The audiences are uniformly supportive and ask good questions about the case and its broader implications. They understand that this story is but a metaphor for the larger abuses perpetrated by this administration against our civil liberties and Constitutional rights. The story has ebbed and flowed over nearly four and a half years, so it is not surprising that the public has had trouble following the narrative. I have found that when I put the story in chronological order and in context audiences are outraged and shocked all over again at the harm done to our national security for purely political reasons. I always make a point of saying that the leak was neither a Republican nor a Democratic issue; it was a violence done against our national security.

It is particularly gratifying to have an opportunity to encourage young people to pursue a career in public service. I make a point of saying that despite my personal experiences and disappointments with the CIA, I loved my career, was proud to serve my country, and I urge them to think about serving something bigger than themselves. Our country is suffering through perilous times, and the threats we face are new and profound. We need as many smart, young, patriotic people in the intelligence community as it can attract. After my speech is finished, I almost always have students crowding around me asking how they can improve their chances of getting into the CIA, whether they should learn Arabic or Chinese or study abroad. Government service is not lucrative, but I would not have traded one day of my career at the CIA with the CEO of any Fortune 500 company.

My hope is that the lesson learned from our experience is that an informed and active citizenry is critical to holding government to account for its words and deeds. This administration, to a degree unprecedented in our history, has shredded our Constitution, restricted our civil liberties, and used fear to cement its hold on power. By intimidating Congress, the press, and the citizenry with its sustained campaigns of lies and character assassination to a remarkable degree it has succeeded.

Twenty years from now, when our twins ask us where we were when the fight was being waged for the future of our democracy, we can tell them we were on the front lines, acting in the long tradition of Americans against those who would subvert our Constitution in their lust for power and the perks that come with it. And we did so with integrity and honesty, if not always perfectly.

*Santa Fe, New Mexico
March 2008*

Contents

Publisher's Note	<i>ix</i>
Introduction	<i>xi</i>
1. Joining the CIA	<i>1</i>
2. [REDACTED] Tour	<i>28</i>
3. [REDACTED]	<i>49</i>
4. Love and the Island of Misfit Toys	<i>59</i>
5. Motherhood	<i>74</i>
6. Mother and Part-Time Spy	<i>88</i>
7. Trip to Niger	<i>102</i>
8. Shock and Awe	<i>113</i>
9. Exposed	<i>137</i>
10. The Only Washington Scandal Without Sex	<i>159</i>
11. The Year from Hell	<i>177</i>
12. Stay and Fight	<i>200</i>
13. Indictment	<i>222</i>
14. Life after the Agency	<i>241</i>
15. Alice in Wonderland	<i>264</i>
16. The Libby Trial and Farewell to Washington	<i>282</i>
Epilogue	<i>305</i>
Afterword	<i>307</i>
Appendix	<i>391</i>
Acknowledgments	<i>407</i>

CHAPTER 1

Joining the CIA

Our group of five—three men and two women—trekked through an empty tract of wooded land and swamp, known in CIA terms as the “Farm.” It was 4 A.M. and we had been on the move all night. Having practiced escape and evasion from an ostensible hostile force—our instructors—we were close to meeting up with our other classmates. Together we would attack the enemy, then board a helicopter to safety. This exercise, called the final assault, was the climax of our paramilitary training. Each of us carried eighty-pound backpacks, filled with essential survival gear: tents, freeze-dried food, tablets to purify drinking water, and 5.56 mm ammunition for our M-16s. The late fall weather was bitter, and slimy water sloshed in our combat boots. A blister on my heel radiated little jabs of stinging pain. My friend Pete, a former Army officer, usually ready with a wisecrack and a smirk, hadn’t spoken in hours, while John, our resident beer guzzler, carried not only his backpack but at least fifty extra pounds of body weight. His round face was covered with mud and sweat.

When our point man gave the hand signal, we gratefully

stopped, shrugged off our backpacks, and slumped together for a moment against a small protected knoll. Then we fell into formation again and moved toward the landing zone. When we finally reached a clearing at dawn, I could barely make out the blades of an enormous helicopter rotating slowly, and the friendly faces of my other classmates, Sharon, David, and Tex. I heard Pete mutter, "Finally." We all surged forward, energized by relief and hope. I began to imagine the hot shower I would enjoy when this was over. Then suddenly the sharp firecrackers of light from magnesium flares exploded over our heads and the repetitive sound of machine-gun fire sent adrenaline rushing through my veins.

I dropped to the ground and crawled over to Pete, thinking he would know what to do. Despite three months of hard training, my idyllic suburban upbringing had not prepared me for incoming fire and the overwhelming physical sensations that accompanied it. Dragging me a few yards away to a crest of land, Pete pointed at the helicopter. "Get your ass over there!"

Before I knew it, we brushed aside any pretense of military discipline and made a dead run at the helicopter. As we careened down the hill at full speed, M-16s blazing, I caught the eye of a classmate running alongside me. His expression suggested a hint of enjoyment, or at least his awareness of the absurdity of the situation. Soon enough, I threw myself into the open door of the helicopter and caught my breath beneath the noise of artillery and the deafening sounds of the rotors and engines. I shrugged off my pack, and as we were lifted to safety, I marveled at how I came to be at the Farm.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[illegible][illegible]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] As a teenager, I read William Stevenson's *A Man Called Intrepid*, about the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) days during World War II. The OSS was the predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency. I loved the book and I found the history intriguing. I began to seriously consider what working for the CIA meant. If I joined, what would I be asked to do? Was it dangerous? Did I believe in what the CIA did? My family had always valued public service and kept a quiet patriotism. On Memorial Day and the Fourth of July we always put out the flag in a big flowerpot. My father, Samuel Plame, was a retired Air Force colonel. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941, he was studying at the University of Illinois in Champaign. He remembers that the next day the campus was a ghost town; all the eligible male students had left to sign up for military ser-

vice. He was soon on his own way to enlist in the Army Air Corps—the Air Force predecessor—in San Diego. He served in the South Pacific during World War II and has a seemingly inexhaustible supply of corny jokes, stories, and songs from his time there. My brother, Robert Plame, older than me by sixteen years, joined the Marines in 1966 and was promptly sent to Vietnam. One day in 1967, as my parents and I returned home from some errands, the neighbors told us that two uniformed Marines had been knocking at our door. We learned that Bob was MIA. My stricken parents assumed the worst and, for a few days, we did not know if Bob was dead or alive. He was finally located on a hospital ship. During a reconnaissance mission behind enemy lines, he had been badly wounded in his right arm. He endured years of multiple, painful operations to restore some sensation in his limb. Incredibly, with just one working arm and hand, he went on to learn how to fly, ski, write, and tie shoelaces. He has been happily married to Christie, a nurse, for nearly thirty years and is the proud father of two bright and beautiful girls. I thought that if I served in the CIA it would extend a family tradition. Still, I had my nagging doubts. Hadn't the CIA tried to kill Castro with an exploding cigar?

“Imagine you are meeting an agent in a foreign hotel room and there is suddenly a loud banging at the door. You hear ‘Police, let us in!’ What do you do?” This question was being put to me by a kindly looking older woman wearing pearls and a surprisingly bright yellow blouse during my initial CIA interview in Washington. I [REDACTED] had checked into a modest—well, seedy—hotel in Arlington, Virginia. I had no idea what to expect but the interview the next day, in a beige building in the suburbs of Washington, followed along the traditional lines of “What are your strengths, what are your weaknesses,

why do you want to work for the CIA”—until now. This question veered off the conventional path and was more interesting. My immediate thought was that excluding espionage, there is only one good reason for an unrelated man and woman to be in a hotel room together. “I would take off my blouse, tell the agent to do the same, and jump into bed before telling the police to come in.” Her barely perceptible smile told me I had hit on the right answer. I thought, This could be fun. I was ready for the next question.

but I thought if it didn't pan out, I could find something on Capitol Hill or in the Peace Corps. In the meantime, I found a job as a management trainee with a Washington department store. Despite the 20 percent employee discount, I hated working in retail, but it was a way to pay the rent as I continued through months of CIA psychological tests, a battery of interviews, and an exacting, comprehensive physical exam. One question out of at least four hundred in one psychological test still stands out in my memory: “Do you like tall women?” I still have no idea if I got the right answer on that one. Later that summer, I was asked to take a polygraph exam. It was a weird, but relatively brief experience.

At the same time, the Agency was conducting a security background check on me. Several neighbors reported to my parents that “someone” had interviewed them to ask if I had any known drinking, drug, or other problems.