

examples of Mr. CHENEY's policy of not telling anyone anything. Going as far back as Mr. CHENEY's meetings with the Energy mogul's who helped him shape this country's lopsided energy policies in which Exxon Mobile posted the greatest profits ever made in the history of this country last year when energy prices were so high some of America's poor have to depend on the charity of Hugo Chavez of Venezuela to make it through the winter.

Mr. CHENEY is so secretive he implemented and managed a system of CIA prisons and torture cites in Europe called "black sites" which violated not only our laws and treaties but those of the European Union. And practically no one in the Congress of the United States knew anything about these prisons until the Washington Post disclosed their existence.

Mr. I. "Scooter" Libby just disclosed at his perjury trial that Mr. CHENEY gave him classified information to give to the press. That was classified information about an undercover secret service agent, Valerie Plame.

Since the Congress and the public know only egregious examples of what exposures by whistles blowers and the press has made in the interest of the public's greater good, we, the American people, know nothing of the Vice President's doings of the last 6 years. That is a scary thought.

This hunting accident, in which Mr. CHENEY defied all White House protocol by not informing the President, the White House Press Office, the Police or Sheriff until at least 24 hours after the shooting, has reinforced the opinion that Mr. CHENEY is out of control. That is, he is above the law, rules and regulations of ordinary mortals. He doesn't even have to do what the President wants him to do. He isn't just above the law; he is the law.

The story had many conflicting versions as they were told by the owner of the ranch, the doctors treating the shooting victim, Scott McClelland and finally, CHENEY himself. This has opened the White House to increasingly hard questions about the inconsistencies in these stories. The White House can't reconcile these differences because, it appears, Mr. CHENEY feels he doesn't have to explain anything to the President or the White House Press Secretary. Mr. CHENEY is an official who works for the people of the United States. But don't try to tell him that. It doesn't fit with his view of himself or the way he carries out his office of Vice President.

Mr. Herbert points out in his op-ed piece: "The shooting and Mr. Cheney's high-handed behavior in its immediate aftermath fit perfectly with the stereotype of him as a powerful but dangerous figure who is viewed by many as a dark force within the administration. He doesn't even give lip service to the idea of transparency in his private or public life . . ."

DICK CHENEY is a constant reminder of those things the White House would like most to forget: the bullying, the intelligence failures, the inability to pacify Iraq (Mr. CHENEY told Tim Russert: "I really do believe, that we will be greeted as liberators," he said) the misuse of classified information and the breathtaking incompetence that spread through the administration.

I agree with Mr. Herbert's conclusion: "Mr. Cheney would do his nation and his president a service by packing his bags and heading back to Wyoming. He's become a joke. But not a funny one."

[From the New York Times, Feb. 16, 2006]

MR. VICE PRESIDENT, IT'S TIME TO GO

(By Bob Herbert)

It's time for Dick Cheney to step down—for the sake of the country and for the sake of the Bush administration.

Mr. Cheney's bumbling conduct at the upscale Armstrong Ranch in South Texas seemed hilarious at first. But when we learned that Harry Whittington had suffered a mild heart attack after being shot by the vice president in a hunting accident, it became clear that a more sober assessment of the fiasco at the ranch and, inevitably, Mr. Cheney's controversial and even bizarre behavior as vice president was in order.

There's a reason Dick Cheney is obsessive about shunning the spotlight. His record is not the kind you want to hold up for intense scrutiny.

More than anyone else, he was fanatical about massaging and distorting the intelligence that plunged us into the flaming quagmire of Iraq. He insisted that Saddam Hussein had chemical and biological weapons and was hot on the trail of nukes. He pounded away at the false suggestion that Iraq was somehow linked to Al Qaeda. And he spread the word that the war he wanted so badly would be a cakewalk.

"I really do believe," he told Tim Russert, "that we will be greeted as liberators."

Well, he got his war. And while the nation's brave young soldiers and marines were bouncing around Iraq in shamefully vulnerable Humvees and other vehicles, dodging bullets, bombs and improvised explosive devices, Mr. Cheney (a gold-medal winner in the acquisition of wartime deferments) felt perfectly comfortable packing his fancy 28-gauge Perazzi shotgun and heading off to Texas with a covey of fat cats to shoot quail.

Matters went haywire, of course, when he shot Mr. Whittington instead.

That was the moment when the legend of the tough, hawkish, take-no-prisoners vice president began morphing into the less-than-heroic image of a reckless, scowling incompetent who mistook his buddy for a bird.

This story is never going away. Harry Whittington is Dick Cheney's Monica. When Mr. Whittington dies (hopefully many years from now, and from natural causes), he will be remembered as the hunting companion who was shot by the vice president of the United States. This tale will stick to Mr. Cheney like Crazy Glue, and that's bad news for the Bush administration.

The shooting and Mr. Cheney's highhanded behavior in its immediate aftermath fit perfectly with the stereotype of him as a powerful but dangerous figure who is viewed by many as a dark force within the administration. He doesn't even give lip service to the idea of transparency in his public or private life. This is the man who fought all the way to the Supreme Court to keep his White House meetings with energy industry honchos as secret as the Manhattan Project. (Along the way he went duck hunting at a private camp in rural Louisiana with Justice Antonin Scalia.)

This is also the man whose closest and most trusted aide, Lewis "Scooter" Libby, has been indicted for perjury and obstruction of justice as a result of the investigation into the outing of a C.I.A. undercover operative, Valerie Wilson.

Mr. Cheney is arrogant, defiant and at times blatantly vulgar. He once told Senator Patrick Leahy to perform a crude act upon himself.

A vice president who insists on writing his own rules, who shudders at the very idea of transparency in government, whose judgment on crucial policy issues has been as wildly off the mark (and infinitely more

tragic) as his actions in Texas over the weekend, and who has now become an object of relentless ridicule, cannot by any reasonable measure be thought of as an asset to the nation or to the president he serves.

The Bush administration would benefit from new thinking and new perspectives on the war in Iraq, the potential threat from Iran, the nation's readiness to cope with another terror attack, the development of a comprehensive energy policy and other important issues.

President Bush's approval ratings have dropped below 40 percent in recent polls. Even Republicans are openly criticizing the administration's conduct of the war, its response to Hurricane Katrina and assorted other failures and debacles.

Dick Cheney is a constant reminder of those things the White House would most like to forget: the bullying, the intelligence failures, the inability to pacify Iraq, the misuse of classified information and the breathtaking incompetence that seems to be spread throughout the administration.

Mr. Cheney would do his nation and his president a service by packing his bags and heading back to Wyoming. He's become a joke. But not a funny one.

CELEBRATING THE SESQUICENTEN-
NIAL OF THE SAN MATEO SHER-
IFF'S OFFICE

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to celebrate the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department on their Sesquicentennial Anniversary. The Department is the oldest and largest law enforcement agency in San Mateo County, California, located in my Congressional District.

The San Mateo County Sheriff's Department history begins with the formation of the County of San Mateo in 1856. Residents of the Peninsula watched as John W. Ackerson was sworn in as the first sheriff of San Mateo County. He had three total staff members, an Undersheriff, bailiff of the Courts and a jailer. There weren't even patrol duties for the office.

Mr. Speaker, today, from those humble beginnings, the San Mateo Sheriff's Office has grown to a force of 450 officers and is responsible for everything from patrolling the county to running the courts and the correctional facilities. They have exemplary task forces, specializing in narcotics, regional terrorist threat assessment and emergency services among others. Today, the Sheriff's Office is still the Chief Law Enforcement Agency of the County of San Mateo.

Mr. Speaker, since 1993 the Sheriff's Office has been most ably led by Sheriff Don Horsley. In fact, Sheriff Horsley picked out the badge marking the 150th anniversary of the Sheriff's Office. The commemorative badge replicates the Old West style that Sheriff Ackerson would have worn. I dearly appreciate their extraordinary service that they provide to the County and I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the San Mateo Sheriff's Office for the honorable duty they have performed for the last 150 years.