

from our viewpoint...

Let's quiet carping, get on with world

Call it Yellowcake-gate? Democrats are screaming for a special counsel to nail someone for revealing the identity of a CIA agent who happened to be an ambassador's wife.

Get real. These are the same Democrats who didn't want a special counsel to investigate Bill Clinton's doings, first among them a bunch of shady Arkansas land deals.

Just as that got ridiculous when the FBI had to analyze the stain on Monica's dress, this one cracks up somewhere on the diplomatic cocktail circuit.

The ambassador's wife was CIA? Sounds like the plot for a bad spy novel.

Already, the FBI is hot on the trail of the alleged leak. Hundreds of officials who knew officially the agency's identity will be rounded up and questioned.

The government sent Ambassador Joseph Wilson to Africa to investigate rumors that Saddam Hussein was trying to buy a form of refined uranium ore known as yellowcake. He reported back that there was no substance to the rumor, but the allegation to into President Bush's State of the Union address anyway.

Washington columnist Robert Novak reported that Mr. Wilson, who became a critic of the administration, had been sent because his wife, Valerie Plame, was a CIA agent.

Though the CIA confirmed her identity and, according to Novak, did not protest the use of her name, it's a violation of federal law to disclose classified information. And the names of CIA agents, apparently are classified. Even when the whole world knows who they are.

Democrats out for blood want to see someone prosecuted. They claim someone at the White House leaked Ms. Plame's name to punish her husband for his anti-administration stance.

No one really knows the truth about the leak, unimportant as that might be. The howling is liable to last all year.

The real question is not whether we need a special prosecutor. The question is, does anyone really care?

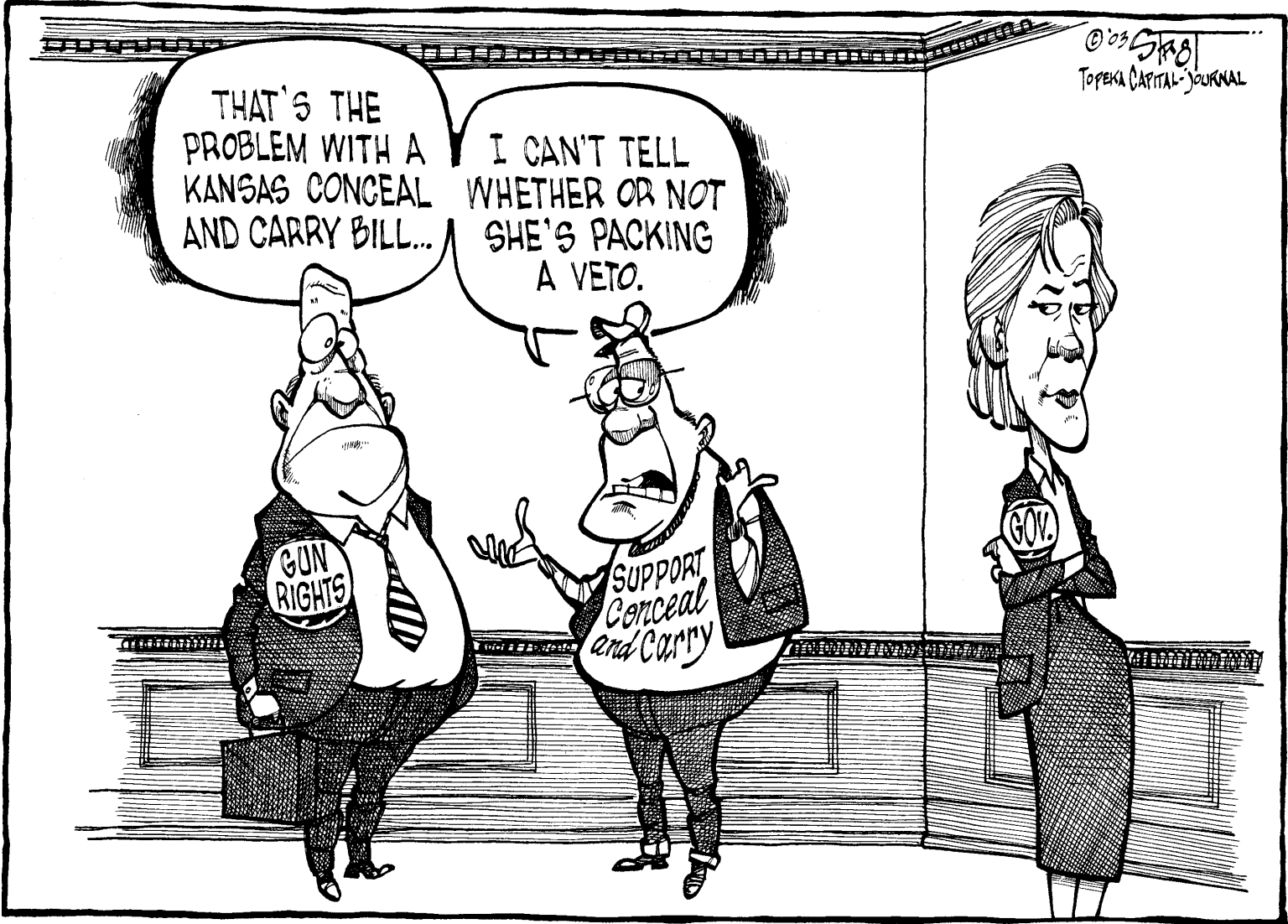
Apparently, not even the CIA. But meantime, dozens of FBI agents have been pulled out of the counterterrorism unit to pursue the leaker. Instead of hunting for al Qaida terrorists, they're hunting elephants down on Pennsylvania Avenue. The are being led by a senior prosecutor from the counterterrorism unit.

America is tired of special prosecutors and special investigations of such trivia. Instead of appointing an independent prosecutor, why not admit that the entire affair was inconsequential?

Let Congress get back to worrying about the budget and let the FBI go find terrorists. That's what we pay them for, after all.

Not hunting leakers and Republicans.

If this is the worst thing they have on Mr. Bush, he's liable to get re-elected. — *Steve Haynes.*



Big brother among 'the greatest'

I don't know about you, but I have a brother who fought in World War II.

For his last birthday, I gave him a copy of the book "The Greatest Generation."

He is part of that greatest generation. He earned the nation's gratitude and hero-status from his younger sister.

That generation is quickly passing away from us, and their patriotism with them. Will America ever be so united as it was then?

I can't view any war with joy, but I do look back on World War II with a degree of nostalgia. I was too young to realize what it was all about. But I remember we didn't like "Japs," there were no Hershey bars, and I missed my big brother. I think the war changed him a lot, but then World War II changed the world. Never after that were we so innocent.

Ideas of morality changed dramatically, just as acceptance of drug-use came through the Vietnam conflict. Our young and bright go off to fight for an ideal, and too often come back disillusioned.



**lorna
gt**

• commentary

or their religion. Yet we went over to free them, expecting to be welcomed with open arms. We didn't fulfill the bravado, and we can't get out gracefully. Shades of Vietnam.

No war is good, and I'm not sure I can ever come to terms with any being "just."

The hearts of men and women seem to have an infinite capacity for hate and revenge, both of which proliferate in war and last for generations. We have to oppose evil, of course, but sometimes we need to look closer to home for the evil. Maybe in our own hearts and actions.

Yet, even in my concern and prayers, I have faith in the goodness of humankind — if not always in their governments. And my heart is warmed knowing that good Iraqi people risked their lives to help our troops in many ways — especially in the situations leading to the recapture of our prisoners.

The evil that exists in the world is usually in human-made governing bodies, not in the everyday people of any nation.

God help us all!

Kansas cornfield yields rare treasure

We laugh when people say that everything that is to be discovered has been. But when we find out something has been discovered in our own back yard, we are a bit surprised.

That's how I felt when I visited the Museum of the Steamboat Arabia in Kansas City last month.

I know Kansas City. I spent 10 years living and working in Kansas City, Kansas, and its suburbs. Steve spent more than a dozen years on various beats around the city, from the courthouse to the airport, for *The Kansas City Times*.

Our children were born in Kansas City. We followed the Royals for years. We know most of the best barbecue places and have visited the galleries, parks and museums.

How dare they sneak one in on us just because we moved away in 1980?

When the information on the National Newspaper Convention in Kansas City arrived with a note that we would visit the Nelson Gallery of Art and the Steamboat Arabia Museum, I was excited. I love the Nelson. I thought the Arabia must be some sort of gambling cruise.

I soon learned, however, that the Arabia was a steamship which sank in the Missouri River near Kansas City on Sept. 5, 1856 — several years before the Civil War.



**cynthia
haynes**

• open season

plorers tapped out their savings.

And what was on the Arabia, besides the ill-fated mule?

Some 200 tons of merchandise. Everything you'd need if you lived in the West in 1856. On display are jewelry; perfume; champagne; fur coats; food including pickles, pie fillings, peppercorns, cheese, catsup and oysters; more than 4,000 leather boots and shoes, 100 pair of India rubber overshoes manufactures by Ford & Goodyear Co., more than 2,000 pieces of china including Wedgwood and Ironstone; 150 leather hits and 65 bolts of fabric, sewing supplies including china and brass buttons, Indian trade beads, and thousands of needles and pins.

And it was all found in a field owned by Norman Sortor of Kansas City, Kansas.

His daughter, Martha, and I were college roommates in the late '60s.

It's a very small, very strange world.

For information about the museum and its amazing contents call (816) 471-4030 or go to www.1856.com.

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