

By William Rivers Pitt

From Truthout.org | Original Article

Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction.

- Dick Cheney

It is axiomatic by now: when someone leaves government service, especially from a high-profile position, they write a book. They all do it, sometimes more than once. Richard Nixon is the main example of one who produced a multi-volume apologia; by the time he went into the ground, he'd penned enough books to fill a wide shelf. Henry Kissinger was similarly prolific, which leads one to wonder about the relationship between criminal activities and the printed page. Nixon was chased from office after a series of crimes that, at the time, had no precedent, and Kissinger is still so infamous that he cannot travel abroad for fear of arrest. Both wrote enough books to take up half the political science section of any local bookstore, perhaps in the vain attempt to explain away the lasting damage their actions did to the republic.

Speaking of damaging the republic, Dick Cheney has a book out. I'm sure you've heard about it by now; he laid the groundwork for its release by claiming the contents would cause heads to explode in Washington, causing a lot of people who should know better by now to say, "Ooooh, this should be good." It isn't, at all, but I must confess that my head did come very close to launching itself off my shoulders...not because of what's in the book, but because I have to deal with the rancid reality of a free and un-convicted Dick Cheney appearing in the public eye once again.

If there were any justice to be found in this deranged country, Dick Cheney would have penned his pestiferous, self-serving little memoir by the light of a bare bulb inside the cell of a federal prison. If there were any justice to be found, Mr. Cheney would be forced to contend with the "Son of Sam Law," which, according to [World Law Direct](http://WorldLawDirect.com), "refers to a type of law designed to keep criminals from profiting from their crimes, often by selling their stories to publishers. Such laws often authorize the state to seize money earned from such a deal and use it to

compensate the criminal's victims."

The Son of Sam, a.k.a. David Berkowitz, killed six people and wounded several others during his notorious summer-long shooting spree in New York. Berkowitz is an absolute piker compared to Dick Cheney, whose actions directly caused deaths and injuries that number in the hundreds of thousands. The deaths he is responsible for are ongoing to this day, in fact. If there were any justice to be found, whatever profits he earns from his book would be spread out between the families of dead and wounded soldiers whom he lied into war in Iraq, between the families of dead and wounded Iraqi civilians, and between Americans like Valerie Plame, who along with numerous other intelligence figures, had their lives bulldozed by Cheney's eight-year rampage through our system of government.

It would hardly amount to a pittance paid to each injured party - there are so many to account for! - but it would be a kind of justice all the same, for nary a dime of profit would line Dick Cheney's already-stuffed pockets.

Alas, the generations to come will be forced to reckon with one of the great and lasting failures of the Obama administration: the simple, unbelievable fact of Dick Cheney's continued freedom. He and his ilk committed enough brazen crimes to keep a brace of federal prosecutors busy for the next twenty-five years, and yet Mr. Cheney remains unmolested by the system of law he so vigorously disdained. According to Wikileaks, not only has the Obama administration failed to seek a reckoning with Cheney, they worked vigorously behind the scenes to ensure that no such reckoning will ever come to pass.

And so we have Dick, and his book, and yet another hard lesson on the absence of justice. He'll make a few bucks off the thing, which he can bank next to the obscene millions he gained through his nefarious Halliburton war profiteering. He was still getting paid by Halliburton while in office. Remember that? They called it a "deferred retirement benefit," an annual check with six zeroes to the left of the decimal, and all the while Cheney was steering your tax dollars into Halliburton's coffers with a blizzard of bald-faced lies about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

There is so much to remember about Dick Cheney's time in office. There was the Office of Special Plans, which he created to formulate the most effective lies possible about Iraq, WMD, and connections to September 11. There was the torture in Abu Ghraib and elsewhere, which he referred to as "the dark side" and which he championed with great vigor. There was his

dismissal of lawfully-issued congressional subpoenas, and his dedication to the idea of a "Unitary Executive" which is beholden to nothing and no one. There was his broad plan to spy on millions of Americans without a warrant, which he wanted to continue even after the whole thing was declared to be illegal. There was (and remains) the program of indefinite detention without due process of law, which was his baby, and there was the coddling of known criminal and double-agent Ahmed Chalabi, who was his pal.

There was all this, and so much more besides, but one incident stands out in my mind above all else. It was only an accent in the symphony of wrongdoing Cheney directed from his office, and was barely noticed at the time, but I will never forget it.

It was a simple thing, really: the National Archives, by dint of two different federal laws, annually collects the official papers of the Executive Branch for the edification of future historians, researchers and government officials. It is a by-rote requirement, one small cog in the wheelworks of government, but not this time.

Dick Cheney said no. No, you cannot have any papers from the office of the Vice President, and for one reason: the office of the Vice President, because I say so, is not part of the Executive Branch.

It deserves to be written twice: Dick Cheney actually claimed, with his bare face hanging out to all the world, that the office of the Vice President is not part of the Executive Branch. The unmitigated gall required to utter such a claim, especially after so much talk about the "Unitary Executive," is unparalleled in modern American history.

There, right there, is everything you need to know about the man. Dick Cheney is the ultimate American terrorist, one who not only lacks respect for American law and government, but who spent his eight years in office actively working to destroy and dismember the functions of that government. He tore the place up, deliberately and with intent, because he hated the law and the government it supported, and we will be a long time recovering from his deeds. He is directly and personally responsible for thousands of deaths and injuries. If this is not terrorism in the raw, then the word has no meaning.

Dick Cheney has blood on his hands, but will remain free for the foreseeable future because the

administration that replaced him lacks the honor, integrity and intestinal fortitude to address what he has done. Until such a reckoning is at hand, all I can do is remind Mr. Cheney, and anyone who will listen, of another fact of law that, God willing, will be brought to bear against him someday.

There is no statute of limitations on murder, and murder is exactly what he did.