

April 13, 2015

It can make your hair hurt, but getting the story straight on the West's understanding about Iraq's WMD's is going to be a point historians will find important. [Peter Berkowitz](#) of Real Clear Politics reviews Judith Miller's new book. Miller was in [Pickings](#) a few days ago introducing her book.

... That is where Miller almost ends her book.

In the epilogue, however, she discloses that she now believes she gave incorrect testimony in United States v. Libby and that she did so because prosecutor Fitzgerald—who declined to respond to written questions about the case— withheld crucial information from her.

Of the nine journalists who testified at Libby's trial about conversations with him—including Bob Woodward of The Washington Post, Times reporter David Sanger, and syndicated columnist Robert Novak—Miller was the only one to say that Libby voluntarily revealed Plame's CIA employment. She writes that her testimony "was also crucial to Fitzgerald's assertion that the vice president had been involved, since Libby had told the grand jury that Cheney had approved his suggestion that he discuss the intelligence estimate [the October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate] about Iraq and WMD with me."

Before she appeared before the grand jury in the autumn of 2005, Miller writes, Fitzgerald led her by pointed queries to believe that a four-word question contained between parentheses in her notebook—" (wife works in Bureau?)"—was the smoking gun that proved that Libby, in a June 23, 2003 conversation, had told her about Plame's CIA employment. She so testified to the grand jury in 2005 and at trial in 2007.

Three years later, while reading Plame's book, "Fair Game," Miller was astonished to learn that "while working overseas for the CIA, Plame's cover were jobs at the State Department." This threw "a new light" on Miller's notebook jotting, because the State Department has "bureaus," while the CIA is organized into "divisions."

Miller saw that she must have begun her conversation with Libby wondering whether Wilson's wife worked at the State Department. Moreover, had a seasoned Washington insider like Libby sought to reveal Plame's CIA job, Miller realized, he would not have referred to the place she worked as a "bureau," but rather as a "division." These revelations, according to Miller, shattered her confidence in her recollection and led her to believe that Fitzgerald misled her into providing false testimony.

The prosecution had the classified file of Plame's service and Fitzgerald knew, or should have known, of Plame's State Department cover. But despite his obligation to provide exculpatory evidence to witnesses as well as to the defendant, he withheld this information not only from Judy Miller, but also from Scooter Libby's lawyers even though they had requested Plame's employment records.

It would have been easy for Miller to take her knowledge of her mistaken testimony to her grave. Who would have known? Who would have cared?

Nevertheless, as she had done with the prewar intelligence failures, Miller investigated. In addition to finding injustice to Libby she also revealed that Fitzgerald's three-and-half year pursuit of him damaged American national security.

In a 2013 interview, former Vice President Cheney told Miller that but for Fitzgerald's sidelining of Libby, the Iraq War might have turned out differently. In 2003, Libby was the principal figure in the White House arguing for the counterinsurgency strategy that President Bush only embraced in late 2006 after many wrong turns and much carnage, and which Gen. David Petraeus successfully implemented in 2007. It is painful to contemplate how many lives—American and Iraqi—might have been spared had Libby, the foremost champion within the White House in 2003 of stabilizing Iraq through counterinsurgency operations, not been hindered by, and eventually forced to resign because of, Fitzgerald's overwrought federal investigation and prosecution.

Serendipity, a biased press, and a fanatical prosecutor combined to yoke together the fates of Scooter Libby and Judith Miller. Elite left-wing opinion demanded that the Bush administration pay for its supposed lies about Iraqi WMD. The left wanted to take down Bush or Cheney and when they couldn't destroy either, they settled for Libby.

At the same time, the left had no interest in toppling their beloved New York Times, but relished the newspaper's guilt offering of Miller. That the only lies of consequence were those they promulgated about Libby and Miller does not yet seem to have registered in, much less troubled, the left-liberal conscience.

Miller's sobering book, which demonstrates her devotion to getting the story right, makes a major contribution to correcting the record.

For another back-story that exposes the lies of the left, [The Daily Caller](#) shows the link between the obama administration and the fraudulent Rolling Stone article about UVA.

A top-ranking official at the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights has emerged as a potentially key figure in Rolling Stone's false article, "A Rape on Campus."

Catherine Lhamon, who heads the Department's civil rights wing, was identified in a letter sent last month by University of Virginia Dean of Students Allen Groves to Steve Coll and Sheila Coronel, the two Columbia Journalism School deans who conducted a review of the Nov. 19 article, written by disgraced reporter Sabrina Rubin Erdely.

Groves' letter was included as a footnote to the Columbia deans' report, which was released on Sunday and cataloged the failures and lies that led to the article's publication.

In the letter, Groves wrote that he has suffered "personal and professional" damage as a result of Erdely's reporting and comments Lhamon made about him which were included in the article.

As the Rolling Stone article fell apart, Lhamon's involvement has gone virtually unmentioned. But a deeper look reveals her ties to Emily Renda, a University of Virginia employee and activist who put Erdely in touch with Jackie, the student whose claim that she was brutally gang-raped by seven members of a fraternity on Sept. 28, 2012, served as the linchpin for the 9,000-word Rolling Stone article. President Obama nominated Lhamon to become the Education Department's Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights in July 2013. The Senate approved her unanimously the following month.

She has served as the Education Department's designee to the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault which Obama created on Jan. 22, 2014. Renda served on the same task force.

Besides that link, both spoke at a February 2014 University of Virginia event entitled "Sexual Misconduct Among College Students." ...

The above is not the first time Emily Renda's fingerprints were found in the Rolling Stone disaster. The blog [28 Sherman](#) posted on her involvement last December. *Even after my Erdely-Renda post from Thursday, the Rolling Stone article continues to unravel elsewhere. The Washington Post managed to do the yeoman's work on the problems to the story. Chuck Ross at the Daily Caller has interviewed Jackie's friend Randall, adding to the catfish elements to the story. Emily Renda's still skating free from scrutiny except here. A really weird coincidence is found between Renda's words and Jackie's story in the Rolling Stone. This plays into who came up with Sabrina Erdely's story details. The media should be asking Emily Renda deeper questions than the softballs NPR threw her way.*

Jackie's story to her friends differs from Erdely's reporting. Jackie has accused Erdely of lying, people have accused Jackie of lying, and it is a tornado of lies. This is where Renda fits in. Emily Renda's testimony to the Senate was in June. Here is a passage about a vicious rape on campus.

"One of the student survivors I worked with, Jenna, was gang-raped by five fraternity men early in her freshman year. Despite the severity of the assault and injuries she sustained, Jenna still experienced a feeling of personal responsibility. Looking for affirmation, she sought out peers and told her story. Sadly, each and every one of the friends she reached out to responded with varying denials of her experience; these responses worsened her feelings of self-blame – that she must be confused because that fraternity "is full of great guys"; that she must have made them think she was "down for that"; questioning how no one else at the party could have heard what was going on if she was telling the truth; or discouraging her from seeking help because "you don't want to be one of those girls who has a reputation" for reporting "that kind of thing." These statements haunted Jenna. She told me that they made her feel crazy, and made her question whether her own understanding of the rape was legitimate."*

Sounds familiar? ...

And the blog [The Other McCain](#) posts on the "coven of liars" that promoted the story.

... The Daily Caller's Chuck Ross reports that Lhamon and Emily Renda are part of the same federal apparatus:

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Besides that link, both spoke at a February 2014 University of Virginia event entitled "Sexual Misconduct Among College Students."

Lhamon has been invited to the White House nearly 60 times, according to visitor's logs.

Renda has been invited six times. Both were **invited to the same White House meeting on three occasions**. One, held on Feb. 21, 2014, was conducted by Lynn Rosenthal, then the White House Advisor on Violence Against Women. Twenty-one people, mostly activists, were invited to that meeting. Lhamon and Renda were invited to two other larger gatherings — one on April 29 and the other on Sept. 19.

It is unclear if both attended the three meetings. Renda did not respond to an emailed request for comment.

Renda and Lhamon also testified at a June 26, 2014, Senate hearing on campus sexual assault. It was at that hearing that Renda cited Jackie's story that she was brutally gang-raped by five fraternity members — a statement that was inconsistent with Jackie's claim to Erdely that she was raped by seven men. According to the Columbia report, **Renda first told Erdely about Jackie's allegation on July 8**, nearly two weeks after her Senate testimony.

During her testimony, Lhamon claimed that "The best available research suggests that 20% of college women, and roughly 6% of college men, are victims of attempted or completed sexual assault." That "one-in-five" claim about the prevalence of sexual assault on campus has been heavily disputed."

Now, read [the second page of Chuck Ross's report](#):

"In his letter, Groves wrote that he filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request seeking correspondence between Lhamon and Erdely. Likewise, The Daily Caller filed a FOIA request but expanded the inquiry to include emails Lhamon and her assistant sent to Renda.

In his letter to Coll and Coronel, Groves wrote that he was "one of the professionals vilified by name" in Erdely's article.

He claimed that Erdely completely mischaracterized remarks he made at a Sept. 2014 meeting with university trustees about sexual assault and that **Lhamon disparaged him with comments she made to Erdely**. . . .

Despite the context provided by Groves, the Department of Education is not backing off of Lhamon's comments to Erdely.

"We stand by the statement Catherine made during her interview with Rolling Stone," Dorie Turner Nolt, the agency's press secretary, told The DC."

This is serious. Here you have Erdely misrepresenting a UVA dean's words and a federal official disparaging the dean on the basis of that misrepresentation, and the Department of Education declares that it will "stand by" this smear? More than that, however, Lhamon and Renda appear to have a very close connection through the White House task force, and both were sources for Erdely's now-discredited article. ...

Real Clear Politics

[Judith Miller's "Story": Setting the Record Straight](#)

by Peter Berkowitz

"In the spring of 2002, a year before the invasion of Iraq, I was at the peak of my profession," Judith Miller writes in the prologue to "The Story: A Reporter's Journey," her compelling account of her life in journalism. Miller had been a versatile reporter at The New York Times for 25 years,

but her special beat was the Arab world, Islamic extremism, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and war.

She was part of the Times staff that won the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for explanatory reporting for its investigation of al-Qaeda's pre-9/11 global network; she received an Emmy that year for a documentary based on her co-authored book "Germs: Biological Weapons and America's Secret War." She was nine years into a happy marriage to New York publishing eminence Jason Epstein.

Three years later, with her reporting "mired in controversy," the Times drove her out. A swarm of bloggers and more than a few fellow print journalists accused her of "hyping" the threat of WMD posed by Saddam Hussein's Iraq, thus helping President George W. Bush and his team sell a misbegotten war to the American public. At best, Miller was blamed for lacking the requisite skepticism any serious reporter must have, for ignoring facts, and distorting information. At worst, she was charged with having morphed into one of the dreaded neoconservatives who, according to this media caricature, sought to export democracy to the Arab world by sword and fire.

Miller's longtime Times colleagues—led by publisher Arthur O. Sulzberger Jr., Executive Editor Bill Keller, Managing Editor Jill Abramson, and columnist Maureen Dowd—threw her overboard in fall 2005. They had reason to have known better.

By then, the verdict on the Bush administration's handling of pre-war intelligence concerning Iraqi WMD—at least for any fair-minded person—was conclusive: Much of the intelligence passed along to the American people proved to be wrong. Saddam did not possess stockpiles of biological and chemical weapons and was not close to acquiring a nuclear bomb. Much of the intelligence remains unrefuted: Saddam had retained the capacity to make biological and chemical weapons and showed every sign, once sanctions were lifted, of intending to resume their production and renewing his pursuit of nuclear weapons. But Bush and his team had not pressured intelligence agencies to conform their analysis to preconceived White House conclusions; nor had they doctored intelligence to deceive the public.

The evidence for these conclusions came from a wide array of domestic and international sources: the intelligence community's October 2002 [National Intelligence Estimate](#); then-CIA director George Tenet who, a few weeks before the mid-March 2003 invasion of Iraq, assured Bush that finding WMD would be a "slam dunk" and who, in a July 2003 [statement](#), several months after the fall of Iraq, acknowledged the agency's responsibility for flawed assessments; the July 2004 [report](#) of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence; the March 2005 [report](#) of the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction, led by former Sen. Chuck Robb, a Democrat, and Judge Laurence Silberman, a Republican; and the British government's 2004 Butler [report](#) as well as the assessments of intelligence agencies in France, Germany, and Israel. Neighboring Kuwait and Iran also thought Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction. So did some of Saddam's field commanders.

Despite the bipartisan and international consensus that though the intelligence agencies made serious mistakes the Bush administration did not lie, left-wing critics, devoted New York Times readers, and the newspaper's own leadership all demanded an accounting for what they regarded as the newspaper's monstrous sin. In the eyes of the faithful, the Gray Lady had not met her obligation to discredit the Bush administration for a war they reviled—as if the job of the paper's news division were to operate as an opposition party. Miller was the most convenient scapegoat and the Times senior management dutifully delivered her up.

“There is no shortage of mistakes about Iraq,” Miller writes in her book. “Good grace, and honesty, require all of us who made them to admit error.” The commitment she demonstrates to getting the facts straight and the analysis correct puts to shame the pundits—from Times contributing op-ed writer [Timothy Egan](#) to “Daily Show” host [Jon Stewart](#)—who continue to peddle what Judge Silberman recently called the “[dangerous lie](#)” that the Bush administration deliberately deceived the American people about WMD.

Miller—now a Fox News contributor, a fellow at the Manhattan Institute, and a theater critic for Tablet Magazine—writes: “When journalists make mistakes about an event—or a person—we must revisit our work to report new, contradictory information or fill in the contours or holes in an incomplete story.”

In doing so in her book, she lets no one off the hook: not herself, not the Bush administration, not the CIA, not the Times—and certainly not former Special Counsel Patrick J. Fitzgerald, who since 2012 has been a partner in the Chicago office of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, a highly profitable New York City law firm.

Fitzgerald and a compliant federal judge jailed Miller for 85 days in pursuit of evidence against, among others, I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby. It was Libby, Fitzgerald would subsequently [allege](#), who “threw sand in the eyes of the grand jury and the FBI investigators” looking into the 2003 leak of CIA operative Valerie Plame’s identity. In a remarkable epilogue, Miller offers reasons to conclude that Fitzgerald misled her into giving what she now understands to have been erroneous testimony that helped Fitzgerald in 2007 secure a conviction of Libby for obstruction of justice, making a false statement, and perjury.

Miller’s account of her life and times includes good friends; remarkable colleagues; the thrill of the scoop; and the glamor, hardship, and danger of the foreign correspondent’s life. Her tale leaves little doubt that, as her critics charged, she could be ambitious, headstrong, and abrasive. It also illustrates the risks run by reporters who rely heavily on sources who, unless they can speak on background or off the record, will not share what they know, or think they know. Most of all, “The Story” displays Judith Miller’s devotion to journalism—a devotion that, despite the many disappointments and betrayals, endures.

Miller’s parents came from different worlds. Her father was a Russian-born Jew who had become, she writes, “a successful nightclub owner and influential entertainment impresario.” Her mother was a “pretty Irish Catholic showgirl.” She credits her father’s American success with instilling in her the conviction—fortified by her travels to the Middle East, the Soviet Union, and Africa—that notwithstanding its failings, the United States is nothing short of “a miracle.”

Growing up in Las Vegas in the 1950s at the height of the Cold War, Miller was also influenced by the nearby Nevada Proving Ground, a nuclear weapons testing facility about an hour’s drive from her home. She recalls sneaking out of the house as a first-grader in the predawn hours to watch a detonation: “In my childhood memory it was ripe red—beautiful and intensely terrifying.”

While she absorbed some of her parents’ patriotic political attitudes, she writes, “the official lies” told to protect atomic testing in the deserts of the American West and later war in the jungles of Southeast Asia fed a distrust of government authority.

Miller joined the Times in 1977 and was appointed the paper’s Cairo bureau chief in 1983, responsible for covering most of the Arab Middle East. She went on to a posting in Paris, and then stints as an editor in Washington and New York.

In the summer of 1990, following Saddam Hussein's August invasion of Kuwait, she again turned to the Middle East and national security. Over the next decade she reported about the first Gulf War; Hamas's extensive donor networks in the United States; wealthy Persian Gulf financiers of terrorism including a then-obscure figure named Osama bin Laden; and secret biological weapons programs in Iraq, the former Soviet Union and, after the dissolution of the USSR, Russia. Following a 2000 trip to Afghanistan, Miller wrote numerous articles about bin Laden's jihadist networks.

Along the way, she brought out, in addition to "Germs," three other books: "One, by One, by One: Facing the Holocaust," published in 1990, which deals with the burdens and responsibilities of memory; "Saddam Hussein and the Crisis in the Gulf," co-written with Laurie Mylroie in two months following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait; and, in 1996, "God Has Ninety-Nine Names," which chronicled the rise of militant Islam.

By December 2001, Miller was investigating claims that Iraq possessed substantial stores of WMD. Ahmad Chalabi, the controversial leader of a coalition of Iraqi dissidents, helped her locate Adnan Ihsan Saeed al-Haideri, an Iraqi engineer who had defected and who "claimed to have personally renovated secret facilities he was told were for biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons."

The December 20, 2001 [article](#) she wrote about Haideri, "Secret Sites: An Iraqi Defector Tells of Work on at Least 20 Hidden Weapons Sites," proved to be one of her most controversial. Yet, as Miller notes, she framed the story with the requisite qualifications. In the third paragraph, she stated that government officials, who had interviewed Haideri twice, were still attempting to verify his claims, which to them "seemed reliable and significant." In the next paragraph she noted that the interview "was arranged by the Iraqi National Congress, the main Iraqi opposition group, which seeks the overthrow of Mr. Hussein." And in the next sentence she observed that *if* Haideri's as yet unverified claims were verified, they would support Bush administration contentions that Saddam Hussein's weapons programs, in defiance of more than a dozen U.N. Security Council resolutions, rendered him a menace who should be removed from power.

After the post-invasion search for WMD came up empty—she was embedded with a special unit looking for them—Miller sought to investigate what appeared to be "a colossal intelligence failure." Amid mounting controversy about her reporting, however, the Times increasingly sidelined her.

In March 2004, Executive Editor Keller and Managing Editor Abramson presented Miller with a draft statement from the editors that they were planning to run on the front page singling out for criticism her reporting on Iraqi WMD.

Miller protested. She writes that she told Keller and Abramson that other Times reporters—including Pat Tyler, John Tagliabue, James Risen, David Johnston, and Christopher Hedges—published front-page pieces based on flawed prewar intelligence, as did various Washington Post reporters.

She reminded Keller and Abramson that she had written articles casting doubt on claims about Iraqi WMD, most strikingly in a January 2003 [exclusive](#) interview with Hans Blix, the head of the U.N. investigations of Saddam's chemical and biological weapons programs. And she noted that contrary to postwar posturing, "a majority of Republican and Democratic politicians and many independent analysts asserted that Iraq was hiding some of its older chemical and biological weapons and was trying to reconstitute its nuclear program—or, at very least, trying to preserve an ability to do so quickly when sanctions were lifted." Included in that company were former

President Bill Clinton, former Vice President Al Gore, as well as Democratic Sens. Hillary R. Clinton, Edward M. Kennedy, John F. Kerry, and Joe Biden.

In May 2004, the Times published a statement from the editors, "[The Times and Iraq](#)," criticizing the newspaper's prewar WMD coverage. The article avoided criticism of "individual reporters" and instead placed the blame on "editors at several levels." Nevertheless, the whispering campaign, the personal attacks, and the charges of professional malfeasance against Miller persisted.

In August 2004, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois Patrick J. Fitzgerald—who had been appointed by the Justice Department in December 2003, to head the Valerie Plame leak investigation—subpoenaed Miller, demanding that she give grand jury testimony about her sources. She refused to testify for two reasons. She wanted Fitzgerald to limit the scope of his inquiries to what she and Scooter Libby may have discussed about Plame and her husband, former Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV. And she considered Libby's original waiver of confidentiality coerced.

In the summer of 2005, after Miller's efforts to quash Fitzgerald's subpoena and her appeals had run their course, she was held in contempt and imprisoned for 85 days—the longest period an American journalist has served in jail to protect sources. It was only when Fitzgerald agreed to limit his questioning to the topic of Libby and Wilson and his wife, and when Libby immediately complied with her request to go beyond his original general waiver of confidentiality and provide a personal and clearly voluntary waiver, that she agreed to testify.

In October 2005, following Miller's grand jury testimony, Keller assigned a piece about her role in the Libby investigation. The 6,200-word [article](#) described Miller as an "intrepid" journalist but also as "divisive" and "hard to control."

A week later, as Miller documents, the Times launched a three-pronged attack on her. On Friday, October 21, 2005, Keller emailed a "lengthy message to staff"—more than 1,200 Times employees—expressing regret that he had not dealt promptly with the controversy over Iraqi WMD coverage, accusing Miller of misleading Times Washington Bureau Chief Philip Taubman, and blaming her for failing to inform him about an alleged "entanglement" with Libby. On Saturday, October 22, Maureen Dowd produced a gossipy [piece](#) reveling in uglier innuendo. Keller and Sulzberger, Dowd wrote, "should have nailed her to a chair and extracted the entire story of her escapade."

And on Sunday, October 23, public editor Byron Calame [opined](#), "the problems facing" Miller "inside and outside the newsroom will make it difficult for her to return to the paper as a reporter."

On Monday, October 24, at a hastily arranged meeting in his office, publisher Sulzberger informed Miller that he wanted her to remain at the Times, although as neither a reporter nor an editor. Miller writes that she was left with no alternative but to resign.

As part of her termination agreement with the Times, Keller made public a letter he wrote to her stating that in referring to her "entanglement" with Libby in his October 2005 email to the Times staff, he had not intended to imply an improper relationship. (Keller never did apologize to Libby, who had only met Miller three times in his life, twice in professional settings in Washington and once by chance when she was on vacation with her husband in Wyoming.) Keller also withdrew the claim that she had misled Taubman.

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eventually forced to resign because of, Fitzgerald's overwrought federal investigation and prosecution.

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Miller's sobering book, which demonstrates her devotion to getting the story right, makes a major contribution to correcting the record.

Daily Caller

[How Deep Is This Education Official's Involvement In The Rolling Stone Hoax?](#)

by Chuck Ross

A top-ranking official at the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights has emerged as a potentially key figure in Rolling Stone's false article, "A Rape on Campus."

Catherine Lhamon, who heads the Department's civil rights wing, was identified in [a letter sent last month by University of Virginia Dean of Students Allen Groves](#) to Steve Coll and Sheila Coronel, the two Columbia Journalism School deans who conducted [a review of the Nov. 19 article](#), written by disgraced reporter Sabrina Rubin Erdely.

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Renda and Lhamon also testified at a [June 26, 2014, Senate hearing](#) on campus sexual assault. It was at that hearing that Renda cited Jackie's story that she was brutally gang-raped by five fraternity members — a statement that was inconsistent with Jackie's claim to Erdely that she was raped by seven men. According to the Columbia report, Renda first told Erdely about Jackie's allegation on July 8, nearly two weeks after her Senate testimony.

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Lhamon's and Renda's coverage of two different aspects to campus sexual assault highlights exactly what Erdely tried — but failed — to accomplish with her article. The reporter used Jackie's story about a gang-rape to introduce readers to what she asserted was a systemic failure on the part of universities, police, and society to prevent and investigate sexual assault.

28 Sherman

[Jackie's Story Echoed Emily Renda's Senate Testimony](#)

Even after my [Erdely-Renda post](#) from Thursday, the Rolling Stone article continues to unravel elsewhere. The Washington Post managed to do the yeoman's work on the problems to the story. Chuck Ross at the Daily Caller has [interviewed](#) Jackie's friend Randall, adding to the catfish elements to the story. Emily Renda's still skating free from scrutiny except here. A really weird coincidence is found between Renda's words and Jackie's story in the Rolling Stone. This plays into who came up with Sabrina Erdely's story details. The media should be asking Emily Renda deeper questions than the softballs NPR threw her way.

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These statements haunted Jenna. She told me that they made her feel crazy, and made her question whether her own understanding of the rape was legitimate."

Sounds familiar? Jenna was a "changed name" to protect the victim. Is Jenna really Jackie? The section on the social life obsessed friends sticks out and sounds eerily reminiscent of something else I recently read. Here's the callous friends section of the Rolling Stone UVA article.

' Their other two friends, however, weren't convinced. "Is that such a good idea?" she recalls Cindy asking. "Her reputation will be *shot* for the next four years." Andy seconded the opinion, adding that since he and Randall both planned to rush fraternities, they ought to think this through. The three friends launched into a heated discussion about the social price of reporting Jackie's rape, while Jackie stood beside them, mute in her bloody dress, wishing only to go back to her dorm room and fall into a deep, forgetful sleep. Detached, Jackie listened as Cindy prevailed over the group: "She's gonna be the girl who cried 'rape,' and we'll never be allowed into any frat party again." '

There are a lot of similarities. The rape itself involved seven fraternity brothers. It was early in the girl's freshman year. The friends doubted her and were worried about the social implications. The reputation word used. Erdely said she started looking for a college in June. Renda's testimony was in late June. These are all just coincidences, but coincidences worth exploring before the project coordinator to the Vice President of Student Affairs at UVA starts changing policies.

If Jackie doesn't support Erdely's details, did Erdely make them up completely? Did Renda help Erdely fill in details from other attacks she knew of? Is Jenna from the Senate testimony Jackie? If so, why was it 5 men raping her for the Senate but 7 for the Rolling Stone article? If not, does UVA have a campus full of gang rapists and doubting Thomas friends that are obsessed with reputations? That sounds unlikely, but no one is asking Emily Renda. The media should be asking Ms. Renda these questions and her involvement with Erdely's story beyond matchmaker. If she is completely innocent, then Erdely needs to come clean.

This story was a horrible farce. Horrible in the smears and the lies, and the avoidance of actual rapes on campuses across America. It was also a lie in hiding the progressive side involved. Sabrina Erdely wrote this line, "*But like most colleges across America, genteel University of Virginia has no radical feminist culture seeking to upend the patriarchy*". "Genteel", so you can picture young patriarchs in white suits or seersucker suits sipping cool drinks in the shade of their antebellum mansions. This is all part of Erdely's narrative pitch. It is a narrative with major holes though. "No radical feminist culture" sounds fake to me. What else do we call an activist who pushed lying Jackie and multiple other student activists into the arms of Erdely for a national story? Lying to the national press may not be radical in Erdely's book, but it is to the rest of us.

The Other McCain

[A Coven of Liars: Sabrina Rubin Erdley, Emily Renda and Catherine Lhamon](#)

by Robert Stacy McCain



Sabrina Rubin Erdley,



Emily Renda,



Catherine Lhamon

One of the first journalists to raise serious questions about *Rolling Stone's* rape hoax story, [Richard Bradley makes this point](#):

Sabrina Rubin Erdely started with a thesis and went in search of someone—and some place—that fit her thesis. She found Jackie and the University of Virginia. But, she admits, if she had discovered that Jackie was a liar, it wouldn't have caused her to question her thesis.

Erdely's article began with her belief — *i.e.*, rape is commonplace on American campuses, and university officials are indifferent to the plight of victims — and all her “reporting” was intended to *confirm* this belief. Rather than following the facts wherever they might lead, Erdely instead ignored facts that did not fit her pre-existing belief, and therefore accepted Jackie's gang-rape lies without investigating them properly.

Erdely's article was not only a [baseless smear of Phi Kappa Psi fraternity](#), but a vicious libel against University of Virginia officials who were presented as heartless enablers of an out-of-control culture of sexual violence. The crucial link in Erdely's dishonest work — the person whose assistance made it possible for her to produce this cruel fabrication — was a young UVA activist named Emily Renda.

[K.C. Johnson at *National Review* highlights Renda's role](#):

“Last July 8, Sabrina Rubin Erdely, a writer for *Rolling Stone*, telephoned Emily Renda, a rape survivor working on sexual-assault issues as a staff member at the University of Virginia.” So opens the Columbia Journalism School's review of *Rolling Stone's* retracted story about the University of Virginia. The piece confirms that it was Renda who informed Erdely about Jackie, the fabulist whose tale became the spine of the *Rolling Stone* article. Though the CJR labels Renda a “rape survivor,” she appears never to have filed a complaint with the university, much less with the police.

What did he say? Johnson links to Renda's June 2014 testimony before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, which begins with [this three-sentence paragraph](#):

Like many others who work on the issue of campus sexual assault, my connection to this cause is a personal one. Nearly four years ago, six weeks into my first year, I was raped by a fellow student on my campus after a night out with friends. In the time following the assault, I became active in peer sexual assault education, worked for the University of Virginia's Women's Center, interned with the Commonwealth Attorney's Victim Witness Program, worked with U.Va. administration to improve prevention and response efforts, and chaired Take Back The Night, a national campaign to raise awareness about sexual violence.

Nowhere in her testimony does Renda say that she reported to police or to university officials that she was raped, nor if anyone was prosecuted or disciplined as a result. This omission is curious. If her “connection to this cause is a personal one,” wouldn’t Renda want to tell the committee how officials dealt with her personal trauma? However, I think Johnson may be going too far by asserting that it “appears” Renda never filed a complaint. Maybe she just didn’t think these details relevant to her Senate testimony, as compared to [this part of her testimony](#):

One of the student survivors I worked with, Jenna, was gang-raped by five fraternity men early in her freshman year. Despite the severity of the assault and injuries she sustained, Jenna still experienced a feeling of personal responsibility. Looking for affirmation, she sought out peers and told her story. Sadly, each and every one of the friends she reached out to responded with varying denials of her experience; these responses worsened her feelings of self-blame — that she must be confused because that fraternity “is full of great guys”; that she must have made them think she was “down for that”; questioning how no one else at the party could have heard what was going on if she was telling the truth; or discouraging her from seeking help because “you don’t want to be one of those girls who has a reputation” for reporting “that kind of thing.” These statements haunted Jenna. She told me that they made her feel crazy, and made her question whether her own understanding of the rape was legitimate.

This story about “Jenna” is actually about Jackie, whose lurid (and evidently fictitious) rape saga Erdely told in *Rolling Stone*. [Renda testified to the Senate](#) how the case of “Jenna”/Jackie came to the attention of university officials:

Survivors who receive disaffirming responses to initial disclosures are more likely to experience negative mental health consequences as well. These negative and victim-blaming responses from her peers reinforced Jenna’s sense of fault, and prevented her from coming forward to the University’s administration or the Police. When **she finally sought assistance from the Dean of Students’ office, after struggling and nearly failing out of her classes for two semesters**, it was difficult for the university to conduct a meaningful investigation because much of the evidence had been lost, and witnesses were more difficult to locate.

Whoa. Full stop. Do you see the significance here? Jackie was having an academic problem and “sought assistance” by offering the excuse that her poor performance in the classroom was a traumatic symptom of her gang-rape. We now know that, despite the urging of university officials, Jackie refused to file a criminal complaint or to identify her alleged attackers, and also refused to cooperate with the more recent police investigation of the claims made in the the *Rolling Stone* story.

[Phi Kappa Psi has been exonerated](#), and the disclosures about her [“Haven Monahan” catfishing scheme](#) have destroyed Jackie’s credibility. It therefore appears that everything Jackie told Emily Renda was a lie, and Renda then repeated these lies in her own Senate testimony. Now, back to [K.C. Johnson at National Review](#):

As for Jackie with *Rolling Stone*, for the CJR, Renda’s word about her status as a victim of crime is enough. Renda appeared in the Monday *New York Times*’ summary of the Columbia exposé, described not only as a “rape survivor” but “the expert at the university on sexual assault issues.” Now, however, Renda was a *critic* of Erdely’s work and the decision to highlight Jackie’s story. “Ms. Renda,” reporter Ravi Somaiya wrote, “offered another reason that she felt the *Rolling Stone* article was flawed: The magazine was drawn toward the most extreme story of a campus rape it could find. The more nuanced accounts, she suggested, seemed somehow

‘not real enough to stand for rape culture. And that is part of the problem.’”

Nowhere in his article did Somaiya reveal that *Rolling Stone* never would have learned about Jackie but for Renda. Indeed, as Columbia uncovered, the UVA employee had even vouched for the fabulist’s credibility: “Obviously, maybe her memory of [the rape] isn’t perfect,” she said, defending Jackie in advance against worries Erdely might have. Informing *Times* readers of Renda’s critical connection to the *Rolling Stone* fiasco might have undermined the *Times*’ desire to portray her as an expert on the topic of campus sexual assault.

What Johnson is pointing out here is the circular logic of self-validating authority that the “rape survivor” Emily Renda presents as the crucial credential of her own expertise. Neither *Rolling Stone* nor the *New York Times* would dare question Renda’s authority, so that when Renda vouched for Jackie, this was like the Certified Rape Survivor Seal of Approval as far as Erdely and *Rolling Stone* were concerned. When it turned out Jackie was a liar, however, the *New York Times* cited Renda to criticize Erdely’s reporting. Yet it seems quite likely that Erdely never would have thought to make the University of Virginia the focus of her story, had it not been for Emily Renda’s Senate testimony about “Jenna”/Jackie getting gang-raped at a frat house.

The feminist mantra about rape — “*We must believe the survivors!*” — conveys an unquestionable authority to any woman who says she has been raped. K.C. Johnson, however, points out that we know nothing at all about the circumstances surrounding Emily Renda’s own status as a “rape survivor.” While we cannot draw any inference from this omission, it is nevertheless indicative of a journalistic failure. Has any reporter even bothered to ask Emily Renda if she reported her own rape to police or university officials? Is the basis of her “rape survivor” authority not even worth asking a few simple questions?

Excuse me if this seems impertinent or disrespectful, but this goes back to something that happened last summer. George Will wrote a column about the “campus rape epidemic” hysteria in which he said that [university officials are learning “that when they make victimhood a coveted status that confers privileges, victims proliferate.”](#) His suggestion that being a victim of rape is a “coveted status” on campus made Will a target of vilification, although anyone with two eyes and a brain can see that what he said (or, at least, what he *intended* to say) is quite true. Emily Renda’s status as a “rape survivor” has become the basis of her career as an activist, and Jackie’s tale of being raped at the Phi Kappa Psi house made her a source so authoritative that she was cited in Renda’s testimony to the U.S. Senate and was pursued by a reporter for *Rolling Stone*. So, yes, at some level, victimhood *is* a status sufficiently “coveted” on campus that Jackie was willing to lie to obtain that status. We have certainly [seen how “victims proliferate”](#) in this manner, and even [several clear cases of rape hoaxes](#).

It is reportedly [estimated that between 2% and 8% of rape accusations are false](#). Whether it’s 1-in-50 or 1-in-12, false accusations are not an insignificant danger, even if the vast majority of such accusations are true. What we have to ask — as George Will meant to suggest — is whether false accusations are incentivized by an environment where university officials “make victimhood a coveted status.”

In other words, *are false rape claims more common on campus* than elsewhere in society? Furthermore, isn’t it likely that the recent feminist “rape epidemic” hysteria would inspire an increase in such false claims? And if a reporter like Erdely set out to confirm this feminist narrative, wouldn’t her sources necessarily be activist types who care more about advancing the narrative than telling the truth?

Erdely's journalistic catastrophe was predictable, and Richard Bradley calls attention to [a letter that UVA Dean of Students Allen Groves sent](#) to the authors of the Columbia Journalism Review's investigation of the *Rolling Stone* hoax. Groves describes how his presentation to the UVA Board of Visitors in September 2014 was misrepresented by Erdely, who wrote that Groves "downplayed the significance of a Title IX compliance review" with a "smooth answer."

Erdely's description is contrary to fact, as established by video of the board meeting. Erdely also quotes a federal official describing Groves as "irresponsible." That federal official is [Catherine Lhamon, Assistant Secretary in the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights](#) (OCR). Lhamon's appearance in Erdely's story is hardly a coincidence. [The Daily Caller's Chuck Ross reports that Lhamon and Emily Renda are part of the same federal apparatus:](#)

[Lhamon] has served as the Education Department's designee to the **White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault** which Obama created on Jan. 22, 2014. **Renda served on the same task force.**

Besides that link, both spoke at a February 2014 University of Virginia event entitled "Sexual Misconduct Among College Students."

Lhamon has been invited to the White House nearly 60 times, according to visitor's logs. Renda has been invited six times. Both were **invited to the same White House meeting on three occasions**. One, held on Feb. 21, 2014, was conducted by Lynn Rosenthal, then the White House Advisor on Violence Against Women. Twenty-one people, mostly activists, were invited to that meeting. Lhamon and Renda were invited to two other larger gatherings — one on April 29 and the other on Sept. 19.

It is unclear if both attended the three meetings. Renda did not respond to an emailed request for comment.

Renda and Lhamon also testified at a June 26, 2014, Senate hearing on campus sexual assault. It was at that hearing that Renda cited Jackie's story that she was brutally gang-raped by five fraternity members — a statement that was inconsistent with Jackie's claim to Erdely that she was raped by seven men. According to the Columbia report, **Renda first told Erdely about Jackie's allegation on July 8**, nearly two weeks after her Senate testimony.

During her testimony, Lhamon claimed that "The best available research suggests that 20% of college women, and roughly 6% of college men, are victims of attempted or completed sexual assault." That "one-in-five" claim about the prevalence of sexual assault on campus has been heavily disputed.

Now, read [the second page of Chuck Ross's report](#):

In his letter, Groves wrote that he filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request seeking correspondence between Lhamon and Erdely. Likewise, The Daily Caller filed a FOIA request but expanded the inquiry to include emails Lhamon and her assistant sent to Renda.

In his letter to Coll and Coronel, Groves wrote that he was "one of the professionals vilified by name" in Erdely's article.

He claimed that Erdely completely mischaracterized remarks he made at a Sept. 2014 meeting with university trustees about sexual assault and that **Lhamon disparaged him with comments she made to Erdely**. . . .

Despite the context provided by Groves, the Department of Education is not backing off of Lhamon's comments to Erdely.

"We stand by the statement Catherine made during her interview with Rolling Stone," Dorie Turner Nolt, the agency's press secretary, told TheDC.

This is serious. Here you have Erdely misrepresenting a UVA dean's words and a federal official disparaging the dean on the basis of that misrepresentation, and the Department of Education

declares that it will “stand by” this smear? More than that, however, Lhamon and Renda appear to have a very close connection through the White House task force, and both were sources for Erdely’s now-discredited article.

Lhamon, Renda and Erdely are part of a coven of liars who have conspired to fabricate a crime that never happened in order to justify this ongoing “rape epidemic” hysteria. This dishonest campaign of purposeful falsehood is being *orchestrated directly from the White House* as part of a systematic effort to create regulations that deprive college students of their due-process rights. Congress must investigate!

I have ceased to believe that feminists act in good faith.

— Robert Stacy McCain (@rsmccain) [April 9, 2015](#)

I do not think Sabrina Erdely made "mistakes" nor do I think Emily Renda is honest. I believe that both of them are deliberate liars.

— Robert Stacy McCain (@rsmccain) [April 9, 2015](#)

P.S.: [I emailed the University of Virginia Communications Office to ask if they could provide information about Emily Renda’s rape.](#)



The pollen counts are so high that junkies are trying to convert their meth back into Sudafed.



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Most of the new arrivals seem incapable of conversation. They just stare at their hands in despair.



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