

Speaking Truth to Those in Power

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rrivet@tulane.edu

Valerie Plame Wilson and her husband, Ambassador Joe Wilson, found themselves at the center of a political maelstrom in 2003 when she was outed as a covert CIA operative after her husband publicly argued against the Bush administration's weapons of mass destruction justification for the invasion of Iraq. On Tuesday (Jan. 25), both appeared at Tulane to discuss their ordeal.



"In a democracy it is our responsibility to hold our government to account for what it does and says in our name," said Joe Wilson, left, speaking along with his wife, outed CIA operative Valerie Plame Wilson, right. (Photos by Sally Asher)

In what Plame Wilson called "clear retaliation," the revelation of her identity set into motion a series of events that would span seven years and ultimately lead all the way to the vice president's office. Dick Cheney's chief of staff, Lewis "Scooter" Libby, was convicted of lying to investigators in connection with the leak.

[Plame Wilson](#), speaking to a large audience in McAlister Auditorium, warned that citizens have to be vigilant in the way they hold their governments responsible for what is done on their behalf.

“This is a story of the abuse of power,” said Plame Wilson. “It's a cautionary tale. It's the story about what you need to do and how important it is to hold your government to account for its words and deeds.”

Joe Wilson urged the audience not to fear the power of the government, saying the fact that they fought back and “survived the onslaught” should encourage people to stand up and speak out.



A crowd packed into McAlister Auditorium to listen to Plame and Wilson's cautionary tale of unchecked power.

“This is not a spectator sport,” he said. “Democracy is not for couch potatoes. Democracy is for people who step in and fight these fights.”

In closing, he made it clear that he would do it all over again, given the chance.

“I served my country for 23 years in foreign service. I was an enemy of the state for seven years. The latter was a hell of a lot more fun,” Joe Wilson said.

“The Plame Affair,” as it has come to be known, was made into the 2010 movie *Fair Game* starring Naomi Watts and Sean Penn.