

# Time Out!



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TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2005

## Bush During Armstrong Deception Of Public: He Was Either Lying Or Clueless

by Michael in New York on [4/19/2005 01:16:00 AM](#)

USA Today headlines its story on the Education Department's investigation of itself with the innocuous: "Report: No ethics breach in Education Dept."

Here's a better headline: Bush Lied To America Or was Hopelessly Out of the Loop.

Yes, the report makes clear that Bush was wrong when he first commented on the scandal of the Education Dept. paying commentator Armstrong Williams \$240,000 to plug its No Child Left Behind. At the time, Bush said, "We didn't know about this in the White House."

But this initial report makes clear that David Dunn, "a special assistant to President Bush" took part in AT LEAST FOUR CONVERSATIONS about the Williams contract with Education Dept. officials. Not only that, during at least two of them the officials expressed concern about the arrangement. Naturally, the White House had refused to let the investigators speak to Dunn directly about what he did at the time as a presidential policy adviser, saying it lacked the authority to interview White House staffers. Two more investigations of this ethical breach are underway.

And don't believe Williams' lie that he was already a big fan of NCLB. He conceded in an interview with USA Today that NOT ONE of 194 newspaper columns he wrote in nearly three years mentioned it, but as soon as the money started flowing he wrote about it in glowing terms five times.

By the way, the report said there was no technical violation but that the contract smacked of "bad management" and "poor judgment." That's one way to phrase manipulating the media to deceive the American people, but I can think of harsher terms to use.



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**Paul Krugman**

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1 hour ago

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