

Mark Kraft (<http://insomnia.livejournal.com>) writes:

Awhile back, a U.S. citizen working in Iraq sent me several photographs he obtained from a soldier in Iraq. Apparently, they had been passed along between several sources before reaching me. I felt that the pictures were particularly controversial and newsworthy, in that they appear to show U.S. soldiers planting weapons on Iraqi teenagers. As a result, I passed them on to Seymour Hersh of the New Yorker, who mentioned them in an interview on May 11, 2005.

<http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=05/05/11/142250>

After I did Abu Ghraib, I got a bunch of digital pictures emailed me, and -- was a lot of work on it, and I decided, well, we can talk about it later. You never know why you do things. You have some general rules, but in this case, a bunch of kids were going along in three vehicles. One of them got blown up. The other two units -- soldiers ran out, saw some people running, opened up fire. It was a bunch of boys playing soccer. And in the digital videos you see everybody standing around, they pull the bodies together. This is last summer. They pull the bodies together. You see the body parts, the legs and boots of the Americans pulling bodies together. Young kids, I don't know how old, 13, 15, I guess. And then you see soldiers dropping R.P.G.'s, which are rocket-launched grenades around them. And then they're called in as an insurgent kill.

Unfortunately, Mr. Hersh has no plans to go forward with the story at this time, citing the inconclusive nature of what happened, and the risk it could have to his sources. I, however, have no such ethical problem with releasing the pictures as is, as I think there is an overwhelming public interest that they be released. It should be up to the media and the general public to determine for themselves what occurred that day. (It's not for me to speculate too much upon Mr. Hersh's reasons for not going forward with the pictures. He has his reasons, which I assume are valid.)

They indicate that a group of U.S. soldiers planted weapons -- the same weapon, in fact -- in front of killed, wounded, and captured Iraqi kids. I cannot authenticate whether Mr. Hersh is correct and that the teens in question were innocent or not, but clearly, something significant is amiss. At the very least, it indicates how uncertain the situation is over there. Our soldiers literally do not know who the enemy is, and apparently are willing to manipulate the evidence in order to justify their actions.

The pictures were taken with a digital camera in Buhriz, Iraq on Oct. 22nd, 2004, and their file names are numbered, apparently from the digital camera in question. They show the basics for you: no weapons in the first photos, then weapons inserted into the

pictures later. They also show pretty clearly that I didn't stage these pictures.

It appears to me that these teenagers are not insurgents, in that they showed no signs of having either weapons or wearing khafiyas, or headscarves, which are typically used as a kind of uniform by insurgents, as displayed in the Associated Press photos below. To me, the whole situation is indicative of the terrible uncertainty of the conflict, where everyone is a potential insurgent, and where that fear and uncertainty leads to a situation where U.S. soldiers try to manipulate the reality of the situation.

It's also worth noting that medical treatment was apparently not offered until shown in the later pictures, leading me to wonder whether the assistance, in itself, was part of the "staged" element of these photos.

Here is what I know happened with the incident in question:

A US patrol led by 1st Lt. Terry "T.J." Grider's platoon -- 1st Infantry Division troops based out of FOB Gabe -- were on a "movement to contact" mission -- basically trying to draw fire. At approximately 7:20 am, they were reportedly fired upon by small arms and RPGs while driving near Buhriz. A Captain Bill Coppernoll from the 1st Infantry Division told AFP that nine insurgents were killed and three wounded that day. A hospital from Ba'aquba reported that it received three dead and eight wounded from the fighting.

The dead appear to have been turned over within 48 hours to some other party -- I suspect one of the hospitals at Ba'aquba. Al Jazeera apparently had a reporter/photographer on the scene who took pictures of these teens prior to their funerals. Some of their clothes have been changed, possibly in preparation for their funerals. Figuring out from Al Jazeera what their reporter saw and what the locals told him would probably be very revealing as to what happened that day.

See the following links for details:

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story.php?f=1-292925-466310.php>

<http://www.jang.com.pk/thenews/oct2004-daily/23-10-2004/main/main10.htm>

<http://web.archive.org/web/20041110005515/http://www.alchahed.net/bah241004j>

At least one of these Iraqi kids was "framed and arrested," so I think it's important that some kind of investigation be done to determine whether or not he is guilty of anything. He could still be rotting away in Abu Ghraib for all I know.

I've attached all the pictures I have available, named Buhriz 2004 22OCT 074-091. (#083 and #087 are missing for some reason, probably because the soldier who took the pictures didn't want to pass them on.) Please display them in that order.

Also, I attached photos "aljazeeraabraz1-4," which I found in a Google search at the time I originally researched this issue. The site that hosts these pictures is down now, but archive.org still has a [mirror](#) of them. It shows what is obviously several of the same teens. These should be shown after the other pictures, with their separate source explained.

(Cryptome added two Associated Press photos of the same time period. Cryptome notes under photos.)



1

This person also appears in No. 2, No. 6, No. 10, and No. 11.



3

Person at top in grey t-shirt appears in No. 4, No. 8 (turned face up), No. 13 (head at left) and No. 14 (at left, lower clothing removed, t-shirt cut away).

Person in blue t-shirt appears in No. 7, No. 13 (center, partly nude), and No. 14 (at right).

Both these persons appear to be alive.



5

These two persons appear in No. 12.

Person at center (white shirt) also appears in No. 9.





9

Weapons have been added in the following photos.









16

aljazeerabahraz 1-4



Associated Press Photos

Photo captions by Associated Press.



Masked gunmen take up position in Buhriz, outside Baqouba, 60 km north east of Baghdad, Iraq, during a battle with U.S. troops, Friday, Oct. 22, 2004. Armed gunmen and U.S. troops battled near Buhiz, exchanging gun, rocket and artillery fire as U.S. forces scoured palm groves in search of hidden rebel weaponry, the military said. (AP Photo/Sami Aburaya)