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Today

Black and White and Full of Crap

By: Ted Rall on: 13.05.2005 [10:45] (259 reads)

This is the tragicomic story of American football player Pat Tillman who volunteered for the US army, died in Afghanistan from "friendly" fire and is still celebrated as a great hero by the war mongers in the US. This is a remake of the "private Jessica" story, telling more about the gullibility of present day americans than any anlysis one may compose!

cm

(5677 bytes)



One year ago the American media was pushing the Pat Tillman story with the heavy rotation normally reserved for living celebs like Michael Jackson. Tillman, the former NFL player who turned down a multi-million dollar football contract to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan, became a centerpiece of the right's Hamas-style death cult when he lost his life in the mountains of southeastern Afghanistan. To supporters of the wars and to many football fans, Tillman embodied ideals of self-sacrifice and post-9/11 butt-kicking in a hard-bodied shell of chisel-chinned masculinity on steroids.

Tillman's quintessential nobility, we were told, was borne out by the story of his death--a tale that earned him a posthumous Silver Star. Whether you were for or against Bush's wars, Americans were told, Tillman's valor showed why you should support the troops. Young men were encouraged to emulate his praiseworthy example.

Several thousand mourners gathered at Tillman's May 3, 2004 memorial service to hear marquee names including Arizona Senator John McCain called upon all Americans to "be worthy of the sacrifices made on our behalf." "Tillman died trying to save fellow members of the 75th Ranger Regiment caught in a crush of enemy fire," the Arizona Republic quoted a fellow soldier addressing the crowd. Tillman, said his friend and comrade-at-arms, had told his fellow soldiers "to seize the tactical high ground from the enemy" to draw enemy fire away from another U.S. platoon trapped in an ambush. "He directly saved their lives with those moves. Pat sacrificed his life so that others could live." It was, as the Washington Post wrote, a "storybook personal narrative"--one recounted on hundreds of front pages and network newscasts.

It was also a lie.

As sharp-eyed readers learned a few months ago from single-paragraph articles buried deep inside their newspapers, Pat Tillman died pointlessly, a hapless victim of "friendly fire" who never got the chance to choose between bravery and cowardice. As if that wasn't bad enough, the Washington Post now reports that Pentagon and White House officials knew the truth "within days" after his April 22, 2004 shooting by fellow Army Rangers but "decided not to inform Tillman's family or the public until weeks after" the nationally televised martyr-a-thon.

It gets worse. So desperate were the military brass to carry off their propaganda coup that they lied to Tillman's brother, a fellow soldier who arrived on the scene shortly after the incident, about how he died. Writing in an army report, Brigadier General Gary Jones admits that the official cover-up even included "the destruction of evidence": the army burned Tillman's Ranger uniform and body armor to hide the fact that he had died in a hail of American bullets, fired by troops who had "lost situational awareness to the point they had no idea where

they were."

"We didn't want the world finding out what actually happened," one soldier told Jones. A perfect summary of the war on terrorism.

The weapons of mass destruction turned out to be a figment of Donald Rumsfeld's imagination. The Thanksgiving turkey Bush presented to the troops turned out to be plastic, as much of a staged photo op as the gloriously iconic and phony toppling of Saddam's statue in Baghdad by jubilant Iraqi civilians--well, actually a few dozen marines and CIA-financed operatives. So many of the Administration's "triumphs" have been exposed as frauds that one has to wonder whether that was really Saddam in the spider hole.

We shouldn't blame the White House for producing lies; that's what politicians do. But we expect better from the media who disseminate them.

Case study: the Washington Post's dutiful transcription of the Jessica Lynch hoax. Played up on page one and running on for thousands of words, the fanciful Pentagon version had the pilot from West Virginia emptying her clip before finally succumbing to a gunshot wound (and possible rape) by evil Iraqi ambushers, then freed from her tormentors at a heavily-guarded POW hospital.

Like the Pat Tillman story, it was pure fiction. Private Lynch, neither shot nor sexually violated, said she was injured when her vehicle crashed. She never got off a shot because her gun jammed. As she told reporters who were willing to listen, her Iraqi doctors and nurses had given her excellent care. She credited them for saving her life. In a weird sort of prequel to the shooting of an Italian journalist, they had even attempted to turn her over at a U.S. checkpoint but were forced to flee when American troops fired at them.


In all of these examples, editors and producers played corrective follow-up stories with far less fanfare than the original, incorrect ones. To paraphrase "X-Files" character Fox Mulder, the truth is in there--in the paper, on TV. It's just really, really hard to find.

Readers of the American press and viewers of American radio and television are likelier to see and believe loudly repeated lies over occasionally whispered truths told once or twice. As a result of the reverse imbalance between fact and fiction, the propaganda versions of the Tillman and Lynch stories, the staged Saddam statue footage, and the claim that Iraq had WMDs are all believed by a misled citizenry that votes accordingly.

For journalists supposedly dedicated to uncovering the truth and informing the public, this is exactly the opposite of how things ought to be. Corrections and exposés should always run bigger, longer and more often than initial, discredited stories.

<http://www.commondreams.org/cgi-bin/print.cgi?file=/views05/0511-25.htm>

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Read about other lies, in black and white and on video
by meo48 on 13.05.2005 [13:49]
visit <http://www.theunaol.com> to read about other lies dished out by the Pentagon.

Why this obsession?

by Kensai on 13.05.2005 [14:11]

With the heroic story of "save the lives of his mates"?

After the photos of the Iraki sniper, that shows how he putted down two marines, and the third simple vanished from scene, I think that the subliminar message is that this kind of Usan don't give a shit for his friends.

Too much cheap talking, but they are only selfish and egocentric people.

giddy up.

by Mike-Malaysia on 13.05.2005 [18:14]

Good article, esp the plastic turkey LOL. but WRONG: {We shouldn't blame the White House for producing lies} **yes we damn well should!!** It is when the bastards head down the path of spin and lies, then the machinery of death and atrocity starts to whirr up and pump out its toxic fumes throughtout our society, our world, and often with the result that we end up supporting it.

excellent impact point: {the truth is in there--in the paper, on TV. It's just really, really hard to find.}, but in closer examination, as I indicated in the 'advent of spin' article, and in other posts aswell, the truth is not actually hard to find. Its that the people are not willing or bothered to find it.

The alternative press on the internet are littered with the truth, and forums like mirror-world that post others articles from all over the world for contemplation and criticism also revel sies and spin and often purtaining from that, the truth.

So let me correct the initial impact sentence...

the truth is out there, but can you be bothered to punch in a web address and find it?

-peace-

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