



Welcome Guest

Quotations

*"More than any other time in history, mankind faces a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness. The other, to total extinction. Let us pray we have the wisdom to choose correctly."*

-- Woody Allen

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Announcements : **Update: Fast Friends for Abeer Qassim Hamza**

Posted by : ilyana on Monday, August 07, 2006 - 01:28 PM PST



Testimonies are emerging in the case of the rape and murder of Abeer Qassim Hamza and the murder of her parents and sister. In memory of the innocence destroyed that day and to raise awareness of the her younger brothers who found the family, I am calling for Fast Friends to join me

in a fast and vigil on Saturday August 19. That day would have marked Abeer's 15th birthday.

\*Please join me in spirit and in fact, and encourage others to do so too. I posted a signed up diary on Daily KOS for those would like to make a public declaration regarding this, and all atrocities committed against innocence. Along with an open letter to George W. Bush, Richard Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld.

Thank you.

**Investigator: Troops drank, golfed before Iraqi killings, rape**

Monday, August 7, 2006; Posted: 11:53 a.m. EDT (15:53 GMT)

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) -- U.S. soldiers accused of raping and murdering an Iraqi female drank alcohol and hit golf balls before the attack, and one of them grilled chicken wings afterward, an investigator told a U.S. military hearing Monday, citing a soldier's sworn statement.

Criminal investigator Benjamin Bierce told the hearing that he interviewed one of the accused, Spc. James P. Barker, on June 30, and recorded graphic and brutal sexual details of the alleged March 12 assault.

Bierce was testifying on the second day of the hearing to determine whether five U.S. soldiers must stand trial in the rape-slaying of Abeer Qassim al-Janabi and the killing of her parents and 5-year-old sister in the town of Mahmoudiya, one of the most violent areas in Iraq.

The rape and murders are among the worst in a series of cases of alleged misconduct by American service members that have tarnished the American military. U.S. soldiers' conduct has come under the spotlight over a string of similar cases.

Barker's sworn and signed statement was submitted in evidence during the hearing. Parts were revealed during Bierce's testimony.

Barker is accused along with Sgt. Paul E. Cortez, Pfc. Jesse V. Spielman, Pfc. Bryan L. Howard of rape and murder. Another soldier, Sgt. Anthony W. Yribe, is accused of failing to report the attack but is not alleged to have been a direct participant.

Former Pfc. Steven D. Green was discharged from the Army for a "personality disorder" after the incident and was arrested in North Carolina in June on rape and murder charges. He has pleaded not guilty in federal court and is being held without bond.

At Monday's hearing, Pfc. Justin Watt, testified that Howard told him before the incident that Green, Cortez and Barker had planned to rape someone, and Howard was to be the lookout.

"There's nothing I've read that says what to do if your buddies have raped and murdered a family," Watt said.

According to Barker's sworn statement cited by Bierce, Green not only raped the female, but also shot her and her family members after telling his comrades repeatedly that he wanted to kill some Iraqis.



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Bierce testified that on the day of the attack, Barker, Cortez, Spielman and Green had been playing cards and drinking Iraqi whiskey mixed with an energy drink. Afterward, they practiced hitting golf balls, Bierce quoted Barker as saying in his statement.

Bierce said Barker's statement made it clear that Green was very persistent about killing some Iraqis and kept bringing up the idea. At some point they decided to go to the house of the alleged victim, whom they had seen passing by their checkpoint earlier.

According to Bierce, Barker told him that when they arrived at the house, the father and the female were outside the house. Spielman grabbed her while Green seized her father and took them into the house, Bierce said, quoting Barker. Cortez and Barker also went in.

Green took the father, mother and the younger sister into the bedroom and closed the door, while the alleged victim remained in the living room with the others.

Barker wrote that Cortez pushed the female to the floor, lifted her dress and tore off her underwear while she struggled, Bierce said. Cortez apparently raped her or appeared to rape her, according to Barker's statement, Bierce said.

Barker then tried to rape the female, Bierce said. Suddenly, the group heard gunshots. Green came out of the bedroom holding an AK-47 rifle and declared: "'They're all dead. I just killed them,'" Bierce said, quoting Barker's statement.

Green put the gun down, then raped her while Cortez held her down; Barker claims Green picked up the AK-47 and shot her once, paused, then shot her several more times, Bierce said.

Barker confirms he got a kerosene lamp and poured the fuel on her, Bierce said. The body was set on fire, but Barker does not say who did it. Barker's statement also does not say if Howard or Spielman participated in the alleged rape.

Barker's statement says he grilled chicken wings once they got back to their checkpoint, Bierce testified. A few hours later, Barker wrote, Iraqi army soldiers came to report they had found a family murdered.

Since the case became public last month, U.S. officials have said they were concerned it could strain relations with Iraq's new government if Iraqis perceive that the soldiers receive lenient treatment.

They have offered assurances that the case will be pursued vigorously and that the soldiers will be punished if convicted.

The case has already increased demands for changes in an agreement that exempts U.S. soldiers from prosecution in Iraqi courts. And Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki has demanded an independent investigation into the case.

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original article:

<http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/08/07/iraq.mahmoudiya.ap/>

Here is an excerpt from the open letter I wrote to Bush Cheney and Rumsfeld:

President George W. Bush, Vice President Richard Cheney and Secretary Donald Rumsfeld,

Under your administration our country embarked on a pre-emptive war on the sovereign nation of Iraq. In the course of any war, people lose track of their common humanity. Young people are raised in our culture to follow certain widely respected rules of conduct. Be nice; do not run with scissors; share your toys; don't fight, bite, or pull hair; don't steal, lie or kill; listen to your elders; do your homework and chores; take care of your brothers and sisters. When enlisted as soldiers, these young are suddenly required to open doors to predatory parts of

their psyches that were once shut, bolted and sealed.

\* ilyana's diary :: :: \*

Do you know the story of Pandora's box?. Pandora was a lovely young woman in Greek mythology, who was present when a messenger from the god Jupiter delivered a finely carved, dark wood box, tied shut with a golden cord. She was curious about it's contents and proud of her skill at untying knots. Disregarding the calls from her husband to come join him outside at a neighborhood party, she worked the knot loose and opened the box. Out poured pestilence, disease and pain into a place that had been as perfect as the one described in the Judo/Christian Bible as Eden. According to the story, people had never known those horrors until Pandora opened the box.

The contents of Pandora's box once opened, could not be contained.

The golden cord of early conditioning once untied, becomes twisted into a garotte with which to kill or be killed. When conditioning from human socialization no longer serves to contain baser human instincts, what is there to prevent impulsive destructive behavior?

International laws were enacted to loosely chain Pandora's box so that it can not open wide. So that the atrocities of war would be restricted. Since the horrors of World Wars I & II, the Geneva conventions and other humanitarian laws codified the only legitimate excuses for acts of war as being self defense, or the defense of an ally who has been attacked within their own borders from an outside enemy.

Your administration's policies have disregarded International law and our own Constitution, adding to the confusion created in our young people on the front lines. Our pre-emptive attacks on Iraq constituted illegitimate acts of war. If our commander in chief disregards the rules of war, what constrains those who are commanded by him?

Some people do not govern themselves at war, especially when their leaders disregard law and order. Cases of absolute moral depravity are happening in Iraq Such is the case of the rape and death of Abeer Qassim Hamza, who would have been 15 this up coming August 19th. Our soldiers murdered her parents and seven year old sister (first estimated to be five years old), perhaps to eliminate witnesses and resistance to the subsequent rape and murder of Abeer. Their bodies were found by her two little brothers and neighbors.

Here is an internet link:

<http://news.findlaw.com/cnn/docs/iraq/usgreen63006cmp.html>  
to the affidavit requesting an arrest warrant for Steven Green, who allegedly led the attack on this innocent Iraqi family, describing the initial reports of what took place.

The other four soldiers: SGT Paul E. Cortez, SPC James P. Barker, PFC Jesse V. Spielman and PFC Bryan L. Howard, have been charged with participation in the crime, and will be tried in military court. A sixth soldier, SGT Anthony W. Yribe, is charged with not reporting his knowledge of the crime immediately after it became known to him.

The United States Government, who sent these soldiers to Iraq against International law, owes the brothers of Abeer more than could possibly be paid. While we owe every innocent civilian maimed, killed, or who have experienced losses, this case particularly cries out for justice. Her 8-year-old brother, Ahmed Qassim, and 13 year old brother (Mohammed?) are owed a bare minimum of a livelihood, a home, counseling and protection. What they witnessed, is at least as horrible as the reality of their loss.

Abeer's 8-year-old brother, Ahmed Qassim, said he and his brother found the bodies when they came home from school.

"We found them dead in the house. We also found the house blackened and smoke coming from it," Ahmed said, holding a shovel and sitting near a mud puddle with a cow grazing behind him.

Can you imagine coming home to the burning wreckage of your sister's body, and the bloody remains of your parents and little sister? Can you imagine the visage engraved forever in your memory of your sister's last expression?

In the story of Pandora's box there is another thing which followed the nightmares released by her pride filled, thoughtless curiosity. It was Hope. Hope emerged as a balm for the stings of pestilence. Hope emerged to heal pain and suffering.

This is a petition of hope calling on this government, who is a signatory to the International Humanitarian Law; Convention on the Rights of the Child to act according to it's stated ideals:

\*Read the rest of the letter, which include active links and particular portions of International Humanitarian Law the US has repeatedly broken in this and other cases.:

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2006/7/27/174717/453>

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