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The Truth about John Walker Lindh

by Mikethehack '' Wed Aug 08, 2007 4:11 pm

<http://www.honormikespann.org/>

The Truth about John Walker Lindh

By Robert Young Pelton

John Walker Lindh aka John Walker aka Suleiman Ferris aka Abdul Hamid aka The American Taliban is a person that I will mostly likely to be associated for some time to come. I am sure on my obituary there will be a bombastic note that I was ``the journalist who ``discovered'' Lindh after the battle at Qali Jangi'' (the afghans have that dubious honor).

Many have told me that Lindh's story was a big deal back in the States. I will never know as I was in Afghanistan covering combat operations with in the ongoing war against the Taliban for CNN. I will never have the chance to the get the full impact of finding an American professing his love for the Taliban. To me Lindh was just an unpleasant arrogant kid who preferred to stay with his murdering friends.

He was in the fact, the second Irish-American Jihadi I have met and interviewed. The first one was a one-legged psychopath who had been trained in the same camps and had fought in Kashmir, Kosovo, Bosnia, Chechnya and Liberia gave me his opinion. When I called him to discuss Lindh's hejira, Aqil Collins simply called Lindh ``a pussy''. When I returned from Afghanistan I was quite aware of the outrage he had caused. I only did interviews in which I spoke positively about Lindh in a deliberate effort not to influence his pending case. Privately I warned his lawyers to keep me off the witness stand because I would send their little Johnny to prison.

Wisely Lindh copped a plea and I was spared months of inconvenience.

Some people wanted a trial to get to the bottom of Lindh's nefarious activities, among them the grieving family of Mike Spann. Lindh's plea bargain denied them and the country of that truth finding. So it was left to me to set the record straight. My decades of travels with jihadis and terrorists, my time with both the Taliban leadership, the Northern Alliance aka the United Front, Dostum's forces and and based on my time spent during and after talking to the players involved with Qali Jangi leads me to believe that I am uniquely qualified to pass judgment on Lindh and to accurately describe who he was and what he was doing there.

Now that Lindh's father has decided to wrongly blame me for his son's misery and seek clemency under false pretences, I feel its time to reveal the truth.

Quite simply in my opinion, Lindh was a terrorist, a member of what we call al Qaeda and a man who chose to stay with killers even though he was afforded numerous opportunities to separate himself from his murderous associates. Twenty years in jail may be a blessing compared to how many of his friends have been dealt with since.

Frank Lindh cannot be blamed for the emotions behind his need to reinvent history or doing what he can to get his son out of jail. But he is lying. His son did not ``love America'', he fought for bin Laden against us, his son is not ``honest'', he lied to his parents and others. His son is not a ``decent'' young man; he trained to be a murderer. His son went to kill strangers in a stranger land. A spiritual quest? What part of grenades and AK 47's can be described as spiritual? What part of patriotism is eating bin Laden's food, listening to Usama's droning hate-filled speeches against America and sitting obediently within strangling distance of our greatest single enemy?

To think that the American public is that stupid is an insult. John Walker Lindh was an Arab speaking member of bin Laden's terror legions. He called it Al Ansar (the correct term) we call them al Qaeda. He was never a member of the Taliban. Why because Lindh only spoke Arabic and English he would have been useless in a combat situation among Pashto or Dari speaking troops. I have seen Taliban ID cards and spent time with bin Laden's ``055 Brigade, ``al

Ansar'' members and al Qaeda. Lindh was exactly the person we were trying to kill in Afghanistan and now around the world. An educated, idealistic young Muslim who chose murder of innocent people as his path in life. He is no different than Mohamed Atta, Zargawi or thousands of other terrorists that come from nice middle class families.

The elder Lindh would have us believe that somehow America supported what his son and bin Laden did at one time. Pure invention. Osama bin Laden never received any US CIA funding, he channeled Saudi money into what was then called the Office of Services and then into his own ventures. Yes the Taliban were mujahids but their draconian regime and support of bin Laden made them pariahs long before Lindh went there. Later in the post Soviet era of Afghanistan the CIA would pay Massoud money to try and kill Bin Laden. John Lindh went there to kill the members of Massouds' fighters. When the war broke out there was no clearer distinction of ``with us or against us'' than the forces of bin Laden and the Taliban against the combined Afghan forces we called ``the Northern Alliance.'' Lindh was on Bin Laden's side against us. Period. End of conversation.

I agree with Frank Lindh that perhaps his son's timing sucked. Johnny's perverse need to run around Afghanistan looking to murder other Muslims would not have been that big a deal pre 9/11. Once he and his Arab jihadi friends heard on their BBC short-wave radio broadcasts that the US was coming .... Well only the dumbest or the most resolutely criminal were going to stay for what was going to be a high tech, high ordnance ass whupping. Lindh chose to stay. He watched America's B52 contrails in the sky, he felt the destruction American bombs dealt his friends and yet he stayed with his terrorist friends. When he fled to Kunduz he again chose to stay with his murdering friends and when a small group of foreign jihadis was chosen for a Hail Mary suicide mission to nearby Mazar i Sharif. Lindh was on board.

What you say? I thought poor Abdul Hamid (Lindh's ``jihad'' name) was fleeing his evil master and seeking help. No. The group of around 460 jihadis that left Kunduz towards Mazar i Sharif were on their way to link up with Mullah Dadullah (now the leader of the Taliban military) in Balkh (just west of Mazar) and then attack the city while the US and Afghan forces were tied up in Kunduz monitoring the surrender. Yes, thousands of fighters did surrender peacefully but Lindh again chose to associate with a rag tag group of die-hards led by one of bin Laden's lieutenants; Abdul

Aziz, as well as the hardest core terrorists that comprised Saudi, Uzbek, Iraqi, Russian, Sudanese, Yemeni and Pakistani jihadis.

This group was stopped heading west early in the morning and had an armed standoff with Afghan and US forces. (Yes Lindh's group was fully armed during their purported ``surrender'' and they had no good reason to explain why they not going east towards Pakistan). The stand off was tense until bombers appeared overhead. Dostum drove by on his way to Kunduz and told them to be disarmed and taken to his garrison called Qali Jangi. Lindh during that entire time was within feet of western journalists and US forces and could have simply identified himself as an American. But he chose to stay in the company of killers. Lindh also knew that his cohorts were still secretly armed with pistols, rifles and even grenades tied by shoelaces and dangling around their groin area. A place where they knew Afghans dare not pat down.

The Uzbek terrorists among Lindh's group were ecstatic. Qali Jangi was where they had trained under the Taliban and the storage rooms of garrison were literally overflowing with weapons confiscated and stored by the Taliban. Upon arrival one of the Uzbeks immediately killed himself with a grenade while trying to murder what he thought was Dostum. It was Dostum's Intel officer (who survived) and a Hazara general was killed. This event was filmed and once again, despite the presence of western media and the casual atmosphere (prisoners were even being interviewed by CNN and others), Lindh refused to identify himself or ask for help.

Terrified and outnumbered by the false surrender the Afghan guards (there were only about 100 guards for the 460 prisoners) pushed the killers down into the basement of a fortified schoolhouse until they could be searched in the morning. That night in the cramped five-room basement there was an angry and desperate argument among the prisoners.

The Saudis and Uzbeks planned an attack; they just needed a diversion to get to the weapons stored a few yards from the pink schoolhouse. The Pakistanis

wanted to just surrender and go home. According to the survivors I interviewed, Lindh was an Arab speaking al Qaeda member and had full knowledge of this discussion and he has yet to admit which path he was going to choose. Some insist that Lindh was among the main proponents of this violent action. I was not in that basement so I don't know what happened. What I do know is that Lindh's actions the next day would provide the damning answer.

The next morning two CIA officers went to Qali Jangi to interview the prisoners. Mike Spann and Dave Tyson arrived in separate vehicles. Tyson spoke a number of languages but Spann only spoke English. The prisoners were brought up one at a time. They were searched, bound with their turbans and then marched into lines inside the southern courtyard. Spann walked up and down the lines of prisoners. He asked an Iraqi mechanic who spoke English if there were any other prisoners who spoke English. The Iraqi pointed out the ``Irishman''.

Lindh had been told to say he was Irish in the camps to avoid problems. Spann had Lindh brought over away from the main group and put out a blanket for him. Spann and Tyson tried to talk to Lindh. Mike even calls him ``Irish''. Away from his peers Lindh just stares down. Mike pleads with Lindh to talk. Lindh remains hostile and silent.

Spann and Tyson play a clumsy game of ``good cop, bad cop''. But one thing is clear; they offer Lindh a way out. Lindh is alone with two of his fellow countrymen with full knowledge of the violence that is about to happen. He says nothing. If there was ever one moment that will define one man and damn another this was it. Lindh is put back into the lineup, and Mike Spann will die in the next few minutes as Uzbeks rush up from the basement, yelling Allahuakbar detonate hidden grenades. The fighting begins. Lindh has once again been given a clear choice between right and wrong and once again. He makes that clear choice again.

It is not known what Lindh and his fellow terrorists did for the next few days while fighting raged and Mike Spann's still body lay there with two AK 47 bullet holes through his head---one straight down, and one from left to right. When the Afghan Commander Fakir used pleading, threats, then finally flame, explosions and flooding, to roust the killers, the first person that came up to negotiate on behalf of the jihadis was John Walker Lindh.

The same murderous group that had shot and killed a clearly identified elderly Red Cross worker who went down to look for bodies a week earlier. I had asked Dostum to bring me the prisoners. I wanted to interview and meet these men. At around midnight after Lindh and his 85 friends surrendered, two open trucks showed up filled with shivering, screaming jihadis. One truckload was unloaded in front of me. I photographed and talked to the men while a group of Special Forces soldiers watched from a distance, their guns at the ready. This was not the first false surrender they had suffered. One truck was full of moaning

and crying men. Way in the back sat John Walker Lindh. He slowly hides from view in my series of photographs. Once he had a chance to identify himself and surrender but he chose to stay in the company of killers A few minutes later Dostum's cameraman runs into the living room and says there is an American.

He shows me an image of Lindh repeating his name'' John'' on his Panasonic camera. My first impression is that whoever this American is, he needs help. Fast. I ask the Special Forces medic if he will bring his medical bag and come with me. We jump into a truck and I along with my cameraman and some SF team members go into the triage room. The doctor is whacking Lindh on the head trying to talk to him. I motion for the doctor to back off and ask if I can ask the questions. I clearly identify myself to Lindh as working for CNN.

Frank Lindh ignores the fact that all my initial questions are about his son's health and if he wanted to contact his loved ones. Lindh Jr (who called himself ``Abdul Hamid'' and ``John Walker'' repeatedly states that he is not. I move him to a private room so the medic can examine him properly. Downstairs the doctors hate these people. They have just murdered their compatriots in cold blood there will be no pity for the men left downstairs. They are all now dead or in Gitmo. Lindh will be the lucky one.

Upstairs Lindh and despite our attempts to improve his condition, he was yet again rude, arrogant and unhelpful. I still press him for someone to contact.

He refuses. He is being given gentle medical care by a US medic who was busy killing his murderous friends a few days earlier. There is a myth that morphine somehow forces Lindh to talk. But his statements (some of them true and some of them false) begin and flow without my help. He is consistent in his love the the Taliban and his cause. I clearly identify to Lindh when he is given morphine (happy juice) and I ask no leading questions. My interest is simply understand who is he is and how he got there.

In fact the reason Lindh talks to me is because he senses that I know about jihad, Muslims and his cause. He even asks me if I am a Muslim. I know jihadis and I know jihad. On tape I ask him if it is Ok for Muslims to kill other Muslims. He brushes me off saying the Koran deals with this. Finally I ask him what he thinks of his condition and decisions. He is unrepentant.

Despite his attitude and affections for killers. I left Lindh tea and cookies and once again ask him if he wants to contact his parents. He refuses. Finally, I turn off my camera and tell him to sleep. Consulting with the doctor and concerned that he could be killed by revengeful Afghans, I decide to take him home with me for his own safety. One of the Special Forces soldiers, fresh from three weeks in combat, gives up his room so that Lindh could sleep in his bed.

The next morning Lindh is taken to the Turkish School, rested, fed, attended to and dressed in a clean pair of pajamas and out of my control. I know what happened to Lindh after that because I met some of the Marines that did it. He could have suffered much worse. His parents have never thanked me.

For an entire month I called Lindh's parents and lawyers to provide the details of his capture and events surrounding the uprising. Brosnahan tried to cajole me and then threatened me sputtering about how the courtroom would be a dangerous place for me. His parents refused to take my calls or call me back but his mother had time to chastise a gossip columnist for criticizing her relationship with her lawyer. During Lindh's 15 minutes of fame, I respected my responsibility as a working journalist for CNN and did nothing that would influence his case.

Despite my dark knowledge I told his lawyers to keep me out of it. They played games and and I fought my court appearance knowing full well that they would characterize me as a spy and I would bring out information that would put Lindh away for a very long time. They wasted \$64,000 of CNN's legal money and worked the media to present me as a greedy story hungry freelancer. The truth is I have made no additional money from Lindh's story (other than my standard day rate for CNN) and never will. Now that Lindh's father is now blaming me for his son's `exculpatory' interview and has restarted his negative spin, the gloves are off. The truth will prevail.

I don't think about the evening of December 1 2001 that much. I continue to cover conflict and the actors within but on a recent motorcycle trip from the east coast to the west coast, I found myself passing through Victorville close to where `Johnny Taliban' is staying. The cold dirty wind and high mountain air reminded me of Afghanistan. I thought about Lindh, felt the air on my face and wondered how lucky Lindh is to be still alive. A privilege that Mike Spann, a real hero and American patriot will never have due to John Walker Lindh's duplicity.

So for Mike's sake, don't let Frank Lindh's PR and legal campaign change the fact that his son was the exactly the kind of person that fly aircraft into buildings, blow up American troops in Iraq and kill innocent Muslims on their `spiritual journey' to paradise. He was and is a terrorist.

To hell with John Walker Lindh and his murderous ilk. They have done nothing to advance the cause of Muslims and they have caused a world of heartbreak in their arrogant pursuit of senseless death. To support Frank Lindh's na`{\i}ve, self-serving and false view of his son's motivation and actions furthers that dark vision.

I'm not really a proper reporter, due to the chronic lack of discipline, negligible attention span, and a certain juvenile difficulty taking serious things seriously.

Andrew Mueller.

Mikethehack

Pimpmasterus Generalismus || Posts: 7854 || Joined: Fri Mar 26, 2004 6:34 pm  
|| Location: The Irish colonies

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by docwatson '' Wed Aug 08, 2007 7:09 pm

RYP sounds..... ..Conservative!

``An armed society is a polite society. Manners are good when one may have to  
back up his acts with his life'`---Robert A. Heinlein

docwatson

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 919 || Joined: Mon Jan 17, 2005 4:17 pm ||  
Location: Metro DC

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by Sri Lanky '' Wed Aug 08, 2007 7:13 pm

RYP is beyond Liberal or Conservative..... .right is right and wrong is wrong.

you grew your brain without even thinking about it---Alan Watts

Sri Lanky

Other Vaginus || Posts: 9284 || Joined: Fri May 07, 2004 12:04 am ||  
Location: 14th dimension

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by RYP '' Wed Aug 08, 2007 7:42 pm

The truth shall set you free.. I am not defending any political viewpoint, I  
am setting the record straight. And yes my opinion on the middle class  
fuckwits with issues who want to kill innocent civilians under the false  
banner of religion is my opinion but I will state it as a fact until I die.

I don't use the word ``hero'' lightly. But Mike Spann did join the SAD to  
serve his country, and he was someone that was well liked by the people I was  
with. I know his Dad and his Dad was treated terribly by the CIA when he  
tried to find the truth about his son's death.

Mike died all alone fighting for his life. He could have run against  
overwhelming odds but he didn't. He had a man at his side who needed  
protection (his job) and he went down doing his job. The worst part is they  
bombed and AC 130'd the shit out of that compound when Mike was still MIA and  
his team said do not bomb the compound.

But even knocking it down a notch. Lindh's father's attempts to recast his  
son as a good American just get stuck in my craw, his lawyer's grandstanding  
and the retarded prosecution all were worth sending a truth missile up their  
collective asses.

RYP

Ownerus Websiteus Authorus || Posts: 25605 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 3:42  
am

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by Q '' Wed Aug 08, 2007 7:45 pm

RYP wrote:

> But even knocking it down a notch. Lindh's father's attempts to recast his  
son as a good American just get stuck in my craw, his lawyer's grandstanding  
and the retarded prosecution all were worth sending a truth missile up their  
collective asses.

The only other descriptive phrase other than ``hero'' that is used WAY too

much these days is ``he/she was a good kid''.

It's amazing how many ``good kids'' die in a gang fight, crack house, or militant compound these days.

I'm down with DDT.

Q

Al-Aqua Teen Martyr's Brigade || Posts: 6301 || Joined: Sat Mar 27, 2004 6:29 am || Location: Piss off

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by Wayne '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 12:01 am

(round of applause)

Anyone but BO!

Wayne

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 3512 || Joined: Mon Aug 14, 2006 12:09 am || Location: ....

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by SRR '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 12:07 am

Hey, this Pelton guy sounds kind of smart. Has he written any books?

SRR

Hippie Dangerous || Posts: 4331 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 3:07 pm

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by OneLungMcClung '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 12:46 am

SRR wrote:

> Hey, this Pelton guy sounds kind of smart. Has he written any books?

Indeed, that would be nice! I wonder if he's on the net as well?

Money Talks ....

OneLungMcClung

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 2036 || Joined: Sat Apr 21, 2007 12:26 am

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by Lunatock '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 2:40 am

OneLungMcClung wrote:

> SRR wrote:

> Hey, this Pelton guy sounds kind of smart. Has he written any books?

Indeed, that would be nice! I wonder if he's on the net as well?

If he rode a Harley nilly-willy across the States and Canada he'd score a hat trick.

So I'll meet up with that Russian, that Brazillian, the rest of the team from Brooklyn..and we'll start shooting.

Lunatock

Obarrg || Posts: 2000 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 11:06 pm || Location: Yugofukyurselv

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by Jack Shadow '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 5:45 am

\*golf clap\*

Jack Shadow || Posts: 75 || Joined: Tue Dec 26, 2006 9:36 am

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by Farmdog '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 5:59 am

RYP,

Splendid article. I didn't know that you were this deep in to the Afghanistan piece. Great work, truth is truth, glad to hear that it is inconvenient for the spoiled suburban set.

Farmdog

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 1543 || Joined: Fri Sep 15, 2006 9:03 pm ||  
Location: Your Mom's house

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by svizzerams '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 6:02 am

Lunatock wrote:

> OneLungMcClung wrote:

> SRR wrote:

> Hey, this Pelton guy sounds kind of smart. Has he written any books?

Indeed, that would be nice! I wonder if he's on the net as well?

If he rode a Harley nilly-willy across the States and Canada he'd score a hat trick.

RYP doesn't ride no stinkin' Harley coast to coast..... . ;-)

Thought provoking and clearly stated article..... facts is facts. Sometimes there are consequences for chosen actions that can't be waved away by rewriting history.

Joan of Arc went to battle with nothing

but the voices in her head

and a well-sharpened sword ~ Charlotte

svizzerams

Rx Rangerette || Posts: 5117 || Joined: Fri Mar 26, 2004 5:00 am || Location:  
Drug Goddess of Chelanistan

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i don't consider lawyers middleclass. and neither do they.

by denise '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 6:09 am

he was an american from california.

you were an american from california.

the first thing you should have asked him was if he had an attorney.

denise

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 6951 || Joined: Thu Dec 29, 2005 3:25 am ||

Location: Home of the Wild Frontier

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another view

by therenaissanceman '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 8:50 am

can't upper middle class white kids from marin county find something better to do with their time than to join the taliban?

after reading ryp's article i wanted to find out the marines did to him and found this article on salon. frankly, i think that there may be assumptions made by both authors that are difficult to prove. i also wonder if RYP' s objectivity is compromised because of his affinity for and adulation of the SF and SAD folks.

There are two things that struck a chord with me. the first was that JWL was being as asshole. from my recollection of mr. p's interview, he was pretty fucked up. for 4-- 7 days, he was stuck in a dungeon with little or no provisions where gasoline, explosives, and frigid water, inter alia, were all dumped on him. his misery was compounded by the fact that he was suffering from an untreated gunshot wound. is it possible that the guy was in so much pain and likely disorientated that he was curt and noncooperative? him and his jihad homies did go through hell.

the second thing was the green beret who have up his cot for JWL. i think that this was because detainees need to quartered and provided with medical care. did he sleep in the same room with JWL or was he isolated properly for security reasons?

for the record, I don't like JWL and his ilk and think that he got what deserved; however, i do think that the govt had a very weak criminal case against him and that the climate of the day led to his relatively long incarceration. my ex was an asst. us attorney fresh out of law school and she said that the USG would have a hard time proving it's case against JWL. Remember that conviction and guilt are not always synonymous.

anyway, here's the article from Salon.

<http://dir.salon.com/story/news/feature.....html?pn=1>

The fall of John Walker Lindh

He met bin Laden and carried arms for the Taliban. And when he was finally captured, he faced the fury of Americans---U.S. soldiers in particular. Part 2 of an exclusive excerpt.

By Mark Kukis

Pages 1 2 3 4 5 August 26, 2003 | John Walker Lindh reported to Osama bin Laden's al Farooq training camp outside Kandahar in June 2001 with about 20 other volunteers, mostly from Saudi Arabia. The desert base was similar to the mountain camp in northern Pakistan where Lindh received his first arms training with Kashmiri militants weeks earlier. But these grounds were home to Arabs, rather than Afghans or Pakistanis, and the men who ran al Farooq had even darker ambitions than training and arming a guerrilla force.

Living in a tent, Lindh joined about 100 Arab volunteers at the camp, which sat on a hidden canyon floor in a chain of low mountains arching across the desert plain surrounding Kandahar. Instructors woke recruits early and ran them through a daily regimen of running, hiking and arms training, broken up by prayers. The trainees had target practice and learned how to handle grenades and Molotov cocktails. They went on camping excursions and learned battlefield tactics such as different types of combat crawls, surveillance methods, camouflage techniques, signs and signals, navigation of rugged terrain and how to carry weapons properly.

The trainees gathered together in the evenings at the camp mosque. But instead of accountability sessions, al Farooq offered guest speakers every night. Among the lecturers who addressed the group was Osama bin Laden, who showed up at the camp a handful of times toward the end of Lindh's course.



The evening lectures had always been a chance for Lindh and other recruits, who sagged at the end of a day's training, to nod off. Sitting through a bin Laden lecture required a special kind of endurance. Bin Laden, apparently ill, spoke softly and slowly as he sipped water during his talks, which covered topics ranging from local problems to global politics. Lindh dozed through at least one of bin Laden's lectures, and found the others unmemorable, despite bin Laden's obvious stature in the camp.

Lindh also had heard rumors that bin Laden masterminded the embassy attacks in East Africa, and he knew that the wealthy Saudi had worked with Azzam and supported jihadi causes. But he had also heard that bin Laden thought jihadi struggles like Chechnya and Bosnia were a lost cause, leaving Lindh uncertain of what to make of him. Also, Lindh disdained how some in the camp looked with reverence to bin Laden, who was always accompanied by an unusually large entourage. Lindh felt jihad was not a celebrity cause, and that bin Laden's apparent stardom did not mesh with the egalitarian ideals of Islam.

Each time after bin Laden spoke, recruits who wanted to meet him would line up for a handshake. Lindh passed on the first evening, as did some of the other trainees, and went back to his tent to sleep. On one of bin Laden's other visits, however, recruits were told at the end of bin Laden's talk that they could either meet the famed Saudi exile, or do camp chores after the mosque session. Some of the camp instructors had told Lindh beforehand that anyone who wanted to meet bin Laden had to be sincere about jihad, since many in the camp seemed ready to drop out. Lindh was indeed serious about jihad---and wanted to get out of work detail---so he joined four other trainees, with whom bin Laden spent about five minutes, thanking each for volunteering.

The meeting seemed insignificant to Lindh at the time, an excuse to avoid unpleasant camp duty. He didn't know the United States already wanted the terrorist leader for mass murder, or that in those very days bin Laden was orchestrating the death of thousands more in New York. He walked away thinking little of the encounter, eager only to be done with training so he could finally go on duty with the Taliban.

But toward the end of the course, an al Farooq instructor approached Lindh and others to ask if anyone would be interested in taking up jihad in either Israel or the United States.

Lindh and his comrades thought the offer was a trick question, an effort by the Arabs who ran the camp to ferret out spies rumored to be among them. But the recruitment was likely for real.

One of the ranking al Farooq trainers, Abu Mohammad al-Misri, an Egyptian also known as ``Shaleh,' ' had been named in a federal indictment for his alleged participation in the 1998 embassy bombings. Again, Lindh knew nothing of him. Regardless, he turned down the offer to leave Afghanistan, saying again that he had come to help the Taliban. Lindh left the camp in June or July at the end of his training, and soon joined a group of about 30 other Ansar volunteers headed north to fight Northern Alliance forces, who were then clinging to a tiny corner of Afghanistan in a losing war.

Lindh arrived on the front lines in the war's eleventh hour. His group flew in on one of the last troop lifts from Kabul to Konduz on about Sept. 6, 2001. In Konduz, Lindh was given a Kalashnikov and two grenades, a vest with pockets for his ammunition, and some warmer clothes since winter was already coming in the mountains. A Taliban commander told Lindh and the others in the group that they were officially members of the Afghan army, even though there was not an Afghan among them. With that, Lindh saw himself as a sworn servant to the Taliban's Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, a soldier not a terrorist---a distinction that would come to mean little, if anything, in the eyes of most Americans.

Lindh's unit was then sent toward the front lines in Takhar, where the group was ordered to take up defensive positions on two hills opposite Northern Alliance forces. Lindh was told his group would make no attacks; their mission was simply to hold the hills, essentially guard duty at a position that weathered only the occasional volley of Northern Alliance mortar fire. His long-anticipated jihad consisted of touring a remote corner of the front line where the Northern Alliance forces were so far away that the Taliban rarely, if ever, saw them. Lindh never managed to squeeze off a shot across the front lines, and his unit suffered no casualties while protecting the lonely hills. He mostly read and eyed the empty landscape, rotating with

others in two-week shifts in and out of foxholes.

Word of what happened on [Sept. 11](#) spread by word of mouth from others in his unit who listened to radio broadcasts. With no access to a radio himself, much less a television or newspaper, he was unsure what to think of the attacks and the speculation that bin Laden was behind them. In any case, Lindh saw bin Laden and any conflict he had with America as separate from the Taliban's fight against the Northern Alliance. He was tragically wrong in many ways.

Eventually Lindh and others began to suspect that bin Laden was indeed behind the attacks, a troubling revelation for some on the remote front. The moral, ethical and religious reasoning that had drawn Lindh and many of his jihadi comrades to fight in trenches against fellow Islamic believers in Afghanistan did not call for the attacks like those unleashed on [Sept. 11](#). And whatever misconceptions Lindh had about bin Laden, one thing was clear: the Taliban supported him. Many of the foreign fighters in the trenches alongside Lindh began to question the Taliban and its support of bin Laden as sketchy details about the thousands of civilian casualties reached them in their lonely post.

Some considered defecting, looking for ways to flee Takhar. But U.S. airstrikes, which had begun on [Oct. 7](#), had frozen all transportation to and from the area. Slipping away on foot seemed out of the question. A walk back to the nearest town of any size, Konduz, would take more than two days over frigid steppe supposedly roamed by bandits. There seemed to be no way out, so Lindh never really considered abandoning his position. But eventually he and his colleagues were forced to, as the airstrikes were breaking up Taliban positions elsewhere along the front, and Lindh's unit was ordered to fall back.

By mid-[November](#), they moved from their positions and the entire front line folded; all the Taliban in the area broke into a full retreat toward Konduz. By the time they reached it, the town was controlled by the Northern Alliance and the Taliban soon accepted defeat---at least officially---and entered into surrender talks.

Around [November 24](#), Lindh and several hundred other foreign fighters were ordered by Afghan Taliban commanders to turn themselves over to the Northern Alliance soon after they arrived in Konduz. Lindh and others were told by a Taliban commander that they would be let go after being disarmed. Whether the Taliban commander believed that or not, Northern Alliance Gen. Rashid Dostum had no plans to free any of the surrendering foreigners. Instead, Dostum's men trucked them to his fortress on the outskirts of Mazar-e-Sharif called Qala-i-Jangi. There Northern Alliance troops crowded Lindh and roughly 400 other captives into a basement for overnight keeping ahead of interrogations. The packed cellar was a din of fighters speaking in no fewer than half a dozen languages echoing off the cement walls. Lindh crouched on the dirt floor near a corner used as a toilet because there was no room to lie down anywhere else.

Lindh's brief time as an armed Taliban fighter was over. But he would not escape the brutalities of war.

As the sun rose on the chilly morning of [November 25](#), Northern Alliance guards descended to the basement to begin bringing up the prisoners for interrogation. At about 10 a.m., after some 200 prisoners had left the basement without incident, Lindh too mounted the double plank of metal stairs leading from the cellar. At one point, as Lindh sat motionless, one of Dostum's guards struck him in the head, leaving him dazed as he watched two men who appeared to be Americans question prisoners one by one.

Lindh thought the two Americans were somehow under the command of Dostum, renowned among Taliban for his brutality, because Afghan guards aided them and took orders from them. It seemed to Lindh that the two Americans must have seen the guards beating the prisoners randomly, but neither appeared concerned. Lindh began to fear that if identified as an American he would be separated from the group and kept behind in Dostum's custody for further questioning. Lindh dreaded the idea of remaining in Qala-i-Jangi, where he expected to be tortured and killed by Dostum's men.

The Americans Lindh saw were CIA operatives Mike Spann and Dave Tyson. During the early interrogations, an Iraqi prisoner had told Spann that there was an Irishman among the prisoners. Spann noticed Lindh in the group and was told the disheveled fighter, whose skin was lighter than most, had been overheard

speaking English. Lindh also drew the attention of an Afghan camera man, who began videotaping Lindh, providing an eerie record of one of the most compelling moments of the war---two Americans face to face in a remote corner of Afghanistan, each there for reasons of conviction, yet on opposite sides of battle lines.

``Hey, you, right here with your head down,`` Spann called to Lindh as he sat limply among the other prisoners.

``Look at me; I know you speak English,`` Spann said, eyeing Lindh as he sat unresponsive. ``Look at me. Where did you get the British military sweater?``

Northern Alliance guards hauled Lindh to his feet and shoved him over to a blanket spread over the dirt, where he kneeled and sagged his head, letting his long brown hair fall over his face.

``Where are you from?`` Spann said. ``You believe in what you're doing here that much, you're willing to be killed here? How were you recruited to come here? Who brought you here? Hey!``

Spann snapped twice in the prisoner's face but still got no response.

Spann matched Lindh's silence for a moment, looking him over in a long pause as a distant autumn sun rose and warmed the chill morning air. Square-jawed with a neatly trimmed mustache, Spann was built like a brick house. The brawn in his chest and shoulders showed through even the heavy fleece he wore with his jeans. Lindh by this point looked like a wasted waif.

Lindh glowered and hunched angrily until a nearby Afghan guard reached over, pulled his hair back and held his head up for Spann's digital camera. The expression of defiance and angered humiliation Lindh wore Spann had undoubtedly seen on the others he had already questioned.

``You got to talk to me,`` Spann said. ``All I want to do is talk to you and find out what your story is. I know you speak English.``

Lindh said nothing, and Spann clearly displayed frustration when Tyson walked over.

``He won't talk to me,`` Spann said. ``Well, he's a Muslim, you know,`` Tyson said, lowering his voice for a moment to talk quietly with Spann before going on to speak loudly enough so Lindh was sure to hear.

``The problem is he needs to decide if he wants to live or die, and die here,`` Tyson said. ``We're just going to leave him, and he's going to fucking sit in prison the rest of his fucking short life. It's his decision, man. We can only help the guys who want to talk to us. We can only get the Red Cross to help so many guys. If they don't talk to us, we can't ....``

Spann suddenly turned to address Lindh. ``Do you know the people here you're working with are terrorists, and killed other Muslims?`` he said. ``There were several hundred Muslims killed in the bombing in New York City. Is that what the Koran teaches? I don't think so. Are you going to talk to us?``

``That's all right, man,`` Tyson said. ``Gotta give him a chance, he got his chance.``

Indeed, Lindh had his chance, but he wasn't taking it with Americans. Foolishly, he still hoped that somehow the group would be freed, and allowed to leave the fortress peacefully after the interrogations.

Spann still had no idea Lindh was an American as a guard pulled Lindh to his feet and shoved him to an area with the other previously interrogated prisoners. And he didn't live long enough to find out what the rest of the world would soon know.

About half an hour later, as alliance guards called into the cellar for another prisoner, as many as half a dozen, mostly Uzbeks, suddenly rounded the steps, tossing grenades, yelling, ``Allah u Akbar!`` The guards fired into the crush of prisoners charging up the stairs but were soon overpowered as more men leapt up behind them and fought toward the outside door.

It was the beginning of an uprising.

Seated by the side of the building, Lindh heard the sound of shots and screams and rose to his feet as some of the prisoners around him began shouting and untying each other. He turned to run but was shot in the leg as alliance fighters standing on the roof of the building fired Kalashnikovs down into the yard, spraying the scattering prisoners. Elsewhere in the yard Spann had gone down under a crush of prisoners who rushed him, becoming the first U.S. casualty in America's war against the Taliban.

As the gunfire of the revolt quickened, Lindh lay bleeding, motionless where he fell, watching the bloody scene unfold. He and another wounded prisoner lay in the yard playing dead for the duration of the 14-hour shootout.

At nightfall, as the battle wore on, Lindh's Taliban comrades dragged him back into the basement, where he remained for nearly a week with holdouts from the revolt until the Northern Alliance finally forced them to surrender. When Lindh emerged from the basement again he was among 86 of the surviving 400 Taliban, whom the Northern Alliance brought to Dostum's personal home outside Mazar-e-Sharif.

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Twelve Green Berets, two Air Force bomb guiders and three CIA operatives, including Spann, had been traveling with Dostum since October, when they were assigned to help his faction of the Northern Alliance as part of the U.S. campaign in Afghanistan. Author Robert Young Pelton had joined Dostum's entourage during the uprising at Qala-i-Jangi, having arranged to take a small CNN crew with him on a monthlong assignment profiling the warlord for National Geographic Adventure magazine. Pelton had quickly become friends with many of the Green Berets, who recognized him from his books and television show.

Pelton and the Green Berets were watching television at Dostum's house the night of Dec. 1 when they heard a loud bang at the gates. The group went out to find Dostum's men unloading dozens of wounded from two trucks and lining the prisoners up in a gloom of swirling dust aglow with headlights. Earlier Pelton had asked Dostum's men to show him any prisoners taken from the basement so he could interview them. Dostum's men had obliged, bringing all 86 men from the basement to Pelton. Like others, Pelton had heard that perhaps a handful of men remained in the basement and was stunned to see so many survivors. Many of the prisoners were barely alive and wailed in pain as Dostum's men pulled them off the trucks while Pelton and the Green Berets looked on.

Pelton took some pictures while the Green Berets urged him to be careful and stay back. Initially Pelton didn't notice Lindh, and after several minutes of photographing the group, he urged Dostum's men to take them to the hospital.

At the hospital, Lindh was unable to stand and had to be carried by stretcher into the makeshift emergency ward, where he was placed on the floor with the other wounded from the basement, all of them near death. One of Dostum's personal cameramen had gone to the hospital and was taping the scene, turning his camera on the wounded one by one as the doctors asked each individual his name and nationality. Lindh wearily said he was American when the doctor came to him. Stunned, the cameraman ran from the ward back to the palace to tell Pelton.

Several Green Berets, including a medic, went with Pelton to the hospital, where Pelton interviewed Lindh for CNN, made sure the boy got badly needed medical care and offered to help him get in touch with his family.

``And did you enjoy the jihad?'' Pelton asked Lindh. ``I mean, was it a good cause for you?''

``Definitely,'' Lindh said.

After the interview the Green Berets took Lindh back to Dostum's house, where Lindh slept as Pelton's interview began to air on CNN Dec. 2. John Walker Lindh became a household name.

The Green Berets woke Lindh up early the next morning, bound his arms and blindfolded him. A three-car convoy set out from Dostum's house back to Mazar-e-Sharif, where Lindh was taken to the main coalition base in the area,

an unused high school where military officials interrogated him over the course of several days. He talked and talked, urged on by his interrogators who told him that anything he knew might be able to save American lives.

Some of the soldiers who had to deal with Lindh grew disgusted after learning where he had been and what he had done. His guards in particular began to show open disdain, along with traces of fear. They frequently called him ``shit bag'' and ``terrorist,'' as well as ``shithead''---the nickname that stuck.

At some point during those initial days of questioning, which lasted from Dec. 2 to Dec. 7, it struck Lindh that he might need a lawyer, and he asked his military keepers when he could seek an attorney. But the officers on hand neither had an answer for him nor seemed overly concerned with Lindh's request. They wanted battlefield information that might be of use to the ongoing conflict, not evidence of criminal wrongdoing. Orders had come from the Pentagon that Lindh was to be questioned about military, not criminal, matters. The FBI, U.S. officials decided, would ask any questions about possible law violations later.

On Dec. 7, military officials planned to fly Lindh to Camp Rhino, the main U.S. base in Afghanistan outside Kandahar. In preparation for the journey, U.S. troops bound and blindfolded Lindh, tying his hands tightly together with plastic cuffs. On Lindh's blindfold U.S. troops scrawled ``shithead,'' and they taunted him as they took turns posing for snapshots next to their infamous prisoner.

One soldier told Lindh he was ``going to hang'' for his crimes and that upon his death the soldier would sell the souvenir ``shithead'' blindfold snapshots and give the money to a Christian charity. Another soldier told Lindh that he'd like to shoot him then and there. But instead, they marched him from his quarters, shoved him into the back of a van, and drove him to the Mazar-e-Sharif airport. There, they hustled Lindh onto a cargo plane.

Onboard, the plastic cuffs dug into Lindh's wrists, sending sharp pains through his arms. At some point during the flight Lindh began to beg the unseen troops around him to loosen the ties, screaming to be heard over the engine noise of the plane. But Lindh's guards simply told him the cuffs weren't meant for comfort. And then Lindh began to grow scared.

``Please don't kill me,'' he pleaded, speaking blindly to the soldiers around him.

``Shut up,'' someone near said.

It was night when the plane touched down at Camp Rhino, about 70 miles south of Kandahar. Lindh's guards initially put him face down on a stretcher, and he thought for a moment that he might be en route to his execution. The frigid winter air in the high desert darkness swept cold over Lindh as the Marines unloaded him from the plane.

``Please don't kill me,'' Lindh begged again.

``Shut the fuck up,'' one of the Marines nearby said.

Lindh's guards cut off the clothes he had been given in Mazar-e-Sharif, leaving him naked as they bound him to a stretcher with duct tape wrapped tightly around his chest, upper arms and ankles. Troops at Camp Rhino took more pictures of Lindh as he lay naked, taped to the stretcher, blindfolded in pain and fear. Then they placed him in yet another metal shipping container, where Marines questioned him for roughly 45 minutes before leaving him to lay shivering alone, crying. After some time, guards returned to wrap him in blankets, but left him bound so tightly that his forearms were pinned together in front of him, pointing down. The Marines kept him like that for two days, inside his windowless compartment, unknowing of when day and night passed. Small holes in the sides of the container provided the only source of air and light, through which troops yelled swearing insults and loudly discussed how they planned to spit in his food. When Lindh needed to urinate, his guards simply propped up his stretcher vertically, leaving him bound.

Lindh began Dec. 9 cold and hungry. He was given a meal with pork, which he refused to eat. His guards then gave him another meal and a new blanket. Shortly thereafter, Marine guards entered Lindh's container, tore off the duct

tape, dressed him in a hospital gown and shackles and then carried him on his stretcher, still blindfolded, to a nearby tent. When guards removed the blindfold, Lindh sat facing Federal Bureau of Investigation Agent Christopher Reimann, who introduced himself and then immediately read Lindh his rights. When Reimann came to the point related to one's right to an attorney, he said, ``Of course, there are no lawyers here.''

Reimann questioned Lindh in three lengthy interrogation sessions over the course of two days after Lindh waived his Miranda rights both verbally and in writing. After questioning, Lindh was allowed to wear clothes again and was no longer taped to furniture inside his box, but Reimann's interrogations were shaping up as something bad for Lindh nonetheless.

On Dec. 14, a helicopter flew Lindh from Camp Rhino to the USS Peleliu, a warship afloat about 15 miles off the coast of Pakistan, where he would remain for 17 days before being transferred to the USS Bataan. In mid-January of 2002, as Lindh sat jailed in the belly of a U.S. warship at sea, the government filed an affidavit and obtained an arrest warrant for him, clearing the way for a civilian trial in the United States. Last October, he was sentenced to 20 years in federal prison, after pleading guilty to aiding the Taliban and carrying explosives. With time off for good behavior, he will still need to serve 17 years.

therenaissanceman || Posts: 67 || Joined: Mon Jul 23, 2007 3:35 pm

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by Farmdog '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 9:59 am

Ren-o-man,

Not to seem curt, but I am in with RYP on this one, the other story is obviously composed of careful research, not primary source experience. Take for instance the following:

``Twelve Green Berets, two Air Force bomb guiders and three CIA operatives'' Where the fuck does a professional journalist find a term like ``bomb guider''? How far do you have to stick your head up your ass to not know what a JTAC is? Part two of this diatribe is referring to anyone in uniform as a Soldier. A Soldier is someone who serves in the United States Army, not the Marine Corps, not the Air Force.

Apparently the author has never been flex cuffed, we can arrange that. Schedule a time in about two months when I get back since chances are said author has never been to the CENTCOM AOR and probably will never go there. At least RYP has got some testicleez to do his job like a man, not a lap top totting frapachino drinking loser.

``Onboard, the plastic cuffs dug into Lindh's wrists, sending sharp pains through his arms.''

Why doesn't anyone questioning JWL's treatment post themselves at the Bataan Memorial Death March to discuss the issues with survivors. He was not mistreated given the gravity of his offense.

Sorry, in the end JWL is just another spoiled momma's boy, at least he didn't kill people at his high school.

Farmdog

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 1543 || Joined: Fri Sep 15, 2006 9:03 pm || Location: Your Mom's house

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by michelle in alaska '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 10:00 am

....

Last edited by michelle in alaska on Wed Aug 22, 2007 7:38 am, edited 1 time in total.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-ImCpNqbJw>

michelle in alaska

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 2279 || Joined: Mon Apr 23, 2007 7:45 am ||  
Location: terra ignota

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by Penta '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 12:09 pm

Farmdog wrote:

> He was not mistreated given the gravity of his offense.

That's an interesting proviso. What does it mean? You can be very badly mistreated if your alleged offence is very bad, only slightly mistreated if your alleged offence is slight?

As I understand it, you're either treated properly, or you're mistreated. The gravity or otherwise of your alleged offence has absolutely nothing to do with it. Perhaps you have different laws from the rest of us?

I met her once and I found her to be a nice lady. Not kookey in any way.

Penta has always been gracious, kind and very sane in all my interactions with her.

Penta

Ruby Tuesday || Posts: 15588 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 4:32 pm || Location: UK, Spain

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by Farmdog '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 12:49 pm

JWL isnt worth the rope it would take to hang him.

Treason of this order is unacceptable, he is lucky he is still breathing. Don't for a minute think that he didn't in some way contribute to the death of the CIA agent. An English speaker in a situation like that should have been segregated IOT prevent him passing information to the rest of the prisoners, sadly the tactical situation did not allow for that action. The whole ``I was shocked by the rage I encountered once captured after committing treason'' is pure cock. Really, if you don't see this you have had too many martinis.

Treason on the battle field falls into area you have not experienced. He is not a coward; he was obviously proud of what he did and did not flea the fight. In this case if you live by the sword you die by the sword. That is part of the contract the minute you step onto the battlefield. Had he been forthright regarding his identity I would be inclined to agree with you, however he was not. He was intent on taking the fight as far and as deep as he could. His actions were outside the scope of the Geneva conventions, he is lucky that RYP found him as quickly as he did or much more nefarious things could have happened to him. Tight flexi cuffs from the Marines have nothing on what would have happened if he was questioned by the Alliance. Nothing regarding his interrogation was beyond the bounds of legality. The nude duck tape shit was wrong, but scaring him and making his scurvy ass cry is not in any way illegal.

Please do come visit, I think the smell of detainees will leave a permanent mark on you and give this story a new meaning.

Farmdog

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 1543 || Joined: Fri Sep 15, 2006 9:03 pm ||  
Location: Your Mom's house

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by Vincent '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 2:02 pm

> That's an interesting proviso. What does it mean? You can be very badly

mistreated if your alleged offence is very bad, only slightly mistreated if your alleged offence is slight?

> As I understand it, you're either treated properly, or you're mistreated. The gravity or otherwise of your alleged offence has absolutely nothing to do with it. Perhaps you have different laws from the rest of us?

Correct. He was not mistreated.

``Too bad my real life experiences lead me to believe they're just like the rest of us: 5\% assholes, 5\% good people and 90\% scenery.'''---el3so, BFC philosopher and bon vivant.

Vincent

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 1332 || Joined: Tue Mar 30, 2004 11:40 pm || Location: New York, USA

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by Penta '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 2:31 pm

You didn't answer my question, Farmdog. For clarification, I think it's worth looking at GC3:

Article 3

[ .... ] the following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever

[ .... ]

c) Outrages upon personal dignity, in particular, humiliating and degrading treatment;

Article 13

Prisoners of war must at all times be humanely treated.

[ .... ]Likewise, prisoners of war must at all times be protected, particularly against acts of violence or intimidation and against insults and public curiosity.

Article 17

[ .... ]No physical or mental torture, nor any other form of coercion, may be inflicted on prisoners of war to secure from them information of any kind whatever. Prisoners of war who refuse to answer may not be threatened,

insulted, or exposed to any unpleasant or disadvantageous treatment of any kind.

[ .... ]

Article 20

The evacuation of prisoners of war shall always be effected humanely and in conditions similar to those for the forces of the Detaining Power in their changes of station.

The Detaining Power shall supply prisoners of war who are being evacuated with sufficient food and potable water, and with the necessary clothing

It seems to me that, according to the 2 accounts in this thread, each of the provisions above was broken.

Penta

Ruby Tuesday || Posts: 15588 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 4:32 pm || Location: UK, Spain

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by RYP ' ' Thu Aug 09, 2007 3:03 pm

Mark Kukis interviewed me for the book and actually retraced Walker's route. he was not at Qali Jangi and since Kukis is a buddy I can say that I lambasted him for not calling the shot but describing the rifle.

As for the marines. I was asked to give a talk at Camp Pendleton and the commander said he was the guy that had to go and get all those photos the jarheads took with JWL. Most people don't realize it but Walker was being treated according to the book.

Battlefield detainees are stripped, and if wounded secured to their cot. Lindh had a tiny, repeat tiny bit of an AK 47 round in his leg and miniscule shrapnel wounds along his back. The medic Bill Bennett (my friend who was killed in Iraq later by the same kind of foreign fuckwits that Lindh joined) diagnosed that the bullet was better left in situ since it wasn't inflamed and is SOP to leave lead in until proper medical facilities are available.

Yes he was in a basement and most people forget that after the battle they sent down two very old afghan dudes wearing very large Red Cross smocks and Walker's friend wasted one of them. They were asked nicely then forced to come up after 7 days. The basement was full of weapons, grenades, ammo including a 110mm recoilless

The guy who gave up his bed did so because he is a nice guy and he slept across the door so Lindh couldn't escape. I took the fuckwit home because I too am a nice guy and didn't want him killed. As to his demeanor .... go back and listen to the transcript .... I am simply asking the guy if we can contact his loved ones or family. His responses show a calculated coldness and anger towards someone who is trying to help. I don't judge the guy for being in a bad mood, but its clear the picture his parents paint of a guy trying to escape, or being victimized just ain't true.

The government's case was crap because, well, they are as stupid then as they are now. Focusing on the wrong people and not understanding who they are dealing with.

Just one look at the guy who prosecuted the case would explain everything.

RYP

Ownerus Websiteus Authorus || Posts: 25605 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 3:42 am

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by redharen ' ' Thu Aug 09, 2007 3:04 pm

Just to clarify (so I'm sure I understand): Was Lindh being treated as a POW or as a US citizen who had committed a crime? I don't know that the rules are any different, but I'm curious as to what his official status was, and if/when that changed.

redharen

small ax || Posts: 2589 || Joined: Mon Apr 19, 2004 2:22 am || Location: Jerusalem

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by Mikethehack ' ' Thu Aug 09, 2007 3:08 pm

I just posted this to stir shit up

:-)

Do I get an A+?

I'm not really a proper reporter, due to the chronic lack of discipline, negligible attention span, and a certain juvenile difficulty taking serious things seriously.

Andrew Mueller.

Mikethehack

Pimpmasterus Generalismus || Posts: 7854 || Joined: Fri Mar 26, 2004 6:34 pm  
|| Location: The Irish colonies

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by therenaissanceman '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 3:26 pm

penta,

the gc only applies to POWs;it is not clear to me if he was a POW or an enemy combatant. according to salon, he felt that he was joining the afghan army to fight the insurgent NA. i wonder if he was in any sort of uniform.

however, this should be moot as i think that all people captured by the USG should be afforded treatment in accordance with the GC. being mean to people only hardens their resolve and makes interrogation less effective. big macs and fries usually get better intel than waterboarding does.

the officers should have put the kibosh on the sophomoric treatment of JWL after he was in military custody.

two wrongs---even if they are not parallel---don't make a right. but, as others have alluded to, if the NA got ahold of him he would have likely been tortured to death.

farmdog,

you and i are ex-military and know the lingo. i can assure you that most salon reader's have a military iq of zero. the author is just writing to his respective audience. if he started using military acronyms he would lose his readers.

i also suspect that the gov may know more about JWL's treasonous actions than it is letting on. cia and military interrogators are granted more leeway because they are looking for actionable intel while the FBI is looking to obtain information which can be used against a defendant in a federal court. the gov could have had the goods on him but because they were obtained under duress or came from classified sources it was no good in court or could not be released to the public. if every al qaida dude at a cia morocoon ``black site'' said JWL was the 22 9/11 bomber it would mean zilch to a us attorney and a federal court .... it just ain't admissible.

this would serve JWL well because he could play innocent and spin a tale that the USG could not refute.

therenaissanceman || Posts: 67 || Joined: Mon Jul 23, 2007 3:35 pm

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by Penta '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 4:42 pm

therenaissanceman wrote:

> penta,

> the gc only applies to POWs;it is not clear to me if he was a POW or an enemy combatant.

I don't think it actually makes any difference what his status was. Article 3 in its entirety reads:

Article 3

In the case of armed conflict not of an international character occurring in the territory of one of the High Contracting Parties, each party to the conflict shall be bound to apply, as a minimum, the following provisions:

1. Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed hors de combat by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all circumstances be

treated humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, colour, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria.

To this end the following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever with respect to the above-mentioned persons:

(a) Violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture;

(b) Taking of hostages;

(c) Outrages upon personal dignity, in particular, humiliating and degrading treatment;

Stripping him naked, blindfolding or hooding him, keeping him strapped to a stretcher, allowing him to piss only on that stretcher tipped upright, writing shithead on his forehead, allowing Marines to take photos of him in that state, allowing those photos to be seen by the public---all of that is ``humiliating and degrading treatment'' and a war crime.

As you say, however much they try and wriggle on his status, they shouldn't have treated him like that, for all sorts of reasons. And saying it is not as bad as what Dostum might have done to him is completely irrelevant (except inasmuch as people who make that sort of excuse show very little allegiance to western values).

Penta

Ruby Tuesday || Posts: 15588 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 4:32 pm || Location: UK, Spain

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by Farmdog '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 5:24 pm

Renni,

Roger, I am glad that the people at salon have the time to digest complex stock analysis but might pass judgment on tactical and operational actions based on some dick and jane level tactical analysis. My point is that RYP is standing ankle deep in shit and writing about it. Perhaps if some one would like to present an opposing view they could do some primary source work in country, not from Marin County. If you want to write about something interesting in Marin County go visit Gary Fisher and write about mountain bikes. Stay out of national security if it is not your purview. Stick to Ice Frapachinos and Lindsey Lohan if you don't want to leave the US.

Penta,

You are correct that he was deserving of humane treatment and should not have been mistreated. Again, he was not mistreated. I leave to pick up detainees in 15 minutes and again, you aren't by my side for the experience. Remember that the overly legalistic approach is to say that Al Qaeda is a terrorist group and not a signatory to the GC. For this reason it is a matter of Duty and Respect for basic human rights not to throw him out of a helicopter somewhere over the mountain range, nothing to do with the GC. Remember, he was asked if he was an American or British subject and refused to answer. On last time, come spend some time with the detainees, I don't have four hundred but eight or ten real deal insurgents is enough to creep out most people. It will be an experience you won't forget. If I could bottle the smell I would send it to you.

Farmdog

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 1543 || Joined: Fri Sep 15, 2006 9:03 pm || Location: Your Mom's house

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by Penta '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 5:30 pm

Farmdog wrote:

> Penta,

> You are correct that he was deserving of humane treatment and should not have been mistreated. Again, he was not mistreated.

Oh yes he was, in the ways I pointed out above, according to the 2 accounts.

Remember, he was asked if he was an American or British subject and refused to answer.

Prisoners of war who refuse to answer may not be threatened, insulted, or exposed to any unpleasant or disadvantageous treatment of any kind.

> If I could bottle the smell I would send it to you.

I can't see what people's smell has to with any of this. As you've pointed out yourself, you smell pretty ripe yourself.

And I'm very disappointed we haven't yet been charmed by pictures of your disgusting latrines.

Penta

Ruby Tuesday || Posts: 15588 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 4:32 pm || Location: UK, Spain

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how civilized we humans are

by denise '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 6:54 pm

it's interesting to note that prisoners of war have more rights than the average poster at the BFC.

hey, if you're not for me, i'm against you. so bring it!

denise

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 6951 || Joined: Thu Dec 29, 2005 3:25 am || Location: Home of the Wild Frontier

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by Lunatock '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 6:55 pm

Penta wrote:

> Farmdog wrote:

> He was not mistreated given the gravity of his offense.

> That's an interesting proviso. What does it mean? You can be very badly mistreated if your alleged offence is very bad, only slightly mistreated if your alleged offence is slight?

> As I understand it, you're either treated properly, or you're mistreated. The gravity or otherwise of your alleged offence has absolutely nothing to do with it. Perhaps you have different laws from the rest of us?

I'm sure that as far as some of our fighting men were concerned, JWL would of slit their throats in a second if he could. Pity 'ol Johnny boy was taken alive first though, huh?

And wrt no lawyers being present. The Northern Alliance no doubt had some, as well as a functioning Sharia Court in country.

So I'll meet up with that Russian, that Brazillian, the rest of the team from Brooklyn..and we'll start shooting.

Lunatock

Obarrg || Posts: 2000 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 11:06 pm || Location:

Yugofukyurselv

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by khalampre '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 7:42 pm

> Oh yes he was, in the ways I pointed out above, according to the 2 accounts.

Ummmmmmmm..... .. well he is alive to bitch about it (or have people bitch about it for him) and that other guy Mike ahhhhhhhhh whats his name..... .. you know the one that actually died..... .. shucks what was his name..... ..you know the guy that was not giving OBL blow jobs,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,ehhhh who cares that guy is dead any how.

And BTW I most likely have been treated worse in the BSA.

I hate everything about you---Ugly Kid Joe

khalampre

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 1617 || Joined: Fri Mar 26, 2004 5:17 am || Location: Bryan, TX

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by RYP '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 10:08 pm

A subtle but important part of the whole story had been the use of false surrenders. Knowing full well that the Americans would be critqued for taking out a group that had surrendered. A few days before a group of Pakistanis at the Sultan Reza school (under the command of Mullah Dadullah) kept refusing to surrender after shooting at people and refusing to come out. They were flattened by a US directed air strike killing almost all of them.

Their had been other false surrenders in which dostums commanders and men had been cut down by Mullah Rezak pretending to surrender in smaller towns to the south.

The other aspect is the unusual number of times that Walker was in direct contact with western journos and members of the US military and CIA and refused to give up.

Finally there was his insistence that he somehow justified in his actions. Which is almost psychopathic in his refusal to admit that he was fighting for bin laden up to his ultimate surrender.

Yes a lot of his jihad homies were let off but a lot had their heads bashed in with rocks and shot to death until they were jelly. So he made the call every time, including his 20 year plea bargain. So its hard to have pity for someone who so clearly shows malice of forthought, duplicity and intransigence.

I am sure that that he has been deprogrammed and left to think about things he has either reinvented himself in yet a new persona or still doesn't get it. His lawyer keeps looking for softball articles like the one that was in Esquire by Tom Junod. Oddly enough Junod was sucked in by a fake Blackwater guy and then at the last minute figured out his game and skewered him. He never met Lindh so he believed the hype.

RYP

Ownerus Websiteus Authorus || Posts: 25605 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 3:42 am

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by SRR '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 10:19 pm

Mikethehack wrote:

> I just posted this to stir shit up

: -)

> Do I get an A+?

Yes, but you're still far behind the alzheimer's lady in winding up the usual suspects.

SRR

Hippie Dangerous || Posts: 4331 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 3:07 pm

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by Penta '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 10:23 pm

> well he is alive to bitch about it (or have people bitch about it for him) and that other guy Mike ahhhhhhhh whats his name..... you know the one that actually died..... shucks what was his name

JWL didn't kill Mike Spann, though, did he? In fact isn't the story that he never killed anybody ever?

Penta

Ruby Tuesday || Posts: 15588 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 4:32 pm || Location: UK, Spain

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by RYP '' Thu Aug 09, 2007 10:55 pm

No, Lindh did not kill Spann. I think you could make a very strong case that he was accessory to murder. Since he had foreknowledge of violent attack, was a recognized member of a terrorist group and a US citizen.

I would have tried him on that and there were enough witnesses in the basement that swore he was among the more vocal in staging a violent attack the next day.

RYP

Ownerus Websiteus Authorus || Posts: 25605 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 3:42 am

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by Penta '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 12:03 am

I'm not contesting your account, RYP. How could I anyway? (Though you are certainly in need of a halfway decent copy-editor.)

There seems to be plenty of evidence that he was mistreated in US custody, to an extent which should have made a proper trial impossible. Presumably he was offered the plea bargain because the prosecutors knew it would be hard to make the charges stick when he could argue coercion, mistreatment, and Lord knows what else. He agreed to plead guilty to the two minor charges---serving in the Taliban army and carrying weapons---presumably because of the febrile atmosphere and extreme hostility to him in the US; otherwise his lawyer deserves harsh punishment of his own. The sentence, 20 years without parole in one of those revolting Supermax prisons you have, was by any normal standards exceptionally heavy.

Whether he was a very bad person or not is not relevant: people are convicted for what they have been proven, in a proper court of law, with all the proper safeguards, to have done. He was never convicted of killing anyone at all, of being an accessory to any murders, of plotting any terrorist attacks, of waging war against the US or even against its forces in a foreign land .... He admitted being a member of the Taliban (as you say, it could have been of al-Qaeda, but that makes no practical difference) and of carrying (but not using) a rifle and 2 grenades.

Meanwhile, US soldiers and marines properly convicted of torturing prisoners in their care to death, killing and raping women and children and all the other horrors are sometimes getting no jail time at all. Not to mention the

people at the top who happily gave orders for the use of 2000lb bombs, white phosphorous and cluster munitions on residential areas, knowing they would kill dozens or hundreds of civilians at a time (civilians they claimed to be ``liberating'') and cumulatively hundreds of thousands of innocent people: not only are these real criminals not charged with anything, they remain in their positions.

There's something very skewed indeed here.

Penta

Ruby Tuesday || Posts: 15588 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 4:32 pm || Location: UK, Spain

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by khalampre '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 3:55 am

> Whether he was a very bad person or not is not relevant: people are convicted for what they have been proven, in a proper court of law, with all the proper safeguards, to have done. He was never convicted of killing anyone at all, of being an accessory to any murders, of plotting any terrorist attacks, of waging war against the US or even against its forces in a foreign land .... He admitted being a member of the Taliban (as you say, it could have been of al-Qaeda, but that makes no practical difference) and of carrying (but not using) a rifle and 2 grenades.

Do you really believe that?

> (Though you are certainly in need of a halfway decent copy-editor.)

What kind of cheap shot is that?

I hate everything about you---Ugly Kid Joe

khalampre

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 1617 || Joined: Fri Mar 26, 2004 5:17 am || Location: Bryan, TX

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by Sterling '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 5:58 am

> ``I know what happened to Lindh after that because I met some of the Marines that did it. He could have suffered much worse.''

What did they do?

Sterling || Posts: 7 || Joined: Mon Nov 27, 2006 4:08 am || Location: Colonial Mexico

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by therenaissanceman '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 7:13 am

sterling,

the salon article addresses this. according to the article, they kept him tied to his cot for a few days, wrote mean things on his person, flexicuffed him too tight, called him names, and took pictures of him in an embarrassing state.

therenaissanceman || Posts: 67 || Joined: Mon Jul 23, 2007 3:35 pm

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by Penta '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 1:28 pm

khalampre wrote:

> Whether he was a very bad person or not is not relevant: people are convicted for what they have been proven, in a proper court of law, with all

the proper safeguards, to have done. He was never convicted of killing anyone at all, of being an accessory to any murders, of plotting any terrorist attacks, of waging war against the US or even against its forces in a foreign land .... He admitted being a member of the Taliban (as you say, it could have been of al-Qaeda, but that makes no practical difference) and of carrying (but not using) a rifle and 2 grenades.

> Do you really believe that?

Of course I do, because it's true, unless the news reports of the trial and plea bargain are all factually incorrect. That's what our laws say; those are the values we were supposedly going to war to uphold and/or impose on others (at the cost of thousands of innocent lives). You think we should just ignore them when it suits us? What else was he convicted of?

It's a bit like the execution of William Joyce (Lord Haw-Haw) for treason after the second world war. He was tried for high treason as a Brit (which he wasn't; he was American); he'd made radio broadcasts for the Nazis; he hadn't killed anyone. The death sentence was excessive for what he had done (even if he had been British): only a handful of the very worst Nazis were executed; plenty got away with mass murder. Joyce was a very nasty piece of work, holding---and broadcasting---very nasty views. That didn't justify his execution. Conceding to popular demands for vengeance is a very bad way to run a legal system. It is not justice.

> (Though you are certainly in need of a halfway decent copy-editor.)

> What kind of cheap shot is that?

Not a cheap shot at all; a piece of professional advice. If the article was intended for publication, as apparently it was, it needed editing. With short pieces like that, he'd be perfectly welcome to run it by me first and I'd be happy to tidy it up for him.

Penta

Ruby Tuesday || Posts: 15588 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 4:32 pm || Location: UK, Spain

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by RYP ' ' Fri Aug 10, 2007 1:40 pm

Lindh's treatment is standard battlefield detainee stuff with a extra dash of fuck you white boy. Detainees are stripped, hooded, and if wounded attached to their cot. They also used to shave them (for lice etc) put spit masks on em, Tampons on their eyes, ear plugs etc etc. I had nothing to do with what the CIA or marines did with him. I treated him with respect and made sure he was not killed or harmed. The Marines fucked with him because he was an irritating prick (as you probably saw) and it was a few weeks after 9/11.

Talk to Donald Rumsfeld or George Bush if you didn't like his treatment. Here is that bizarre article by Junod, edited by a muslim group with Lindh's address

The American Taliban: How Suleyman Became Hamza

Aug 08, 2007

By Tom Junod

Can America And Islam Coexist? The Answer May Lie With The Fate Of Twenty-Five-Year-Old

Arabic must be one hell of a language. It must indeed be preeminent among all languages on earth, because it is the language of revelation in Islam. It is not only the language that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, spoke to all of humankind; it is the language that God spoke to the Prophet. It is the language that God chose to make His wishes for humankind known. In Islam, there are none of the bewildering textual controversies that have beset Judaism and Christianity; in Islam, there are no authors with competing claims. There is only one God, giving one specifically Arabic Koran to his final Prophet. Let other religions divide themselves with their warring



tongues, their disjointed canons. In the singular Arabic of the singular Koran, humankind has found its answer to Babel.

And so it is that the Holy Koran cannot exist in translation. There are many translations of the Koran, but they are not the true Koran itself, for it is only the Arabic that transforms God's repetitive instructions and injunctions and warnings and threats---and his repetitive hatred of the infidel---into a miraculous song impervious to every challenge.

And so it is that every Muslim must try to master Arabic. It is not necessary that every Muslim succeed in his effort, for God made every man with different capabilities. But it is necessary for every man to try, once he becomes a Muslim. The effort is his obligation, his fard. God is merciful, wise.

And so it is that when a sixteen-year-old American named John Walker Lindh converts to Islam in 1997, he begins calling himself Suleyman al-Faris and sets about trying to master the language of the Prophet, peace be upon him.

And so it is that Suleyman travels alone from California to Yemen when he is seventeen years old and attends an Arabic language school. Two years later, he goes again, this time with the intention of absorbing not only the singular language of Arabic but also what he hopes will be a singular Islamic culture. He does not find singularity in Yemen, and so he tries finding it in a madrassa---an Islamic school---in Pakistan, and then a military training camp in Afghanistan.

And so it is that for months, Suleyman speaks almost nothing but Arabic in the mountains of Afghanistan, for Muslims come to Afghanistan from all over the world, seeking to fulfill their religious obligations by engaging in jihad---by taking up the cause of Afghans fighting to maintain a pure Islamic state. The Afghans he is fighting for are called the Taliban, and speak their own language, Pashto. The Muslims who come in their cause speak Arabic and go to the front lines in the Afghan civil war as Al Ansar---the Arabic term for ``the helpers.'' By the time Suleyman reaches the front on September 6, 2001, carrying his rifle and his grenades, he is just twenty years old and already fluent in the one language of the one God. He is a prodigy waiting to become a saint.

And so it is that after September 11, when the Americans come to Afghanistan with their planes and their bombs, and they capture Suleyman and put him in front of a camera, he speaks his English with a slight Arabic accent, and millions of people in America and all over the world believe they hear the mottled tongue of treason.

And so it is that when an American dies in the battle that led to his capture, Suleyman is accused of conspiring to kill him.

And so it is that now he is imprisoned in America for twenty years, and part of his sentence is that America will not allow him to speak Arabic. He cannot teach; he cannot even pray with an open mouth. It is forbidden. And yet the brothers in the prison speak Arabic to him, because they know he is learned, patient---a serious scholar. He doesn't call himself Suleyman anymore, but he hasn't gone back to calling himself John, either. He calls himself Hamza, after the uncle of Muhammad, peace be upon him. He is Hamza Walker Lindh, still caught between the language of the Islamic imperium and the language of the American empire. And one day in late 2003, when he is on line for chow and one of the brothers says to him, ``Assalamu alaikum,'' he has a decision to make.

Assalamu alaikum is the traditional Muslim greeting. It means ``Peace be upon you,'' and when a Muslim hears it, it is customary for him to respond not only in kind but in excess of the original greeting---in slightly more effusive language. But the language is Arabic. And Hamza is standing within earshot of a guard. And he, with his pinioned tongue, knows that to speak is to be punished. And he has to choose, as he has always had to choose. And his choice has always been one choice, as his God has always been one God.

And so it is that Hamza speaks.

He is a better person than you or I. He has gone away, but his story hasn't, because his story is about something no prison can extinguish. Even in prison, he has a glow, a light on his face. He has a spiritual presence. His list of don'ts stretches further than your list of dos, and his list of dos keeps him

occupied in the vast chronological wasteland of prison. He's very kind. He has no anger, no dark testosteronal currents. He has a sad story to tell, but he doesn't tell it as a sad story. He is not bitter.

He's funny, in fact. His father, on the lecture circuit now, says that when he visits his son in prison, they sit for five and six hours at a time, talking, laughing. The guards look at them. Not that he's flippant, a wiseguy. He's very, very serious. He's very concerned about the poor---so concerned that he's lived among them. He's committed to social justice, though he's the first to admit that he's made some bad decisions in that regard. But that's another thing about him. He never lies. He never changes his story, even when he has every reason to. He's very consistent, to put it mildly.

If you happen to be a Muslim: Well, he's a better Muslim than you are, too. If you want to know him---why he did what he did, why he does what he does---all you have to do is open the Koran and read. It's all there. In Islam, more than in Christianity or Judaism, perfection is a possibility, and that's what he strives for. Islam has no apparatus for the official recognition of saints, but it has a word, waliyy, that means in the Arabic ``one of God's special slaves.'' Well, that's him. When he went to Yemen in 2000---the trip that took him to Pakistan and Afghanistan and back to America in shackles---he went to memorize the Koran. He got a quarter of the way through before he was captured on December 1, 2001. He finished at the federal prison in Victorville, California, where he lives now. In the Muslim world, that's not only an honor to him; it's an honor to his entire family.

But then: Maybe you're not a Muslim. Maybe you're just an ... American, and you don't particularly care if John Walker Lindh is waliyy or not. You don't particularly care if he's a better Muslim or even a better person, because neither of those things makes him a better American. Even if he didn't do what the government originally said he did, he did something, and what he did was put Islam first. Islam is the Arabic word for ``submission,' and John Walker Lindh submitted. He was free to do so, of course, because he was an American. But his freedom to practice any religion he wanted eventually put him in the service of a cause that had nothing to do with freedom. His search for purity within himself eventually led him to search for a pure Islamic state---and to serve the comprehensively oppressive Taliban. And now he is supposed to be pure in thought and in word and in deed. Well, that purity is what makes him problematic to Americans, because it's Muslim purity, and Muslim purity and American freedom seem to be on a collision course. Indeed, they have already collided in the person of John Walker Lindh, and American freedom was the worse for it, while Muslim purity found its perfect, silent spokesman.

Hamza does not have to speak. He does not have to answer the brother's greeting, even after the brother says, ``Assalamu alaikum'' on the chow line. It is not an obligation. Oh, sure, he knows what is customary among Muslims. There is no one at the federal medium-security prison in Victorville who knows better. He has made a study of proper Islamic etiquette, as he has made a study of most things relating to the Prophet, peace be upon him. The way Hamza shakes hands---with a lingering refusal to be the first to break the clasp---is the Muslim way. So is the way he engages his teachers. ``In the Islamic spirit of learning, there is an elaborate etiquette to be followed,' says Shakeel Syed, an imam from Los Angeles who served as a contract chaplain at Victorville through the summer of 2005. ``If your teacher is wrong, and you know he is wrong, there is no public correction. There is only public praise. And even in private, criticism is implied and inferred. And even after all that, it is customary for the student to say, `God knows best---maybe both of us are wrong.' Well, that's Hamza. He has the kind of knowledge you don't get from Islam 101 books. We used to have circle discussions after Friday prayers. And in one of the historical stories I mentioned, I referred to a person as a cousin of Muhammad. Hamza waited till everyone left. Then he said, very politely: `You might want to double-check that. You may very well be right, but you might want to check---and I'll check, too.' There's nothing he does that's not in the Islamic spirit.''

And yet, because Hamza knows his etiquette, he knows it would not be a violation of etiquette to stay silent after the brother's greeting, for God is generous, forgiving. Indeed, God says that He has given his Koran to the faithful to make life easier for them, not harder. God calls Islam the middle way, not only the straight path but the path of moderation. He allows many exemptions from the practice of faith if the practice of faith puts the faithful in peril. He even allows the faithful to disavow their faith, so

long as their hearts stay true. And surely Hamza faces peril from the practice of his faith and the expression, in Arabic, of his true heart.

He was in chains, after all, when he returned from Afghanistan to America on [January 23, 2002](#). He faced spending the rest of his life in prison after a federal grand jury returned charges two weeks later that he had conspired to kill Americans and had lent ```material support``` to Al Qaeda. Even after the Justice Department offered a plea bargain in [July 2002](#) and dropped eight of the ten charges against him, even after prosecutors finally admitted that there was no evidence that he had joined Al Qaeda or threatened to kill Americans, even after he wound up pleading guilty only to carrying a rifle and grenades for the Taliban, the government and its negotiator, Michael Chertoff, made his silence a condition of the plea. And so, although it dropped all charges against the defendant relating to terrorism, the administration would continue to treat the defendant as a terrorist through the course of his incarceration by imposing what is known by statute as special administrative measures and by common parlance simply as a gag order. He would not spend his life in jail. He would spend, instead, twenty years in jail, and during that time not only would he be unable to have any visitors but his attorneys and his father and his mother and his brother and his sister and his grandmother; not only would his visitors be forbidden to relate to the public anything he said or thought; not only would the FBI have to read and clear any letter he sent or received and the government reserve the right to bug his conversations with his cellmates and monitor his phone calls. No, he would also have to abide by the following provision of the SAM: ```All communications with others will be in English.```

He is, by virtue of the strictures on his speech, regarded as a political prisoner inside prison walls. And so surely the brother who greets him would forgive Hamza his silence. Surely Hamza could just mouth the proper Arabic words, or speak them under his breath, or whisper them so quietly that no guard could hear him. Surely God would forgive such an exercise in discretion.....

```Walaikum assalam,``` Hamza says, loud enough for the brother---and the guard---to hear.

Maybe the guard is new, and zealous. Maybe Hamza knows the guard is new and zealous and wants to be zealous in return. For, as Shakeel Syed says, ```he has an option to lead a normal Muslim prison life. Instead, he chooses to defy every norm the prison is used to---both the administration and the inmates.``` And so the zealous guard reports that zealous prisoner [45426--083](#) has spoken words in the forbidden tongue. And when prisoner [45426--083](#) returns to his cell, he is ordered to back up to the feeding slot in his cell door. He is handcuffed through the slot and led away to the Special Housing Unit---also known as the SHU, also known as the hole. There he has to strip naked and is searched under his testicles and in the cavity of his ass. And there Hamza settles into his cell, with the Arabic singing in his head, where no one can stop it.

He was the first.

The first American to get Abu-Ghraibed, long before Americans knew they were capable of such an exotic verb. The first to inspire Donald Rumsfeld to issue the order ```Take the gloves off,``` and the first to be on the order's receiving end. The first to be denied medical treatment, the first photographed naked and bound, the first taunted while blindfolded, the first---certainly the first---to have SHITHEAD scrawled on his blindfold, the first whose digital photos made their way round the world as souvenirs, the first denied access to the Red Cross, the first to be ushered into a legal limbo created ex nihilo by the administration's notions of executive power.

He served as a test case for an administration eager to see what it could get away with, and what it tried to get away with was, well, this: His father hired him a lawyer as soon as he saw his son on MSNBC. The lawyer immediately wrote to John Ashcroft, Donald Rumsfeld, Colin Powell, and George Tenet and informed them that John Walker Lindh had counsel, and counsel was ready to fly to Afghanistan to meet him. They did not write him back, but John Ashcroft did not believe he was obliged to. He operated on the theory that John Walker Lindh had a lawyer only if he, not his father, hired one, even though at the time John Walker Lindh was blindfolded and duct-taped naked to a stretcher in Afghanistan. He was being held in a shipping container, and he had a bullet in his thigh, and by the time an FBI agent interrogated him, the bullet had

been in his thigh for nearly two weeks and the wound was starting to stink. ``Of course, there are no lawyers here,`` the agent told him, and two days after he gave his statement, he was moved to a ship in the Arabian Sea and the bullet was finally extracted.

The treatment John Walker Lindh received while in American hands is not only an affront to conscience. It manages to make someone described by everyone who knows him as ``singular`` and ``one of a kind`` somehow representative of betrayed American innocence, and that indeed is how Frank Lindh characterizes him when he talks about him in public. When John Walker Lindh was being reviled as a traitor, Frank Lindh was being reviled for allowing him to become one. When no less successful a parent than George Herbert Walker Bush was lampooning John Walker Lindh for being a ``misguided Marin County hot-tubber,`` Frank Lindh was being lampooned for actually raising his son in a place like Marin County, and then for divorcing his wife, Marilyn Walker, and living with a man. And when, after his sentencing, John Walker Lindh began his imposed silence, Frank Lindh began an elective one, along with the rest of his family. Now, though, John Walker Lindh's lawyers have petitioned the administration to commute his sentence.

Yaser Hamdi---the other American citizen who was taken prisoner alongside John Walker Lindh during the rout of the Taliban and was in the same place at the same time doing the same things---has, after spending three years in a Navy brig without being charged with any crime, been sent home to Saudi Arabia, where he was raised. And Frank Lindh, a lawyer himself, has sensed an opportunity not only to press his son's case but also to tell his son's story the way he sees it---the way he has always seen it, even when his son was extolling the virtues of martyrdom on CNN.

It has always been difficult for John Walker Lindh's parents to reconcile the classically American innocence and idealism they perceive in their son with the extremism of his eventual actions and allegiances. And to the extent that Frank Lindh does it, while speaking one April evening on the stage of a private school in Oakland, he does it by characterizing John Walker Lindh as extremely innocent, extremely idealistic, and, above all, extremely American. A teenager who found God, or, as his family thought of it, his passion. A seventeen-year-old who travels with his father to Ireland in full Islamic dress and wins over the local Catholics with the simplicity and fervor of his love for God. A nineteen-year-old who is bold and brave enough to say goodbye to his weeping family and travel for the second time on his own to Yemen in search of the true Arabic. A twenty-year-old who in late April 2001 e-mails his parents from an Internet cafe in Pakistan with a request for permission to go into the mountains for the summer---and neglects to mention that he means the mountains of Afghanistan. A young trainee who believes he has chosen the right side in the civil war between the mujahideen of the Taliban and the corrupt warlords of the Northern Alliance. A dedicated student who knows after meeting Osama bin Laden in the summer of 2001 that bin Laden is not a serious scholar---and who falls asleep during bin Laden's speeches. A green soldier who does sentry duty at the front lines and never fires his gun. A homesick American who like all Americans dreams of coming home for Christmas .... until, that is, America comes for him. And not the America he knew, not the America he left just a year earlier---an America changed by 9/11 and determined to show the world that the innocent empire that might have forgiven someone like John Walker Lindh is gone forever.

It is an American story, all right. It is so American that Frank Lindh, in his trimmed beard and his gray suit, sometimes seems to be offering his own innocence---at once wounded and breathless---as proof of his son's. When he gave his permission to John to travel into the mountains in the spring of 2001, he wrote in an e-mail, ``I trust your judgment and hope you have a wonderful adventure.``

After all that has happened since Frank wrote those words, he still lives by them. He still trusts and he still hopes. He still has such complete faith in his son that he has become a kind of fundamentalist on his son's behalf---a fundamentalist who discounts his son's own fundamentalism. In Frank's recounting, John Walker Lindh is not a religious figure but rather a romantic one, whose e-mails from his travels ``are still a delight to read, full of wonderful observations and wry comments,`` and who while abroad ``met a lot of interesting people`` from places like Indonesia and Chechnya. ``John's views are very much those of a mainstream Muslim,`` he says, in answer to a question. ``He's not an extremist in any sense.`` Never, in the hour and a half he's onstage, does he acknowledge that the interesting people John met

were, like John, perfectly willing to die in defense of Islam. Never does he suggest that it's John's very talent for extremity of faith and feeling that has sustained him through his trials and sustains him still. And never does he call John by the name John calls himself.

Never does Frank Lindh call his son Hamza.

Hamza spends a lot of time in the hole, according to two Muslims recently released from Victorville. He doesn't even have to do anything. Other people do it, and Hamza goes into the hole. Other Muslims do it, and Hamza goes into the hole. Whenever there's a big terrorist attack and Muslims take the blame, there goes Hamza for his own protection. He went to the hole after Madrid, and he went to the hole after London. He went because he was the most visible Muslim in the prison, and therefore representative. The prison didn't want him to be the object of anti-Islamic anger. It did not want Hamza to provoke violence just by being quiet, gentle Hamza.

He was always a Muslim, his father says. He was born a Muslim on February 9, 1981---already still, already centered, already disciplined. The Men at Work album was popular at the time, and his father and his mother and his older brother used to sing one of the songs to him: Boy, you sure are a funny kid, Johnny, but I like you. So tell me what kind of boy are you, John?

It's one of the things Frank Lindh has a hard time getting people to believe, even from the podium---that his son became a Muslim not because of what went wrong in his childhood but because of what went right. What kind of boy was John? He was a rare boy indeed---a boy who consolidated all his frailties into a fantastic tensile strength and used all his stumbling to find exactly what he was looking for. He was a boy who loved music and language but was immediately skeptical of Santa Claus. He was a boy who went to Catholic church with Frank but who couldn't accept the Trinity. He was a boy who loved his family but didn't have a lot of friends. He was a boy who was physically robust but also suffered terribly from allergies. When he was ten years old, his family moved from a suburb of Washington, D. C., to San Anselmo, outside San Francisco, and he got sick. He had chronic diarrhea. It was caused by a parasite, but it was thought to be psychosomatic, and he wound up being home-schooled for four years, developing the habits of the solitary scholar. Not particularly comfortable in his own skin, he sought to transcend it, and after he saw Spike Lee's Malcolm X with his mother when he was twelve years old, he followed Malcolm's own course from militancy to Islamic submission in accelerated fashion. In his early adolescence, he presented himself as a militant black rapper on hip-hop message boards, composing epic rhymes that castigated the rest of ``his'' race for selling out to the commercial interests of the white man. At the same time, he studied Islam, and when he was sixteen, before he could even drive, he showed up at the mosque in Mill Valley, California, a half hour from his home, and met a devout young Muslim named Abdullah Nana.

``Most people, when they come to mosque for the first time, have questions, and ask for reading materials,'' Abdullah Nana says at a halal restaurant in downtown San Francisco. ``John Walker came in and said, `I want to be a Muslim.' He'd already made the decision on his own. He didn't ask any questions. He didn't have any doubts. He was unique, in my experience.''

He converted that day. He took his shahada, right then and there. He declared, in front of the few brothers assembled at the mosque, that there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad, peace be upon him, is His Messenger. Then he went home and took his symbolic shower and left his old---his young---life behind. He did not tell Frank and Marilyn, though, until one night Marilyn picked up the phone and a voice she had never heard before---the voice of an older man---asked for her son. When she asked John for an explanation, he said that the man was from the mosque and that he, John Walker Lindh, was now a Muslim. His father and his mother both wound up taking John back and forth to the mosque nearly every day, and John found himself with few encumbrances for his new faith. The Koran asked him to quit the association of infidel friends, but in Abdullah Nana's memory there were no friends to quit. The Koran asked him to avoid women who were not devout, but in Abdullah Nana's memory there were no women, no girlfriends back in San Anselmo. There were only the trips to the mosque in Mill Valley and then other mosques in San Francisco, and the two- or three-hour discussions he and Nana and a few other strictly orthodox young Muslims would have after Friday prayers, sitting bearded and robed and shoeless in a circle on the mosque's carpeted floor.

``He was an example to other Muslims,'' Nana says. ``He was very pious, very dedicated. Within six or seven months, he was wearing full Muslim dress. And after a year and a half, he decided to leave the country. His first objective was to memorize the Koran. The fact that John accepted Islam and within a year and a half had left his country for study in a Third World country---this could only happen with a person who had dedication, discipline, and commitment.''

Abdullah Nana and the teenager he still calls John Walker often spoke of going abroad to study Arabic and Islamic law. John went first. Abdullah went a year later, and now, at twenty-seven, he's the co-imam of the Mill Valley mosque. He's married, and in public his wife covers her face completely. He wears a long white robe and a white flat-topped headdress. His face is curtained by a thick black beard, and he speaks in a soft monotone that is occasionally inaudible. He does not listen to any music with a beat, because ``music with a beat is not permissible---it causes hypocrisy of the heart.''

He eats without a fork, with his right hand, because that is how the Prophet, peace be upon him, is said to have eaten. He tries to sleep as the Prophet is said to have slept, and to deal with his relatives as the Prophet dealt with his relatives. When he speaks of his own conversion to a devout and orthodox brand of Islam, he recalls his years attending Cal-Berkeley, where, he says, ``it does bother you a little, to see too much freedom.''

He offers, in short, a glimpse of the kind of Muslim John Walker would be if John Walker had gone abroad, completed his studies, and come home to Marin County. Of course, John Walker never did come home. Although Abdullah's devotion nearly matched John Walker's, he wound up following the course of study most Muslims from secularized countries follow---that is, he chose to study in another relatively secularized country. He studied in South Africa. John Walker, on the other hand, chose to study in a country untouched by modernism, much less secularism. He chose to study in Yemen, where men wear daggers and carry guns and chew khat all day. Now he is in Victorville, and what he has in common with Abdullah Nana is ... well, almost everything, because they have both offered their freedom to God, and while Abdullah continually checks the time to make sure he's not missing his obligatory prayers, John Walker is doing the same thing four hundred miles away, an anchorite in a desert prison.

Each day, just before dawn, Hamza wakes up to pray in a world of men. It is not easy to wake up in a prison before the wake-up call, but as an inmate and a Muslim there are two clocks he has to obey. There is the clock set by the prison and the clock set by the Creator, all praise be upon Him, when He bid the earth to move in its wobbly cycles around the sun. And so Hamza gets out his prayer mat and bends toward Mecca in the dark at the time prescribed on the downloaded prayer schedule posted in the prison chapel. As a free man, he made himself a prisoner of God's will. Now this imprisonment is his only freedom. It is all one, to the one God.

He never misses the predawn prayer. He is known for not missing the predawn prayer, for even the most devout sleep past the prayer occasionally. But not Hamza, because Hamza is waliyy. There are about fifty Muslims at Victorville, and they all know Hamza is a beautiful brother. His cellie is a Muslim, an older white man. His closest friend is a Muslim, a slim, bespectacled black man who---according to former inmates---killed another soldier while in the military. Hamza doesn't have many friends, though, for he is in for the long haul and doesn't want anyone to suffer from their association with him. He also doesn't watch TV, or play cards, or play basketball, or talk about politics. He just prays with the other Muslims. He studies with the other Muslims. And he eats with them---for they all eat together, away, by choice, from the other inmates---when he is not fasting. He fasts twice a week, Monday and Thursday, from sunup to sundown. Like all his brothers, he feasts at the end of Ramadan.

At seven o'clock in the morning he goes to work in the library. It is not a job that most other inmates want, but it suits Hamza, because all Hamza does is read and study. He reads and studies so much that people have to stop him from reading and studying, and sometimes his only respite comes when the brother who makes the prayer call comes for him and brings him to the chapel. He cannot speak Arabic, he cannot pray in Arabic, but he can read Arabic. He can read the Koran and he can read, in his father's words, ``five-hundred-year-old Arabic texts,''

and they are his sustenance, although according to Shakeel Syed, ``he has lost some of his spoken fluency.''

Still: Arabia, pronounced Ar-a-bee-uh. That's what the brothers call Arabic, their slang for the divine language. As in: ``Hamza? No, you can't do nothing to Hamza. Nothing fazes him. He just sits there reading that Arabia.....''

His diet is what's called common fare, which is the institutional attempt to accommodate all prisoners with dietary restrictions. Hamza is a good cook, though, and often he and some of the brothers skip the meat and make their own meals with the common-fare vegetables and sardines they buy at the commissary. After dinner, there is time to relax, although for Hamza relaxation often means listening to Islamic audiotapes and watching Islamic videos. Ten o'clock is the count, when every prisoner must be in his cell before the doors close. And then, slowly, there is the sound of surrender, the sound of men dropping off to sleep, even Hamza, until midnight. That's when he wakes up for his last prayer, an optional prayer, a prayer that God does not require but is delighted to receive. The prayer is called the tahajjud. It is a prayer through which the Muslim speaks to God most intimately. A sleeping man must wake himself up, and Hamza wakes himself up. And now, when he is obliged to show his deepest heart to God, the one thing his Muslim brothers can't imagine him doing is asking God how he might have lived his life differently.

Whatever sympathy there was for Lindh was based on the idea that he was an idealist, and therefore a fool. That he took a wrong turn. That he was a starry-eyed kid, in over his head. That he was looking for his Muslim merit badge. That he stumbled and bumbled his way into Afghanistan. The problem with this idea is that it sells John Walker Lindh short. It doesn't give him credit for his sense of purpose or his vast reserves of will. It doesn't give him credit for what it took to get to Afghanistan, much less what it took for him to get back to America.

David Fehheimer knows what it took for John to get to Afghanistan. So does Barry Simon. They were the investigators hired by James Brosnahan and his law firm after Brosnahan took up John Lindh's case. They were hired to trace his every step from February 2000, when he left for his second trip to Yemen, to December 1, 2001, when the remnants of the routed Taliban climbed out of the basement at an Afghan fortress and there he was, famously bearded, famously filthy, famously Muslim, famously American, famously white. Not long after he came home---or, rather, back to America---Fehheimer and Simon met him in his cell in Alexandria, Virginia, where he was awaiting trial. They met with him for a total of about eight hours, and for a very specific purpose: ``to get enough information to put together a defense,' says Fehheimer. ``So there wasn't a lot of small talk. We had to know where he had been and who he had talked to, and he was the only person who could tell us.''

They did not get to know him in their time with him---but then, he was not the kind of person you got to know. He was, rather, unlike any person they'd ever met, a throwback, Fehheimer says, ``to those Victorian explorers'' who had to go native in order to feel authentic. He was, like Lawrence of Arabia, willing to suffer almost any kind of deprivation, if deprivation was what it took to erase the distinction between himself and his hosts; he was, like Simone Weil, so spiritually ambitious that he was willing to starve himself into sainthood. ``He had terrible eyesight, and he was frail physically, but he was tough as nails. He told me that during the last year of his travels, he spent \$200, and he was deeply embarrassed at having spent that much.''

When Fehheimer and Simon traveled through John Lindh's world in the spring and summer of 2002, they also found out this about him: ``He had,' says Fehheimer, ``almost photographic recall. He was an absolutely reliable narrator. We were on the moon, man, but you could find these places he talked about by following his directions to the letter. He would say, `Go west an hour and a half, then look for a large rock. If there's a red mark on it, take a right and then look up and you'll see a small valley..... ` Well, if you did that, a small valley is exactly what you'd see. We actually found the foxhole he'd been in on September 11, and that's how we found it.' And as John's directions guided the two investigators, they came to discover the principle that guided John: ``He was extremely hard on himself. If we ever came to a fork in the road and didn't know which fork to take, we'd say, Okay, let's take the hardest one. Let's take the one that looks impossible---because that's the one he'd take. And it always was.''

And so they followed his path to Yemen, where he was displeased with the first language school he attended because, in Simon's words, ``there were young girls from Texas smoking hash at night with bare sleeves'' and where, ultimately, he went to three different schools, each one more fundamentalist than the last. They followed him to Pakistan, where he found a contact from a group called Tablighi Jama'at---a Muslim missionary group that preaches a fundamentalist brand of Islam to other Muslims---and rode for days on the back

of a motorcycle looking for the right madrassa. They followed him to the city of Bannu, where he lived in the tiny, dirt-floored back room of a madrassa and where they found some of the possessions he left behind---notebooks filled with Arabic exercises, underwear, and an Adidas tracksuit. They followed him to the old smuggling town of Peshawar, where in May 2001 he showed up at a recruiting center for the Harakat ul-Mujahideen, which in 1997 had been designated a terrorist organization by the Clinton administration. They followed him to the military training camp of the HUM, where he was displeased to find prosperous Saudi boys looking to jihad as a way to lose weight. Then they did what he had done at the end of June and crossed into Afghanistan. Using his directions, they found the site of Al Farooq, the training camp funded by Osama bin Laden, where John Lindh, in the words of his sentencing memorandum, ``voluntarily swore allegiance to jihad'' and trained to serve the Taliban in its civil war against the Northern Alliance. And then they found his foxhole. It was in a place called Takhar, and ``if we had seen a sign that says the world ends in five miles, we wouldn't have been surprised,'' Fehheimer says. ``All the men are like five foot two. We met thirty-four-year-old men who had white beards. And if the people are smaller, so are the animals. There were all these .... tiny donkeys.''

It was far away from Marin County, far away from America. Indeed, it had nothing to do with America, which, as far as Fehheimer and Simon could see, was why John Lindh went there. He wasn't interested in being an American in Afghanistan; he was looking to lose his American identity among Arabs and Afghans---and Chechens and Uzbeks and Muslims from all over the world---in the most extreme landscape imaginable. ``He wasn't a poster boy for the Taliban,'' Fehheimer says. ``He didn't receive special treatment, and he didn't want any.''

It was only the global shock of 9/11 that brought America and Americans to this place of tiny men and tiny donkeys, and, as Fehheimer says, ``if George W. Bush couldn't see 9/11 coming, how the hell could Johnny Walker?''

The same conclusion was reached by Rohan Gunaratna, who was hired by James Brosnahan to interview John Walker Lindh and write a report to the court before his sentencing. Gunaratna had made a career of interviewing terrorists and writing about terrorism and had served as an expert witness both for and against the government. He spoke to John Lindh for eight hours and decided emphatically that he was not a terrorist. ``He had no intention of killing civilians,'' Gunaratna says. ``He was not Al Qaeda. At Al Farooq, there was military training for soldiers in the Taliban and very specialized training for Al Qaeda. He trained as a soldier. He wore a Taliban uniform. It has become common to speak of Al Qaeda and the Taliban as if they are the same thing, but they are not.

In fact, he was asked by [Al Qaeda lieutenant] Abu Mohammad al-Masri if he wanted to go to the United States or Israel as a martyr. John answered that he came to Afghanistan to serve on the front lines against the Northern Alliance. It's very difficult to refuse in a place like Al Farooq. But he refused.''

And yet: Shouldn't the nature of al-Masri's invitation have informed him that he might be fighting for the wrong side? Wasn't the spring and summer of 2001 a decisive time, when the Taliban set itself on an increasingly confrontational course with the West? Even if John Walker Lindh had no access to the Internet or anything like modern communications when he was training in Al Farooq and soldiering on the front lines in Takhar, he went to Internet cafe' when he was in Bannu, and surely he knew what course the Taliban was taking. Surely he was aware that on March 9, 2001, the Taliban had destroyed the towering twin fifteen-hundred-year-old Buddhas carved into the side of sandstone cliffs in northern Afghanistan, in an emblematic bit of icon smashing that indicated a new kind of evil was afoot and presaged so much grief to come.....

``Yes, he was aware,'' Gunaratna says. ``But he was a young man. People make mistakes when they are young. He didn't think it was the worst thing. For him, the destruction of the Buddhas was like Lenin's statue coming down at the end of the cold war. He was very ideologically driven. He was radicalized. The process of radicalization had begun when he was in Yemen. He went to the Taliban because he had been radicalized.''

There were no Taliban left when Fehheimer and Simon retraced John's steps in Afghanistan. At least, they couldn't find anyone who admitted he belonged to the Taliban, although they did see plenty of people driving the Taliban's



trademark black Toyota pickups. And they did meet plenty of people who knew or knew of John Walker Lindh. ``He was kind of a mythical character,' Simon says, ``because his single-mindedness outdid theirs.''

America still doesn't know how many radicalized Muslims made their way here. But as far as radicalized white Americans making their way over there:

John Walker Lindh was the only one.

About three months after Hamza was incarcerated at Victorville in February 2003, he was jumped outside the chapel by a white inmate reputed to have ties to the Aryan Nation. According to a former Muslim inmate named Abdul Rahim, the attack came not because of Hamza's history but because of his fraternization with the brothers, in both senses of the word---the Muslims and the African-Americans. ``They just couldn't stand the fact he was in that religion with blacks and Hispanics and Arabs. Now he's surrounded by Muslims. They got Muslims now coming from the penitentiary, and they'll kill you if you transgress a brother.''

Still, Hamza is careful. The greatest fear of his father and mother is simply that he will be killed in prison, and it is probably Hamza's, too. He doesn't go where there is a lack of supervision. He doesn't play sports, and he doesn't spend a lot of time out on the yard, except on Fridays, when after Friday prayers some of the brothers find a corner in the yard and talk about God and nobody dares mess with them or with Hamza. Well, almost nobody: ``A Christian guard---a good, decent man---told me something one day,' says Shakeel Syed. ``He said, `Some of us try to provoke him once in a while. We try to make him mad.' Then he said, `We fail miserably.'''

It is what everybody who comes into contact with Hamza eventually concludes: that there is something inviolate at the heart of his being, maybe because he has found a peace beyond understanding, or maybe simply because he has already been violated. By the terms of his gag order, he is not allowed to speak publicly of what happened to him in Afghanistan and in American hands after the surrender of the Taliban, but Hamza never talks about it with anyone, not even his father or Shakeel Syed. And so his father, when he visits Victorville and watches his son walking across the visiting room, sees the body language of a man holding in tremendous grief, and Syed says, ``I would often question myself: What can I teach to this man who has gone through experiences no man should go through, who has endured such hardships and tribulations? What can I possibly impart?''

``They who believe, and who fly their country, and fight in the cause of God may hope for God's mercy,' says the second Sura of the Holy Koran.

Why did such a gentle soul as John Walker wind up carrying a gun for any army, much less the army of the Taliban? It is simple: John Walker believed. Therefore he was obliged to fight in the cause of God. And therefore he received God's mercy.

Of course, it is easy to doubt. It is easy to join in the chest-beating rhetoric of America's right-wing commentators, who every time they mention John Walker seem compelled to observe the convention of calling him a ``punk'' and a ``coward.''

But he was neither punk nor coward. He was Al Ansar. He was a helper. He was where he wanted to be---at the front lines in the war between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. He was in a foxhole. The front was static, and he spent his time reading the Koran. Then the American planes came and the front broke and the Northern Alliance began the rout. There was a desperate retreat, in the form of a fifty-mile march on foot from Takhar to Kunduz. There was no food and no sleep and hardly any water, and in the panicked darkness scores of Taliban soldiers were killed by friendly fire. The Taliban's commanders negotiated a mass surrender with Northern Alliance warlord Rashid Dostum. The men were transported to the city of Mazar-i-Sharif. Many of the foreign fighters who made up Al Ansar were herded into a basement at Qala-i-Jangi, an old mud-brick, star-shaped castle several miles in circumference. Hundreds of men were in the pitch-dark basement, praying, shining flashlights in one another's faces, trying to sleep standing up. John Walker was among them, standing in a corner where men shit and pissed. So was Yaser Hamdi, the Saudi who was the other American citizen. They had met each other after the retreat, and Hamdi initially had no idea John Walker was an American because he spoke nothing but Arabic, and besides, there were no Americans in Afghanistan.

There were, though. The Americans had come, and the next morning---November 25, 2001---when the men in the basement were brought one by one into the courtyard at Qala-i-Jangi, two American men were standing with Dostum's soldiers. The men from the basement were bound by their arms and forced to kneel while the Americans looked them over and asked them questions and Dostum's soldiers translated and hit them with rifles. Then John Walker was hit in the head with a rifle, and the Americans saw him and took him aside. They did not know that he was American, and John Walker did not tell them. John Walker, cross-legged and bound, did not say a word. They did not threaten him exactly, but they said that if he did not speak, he would be left to Dostum and he would die there at Qala-i-Jangi. Then one of the men John Walker shared the basement with the night before blew up a grenade he hid under his coat and the uprising at Qala-i-Jangi began.

The American who was trying to get John Walker Lindh to talk was a CIA agent named Johnny Micheal Spann. He was shot in the head, and he was a historic figure just like John Walker, for he was the first American killed in America's war on terrorism. John Walker was shot in the leg, and he played dead for twelve hours while the shooting continued and bodies piled up on both sides. Yaser Hamdi just ran and went back down to the basement. Finally dark came and someone came out of the basement and dragged John Walker back in. And then John Walker and Yaser Hamdi and several hundred men stayed in the basement for six days while Rashid Dostum, with the backing of American bombers, tried to get them out.

Six days: The American bomb came first, but the American bomb missed. Then came the grenades tossed down the air shafts. Then came the diesel fuel, poured in and then lit on fire. And then the freezing water pumped in from an irrigation ditch. They were blown up and then burned and then drowned in the dark. Men were dying continually, men were howling in pain and hunger, men were going mad. John Walker had a bullet in his leg, and he was also wounded from shrapnel, and he was sick from drinking the water fouled with the excrement of several hundred men and the effluvia of the sick and the dying. Yaser Hamdi, like all the rest, couldn't sleep and had to keep standing because at the end, to sleep meant to slip away in the water. And still for six days they held out and only began to surrender because they faced the choice of surrendering to Dostum or surrendering to the water, and John Walker is said to have reminded the others that suicide was strictly prohibited by the Holy Koran.

And so you see---God is merciful, wise. You might say He was not there in such hell, but Yaser Hamdi was in the basement with John Walker, and this is what he says, in a phone interview from Saudi Arabia: ``It was twenty-four hours asking our God, Allah, for any help. Men crying out to him. Men who were wounded, men who were sick, men who were dying: The Koran tells you how to pray in all situations. People there who couldn't move and couldn't turn to face Mecca still prayed. They prayed in one position until they died.

``We really had a strong belief and a strong faith in Allah, and we were praying to him all the time, and we knew what we were going through was something Muhammad, peace be upon him, and his companions would go through with patience. We were praying for patience. But it was hard. Really, really hard. You cannot imagine. This guy was killed, that guy was killed, and you saw your friends die right in front of your eyes. When they put in the water, people started sinking, and when we walked, we walked on top of them. Bombs, bullets, fire, and thirsty people yelling, `We want to drink the water.'

``What happened then was that some people lost their minds, and also people were injured really badly and they couldn't stand up in the water anymore, and they just threw themselves into it. They are not killing themselves, because they are Muslims, but they just can't handle it anymore, and we try to help them, and maybe John Walker did, too.

``When John Walker was in the basement, he was in a bad situation. He was injured and the situation was really bad, and Mr. John said, `I want to surrender. I can't be patient more than that.' It was impossible for him to be patient any further. We're Arabs and we can be patient but John Walker couldn't be patient any further. I said, `You be patient. If we surrender, we surrender all; if we die, we die all.' And after that he moved and he walked in front of my eyes, and after that I did not see him at all. But he was not the first to surrender. Some of the guys in the basement who lost their minds were the first to surrender. And after that some Pakistani

people. And after that John Walker came. He was not saying to anybody, 'Let's surrender.' He surrendered by himself, and that's it.

``In our life, in our world, there is no story like this. When we all surrendered, we said, 'This is a miracle.' Four hundred people were in the basement. Seventy survived. Three hundred thirty people died.

``Believe me, the most important thing in John Walker's life is what happened in this castle.''

Hamdi's numbers are not exact. The count is closer to this: 330 men went into the basement on November 25, 2001, and 85 came out on December 1. Many, including Hamdi, were then sent to Guantanamo, although once American officials realized that Hamdi was an American citizen, he was brought to the United States and put in the brig for two years without access to counsel, until at last his lawsuit against Donald Rumsfeld went to the Supreme Court and he was deported back to his family in Saudi Arabia. And John Walker went back to America with every reason to turn away from God.

Instead, he became Hamza.

It is agonizing for him, not to be able to share what he knows. When a person knows as much as Hamza does, it is human nature to want to share it, but in Islam the desire goes much further. It is an obligation. God has given him his knowledge for a reason, and the reason is the further glory of God. Oh, sure, sometimes he is asked to weigh in on disputes, for he is known for his wise counsel. And sometimes he offers a correction, if one of the brothers mispronounces his Arabia. And sometimes he'll turn his back to a guard and say what he has to say in Arabic, quickly, as if he has turned away to cover a cough. Most of the time, though, he keeps it in, both the weight of his knowledge and the weight of experience that was necessary to get it.

Prisons actively discourage inmates from assuming leadership roles, because they are in the business of actively discouraging inmates from assuming power. And that goes double for Muslims, the Muslims say. And yet people come to Hamza. They watch him, they study his example, the way he talks, the way he walks. And they show up for Friday prayers to find out what Hamza---and by extension Islam---is all about. He even converts the converts. ``You'll see someone who's been playing basketball too much, and he'll be sitting in his cell reading the Koran,' ' Abdul Rahim says. ``And you'll say, Hey, man, aren't you playing ball? And he'll say, No, man, I'm fixing to be like Hamza.''

Christianity seeks to remake human nature, and its great ambition is its great fault. It is unambiguous in its prohibition of violence for any purpose, including self-defense, and so it makes hypocrites of its warriors. Islam's great advantage is that it seeks only to govern human nature as it is, and so it doesn't ask its warriors to be conflicted about conflict, as long as conflicts are conducted according to the principles of the Koran.

And so Hamza is an unconflicted soul. Jihad is the obligation of every Muslim, and Hamza met his obligation. Martyrdom is the goal of every Muslim, but Hamza wrote later in an essay to the court that suicide bombing is against Islam, because the suicide bomber seeks to become a martyr by his own hand, and martyrdom is only God's gift to grant. Hamza was not granted martyrdom, but he was granted something else---righteousness.

The reviled one is the righteous one. And if you don't think so, take a look at him in the courtyard of Qala-i-Jangi, as he is questioned by Johnny Micheal Spann. Spann does not identify himself as a CIA agent, and Hamza does not answer his questions. Indeed, Hamza, with his beard and his long hair and his air of humble dereliction, looks iconic in a Christian sense, for the Christian god was well-known for not answering questions when his life was on the line. And yet he is spared.

Who then is the righteous one? And who is favored by God?

Take another look at Hamza, when he is starved and shot and dehydrated and sick and sleepless and filthy and sooty, after being taken in a truck from the basement to an infirmary set up inside an old Afghan prison. It is not overdramatizing things to say he is close to death, but a CNN reporter finds out that he's an American and puts him on camera. ``If you're concerned about my welfare, don't film me,' ' Hamza says. The reporter finds a medic, and the

medic gives the prisoner a shot of morphine, but the camera stays on. Who then is the righteous one? And who is favored by God?

Take another look. Now Hamza is on a plane, being transported to an ad hoc American base set up outside Kandahar called Camp Rhino. He still has the bullet in his thigh. He can't walk, but his wrists are bound so tightly that he begins to scream. He says, ``Please don't kill me,' and a soldier tells him to shut up. Later he's duct-taped to a stretcher, naked, and put in a shipping container. Soldiers are spitting in his food and taking souvenir pictures of him and his blindfold emblazoned with the word SHITHEAD. Who is the righteous one? And who is favored by God?

Take another look. He's out of the container now, but he's being interrogated by an FBI agent at Camp Rhino and still bound and still wounded. Of course, there are no lawyers there, and the FBI agent has neither audio nor videotape nor another agent to attest to the propriety of the proceedings and the accuracy of the statement. And Hamza tells him everything he knows, for he has nothing to hide. Who is the righteous one? And who is favored by God?

Now take another look, for he is back home. Take a look as the Justice Department makes sure he can't speak Arabic, take a look as the Christian guards make sport of trying to provoke him.....

It goes on and on. And here's the thing: It will go on and on. He is Hamza now---Hamza Walker Lindh---and Hamza will never stop. His righteousness will never stop. In prison, and then out. ``I don't see him going on the speaking circuit when he goes out,' Shakeel Syed says. ``But he will be pushed into that. When he gets out, he will have a married life. He will have a child, because his faith is so strong and his faith demands it. I see him living in a normal corner of life and yet bringing about some massive change..... ``

His father's vision is at once more ambitious and more, well, innocent. Frank Lindh hopes that when his son gets out, he can serve as an ambassador between the United States and the Muslim world.

And he will get out. Unless the worst fears of his parents come to pass, he will get out, either when the Bush administration itself gets out and a more righteous man is elected, or at his scheduled release in 2019. But he will get out, and the question is not what he will be like---that we know---but what we will be like. For Hamza Walker Lindh has come to embody the challenge of Islam to America, and the challenge is simply this: In response to what America has done to him, Hamza has become more Islamic---more himself, and a better Muslim. And in response to what Hamza has done to it, America has become less properly Christian, and ever less democratic, and ever so much less than itself. It is a simple, remorseless calculus, and it will transform the face of the country Hamza is released into, whenever he is released.

For so it is that Hamza will be free to say what he knows, in the language of God.

And so it is that Hamza will finally speak, and America will have to hear.

Suleyman al-Faris or John Walker Lindh has long been out of the front pages of the newspapers but Hamza, as he is known now, remains a devout Muslim serving 20 years in prison for never aiming a gun at an American. Since this article was written, he has been transferred to Admax Super Max Prison in Florence Colorado, a harsh facility designed for the worst offenders after he was beaten by another prisoner at Victorville. He spends 23 hours a day in solitary confinement.

You can write to Hamza at:

John Walker Lindh

Inmate # 45426--083

USP Florence Admax

U.S. Penitentiary

PO BOX 8500

Florence, CO 81226

Mail to him will be screened by federal authorities. May Allah hasten his release. Ameen.

RYP

Ownerus Websiteus Authorus || Posts: 25605 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 3:42 am

---

by Penta '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 1:52 pm

RYP wrote:

> Lindh's treatment is standard battlefield detainee stuff with a extra dash of fuck you white boy. Detainees are stripped, hooded, and if wounded attached to their cot. They also used to shave them (for lice etc) put spit masks on em, Tampons on their eyes, ear plugs etc etc.

which is mistreatment under international law. That's why British forces have been banned from even hooding detainees---a little late, but they cottoned on in the end.

> Talk to Donald Rumsfeld or George Bush if you didn't like his treatment.

As I said, I wasn't taking issue with you. And if I ever got the chance, what a mouthful I'd give those two.

Penta

Ruby Tuesday || Posts: 15588 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 4:32 pm || Location: UK, Spain

---

by Farmdog '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 1:53 pm

Penta,

I have given some thought as to why I think it would be beneficial to the whole of humanity to tape a cinder block to JWL head and drop him off in the Gulf Stream. I have come to the following conclusion.

I have been trained my entire life to despise people who are traitors and commit acts of treason. Maybe it is the Italian in me, but no body likes a rat, narc, snitch, or traitor. Now my job conveniently includes an oath where I swear to uphold the Constitution against all enemies foreign and domestic. That domestic part is heavy because so much emotion in America is still tied to the civil war and how horrifying the thought of a domestic threat to the sovereignty of the United States is to most Americans. Sorry you can't appreciate this; instead of civil war in the British Empire you all just got bad teeth instead.

JWL is a rat of epic proportion. In the end, sadly, my idealistic beliefs sway under the feeling that this guy deserves to die for betraying America and actively participating in combat against any agent of the United States Government. This is one of those places where you can hem and haw all day long but you really don't have a dog in this fight as you feel that there is nothing that would ever merit this type of brutal response. That is why people like you have people like me. You philosophies, I act. Until you move from the couch to the field I hold the initiative. Once people like you leave the couch their attitude changes either to an even more polarized opposing view or to something more akin to what I say, but either way the point of view does not survive intact.

Somebody has to keep all of you philosophical types safe and prevent Q from seizing your yacht as part of his wealth redistribution plan.

Farmdog

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 1543 || Joined: Fri Sep 15, 2006 9:03 pm || Location: Your Mom's house

---

by Q ' ' Fri Aug 10, 2007 2:05 pm

Farmdog wrote:

> Somebody has to keep all of you philosophical types safe and prevent Q from seizing your yacht as part of his wealth redistribution plan.

Penta is a hypocritical, lying sack of shit. I mean, if I thought for a second she believed half the shit she posted, I'd cut her some slack and atleast respect her for practising what she preaches.

Her commenting on SOP's in the field would be like me commenting on being some miserable, middle aged harpee with nothing better to do than sit on her yacht all day long and wave her liver spotted fist at giants.

I'm almost convinced that her hatred for anything remotely related to wearing a uniform comes from one of the boy's at Hereford not returning her calls.

I'm down with DDT.

Q

Al-Aqua Teen Martyr's Brigade || Posts: 6301 || Joined: Sat Mar 27, 2004 6:29 am || Location: Piss off

---

by Penta ' ' Fri Aug 10, 2007 2:06 pm

&gt; Farmdog wrote:

&gt; Penta,

> I have given some thought as to why I think it would be beneficial to the whole of humanity to tape a cinder block to JWL head and drop him off in the Gulf Stream. I have come to the following conclusion.

> I have been trained my entire life to despise people who are traitors and commit acts of treason. Maybe it is the Italian in me, but no body likes a rat, narc, snitch, or traitor. Now my job conveniently includes an oath where I swear to uphold the Constitution against all enemies foreign and domestic. That domestic part is heavy because so much emotion in America is still tied to the civil war and how horrifying the thought of a domestic threat to the sovereignty of the United States is to most Americans. Sorry you can't appreciate this; instead of civil war in the British Empire you all just got bad teeth instead.

> JWL is a rat of epic proportion. In the end, sadly, my idealistic beliefs sway under the feeling that this guy deserves to die for betraying America and actively participating in combat against any agent of the United States Government. This is one of those places where you can hem and haw all day long but you really don't have a dog in this fight as you feel that there is nothing that would ever merit this type of brutal response. That is why people like you have people like me. You philosophies, I act. Until you move from the couch to the field I hold the initiative. Once people like you leave the couch their attitude changes either to an even more polarized opposing view or to something more akin to what I say, but either way the point of view does not survive intact.

> Somebody has to keep all of you philosophical types safe and prevent Q from seizing your yacht as part of his wealth redistribution plan.

There are some harsh things I could say about your ``upholding the Constitution'', but I won't, because I like you.

What I will say is that you should perhaps brush up your history if you think we English didn't have a civil war.

Penta

Ruby Tuesday || Posts: 15588 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 4:32 pm || Location: UK, Spain

---

by Farmdog '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 2:27 pm

Yours isn't as nasty as ours and you dragged it out. Did England not remain an empire during many of her little self exploratory campaigns? You all burn people at the stake and unplug their bowels. We destroy infrastructure and entire civilizations on our home continent. You still have the French, you haven't snuffed them yet, and what about the Spanish? How does any of this excuse the state of dental care in the UK, the real root of the issue.

Just kidding, you are right, you have endured multiple civil wars but they are just not of the same grand scale nor as heavily influenced by the industrial revolution. Lets face it, when it comes to trashing your own country only the Russians are on par with us. To stand on the field in Chickamauga is an awe inspiring experience that I don't gather you can comprehend. Additionally the root causes of your civil wars are still not hotly debated and their emblems don't spark the same emotion. People in the south still refer to the civil war as ``the war of northern aggression''. There is something at work in Americans that you don't understand, our history is so short that the impact of the civil war has a defining quality not applicable to continental Europe.

Don't worry though, until you leave the couch, I hold the initiative. For the love of Pete at least go to America and look at what it is you decry. I double dog dare you.

Q,

Does this mean that I get the Yacht if I support your plan?

Farmdog

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 1543 || Joined: Fri Sep 15, 2006 9:03 pm || Location: Your Mom's house

---

by Q '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 2:36 pm

Farmdog wrote:

> Q,

Does this mean that I get the Yacht if I support your plan?

Sorry bro, I intend on trading it for a couple dozen crates of AK's for rebels in Sudan. Or chow for poor kids in the Ozarks.

However, we can take it for a spin and release some more PCP's into the environment to make sure we kill ATLEAST one more gay whale.

I'm down with DDT.

Q

Al-Aqua Teen Martyr's Brigade || Posts: 6301 || Joined: Sat Mar 27, 2004 6:29 am || Location: Piss off

---

by Mikethehack '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 2:46 pm

Q wrote:

> Farmdog wrote:

> Somebody has to keep all of you philosophical types safe and prevent Q from seizing your yacht as part of his wealth redistribution plan.

Penta is a hypocritical, lying sack of shit. I mean, if I thought for a

second she believed half the shit she posted, I'd cut her some slack and atleast respect her for practising what she preaches.

Her commenting on SOP's in the field would be like me commenting on being some miserable, middle aged harpee with nothing better to do than sit on her yacht all day long and wave her liver spotted fist at giants.

I'm almost convinced that her hatred for anything remotely related to wearing a uniform comes from one of the boy's at Hereford not returning her calls.

Penta is one of the most charming, intelligent and beautiful women I have ever met and if the world was fair, I would be Mr. Penta.

She's babelicious.

I'm not really a proper reporter, due to the chronic lack of discipline, negligible attention span, and a certain juvenile difficulty taking serious things seriously.

Andrew Mueller.

Mikethehack

Pimpmasterus Generalismus || Posts: 7854 || Joined: Fri Mar 26, 2004 6:34 pm  
|| Location: The Irish colonies

---

by khalampre '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 2:52 pm

Sorry let me grab a little less of that quote for you.

> He was never convicted of killing anyone at all, of being an accessory to any murders, of plotting any terrorist attacks, of waging war against the US or even against its forces in a foreign land .... He admitted being a member of the Taliban (as you say, it could have been of al-Qaeda, but that makes no practical difference) and of carrying (but not using) a rifle and 2 grenades.

Now, do you really think that this guy just toted a rifle and a few grenades around without doing anything else?

I hate everything about you---Ugly Kid Joe

khalampre

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 1617 || Joined: Fri Mar 26, 2004 5:17 am ||  
Location: Bryan, TX

---

by Mikethehack '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 3:01 pm

In the absence of Royal:

I'm not really a proper reporter, due to the chronic lack of discipline, negligible attention span, and a certain juvenile difficulty taking serious things seriously.

Andrew Mueller.

Mikethehack

Pimpmasterus Generalismus || Posts: 7854 || Joined: Fri Mar 26, 2004 6:34 pm  
|| Location: The Irish colonies

---

by Stiv '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 4:33 pm

Good thing he wasn't a Shia pilgrim from Britain or the US visiting Mecca!

Pilgrims accuse Saudi religious police, want trial



Reuters

August 10, 2007

By Sylvia Westall

LONDON (Reuters)---A group of British and U.S. Shi'ite Muslims said on Friday the Saudi religious police they accuse of beating them in the holy city of Mecca should be put on trial abroad.

The eight male pilgrims, all of Iraqi descent, said they were beaten and detained overnight on Sunday by the Saudi Mutawa'a, or religious police, because of their nationalities and the fact they were holding Shi'ite-style prayers.

Saudi embassy officials were not immediately available for comment. Saudi-owned newspaper Asharq al-Awsat quoted Ghazi al-Usaimi, deputy police chief at Mecca's Grand Mosque, on Thursday as denying any truth to reports about the incident.

Tension is high in the region because of sectarian violence between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims in Iraq. Saudi Arabia, which practices a strict form of Sunni Islam, is uncomfortable with the rise of a Shi'ite majority to power in Iraq.

Iraq's defeat of Saudi Arabia in the final of the Asian Cup soccer competition has heightened anti-Shi'ite feeling.

An Iraqi parliamentarian told Reuters earlier this week that sons of Iraqi politicians were among the group.

At a news conference in London, the group of Shi'ite pilgrims called on the religious police to apologize and pay compensation. They said those responsible should be handed over and tried for violating human rights.

``While in police custody we were handcuffed and savagely beaten with chairs, bats, sticks, shoes and police radio communication devices,'' 24-year-old pilgrim Amir Taki said.

He said they were refused food, water, medicine and access to toilets. One was told they would be ``killed and thrown to the dogs''.

The group, aged between 16 to 26, said they were not allowed to contact their embassies or relatives.

However, using a cell phone hidden by one of the pilgrims, they were able to contact family members and were released after intervention from the embassies.

A spokesman for the pilgrims said they would support a trial at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

Many clerics in Saudi Arabia, which sees itself as the leader of Sunni Islam, view Shi'ism as a heresy. Religious police, who are often armed with sticks, are charged with ensuring Sunni rites and beliefs dominate in the kingdom.

Saudi Arabia's Shi'ite minority say they are treated like second-class citizens in the country.

The incident is the latest of a series of scandals involving the Saudi religious police after two Saudis died in their custody this year, prompting calls by Saudi liberals for the autonomous force to be disbanded.

(Additional reporting by Andrew Hammond in Riyadh)

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Her eyes like sparks, my heart like gasoline

Stiv

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 5631 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 12:44 pm

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by Farmdog '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 5:28 pm

Q,

I am on for the cruise. Can we take JWL for the first half of the trip. I have always wanted to keel haul some one. Should we go cold water or warm? It just takes so much longer to drown in warm water than cold I think warm is the way to go with JLW. Lets just drown a dolphin, it is much more upsetting than the gay whale.

Farmdog

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 1543 || Joined: Fri Sep 15, 2006 9:03 pm ||  
Location: Your Mom's house

---

by kilroy '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 5:34 pm

Farmdog wrote:

> cold water or warm?

drowning is too good for him. i'd say give a nice cut before dropping him in the southern part of the mississippi and then let the bull sharks take their time with him.

``we all gots to make that livin.

sex, drugs, murder, politics, and religion,

all just forms of hustlin.'''--- black thought

kilroy

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 5439 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 7:34 am ||  
Location: Alabambam

---

by Penta '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 5:45 pm

Q wrote:

> Penta is a hypocritical, lying sack of shit. I mean, if I thought for a second she believed half the shit she posted, I'd cut her some slack and atleast respect her for practising what she preaches.

Well, why don't you do that, then, because the opinions I post here (though not other people's articles) are all my own.

MtH wrote:

> Penta is one of the most charming, intelligent and beautiful women

You should probably hold the charming. I'm a fire-breathing virago.

khalampre wrote:

> Sorry let me grab a little less of that quote for you.

Quote:

He was never convicted of killing anyone at all, of being an accessory to any murders, of plotting any terrorist attacks, of waging war against the US or even against its forces in a foreign land .... He admitted being a member of the Taliban (as you say, it could have been of al-Qaeda, but that makes no practical difference) and of carrying (but not using) a rifle and 2 grenades.

Now, do you really think that this guy just toted a rifle and a few grenades around without doing anything else?

What I think has no relevance at all. That was what he was convicted of. No one has offered any evidence he did anything else, which is what matters.

Penta

Ruby Tuesday || Posts: 15588 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 4:32 pm || Location: UK, Spain

---

by khalampre '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 5:57 pm

What I think has no relevance at all. That was what he was convicted of. No one has offered any evidence he did anything else, which is what matters.

So could we apply that same logic to Don Rummy, GWB, some of the top brass, some of the lower brass, some of the grunts? They have not been convicted of anything ( most of them) yet you go after them.

I hate everything about you---Ugly Kid Joe

khalampre

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 1617 || Joined: Fri Mar 26, 2004 5:17 am || Location: Bryan, TX

---

by Penta '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 6:01 pm

So could we apply that same logic to Don Rummy, GWB, some of the top brass, some of the lower brass, some of the grunts? They have not been convicted of anything ( most of them) yet you go after them.

No, we couldn't. Because the impeachment process hasn't begun.

Penta

Ruby Tuesday || Posts: 15588 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 4:32 pm || Location: UK, Spain

---

by RYP '' Fri Aug 10, 2007 6:06 pm

I can't wait until Bush and the Dumbhouse Gang get hauled up for war crimes. One dangerous thing about creating new free countries is they can bite back pretty hard.

RYP

Ownerus Websiteus Authorus || Posts: 25605 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 3:42 am

---

by Farmdog '' Sat Aug 11, 2007 2:38 pm

Penta,

Please enumerate for us poor God fearing folks what the hell you are talking about? Impeachment? You been smoking da devil weed woman. Your not supposed to drink the bong water either.

Farmdog

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 1543 || Joined: Fri Sep 15, 2006 9:03 pm || Location: Your Mom's house

---

by ayouné '' Sat Aug 11, 2007 3:47 pm

hey ryp .... what happened to our man Agil? Is he still in mexico? does anyone know?

ayoune

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 113 || Joined: Wed Apr 21, 2004 4:54 pm

---

by RYP '' Sat Aug 11, 2007 4:21 pm

Last time he broke cover he was working as a driver for a bunch of Orange County titty girls. Its on YouTube somewhere

RYP

Ownerus Websiteus Authorus || Posts: 25605 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 3:42 am

---

by rickshaw92 '' Sun Aug 12, 2007 3:24 am

Your not supposed to drink the bong water either.

Really?

rickshaw92

Pikey Bastard || Posts: 6919 || Joined: Fri Mar 26, 2004 1:28 am

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by Big Duke 6 '' Tue Aug 14, 2007 3:44 pm

Some of the treatment of Lindh doesn't sound any worse than what us military guys do to one another for fun---and we're on the same team.

Talk about the pussification of society. It sounds to me if Penta had her way we'd all be wearing purple and pink battle dress uniforms, wielding flowers, and blowing one another.

The arguments are moot. She will never understand what being a solider entails, and I doubt we'll ever see her point of view either. We can agree to disagree as adults, but she doesn't seem like much of an activist---so she can

spew hate and anger all day long---she'll change nothing. So carry on with the command and conquer.

History is written by the winner.

In the case of a nuclear war I wanna be where I can say, ``What the fuck was THAT!?' ' ---Jay Hickman

Big Duke 6

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 823 || Joined: Tue Jun 29, 2004 3:29 am

---

by Penta ' ' Tue Aug 14, 2007 4:22 pm

Big Duke 6 wrote:

> Some of the treatment of Lindh doesn't sound any worse than what us military guys do to one another for fun---and we're on the same team.

It's bit different when it's for fun---and you're ``on the same team' '.

Talk about the pussification of society. It sounds to me if Penta had her way we'd all be wearing purple and pink battle dress uniforms, wielding flowers, and blowing one another.

If I had my way, most international problems would be resolved through diplomacy. But then our governments wouldn't be able to justify all that spending on arms. Perhaps they'd be able to spend some on maintaining physical infrastructure, for instance, and providing decent mental health services for all who needed them. Would that be such a bad thing?

The arguments are moot. She will never understand what being a solider entails, and I doubt we'll ever see her point of view either. We can agree to disagree as adults, but she doesn't seem like much of an activist---so she can spew hate and anger all day long---she'll change nothing. So carry on with the command and conquer.

I'm more of a hearts and minds gal, than command and conquer.

History is written by the winner.

Perhaps you haven't noticed, but the US isn't coming across as much of a winner these days. How's that going to feel, when history is written by somebody else?

Penta

Ruby Tuesday || Posts: 15588 || Joined: Thu Mar 25, 2004 4:32 pm || Location: UK, Spain

---

by Chimborazo ' ' Tue Aug 14, 2007 4:25 pm

rickshaw92 wrote:

> Your not supposed to drink the bong water either.

Really?

Uh-oh.

Chimborazo

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 3875 || Joined: Wed Feb 15, 2006 7:12 pm || Location: RVA

---

by Big Duke 6 ' ' Tue Aug 14, 2007 7:16 pm

> If I had my way, most international problems would be resolved through diplomacy. But then our governments wouldn't be able to justify all that spending on arms. Perhaps they'd be able to spend some on maintaining physical infrastructure, for instance, and providing decent mental health services for all who needed them. Would that be such a bad thing?

It would not be such a bad thing, but it is a bit utopian. Plus, I never see you attacking other countries. I'm quite sure America isn't the only nation on the planet that is lacking in the diplomatic realm. The whole ``America is at the root of all evil'' premise is naive.

> Perhaps you haven't noticed, but the US isn't coming across as much of a winner these days. How's that going to feel, when history is written by somebody else?

The verdict isn't out yet over the victor.

In the case of a nuclear war I wanna be where I can say, ``What the fuck was THAT!?' ' ---Jay Hickman

Big Duke 6

BFCus Regularus || Posts: 823 || Joined: Tue Jun 29, 2004 3:29 am

\end