

Jessica Lynch: Hero or pawn?

Andrew Kilgo
Sports Editor

In this time when the spotlight is cast on the heroics and sacrifices that young men and women make on the battlefields around the world, here comes the story of Private Jessica Lynch and how she was used as a tool by the Bush leadership to increase support and turn the public's attention away from the negatives of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The war in Iraq was progressing, and word came out about the ambush of the 507 Maintenance Company on March 23. The story told of a convoy that missed an important turn and stepped into a trap in Nasiriyah, Iraq. High ranking military sources informed reporters covering the war of a story about a 19-year-old woman who acted as a hero, who was wounded by Iraqi gunfire, but kept firing until her ammunition ran out, shooting several Iraqis. The story, was that of Lynch as a "Rambo".

However, in an interview conducted by Diane Sawyer of ABC with Lynch, she indicated that the accounts were not truthful and that "I did not shoot. Not a round, nothing," she said. "When we were told to lock and load, that's when my weapon jammed. I did not shoot a single round. I went down praying to my knees. And that's the last I remember."

This was just the first of multiple instances of the military misinforming the public.



Jessica Lynch

The military painted the picture of how Lynch was subjected to abuse by the staff at the Iraqi hospital where she was held. Lynch later refuted this in her new book, saying that no one among the staff at the hospital was abusive to her. "No one beat me. No one slapped me. No one, nothing," she said.

The most interesting action that was taken by the military was that while Lynch was in a hospital bed in pain and wanting desperately to get home, the military launched a rescue that was filmed in its entirety for reasons not made clear.

Not long after the rescue, U.S. television networks broke onto the air to show people around the world the dramatic night-vision footage over and over. The media reported how the U.S. Special Forces team, acting on a tip from a brave Iraqi lawyer, engaged in firefights on their way into and out of the hospital.

The only problem was that in fact, there were no firefights at the hospital during the rescue. The hospi-

tal staff said there were no Iraqi soldiers there, and questioned the need for the Americans to use force.

Asked whether the military's portrayal of the rescue bothers her, Lynch said, "Yeah, it does. It does that they used me as a way to symbolize all this stuff. I mean, yeah, it's wrong. I don't know what they had, or why they filmed it."

Lynch's story captured the hearts of many Americans young and old. The story deserved to be told to the American people especially during a time when you would only hear about the bad side of the Iraq conflict.

But it simply wasn't necessary for the military to go out of their way to play up the rescue and the whole ordeal that Lynch suffered through.

There were other POWs during the war including members of the 507 Maintenance Company that Lynch belonged to. They didn't receive nearly the same amount of coverage, and they were the ones the Iraqis paraded in front of cameras for the world to see, not Lynch.

It is concerning that there were many points in the Lynch story, in which the details given to the media were exaggerated and were not entirely truthful.

Also, the military should never have used Lynch to advance any political cause. U.S. soldiers sign up to serve their country, to defend it, and not to become a political tool or cause for advancing policy issues. The soldiers deserve more than that.

Don't give in to phone curiosity

Hounded by Slobber Boy? Just disconnect the phone

Jennifer Smith
Contributing Writer

The scary part of a date is always when he leans in for the kiss. His mouth opens up, and he closes his eyes and tries to act all suave, even though he has just acted like an ass for a whole evening. Turning away quickly, I leave him with a cheek and a quick good-night.

Running for my bathroom to quickly wash off his slobber, I trip and fall in my haste and wake my roommate

who has no nice words for me at this time of the morning. The bruise I pick up lasts a week, and I still have to figure out how not to answer my phone when Slobber Boy calls back.

Answering the phone is almost habitual. When it rings, I always find myself desiring to find out who is on the other



side of the line. Could it be one of my friends? Is it my parents calling to tell me something important? Or could it be Mr. Right calling with a gift card from Wal-Mart? I just have to know. I can't let the phone just ring unanswered.

But when I answer, it's Slobber Boy and I have to invent a lie. I tend to seek solutions to my curiosity, which always leads my ear to the phone. When the phone rings next, I stuff my face in my stuffed tiger, Max, and attempt to drown the noise of the ringer. Ring, ring, ring. The phone won't shut up.

Who is it? Is it a talent agent to tell me that I'm really pretty, and he wants to represent me on my quest to stardom? Is it the police calling to tell me that my roommate is dead? I have to know.

It's Slobber Boy again, and he wants to know if I'm available tonight.

"Uh, no, I'm washing my hair."

The next time that the phone rings, I turn up the volume of the stereo. I put on Ace-of-Base's song "It's a Beautiful Life," and try to dance and pretend that the ringing is just a part of the song. It doesn't work. I still wonder who it is. Is it my little sister needing a ride? Is it Ed McMahon calling to give me a million dollars?

Nope, it's Slobber Boy yet again. He wants to go to Seville. He tells me that it'll be a blast.

"I'm sorry. I'll be feeding homeless people early Friday morning."

I turn the phone's ringer off. The silence is deafening. I listen to see if I can hear anyone trying to call. I listen for the buzz of electricity in the walls that might signal a phone call. No, no, no. I don't want to answer the phone. I disconnected it for just this purpose. But I just can't stop my curiosity.

Who could it be? What am I missing? Is a hurricane headed this way? Is my best friend pregnant? Is my friend trying furiously to get through to me, wanting to tell me that Brad Pitt is on TV? I plug the phone back in.

And nobody calls. Nobody calls for one day. Nobody calls the next day either. Did I do something wrong when I plugged it in? I check for a dial tone. It's there. Still no phone calls though. Oh well. More time passes. Maybe I can call out, but nobody can call in?

I have my friend call me. She does. My line works, but nobody calls. I wonder what happened to Slobber Boy. Maybe I should give him a call and find out.

Tax money is going in wrong collection plate

Terese Jordan
Staff Writer

The Bush administration implemented a plan to give tax dollars to faith-based organizations that preach strong moral values and give back to the community. But it would be ludicrous to think that some of the American tax dollars are going toward organizations preaching hate. However, there is one specific church that receives aid that it shouldn't be entitled to.

The Rev. Sun Myung Moon, leader of the Unification Church, receives money from the government through President Bush's faith-based initiative plan in order to further spread his Christian values across the world in hopes of creating heaven on earth.

To most, this doesn't appear a major concern until one takes a closer look at exactly what Moon's "Christian" message is. Moon believes that Jesus was a failure because he never attained world domination. He also thinks that the scandalous sexual culture in America has turned American women into a "line of prostitutes."

Furthermore, Moon claims that the Holocaust



Sun Myung Moon

celibacy.

Sounds good enough. However, Moon's sermons on the subject prove otherwise. Moon frowns upon sex before marriage, which is a respectable opinion. However, he believes that sexual purity is so important that if a woman is in the process of being raped, she should kill herself instead of having to live the rest of her life as an "impure rape victim."

"If someone is trying to invade you, you would rather kill yourself than go through the fall. At least

was justified because it was payback for when the Jews crucified Christ. Thus, Jews need to repent. "Through the principle of indemnity, Hitler killed 6 million Jews," he said.

Moon received nearly \$500,000 last summer from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to fund one of his civic organizations, Free Teens USA, a school club in New Jersey that endorses

you won't go to hell that way. This means love comes before life," Moon said to an audience in the early 90s.

Within his church, he preaches such nonsense as to appreciate and punish your "love organ" (Moon suggests with pliers if necessary). It would be reasonable to believe that a man who holds true to such radical beliefs would at least support the democracies that protect his right to spout off such foolishness. However, Moon declares that "individualism is what God hates most," as opposed to communism and totalitarianism, which produce obedient people who are "trained to follow orders from above," contrasting sinful Americans.

If Moon believes that Americans are such a sinful line of prostitutes with an inferior form of government, then he should try getting money from the communist and totalitarian governments, of which he speaks so highly and leave the tax dollars of U.S. citizens alone.

Furthermore, President Bush should ensure this type of hate speech and ridiculous rhetoric falsely hidden under the cloak of a "faith-based institution" never receive funding from the U.S. government and hard-working Americans.

Capitalism has become the people's bullhorn

Travis Huisken
Staff Writer

Last week, I decried the fascist censorship that cost Michael Savage his television career. This week, I applaud the American people for their successful efforts to shut down mainstream publicizing of Ludacris, Snoop Dogg and most recently, the CBS hatchet job of the Reagan family. Am I devilishly inconsistent? Hardly. Allow me to explain.

Michael Savage gained his television show because he already had a massive audience. He lost his television show not because he lost his audience, but because a minority of people who opposed his show, even before it ever aired, were bullying the producers with threats of lobbying efforts and legal strong-arming. This whiney minority shrieked that they didn't like what Savage had to say, and so they were not going to allow him to say it.

Contrast that with what happened to the others listed above. Snoop Dogg, for example, was asked to be a guest star in a Muppets movie. Movies are made

for audiences, and the object behind guest stars is to cater to, or expand, an audience. Mothers decided to inform the Muppets' producers that they were not interested in taking their children to a movie that glorified a gangster who narrowly escaped death row and makes his millions by rhythmically droning about his obsession with illegal drugs and brutalizing women.

The surprised producers decided that Snoop's presence wouldn't bring in enough of the gangsta crowd, and without the children, they didn't have a market for their program. The scenes with Mr. Dogg ended up on the cutting room floor. This isn't fascist censorship. This is an illustration of a simple economic principle: there is no market for a product that is wildly out of touch with the wants and needs of consumers.

This is capitalism's voice, and it greatly empowers the general populous. In the case of Michael Savage, he was told, "we do not want you to say that, and if you do, you'll hear from our lawyers." That is fascist censorship. In the case of Snoop, Ludacris and the recent cheesy assault on the Reagan family, the

people themselves were at work, saying, "You may say whatever you want. But if you do, we will not be patrons of your goods or services." There is no censorship there, just the loss of a market.

A more local example of the people speaking up with their pocketbooks was seen in Niceville this fall. To meet the demands of a great many people, it was decided that the Sunday of the annual Mullet Festival weekend would be an alcohol-free day, so families could feel more comfortable taking their kids to the festival. Many area churches encouraged their congregations to attend the festival on Sunday, so that the implementation of an alcohol-free day would not be lost due to a lacking market. The result was a nearly record-breaking attendance for Sunday.

It appears that the people are starting to realize that they can speak volumes with their spending. Moral relativism may be pervasive in our institutions of higher learning, but it doesn't seem to fly in the homes of the heartland. Fascist screaming is not their tool of communication. When you try to market something to them that they find offensive, they won't use coercive tactics to shut you down. In fact, you can expect to not hear from them at all.

Letters to the Editor

The evils of drinking on campus

For those of you who do not know me, I am a drunk. I am not an alcoholic. I am an old fashioned drunk. Of course to most, I would probably be considered an alcoholic, but I do not

believe in alcoholism. I have never believed in alcoholism. That is something that people make up so they can feel better about what they do. I would also like someone to explain to me how it is a disease. I have no disease. I like to drink. And I drink to excess. I like to drink because it is fun to be drunk. There is nothing that anyone can say to me

to make me think that what I am doing is wrong. Although, people have tried and I am sure they will try again.

Speaking of getting drunk, let me tell you a story. I was standing outside one night talking with my friend and drinking a beer. Along comes two Resident Assistants who ask me for my ID. I am 22 years old, so I

give it to them. They write me up. The reasoning behind this is that I was drinking outside, and apparently this is evil. The RA asked me to step inside to explain the rule to me that states I cannot drink outside, so I



complied. There actually is a rule in the Housing Handbook that says that you cannot drink a beer outside of your apartment or in any other public area. (Apparently this rule does not apply to the Argos Grill where we can buy and drink beer in public.)

I asked this RA what would have happened if I had the beer in a cup, and he told me that nothing would

have happened because there is no rule about drinking out of a cup.

Please someone, anyone, explain to me the difference between drinking a beer out of a cup and drinking beer out of a can. I will get equally drunk either way, so where is the problem? And more important, what is the difference?

— Bryan Reingruber

VOYAGER

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