

I got this question from Mr O'Reilly's producers

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Date: Tue, 4 Sep 2007 13:14:55 -0400  
Subject: o'reilly factor request

> Mr. Cuban,  
>  
> The Factor will be doing a segment this evening on Redacted...which, as  
> you know, depicts US atrocities in Iraq. The director says the the  
> depicted rape is "the reality" of what is happening in that country.  
> Of all of the schools that are being built, the medical care being  
> supplied, and the security that our soldiers have been providing to  
> Iraqi neighborhoods...do you agree that a few random and horrific  
> crimes represent the norm of what is going on in that newly liberated  
> country? and what exactly was it about the film that made you want to  
> produce it?  
>  
> Thanks  
>  
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>

**From:** "Mark Cuban" <[Mark.Cuban@dallasmavs.com](mailto:Mark.Cuban@dallasmavs.com)>  
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**Subject:** Re: o'reilly factor request

No, it doesnt represent the norm and the movie doesnt say it represents the norm. Seperate the self promotion of Brian Depalma from the movie. The movie is fully pro Troops. The hero of the movie is a soldier who stands up for what is right in the face of adversity.

Maybe Bill can attempt to be fair and balanced and actually see the movie before he thinks he knows what he is talking about.

And this is one of many movies we produce. I actually have seen it and think it is an amazing movie. But to answer your question, I didnt read the script or know all that much about it before we greenlit it. As we do with several big name directors, we give them carte blanche in producing their movies.

And to pre empt some of the stupidity coming from bloggers, I am fully Pro Troops, Pro America. I think that the concept that the enemy will see these films and use it as motivation is total nonsense. We have no plans of translating these movies to arabic or other middle eastern languages. Nor will we provide batteries or electricity for them to watch bootleg DVDs as some zealots have suggested online.

And no , I am not involved in Loose Change. No I didnt finance it. No I didnt plan to have it translated to multiple languages as Mr Oreilly claimed on air. His command of the facts is truly abysmal.

What other lies has Bill spread that I can dispel ?

Oh, as far as other movies we have distributed, we released Voices of Iraq, a movie whose [PR](#) campaign was financed by Republicans right before the 2004 election. [You may have caught my comments about this very much](#) pro Iraq movie that "this is a movie everyone should see before the election"

And maybe Bill can do something that is truly fair and balanced and put in a plug for [WWW.fallenpatriotfund.org](http://WWW.fallenpatriotfund.org) . A fund I started right after the

war started. We provide funding for soldiers in need. To date we have given 2.5mm dollars in grants. 100pct of the money goes to the troops, not a single penny is spent on overhead or expenses. I cover those myself.

Oh, and I dont know how bill feels about No End in Sight, but we distributed that movie as well.

Thats my feedback for Mr Bill

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I didnt forward what is below to them, but i couldnt resist adding it below, it is the commentary criticizing me for Voices of Iraq. Just to show im equally hated by zealots on both sides. And to answer the question of why we distribute or get involved with politically charged movies ? Because I am a zealot that truly believes what JFK said and that I quoted in my last blog post. To paraphrase, "A country afraid of the marketplace of ideas is a country afraid of its people". Its really easy to hate, its really hard to think issues through on their own merits. Anything that makes people think about issues is a good thing. I don't take sides, Diversity of information makes for more informed perspective and decisions.

Which leads to my position on the Iraqi War. I hate that thousands of our troops have died. It sickens me to think of how their families must feel and every single day I wake up I say thank you to them, as I thank all those who have come before them for their sacrifices to make this country so great and to give me the opportunity to live the life I have and enjoy my family. I have never, nor will I ever take for granted the liberties we have in this country

That said, I don't agree or disagree with the war because I don't know enough. There isn't enough information available to me to take a position beyond hoping that it runs its course very very quickly and our troops return home safely as soon as it is viable.

And to anyone who has ever questioned my patriotism or love for this country, fuck you.

## A Dubious Doc

By [Eartha Melzer](#)



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Just before the election, a film about Iraq hit art house theaters around the country. *Voices of Iraq* claimed to be a groundbreaking film in which "150 DV cameras [are] distributed across Iraq for the Iraqi people to show the world who they are and what Iraq will be."

The results? People seem happy that Saddam is gone and optimistic that, if the United States stays in Iraq, democracy will prevail. They seem unafraid of bombs going off nearby. People say Saddam funded al Qaeda. Former Iraqi political prisoners are shown laughing off the stories of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib-what Arab man wouldn't want a female American soldier to play with his penis?

The film begins with shaky handheld footage but the production values increase dramatically as talk turns to the horrors perpetrated by Saddam Hussein-extended sequences of beatings and dismemberment obviously shot using a tripod not supplied by the producers of this film.

So how was this film made?

*Voices of Iraq* was promoted as a project in which "thousands of ordinary Iraqis become filmmakers" as the cameras are passed hand to hand and-amazingly-all returned to the filmmakers. But Archie Drury, the Gulf War vet and actor who went to Iraq with the cameras, told me that he actually shot some of the footage himself.

Drury also said that the Iraq Foundation was “extremely helpful” to him as he tried to figure out how to get around and who to give the cameras to. The foundation also supplied the torture footage.

The Iraq Foundation, based in Washington, is funded by the State Department and the National Endowment for Democracy.

Not surprisingly, Drury got uncommon access to Iraqis and Iraqi leaders favored by the U.S. government. Among the notables interviewed, but not identified, is Sharif Ali, the cousin of Iraq's last king. Drury also interviewed a Sheik Aku Bezei, a man he says was the most powerful tribal leader in Fallujah. On November 6, a Sheik Bezei was killed for collaborating with American forces.

Drury says that his commanding general from Desert Storm put him in touch with General Mattis, fighting in the Sunni Triangle, and General Amos of the Air Wing, and that he exchanged e-mails with these generals as he planned his trip.

In an interview in *Movie Maker* magazine, another of the film's producers, Martin Kunnert, said: “Getting a theatrical release for a documentary film is still rare. We lucked out in that our distributor, Magnolia Pictures, [which also put out *Control Room* and *Capturing the Friedmans*] was eager to get the film in theaters before the presidential election.”

A call to Magnolia Pictures in New York was answered by a man who, lowering his voice when asked about *Voices of Iraq*, whispered, “Nobody here wanted to release this and we didn't do any of the promotion on it. [Mark] Cuban steamrolled us on this.” (Cuban owns Magnolia Pictures, the Dallas Mavericks and much more.)

Jeff Riechert, the Magnolia Pictures contact for *Voices of Iraq*, said that while his company is technically distributing the film, Manning, Selvage & Lee (MS&L) is coordinating the publicity. MS&L has the public affairs contract for the U.S. Army. The firm's revamp of the Army's image with the reality TV-style “Army of One” ad campaign is credited with enabling the Army to meet its recruiting goals after a long slump. According to MS&L Managing Director Joe Gleason, he and his colleagues also deliver key targeted messages about the war in Iraq to specific constituencies.

Was the left-leaning art house crowd one of those constituencies? Is the government hiring documentary filmmakers to propagandize the U.S. population?

Nobody involved with the film is willing to say who initially put up the money for the film or how they ended up represented by the Army's PR firm.

On November 13, as Marines stormed Fallujah, the Marines' Birthday Ball in San Francisco honored Drury for his work on *Voices of Iraq*, for “going back and living up to the standard of a Marine.”

**Eartha Melzer**