

Of the 75 or so emails I received about Redacted, only one was so well thought out I had to post it. It came from a member of our Armed Forces. We have exchanged a couple emails and I asked him if I could post this anonymously . He presented it to his superiors , who approved the posting.

He is a hell of a guy.

Subject: This soldiers perspective on the Redacted issue.

Sir,

I doubt that you will read or see this email, as I have to imagine you receive thousands of emails a day. And while I figure mine will just be lost in the flood, I happened across the story about you and Mr. O'Reilly and the controversy over the movie Redacted, and could not help but say something. I did not leave a comment on your blog as I do not want my feelings on the matter to appear anywhere other than in your inbox. The fact that I'm in the military could make my feelings on this matter a banner to wave in the argument about this film. I hope you can forgive me this small indulgence.

To introduce myself, I'm a soldier who was recently wounded in Iraq; hence why I am in the US and have time to send you this email. Right now I am still recovering from my wounds, their related complications, and further surgery. I became aware of the current situation between yourself and Mr. O'Reilly by a link to your blog on a newsfilter I read called Fark and read through your entries to see what had occurred.

I want to begin by saying that I am not an expert on Iraq, I can only speak about what happened to me and what I have experienced. But I think that Bill's (his first name is faster than endlessly typing O'Reilly) argument is flawed on a few levels. First of all, what happened in the Mahmudiyah "incident" has already happened, and the news has already been widely disbursed through the Arab press. Nearly every house we ever drove by, even mud huts in rural areas in Baghdad, had satellite dishes on them. So I would have to imagine that this movie is not going to provide a shocking revelation to the average Iraqi.

From my experiences, they've already formed their opinions of us and very little we do or say is going to change their minds. One movie, regardless of its subject matter, is not going to overcome their personal feelings about things like Abu-Ghraib, the criminal acts discussed in Redacted, their fears about security and lost loved ones. I was in Iraq when Insurgents ambushed an American convoy and kidnapped American soldiers, claiming it was in revenge for what had happened in Mahmudiyah, so I cannot honestly imagine that his case for the movie helping motivate terrorists is correct. I think Bill has put the cart before the horse to try and make a point, but thats standard practice for idealogues on both sides of the fence, Michael Moore does the same thing all the time, so does Ann Coulter, and the list goes on.

Now, I have not seen Redacted, nor do I wish/plan to. I'm all too familiar with Iraq and the experience thereof, and I don't want to see someone who has never been there try and distill it into a film, regardless of his motivation. In an effort to at least have some slight idea of what I'm talking about, I did some research, read plot summaries from objective sources, etc. I do have some concerns about the film, but they're not that it will provide ideological support to terrorists. I think we do enough of that on our own with our popular culture, decadent society, and past mistakes in foreign policy. What does worry me about films like Redacted is that people in America will watch them and use isolated incidents to color their entire view of the military and its service in Iraq. When you look at what we've done there, the military has accomplished amazing things and done a lot of good. But mistakes have been made and criminal actions that have been committed (and harshly punished) are all that we ever hear people talk about on TV, in film, and in print media. There aren't many movies about guys who die trying to bring freedom to an oppressed people without ever getting to meet their children, or about how hard and tirelessly soldiers work over there to try and do a thankless job, while the media back home paints the war as lost and their efforts as

futile. But, I would never go so far as to advocate boycotting a film or piece of literature just because I do not agree with what it says or because I'm afraid of what it might cause. Free Speech is part of the constitution I am sworn to defend, and there is no stricture in the first amendment about liking what everyone says. I just wish someone would tell the stories of the good things, too.

So, don't worry about Bill. He's just doing his job, and imagining that he should always make sense is an exercise in madness. Sometimes he's on point, and sometimes he's way off base. I think this is one of the latter. For that matter, Brian De Palma is just doing his job too, no matter how I feel about what he made or what he has to say. If I was in your position, I would just cut my losses and walk away. Nothing you can do or say will get him off your case.

If you actually read this, I apologize for the length and for my occasional rambling. I've got a lot of time to think these days and very little outlet for it. I just wanted to let you know what I thought, without having it in a public forum. Thank you for your time.

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Patriotic dissent is a luxury of those protected by better men than they. -Anon