

Winner of Pulitzer Prize for Tiger Force 

toledoblade.com TOLEDO, OHIO

Letters to the Editor

Article published Wednesday, August 1, 2007

Iraq's real story is not often reported

On July 13, a 23-year-old Iraqi journalist named Hassan who worked for the New York Times became yet another casualty of a convoluted war. The executive editor of the Times, Bill Keller, made the following statement: "Hassan was part of a large, sometimes unsung community of Iraqi newsgatherers, translators, and support staff who take enormous risks every day to help us comprehend their country's struggle and torment. ... Without them, Americans' understanding of what is happening on the ground in Iraq would be much, much poorer."

That's a very fitting tribute, but a eulogy hollower than a bamboo reed, decaying in the wild. That's what has happened to a once-respectable profession. Sadly, when journalism becomes the domain of glib liars — and a very lucrative financial source for media moguls, it begins to fill you with nausea. That's precisely what I felt after reading these comments.

The truth is contrary to what he said. The current and even the 'old' school of veteran journalists are no longer interested in picking up the right story and ramming it deep down the throat of the perpetrators until they choke, no matter how high perched they are, both abroad and at home.

I wonder if the reporters of the Desert Storm era or the current breed ever rummage through their conscience and ask: Are we really bringing home the real thing, day after day? They should know: A story is not the reality. Please do not equate the two. Bring home the reality, not the stories that are handsomely wrapped in gore, blood, flesh, and soot.

The day they begin doing so, journalism will reincarnate itself. Until then, it will run and execute like the proverbial Italian mafia. Ordinary Americans like myself are seeing it every day, how can you not?

Abdul-Majeed Azad
Perrysburg