

“We owe you nothing when we ruin your business. We have that right.”

Tom Segrave (paraphrase)

When Wyoming legislators debated the issues of eminent domain and condemnation, as well as proper notice and compensation, at the recently concluded Session, the focus was on rural ranchlands with the interloper being energy companies, railroads and public utilities.

There was strong opposition to making any changes to the statutes from municipalities but no advocate for the property owners affected by what can be arbitrary and heavy-handed actions by towns, cities, counties and the State was heard.

Cheyenne is again witnessing the effects these public projects, no matter how little or much needed, can present to private property rights. Not only does eminent domain involve the taking of private property, it also involves dramatic changes to nearby property.

Compassion would be a welcome quality in dealing with private property rights but it is often missing.

A woman has a day care business that, on a map, may appear to have missed the wrecking ball or transport truck. But it didn't.

As Fifth Street is widened from at least Alexander west to Morrie (north of the refinery), a major curve in the street will be necessary to take the increased traffic down Morrie to points south. When the new city "right of way" was staked, it left the business with about ten feet from its front steps to the sidewalk. If a new right-of-way is then claimed, the potted plant on the steps will be in the right of way.

The City's reaction to her plight? As usual, they simply do not care. First because it's the southside and second because they have the power to take or disrupt your property or business. Or so they think. Maybe Gay needs to make another call.

Why were lies told about Pat Tillman and Jessica Lynch?

One was an NFL football player,

The other a 19 year old supply clerk.

Both were unknowing and undeserving of the fates that would befall them.

One died.

One suffered permanent scars and injuries to her young body.

Pat Tillman was a principled football player reaching the peak of his career with the Phoenix Cardinals - a teammate of Jake Plummer's, both in college and the NFL.

At Arizona State, according to Wikipedia, Tillman was chosen Pac-10 Defensive Player of the Year. He majored in marketing and graduated in three and a half years with a 3.84 GPA.

He was offered a five-year \$9 million contract to play for the St. Louis Rams but rejected it out of loyalty to the Phoenix Cardinals. He turned down a contract offer for \$3.6 million over three years from the Cardinals and enlisted in the Army.

He finished Army Rangers training and was deployed to Iraq, then Afghanistan. He had joined the Army with his brother and was serving in Afghanistan with him when he was killed.

Because of the high profile he received after he declined a multimillion contract to serve his country, his death was important for propaganda purposes and recruiting. People would pay attention - they would read that former-NFL star Pat Tillman had been killed in combat.

The story was embellished from the start. The Army said he been killed in a "fire fight." They did not mention that it was in an exchange of fire with friendly forces, not enemy combatants. They made a Sgt. York, Audie Murphy hero out of a guy shot and killed by his own men.

Friendly fire claims many victims. During Desert Storm, there were more casualties

from friendly fire than were killed by the enemy. Friendly fire is, of course, a euphemism for being killed by people on the same side as the victim. Sometimes the fire comes by air, sometimes by ground fire - sometimes close range, sometimes from an unseen distance.

After five weeks, the Army came clean to the Tillman family. There is no doubt this family, exemplified by son Pat, would have dealt with the truth in a dignified manner, with no recriminations. Friendly fire, like civilian casualties, is one of the dastardly happenings of war.

Now, the world knows. Congressional hearings have been called to discuss what happened with these two cases and, hopefully, to prevent the re-occurrence.

There is no question this is opportunism by the Democrats to embarrass the President and all who supported the invasion and deny the reality of where the war is today. And the information it elicits will embarrass and shame the American people and direct a further spotlight on the death of their son that these parents could do without.

Jessica Lynch is a young woman now. She was a child when sent to Iraq with her unit. She probably was unprepared for the combat environs and supply clerks are not normally sent into the teeth of enemy fire as she was.

I read her ghostwritten book soon after it was published. It was revealing. This young girl never took advantage of the false hero our government created of her.

In the book, "I Am A Soldier Too: The Jessica Lynch Story," she quickly admitted that she did nothing heroic - that she was knocked unconscious in an accident and did not ward off the enemy until she ran out of magazines. She came back from Iraq and long stays in hospitals a gravely injured and changed young woman. While it seems she has been in our focus for a long time, she will be only 24 the day after I write this. She is married but not to the G.I. in the Welcome Home Parade with her and she just gave birth to a daughter whom she named after her friend in the Army who was killed in the same incident in Iraq.

Why did our government turn a brave retrieval into a phony death-defying filmed rescue of Jessica Lynch and make the rest of the story even more untrue?



Jessica Lynch testified before Congress just yesterday: The report was:

On April 24, 2007 she testified in front of Congress that she never fired her weapon and was knocked unconscious when her vehicle crashed. She woke up later in an Iraqi hospital. She blamed the media and the military of lying for their own gain. She said during her testimony, "They should have found out the facts before they spread the word like wildfire."

The American people deal very well with the truth. War is ugly, unpleasant and unpredictable. There may be other stories similar to these two and these two came to public attention because the guy had a tremendous story to repeat and the girl was young, cute, and to hear the Army tell it, amazingly courageous. Rambette. She was brave but it was shown in being there - not in the myth that she fought until her ammo ran out.

An example of these soldiers youth and lack of military experience is in their ranks. Pat Tillman was a Specialist who was promoted posthumously to Corporal. A Corporal is pay grade E-4 in the Army. Jessica Lynch spent just over two years in the Army and was discharged a PFC - pay grade E-3. Lower ranks who die in war. Generals are far away and Colonels and above design the battle plans, but they do not fight in the wars.

Jessica Lynch and Pat Tillman's family will forever carry the burden of war. Who will suffer more is arguable.

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