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Who's Behind the Government's Delay in Bringing the Haditha Case to a Close?

Defend Our Marines | Rusty Howell and David Allender [\[PDF\]](#)

September 11, 2008 -- It's fitting that the last remaining defendant in the Haditha case is the squad leader, SSgt Frank Wuterich.

Real leaders take responsibility, and SSgt Wuterich has taken full responsibility for the actions of his squad in Haditha. He has also expressed deep remorse for any civilians who were killed as a result of those actions.

Over the past 18 months, Wuterich, still waiting to clear his name, has seen all of his squad mates exonerated of all charges. One of those is LCpl Justin Sharratt, whose parents live in Congressman John Murtha's PA-12 congressional district

There's no question that civilians died in Haditha. But was it murder or the kind of tragedy that occurs when insurgents fight behind women and children?

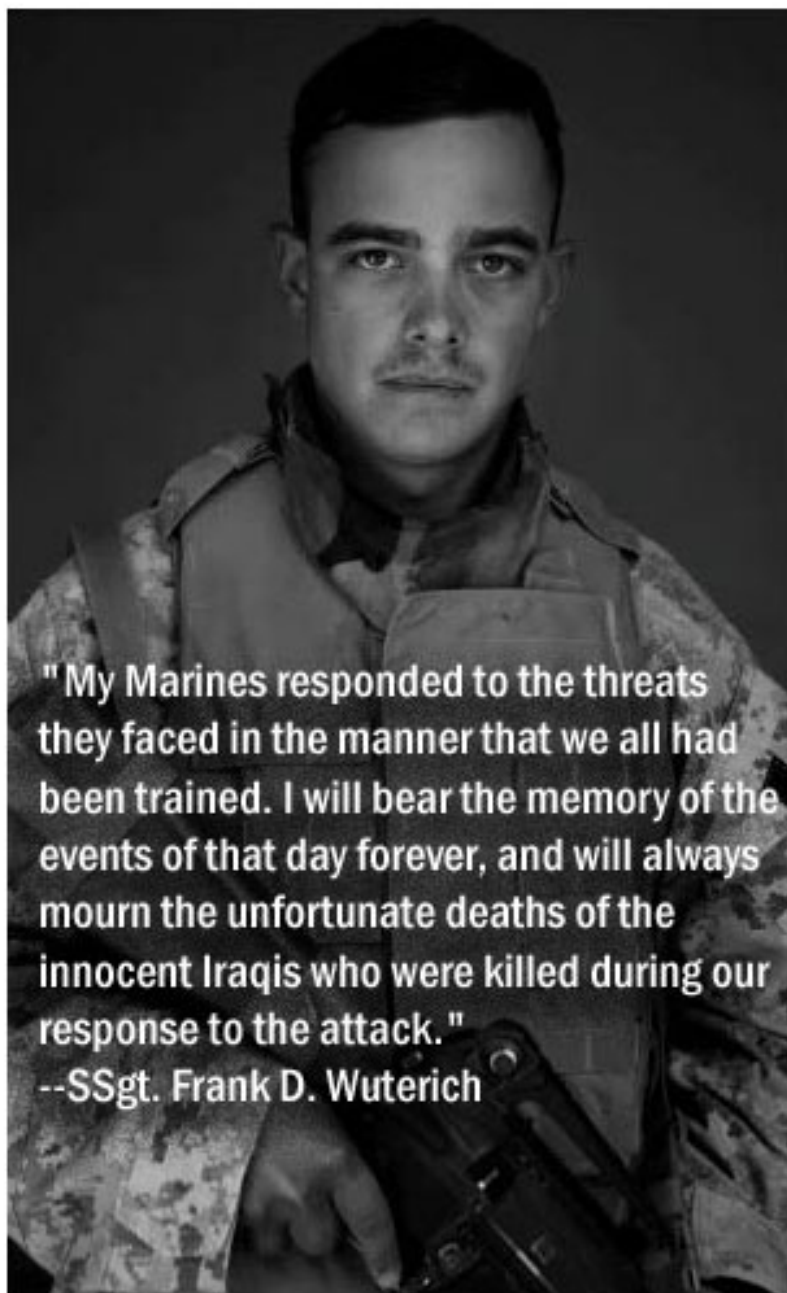
Wuterich has maintained the Marines responded to an enemy threat. In every trial and hearing, the evidence has borne him out.

Wuterich's own charges have been reduced to manslaughter as the result of a preliminary hearing. This means that no one in authority still claims that the incident in Haditha was "cold-blooded murder".

No one except Congressman John Murtha.

Murtha has never apologized or recanted his remarks that the Marines in Haditha "murdered innocent civilians in cold-blood".

In stark contrast to SSgt Wuterich, Murtha takes no responsibility for anything he has said or done. Murtha has no remorse for making accusations, now known to be false, against the Haditha Marines, the American military, and the United States of America.



"My Marines responded to the threats they faced in the manner that we all had been trained. I will bear the memory of the events of that day forever, and will always mourn the unfortunate deaths of the innocent Iraqis who were killed during our response to the attack."
--SSgt. Frank D. Wuterich

Today, the staff sergeant awaits his day in court. Saddled with legal bills he can't afford to pay, Wuterich won't get his day, in all probability, for another year due to legal maneuverings.

Our government is doing everything in its power to delay Wuterich's probable exoneration.

Which raises the question: why?

A year ago, a young man with a video camera, Jason Mattera, asked Murtha when he would apologize.

Murtha responded, "Is the trial still going on?"

With an apology for his accusations, Murtha could do much to restore the reputations of the men he slandered.

Murtha could also help restore the reputation of America around the world. It was Murtha who gave an official imprimatur to the massacre story and who said, for a worldwide audience, that American military leaders were liars who couldn't be believed.

But Murtha won't apologize. Even when his charge of "cold-blooded murder" has been disproved, Murtha won't apologize. His lack of decency and moral scruples is simply both breathtaking and heartbreaking for anyone who still believes in an America that is the land of free and home of the brave.

Haditha is still used in anti-American propaganda around the world, and Murtha is directly responsible for that. What kind of a man would rather see his country shamed then admit his own mistake?

Perhaps John Murtha was a patriot once. But not now. No patriot would put his own petty pride above the reputation of his country.

In a recent ruling, a military judge wrote: "Unlawful command influence is the mortal enemy of military justice, the appearance of unlawful command influence is as devastating as actual manipulation of a trial."

Murtha influenced the prosecution of the Haditha Marines from the start by stating exactly what the investigation would conclude before investigators had even finished their work. And Murtha insisted that anyone who said different, up to and including General Peter Pace, was a liar.

If Murtha hadn't already killed off his own conscience years ago, he might recall the words of Our Supreme Judge: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

Small wonder that many are suspicious that Murtha is behind the endless delays in the trial of SSgt Wuterich. After all, Murtha is fully invested in the myth of a "Haditha massacre" and the last thing he wants is to be majorly embarrassed in an election year.

Murtha has abused the powers of his office for far too long. He should be reminded that he doesn't own his



JASON MATTERA, YOUNG AMERICAN FOUNDATION: A number of the charges have been dropped on the Haditha incident; they're being dropped. Would you like to issue an apology for saying that they killed innocent civilians in cold blood?

MURTHA: Is the trial still going on?

MATTERA: The charges are being dismissed.

MURTHA: Are they still going on? Out, out.

office. His power is on loan from the voters of PA-12.

The media won't hold Murtha accountable. But the voters can.

Rusty Howell
David Allender
Defend Our Marines
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