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DEFEND OUR MARINES

SLANDER? MARINE SUES REP. MURTHA OVER HADITHA COMMENTS, CLAIMS CONGRESSMAN DAMAGED HIS REPUTATION

**Justin Sharratt interviewed on "America's Newsroom",
Fox News, 1 October 2008**

Watch the interview at the source: [Fox News](#). Or see it now in [Windows Media](#) or as a [Flash file](#) (these are large files: they will take a couple-few minutes to load).

Transcript:

MEGYN KELLY: It has been one of the most talked about stories of the Iraq War: the so-called Haditha Massacre. Two dozen Iraqis killed by US Marines.

After the news first broke, Pennsylvania Congressman John Murtha, a former Marine himself, was quick to condemn the accused Marines, saying they quote "murdered these Iraqis in cold blood". Take a look at this exchange from MSNBC...

(VIDEO CLIP)

CHRIS MATTHEWS: Was this melee? I mean, was this a case of—when you say cold blood, Congressman, a lot of people think you're basically saying you have got some civilians sitting in a room or out in a field and they're executed just on purpose...

MURTHA: That's exactly what happened.

MATTHEWS: ...not because the Marines are scared or anybody is scared or the soldiers are scared.

MURTHA: Let me tell you, this was not an action, this was not—at first they tried to say it is an IED. There was no IED involved in this. This was troops who went in—they were so stressed out, they went into houses and killed women and children, 24 people they killed. Now, this is the kind of stuff—this is the kind of stress they're under.

(END VIDEO CLIP)



KELLY: Well, since Murtha made comments like that, nearly all of the Marines in the case have been cleared. In fact, only one of those men is still facing charges. And now, one of those exonerated men is suing Murtha for slander. That Marine, Lance Corporal Justin Sharratt, joins us now. He lives in the district that Congressman Murtha represents. Lance corporal, good morning to you.

JUSTIN SHARRATT: Good morning.

KELLY: I know that you are actually the second Marine to file a lawsuit against Murtha for defamation. Tell us why you're suing him.

SHARRATT: Basically, I just want justice. After he made those comments on national television, it was a very big demoralization factor for myself and the other Marines that were being charged at the time.

KELLY: You're over there serving the country in Iraq, you have this awful situation where civilians do get killed, that's not in dispute And then you have charges brought and you've got a US congressman, in fact, your US congressman, taking not only to the floor of the House but going on national news organizations and calling you a cold-blooded murderer, what does that put you through, what does that put your family through?

SHARRATT: It was a terrible time for myself and my family. When they heard that on the news, their jaws just dropped.

KELLY: Did you expect your congressman, or a former Marine like Murtha, to give you the benefit of the doubt, at least while charges were pending?

SHARRATT: Oh, definitely.

KELLY: And did you ever hear from Congressman Murtha after the charges were dropped?

SHARRATT: No, I did not.

KELLY: Has he apologized to you, has he in any way reached out to you or any of the other Marines involved in this, that you know of?

SHARRATT: Not in any way, shape, or form.

KELLY: So what do you hope to accomplish with this lawsuit, lance corporal?

SHARRATT: It would restore hope to a lot of the US military, I personally think it would help a lot of civilians in the nation, that way they know that congressmen can't just go on national television and say whatever they want.

KELLY: We should say to our audience that we reached out to his office for comment, they had none, there was no comment about the pending litigation. I want to ask you, right now he has a campaign flyer up called, "Honoring our troops and veterans is a top priority for John Murtha". Your reaction to that?

SHARRATT: Personally, I think it's a joke. How can, one minute, he call his brethren, US Marines, cold-blooded murderers and turn around and say his top priority is to honor the troops.



KELLY: For those not familiar with the Haditha story, and as I said, it's clear that civilians were killed that day, explain in a nutshell, what actually what down.

SHARRATT: I wish I could, since there's still one Marine that still has charges pending, he's pending a court martial, I'd rather not comment on what went on that day.

KELLY: Obviously, you deny the accusation that a quote "murder" took place in any way. And I know you've been exonerated now on that charge.

SHARRATT: Yes.

KELLY: Well, lance corporal thank you for being here with us and telling us your story.

SHARRATT: Thank you.

KELLY: And thank you for your service.



NOTE: By evening, Justin's interview was one of the most highly rated by viewers....

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