

Truth, Lies, & Jessica Lynch Student perspectives on the FTAA



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Lynch stands by Pfc. Lori Piestewa, who did not survive the ambush

Emily Hantz
Staff Writer

Last May you could buy a magnet on eBay that said, "America loves Jessica Lynch."

I wonder if Jessica Lynch still loves America?

Private Jessica Lynch, a 19-year-old soldier, was injured in a Humvee crash, treated kindly in a Nasiriyan hospital, and taken without resistance from the unarmed hospital by American soldiers.

Private Jessica Lynch, a 19-year-old soldier, took a defiant stand against Iraqi soldiers, sustaining gunshot and stab wounds. She shot several enemy soldiers, firing her weapon until she ran out of ammunition. She was taken to a Nasiriyan hospital, where an Iraqi security guard slapped her around.

Army Rangers and Navy SEALs stormed the hospital, exchanged fire with Iraqi soldiers, and brought Jessica Lynch home. Oh, and luckily they caught the rescue on tape and

were able to broadcast the green-tinted, night-vision video of the mission for all of America to see.

In a country where the news is either affectionately or disgustingly referred to as info-tainment, it is the latter of these two versions of the rescue of Jessica Lynch that originally ran. Pieces of it were printed in respectable newspapers like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.

Unfortunately, the latter version is not true.

Lynch spoke after seven months of silence on Nov. 11 to Diane Sawyer on ABC's *Primetime*. She was bothered by the military portrayal of her rescue. Lynch said it's wrong that they used her to symbolize all this stuff. She questions the Army's choice to film her rescue.

I question it, too. I also question media that turn a person into a patriotic symbol through lies and videotape. But then again, I question a country that sends 19-year-olds, or any human beings, to war.

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Guilford College students have been trickling into Miami since Nov. 13. By Nov. 18, there were almost 40 of them. It is not the promise of sunnier weather and exciting nightlife that draws them, but the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) trade negotiations that Miami is holding this year.

The FTAA is an expansion of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). It involves 34 nations in South, Central, and North America and the Caribbean. The FTAA's objective is to perpetuate the NAFTA model of increased trade liberalization and privatization in the entire Western hemisphere.

Guilford College students are going to protest this, along with thousands of other demonstrators.

I went to a preparatory meeting held by the protesters. It was strange to hear my peers talking about the possibility of getting arrested, when I knew the worst thing I would have to deal with in the upcoming week was an exam. I was curious what their feelings are about the protest and why they are protesting.

"There is good hard data out there to argue that NAFTA has not had a lot of positive effects for the people of the U.S., Mexico, and Canada," said sophomore Will Johnson. "The economists that back up the FTAA policies value short-term growth over the long-term effects these policies have on the environment, indigenous cultures, and the poor."

Junior Liz Nemitz is going to Miami to work with Food Not Bombs, an international group that gives free vegetarian meals to hungry people in hundreds of cities, as well as serving food at protests.

Nemitz recognized people's criticism of protesters as being a bunch of crazy white college kids who yell and scream - and then return to campus where things are fine. She spoke of going to stand in solidarity with the

people who are really getting hurt, as it is a matter of life and death for them.

"There is going to be an eclectic group of people there," Nemitz said, "working class folks, anarchists, and anti-globalization people."

Junior Molly Lowe said, "I'm really excited about going; it's a good chance for people to get their voices heard and opinions out. It's our right and our duty to speak out against social injustices."

Sophomore Lauren Reed echoed these sentiments. "It is our duty as citizens to creatively and noisily join with the international community to prevent these decisions from taking place, all the while promoting alternatives such as fair trade, horizontalism, sustainable living and local knowledge."

This is some people's first big rally, including first-year Eliza Hudson.

"I feel good about the protest," Hudson said. "I trust the people I am going with. I am impressed with Guilford and its ability to train people, get them contacts, and not just send them down."

This is what people are up in arms against, what they're risking arrest for. This is why they're going.



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Almost 40 Guilford students have gone to Miami to protest the FTAA

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