

Giuliana Sgrena forced to shut up about what happened to her in Iraq

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The Bush-lovin' Italian government wants (1) Giuliana Sgrena to shut up about what happened to her in Iraq, and she has apparently taken the hint (2), and now claims that she does not believe the Americans were trying to kill her (3). I don't blame her for this, as we don't need this issue to blunt the effect of the reporting she will be doing regarding what took place in Falluja. We are able to draw our own conclusions on what happened to her:

1. Sgrena said:

"A soldier opened the door on the right-hand side. When he saw us, I had the impression that he was upset. I seem to remember him saying, 'Oh shit!' And when more turned up in an armoured car, I had the sensation that they were unhappy about what had happened."(4)

From that, we are to believe that the shooting was an accident. What if the soldier who opened the door said 'Oh shit!' when he realized they had shot the wrong person?

2. From the Associated Press (5):

"U.S. troops who mistakenly killed an Italian intelligence agent last week on the road to Baghdad's international airport were part of extra security provided by the U.S. Army to protect U.S. Ambassador John Negroponte, a U.S. official said Thursday.

Italian intelligence agent Nicola Calipari was killed Friday when U.S. troops opened fire on a car carrying him and Italian journalist Giuliana Sgrena, who had just been freed from insurgents.

'The mobile patrol was there to enhance security because Ambassador Negroponte was expected through,' U.S. Embassy spokesman Robert Callahan said, confirming reports in Italian media. The newspaper La Repubblica reported Wednesday that the checkpoint had been 'set up to protect the passage of Ambassador Negroponte.'

In case you're wondering what the American Ambassador to Iraq [and designate National Director of Intelligence] was doing driving around the dangerous roads of Baghdad when he could be flying, there is an attempt at a vague explanation:

“Senior U.S. officials such as the ambassador, who is by far seen as the most important American in Iraq, normally travel by helicopter to avoid roadside bombs and insurgent attacks along the airport road, which are frequent. But U.S. officials in Iraq often vary travel routes and methods so as not to be predictable.”

You’ll note that the explanation makes no sense. Would you expose yourself to gunfire on the ground just to avoid being ‘predictable’?

3. The Official Story has been elaborated to explain that Negroonte was traveling by road because a storm made (6) flying impossible. If you believe that, you have to swallow the story about the supposed temporary checkpoint that fired on Sgrena’s car. Negroonte was traveling to a dinner appointment at 7:30, so must have passed the area before 7:30. Sgrena’s car was shot at 8:55. What was a ‘temporary’ checkpoint set up supposedly just to facilitate the passage of Negroonte’s convoy doing still in place an hour and a half later? As an American embassy official explained (7):

“A mobile one is one set up for a purpose and goes away.”

Negroonte supposedly made the return trip by helicopter.

4. Based on evidence of where the ambush occurred, the fact the car appears to have been blocked by an American tank (8), and the precise bullet holes inconsistent with the massive amount of wild shooting that is claimed to have occurred, one can conclude that the attack on Sgrena’s car was a professional hit (9).

5. An Italian general was the liaison with the American military. He informed them (10) that an Italian national traveling with two officials would need access to the airport, but apparently did not know the purpose of the mission. Although he did not know the description of the car, the Americans had that description after it passed the first checkpoint. It is very implausible to think that the Americans weren’t fully aware (11) of what was going on.

Adding it all up, it appears that John Negroonte became aware that Giuliana Sgrena was leaving Iraq with dangerous information about what American forces had been up to in committing war crimes in Falluja. Negroonte’s experience in Honduras (12) gave him a certain expertise in covering up human rights violations, and he ordered his own personal bodyguard to assassinate Sgrena in a staged incident which was supposed to look like the usual problem at an American checkpoint in Iraq. The almost complete lack of damage to the car is inconsistent with the wild firing that is supposed to have happened, unless the Americans were intending to miss. The one shot that was supposed to count was the sniper shot to Sgrena, but that bullet was taken by Nicola Calipari. Had the shot hit Sgrena, we would never have heard about any of the details as the only witness who would have talked would be dead. It would simply be another unfortunate checkpoint incident, the Pentagon would have apologized, and all would soon be forgotten. No wonder the soldier said ‘Oh shit!’ To John Negroonte’s many skills we can now add a new one: hit man.

Notes

1. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200503/s1321953.htm>

<http://xtramsn.co.nz/news/0,,11965-4190767,00.html>

2. <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/FA3EE8E8-B37B-418A-8F30-81ACBF6ED27E.htm>

3. <http://news.independent.co.uk/europe/story.jsp?story=619206>

4. <http://news.independent.co.uk/europe/story.jsp?story=619206>

5. http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/news/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1000836000
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/worldlatest/story/0,1280,-4855751,00.html>

6. <http://www.nytimes.com/auth/login?URI=http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/12/international/middleeast/12iraq.html&OP=2ee2494f...>
<http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory?id=571544>

7. <http://www.turkishpress.com/news.asp?id=38449>

8. <http://sf.indymedia.org/news/2005/03/1711903.php>

9. <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=m10289>

10. <http://www.news.com.au/story/0,10117,12517585-29277,00.html>
<http://cnews.canoe.ca/CNEWS/World/Iraq/2005/03/10/956367-ap.html>
<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,150158,00.html>

11. <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=m10315>

12. <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=54&ItemID=5852>

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