

Iraq War Veteran and Anti-War Activist Tomas Young Dies at 34

By [RT](#)

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Iraq war veteran Tomas Young (Reuters / Mark Blinch)

Tomas Young, an Iraq War veteran and outspoken critic of the conflict he was severely injured in, died on Monday at the age of 34 – a day before Veteran’s Day. There is no word about the cause of death.

Tomas Young enlisted in the military two days after 9/11 because he wanted to strike back at those responsible for the attack on America. Instead of being deployed to Afghanistan after joining the Army, he was deployed to Iraq. He was shot in the chest and paralyzed during an insurgent attack in Sadr City just a few days after beginning his tour of duty.

His injuries resulted in quadriplegia, paralysis from the neck down. Young became a significant critic of the war in Iraq – during which 4,488 soldiers and Marines died in Iraq and 30,000 were wounded – and an early member of Iraq Veterans Against the War advocacy group.

Following his return home, he was the subject of the 2008 documentary “*Body of War*,” which chronicled his life after Iraq.

On the 10th Anniversary of the Iraq War, he wrote a letter addressed to President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney, in which he mentioned his poor health and heavily criticized their decision to invade Iraq.

Titled “[A Message to George W. Bush and Dick Cheney from a Dying Veteran](#),” the letter was published in Truthdig and read:

“I write this letter, my last letter, to you, Mr. Bush and Mr. Cheney. I write not because I think you grasp the terrible human moral consequences of your life lies, manipulation and thirst for wealth and power. I write this letter because, before my own death, I want to make it clear that I, and hundreds of thousands of my fellow veterans, along with millions of my fellow citizens, along with hundreds of millions more in Iraq and the Middle East, know fully who you are and what you have done.

“You may evade justice but in our eyes you are each guilty of egregious war crimes, of plunder and, finally of murder, including the murder of thousands of young Americans – my fellow veterans – who’s future you stole.”

This letter was supposed to be his last and mark his death in 2013, since he planned to stop his medication and stop eating via his feeding tube. He later reversed that decision to spend more time with his wife.

Tomas Young, one of the first veterans to oppose the Iraq war, passed away today. He was 34 and had been badly... <http://t.co/OM1e36Je5j>

— Cynthia Dixon (@cynthetta) [November 11, 2014](#)

In an interview with RT last year, Young said:

“... Make sure your son and daughter understands they don’t get to decide when or where they go to war. It is rich, predominantly white men in the House and Senate that have the power to send children of other parents – but not their own children – off to die [and] be injured in a senseless war. And I would like current or future politicians to make sure every avenue of diplomacy, and what you have, are exhausted before sending young men and women off to death and serious injury.”

This is where it all began! Tomas Young – thanks for shining so bright! [#veteran...](#) <http://t.co/4ASVj5BVTX>

— Tina Garnanez (@Obeyanddisobey) [November 11, 2014](#)

Phil Donahue and Ellen Spiro took three years to make “*Body of War*,” highlighting Young’s life and activism, how he handled his injuries and his need for ‘round-the-clock care. Donahue visited Young last month in his home in Seattle.

“*He was a political animal and he had a political statement that he wanted to make,*” he told BillMoyers.com. “*Tomas wanted people to know that this is the drama being played out in houses across the country occupied by thousands of young men and women who fought in the war,*” he said, referring to injuries that left Young in need of constant care.

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