

My Truth

The Bullets were intended for Giuliana Sgrena:

By [Giuliana Sgrena](#)

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In what visibly constitutes a cover-up, The Pentagon's preliminary investigation confirms that "the soldiers had followed their rules of engagement and should therefore face no charges of dereliction of duty." The important question is not the soldiers, but who in the military hierarchy gave the order to shoot, with the intent to kill Giuliana Sgrena. The probe was conducted Brig. Gen. Peter Vangjel, who was appointed by the top U.S. Army general in Iraq General George Casey.

"The US Embassy in Baghdad has said the soldiers fired from a checkpoint set up temporarily to boost security for US Ambassador John Negroponte as he drove to a dinner meeting with General George Casey, the top US commander in Iraq."

[According to Wayne Madsen \(http://globalresearch.ca/articles/MAD503A.html\)](http://globalresearch.ca/articles/MAD503A.html),

"Calipari and Sgrena, according to well-placed Italian sources, had irrefutable evidence of U.S. war crimes in the siege of Fallujah, involving the use of napalm, mustard gas, and nerve gas. Sgrena works for the Italian daily, Il Manifesto.... The U.S. hit team wanted to kill Calipari and Sgrena because they had intimate knowledge of the Iraqi resistance and how some loyalists of the U.S.-supported Iraqi regime may have cooperated with the alleged Zarqawi forces to seize Western hostages and decapitate them on videos for propaganda purposes."

In an article published in The Italian Il Manifesto, Giuliana Sgrena confirms that the bullets were intended to kill her. In an act of courage intelligence officer Nicola Calipieri gave his life to save Giuliana Sgrena.

Below is the excerpt, followed by the complete article published in March.

Giuliana Sgrena writes in Il Manifesto:

"The driver twice called the embassy and Italy to say that we were heading towards the airport that I knew was heavily patrolled by US troops.

They told me that we were less than a kilometre away... when... I only remember fire.

At that point, a rain of fire and bullets hit us, silencing forever the cheerful voices of a few minutes earlier.

The driver started yelling that we were Italians. "We are Italians, we are Italians."

Nicola Calipari threw himself on me to protect me and immediately, I repeat, immediately I heard his last breath as he was dying on me.

I must have felt physical pain. I didn't know why.

But then it came to me in a flash, and my mind went immediately to the things the captors had told me.

They declared that they felt fully committed to freeing me but I had to be careful, 'Out there are the Americans, who don't want you to go back'.

Then, I had considered those words superfluous and ideological. But at that moment, they risked acquiring the flavour of the bitterest of truths. At this time I cannot tell you the rest."

"There was no bright light, no signal," she told Italian La 7 TV in response to a US military account.

"We were driving slowly, about 40-50 km/h (25-30mph)," the driver, an unidentified Italian agent, said according to Italy's Corriere della Sera.

Ms Sgrena's editor, Gabriele Polo, said he was told by Italian officials that 300 to 400 rounds were fired at the car.

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by

Giuliana Sgrena

Il Manifesto

6 March 2005

I'm still in the dark. Friday was the most dramatic day of my life. I had been in captivity for many days. I had just spoken with my captors. It had been days they were telling me I would be released. I was living in waiting for this moment. They were speaking about things that only later I would have understood the importance of. They were speaking about problems "related to transfers."

I learned to understand what was going on by the behavior of my two guards, the two guards that had me under custody every day. One in particular showed much attention to my desires. He was incredibly cheerful. To understand exactly what was going on I provocatively asked him if he was happy because I was going or because I was staying. I was shocked and happy when for the first time he said, "I only know that you will go, but I don't know when." To confirm the fact that something new was happening both of them came into my room and started comforting me and kidding: "Congratulations they said you are leaving for Rome." For Rome, that's exactly what they said.

I experienced a strange sensation because that word evoked in me freedom but also projected in me an immense sense of emptiness. I understood that it was the most difficult moment of my kidnapping and that if everything I had just experienced until then was "certain," now a huge vacuum of uncertainty was opening, one heavier than the other. I

changed my clothes. They came back: "We'll take you and don't give any signals of your presence with us otherwise the Americans could intervene." It was confirmation that I didn't want to hear; it was altogether the most happy and most dangerous moment. If we bumped into someone, meaning American military, there would have been an exchange of fire. My captors were ready and would have answered. My eyes had to be covered. I was already getting used to momentary blindness. What was happening outside? I only knew that it had rained in Baghdad. The car was proceeding securely in a mud zone. There was a driver plus the two captors. I immediately heard something I didn't want to hear. A helicopter was hovering at low altitude right in the area that we had stopped. "Be calm, they will come and look for you...in 10 minutes they will come looking for." They spoke in Arabic the whole time, a little bit of French, and a lot in bad English. Even this time they were speaking that way.

Then they got out of the car. I remained in the condition of immobility and blindness. My eyes were padded with cotton, and I had sunglasses on. I was sitting still. I thought what should I do. I start counting the seconds that go by between now and the next condition, that of liberty? I had just started mentally counting when a friendly voice came to my ears "Giuliana, Giuliana. I am Nicola, don't worry I spoke to Gabriele Polo (editor in chief of Il Manifesto). Stay calm. You are free." They made me take my cotton bandage off, and the dark glasses. I felt relieved, not for what was happening and I couldn't understand but for the words of this "Nicola." He kept on talking and talking, you couldn't contain him, an avalanche of friendly phrases and jokes. I finally felt an almost physical consolation, warmth that I had forgotten for some time.

The car kept on the road, going under an underpass full of puddles and almost losing control to avoid them. We all incredibly laughed. It was liberating. Losing control of the car in a street full of water in Baghdad and maybe wind up in a bad car accident after all I had been through would really be a tale I would not be able to tell. Nicola Calipari sat next to me. The driver twice called the embassy and in Italy that we were heading towards the airport that I knew was heavily patrolled by U.S. troops. They told me that we were less than a kilometer away...when...I only remember fire. At that point, a rain of fire and bullets hit us, shutting up forever the cheerful voices of a few minutes earlier.

The driver started yelling that we were Italians. "We are Italians, we are Italians." Nicola Calipari threw himself on me to protect me and immediately, I repeat, immediately I heard his last breath as he was dying on me. I must have felt physical pain. I didn't know why. But then I realized my mind went immediately to the things the captors had told me. They declared that they were committed to the fullest to freeing me but I had to be careful, "the Americans don't want you to go back." Then when they had told me I considered those words superfluous and ideological. At that moment they risked acquiring the flavor of the bitterest of truths, at this time I cannot tell you the rest.

This was the most dramatic day. But the months that I spent in captivity probably changed forever my existence. One month alone with myself, prisoner of my profound certainties. Every hour was an impious verification of my work, sometimes they made fun of me, and they even stretch as far as asking why I wanted to leave, asking me stay. They insisted on personal relationships. It was them that made me think of the priorities that too often we cast aside. They were pointing to family. "Ask your husband for help," they would say. And I also said in the first video that I think you all saw, "My life has changed." As Iraqi engineer Ra'ad Ali Abdulaziz of the organization A Bridge For [Baghdad], who had been kidnapped with the two Simones had told me "my life is not the same anymore." I didn't understand.

Now I know what he meant. Because I experienced the harshness of truth, it's difficult proposition (of truth) and the fragility of those who attempt it.

In the first days of my kidnapping I did not shed a tear. I was simply furious. I would say in the face of my captors: "But why do you kidnap me, I'm against the war." And at that point they would start a ferocious dialogue. "Yes because you go speak to the people, we would never kidnap a journalist that remains closed in a hotel and because the fact that you say you're against the war could be a decoy." And I would answer almost to provoke them: "It's easy to kidnap a weak woman like me, why don't you try with the American military." I insisted on the fact that they could not ask the Italian government to withdraw the troops. Their political go-between could not be the government but the Italian people, who were and are against the war.

It was a month on a see-saw shifting between strong hope and moments of great depression. Like when it was a first Sunday after the Friday they kidnapped me, in the house in Baghdad where I was kept, and on top of which was a satellite dish they showed me the Euronews Newscast. There I saw a huge picture of me hanging from Rome City Hall. I felt relieved. Right after though the claim by the Jihad that announced my execution if Italy did not withdraw the troops arrived. I was terrified. But I immediately felt reassured that it wasn't them. I didn't have to believe these announcements, they were "provocative." Often I asked the captor that from his face I could identify a good disposition but whom like his colleagues resembled a soldier: "Tell me the truth. Do you want to kill me?" Although many times there have been windows of communications with them. "Come watch a movie on TV" they would say while a Wahabi roamed around the house and took care of me. The captors seemed to me a very religious group, in continuous prayer on the Koran. But Friday, at the time of the release, the one that looked the most religious and who woke up every morning at 5 a.m. to pray incredibly congratulated me shaking my hand, a behavior unusual for an Islamic fundamentalist — and he would add "if you behave yourself you will leave immediately." Then an almost funny incident. One of the two captors came to me surprised both because the TV was showing big posters of me in European cities and also for Totti. Yes Totti. He declared he was a fan of the Roma soccer team and he was shocked that his favorite player went to play with the writing "Liberate Giuliana" on his T-shirt.

I lived in an enclave in which I had no more certainties. I found myself profoundly weak. I failed in my certainties; I said that we had to tell about that dirty war. And I found myself in the alternative either to stay in the hotel and wait or to end up kidnapped because of my work. We don't want anyone else anymore. The kidnappers would tell me. But I wanted to tell about the bloodbath in Fallujah from the words of the refugees. And that morning the refugees, or some of their leaders would not listen to me. I had in front of me the accurate confirmation of the analysis of what the Iraqi society had become as a result of the war and they would throw their truth in my face: "We don't want anybody why didn't you stay in your home. What can this interview do for us?" The worse collateral effect, the war that kills communication was falling on me. To me, I who had risked everything, challenging the Italian government who didn't want journalists to reach Iraq and the Americans who don't want our work to be witnessed of what really became of that country with the war and notwithstanding that which they call elections. Now I ask myself. Is their refusal a failure?

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