



I have to confess: I was suckered by the trailer for American Sniper. It's a masterpiece of short-form tension – a confluence of sound and image so viscerally evocative it feels almost domineering. You cannot resist. You will be stressed out. You will feel. Or, as I believe I put it in a blog about the trailer, "Clint Eastwood's American Sniper trailer will ruin your pants."

But however effective it is as a piece of cinema, even a cursory look into the film's backstory – and particularly the public reaction to its release – raises disturbing questions about which stories we choose to codify into truth, and whose, and why, and the messy social costs of transmogrifying real life into entertainment.

Chris Kyle, a US navy Seal from Texas, was deployed to Iraq in 2003 and claimed to have killed more than 255 people during his six-year military career. In his memoir, Kyle reportedly described killing as "fun", something he "loved"; he was unwavering in his belief that everyone he shot was a "bad guy". "I hate the damn savages," he wrote. "I couldn't give a flying fuck about the Iraqis." He bragged about murdering looters during Hurricane Katrina, though that was never substantiated.

He was murdered in 2013 at a Texas gun range by a 25-year-old veteran reportedly suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

However we diverge politically, I have enough faith in Eastwood's artistry and intellect to trust that he is not a black-and-white ideologue – or, at least, that he knows that the limitations of such a worldview would make for an extremely dull movie. But the same can't be said for Eastwood's subject, or, as response to the film has demonstrated, many of his fans.

**TVNL Comment: Really worth a read, folks....and a serious look at the way we view those who kill in our name.**

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