26th KZGN TV Talking Points Editorial

Today’s topic: What does it take to get the media to cover a real hero?

First, I need to address a mistake I made in last Tuesday’s editorial. Last Tuesday’s editorial was titled, “Do we really need to consider terrorist attacks when deciding where to build a new stadium?” The editorial stated that former Department of Homeland Security Secretary Ridge was an Obama Administration official. I was wrong. He was a Bush Administration official. To my viewers and readers, I apologize for the error.

As a matter of fact, tonight’s editorial has been totally redone. Last week, I had received an email story from one of our viewers. The story had me outraged, and I wrote a whole editorial for today based on it. But before finalizing my editorial, I decided to check the source closer. It turns out while the story was true, the story was very old. But the context I had received it under was that it was a current story. It was not. To anyone that was annoyed with my mistake, let me assure you, I am sorry for the error. I have learned from it. But, it still did inspire today’s editorial.

“What does it take to get the media to cover a real hero’s death?”

Have you ever noticed how much time the media can devote to the passing of one of their own? Have you also noticed how much time they can devote to a Hollywood actor or actress when they pass? Well, this editorial is not meant to demean these people or their professions in any way. But I’m still amazed at how the media covers the deaths of these people. Last time I checked, we all got dressed the same way. But when it comes to getting dressed, I would say many of these “famous” people probably even have assistants helping them get dressed.

Well, let’s think about the country’s real heroes: the men and women of the armed forces. How are they covered when they die by the media? How often are they covered the same as these media or Hollywood idols? Almost at least once a week, we get bombarded by the media by one of their own, or someone from Hollywood dying. Heck, just look at how much time was devoted last week to just the plane crash of Harrison Ford. As a matter of fact, I heard another update in the news yesterday about him. This was covered on every network, over and over, daily for days. Would they ever give this much footage to a fallen military hero?

How about this example (I admit this is a bit dated, but it emphasizes my sentiment): You are critically wounded and dying in the jungle somewhere in the central highlands of Vietnam. It's November 11, 1967. You’re at landing zone x-ray. Your unit is outnumbered 8-1, and the enemy fire is so intense from 100 yards away, that your commanding officer has ordered the medevac helicopters to stop coming in. You're lying there, listening to the enemy machine guns and you know you're not getting out. Your family is half way around the world, 12,000 miles away, and you'll never see them again. As the world starts to fade in and out, you know this is the day. Then, over the machine gun noise, you faintly hear the sound of a helicopter. You look up to see a huey coming in. It doesn't seem real because no Medevac markings are on it. Captain Ed Freeman is coming in for you. He's not medevac, so it's not his job. But he heard the radio call and decided he's flying his huey down into the machine gun fire anyway, even after the medevacs were ordered not to come. He's coming anyway. He drops it in and sits there in the machine gun fire, as they load 3 of you at a time on board. Then, he flies you up and out through the gunfire to the doctors and nurses and safety. And, *he kept coming back*!! 13 more times, Until all the wounded were out. No one knew until the mission was over that the captain had been hit 4 times in the legs and left arm. He took 29 of you and your buddies out that day. Some would not have made it without the captain and his huey. Medal of Honor recipient, Captain Ed Freeman, United States Air Force, died in 2009 at the age of 70, in Boise, Idaho. May God bless and rest his soul. Even though this is a story from 2009, it illustrates how media coverage could be provided. I know there are equally heroic stories going on even as we speak. But when will we hear any story from the main stream media about these real heroes? There are even many police and fire officers that have sacrificed much for us. What about them? Again, I don’t mean this to demean anyone’s contribution to society. It seems more attention is given to the media’s own people and Hollywood people when they die.

In conclusion, how about it mainstream media? How about covering real heroes as much as you cover you own people when they die? I ask you viewers, if you know of any such stories, please send them to KZGN. We’d love to cover the stories of our local heroes.

I’m Tom Wiknich, and that’s what I think. If you have any comments about this editorial, or would like to discuss or recommend a topic, I’d like to hear from you. Please email them to info@kzgn.net