

# Judith Miller Dismantles Jon Stewart; Stewart Declared Winner



I was perusing Twitter late last night when I couldn't help but notice that the name "Judith Miller" was *trending*. I knew that the former *New York Times* journalist was promoting a new book about her coverage (from over a decade ago) of the build-up to the Iraq War, but I was surprised that she was the talk of the town on social media.

Curious, I clicked on her name and was immediately overwhelmed with comments and headlines like "Jon Stewart destroys Judith Miller over Iraq!", "Jon Stewart shows Judith Miller what REAL journalism is!", and "Judith Miller's still lying on the floor after that beating. Owned!" There were literally thousands of them, and they weren't just auto-generated from phantom accounts. They came from actual people (some from popular news sites) that had seen Miller's appearance last night on the Daily Show, and absolutely believed that comedian Jon Stewart had verbally torn her to shreds.

You see, Miller has taken a *lot* of heat from the American left over the years for the pieces she wrote in the *New York Times* in 2002 and 2003 that substantiated the belief of intelligence agencies all over the world that Saddam Hussein *did* in fact have a significant, active WMD program in Iraq. Even though her articles were based on information from a variety of well-placed sources within the intelligence community that had steered her right on multiple big stories in the past, the

liberal mantra is that Miller was essentially a stooge for the *neocons* in the Bush administration. They think she allowed herself to be used as a propaganda tool by the likes of Dick Cheney to take our country to war.

Miller's stated explanation for why she wrote her new book, *The Story: A Reporter's Journey*, is that she wanted to dispel the many myths and popular misconceptions surrounding what our country knew and what it didn't prior to the Iraq War, and also to explain her reporting on it.

Being that Jon Stewart is an anti-war liberal who has wholeheartedly subscribed to (and perpetuated) several false narratives on Iraq, I envisioned that the interview was probably every bit as rabid as it was being described.

Then, I actually watched it.

Stewart did indeed take an uncomfortably stern tone with Miller, venting his frustrations over Iraq and asking tough, accusatory questions that at times felt more like part of a censure than an interview. Still, they were fair questions, and they were perfectly legitimate.

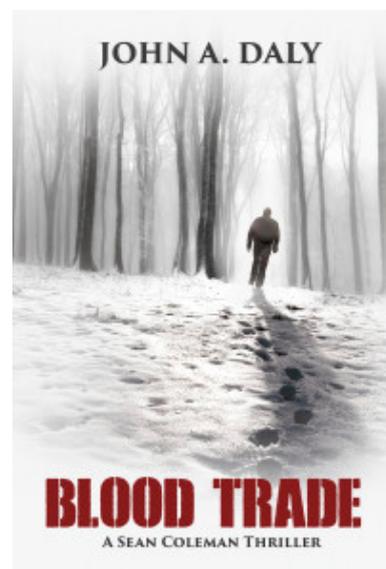
What surprised me was Miller. She was perfectly composed, and effectively dismantled each and every charge thrown her way. She explained her reporting methodology in great detail, and described her diligence in presenting the best available information to the American public. She also pointed out that there was a strong consensus on Iraq, not just in the intelligence community, but also among our political leaders (including the Clinton Administration) and the media as a whole. She left that interview having validated her journalistic integrity.

Stewart, on the other hand, left with very little.

The notion that Miller had somehow been "destroyed" by Jon Stewart, or that he had "wiped the floor" with her wasn't just

inaccurate... It was pure delusion. It's just not a conclusion that any objective mind could have possibly reached, even as the same headlines continue to pour out across news websites this morning. Heck, I doubt Stewart himself thinks he ended up on the winning side of that exchange—if there was even a *winner* to be had.

Yet, because he was aggressive, angry, and venting the frustrations of many liberals, he was somehow deemed to have resoundingly “won” the *debate*. It apparently didn't even matter what Miller had to say.



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I find that incredibly sad.

Our nation is so depressingly partisan right now that we've completely shut ourselves off to reasoned, constructive dialogue. Facts just aren't important. We're on the constant lookout for some sort of *knock-out punch* that bolsters our point of view, and we turn a blind eye to anyone who challenges that point of view.

Instead of placing our faith and smarts in the hands of

comedians who use the power of hindsight to deliver stinging one-liners, we should think about investing in our own objectivity, and listening to each other every now and then. We'd most certainly learn something.

Unfortunately, objectivity isn't nearly as entertaining as grand displays of self-righteousness.

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