

Dispelling the Falsehoods of *Washington Monthly* Magazine

HOW THE LIBERAL, LEFT WING MEDIA LIES TO DESTROY OUR MISSION AND OUR MEN

by

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Please bear with me, as this article is long. It's lengthy because it sometimes takes a lot longer to unravel a falsehood than to tell it in the first place. But I think you will find it worth reading. You see, I'm mad as hell. I am mad that the politically motivated, Islam-loving, terrorist-apologizing media continues to paint the Muslim extremists as reasonable, decent people. I am even madder that when they cannot convince the public of the rightness of that belief, that they then paint us – that is everyone who works to keep this country safe from terror attacks – as *unreasonable, indecent* people. I'm going to tell the truth about some very decent and dedicated professionals who were scandalously and unfairly attacked by the *Washington Monthly* in its recent March/April 2011 issue. I'm going to explain how they tell portions of the truth, twisted to convey a false impression. I'm going to tell how the very information they were given was obtained under false pretenses.

First, I want everyone to know who is writing this. I just retired in January (2011) after 40 years as a police officer, all of them spent with the City of Chester, Pennsylvania PD. Other than time in the National Guard and a short stint in hospital security, this was the only job I ever had. I was the son of the police chief. I retired as a major and commanded the SWAT team (which I started), the Dive Search and Rescue Team and the Tactical Dive Team (both of which I started), as our jurisdiction on the southwestern edges of Philadelphia had seven miles of Delaware River, on which were situated numerous potential terror targets. After 9/11, I ensured that my department had training in skills outside conventional law enforcement for counter-terrorism operations. Many of these efforts were detailed in my article "Counter-Terrorism On A Budget," published in *Counter-Terrorist Magazine*, April, 2009. Through that work I quickly became acquainted with the Archangel Group and John Giduck. Over the past ten years I have been to international anti-terrorism conferences they have hosted, and through that met an array of foreign dignitaries, intelligence officers, special forces commanders, as well as their American counterparts. I have traveled to remarkable places around the world with John, and had experiences beyond anything I could have ever imagined as a police officer in the United States. I have attended training that John and others at Archangel did, and have had the honor of doing training for them. Therefore, I am in a unique position to address the issues raised in the article.

This article was entitled, "How We Train Our Cops to Fear Islam," and was written by Meg Stalcup and Joshua Craze. In it, the authors clearly fail to convince anyone that police should not be receiving training in counter-terrorism, or that police shouldn't waste time being informed

of Islam, Islamic extremists, or the Islamic perpetrators of terroristic acts. So, they do what all good politically and ideologically motivated journalists do: they attack the people they have singled out as those who represent what they see as the problem. They seem to have concluded that if they can malign those professionals and their reputations, they will still have accomplished their goals. In this case the people they targeted were Sam Kharoba, whom I do not know; John Giduck; Lt. Col. Joe Bierly (who I know and respect); and Maj. Richard Hughbank, a recently retired Army Military Police officer, and author of two books on terrorism. In addition to a law degree, Giduck has a master's degree in Russian studies and a Ph.D. in Middle East studies he earned at Kings College in London. I do not know Richard personally, but am familiar with his work and the fine reputation he has as a knowledgeable professional and who served our nation for 22 years in uniform. As I have no contact with Mr. Kharoba I cannot address the specific allegations against him. But if the skewed and misleading reporting, and baseless character assassination they engaged in with the others is representative of their entire article, I would have serious doubts about anything they wrote about him.

In their version of "fair" investigative journalism, Stalcup and Craze recite slanted and not-*completely*-inaccurate facts about Giduck, presenting them in the most unflattering fashion they could, and used that to question his integrity, his life experiences, his credentials and the work he does. First, he was contacted by Craze and told that he was writing an article on the need for American police to be better prepared to respond to terror attacks. He used a reference that Giduck knew and respected, but failed to confirm. This was repeated with both retired Marine colonel Bierly and retired Army major Hughbank, only Bierly was told by Stalcup that she was doing a study on that very issue for her Ph.D. Hughbank was fed this very same lie by Craze. In their cases as well, they appeared with the name of someone as a reference who was an impeccable person in the target's mind, and they all failed to verify what they were told. So, shame on the three of them for not checking these defrauders out. Certainly, having mentioned that they were students at UC Berkeley should have sounded a warning bell. But that simple act of naïve trust hardly warranted what they got for their honesty and willingness to help we police get better trained for what will – once again – be the most challenging and deadly threat to our citizens that we will ever be called into.

In response to questions about how Giduck knew Russian spetsnaz soldiers whom he interviewed in the aftermath of the Beslan school siege in September 2004, he explained that years before he had known the former director of the KGB for the St. Petersburg region while working on his master's degree at the university there. You see, the wife of that man – KGB Lt. Gen. and Director Anatoli Kurkov – was one of the professors in charge of the foreign students. Through her, John met Gen. Kurkov. This is something that John typically does not talk about in public or during trainings, unless specifically asked. John was interested in learning Russian SAMBO and asked Kurkov, with whom he had developed a personal and professional relationship, if he could help him find instruction. From his early training by Russian spetsnaz instructors, John's continued interest in Russian hand-to-hand combat systems saw him meeting

and training with many others from various spetsnaz units. That, and growing friendships with these elite soldiers, ultimately resulted in him getting to learn to drive Russian tanks, APCs, do underwater combat with their naval commandos (what they call their Anti-SEAL teams), and do counter-terror hostage-rescue training. He told Craze that he had friends in the elite Alpha counter-terror group, Vityaz (a similar group under the MVD), the SOBR rapid reaction force, Rus and others. However, in the article they say that they called both Rus and Vityaz to verify this. Rus supposedly said that they never heard of John, and Vityaz supposedly confirmed that he had attended some type of “commercial” course; however, he had never done any counter-terror training.

To think that Russian spetsnaz units can be called by looking up their numbers in a phone book is ridiculous. Even if they had somehow gotten a number, would anyone really believe that they would tell these unknown people the truth about anything, if they even talked to them at all? And would the one person they spoke to necessarily know who John was? When asked, Giduck said, “They obviously didn’t want confirmation. If they had, they could have simply asked me and I would have put them in touch with the right people. What they wanted was not to be able to verify it so they could try to attack my credibility.” Igor Livits was a sergeant on an elite Soviet military team that guarded its nuclear missile silos. He says, “That is just naive for them to think they would be told anything by anyone in Russia.”

Retired Green Beret Sergeant Major John Anderson, founding director of Archangel and longtime chairman of the board, gives the lie to what they did. After several years of Giduck training there, SGM Anderson was given permission to go on some of his trips. “The physicality of it was brutal, even by [American] Special Forces standards,” he said. “No one used a mouthpiece and there were no pads. The obstacle course was bad.” Anderson also confirms that all of the trainings he attended were conducted on a brand new compound of Vityaz on the Balashikha Army Base outside of Moscow. “They did everything John has said. This included shooting with Alpha instructors, hostage-rescue and a lot of hand-to-hand combat. They had a new multi-story, live fire shoot house. We lived on base and slept in the barracks.” Mike Rich worked for Archangel for years, and was one of the first people John started taking with him for training. He is an instructor in Russian hand-to-hand combat systems, and holds a black belt. Now a senior vice president with one of the largest security firms in the world, he said “I was there when Col. Sergei Lisyuk, the commander of Vityaz and their version of a Medal of Honor Recipient, took his own sterling silver challenge coin out of his pocket, and his own beret off of his head, and presented them to John after getting through a particularly grueling program.”

Livits, who is now a U.S. citizen and another director of Archangel, went along on several training trips. He said, “I had lost touch with everyone from spetsnaz since I left Russia and got to know some of the most elite soldiers and commanders over there through John. This training was not for everyone. I have since maintained relationships with them all and continue to return to Russia to train with the spetsnaz and FSB [KGB] every year for the skills necessary in my own security work.”

Yuri Ferdigalov was a GRU spetsnaz commando, severely wounded in the Nagorno-Karabakh war. Now a contract consultant and instructor with Archangel he traveled to Beslan with John as the Beslan siege was happening, then spent three months there with him over three trips interviewing the spetsnaz who fought the battle out, FSB officials, other government agents and townspeople. Yuri confirms that they spent a great deal of time with officers and commanders from Alpha, SOBR and Rus in addition to FSB [KGB] agents involved in the government's operation. I can verify the same thing as I went with John and Yuri on their third and final trip. While there we did days of interviews of Rus commanders, even on their base. The officers threw a party for us in their offices in one of the barracks and I still have the unit watch with the Rus insignia and unit history and photo album that they all signed and presented to me. The most meaningful thing for me during our days with Rus, however, was when they asked me to make presentation on U.S. law enforcement SWAT capabilities and training. I also went to the home of the Alpha officer John begins the Beslan book by describing returning from the school siege, who was struggling emotionally. He had been severely wounded in another operation against terrorists about to take a second school in January 2005. He was in a FSB hospital but they released him for that night just so John could get to see his friend. Finally, the men from Alpha and SOBR threw a big party for us one night. It was a great honor. I believe that I am currently the only American law enforcement officer to have interviewed the warriors that were deployed to the battle that was Beslan.

Ron Lousberg is a former international full contact karate champion. He is also one of the instructors Archangel uses when training Green Berets and SWAT in hand-to-hand combat and close-quarters firearms. "I've gone on two trips with John to train with the spetsnaz. It was unbelievably hard, even harder than the training I did in Japan when competing there over the years," he said. "The Russians are incredible at fighting. Their entire emphasis is on close quarters fighting. That is why their tactics are so applicable to U.S. law enforcement. I also got to do some other things, such as hostage-rescue and bodyguard work. I got to meet everyone from commandos to generals, all because they were people John knew from his years there."

Professor Emeritus Walt Copley, Ph.D. destroys Stalcup and Craze's intimation that John did not know the head of the KGB in St. Petersburg. Dr. Copley is a retired Air Force officer who spent 22 years doing counter-espionage work for the U.S. military before earning his Ph.D. and becoming a college professor. "I was the chair of the Department of Criminal Justice at Metropolitan State College in Denver," he said. "I had tried for years to get a study abroad in Russia put together for my students, police and some of my old colleagues from the military. But no matter what I tried, no one ever had the contacts to get it done." Dr. Copley said that one day he was introduced to John as someone who might be able to help. "He said 'no problem' when I told him what I wanted to do," Copley said. "A week later we were on a plane to St. Petersburg. The first people I met through John were one former colonel in the KGB, in addition to former KGB Director Kurkov, plus a bunch of top ranking anti-organized crime unit cops. The program was the best thing I ever did. We took 40 people, and they all got training

presentations at the Moscow and St. Petersburg police academies, and the Tallinn, Estonia police headquarters. The best part was that Director Kurkov got us into the infamous Lubyanka, the KGB's headquarters in Moscow. They did presentations and we got a tour of the building. After reading their article, however, I'm surprised they didn't claim to have called the KGB too."

Anderson says that the first time he was at John's house in Colorado after he retired from Special Forces he was face-to-face with a retired KGB colonel who was visiting from Russia. But Kurkov even visited John in Colorado. When he and his wife were being hosted by Giduck, John Anderson held a dinner party for them at his house. "In all my years in Special Forces I never imagined I would have a KGB head in my own house. And I dare anyone to challenge my credibility or credentials," he said. Anderson readily admits that through John he has also become friends with everyone from Alpha commandos to commanders from other spetsnaz units.



John Giduck flanked by former KGB Director Anatoli Kurkov and his wife Nina, taken at Green Beret Sergeant Major John Anderson's house.

I, personally, have had the same kind of experiences. At a party John had at his home after one of Archangel's international conferences were two Afghan generals, including the minister of counter-terrorism in the Karzai administration; spetsnaz colonels; Mossad and Israeli state department officials; CIA; U.S. Special Forces; and many others. This included Vityaz commander, Col. Lisyuk who had traveled from Russia at John's request. There all those people were, together in John's kitchen and dining room, drinking and sharing stories of their lives and careers. Even the Afghans were drinking single malt scotch. Where else would anyone find that?

But I've been other places with John on behalf of Archangel too. We were in north Georgia during the Russian invasion in the summer of 2008. A few months later we were in Mumbai assessing that terror attack and the Indian response. John had arranged us to be taken through the target-sites and be briefed by two Indian special forces generals, including the former head of the National Security Guard (NSG), India's elite Delta-force type counter-terror unit and a number of others who took part in the operation. We were at the Ma'a lot school in northern Israel assessing that terror attack that created the model for school takeovers by terrorists. Through John's contact with the YAMAM hostage-rescue unit, they unsealed that section of the school for us. His international reach is impressive, and he seems to have top level colleagues and friends in governments and militaries all over the world." Anderson agrees with this even in the

breadth of their organization. “Historically Archangel’s board even had people on it from the U.S., Russia and Australia. There were Green Berets, a college professor, military intel, businesspeople, private security experts, former spetsnaz and FBI.”

Anderson says that all of this has given Giduck a unique skillset. “He brings a lawyer’s analytical mind to all of this. Combined with his time with the Russians, his experiences with terrorists and elite units around the world, as well as the years he spent studying terror tactics and events for his Ph.D., John has a very unique perspective and experiences in counter-terrorism,” the retired Green Beret said. “His mind for unconventional tactics and terrorism is superior to the vast majority of people I ever knew in 25 years in Special Forces.” Anderson adds: “This is why units like CAG [the Delta Force as it’s known outside the military] have used John for training and consulting. In some ways he is outside the box of even unconventional warfare units. This is probably due to the fact that he does not come from a military background. In all my time in Special Forces I was never allowed on their secure compound on Ft. Bragg. Yet John has been there a number of times and has taken me to help him with his work. He took me; I didn’t take him.”

For my part, I agree. As police, we have known for years that we need training, information and skills outside of conventional law enforcement, yet we refuse to listen to those who have that information just because they aren’t cops. In fact, we will even attack them, often on the internet, insisting that they don’t deserve to train us if they’re not cops. But if they were cops, they’d have the same problem the rest of us have. In all the training I got my department for counter-terrorism, not once was it provided by someone in law enforcement. My only test was whether the information they had was useful. If so, I didn’t care who they were or where they got it.

As part of all this work, John and I were even at Virginia Tech together immediately after Cho’s attack. We spent four years back and forth there and have just finished co-authoring a book on that event, called *Shooter Down!: The Dramatic, Untold Story of the Police Response to the Virginia Tech Massacre*. This book will dispel all of the false notions and lies about how the police there responded to that shooting that have – once again – been put forth by the media and that the world has believed. I also got to assist with final edits to his book on Beslan.

With regard to Beslan, the *Washington Monthly* also attacks the part of John’s book that talks about the rapes of older teenage girls that took place inside the school. “When we first got there all everyone was talking about were the rapes,” Yuri Ferdigalov said. “The spetsnaz, the government people, the psychologists who were there, the reporters and the townspeople all were telling us about how the terrorists brutalized these girls.” “Then somewhere along the line the story from the media changed,” Giduck said. “So many of them are apologists for these Islamist terrorists, and if they can’t excuse what they did they simply say it didn’t happen.” He points out that as sometimes happens, the political needs of both sides coincide. “The terrorists and their allies - the western press - don’t want the world to hear that they are brutal rapists. After all, they

can cut the heads off thousands of people, but they're too gentlemanly to rape a girl? But also the Russian government recognizes that it appears impotent and incapable of protecting its most innocent when people realize that they may have stood outside the school while girls were being brutalized and did nothing."

In December 2009 as John was finishing his doctoral dissertation on the evolution of terrorist mass-hostage siege tactics, including a detailed analysis of each of the major ones from Israel to the Netherlands, the four in Russia and even looking to Mumbai as a stepping stone in that tactical evolution, he had a spetsnaz colonel fly to his house to be debriefed. He had led teams into three of the rescue operations. John's was also given access to Russian government reports on the sieges and Alpha commanders had written dozens of pages in response to more than 100 questions John had sent them. Fluent Russian speakers Igor Livits, Lisa Tongren and Lance Alred helped John with the translation during a solid week of 18-hours-per-day questioning and document review. They all told me that when asked about the rapes at Beslan, that the colonel could only say: "The official position of my government now is that no rapes occurred."

In response to Stalcup and Craze citing journalist C.J. Chivers who wrote an article about Beslan for *Esquire* in June 2006, almost two years after the event, and who also insisted that no rapes occurred, Giduck said:

Chivers suffers from the same problem as the rest of us. He wasn't inside the school either. So just like me, he is left to report what others tell him. When Yuri and I arrived, that was what everyone was saying. My book was completed six months later, before the press and certainly the Russian government began changing their stories. I will report the truth, whatever it happens to be. But I don't have an agenda, I'm not going to skew the facts like others who want the terrorists to not come off as terrorists, but poor, downtrodden misunderstood victims of someone else. In their article Chivers challenges me to give the name of one girl who was raped at Beslan. I'm sure he would agree that almost 200,000 females are raped in America every year, but I bet he couldn't give the name of a single one of those either. That doesn't mean it didn't happen to them. And if I knew those names, does he think that I would do what he and Stalcup and Craze would do: disclose their identities and what they suffered to the world to satisfy my own ambitions? Maybe it should occur to him that if they haven't given their names, it might be because they don't want him to know. My book was written by February 2005. If Chivers' information was so available at that time, almost a year-and-a-half before he wrote his article, why didn't he write it then? Then we could have all benefited from his information.

Toward that, John's doctoral dissertation – which will soon be released as a book that also creates a predictive model for American police, military and government agencies on what the next mass-hostage siege will be like – presents all of the facts on both sides of the debate over whether girls were raped at Beslan. "To the extent I didn't claim to have the absolute truth on

that issue like others obviously have when I talked to Craze, I suppose it's not completely inaccurate to say that I couldn't give a better answer. I just wish they had reported the rest of the facts as well."

Bierly says, "I am sorry I ever spoke with them - they misrepresented themselves to me. I was honest in trying to answer their questions and they lied. I was told they were doing graduate/post-graduate work at the U of California. Not that they were 'investigative reporters'. For instance I do not shoot every day and never said I did. They also said that I did ten years of 'black ops' after the Marine Corps. I never said that. What classified work I did was all during my service in the Marines." Clearly, the authors didn't think that such facts were important, yet they used any discrepancy they could find to ruin these men's reputations. Erroneous reporting like this only allows others like Stalcup and Craze to attack these men later for claiming to have done something they didn't, when in fact they never said it in the first place.

Richard Hughbank, a decorated combat veteran in the War on Terror with two tours in Afghanistan, believes that the *Washington Monthly* article was pejorative and ill-referenced, and that the editor failed in his duties to conduct due diligence as to the article's content. Hughbank does offer that he and Joshua Craze exchanged a few emails and a couple of phone calls pertaining to the training of law enforcement personnel in the field of terrorism studies. However, Craze conducted his interviews with Richard under the pretext that he was a doctoral student at UC Berkeley merely conducting research for his dissertation. "He did not identify himself as a journalist or his intent to publish an article that falsely marketed those of us who are committed to terrorism training and contradicted the value of terrorism training to law enforcement professionals."

According to Hughbank, Craze went out of his way to misquote his comments and take others out of context to meet his journalistic agenda to denounce the true need for terrorism training and slander Hughbank's reputation as a retired military officer, and academic professional. Hughbank is a fourth generation combat veteran having served twice in Afghanistan performing terrorist detainee operations and as a counterinsurgency instructor. During his first tour, Hughbank served as a military liaison to the FBI, CIA, and Special Operations Command providing oversight in the capture, in-processing, interrogations, detention, and subsequent movement of over 500 al-Qaeda and Taliban terrorists to the Guantanamo Bay, Cuba detention facility. Of those that were captured and detained in Kandahar during his tour with the 101st Airborne Division, were Johnny Walker Lindh (The American Taliban), bin Laden's personal aid and driver, and six of the FBI's Most Wanted terrorists. Hughbank was also advised by a man whom he holds in high regard, that the Cold War Era was over and that, as a professional officer, Richard had to learn more about the United States' newest enemies in the form of Islamic terrorists. This advice was not the motivation for his future career as an instructor and teacher, but as a better prepared soldier and leader of the sons and daughters of this great nation. While Hughbank has studied the religion of Islam, he does not believe for a moment that he

knows more about the religion of Islam than he does his own religion (Christianity). Furthermore, Richard does not believe he “kinda fell into it” when it comes to lecturing and educating others in the field of terrorism. He has worked hard both as a practitioner and an academic to ensure his teachings are current and relevant in all of his lectures. As a result, Richard is currently teaching homeland security, emergency management, and criminal justice courses as a tenure-tracked assistant professor at Northwestern State University in Louisiana.

Hughbank is also a counterterrorism columnist for *Inside Homeland Security* magazine, has published over 40 articles in peer reviewed and professional journals, a book chapter, and a book in the field of terrorism, emergency response, psychology, and sociology. He is currently finishing his second book, and two more book chapters pertaining to the same subject matter. With his background as a retired Army military police officer, professional and academic training in the areas of SWAT, hostage and crisis negotiations, post-blast investigations, security management, mental health counseling, terrorism studies, and homeland security, Richard has validated himself as an authority in terrorism training to his brethren in the law enforcement communities. Additionally, Hughbank has a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice, master’s degree in business and organizational security management and mental health counseling, a graduate certificate in terrorism studies from St. Andrews University, and is currently a doctoral candidate with an emphasis in homeland security. Toward the end of Hughbank’s military career, he was assigned, after a highly competitive selection process, at the United States Military Academy and United States Air Force Academy where he taught ethics, leadership, and military strategic studies.

For all of these reasons, virtually everything in the *Washington Monthly* article fails. Its targets are experienced, credentialed, honest, committed Americans providing much needed training to American law enforcement. The authors failed to destroy the reputations of the people they targeted. And the facts, as they state them, are false, or skewed to create false impressions. Joe Bierly says that even after he allowed them to visit his home they still wrote that he had a shooting range. “I don’t have a shooting range at my house,” he said. However, John Giduck does. “I told Craze I had a shooting range. They couldn’t even get that much right.”

Additionally, Craze and Stalcup’s article has become viral primarily on liberal and Muslim websites such as muslimmatters.org, theinvestigativefund.org, goatmilkbolg.com, rightsworkinggroup.org, quotha.com, mahjoob.com, Islamicate.com, drzebawaqar.com, masjidma.com, ijtema.net, islamicspotlight.com, muxlim.com, islamsphere.com, msanational.org, loonwatch.org, islam-watch.org, and chasingevil.org. One must ask the question of whether articles of this nature are attempting to point out the shortcomings of current terrorism training or is it the practice of *taqiyya* (Islamic Principle of Lying for the Sake of Allah). Regardless, Hughbank believes the article is an example of unethical journalism written by individuals who based their content on poor research, personal agenda, and innuendo. Expressing his anger of how this article was constructed, Yuri Ferdigalov told me that John had

given Craze his name to confirm the things they had discussed. “I emailed him my phone number but he would never call me,” Ferdigalov said. “From what I have seen, often journalists are more dangerous than terrorists. They do more harm with their writing than terrorists do with their bombs.”

Perhaps the real lesson to be learned from this is that there are people out there who are ideologically motivated to see that America is unprepared for the next terror attacks. And they will do anything possible to undermine us. I believe that we need to stop trusting people like Craze and Stalcup who say that they’re on our side. We must first check out anyone from the media or whatever other story they give us before talking to them. Stalcup’s website says she got her Ph.D. on the integration of intelligence and law enforcement and that she’s writing a book on that very subject. In my opinion, she has proven that police - the very group she claims to serve - should never trust her. Moreover, she attacks these men for not being police officers, yet her entire academic career seems to be based on her own belief that police need intelligence training and networking that they don’t have. The inference to be drawn is that they should go to her for this, yet shockingly it appears that she has no law enforcement background either. It doesn’t appear that her hypocrisy has any limits.

When I asked Giduck why he thinks that only a handful of them were targeted in the article, he said, “There are hundreds of people out there doing different aspects of this very same training. I don’t know why they focused on us. Maybe we’re just the most offensive to their political, ideological and religious agenda.” After a moment he added: “Then again, maybe we were the only ones stupid enough to talk to them.”