

Afghanistan Taliban: A US Colonel on Trial

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The New York courtroom had no spectators on a Tuesday afternoon.

The proceeding was a hybrid military-civilian hearing.

The presiding Judge was a retired general and an Obama appointee. The defendant: US Colonel Nathan Matthews, Special Forces, who had served six tours of duty running a secret training installation outside Kabul.

JUDGE: Colonel Matthews, I want to make a few things clear. First, we are engaged in a finding of fact. Once that is established, I'll decide whether to bring charges against you. If I do bring a charge, you'll be held without bail until a proper trial takes place.

MATTHEWS: Understood, sir.

JUDGE: First question. In the shockingly SAFE exit of US personnel and their Afghan allies from the country last week, is it true that nearly 20,000 Taliban were killed or taken prisoner?

MATTHEWS: It's true.

JUDGE: I would like you to explain how you managed this feat.

MATTHEWS: Your Honor, there is a significant back-story. I

have to tell it, for the first time. Very few people are aware of my secret mission in Afghanistan. I've been conducting that mission since 2003.

JUDGE: Yes, Colonel. Proceed. I've been made aware of the details, and I must say it's changed my political stance on several vital issues.

MATTHEWS: By 2003, it was clear we were going to lose the war. Against our military threat, the Taliban would go into hiding. They would evade us as long as we stayed. When we left, they would emerge, take over the villages and the cities, destroy the central government we built, and the Afghan forces we trained would desert and surrender. All this was a foregone conclusion. Likewise, our efforts to help villagers build a Westernized "sustaining lifestyle" would also collapse. We were up shit's creek without a paddle.

JUDGE: And that's when your secret mission took off?

MATTHEWS: Yes. A unit inside the Pentagon gave me the green light. I'll reveal what we then did in one Afghan village. You can assume we did this in MANY, MANY villages over the next 18 years. We brought roughly 500 heavily armed US soldiers into the center of a village and put all the Afghan men under temporary arrest. Some were Taliban, some were not. We didn't bother to sort them out. Then we separately gathered all the women and children in one place...

And we told the women, in no uncertain terms, that we would not be able to protect them forever. We told them that when we left, their lives would get worse. The Taliban would capture them and their daughters and force them into marriages. They would be raped, beaten, held as slaves for the rest of their lives. If they survived.

This was not news to these women—but we wanted to drive the point home. The men of the Taliban would visit one horror after another on them...

Unless they were willing to fight. Unless they were willing to go to war against the Taliban.

And we would train and equip them to do just that.

We would take all of them out of their village and transport them to a high-security secret base outside Kabul. They would be safe there. We would clothe and feed them. We would train them in the use of weapons. Many weapons. They would become a formidable fighting force.

Our goal—which we achieved—was 200,000 highly trained and equipped Afghan women and girls. Not a coward among them. After all, they were motivated. They were going to fight for their futures, their safety, their lives, against the men who wanted to make them slaves forever.

The name of this female fighting force was Unit Zero. That's the name that was used in reports and communications. Unofficially, they came to be known as the DICK CUTTERS.

JUDGE: The what?

MATTHEWS: The DICK CUTTERS.

JUDGE: You actually taught all these women techniques of castration?

MATTHEWS: There's not a lot to learn, but yes. Of course. It was the first basic skill. Part of the method of the Taliban is inducing terror. So we needed to counter that. We needed to let the men know the women were ready to take away their most prized possession.

JUDGE: And did they? Did the women...do this?

MATTHEWS: On MANY occasions. The Afghan Women's Army is a formidable and ferocious group, believe me.

JUDGE: Did it occur to you that the US should never have been

in Afghanistan in the first place? We should have just left them alone?

MATTHEWS: I had conversations on that subject with higher-ups at the Pentagon. But in the unit that green-lit my secret mission, the consensus was: since we were ordered to wage war, let's find a way to overcome a very difficult enemy.

JUDGE: This women's army—they're full-fledged soldiers?

MATTHEWS: From the use of small arms, all the way up to the deployment of drones. I wouldn't want to face them in a war.

JUDGE: And how would you characterize the reaction of the Taliban to this female army?

MATTHEWS: Fear. Caution and fear.

JUDGE: Now that the US is exiting the country, who is going to take over?

MATTHEWS: The women. They have the upper hand. Their determination is greater than the men's.

JUDGE: A nation explicitly run by women?

MATTHEWS: Women who've been enslaved for centuries. When they look at a Taliban man, they know there is an imminent threat of being captured, beaten, raped, tortured, sold to another Taliban. We simply gave them the means to deal with the threat and the reality.

JUDGE: Are the women now going to stage mass trials of the Taliban?

MATTHEWS: I doubt it. They're going straight to executions.

JUDGE: So we won the war in Afghanistan?

MATTHEWS: I don't put it that way. I'm a soldier. I was ordered to go there and carry out a mission. That's what I

did.

JUDGE: Just out of curiosity, has any Western women's group caught wind of your mission?

MATTHEWS: Not to my knowledge. But some of our staffers did mention a theoretical scenario about Afghan women rising up, to a prominent women's group in California. We described possible mass castrations. The reaction was quite negative. Basically, the California women were defending "Islam." Or that's what they told us. They said "different cultures have different traditions."

JUDGE: And what is your response to that, Colonel?

MATTHEWS: Well, I was told this informal survey took place at an upscale gathering in Beverly Hills. A few soccer moms, but mostly wealthy women involved in the entertainment industry. If you put them in a hut, in an Afghan village, forcibly married to a Taliban warrior who beat and raped them several times a week, they might reflect and introspect in a different manner.

JUDGE: I have no more questions at this time, Colonel. You're free to go.

MATTHEWS: You're not bringing charges, sir?

JUDGE: Right now, I'm hoping I never see you again. I'm going to try to forget everything you've said here today.

MATTHEWS: Why? Because it makes sense?

JUDGE: No comment.

MATTHEWS: You can't get past the image of mass castrations.

JUDGE: You're right. I can't.

MATTHEWS: But you can skate past untold numbers of women being beaten, tortured, raped, and sold for the rest of their lives.

JUDGE: No comment.

MATTHEWS: Well, sir, let me give you a few other things to think about, before I go. For the full duration of the war in Afghanistan, we've known that Taliban personnel and equipment and supplies have been coming into the country from Pakistan. Pakistan is our ally in the region. We fund their intelligence service, the ISI.

JUDGE: Wait. Are you implying the war, on the Taliban side, has been staged out of Pakistan?

MATTHEWS: It's an open secret, yes. Therefore, given US influence and money in Pakistan, our politicians could have stopped the war at any point. Cut off the source. Issued orders to block all the supply lines. But that never happened.

JUDGE: Why not?

MATTHEWS: You'd have to talk with people way above my pay-grade to get answers. People who may be controlling US government policy from outside the government. People who might be operating what amounts to a global chessboard. I'm just a soldier. I make do with the resources at my disposal...

JUDGE: Goodbye, Colonel. I don't want to hear anything more. We're done. Go.

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