NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

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Bravest suffer insult on injury



NO GUTS, no glory — and if guts were made of gold, the lads at Engine Co. 54 on Eighth Avenue should be millionaires.

The lads here suffered like all of us did, but obviously a lot more, when their brothers went out and never came back.

Yesterday, they were watching Osama bin Laden on tape, and somehow I felt guilty about desecrating the brave, by taking them back to Sept. 11.

No worries. There were no mawkish tears, no angry threats, just a deep remembrance of comrades and a resolve that tells me, Binny Boy, don't let these guys capture you.

They were even-eyed and talked in short sentences. "It hurts watching this," said firefighter Dave Turner.

That firehouse where Dave works to the tune of a bell lost 15 lads, and the battalion lost 31 humans who make a practice of running in when people like me are running out.

Eddie Coyle: "This guy bin Laden, he's laughing. Do you know what our loss is? We didn't work with the guys who are sadly gone. We lived with them."

Andy Duffy: "Arrgh, bin Laden is full of s- - -."

Bill Donegan: "Our loss is deep, but it is made worse by one simple fact:

"How did these people take out our brothers and so many innocents by being trained on our soil?

"I mean, they learned flying on this soil. Please."

Ed Gaulrapp looked away from the taunting and laughing on the tape of this virus called bin Laden.

"Here is a flight-school guy who gets paid $20,000 in Florida to teach a guy to fly a plane, not to land one, not to take off, just to fly.

"What happened? Did the flight trainer think he wouldn't get the $20,000 if he dropped a dime on this terrorist jerk?

"The government dropped the ball in a big way. Remember, was it 15 years ago when Col. Ollie North told us all that Osama bin Laden was one of the most dangerous people in the world? Fifteen years ago."

Jim Cooney made bin Laden a poster boy of cowardice: "How come he keeps on telling these young guys to die to be martyrs. You know, paradise, whatever.

"Hey, why won't he embrace paradise. This guy is just a coward.

And this is the point. Perhaps I might have been the first journalist; I am not sure, who laid that cowardice at bin Laden's fetid feet within five hours of that terrible day.

At the time, I wrote: "Simply Kill the Bastard." How stupid could I be?

Let him live forever as a coward because, oh, who the hell said it? A brave man dies but once, a coward dies a thousand deaths.

Yeah, that's the ticket.

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