

Albert snyder

Business



“ He was a hero, and he was the love of my life.

” – Albert Snyder Ironically enough, Lance Corporal Matthew Snyder’s funeral took place on a glorious March day. The cascading light trickled lazily down his coffin and pooled at the feet of the American flag. Albert Snyder was a tough man, and tough men do not cry. Not when they receive the fateful news from the Iraqi fronts. Not when they see the wooden box that encases the pallid corpse of their son being lowered into hard-packed American soil. Squinting in the Maryland sun, Mr.

Snyder curiously noted some picket signs at the edge of the cemetery. Too consumed in his current tragedy, he could not grasp the oncoming one. Today his twenty year old son was dead and nothing in the world could bring him back. Breath had been stolen from his lips, yet this thievery could not be brought to justice. He struggled under the burden of affliction all the way home only to be confronted with more. Albert Snyder turned on the news that evening in futile hopes to escape the fighting arenas of his mind.

Perhaps he could get distracted in other people’s woes and forget his own. A suit-wearing man gave a report about a Topeka, Kansas church by the name of Westboro Baptist, which was said to have attended a military funeral in a protest. Picket signs. Scorching sun. The nauseating smell of fake flowers.

The thoughts came back to Albert Snyder first singularly, then in a torrential rush. He watched his television in a blink-deprived state as the suit-wearing man spoke of signs saying ghastly things. “ Thank God For Dead Soldiers,” they read. “ God Hates America/ Thank God for 9/11.” These people had travelled over a thousand miles to stand at his beloved son’s funeral and

thank God for his death?! To defame his character? To bruise and punch a grieving man who would not cry but wanted very much to? Albert Snyder felt the breath being stolen from him and the thoughts multiply hundredfold in his mental arena. One tragedy tailed by another, more bitter, more cruel one.

At the helm of it stood one Fred Phelps and his whole congregation. This Baptist church nursed a hatred for homosexuals and claimed God punished the US military due to their tolerance of homosexuality. But what did that have to with his son? His mind was an arena, and he would not stand for this. Albert Snyder was going to fight. Mr. Snyder took the issue to court and was granted five million dollars by the Maryland court.

On October 6, 2010, Snyder vs. Phelps was heard by the Supreme Court. The Court ruled in favor of Phelps, 8-1. After all, the First Amendment does grant freedom of speech and expression.

Fred Phelps' protests were constitutional, yet in no aspect kind. Our country was built on morals just as well as laws. Albert Snyder helped us to see that just because you can say something, by no means implies you should. That, indeed, is true American heroism.