

# [An autobiography, american sniper: the autobiography of the](https://assignbuster.com/an-autobiography-american-sniper-the-autobiography-of-the/)

AnAmerican Hero – Film Adaptation of AmericanSniper ChrisKyle was a Navy SEAL and is the deadliest sniper in United States Militaryhistory.

He had at least 160 confirmedkills over four tours in Iraq, according to the Pentagon’s count, but accordingto his own count and his fellow Navy SEALs, the number of kills was closer to two times as many. Over thespan of his four tours of duty in Iraq, Kyle earnedtwo Silver Stars and five Bronze Stars with Valor. He survived six separateIED, or improvised explosive device, attacks, two helicopter crashes, waswounded three times, and underwent multiple surgeries. The honors he receivedand the injuries he lived through, earned him the the title of “ The Legend” amonghis Navy SEAL teammates, and from his enemies, he was given the title of al-shaitan,” the devil” (Mooney 3).

Kyle was honorably discharged from the United StatesNavy in 2009 and years later, with the help of Scott McEwen and Jim DeFelice, he wrote andpublished an autobiography. In his autobiography, American Sniper: The Autobiography of theMost Lethal Sniper in U. S. Military History, he writes about his experiences overseas andthe struggles he faced when he came home. The book’s film adaptation, AmericanSniper, directed by Clint Eastwood, is based loosely off of Kyle’s book andalso tells about the experiences of Chris Kyle, played by Bradley Cooper, butwith some changes. The film adaptation of American Sniper exaggeratesthe role of a character, Mustafa, in order to emphasize Chris Kyle’s image asan American hero. Many films exaggeratecertain aspects of the literature they were adapted from in order to betterportray a specific aspect of a character or idea.

In some cases, it isnecessary to exaggerate in order to adapt appropriately. According to RodneyWelch, a freelance journalist and book reviewer, the drama in a novel may onlytake place inside a character’s head, or is described by an all-knowingnarrator. The screenwriter, therefore, may have to adjust certain scenes and forma dialogue with other characters.

Also, turning literature into film may createother demands, such as if a book is long and includes a large amount ofcharacters. In this case, certain scenes will need to be condensed, or cut outcompletely, and some characters may have to be removed to shorten a story intoa manageable film length. Additionally, many filmmakers may be focused on usingthe book for profit, such as selling it to a larger audience, rather than to providinga film adaptation that will satisfy readers of the book (Welch). In the case ofAmerican Sniper, Clint Eastwood exaggerates the role of Mustafa toportray to a large audience of Americans, the image of Navy SEAL sniper ChrisKyle as an American hero and to emphasize his heroic qualities.

There are many qualitiesthat heroes possess, among the most important qualities are courage, bravery, loyalty, selflessness, dedication, determination, perseverance, humility, sacrifice, and most of all, a purpose. In the case of Chris Kyle, his sole purpose is toprotect his family, his men, and his country. Along with certain heroicqualities, heroes, or protagonists, also need a nemesis, or an antagonist. According to J. Gideon Sarantinos, this idea can be traced back to classicalstorytelling where protagonists are the first to enter the stage, or in thecase of American Sniper, the scene, and represent the point of view theaudience should follow throughout the film.

On the other hand, antagonists areportrayed as negative, bad, or evil. Even though antagonists have a negativeconnotation attached to them, they do have a positive impact on every story bygiving the protagonist a “ glimpse into a better world by making their currentworld increasingly undesirable.” This teaches the protagonist right from wrongand that all the struggles will pay off eventually and that obstacles willalways arise. Overcoming these obstacles allow for the protagonist to become abetter, or stronger, person. These obstacles are the innate expansion of theantagonist’s role. Antagonists are a crucial element of motivating a protagonistto overcome their obstacles. Along with all of this, antagonists must be anequally skilled opponent in order to push the protagonist (Sarantinos). Throughoutthe film, Chris Kyle’s character displays all of these traits but in his book, these traits are not as clear-cut as they are in the film.

By exaggerating therole of Mustafa in the film, Clint Eastwood not only highlights Chris Kyle’sheroic traits but also provides Kyle with a nemesis. Mustafa, played by SammySheik, is a skilled Iraqi sniper, who may or may not exist in the real world. According to Adam Taylor, it is not clear whether Mustafa exists or not, butthere are similar legends of skilled Iraqi snipers, such as that of “ Juba,” asniper with the Islamic Army in Iraq.

Some legends accredit this Iraqi sniperwith hundreds of kills and accounts from American soldiers indicate that he wasa nuisance to many of the U. S. troops. “ Juba” also sent a video message to thenU. S. president, George Bush, that contains him saying, “ I have nine bullets inthis gun and I have a present for George Bush. I am going to kill ninepeople.

” Snipers like “ Juba” have been a terrifying aspect of warfare formany years (Taylor). Even though legends exist of snipers like Juba andMustafa, in his autobiography, Chris Kyle only mentions Mustafa in oneparagraph where he writes about his connection with the near-mythical sniper: While we were on the bermwatching the city, we were also watching warily for an Iraqi sniper known asMustafa. From the reports we heard, Mustafa was an Olympics marksman who wasusing his skills against Americans and Iraqi police and soldiers. Severalvideos had been made and posted, boasting of his ability. I never saw him, butother snipers later killed an Iraqi sniper we think was him. (Kyle 168-169)This quote reinforces the fact that Kyle has heardof Mustafa, but has never actually seen him. On the contrary, in the film, Clint Eastwood uses Mustafa as a villain and Chris Kyle’s nemesis throughoutthe film. Mustafa, is portrayed as a sniper with skills almost as good as ChrisKyle’s and, similar to Kyle’s statement in his book, competed as a marksman inthe Olympics.

Throughout the film, Mustafa is shown continually stalking Kyleand the other Navy SEALs through various cities and deployments in Iraq overmany years. He systematically picks off the members of Kyle’s squad and othertroops and, in one scene, targets Kyle and his good friend, Ryan “ Biggles” Job, played by Jake McDorman, on an Iraqi rooftop. Mustafa shoots, his bullet thenhitting Biggles’ rifle, causing it to shatter into multiple fragments.

Thefragments of Biggles’ rifle explode into his face, disfigure it, and blind him, but he survives.            Ina later scene, shortly after the run in with Mustafa, Kyle visits Biggles inthe hospital just before leaving for his fourth tour to Iraq. During the visit, Biggles tells Kyle that he proposed to his fiancé, they joke with each other, and before Kyle leaves, the two exchange words and in the following dialoguefrom American Sniper, Kyle’s heroic nature can be seen: Biggles. You’re not goingback. Kyle.

We are. We’ll wallthem in and hunt them down. Biggles.

Come on. Youdon’t have to do that. Kyle. You’re my brother…And they’re gonna fucking pay for what they did to you. Biggles. Hooyah, Legend.

Kyle. Fucking hooyah. (3. 117. 17-22)These quotes from Ryan “ Biggles” Job and Chris Kylereinforce the idea of Kyle being a hero. They show Kyle’s sacrifice anddedication to his cause and his Navy SEAL brethren because, even though Bigglesinsists he stays, he courageously is risking his life along with leaving hiswife and child behind to avenge his injured comrade. Soon after Kyle returns toIraq, he learns that Biggles has passed away during surgery.            Inhis autobiography, Kyle does write in depth about the day Biggles was shot, butin contrast to the film, Biggles was not shot by Mustafa but, rather, by anunknown enemy insurgent.

Also, Biggles did not die soon after he was shot, aswitnessed in the film, rather, he died three years later, in 2009, due tocomplications for facial reconstructive surgery. Before his death, he gotmarried, attended college, got a job, and also climbed Mount Rainer. Similar tothe film, Kyle did want to go back to avenge Biggles’ death and writes,  “ A few guys weren’t sure whether we should goor not.

We talked about it, and planned out the mission. I didn’t hardly havetime for it, though. I just wanted blood for my guy (368).” Though Kyle writesabout wanting revenge for Biggles, there is never mention of him fulfillingthis in his book.

In the film, however, Kyle does get revenge, with a skillfulkill shot. Both the film and Kyle’sbook include one of the longest shots in United States military history, 2, 100yards. In his autobiography, Kyle writes about this 2, 100-yard shot he made onan enemy insurgent who was carrying a rocket-propelled grenade launcher, orRPG.

He admits in his book that it was an exceptional, yet lucky, shot where hewrites, “ Twenty-one hundred yards. The shot amazes me even now. It was astraight-up luck shot; no way one shot should have gotten him (Kyle 447).” Thisshot being exceptional, along with being particularly lucky, however, was nottaken to kill “ Mustafa” but rather to protect American troops from an RPG-wieldingenemy insurgent. On the other hand, the film exaggerates this tremendous shotto use as a major moment in the film where Chris Kyle takes down the notoriousenemy sniper and nemesis, Mustafa. This exaggeration of Mustafa and Kyle’s2, 100-yard shot, according to Jason Hall, the screenwriter for AmericanSniper, was used to tie everything together into a major climatic moment inthe film (Lamothe). The role exaggeration ofMustafa is used to increase Chris Kyle’s image as a hero and his purpose incombat and highlighting the heroic qualities of courage, bravery, loyalty, selflessness, dedication, determination, perseverance, humility, and sacrificewhich he uses toward his purpose, protecting his country.

Additionally, byexaggerating Mustafa’s role, the film can focus the constant fight between himand Kyle, and focus less harsh language used Kyle’s autobiography. In his book, Kyle talks about “ slaughtering the enemy” and refers to them as” savages” on more than one occasion. Phil Zabriskie, who covered theIraq and Afghanistan Wars for Time and other magazines, stated in aninterview with GQ on the language used in Kyle’s book: The language used bysoldiers in war zones is rarely pretty; usually it’s quite the opposite, thingsyou just wouldn’t say at home.

It’s bloodthirsty. So the argument that he wasbloodthirsty is spot on. He was bloodthirsty. But when you’re talking aboutsomeone whose job is killing, being bloodthirsty was a way to help him carryout the job he was sent to do. (Editors of GQ)By using this language his seems less humility andselfless.

In the film, however, there is never any instancewhere Kyle refers to his enemies as “ savages” or talks about “ slaughtering theenemy.” Rather, there are only instances where Kyle talks about protecting hismen, family, and country such as when he says, “ Cause it’s the greatest countryon earth and I believe it’s worth protecting,” “ You want to invite thesemotherfuckers to come fight in San Diego? Or New York? We’re protecting morethan just this dirt,” or when he is talking to the doctor about hispsychological issues and says, “ I was just protecting my guys. They were tryingto kill our soldiers and I’m willing to stand before my creator and answer forevery shot I took. The thing that haunts me are all the guys I couldn’t save.” These quotes show how the film portrayed his motivation as being solely toprotect others.

By exaggerating the roles of Mustafa, American Sniper focusesthe audience’s attention on his heroic behavior rather than the brutality thatgoes along with war. With the movie being directed towards Americans, an importantreason for the film focusing more on Mustafa and less on the harsh language, accordingto Antoinette Weil, a marketer and writer for Literary Traveler, is thatAmericans are sheltered from the brutality of wars because they take place far awayfrom the United States. The only exposure most Americans get is from the rare newsfootage that only occurs when the U. S. is taking troops out or sending more troopsin (Weil).              Inconclusion, by exaggerating the role of the character, Mustafa, the filmadaptation, American Sniper, allows the film to focus on Chris Kyle’sheroic qualities as well as giving him a nemesis, the main antagonist, Mustafa. Most importantly, the exaggeration of Mustafa’s role