I have to confess: I was suckered by the trailer for American Sniper. It's a masterpiece of short-form tension – a confluence of sound and image so viscerally evocative it feels almost domineering. You cannot resist. You will be stressed out. You will feel. Or, as I believe I put it in a blog about the trailer, "Clint Eastwood's American Sniper trailer will ruin your pants."

But however effective it is as a piece of cinema, even a cursory look into the film's backstory – and particularly the public reaction to its release – raises disturbing questions about which stories we choose to codify into truth, and whose, and why, and the messy social costs of transmogrifying real life into entertainment.

Chris Kyle, a US navy Seal from Texas, was deployed to Iraq in 2003 and claimed to have killed more than 255 people during his six-year military career. In his memoir, Kyle reportedly described killing as "fun", something he "loved"; he was unwavering in his belief that everyone he shot was a "bad guy". "I hate the damn savages," he wrote. "I couldn't give a flying fuck about the Iraqis." He bragged about murdering looters during Hurricane Katrina, though that was never substantiated.

He was murdered in 2013 at a Texas gun range by a 25-year-old veteran reportedly suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

However we diverge politically, I have enough faith in Eastwood's artistry and intellect to trust that he is not a black-and-white ideologue – or, at least, that he knows that the limitations of such a worldview would make for an extremely dull movie. But the same can't be said for Eastwood's subject, or, as response to the film has demonstrated, many of his fans.

TVNL Comment: Really worth a read, folks....and a serious look at the way we view those who kill in our name.

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