

Further letters on Terri Schiavo

29 March 2005

The following letters were sent to the World Socialist Web Site in response to “‘Culture of life’ or culture of lies: an exchange with WSWs readers on the Terri Schiavo case” and “More letters on the case of Terri Schiavo”. Later in the week we will publish letters in response to “Right-wing propaganda and scientific truth in the case of Terri Schiavo”.

You should ask the Terri supporters if they’ve ever known someone who was in a vegetated state. I have seen first hand a close one in a vegetated state. One of my best friends was in a state like this for five years before he passed away. It was sad to see him like that and although I *wished* he could get better, I knew inside he never would and to be honest, it was a bit of a relief when he died.

It’s ridiculous to claim this woman has any of her senses. Some people assume because her eyes are open and they move she can see and is aware of her surroundings. They don’t understand that her brain cannot register what her eyes are seeing. My friend’s eyes would move and sometimes his eyes would lock on to an object. At times it appeared as if he was looking at me. But, as the doctors informed us, I knew he wasn’t capable of registering any of these objects and he was completely absent of any thoughts. From time to time he would yawn and move his head from left to right. Sometimes, it would even seem as if he responds to something someone said. A yawn or a certain movement at the right time. But, the other times, he would stare off into the distance, completely void of any expression or movement.

I could have done the same to my friend and created a video tape as evidence of his awareness. I could have taken a video camera, pointed it at him and talked to him until he moved, yawned or created what looks like expressions, edited the tape to only show the times where it appears he is responding, and given it to people as “proof.”

RL

Seattle, Washington

25 March 2005

The evidence for Terri Schiavo’s vegetative state seems pretty well indisputable. Her case is a sad one. But the real issue is what the thugs of the Republican Party hope to gain by wrapping themselves in the flag of her supposed victimization.

Case in point, the political leg-breaker Tom “The Hammer” DeLay, who made a statement in which he tried to equate his position as an exposed abuser of the public trust with Ms. Schiavo’s presumptive persecution by the forces of the Left. Contrast this with the smirking tone of the Republican memo published recently that gloated over the super-duper political opportunity presented by the Schiavo case—or the amazing diagnostic powers granted by God to Bill Frist, who, without specialist credentials in neurology, contradicted the diagnosis of Terri Schiavo’s reputable doctors on the basis of one heavily edited videotape.

Talk about wolves in sheep’s clothing! If it ever becomes possible to “regrow” a liquefied brain, it will be science that does it, not

religion.

I don’t agree with everything I read on your site, but no one else in America is making the points that you make as clearly and forcefully as you do.

FG

25 March 2005

Thank you for this comment on the Terri Schiavo case. There has been no lack of coverage of this subject (even here in Europe). The article also correctly identifies the real issues where this case stands out to the thousands of similar cases in the US and worldwide: It is neither the medical decision of what to diagnose nor the personal suffering of those involved (wanting to relieve a spouse from unnecessary suffering on one side, the pain of seeing a child die on the other). The really grotesque aspects are the media blitz against poor Michael Schiavo as well as the turning upside-down of century-long established practices of law in order to boost the political profile of congress members from a country which claims to “spread democracy” worldwide. Finally, the historic decline of the USA from a lighthouse of democracy and inspiring example to the world into a theocratic dictatorship somewhere between the Afghan Taliban and the Iranian Ayatollahs is well illustrated.

I do not lament that this coverage would be honorable for a worthy cause, as the issues involved affect almost all of us. As a husband and a father, I can personally understand both points of view. More than 1,500 American parents that have lost children during the war in Iraq will understand Terri’s parents, while the number of Iraqis losing loved ones because of the decision by Bush and the Republican-dominated Congress to be “anti-life” rises to astronomical figures. After all, my favorite author Mark Twain could not have invented a story more telling about American society.

Finally, your comments stand out because the author obviously has some understanding of science and knows what he is talking about without having to mix up notions like “brain-dead,” “coma patient” and “mentally disabled.”

For short: compliments and keep up the good work!

TA

Kappelen, Bern, Switzerland

25 March 2005

There is so much going on in this case, as you so well point out. One of the main things that bothers me is the use by the family and the right of the allegations of domestic abuse. The Congress hears this, considers this in *this* case, yet does nothing to push through the Violence Against Women Act. No heroic gatherings during one of their many vacations to help your Everywoman going on that I saw...

Another thing is the dumbing down. I remember as a teenager living under Reagan and Bush I the vilification of the “Intellectual Elite.” This was particularly galling coming from a Yale graduate! No, no, they claimed in essence: You don’t need to know facts. You only need to know what We and God tell you. (God through We, that is!)

Given the current findings about planted news-reporters and news stories, it is even more incumbent upon we, the People, to search out *facts*. Thank you for providing decent, thoughtful, and compassionate analysis.

CMS

Portland, Oregon

25 March 2005

If Mrs. Schiavo's parents are willing to take care of her why does Mr. M. Schiavo just not give up his guardianship over her? If her parents believe that she can improve let them try. I don't understand why everything nowadays has to be so difficult. Mr. M. Schiavo has moved on so why not give her parents the guardianship? Must be the American way I guess.

LB

Sudbury, Ontario

25 March 2005

All those who believe in the so-called "Schiavo cause" should turn off their TVs—especially the cesspool of fake news FOX—and seek and read the actual court documents on the case. So far, at least 23 court decisions have found the same facts, and reached the same conclusion: that Terri Schiavo is in a persistent vegetative state, with no brain function whatsoever, with the CAT scan showing that all but the brain stem has "liquefied." Such liquefaction is irreversible. They found that Terri Schiavo told various people that she would not want to be artificially maintained in such a state. And thus—as has long been the law—removing her feeding tube would comport with her wishes.

Such cases occur every day, in keeping with long-standing law. We don't hear about them, however, because (1) there is no dispute among those having legitimate responsibility in the matter, and (2) non-relative religionists aren't involved with that which is none of their business to begin with. The law is clear: those who are not related to the victim in such cases are to mind their own business and get a life.

JN

26 March 2005

It is my strictest belief that God brings us into this world and when He has prepared a place for us to return, as He promises, He will come for us. Terri is still someone's daughter, someone's sister. Blood truly is thicker than water. I do not believe that allowing her to dehydrate and starve were her wishes. She was young when this happened and very few people at that young age even think about making such a request. No living will was filled, we have *no proof* that Michael is telling the truth. No one has the right to decide whether she should live or die except God. I also believe the media and the horrible facts that have been presented regarding Michael's treatment toward Terri. He should be thoroughly investigated. Why can't he take a lie detector test? Is he afraid?

No loving parent will ever give up on the life of their child. Faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love. If one has love, they have faith and hope. God performs miracles every day. He didn't take Terri's life 15 years ago. It wasn't her time. God knew the day Terri was born that her life would be as it is. God Blessed her with loving, caring parents knowing that someday love may be the only emotion Terri would be able to display and recognize. She knows her parents. Terri deserves every chance to live every day for the rest of her life and only our Heavenly Father knows what day He has chosen to take her Home. May God Bless and be with Terri and her family.

CT

Athens, Alabama

25 March 2005

I have a hard time holding credence to a bunch of religious fanatics that want to argue the value of life for a person who has zero quality of life, regardless of whether the feeding tube is reinserted. If these people care so much about life, instead of making it a political agenda, engaging in terrorists activities (soliciting the murder of our federal judges and other political officials), then why aren't they on the streets about the folks who do have functioning brains and are starving to death?

HB

Memphis, Tennessee

26 March 2005

Do these people seriously think that they are acting in the interest of this now shell of a woman? The woman that died those 15 years ago is already dead, and taking a more philosophical point of view, does not the intelligence of a human make that human a person? I suppose I will never understand why this issue has been blown so completely out of proportion. Her mind died years ago, now simply let her body go without all of this media coverage.

JC

27 March 2005

Oh dear, you are so wrong here. I am a socialist and live in the UK. What the US Courts are currently doing by starving to death a disabled woman who is obviously not in a vegetative state is against everything that a socialist should stand for. And what about the motives of the husband? Do you not have a feminist movement and the rights of women in the US? You are mixing up neo-conservative ideology of the rights of the family (and since when was the concept of the family ever a socialist one?) with socialism. The US has never really had a substantial socialist movement, and what you represent is a travesty. What is happening here is legalized murder and however much you want to blame Bush and the politicians you cannot hide this. European socialists are going to view your movement in a different light from now. You have no right to call yourselves socialists, as you are supporting the type of policy that was prevalent in Nazi Germany. You should be supporting Terri Schiavo, even if it does mean making alliances with organizations that are clearly not socialist. This is a basic principle of praxis anyway. I suggest that your entire movement needs to reconsider its philosophical basis and actually starts to understand what socialism is really about.

JP

Bradworthy, UK

26 March 2005



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact