

Moore, Again

With all due apologies to the gentleman, who no doubt enjoys well-deserved worldwide fame and respect as editor of the *Weekly Standard*, we had not heard of Fred Barnes before today. But he has a **complaint about Michael Moore**:

It was in his first bestselling book, *Stupid White Men*. Moore wrote he'd once been "forced" to listen to my comments on a TV chat show, *The McLaughlin Group*. I had whined "on and on about the sorry state of American education," Moore said, and wound up by bellowing: "These kids don't even know what *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* are!" Moore's interest was piqued, so the next day he said he called me. "Fred," he quoted himself as saying, "tell me what *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* are." I started "hemming and hawing," Moore wrote. And then I said, according to Moore: "Well, they're . . . uh . . . you know . . . uh . . . okay, fine, you got me--I don't know what they're about. Happy now?" He'd smoked me out as a fraud, or maybe worse. The only problem is none of this is true. It never happened. Moore is a liar. He made it up. It's a fabrication on two levels. One, I've never met Moore or even talked to him on the phone. And, two, I read both *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* in my first year at the University of Virginia. Just for the record, I'd learned what they were about even before college.

So it's one man's word against another's. Now, faced with a choice between believing a guy we never heard of before, and believing **Michael Moore** – we are inclined to place our confidence in Mr Barnes.

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Huh?

Huh? Humor? *Iliad* and *Odyessey*? Confidence in whom?

by a reader on Tue, 05/25/2004 - 03:34 | [reply](#)

I'm no Michael Moore fan but

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like this I can't quite bring myself to believe it; even with guys like him, you gotta think, Why lie about something so (a) dumb and (b) verifiable? I mean what the heck would possess him?

But it's not like I'm going to believe his version over Fred Barnes's. So I'm thinking perhaps there's some semi-innocent explanation, like that in recalling the incident from memory, Moore mistook Fred Barnes for one of the other McLaughlin Group panelists. Or McLaughlin Group for some other show. Or something along those lines - in other words, the exchange happened, but *not with Fred Barnes*, with Morton Kondracke or someone else.

I mean, to make this up out of thin air, just to take a swat at the low-lying pinata that is *Fred Barnes*, just makes absolutely no sense. Then again I'm not a lefty propagandist like, undoubtedly, Moore is, and I guess you just never know what makes sense to such people.

--Blix

by a reader on Tue, 05/25/2004 - 23:01 | [reply](#)

I'm no M. Moore fan either

Yes, Moore probably didn't deliberately lie on this occasion. But neither did he check the story. Did he care whether it was true or false? Unlikely. It fit his agenda perfectly, so he printed it. That's what he does.

by a reader on Thu, 05/27/2004 - 03:34 | [reply](#)