

Our 2¢ Worth On Kerry's Christmas In Cambodia

If you're unaware of the story, blame (and change) your current sources of news, and look, for instance, [here](#). In short, the Democratic Presidential candidate John Kerry has said many times, including in a speech on the floor of the Senate in 1986, that he spent Christmas 1968 in Cambodia while the then-President was denying that there were any US troops there. It has emerged that this cannot be true, but most of the mainstream media, including the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, have yet to mention the controversy. The Kerry campaign is saying that although Kerry made a mistake about the details, something substantially like that did indeed happen.

We are not yet ready to venture an opinion about whether it did or not, but we have two questions. First: why is no one asking Kerry the question: 'who ordered you into Cambodia?' Kerry's commanding officer at the time denies that there were any such missions. And second: why does a substantial segment of opinion well understand, when Kerry allegedly does it, that saying what one believes to be true cannot be lying, but when Bush allegedly does it they become as **thick as two planks**?

Update: Check out [Solomon](#)'s take on this as well.

Sun, 08/15/2004 - 16:47 | [digg](#) | [del.icio.us](#) | [permalink](#)

Q2

Because in Bush's case they are starting with a conclusion (Bush wicked), then twisting stuff to fit it.

-- Elliot Temple

<http://www.curi.us/>

by [Elliot Temple](#) on Sun, 08/15/2004 - 18:02 | [reply](#)

Neither candidate

Texans are known for tall tales. So are politicians that are worth their salt. However George Bush does not lie. Nor does John Kerry.

As to Cambodia, it is common knowledge that U.S. special forces

and swiftboats too strayed into Cambodia. The Vietnam war was never defined by mere borders or middles of rivers. Sometimes the intrusions were by intent. Whether or not Christmas dinner was had in Cambodia it makes a good tall tale. I am waiting to hear a better one from the Bush camp. Christmas in Alabama? Naw.

by a reader on Sun, 08/15/2004 - 19:32 | [reply](#)

So, what's the beef?

You link to Instapundit who links to a [Telegraph](#) article that quotes Kerry's biographer:

"On Christmas Eve he was near Cambodia; he was around 50 miles from the Cambodian border. There's no indictment of Kerry to be made, but he was mistaken about Christmas in Cambodia," said Douglas Brinkley, who has unique access to the candidate's wartime journals.

But Mr Brinkley rejected accusations that the senator had never been to Cambodia, insisting he was telling the truth about running undisclosed "black" missions there at the height of the war.

He said: "Kerry went into Cambodian waters three or four times in January and February 1969 on clandestine missions. He had a run dropping off US Navy Seals, Green Berets and CIA guys." The missions were not armed attacks on Cambodia, said Mr Brinkley, who did not include the clandestine missions in his wartime biography of Mr Kerry, Tour of Duty.

"He was a ferry master, a drop-off guy, but it was dangerous as hell. Kerry carries a hat he was given by one CIA operative. In a part of his journals which I didn't use he writes about discussions with CIA guys he was dropping off."

So although Brinkley says Kerry was not in Cambodia on Christmas Day, he does say that Kerry was in Cambodia near that time. So what's the beef: that Kerry slightly changed the dates in his story to tug at a few heartstrings? Is this supposed to be a headline-grapping controversy?

by a reader on Sun, 08/15/2004 - 22:54 | [reply](#)

Where's the beef?

I don't know if there's any beef in this story. Quite possibly there's an innocent explanation, as [The World](#) admits. But the fact that Kerry made this embarrassing mistake, the fact that Kerry's commanding officer denies that there were any missions to Cambodia, the fact that other Swift Boat vets also say there weren't any, and the fact that the vets from Kerry's own Swift Boat who

have been loudly supporting him have not come forward to say that there were, and the fact that Kerry himself is keeping quiet, **is all tremendously newsworthy**. Isn't it?? The fact that the media aren't buzzing with it, and many of them aren't even mentioning it at all is extremely bizarre.

by a reader on Sun, 08/15/2004 - 23:24 | [reply](#)

He-says She-says

The reason the story is not news is that there is no substance to it. It is just he-says she-says and, frankly, has the hallmarks of a smear campaign. Produce some hard evidence to show that Kerry was or was not in Cambodia and you'll have your headline.

by a reader on Thu, 08/19/2004 - 02:35 | [reply](#)

He-says Everybody-Else-says

His own journal says he wasn't there; his commanding officers say he wasn't there; nobody who served with him says he was there.

What kind of evidence would give the story substance?

Gil

by **Gil** on Thu, 08/19/2004 - 15:32 | [reply](#)

What kind of evidence

how about video footage?

;-P

-- Elliot Temple

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by **Elliot Temple** on Thu, 08/19/2004 - 23:16 | [reply](#)