

A GUY NAMED JOE

by Michael Skinner

ON SUNDAY NIGHT, February 6, 1994, 60 Minutes featured a story about a Massachusetts man named Joe who had been incarcerated for over twenty years, serving a first degree life sentence without the possibility of parole for murder. He was filing an application before the Governor of Massachusetts to have his sentence commuted from first degree to second degree, which, if granted, would immediately make Joe eligible for parole.

The piece that aired that night centered on Joe's exceptional war record from his two tours in Vietnam as a member of the United States Marines. Joe was awarded the Purple Heart as well as the Bronze Star with Combat V for Valor. On February 10, 1994, four days after the 60 Minutes story aired, *The Boston Globe* featured a story about Joe and highlighted Joe's war record and achievements while incarcerated, and, like 60 Minutes, implied that this war hero should in fact be commuted for his service to his country.

As fate would have it, Joe would be given a commutation and paroled within a year of the 60 Minutes story.

Unfortunately, that's not the end of the real story.

On August 24, 1998, a new story broke that the guy named Joe who was featured on 60 Minutes and portrayed as a war hero had in fact lied about his war record. He had never served in Vietnam nor had he earned any of the medals that were cited. He had somehow gotten hold of someone else's DD2-14 service records and switched the names. What is even more incredible is that apparently 60 Minutes never verified this Joe's veteran status or service records with either

the Department of Defense or the Veterans Administration.

Joe Yandle — the Joe who lied about his service record — was immediately declared in violation, had his parole revoked, and was returned

***“It is time to
set the record
straight.”***

to state prison for several years before being paroled again.

There is another guy named Joe who is serving a first degree life sentence without the possibility of parole. This Joe has been incarcerated for forty-three straight years. Joe Labriola is a former United States Marine, who, as a member of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, served two tours in Vietnam, was awarded the Purple Heart, and a Bronze Star with a combat V for Valor.

Seems like quite a coincidence.

To date, neither 60 Minutes nor *The Boston Globe*, or any other media

outlet that reported the fraud ever investigated whose service records were used for the forgery. If they did not belong to Joe Yandle, then who did they belong to?

The answer is that they belonged to the other guy named Joe: Joe Labriola. The irony is that while Joe Yandle is home again, living a quiet life, Joe Labriola is still in prison, slowly and painfully dying from not only his war wounds but also from severe COPD due to his exposure to Agent Orange, which is destroying his lungs. Joe Labriola has applied for a commutation several times, most recently last year, and has yet to receive so much as a hearing. Nor has 60 Minutes ever acknowledged their investigative oversights, or offered any kind of apology.

It is time to set the record straight, and for 60 Minutes to get to the bottom of this and report the truth as to who the real war hero is, and why he is still in prison, suffering with no chance of either a commutation or a medical release.

If you are reading this, you can help Joe by sharing this story with others, or by contacting media outlets. We need to shed some light on Joe's situation before it's too late.

You can contact your local State Representative for State Senator or Veterans Administration liaison to lend a hand and help Joe get that long-overdue hearing.

That's all we're asking. *Semper Fi*, and thank you for listening.

FOR MORE
INFORMATION VISIT
FREEJOELAB.COM