

# Paralyzed Iraq War Vet Turned Peace Activist Tomas Young Dies on Eve of Veterans Day

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[Phil Donahue](#), one of the best-known talk show hosts in U.S. television history. Along with Ellen Spiro, he directed the documentary *Body of War*, which told the story of Tomas Young, an Iraq War veteran paralyzed from a bullet to the spine.

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As the nation marks Veterans Day, we remember the Iraq War veteran Tomas Young, who died this week at the age of 34. He enlisted in the military just after the Sept. 11 attacks. In 2004 he was sent to serve in Iraq. On April 4th—his fifth day in Iraq—Young's unit came under fire in the Baghdad neighborhood of Sadr City. Young was shot and left paralyzed, never to walk again. Young returned home and became an active member of Iraq Veterans Against the War. He remained in and out of the hospital for the rest of his life. Young was later featured in the documentary "Body of War" directed by Ellen Spiro and the legendary television broadcaster Phil Donahue. We broadcast excerpts of the film and past Democracy Now! interviews with Young. Donahue joins us in studio to discuss the impact Young made in the antiwar and veteran communities and the making the film, which was nominated for an Academy Award.

## TRANSCRIPT

*This is a rush transcript. Copy may not be in its final form.*

**AMY GOODMAN:** As the nation marks Veterans Day, we begin today's show remembering the Iraq War veteran Tomas Young, who died this week at the age of 34. In 2004 he was sent to Iraq. On April 4th—his fifth day in Iraq—Tomas Young's unit came under fire in the Baghdad neighborhood of Sadr City. Tomas was shot, left paralyzed, never to walk again. Tomas returned home to become an active member of Iraq Veterans Against the War. He remained in and out of a hospital for the rest of his life. Tomas was later featured in the documentary *Body of War*, directed by Ellen Spiro and the legendary television broadcaster Phil Donahue. In a moment, Phil Donahue will join

us in the studio, but first we turn to an excerpt from the film featuring Tomas Young speaking in 2005 at the Lafayette Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, New York, about President George W. Bush and the Iraq War.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** You'll have to excuse me for a little bit; I get a little lightheaded every now and again. So hold on. I'd also like to—that during this speech, I may say the word "uh" a lot and stammer a little bit, so forgive me for sounding a bit presidential.

I called my recruiter on around September 13, 2001, when, if you all can remember, the president stood on the rubble with a bullhorn and said we were going to get the evil-doers that did this. And, oh, man, hold on a second; I'm starting to—thank you. Alright, let's hope that's a little better. But—and he led the rah-rah around the country and got everybody really excited, and I was excited. And I wanted to go to Afghanistan and get the people that did this to us. But after I joined the Army, it became clearer and clearer to me that we weren't going to go to Afghanistan, that we were going to go to Iraq.

And more and more, it began to feel—with statements like George Bush saying that he sought the approval of a higher father than his own and things like that, it really concerned me that President Bush was trying to use Jesus Christ as an advocate for the war, but I always remembered, at least from the Bible that I read, Jesus Christ was always about peaceful things and love and "whatsoever you do unto the least, my brother, you do unto me." And it just shocks me that a man who tries to live his life by such devout Christian philosophies seems to skew so much on this one issue.

I don't really—I have to—excuse me, again. Sorry, it's a little hard to regulate my body temperature, and it is hot up here.

But I heard somebody once say that the only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing. So just everybody keep together and stay strong, and one day we'll get what we need to get done. And thank you all for waiting, and I hope I didn't disappoint.

**AMY GOODMAN:** That was Tomas Young speaking in 2005. It was broadcast in the documentary *Body of War*. He died this week at the age of 34. Joining us now, the legendary talk show host Phil Donahue, who co-directed the film *Body of War*. So, we believe late on Sunday night, early Monday morning, Tomas died at home with his wife Claudia in Seattle. They had just moved there, Phil. Can you talk about how you came to know Tomas?

**PHIL DONAHUE:** I met Tomas Young in '05. He was shot in April of '04, so we're 10 years and seven months later now, during which time he has been trapped in a bed. And I was with Ralph Nader, and he said a mother at Walter Reed wants to see me, "Do you want to go?" I said, "Yeah." So, off we go, and here is this young 24-year-old, in bed, whacked out on morphine, having just arrived from Landstuhl, whacked out on morphine. And his mother, as we stood, as I stood and looked on, his mother explained his injury to me. Tomas is a T4—that's between the shoulder blades. So a bullet came down and exited T4 on the spine, so he's paralyzed from the nipples down.

And, you know, I said, "People should see this. This is the most sanitized war of my lifetime. If you're going to send all these young men and women to war, show the pain. Don't sanitize the war." And five years later, we came out with this film, this documentary, *Body of War*, which, by the way, won a lot of awards, was on the shortlist for an Oscar, but we sold no popcorn. This is not a take-your-girl-to-the-movie movie, but it is available on Netflix.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Let's go to another clip of *Body of War*. Tomas Young lists the array of medications he has to take every day. The list is interspersed with the Senate roll call vote authorizing the Iraq War. But first, you hear the voices of President Bush and supporters of war around the time Congress voted to authorize the invasion.

**PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH:** Saddam Hussein is harboring terrorists.

**REP. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN:** Harbors these terrorists.

**SEN. HILLARY CLINTON:** Aid, comfort and sanctuary to terrorists.

**PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH:** We know that Iraq and the al-Qaeda terrorist network share a common enemy: the United States of America.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** Wonder if the Bushes and the people at Fox News and people like that had a big sigh of relief when the hurricane hit. "I know it's a horrible tragedy," they must have said, "but thank God we don't have to talk about Cindy."

\*My pillbox separates them out for the week. This is Carbamazepine. It is a nerve pain medication.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Ms. Collins, aye.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** This is a drug called Coumadin, and it's a blood thinner.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mr. Craig, aye.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** This is Tizanidine. It's an anti-spasm medication.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mr. Crapo, aye.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** This is Gabapentin.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mr. Daschle.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** It's a nerve pain medication.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Aye.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** This is Bupropion.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mr. DeWine.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** It's an antidepressant.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Aye.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** This is Omeprazole.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mr. Dodd.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** It's for morning nausea.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Aye.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** And this is morphine. It's a narcotic. And in this situation, the effect is not to get high, but to kill pain. And so, I have to take more and more of it to stop the pain.

**AMY GOODMAN:** That was Tomas Young interspersed with the vote for war in Congress. Phil Donahue, before we go to break, how you came to know Tomas in the making of this film?

**PHIL DONAHUE:** Well, after meeting him at Walter Reed, I thought about a book, and then I thought, "Well, I've been in TV. My pictures—my career has had moving pictures." And although I had never made a film, I called—DeeDee Halleck, who is a longtime progressive figure, who was responsible for DISH TV, who I met on an airplane—

**AMY GOODMAN:** The legendary public access producer.

**PHIL DONAHUE:** Yeah, yes. And she gave me a number, and I called. And a woman answered, and I said, "Hello, I'm Phil Donahue." And she said, "No, you're not." And I thought, "Well, thank God she recognizes me." This is a cold call. We met at the Kansas City airport and went directly to see Tomas, and she immediately embraced the idea. And she turned out to be fabulous. I got very lucky. I mean, she didn't know me, really, and I certainly didn't know her. And somehow, she survived this almost five-year professional relationship with me. And her work is very evident in the film, I think.

**AMY GOODMAN:** We're going to go to break, and when we come back, we're going to look at Tomas over the years after he returned from Iraq. He was wounded April 4th, 2004, in Sadr City, the same day that Casey Sheehan, the son of Cindy Sheehan, the well-known peace activist, was also killed. This is *Democracy Now!* We'll be back in a minute.

[break]

**AMY GOODMAN:** That's Eddie Vedder singing the song "No More." It was a song he wrote for Tomas Young and for the film *Body of War*. Our guest today is Phil Donahue, who made that film with Ellen Spiro, as we remember Tomas Young. I'm Amy Goodman. This is *Democracy Now!* As the nation marks Veterans Day, we remember Tomas Young, who died just weeks shy of his 35th birthday. On April 4th, 2004—his fifth day in Iraq—Tomas Young's unit came under fire in the Baghdad neighborhood of Sadr City. Tomas was shot, left paralyzed, never to walk again.

In 2008, Tomas Young [appeared](#) on *Democracy Now!* We had just come back from the Winter Soldier hearings in Maryland, where soldiers testified about the war. And many of those soldiers had last been, just a few days before, in Austin at South by Southwest, and they had seen the release of *Body of War*. I talked to Tomas Young and asked him to talk about the response to the film and what it meant to him.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** Well, it's been an amazing honor to travel the country with this music that I'm putting out on this album and the movie that has been an amazing experience to make, and to reach out to soldiers that are speaking out against this war and to try to touch lives on an individual basis has been an incredible experience. But right off the bat, I have to address something that Dick Cheney said yesterday in response to the—

**AMY GOODMAN:** Maybe we have a clip. Maybe we have a clip of what Dick Cheney had to say. Let's give it a try. I think this is from our headlines today. This is the vice president, Dick Cheney.

**VICE PRESIDENT DICK CHENEY:** The president carries the biggest burden, obviously. He's the one who has to make the decision to commit young Americans, but we are fortunate to have a group of men and women, an all-volunteer force, who voluntarily put on the uniform and go in harm's way for the rest of us.

**AMY GOODMAN:** That was Dick Cheney. Tomas Young, was that the quote you would like to address?

**TOMAS YOUNG:** Absolutely. From one of those soldiers who volunteered to go to Afghanistan after September 11th, which was where the evidence said we needed to go, to the master of the college deferment in Vietnam, the last conflict we didn't go into voluntarily, many of us volunteered with patriotic feelings in our heart, only to see them subverted and bastardized by the administration and sent into the wrong country. Yes, we volunteered, but we didn't volunteer where you sent us to go. And I realize that we don't choose where we get to go, but we at least should be sent in the right places to defend the Constitution, just as we volunteered to do. That's all.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Tomas, I wanted to go to a part of the film, *Body of War*, which was the White House Correspondents' Dinner of 2005. It's very interesting, because you were watching it. It includes President Bush joking around about the missing WMDs, as well as first lady Laura Bush. This is the clip.

**PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH:** Those weapons of mass destruction got to be somewhere. Nope, no weapons over there. Maybe under here.

**LAURA BUSH:** I said to him the other day, "George, if you really want to end tyranny in the world, you're going to have to stay up later." Ladies and gentlemen, I am a desperate housewife.

**CATHY SMITH:** They're so insulated. They don't want to know about people like Tomas and the 4 or 5 percent of the population that is actually sacrificing for this war.

**AMY GOODMAN:** That last voice is Tomas Young's mother, Cathy Smith. Tomas Young is shown in the film watching the White House Correspondents' Dinner and hugging his little brother. Tomas, your reaction to the skit?

**TOMAS YOUNG:** Well, my reaction is twofold. I'd like to tell Laura Bush that there are probably several—there are probably a couple thousand desperate housewives who are quite missing their husbands and would love to have their husbands there to go to bed early before 9:00. And for the president to be so glib about a lie that he told the American people and my brothers and sisters in arms to get us to go to war so blindly and patriotically for this country, it's offensive to me as a soldier, first, and as an American, second. And now, that clip that I was watching was recorded from the year previous, so I had a full year for that wound to fester and boil, as far as my anger and resentment at the president making that joke and looking around the Oval Office as if the weapons of mass destruction were under his desk.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Tomas, I wanted to go to, well, near the end of the film, when you meet Democratic Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia. We've been playing his impassioned speeches on the floor of the Senate, which figure prominently in the film. In this clip, Senator Byrd proudly reads to you the names of all the 23 senators who voted against authorizing the invasion of Iraq.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** I'm going to read you the names of these—

**TOMAS YOUNG:** The immortal 23?

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** The immortal 23. All right, here we are. H.J. Res. 114, that's the resolution.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Senators voting in the negative.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Here are the 23: Akaka.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mr. Akaka, no.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Bingaman.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mr. Bingaman, no.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Boxer.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mrs. Boxer, no.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Byrd. B-Y-R-D, right there.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mr. Byrd, no.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Chafee, Republican.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** He's a good man.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mr. Chafee, no.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** He stood with us. Conrad.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mr. Conrad, no.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** What's that one?

**TOMAS YOUNG:** Look like Jon Corzine.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Corzine, yeah.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mr. Corzine, no.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** I don't have my glasses on. What's that one there?

**TOMAS YOUNG:** Dayton.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Dayton, yeah. God bless him. He's leaving us after this year.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mr. Dayton, no.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Who's that?

**TOMAS YOUNG:** That's Senator Durbin.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Durbin. This one?

**TOMAS YOUNG:** Senator Feingold.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Feingold.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** That would be Bob Graham from Florida, I think, Senator.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Yes, it would be.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mr. Durbin, no. Mr. Feingold, no. Mr. Graham of Florida, no.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** And we go all the way down here to Daniel Inouye.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mr. Inouye—

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** There's a man who has really sacrificed. He gave his arm.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** From Hawaii, yeah.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** No.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Yes, sir. He's a real hero.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** Here's another one of my heroes.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Jim Jeffords.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** Senator Jeffords, the one that switched sides of the aisle.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** He's one of my heroes, too.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mr. Jeffords, no.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Kennedy, Leahy and Levin.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Leahy, Mr. Levin, no, no, no.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Mikulski.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Ms. Mikulski, no.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Murray.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mrs. Murray—

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Patty Murray.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** No.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Reed from Rhode Island, Sarbanes.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mr. Reed of Rhode Island, no. Mr. Sarbanes, no.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** Stabenow.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Yeah, Debbie Stabenow.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Ms. Stabenow, no.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Wellstone, that's the man who gave his life shortly thereafter.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** And then Wyden.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** And Wyden. He's still here.

**SENATE ROLL CALL:** Mr. Wellstone, no. Mr. Wyden, no.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Twenty-three. Seventy-seven to 23. The immortal 23. Our founders would be so proud. Thank you for your service. Man, you've made a great sacrifice. You served your country well.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** As have you, sir.

**SEN. ROBERT BYRD:** Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

**AMY GOODMAN:** The late Senator Robert Byrd meeting with and talking to the late Iraq War veteran and peace activist Tomas Young. It's from the film *Body of War*, which was co-directed by our guest today, Phil Donahue. What a moment, Phil.

**PHIL DONAHUE:** Yeah, yeah. It was a—it was a chapter of our lives. I mean, none of us who worked on this film had been that close to such a debilitating injury, and it was a spiritual experience we'll never forget.

**AMY GOODMAN:** You have a very difficult section of *Body of War* showing Tomas Young's mother, Cathy Smith, helping him insert a catheter.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** Alright. I'm going to lift up, and you're going to slip that under me.

**CATHY SMITH:** OK.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** OK. This is hard to do from this angle. Help me out here, Mom?

**CATHY SMITH:** Yeah.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** Must be hard. I've been meaning to change those. OK, now, in this bag, you're going to take this lube out. OK. Instead of lubing up the end of that, you're going to lube the head of the penis.

**CATHY SMITH:** OK.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** 'Cause it uses less lube. You're just going to lube right over the hole.

**CATHY SMITH:** Like that?

**TOMAS YOUNG:** And now you're just going to insert the catheter. And I really kind of wanted you to put the glove on the hand that was going to put the catheter in, but OK. You seriously can push in a little quicker than that.

**CATHY SMITH:** No, I can't.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** Are you nervous?

**CATHY SMITH:** Yeah, I have never done this before.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** OK.

**CATHY SMITH:** Is it coming out?

**TOMAS YOUNG:** Yeah, it's coming out. Hey, Mom! We generally tend to watch what goes on up there.

**CATHY SMITH:** I'm trying to move it so it doesn't just go everywhere.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** Good plan. You saw that works swimmingly. Look at that, you've got pee on your hand.

**CATHY SMITH:** I know. You know what? It's not the first time I've had your pee on my hand.

**AMY GOODMAN:** That's Tomas Young's mother, Cathy Smith, with Tomas, as she tried to help him insert a catheter. That moment, Phil, they were in Washington, D.C., right? At an antiwar protest?

**PHIL DONAHUE:** No, that was en route to—oh, wait a minute. Ellen shot that en route to, I think, see Nathan off, her other—her younger son. And—

**AMY GOODMAN:** Well, this is very important, see him off to war.

**PHIL DONAHUE:** Right. They all—they went, and we have that scene in the film of her saying goodbye to her younger son. And she explains, "I could get him out." You know, she's already sacrificed one son. They don't—but he wanted to go. So, brothers. And, of course, he's a big boy now, and she was not able to talk him out of signing up to serve.

**AMY GOODMAN:** So, Tomas Young became very active in Iraq Veterans Against the War. Can you talk about his activism and his struggle against his pain?

**PHIL DONAHUE:** Well, he was a member of Iraq Vets Against the War. A lot of relationships developed between Tomas and other members of that group. He was hugely impressive in his speeches, although he often had to stop because his respiratory system was not as it should be because of the paralysis.

**AMY GOODMAN:** And he would bend over in his wheelchair.

**PHIL DONAHUE:** Right, and have to gather more oxygen for himself. In hot weather, he would put gels in his—in a vest, ice gels from the freezer into the vest, just to cool his body temperature. I mean, these are just some of the things that people didn't see. People didn't see the cleaning of the bedsores and the changing of the bed clothing after the catheter broke, the urinary tract infection. I mean, it's just—the more you see this—and there are thousands and thousands of homes in this country, as we speak, dealing with this kind of burden that turns the whole family upside down. And nobody sees it.

**AMY GOODMAN:** In February of 2013, Tomas Young stunned an audience gathered to watch the film, *Body of War*, when he joined them via Skype after the film and made this announcement. You have to listen closely.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** In July of last year, I began to experience sharp pains in my abdomen. And I went to the VA, and they treated me like I was a second-class citizen, a junkie looking for pain medicines just to get high, even though I was genuinely in pain. I went to a private hospital, was treated much better. They suggested a colostomy, where they would remove my colon. I thought that would reduce the pain. It did for a few days, but the pain came rocketing back. And I decided to go on hospice care, where I have a pump that provides the same IV medications the hospital provided. And after my one-year anniversary with my wife, I will begin to wean myself off of food and one day go away.

**AMY GOODMAN:** That was Tomas Young announcing he would die. He couldn't tolerate the pain. Claudia Cuellar, his wife, was sitting next to him on this Skype. After the showing of *Body of War* in Litchfield, Connecticut, Phil, when did you get word of this, that he was planning to do this? You heard that night? Were you in Litchfield?

**PHIL DONAHUE:** I did. I heard, I think, a—I'm guessing the week before. He called me, a Saturday morning. And, you know, I have to say, I couldn't—you know, if you say, "Oh, Tomas, please don't, Tomas," you know, you suddenly realize it's a selfish thing to

say. You're saying, "I want you to live." And you're not really appreciating or at least having some empathy for what he wants. So, even when he made that announcement at a Litchfield theater, Litchfield, Connecticut, the audience was very, I would say, sympathetic toward his decision. I'm sure there were many there who wished he wasn't doing this, but they understood it. And that was a remarkable—

**AMY GOODMAN:** Can you talk to about the deterioration to the point where we saw? What caused him, in the end—

**PHIL DONAHUE:** Right.

**AMY GOODMAN:** —although he was always in pain—

**PHIL DONAHUE:** Yeah.

**AMY GOODMAN:** —to be experiencing such severe pain? We're talking about 10 years after his injury.

**PHIL DONAHUE:** Right. Tomas, about—it's all a blur to me now, but I'll have to think six, seven years ago, after we had completed the film, sustained a swollen right arm, and it hurt. And they went immediately to the emergency room, and they gave him pain pills at the VA. And he came home, and I think a few—not longer after that, he was discovered in a coma. Tomas sustained a pulmonary embolism, which, as you know, is oxygen deprivation to the brain. And you heard his speech there, how his speech was—is now—came very labored. And he also couldn't hold silverware. He couldn't—he could bend his fingers, but he couldn't—and he had to be fed. And they had to find a corner in a restaurant on those few times when they went out, so that people wouldn't stare at them as she fed him. These are just some of the things people didn't see in this sanitized war.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Well, last year, after Tomas made this announcement, he joined us on *Democracy Now!* A TV crew went to his house in Kansas City, and they filmed him as he and his wife, Claudia, came on *Democracy Now!* And he [read an open letter](#) he wrote called "A Message to George W. Bush and Dick Cheney from a Dying Veteran." Listen carefully. This is an excerpt.

**TOMAS YOUNG:** "I write this letter, my last letter, to you, Mr. Bush and Mr. Cheney. I write not because I think you grasp the terrible human and moral consequences of your

lies, manipulation and thirst for wealth and power. I write this letter because, before my own death, I want to make it clear that I, and hundreds of thousands of my fellow veterans, along with millions of my fellow citizens, along with hundreds of millions more in Iraq and the Middle East, know fully who you are and what you've done."

**AMY GOODMAN:** That was Tomas Young. Ultimately, at that time, he decided not to take his own life. After reading that, he got so much enormous response all over the country. But they moved to Seattle, and he died in his sleep late Sunday night, early Monday morning.

**PHIL DONAHUE:** Mm-hmm, yes, he did. And Claudia called me on very early Monday morning. It was on my cellphone. You know, and I've been waiting for the call for 10 years. I have to say that. You know, every time her or his area code came up, I thought, "This is it." So, finally, it happened, and he's at peace. And we can—we have to take some positive away from this. I think Tomas made an enormous impact on those that he met and those people who saw him and what he went through. He was really the—he was the town crier for all of those other veterans. We're up now to over—is it over?—almost 3,000 in Afghanistan. Afghanistan. So we're coming up on 6,000 in Iraq and Afghanistan—irreplaceable human beings who will, you know, never see a child confirmed, holy communion, bar mitzvah—all the wonderful things in life that they will never, ever experience because of this massive blunder.

**AMY GOODMAN:** And that is the American soldiers. As Tomas would point out—

**PHIL DONAHUE:** Yes, he would.

**AMY GOODMAN:** —we don't know the number—

**PHIL DONAHUE:** Yes, he would.

**AMY GOODMAN:** —of Iraqis and Afghans who have died.

**PHIL DONAHUE:** Right, we don't. We're not even sure. And certainly over four million refugees, people living out of laundry bags.

From Democracy Now