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JEFFERSON MET HEMINGS IN VIETNAM

By Ann Coulter

So now it turns out that Thomas Jefferson was having sex with Sally Hemings while serving in the 101st Airborne during the Vietnam War.

In a stupendously humiliating episode this week, a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian -- and author of the pre-impeachment report, "Jefferson Fathered Slave's Last Child" -- was exposed in The Boston Globe as having lied about his service in Vietnam, in the civil rights movement, and even on the football field.

For years, Mount Holyoke professor Joseph "Full Metal Jacket" Ellis had been regaling students, interviewers and friends with gripping stories of his service in Vietnam. He claimed to have been a platoon leader and paratrooper with the 101st Airborne Division. He said he served in Saigon under Gen. William Westmoreland.

Ellis was recently forced to apologize for "having let stand" the "assumption" that he served in Vietnam. Ellis whiled away the Vietnam War in his college dorm room, presumably, like most academics, smoking pot and listening to the Beatles' "White Album."

Among the "assumptions" Ellis had "let stand" was his claim that after witnessing the horror of Vietnam, he came home and enlisted in the anti-war movement. He also boasted of having helped David Halberstam with his 1972 best seller, "The Best and the Brightest," by sharing his vivid recollections of Vietnam.

He had no involvement in the anti-war movement, and Halberstam says he's never talked to Ellis.

The fantasy life of this deskbound Walter Mitty didn't stop at Vietnam. He has also bragged about his work in the civil rights movement. He claims that while on the Freedom Trail in Mississippi, he was the victim of racist Southern cops banging on his door late at night and following him in his car. He wistfully recalled his years as a high school football star, describing to a reporter last year how he once scored the winning touchdown.

He wasn't in Mississippi, and his greatest moment on the football field involved a clarinet.

Between 'Nam flashbacks and Freedom Rider reunions, Ellis co-authored the groundbreaking 1998 report, "Jefferson Fathered Slave's Last Child." You may remember this report if you weren't on the moon when it was released. It was the Clinton flacks' giddiest "Gotcha!" moment. The report was unveiled to instant acclaim -- as luck would have it -- just weeks before the House impeachment vote.

Bill Clinton wasn't a pervert, liar and felon after all! Rather, he was part of an honorable history of venerable



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men molesting the help. As report co-author Ellis put it: "It is as if Clinton had called one of the most respected character witnesses in all of U.S. history to testify that the primal urge has a most distinguished presidential pedigree." Ellis claimed the new testing proved "beyond any reasonable doubt that Jefferson had a long-term sexual relationship with his mulatto slave."

As the author of the award-winning "American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson" -- and a Vietnam veteran -- Ellis spoke with some authority on the matter. He dismissed the likely protestations from "die-hard Jefferson worshippers," proclaiming the debate over. "Now we know," he said.

Unfortunately, proof of a Jefferson-Hemings liaison was as fanciful as Professor Ellis' war service. Two months after the report's "findings" had been published in every news outlet where English is spoken, there was a slight correction. One of Ellis' co-authors, pathologist Eugene Foster, admitted to the British science journal Nature that they had not proved Thomas Jefferson fathered any children by Sally Hemings. What they meant to say was "Jefferson could have fathered the slave's last child." Just like Ellis could have served in Vietnam.

The scientists had compared the DNA from descendants of Hemings' last son to the DNA of descendants of one of Jefferson's paternal uncles. The report established only that some Jefferson male had fathered a child with Hemings.

That isn't as incriminating as it might sound. There were 25 Jefferson males with the same DNA alive when Hemings conceived her last son. Seven of them were at Monticello during the relevant time period. The report's title was a lie.

This point was being screamed from the rooftops by various Jefferson scholars -- presumably the "die-hard Jefferson worshippers" ridiculed by war hero Ellis. But their protestations didn't get much farther than the rooftops. The American press wasn't interested.

Nor was the American press interested when the co-author of the study later disavowed the report's purported conclusion in Nature. Only eight newspapers even mentioned the correction, and only four admitted that the report had actually narrowed the paternity list to Jefferson ... or one of seven other Jeffersons.

Around the time that Ellis was promoting the phony Jefferson report, he pompously declared in The New York Times that "a poll of the Founders would produce a clear majority" opposing Clinton's impeachment. So now I'm wondering -- did he meet those guys in 'Nam?

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