

NYTimes
The Man in the Sky: Killer or Victim?

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To the Editor:

I am writing to applaud the courage of Grace Paley ["The Man in the Sky Is a Killer," Op-Ed March 23] in dissipating some of the "sentiment and dreamy invention" some politicians and newsmen often attach to the P.O.W. issue. She has said publicly what I and many of my fellow Vietnam-era veterans have talked about privately. While I have sincere compassion for the families of these P.O.W.'s, I have no sympathy for the plight of the downed jet jockies who flew and strafed and bombed because it was fun.

Ms. Paley's position will be very easy for the flag wavers to attack, and while there may not be a lot of supportive letters, there are many of us who silently agree with her.

RICHARD BIRD
 Highland Park, N. J., April 2, 1972

To the Editor:

I take strong exception to Grace Paley's March 23 Op-Ed article.

It's a rash, infuriating piece of propaganda, and as a close relative of a P.O.W. interned since 1965, I resent Ms. Paley's accusations.

When this young man graduated from M.I.T. with honors in aeronautical engineering, his one ambition was to fly sophisticated planes—not to kill—and before he had time to evaluate his future, our Air Force "proposed" to him and he became an officer.

I abhor Ms. Paley's assertions that these "volunteer" pilots were "shot

down from a North Vietnam sky where they had no business to be." They indeed had "business to be" . . . but who directed the "business," who trained them and charted those horrendous deeds she describes?

The more we're fed such propaganda, the more convinced I am that this senseless war to preserve a politically corrupt foreign regime (whether Eisenhower, Kennedy or Johnson fostered it) has only resulted in annihilation of innocent humans—Vietnamese villagers and/or our own young manhood.

When one is close to a P.O.W. who is now no doubt brainwashed, drained of body and spirit after seven years internment, one may feel somewhat sensitive to hogwash such as Ms. Paley's. I guess it all depends on what fence you're sitting on, and whether the grass is greener on one side than the other.

PAULA FISCHER
 Forest Hills, N. Y., March 27, 1972