

Three cups of Deceit: How Greg Mortenson, Humanitarian Hero, Lost His Way Edward Charles

Three cups of deceit is a expose of how Greg Mortenson, the best selling author of Three Cups of Tea, Stones into Schools, completely lied about every situation he wrote about in his books. It was written by Jon Krakauer, and it is divided into four major parts: "the creation myth," "Pennies for peace, millions for Mortenson," "ghost schools," "afterword denial." In each one of these parts one becomes more and more disgusted with what Mortenson did.

The Creation Myth

Greg mortenson is the founder of a charity called the Central Asia Institute. The Central Asia Institute's mission is to build schools in small villages, and to educate students in a western style. By doing this they claim that they reduce the possibility that the students will join the Taliban. In the book Krakauer acknowledges that Mortenson did actually start the non-profit with these intentions. However, in his book Three Cups of Tea he changed the village that he promised to build his first school in. In reality he had promised it to another village, but while he had been back in the U.S. fundraising he decided to build it in a different village, mainly because he had become friends with the village leader on his last trip to Pakistan. As a result when he was writing his book, he made up a elaborate story about finding peace with his sisters death in the new village, It was mainly meant to make him look good. Krakauer also begins to point out in this section that as the CAI has made more and more money in donations krakauers salary and expenses jump up equally.

Pennies for peace, millions for Mortenson

By this section the CAI is well established and Mortenson has released his book, which is now a national seller. People still believe that his book is non-fiction, and as a result he has achieved fame, and wealth due to his "adventures." He then proceeds to use the fame to create a program where school aged kids collect spare change for students in Pakistan. He claims that 100% of this money is going towards school supplies and teachers salaries. However, Krakauer shows proof that the majority of the money collected is going towards paying the expenses associated with mortenson's book tour. Mortenson claims that he was in the right to do this because the book brings in donations, which is true. But the CAI did not get any royalties from Mortenson's book sales. Krakauer awknoledges that the book brought attention to the CAI but points out that it was still a personal expense. In other words he was paid roughly 7 million from money that was donated to buy school supplies for poor children.

Ghost schools

This section moves away from Mortenson but instead focuses on the schools that the CAI was actually able to build. It turns out that the schools that the CAI claimed they built actually existed, but were built with no thought. They were randomly located and built wherever a corrupt Politian could convince CAI to build a building. Mortenson continued to write complete fiction in to his books, and basically

demands a school to be built in a really remote and useless place, to base his second book off of.

Afterward Denile

Today Mortenson continues to deny accusations against him, and insist that everything he wrote about in his books is true. The state of Montana announced an investigation into the CAI, and they concluded that while harm had been done Mortenson would be allowed to continue to run it, under increased supervision. While it appears the CAI and Mortenson have turned over a new leaf they are still rather useless. Mainly because the reputation the organization had has been ripped apart.

Conclusion

I had previously read Three Cups Of Tea and as a result I was really excited to read this. What I find amazing is how quickly Mortenson's Nobel intentions had become corrupted by fame and greed. I think it is an important example of why we should take more time to empathize with others. Something that coincidentally been talking about in class.