

AT THE RISK OF BEING CHURLISH

My father died when he was 56—he was way too young to die, but he had lived a full life. And unlike Tim Russert's family, we had 8 months' notice that he was going to die, so we had the opportunity to put our relationships in order and say goodbye in a meaningful way.

My condolences go out to Russert's family for this sudden and premature loss. I'm sorry.

But as to the media's coverage of his death, I agree with John Cole.

MSNBC has been running nothing but a 5 hour (and presumably it will go until 11 pm or beyond) marathon of Russert remembrance. CNN has done their due diligence, and Fox news has spent at least the last half hour talking non-stop about him.

But let's get something straight- what I am watching right now on the cable news shows is indicative of the problem- no clearer demonstration of the fact that they consider themselves to be players and the insiders and, well, part of the village, is needed. This is precisely the problem. They have walked the corridors of power so long that they honestly think they are the story. It is creepy and sick and the reason politicians get away with all the crap they get away with these days.

Tim Russert was a newsman. He was not the Pope. This is not the JFK assassination, or Reagan's death, or the Space Shuttle Challenger explosion. A newsman died. We know you miss him, but please shut up and get back to work.

Best as I remember, the **only** man or woman who

died in Afghanistan or Iraq who got this kind of eulogy was Pat Tillman. Maybe. And we know that was based on a bunch of propagandistic bullshit spewed by the Pentagon (which doesn't make Tillman's sacrifice—or Tillman himself—any less honorable).

With about five exceptions, all the men and women who have died in George Bush's wars have died before they turned 58—many of them at half that age. Many of them have young children they never saw grow up. Many of them never lived the full life that Tim Russert lived—except insofar as they served this country.

It seems that sacrifice—the men and women who died for this country—deserve at least this kind of tribute.