

SCHADENFREUDE DELAYED

Remember how, back in 2002, the nutters attacked Al Franken because some nutters got booed during Paul Wellstone's funeral?

To this day, there are still a lot of people, including Democrats, who've bought the right wing line on the Wellstone Memorial. Specifically, that it was a cynical, premeditated political event that included endless booing of Republican politicians who came to pay their respects to their fallen colleague. I wrote a pretty detailed account of the Wellstone Memorial in my book *Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them*, and nothing could be further from the truth. I did write that "reasonable people of good will were genuinely offended." The memorial was raucous and a couple of speakers said some things that were inappropriate – basically, let's win this (upcoming Senate) election for Paul.

There were also honest Republicans of good will, including Jim Ramstad – the Congressman from the Minneapolis suburban district I grew up in – who acted like human beings and cut the speakers who offended (Rick Kahn and, to a lesser degree, Mark Wellstone) a little slack because they understood that Rick had lost six very close friends and Mark had lost his father, mother, and sister.

The chapter was mainly about how cynically Republicans used the memorial politically as they complained that the Democrats had used it politically. And how the mainstream media, many of whom had neither attended the memorial nor

seen it on TV, bought into the Republican spin.

Mainly, there was a lot of lying. Rush Limbaugh claimed that the audience was "planted," when, in fact, Twin Cities' radio and TV had to tell people to stay away because Williams Arena was jammed to capacity three hours before the Memorial was scheduled to begin. Thousands were crowded into an overflow gym to watch on a screen and thousands watched outside on a cold, late October night.

A pained Limbaugh asked his audience the day after the memorial: "Where was the grief? Where were the tears? Where was the memorial service? There wasn't any of this!"

This was a lie. I was there. Along with everyone else, I cried, I laughed, I cheered. It was, to my mind, a beautiful four-hour memorial.

I didn't boo. Neither did 22,800 of the some 23,000 people there.

Rush? You want grief?

I present to you Senator Al Franken.