

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**KNOPF TO PUBLISH
AUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY OF JESSICA LYNCH:**

**Pulitzer Prize winner Rick Bragg will write book with Lynch
to be published by Knopf later this year**

NEW YORK, 9-02-03 - Sonny Mehta, president of the Knopf Publishing Group, announced today the acquisition of the authorized biography of Jessica Lynch, to be written by Rick Bragg, Pulitzer Prize winner and best-selling author of *All Over but the Shoutin'* and *Ava's Man*. The book, **I Am a Soldier, Too: The Jessica Lynch Story**, was acquired by Alfred A. Knopf, the flagship imprint of the Knopf Publishing Group.

Jessica Lynch, the former prisoner of war who was rescued by U.S. Special Forces from an Iraqi hospital, was honorably discharged from the Army last week after having spent several months at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., recuperating from injuries she sustained when her 507th Maintenance Company was ambushed in the city of Nasiriyah on March 23. "I have been heartened by the hope and faith of the American people," said Lynch, "and by the tireless effort of the U.S. Armed Forces. Many folks have written, expressing their support for me and for the thousands of other soldiers who serve their country. I feel I owe them all this story, which will be about more than a girl going off to war and fighting alongside her fellow soldiers. It will be a story about growing up in America, and I will tell it with the help of Rick Bragg, a writer my family and I have come to admire."

"I have always been drawn to stories that tell us something about who we are as a nation and a people," said Bragg, "and, like a majority of Americans, I have been captivated by Jessica's story." Bragg has been given exclusive access to Jessica Lynch and her family, and his book will be the first and only authorized account of events that have transfixed the nation. "I feel a kinship with Jessica and her family," said Bragg, "and am thrilled at the prospect of bringing this story to the wider world. Readers will learn about the place Jessica is from and the people she is closest to, and they will discover what she saw, what she felt and what she experienced, and understand what she survived."

I Am a Soldier, Too: The Jessica Lynch Story will be published by Alfred A. Knopf in hardcover in November 2003. "Jessica Lynch has captured the hearts and minds of Americans," said Sonny Mehta. "Her story is one the world is eager to hear, and Rick Bragg, an established chronicler of American lives, is uniquely qualified to tell it. Through Jessica Lynch, people will gain a greater understanding of American life and lives when a nation is at war."

Earlier this summer, Ms. Lynch returned home to Palestine, West Virginia, where she resides with her family and continues a daily regimen of physical therapy at a local hospital. "I am feeling better every day," reports Lynch, "and all the good wishes of the many who have written have certainly kept my spirits up. Right now I am walking with crutches, but my doctors tell me that as I gain strength I will be able to walk on my own again soon. I am looking forward to those first steps."

Rick Bragg is the best-selling author of *All Over but the Shoutin'* and *Ava's Man*. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for feature writing in 1996. Mr. Bragg currently divides his time between New Orleans and his native Alabama.

Alfred A. Knopf is a division of Random House, Inc., whose parent company is Bertelsmann AG, the international media company. For more information about Alfred A. Knopf, visit our Web site at <http://www.aaknopf.com>.

CONTACT: Paul Bogaards, Senior Vice President, Executive Director of Publicity, Promotion and Media Relations (212) 572-2177

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