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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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At The Watercooler: James Frey on Larry King

The most entertaining show on TV last night was surely James Frey on Larry King, the writer that Smoking Gun revealed had simply made up many of the key incidents in his memoir "A Million Little Pieces." In the book, Frey claims to have been in jail, brawled with cops, and beaten an Italian priest. His defense? He made some stuff up. So what? No one expects a memoir to be true.

"I never expected the book to come under this sort of scrutiny," Frey told Larry. I'll bet. He also said "only about 18 pages" have been questioned in the 448 page book. That seemed a pretty good average to him. Frey ignores the fact that most of the factual incidents of his life -- arrests, assaults on police officers, being the focus of a drug investigation, jail time, etc. - in other words, the only details that could be independently checked have proven false.

As for the specific lies he peddled, Frey never said "I made that up" or "No, that really happened." He just compared himself to Hemingway, Kerouac, and Jerzy Kozinski. "And he killed himself," interjected Larry, who quickly added he wasn't suggesting anything about Frey.

For the grand finale, Oprah called in and said she stood by her personal connection with the book, that it could make a difference in people struggling with addiction, that she was disappointed in the controversy, but that she mainly blamed the publisher if the book was marketed inaccurately. Please note that Oprah stood by the *book*, not the author. Everyone's reporting she stood by the author, but Oprah is a smart woman and she chose her words carefully. I wouldn't wait for Frey to come back on her show anytime soon.

Oh, and to top it off, Frey admitted he shopped the book as fiction, but it didn't sell so he started to call it a memoir. Ah well, as long as it's "true." Not true, mind you. But "true."

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