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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE  
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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## Oprah: We Know She Can Sell Books. Can She Stop Them, Too?

Oprah's stamp of approval can sell literally millions of copies of a book. But can her disapproval cut the legs out from under an established blockbuster? We'll have to wait till a week from Sunday to find out what effect she's had on the sale of James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*. We certainly feel vindicated by her Thursday show. While the traditional media distorted Oprah's comments on Larry King, [Popsurfing was the only one to accurately describe what she REALLY said](#): that Oprah was disappointed with Frey, angry at the publisher and not a happy camper. She did NOT call to give unwavering support to Frey.

As for her special, Oprah did a great job with Frey by not letting him off the hook and insisting he lied. His publisher Nan A. Talese came across as an idiot, frankly, talking about the "authenticity" of his voice when Frey had just admitted it was a pack of lies. They also missed the basic truth of modern publishing: publishers not only don't factcheck nonfiction books, they barely COPYEDIT them. Finally, the guy from the Poynter Institute was foolish, too, discussing how memoirs should be labeled to say how honest they are. Talese jumped at that idea, as if a disclaimer at the beginning would make Frey's lies okay. The only label that "*A Million Little Pieces*" deserves is the label Frey tried and failed to sell the book under: fiction.

POSTED BY MICHAEL IN NEW YORK AT 8:03 PM



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