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Timothy McVeigh's Legacy of Revenge – Evil is Evil is Evil

By Dr. Dorree Lynn

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A Psychologist Speaks

"Are we like sheep? "

Isaiah

If we give an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, we shall all be blind and gumming. Overtly we are dealing with the issue of crime and punishment. Covertly we are dealing with evil, revenge, and passion. As soon as we get caught in the confused web of revenge masked as justice, as soon as we are blinded by our own evil intentions, good people get lost. Revenge evolved into justice because individuals needed to give over personal retribution for the good of society. The desire for revenge probably exists for all of us in the most primordial parts of our brain, as do other feelings that we chose not to act upon. We chose not to act upon them because as humans we are the only species that can foresee the consequences of our actions. Premeditated execution is premeditated murder. If we kill McVeigh on TV—closed circuit or not—and who is naive enough to believe the film won't be hacked?— We only perpetuate the most base and heinous of crimes—premeditated murder.

An avenger acts to preserve his kin group. Primitive men and women have always acted this way. As we became less overtly animalistic, we saw ourselves as better than beasts. If we use justice as our excuse for retaliation and revenge, we hide behind our own evil and become less than the animals we claim not to be.

Mourning is a natural process that goes through a series of stages in order to reach closure. One TV host asked me: "How does one avoid the pain of the loss of a loved one?" The answer is simple, but not easy. "You don't." One must not bypass the pain, but instead go through it and come out the other side. Those who try to sidestep the agony often wind up living it forever. The only prerequisite to loving deeply is the ability to sustain intense pain. Therefore, mourning a tragedy requires walking through the fires of hell until one reaches healing shores and possibly even the ability to forgive. This process requires more courage than many possess and it is easy to understand if one chooses to stop midway.

The death of a child goes against the natural order of life and thus is rarely fully mourned and certainly never forgotten. As religion and history attest, closure comes in many forms, unveiling, visits to the cemetery, perhaps the birth of a new child or through religious rituals. One does not have to watch the victims' death throes to have closure.

Why not call the upcoming June 11th event the circus it really is? Call the movie by its rightful name and have participants pay for the play? Make it pay per view, pay to play, sell popcorn and soda, exalt the tailgate parties, and let us live with our own denied evil. Someone will make millions from this event. It may as well be the government. Only then, they too would have to acknowledge their participation in the "show." We may as well be viewing a film like *Gladiator*. Watching an execution or ritual murder on closed circuit TV is not so different from going to the latest blood and gore flick, except

that some adults and most children can't distinguish between the reality and fantasy of the event. Studies of children's reactions to cartoons indicate that when a cartoon character dies and then pops up again, kids expect that if they shoot someone in real life the same thing will occur.—They don't understand why the dead person doesn't bounce back to life.

There will always be another Timothy McVeigh. However, with notoriety and fame, he or she will get younger and younger. Evil or good, fifteen minutes of fame is what matters in our celebrity oriented society. McVeigh ritualized Waco. Now we ritualize him. We are McVeigh's puppets, giving him exactly what he requests. Does this make sense? Not only does execution as deterrence not work, but in modern society its application masks the more primitive motives of "justice." The assertiveness of the minority of the relatives in the McVeigh case and the willingness of officials to acquiesce, allows a glimpse of what is being acted out. However, I suspect, that little, if any of this is their awareness. Attorney General Ashcroft is as pea brained about the human unconscious as Prosecutor Starr was about Kinsey and sex.

As a psychologist it is my responsibility to look at the unconscious, collective unconscious, and evolution as it applies to McVeigh and the families who will witness his death. Simply, what we have here is a case of revenge, not justice. Can there be harm from witnessing his death? "Yes." It is estimated that it can take many people from three years with help, to five, more, or never without help to get over the trauma of an automobile accident. Many of the loved ones of the 168 people who died must be experiencing more than the trauma endured after an automobile accident. Many are suffering Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, which can get worse under such conditions. No one knows how he or she will ultimately react. Kathleen Kennedy Cuomo was only eight when her father, Bobby Kennedy was senselessly shot and killed. She has said that even then, her only wish was that they did not kill the killer so that another family would not have to suffer. Turn the other cheek? Not exactly. But, to rise above our primordial instincts makes us human. Let us try to behave so.

Life is too hard to do alone,

Dr. D.

Dorree Lynn, PH.D.

Dr. Dorree Lynn is co-founder of the Institute for the Advanced Study of Psychotherapy and a practicing clinician in New York and Washington, DC. Dr. Lynn served on the executive board of the American Academy of Psychotherapists and she is on the editorial board of their publication, Voices. She is also a regular columnist for the Washington, DC newspaper, The Georgetown. Dr. Lynn is a noted speaker and well known on the lecture circuit.

The Politics of Freedom

By Kathy Simcox

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The war on terror should not be a political war. It should not be a war pitting Republican against Democrat or Christian against Muslim. The war on terror is a war on evil. There have been countless wars in our world that to some extent have protected against some level of evil. But this evil we fight today is an evil more bitter, more deadly, than anything you or I have ever lived to see. It is an evil so deeply rooted in hatred that it will take a very long time, if ever, to defeat. I am against war not because I am a Democrat or a peace-loving hippie, but because my Christian values tell me killing is wrong; because my Christian values tell me to love my Muslim brothers and sisters even though they worship God differently than I do; and because my Christian values tell me that its wrong to kill millions of innocent people, on both sides, because of those differences. I support the war on terror not because I am a Republican or a conservative bigot, but because I am an American who holds the value of freedom very near my heart; because I am an American who wants to live within the protective walls of that freedom for as long as I can, the very same protective walls so many young people have sacrificed their lives to keep standing; and because I want so very much for the rest of the world to know how wonderful that freedom feels and the peace that freedom brings.

I support our President not because of any hidden agenda or foolish conspiracy, but because he is an American like me who despises the enemy of freedom and the enemy of his faith; because he despises the enemy of ALL faiths, including that of true Islam; and because he despises the enemy of humanity. I am a free American, and I believe in all who fight for that freedom.

About the Author Kathy Simcox, Columbus, Ohio, United Stateshrdude28@hotmail.com Kathy works as an Administrative Assistant in the College of the Arts at The Ohio State University. She holds a BA in Psychology and is currently working on a second BA in Religious Studies. In addition to writing, her passions include hiking, biking, kayaking, photography, and singing in her church choir. She is also known to read an occasional book.



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