

The Face Of Evil

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What does evil look like? Does it have face? Can we see it? Taste or smell its presence? Does it laugh or smile? The short answer is: perhaps...

Every day I converse with the men society has deemed unfit to live, men considered the poster children of evil. Touted by the media as the "worst of the worst" for the senseless act of murder.

I often wonder what is going through the mind of someone who premeditates the murder of another human-being, deliberately pursues this murder for 10-15-20, even 25 years down the road. Are these people deranged? What are we to make of this relentless pursuit of a murder for decades? This person must be a psychopath with a lust for murder, evil perhaps. These people live among the unsuspecting public, practicing their trade under the legal guise of office of the prosecutor.

I reside around an odd assortment of characters, mass murderers, serial killers, rapist, assassins and more than one whom choose to quarter his victim for ease of disposing of the corpse, one man resides nearby who even the police admits wasn't at the crime scene to participate in the murder. He has since committed suicide, unable to bare living on the row as an innocent man.

If evil exists in human form, then I have an excellent chance of coming face to face with it here on the row. Every day, a selection of men parade past my cell or I see them at rec or the chow hall.

I've studied these people as they amble by, trying to catch a glimpse of the darkness that lives in their souls, that squinty expression of menace or scowl of hatred that stereotypically marks the FACE OF EVIL. Furthermore, I've had endless conversations with many men here and I've listened for that elusive sign of evil to no avail.

Society has placed these men here, monitoring the "Monsters" and slating each for execution. The pursuit of their death reminds me of the mob of vengeful folks who chased the creation of Dr. Frankenstein. I don't see the prevalence of evil this blood thirsty Mob speaks of with such vile contempt.

Instead, I see human-beings with their own loves and fears, their desire to live life to the fullest and make the best of a terrible situation. There is no gloating over heinous crimes or relishing in the gore of death as the popular media outlets would lead the public to believe.

I have experienced just the opposite; there is talk of life, sorrows of being separated from growing children and aging parents. Some share photos of new grandchildren and speak with pride as any grandpa would. Some of these men are familiar with one another's families, they share a mutual concern and sincerely care for how well they are getting along in the free world.

At birthdays, a card is usually passed around that everyone signs with well-wishes for the future. It may sound trivial, but on death row, small things like this mean a lot. It is a comfort to know someone else sincerely cares how you are doing and tries to lighten an otherwise dark day.

These men have interests that border on obsessions, at least for a few. Something to help pass the long days, an escape from the reality of their situations; sports are popular; boating; construction; cars; writing; role playing games; or eagerly consuming every book they can lay their hands on, among hundreds of other things.

Regardless why these people are here, I have discovered them to be human-beings, not monsters. I count myself among this discovery, and I often wonder how society can look upon me as the face of evil? When I look in the mirror, I look for what society sees and it's not there either.

The average Joe Schmoe does not know me, but only knows what the prosecutor spins in the media. For twenty-seven plus years I have lived on the row, I am no longer that 20 years old kid as when I first came to prison in 1991. I am sure there are innocent men here. I wondered why the world has turned a deaf ear. Then it suddenly dawned on me, there is an immeasurable sea of humanity screaming innocence and they are drowned out. Why should the public listen to just another voice in the cacophony? Because it's the right thing to do.

Perhaps some of the people around me are evil, could be. I'm certainly not an expert on the subject. But I've lived with them for most of my life. Regardless of what might be, not everyone here can be evil. The state prosecutors repeatedly make horrible errors in their vengeful rush to execute someone who turned out to be innocent and proved in dramatic fashion.

I know the men around me and try as I might to see it, they do not wear the FACE OF EVIL. I know some are, that's just a fact of life. But I'm sure some are wrongly here. The men I know can be depended on to help me if I asked. We can share conversations when things start to feel depressing. I experience a kind side that many others may never see. Death row creates a unique community environment, for some it's similar to a family; a bond of brotherhood is developed through trust and relying upon one another.

Guilty or not, it's not my place to judge these people, that is for the courts of law and the court of God. We are all here and if something drastic doesn't change we are all headed toward the true FACE OF EVIL: the American Justice System's Execution Chamber, and I am going to lose some close friends before all this madness is put to a stop once and for all...