

**CARPOOLING
WITH
ADOLF
EICHMANN**

**DARK MUTTERINGS FROM THE SIDELINES ON
MICHELLE MALKIN'S TUSH, PROZAC COOKIES
AND OUR DISTURBING SORT OF SANITY**

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“Adolf Eichmann was thoughtful, orderly, and unimaginative. He had a profound respect for system, for law and order. He was obedient, loyal, a faithful officer of a great state. He served his government very well. The sanity of Eichmann is disturbing. We equate sanity with a sense of justice, with humaneness, with prudence, with the capacity to love and understand other people. We rely on the sane people of the world to preserve it from barbarism, madness, and destruction. And now it begins to dawn on us that it is precisely the sane ones who are the most dangerous.”

Thomas Merton, *Raids on the Unspeakable*

ONE of the most unsettling things about this country is that the following people are considered perfectly sane by American standards: Dick Cheney; Arnold Schwarzenegger; Deepak Chopra; Bill Clinton; Oprah Winfrey; Pat Robertson; Grover Nordquist; Michelle Malkin (though she does get points for her tush.) See anybody in that list even remotely normal? Every one of them lives in an egomaniacal la-la-land of his or her imagination and manages to get paid to do it. Believe me when I say that just about any face you see on your television or in the newspaper is a nutjob. I used to interview such freaks for a living. Of course, given that American journalists and interviewers have become mindless suck-asses, I understand that I may have a credibility problem here. But onward!

Any culture that spends as much money as we do on ugly cars, fast food and liposuction cannot possibly be sane, and is certainly adrift from the natural world. Then I consider those Australian aborigines who ritualistically smash their cranks with a heavy rock and conclude that we Eurotrash hog thieves have come at least a little way in the last few hundred years. Despite the aborigines' eco-friendly and spiritual nature, we have an edge when it comes to male puberty. There is a certain element of national sanity in a country that grasps the advantages of playing football over a heavy rock to the crotch.

Unfortunately, our national sanity is of the thoroughly dangerous sort – the Third Reich sort. Remember that even Adolf Eichmann was determined to be completely sane by a panel of medical experts. At least as sane as you and me and if you would like to be excluded from this comparison, you may be excused. Like the other good Nazis, ole Eich would have easily made a respected member of American society today, probably as a Republican judicial nominee. He would have fit quite well into a nation of Americans going about its daily business caring for and protecting the homeland's secu-

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rity and profitability. Eichmann slept well at nights, the same as most of us, unaffected in appetite. He would have made a good carpooler, telling us all about the kids and grandkids as we commute the monotonous asphalt strips to and from our jobs, creating the paper work and the information products and the commerce of the fatherland, that great sprawling circuit board one sees from airplanes. Like Eichmann, we are efficient, productive, and most terribly of all, untroubled by guilt. Oblivious as gravestones. Sane.

The politicians and generals and bureaucrats and soldiers who planned all of our modern wars were also sane. As are people like Colin Powell, Stormin' Norman and Tommy Franks, and those unnamed legions busy planning the next ones for us. No one seems particularly upset. Daily life in the U.S. is as usual. Sure, we have some frightening new national enemies, but the government is dealing with them. And sure, there are little state-sponsored tortures and murders abroad, a rash of prison construction both inside and outside the country, and some incremental incursions on our civil liberties — a small price to pay, considering the danger all around. But what the heck...the NBA play-offs are just around the corner. Interest rates are at an all time low and the Sox won the pennant. The stores are full of shoppers and the congress is full of shit. Can things really be much different than ever? Nah. Besides, why would the government be interested in nobodies like you and me? Totalitarian state? Here? That's insane.

“What no one seemed to notice. . . was the ever widening gap. . .between the government and the people. . . And it became always wider. . . the whole process of its coming into being, was above all diverting, it provided an excuse not to think for people who did not want to think anyway . . . Nazism gave us some dreadful, fundamental things to think about . . .and kept us so busy with continuous changes and ‘crises’ and so fascinated . . . by the machinations of the ‘national enemies,’ without and within, that we had no time to think about these dreadful things that were growing, little by little, all around us. . . Each step was so small, so inconsequential, so well explained or, on occasion, ‘regretted,’ that unless one understood what the whole thing was in principle, what all these ‘little measures’ . . . must some day lead to, one no more saw it developing from day to day than a farmer in his field sees the corn growing. . . Each act. . . is worse than the last, but only a little worse. You wait for the next and the next. You wait for one great shocking occasion, thinking that others, when such a shock comes, will join you in resisting somehow. You don’t want to act, or even talk, alone. . . you don’t want to ‘go out of your way to make trouble.’ . . But the one great shocking occasion, when tens or hundreds or thousands will join with you, never comes. That’s the difficulty. The forms are all there, all untouched, all reassuring, the houses, the shops, the jobs, the mealtimes, the visits, the concerts, the cinema, the hol-

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idays. But the spirit, which you never noticed because you made the lifelong mistake of identifying it with the forms, is changed. Now you live in a world of hate and fear, and the people who hate and fear do not even know it themselves, when everyone is transformed, no one is transformed. . . . You have accepted things you would not have accepted five years ago, a year ago, things your father. . . could never have imagined."

Milton Mayer, *They Thought They Were Free, The Germans, 1938-45*
(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955)

Few of us believe that it is ordinary folks who sell a nation into hell, cast it in infamy. In a democracy, "the people" supposedly cannot be the problem. Right now some of the smartest people I know are more convinced that the problem is George W. Bush and the dysfunctional little Adams family he has created (or who created him, no one is quite certain.) The problem being of course that they are a danger to human civilization and the planet. The fallacy however, lies in believing they are more insane than the rest of us (although a couple of them probably are.) Not many healthy, well-adjusted people look at Karl Rove or Donald Rumsfeld without a small flinch of horror and pity. The kind of fear one has of snakes and the kind of pity one has for people who appear congenitally deformed in character. Rather like the kid I knew in grade school who poured lighter fluid on baby birds and lit it. Now we know what such kids grow up to become.

Yet a walk through an American suburb or one of our bland "office campuses" can throw a thinking person into a darker funk than Rummy or Karl "Toad of Darkness" Rove ever will. We should be far more worried about the Good Germans with orderly lives who populate all those office complexes here in the suburbs of our nation's capitol. They are designers at the defense company in my office building who create control systems for missiles, or the government contracted psychologists in the building across the lawn who help write what are essentially military torture manuals and killing protocols. . . . Or, for that matter, all the people at my own magazine publishing office. We specialize in military history magazines that glorify all wars American and create the state sponsored mythology of our "heroes fighting for democracy around the world." Meanwhile, company 401-Ks are invested in Halliburton, Raytheon, mass distributed mind suppressants such as Prozac and the like. Thus, from my building I can see the sprawling workplace of other "Little Eichmanns" of which Ward Churchill spoke, and cannot delude myself that I am not one of them.

When and if America is ever hauled before the tribunal it is so richly earning with every Iraqi child mangled and every soul it ships to Egypt to be tortured in unspeakable ways, out of sight of the world, what will be my excuse? Will it be: "I only generated the

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propaganda because I needed the health insurance that came with the job.” Will that be an acceptable answer before the world? Who among us is guilty and who is innocent? Is the person who makes the night goggles for the American sniper on a Baghdad rooftop guilty? Is the person guilty who made Lynndie England’s CD player, the one they played while leading those naked weeping men around on dog leashes and in hoods? What about American workers who make Kevlar vests? Are they saving lives, or are they enabling killers to do their work more safely? And this is to say nothing of the Americans who wipe the Doritos crumbs from their double chins, lean toward their televisions and cheer on the young “heroes.”

Many of us can remember during the cold war when we all feared the “mad man with his finger on the nuclear button” scenario. Let us be honest here, Nixon’s face did not inspire confidence in such matters. Who would stop a mad president from hitting the button that opened the missile silos under North Dakota’s barley fields? Who would stop Nixon if he got on one of his benders and said, “Hell, Spiro, let’s toast the fuckers!” Saner heads of course. Precautions were in place, we assured ourselves – or tried to anyway. At the same time we accepted that there were perfectly sane reasons for the existence of those tens of thousands of nuclear warheads. And in doing so we accepted as justifiable the potential radiation deaths of millions, perhaps billions. We willingly became engaged in the most ghastly game of global nuclear blackmail imaginable, one that continues even now, haunting us in North Korea, Iran, Pakistan, and Israel. And somehow the American public’s acceptance of that provided our sane leaders today with logical reasons for firing depleted uranium shells in Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan, where the landscape will remain radioactive for tens of thousands of years. Here we are using nuclear weapons for the fourth time and nobody finds it one bit odd, much less frightening. Sort of nuclear weapons creep.

Some, however, find it as exciting as hell. The Pentagon and the administration hail depleted uranium shells and armor as a breakthrough in modern warfare. U.S. Rep Christopher Shays said that any health effects the Iraqis suffer from depleted uranium – kidney damage, lung cancer, mounting birth defects – “pale in comparison with the benefits of regime change in their country.” Well then! Fry my ass on a plutonium skillet! Bring on the bunker busters! Iraqi and Afghani mothers seem unimpressed with regime change, even as they weep over twisted, blind infants.

All this sanity is killing some of us. To my mind, it is killing the best of us. It drives the artist and the philosopher, dancer, the psychiatrist, the homosexual torch singer and the spiritualist dishwasher toward the cliff with its macabre drone. Most of the genuinely beautiful minds and souls I know are in the deepest sort of despair. Rather like the

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cabaret society of 1930s Berlin, you can hear the high whine of hysteria behind their drunken revelry, their bitter laughter in the face of such black folly. Some people I know do not even bother to get out of bed on weekends. I am serious. I am “seeing the best minds of my generation...” etc. right before my eyes. And like that magnificent old faggot who saw the same vision years before we did, I often find myself sobbing on the steps of a madhouse called America. Meanwhile, I ask my doctor for Prozac, and he says: “Joe, the solution to every problem is not a drug.” That has not been my experience by any means.

What do we prize? Rote sanity? Practicality? Efficacy? Ants are all those things. So are lizards. Perhaps what is lacking is religion. Yet both Eichmann and Hitler were Christians, as were the German people. Tamerlane was a Muslim. And it was Buddhists who conducted the Rape of Nanking. It was Christian America that practiced genocide on the Red Indian and chopped off the feet of Negro slaves so they could not run away from their appointed duties building the “City on the Hill.” Chopping off their feet was practical, sane, clever even. We are all richer now for our ancestors’ cleverness and sanity. Right now it is a dusky Semitic people and their oil that occupy our cleverness.

In any case, there is no lack of religion. We are seeing more of it than ever as it promises to swallow up our judicial system and entire government. Ben Laden, Rabbi Avraham Shapira, Jerry Falwell, and a hundred million Christian pod people are proof religion alone cannot temper our relentless “sanity” into something more deeply human. So what is lacking? My god! No, this cannot be! Is it possible that even leftist intellectuals and educated liberals, are going to be forced to admit it? Admit that “without love, we are nothing?” That without empathy and charity we are doomed?

If in the end the American empire continues pursuit of this awful thing we seem so determined to carry out, we will learn the answer to that question. Assuming it can be found amid the ruin.

To Ward Churchill and Vine Deloria: Ya see guys, we white people even KNOW we are doing it and still can’t help ourselves!

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