

*How Empathy Can Reshape Our Politics,
Our Soldiers and Ourselves*

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Unmaking War Remaking Men

Kathleen Barry

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First Edition

For my brother, Danny Barry

Fear of reprisals keeps soldiers looking out for each other. You give your buddies your support and loyalty. Your survival depends on them. More importantly to you, their survival depends on you, which is why you do not notice that your friendships are being built upon dehumanization. Still, if you could think about it, most of you would know that you would not make friendships that are based on supporting each other in killing. But no alternative relationships or support are available either in training or in combat where on a daily basis your unit is all you have. The military has carefully calculated every step in this process of male bonding, manipulating it so that soldiers will violate their own life force—so that they will kill.

You are a unit and, male or female, you are indoctrinated into the masculinity of war. When you stand up and take ridicule and hazing, the masculinity of war is affirmed in you. This is part of how you learn to survive life-threatening, ego-destroying experiences. Soldiers in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan report that this is the training that gives them the confidence to face the situations they are in as invaders and occupiers who are always unwelcome by people concerned with their own self-determination. But those soldiers in combat are men, and they are battle-ready.

No one says to them that they have been trained to do that which is criminal in civil society. Nor do they get to think about the validity of invading a country that poses no threat to their own. Brainwashing is complete and military authority is brutal. The U.S. military is a law unto itself.

Peace will remain an illusion as long as the U.S. military trains its own soldiers as well as Iraqi and Afghan soldiers in remorseless killing and as long as military leadership rises from the ranks of remorseless killers. Unmaking war necessitates not only sweeping changes in military training, it requires another kind of military. But I get ahead of my story. How we go about unmaking war depends on knowing more about how it is made.

First Kill:

The Soldier's Loss of Soul

The first thing many GIs are told when they are new to a combat zone is to forget everything they've learned. The actual language is "that's all chicken shit." They won't be shining their shoes or making their beds so that a quarter bounces off of them. Most of the time on maneuvers in combat, soldiers don't even have a bed. On maneuvers in Vietnam, every time soldiers changed location, they likely had to dig out their "bed" for the night, which, if it was not deep enough, could become their grave before morning. And above all, soldiers in a combat zone do not salute any officer because that move could identify the officer as a target. It matters not at all whether a soldier's shirt is buttoned in alignment with his fly zipper (or whether it is buttoned at all). That is the same shirt that he wore yesterday, that he slept in last night in the field, and that shirt will be on his back until he returns to his barracks.

Then why did soldiers have to suffer humiliation to learn all of that precision? That was so that the military could reshape their basic human needs to connect with others and produce in them the desire to belong to a team effort to kill. Research on the brain has found that when people make judgments on their own that go against the group, their brain scans show areas associated with emotional salience (the

right amygdala and right caudate nucleus regions) are highlighted. According to psychologist Philip Zimbardo, "this means that resistance creates an emotional burden for those who maintain their independence—autonomy comes at a psychological cost."¹ The military relies on the high cost of that emotional burden for going against the group. It is what keeps soldiers fighting.

In a study of World War II Reserve Police Battalion 101 in Poland, Christopher Browning found that "the Battalion had orders to kill Jews but each individual did not do so. Yet 80 to 90% of the men proceeded to kill, though almost all of them—at least initially—were horrified and disgusted by what they were doing." Why did they keep on killing? "To break ranks and step out, to adopt overtly nonconformist behavior, was just beyond most of the men. It was easier for them to shoot." Those who refused to shoot knew they were leaving the burden with their buddies. Those who "did not shoot risked isolation, rejection and ostracism" in a very tight-knit unit. Further, if they did not shoot, it was as if they were morally reproaching those who did. Not shooting meant that they were not living up to their masculinity.²

Military male bonding can be so powerful that it can even make you act in ways that you never would have considered, not because it took bravery to do it, but because it required that you suspend your common sense. Psychologist William Cross points out that you get a "cold focus on your own responsibility to uphold your end of things, and if you fail, you are not just failing yourself, you are failing your buddies. When I first jumped out of the airplane, I was the first one out. Somebody later asked why I jumped and the first thing that came to my mind is that I jumped because I'd be ridiculed if I didn't."³ Tim O'Brien captured this embarrassment in *The Things They Carried*. It made a young man go into the military, go to war, and kill.

How else can we explain 150,000 American soldiers entering combat and walking from the border of Kuwait into the Iraqi desert on March 20, 2003, having just been told that one in three of them will die in the invasion? Most accounts of this war jump to the next point—that Iraq had no Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) and so one in three soldiers were not killed as planned and predicted. But I want to linger over that announcement to the troops and ask why

these men who were walking into a perfect staging area for Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction did not mutiny?

Those soldiers had heard the same intelligence that their commander in chief presented to Congress and the American public. "Right now, Iraq is expanding and improving facilities that were used for the production of biological weapons," President George W. Bush told the United Nations in an address on September 12, 2002. A month later he escalated his charges against Iraq to include chemical weapons: "Iraq has stockpiled biological and chemical weapons, and is rebuilding the facilities used to make more of those weapons."⁴

On October 5, 2002, Bush told us what Iraq would do with those weapons. "We have sources that tell us that Saddam Hussein recently authorized Iraqi field commanders to use chemical weapons—the very weapons the dictator tells us he does not have."⁵ A few days later on October 7 in Cincinnati, he escalated his rhetoric to the ultimate terror: "The evidence indicates that Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program."⁶ Those statements were all lies from the president of the United States and being used to justify invading another country. Worse, neither Americans nor Iraqis had any protection from the warring consequences of the president's lies as both the U.S. Congress and military accepted them as facts.

Sergeant John Bruhns was in that invasion of Iraq. He remembers that as they spanned out across the southern Iraqi desert where there were no villages or cities, he and his buddies were talking about how they made perfect targets for Saddam Hussein's WMDs. They wondered why their commander in chief would put them in that position.⁷ But they pressed on. That is when many combat soldiers say to themselves, "well, this might be my time to die," or "maybe my number has come up," and they go forward into combat. They were not mutinous, those 150,000 soldiers fanning out in the empty Iraqi desert, even though, as far as they knew, they were invading a country with WMDs to use against Americans—they.

Why did they not refuse to go forward? Ah! That would be unmanly, cowardly. In other words, the military has turned manhood into a suicide pact. The men's manhood and military training propelled them into what seemed sure to be their death march. But they could not let their buddies down. Each of you knew that the guy next

to you is thinking the same thing about how he cannot let you down. So you march in unison toward a likely death. You have been trained so well that you override your own life force and even your sense of self-preservation. You even diminished your genuine connection with others—for if you were marching in tune with your shared human consciousness, your duty to your buddy would have been to convince him to desert too. In fact, you would try to convince others to desert. That is how you actually save and protect human life. And it could lead to unmaking the war that you were sent there to make. But in the military that is unmanly.

Only if you soldiers step outside of military-think will you be able to see that if people cannot act to save their own lives, then they cannot really be expected to protect the lives of others. For a soldier to try to save his own life would mean refusing to be rendered expendable. But the military relies on its training of you that required you to believe that your own life is without value, thereby making a sham of the belief that you are in combat to protect others.

Sergeant Steve Hassna vividly remembers his first days in the combat zone in Vietnam. When you arrive, "you are brand new. You are so green you're like Day-glo. You don't know what to do—you are overwhelmed with everything going on around you." Steve looked around to see the soldiers in his platoon straggling back in from several days of fighting. "These guys are coming back armed to the teeth! They've been out on operations, in combat, looking for the bad guys." He was army, they were army, but he was not yet one of them.⁸

Steve stepped forward to meet his commanding officer, who looked him over and said, "If you are here after about a month, if you are still alive, we'll talk," and walked away. Steve went out with his platoon on maneuvers. "Nobody's talking to me. I stumbled over every single twig, stump or rock in my way." The other guys are thinking "you are a newbie, stay away. Go over there. You're going to do something stupid and get me killed." And yet, they are supposed to be there for their buddies.

How long does this go on? How many times do you go out on maneuvers in combat with these guys and no one talks to you, no one wants you around them? You don't know. And you do not even get a chance to think of how contrary this is to your training to be loyal to

your buddy. Nobody has told you what it will take to be considered one of them, part of their group in a war so far away from home in a place where you are likely to die. And you are eighteen, maybe nineteen years old.

Then you find out. You kill. You try not to notice what is happening inside you. The other guys are there, and you are introduced to a new kind of camaraderie: "If you take somebody out—now you've joined the club"—the "8½ pound pressure pull—the pressure it takes to pull the trigger."

Until the military forbade them, Internet blogs and short YouTube clips taken by U.S. soldiers during firefights in the Iraq war provided ample evidence of the elation that takes place when you take someone out. The soldiers sound like guys in video arcades but with a bit more desperation in their voices. Marines in a tank on an empty street of an Iraqi village see something that's outside the range of the camera recording the event. "Shoot that motherfucker!" comes a screaming order. Then, "get down!" On the screen you see three teenage Iraqi males in tee shirts and jeans running down the street. They have no weapons. Maybe they threw rocks at the tank. Maybe they had weapons and dropped them. As viewers, we don't know. And we don't know if the soldiers in the tank know. Then another command from inside the tank, "Use the 16!" In the intensity of the moment, the young soldier does not stop to ask himself why his commander did not order him to take the two unarmed boys as prisoners.

More sounds of gunfire on the video clip. One of the young men running down the street falls into a heap on the pavement. "I got him, sir." Adrenalin is running high inside the tank. An order is shouted to the driver, "Slow the fuck down." The soldier who shot the teenage boy on the street, insists on getting through to his commander. "We got the motherfucker, sir," with the pride in his voice of a boy announcing his success to his parent.⁹

Dave Grossman found from his interviews with combat veterans that after killing an enemy soldier at close range, the shooter often experiences "a brief feeling of elation upon succeeding in killing the enemy." Later, that kind of bravado usually disappears and is replaced with self-disgust when "the soldier is faced with the undeniable evidence of what he has done, and the guilt stage is often so strong as to

result in physical revulsion and vomiting."¹⁰ One soldier told him that after shooting an enemy soldier who was attacking his comrades, "I can remember whispering foolishly, 'I'm sorry' and then just throwing up... I threw up all over myself. It was a betrayal of what I'd been taught since a child."¹¹ An Iraq veteran remembered the first time he arrived in a combat zone with the U.S. Army, and a small child rolled something under their truck. His commanding officer told him to shoot the kid. "I lost faith in why I was there." From that day on, "I was only there to defend the person next to me."¹²

Men, is that how your military training makes you sidestep the value of human life? Are the hypermasculinity of military training and loyalty to your buddy enough to make you suspend your own life force? Will you wear that indifference or even satisfaction we see in the movies when some macho man kills the other guy? Or is what we see on your face the smugness of patriotic pride?

Apparently not. Soldiers, we can see that often in combat when you face one another, look into each other's eyes, and then kill him or her, you are sickened by your own act. From many combat soldiers accounts it is evident that some of you cry, others vomit, some of you wet your pants—involuntary reflexes against violating your own humanity in taking the life of another. Repeated cases of soldiers being unable to fire on their enemies abound. Fortunately the military has abandoned the practice of shooting on the spot those young men who freeze when they are supposed to fire.

Soldiers have many different stories of their first kill. What is common to most of them is that at that moment everything in their lives and beings changes. Almost every soldier says that. But before you think about what you have done or analyze your reactions, feel your feelings, at the instant that you know deep inside of you that you have broken the bonds of your own humanity, the guys all around you show you that you are one of the group. Grunts, pats on the back let you into their camaraderie, the club of men who have killed in war. They can let you in because you can no longer look at them as different. You've proven yourself and your manhood. You are a true soldier. Not because your footlocker is perfect. You do not even have one. But all of that training, marching in unison, has brought this human being

to this moment when being part of the group is more important than anything else—than oneself, than human life.

When a marine automatic machine gunner had what he called his "first confirmed kill" in Iraq in April 2006, "my company commander personally congratulated me."¹³ His victim was an innocent man who posed no direct threat to him or his unit. Part of his shame when he returned home was that he killed the man in front of the man's friend and father. Those congratulations and pats on the back that go out to every man for his "first kill" are meant to repress his shame, to overlay it with the assurance that he has met the standards of manhood that the military and his country have set for him.

Then you soldiers who were not remorseless killers before enlisting discover something else. You, all of you who have fired your guns, who have passed the 8½ pound pressure test, know that you are different from all of the rest. Some of you know it immediately. Others will see it later in nightmares and traumatic flashbacks when you get back home. But you do not speak of why. You have changed. There is a rupture in your being. You have that sick feeling that you can never go back to who you were before that first kill. The continuity of your lives, which the rest of us take for granted, is ripped out of you.

The first time soldiers kill another human being, their reactions reveal not only the repugnancy that humans have for taking each other's lives, but the damage killing does to their own humanity as well. This is more than psychological harm. It is loss of soul. Shared human consciousness still insists itself on you even when you violate it, even when you degrade yourself.

In spite of all of that destruction of the soldier's humanity, the U.S. military is still puzzled over why so many soldiers commit suicide! "The most frustrating thing is trying to find a cause," General Peter W. Chiarelli, the army's vice chief of staff, told the Senate Armed Services Committee.¹⁴ The 158 army suicides in the first half of 2009 were such a dramatic increase over the total of 128 suicides for 2008 (which itself at 20.2 per 100,000 soldiers was higher than the national suicide rate), the military commissioned a research project to find out why the incidence of suicide was rising. But they seemed to miss the obvious connection between turning soldiers into remorseless killers and soldiers killing themselves.

In 2009, the National Institute of Mental Health launched a new research study in collaboration with the army which was based on the assumption that post traumatic stress disorder, family issues, alcohol abuse, and neurobiological factors might each play a role in soldiers' suicides.¹⁵ Stress? Of course stress is related to suicides inside and outside of the military. But in no other place but war and conflict zones are human beings required to kill other human beings without feeling and then treated as heroes and manly men for doing so. Those soldiers were set up as potential suicide victims when they began their military training. Many blot out the reality of being a killer with alcohol and drugs even though they are prohibited as well as pornography. After the U.S. tripled the number of soldiers deployed to Afghanistan, the Pentagon reported that the number of soldiers seeking treatment for opiate addiction in its Substance Abuse Program rose from 89 in 2004 to 529 in 2009. In the last year, with President Obama's surge in troops, the number dramatically increased to 50 percent.¹⁶

Nor was I particularly surprised when U.S. Army Major Nidal Malik Hasan, a military psychiatrist about to deploy to Iraq, walked into the Soldier Readiness Center on one of the largest military bases, Fort Hood in Texas, and opened fire killing thirteen and wounding thirty before he was brought down by a woman civilian police officer who was one of the wounded. In fact, his own U.S. military training and the hours upon hours that he listened to men in psychiatric sessions talk of committing unspeakable acts and the utter military devaluation of human life left me wondering why this kind of massacre does not happen more frequently.

While the complex web of factors that form around an act like that is unique to that particular killer, each is drawn from an environment that has ruptured the fabric that holds our human life force in place. But politicians and the media seized upon his name and his religious beliefs, diverting Americans' attention away from how the military makes killers and toward anti-Islamic, anti-Arab racism by making Hasan out to be a Palestinian terrorist. We cannot forget that when the Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh and the buddy who assisted him took 165 American lives in April, 1995 they used the training and ideology of the enemy they learned in the military.

As Steve Hassna's story of Vietnam and the first time he killed unraveled, he spoke not of killing but of "taking someone out." That was the first time I was aware of the power of not speaking that word "kill." But by the time of the U.S. war against Iraq however, "kill" had become a rallying call of soldiers and marines. I knew that Steve was going to continue talking about how it felt to make it into the group. I interrupted his narrative. Before shifting to the others, the "club," I wanted to know about him, I wanted him to tell me about how he felt the first time he killed another human being.

Staying in the present tense of the firefight that he was talking about, using his own words for killing, I asked him "When you take someone out, what happens to you?" To keep our attention close to this experience, I continue in the present tense. He tears up. But his reference point is still the other guys—his buddies. "Essentially you join a club" A long pause. I think, he is wondering if I get it. I see behind his words that he is questioning whether I can possibly comprehend how important it is to be part of that club at that moment. But then he continued, "that you can never leave." Quiet—tears, just a few. Then I can barely hear him say "You become part of a fraternity," before another really long pause.

My unanswered question still hangs heavily over us. Finally, in almost a whisper, "I think the closest I can get to it . . . You inadvertently have a hole . . ." long pause and he looks away, then to the floor. ". . . in your soul." Huge tears that had welled up in his eyes drop directly to the floor. I try to hold mine back. Absolute stillness hangs between us in the midst of the café's clanging cups.

Over the years, Steve has had to answer this question that I asked about what happened to him the first time he took someone out, and it is clear to me that this is as much as he can say about it. I do not press him for more. He knows that something of his humanity was ripped apart at that moment, and there is no going back to the guy he was before that. All of his socialization to be a man and his training in the military have served this moment. He is not dead, but, in becoming a killer (the word that is not said), something of his humanity died. And the hell of it is that he knows it and must live with it for the rest of his life.

Then we, the people and politicians who send soldiers to the destruction of their soul and spirit, lock that loss in their hearts. To make up for not welcoming Vietnam veterans home as heroes, today people spontaneously applaud soldiers in airports and politicians repeatedly thank them. President Obama, visiting U.S. soldiers in Iraq in April 2009 told them "You have performed brilliantly on every mission that has been given to you." Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi returned from one trip to Iraq to tell the press that "our soldiers are perfect."

"Loss of soul" repeatedly comes up when soldiers tell us what happens to them when they kill. When Staff Sergeant David Bellavia describes how in self-defense he plunged the blade of his knife into an Iraqi who had been firing on him and his men in Fallujah, he realized, "I was soulless. My innocence was gone. I could never have it back again."¹⁷

Camilio Mejia became a conscientious objector when he saw that "I could be killed in more than one way. It wasn't just the physical death; it was also the many deaths of the soul every time you kill a human being . . . We die, little by little, each time someone gets killed, until there is no soul left, and the body becomes but a corpse, breathing and warm but void of humanity."¹⁸ That is why, as we shall see, diagnosing the trauma of combat as post traumatic stress disorder only skims the surface of describing the harm to soldiers from being in combat.

Professor William Cross, a combat veteran and a psychologist who counsels Iraq veterans, put it this way: "Each of us has a different experience [of killing] that has been emblazoned on us. A lot of people are unwilling to talk about their experiences because they have a sense that their experience is not glamorous or worthy. It's been my experience that the trauma [of killing] is something that touches something in people, that awakens their spirit and can potentially destroy it. [In that act] there is a sense of betrayal by your parents, your church, your government, God." That loss is the unspoken that is embedded in and covered up by platitudes about the 'soldier's sacrifice.'

Forward observers are soldiers attached to infantry units to bring in artillery support. They brought in support for the unit flown in by helicopter that Cross led on a combat mission. "The forward observers are well thought of because they are able to protect people in the unit."

But Cross saw that something had happened to the forward observers out there in field operations. Hanging around during off-duty hours, they would talk about "how many rounds it would take to take out a village." Cross, noting the macho in their talk, was sickened, "There is something very overpowering about that." When he went in after the forward observers with the helicopters, "You see the devastation of that. And it wipes you out."

Most soldiers do not engage in Bill Cross's kind of soul-searching while they are in combat. The effects of brainwashing and the loss of self that is imposed on them during military training shut down their reflection and diminish their consciousness. The war paradigm provides all of the answers they need at the moment until weeks or months or sometimes years after they get home, when their psyches disentangle from brainwashing and conditioning. But there in combat, as one sergeant said of how he felt about killing, "If you are in this environment, it's fine. It's a hoot to be honest with you . . . No civilian job can compare to the infantry. You are trained to kill people. I have no hesitation about it. It's what I do. It's my job."¹⁹

On the other hand, one military police officer had the job of guarding those the United States took as prisoners in Iraq. But he said, "I was not able to make that jump to turn those men into sub-humans. The act of treating them as sub-humans creates atrocities. I just felt my vital spirit bleed out of me."²⁰ He turned in his weapon to his commanding officer, and he too embarked on the grueling experience of becoming a conscientious objector in a military unit where defection was treated as being lower than life itself.

How do we understand the various meanings men give to their experiences of killing in combat?

Answering that question is as vital to unmaking war as it is to remaking men for we cannot even begin a quest for lasting peace until we know what has to be undone in men. Nor can we expect men to break out of the dehumanization that military training and combat does to them until we are all drawn back together in shared human consciousness. To get there, I turn to how human beings interact with each other.

Human interaction is the glue of all human connections—for better and for worse. At the core of every interaction we have with each

other, we interpret the meaning of the other's words, gestures, behaviors, and actions not only with objective knowledge we have about the situation we are in, but personally, subjectively in our felt experiences.

Suppose you, for example, just told me "that you got a hole in your soul" the first time you took someone out in Vietnam. As I have never taken anyone out, I cannot use my own experience to interpret the meaning that experience has for you. But I refuse to say to myself that I cannot understand. For if I do, I disengage from my own life force that is fed by our shared human consciousness. I will not use either my disdain for war nor my lack of war experience to distance myself from you. Even when I write about how you got that hole, as I did in the preceding pages, in order to come close to your subjectivity, I stay in the present moment and speak of "you," instead of the more distanced "he" or "him." Being present with you allows me to have no excuses to not know.

I too am human; I have experienced violation of my soul, not in killing but in another way. There! I have found it—a beginning point for me to understand the violation of your soul, the hole in your soul. I have found a place in me from which I can enter into your personal subjectivity. Other ways can be used to empathize with you and connect to your suffering. This one is mine.

Trying to understand your experience in combat, I have to bring everything I know to bear on it if I am to interpret the meaning that hole in your soul has for you. If I do not, to me you will become just another veteran who has seen horrors that I believe I can never understand, or more likely, that I just don't want to know. If I do not interpret the meaning your experience had for you, or if I grab on to some ready-made explanation like "well, that's men for you," I push you back, and I become to you just another someone who has entered your life but neither can nor will try to understand what war did to you.

I bring to our encounter an objective knowledge that comes from basic assumptions I am making about you. For example, I am thinking of you as someone who very likely was not reared to kill, who enlisted to serve his country thinking he was doing something good. That, I understand, is what you mean when you say "I was a true believer."

Implicitly, I get it. I listen, I ask more questions. You are interpreting, discerning the meaning of the questions I ask. You may be wondering if I get it, or you may just assume I don't. That is how genuine interaction works—each of us trying to interpret the meaning of the other, shifting between assigning meanings already established by society and those we glean directly from each other, touching each other's pain, joy, frustration, satisfaction. That is how our subjectivity brings us in close to each other.

If I do not try to get at the meaning your experience has for you, I am left with stereotypes: sure you killed in war, after all, men are macho, or killing in war is heroic so you must feel strong and heroic or your macho made you do it. And when I fix pre-established explanations to your words and actions, I reduce you to an object again, pushing your humanity beyond reach. That is objectification.

Then I wonder, are you objectifying me into the no-one-can-understand numbness of your own loss of empathy? Or are you engaged with me here as part of your soulful mission to help people understand why wars should not be fought? Don't both of these forces in you work together, contradictions that you can shift in and out of to find the balance between survival and change?

All of our interactions involve those basic elements—interpreting the meaning of the words or gestures of another and then responding with our own words and gestures based on the interpretation we made, and then receiving the other's interpretation of our response. We interact in this way whether ordering a cup of coffee or trying to interpret the meaning of a veteran's experience of killing. The basic elements are the same.

In our interactions, if we are present, that is to say not distanced or dissociated, we are subjects to ourselves—feeling what we feel, bringing those feelings and our senses into the interpretations we are making. If we extend that feeling and sensing, that felt experience to another, not only do we act from our own subjectivity but we enter theirs. Interaction deepens as our subjectivities connect until we can put ourselves in the place of another and interpret what a situation means to that person.

By carefully attending to words being said, feelings and gestures and expressions that come with the words, not flinching, being there

fully, subject to subject, we restore each other to our shared human consciousness and affirm the value of human life. We are melting away objectification. That is the interaction that humanizes us, sparks our souls. It is something we do whenever we seek to genuinely interpret the meaning of the experience of the other. That is the interaction that will diminish the numbness of soldiers in combat as well as anyone attuned to systematic harm. In this kind of interpreting the meaning of the other, we have found our empathy, the route to our souls. It is the nature of being human.

Each time I try to enter into a soldier's experience of combat and killing—when I see a youthful eager face like that of Steve Hassna's in his photo taken just before he enlisted and then look at the tough, remote don't-mess-with-me stance of photos of him in Vietnam, as I listen to him and other veterans talk about how killing forever changed their lives—I feel a terrible heaviness on my chest, sometimes palpitations. For we cannot go to where they were without being affected ourselves. But if we do not go there, we cannot find ways to undo war. If we open ourselves to our own human empathy, we find there the force that is equal to the task of unmaking the wars that wreak destruction of the human spirit.

To know what combat means for soldiers, their experiences must be spoken. When Iraq Veterans Against the War held Winter Soldier hearings in Washington, D.C. in the spring of 2008, courageous and vulnerable soldiers spoke the unspeakable, told us what they did, the dirty secrets of war. They not only were reclaiming their own humanity, but giving us their subjective experiences, that point of human connection from which we can interpret the meaning their experiences had for them. When we do, when we feel their pain, then we know and understand. Only then can we act wisely.

One's soul and the goodness of the human spirit implicitly sets boundaries that limit how far humans go into harming others. Those boundaries are reinforced by values and ethics that are meant to contain violence against others. Even *core masculinity* that promotes and socializes aggression is constrained by humanity's repulsion for killing other human beings. Those are the checks and balances, the controls on human behavior that are defied outrightly in war, especially since major military powers now ignore even the restrictions of inter-

national humanitarian law against killing civilians that are laid out in the Geneva Conventions.

Further, we need to consider the implications of this most often unspoken reality of combat and killing. Is there really room for women in that fraternity of death made up of the grunts that men become even to themselves? Is that why the military has refused to officially assign women to ground combat or frontline fighting and does not even train them for it? Perhaps women's exclusion aims not to protect them but to not disrupt the male bonding that is built upon expendability and cowardice and then sealed with remorselessness.

Despite all of the military efforts to suppress shared human consciousness in combat soldiers, it continually reasserts itself, revealing how difficult it is to snuff out our life force. Now, more and more men are choosing to refuse their own expendability, and women are choosing not to expect it of them. That is the beginning of writing a new social script that will in fact redefine masculinity.

This new masculinity, already a work in progress, will be easier to achieve than the effort it takes to make killers because it will work with rather than against our human life force. It is based on empathy from our connections with each other. But that personal challenge invokes another enormous change—remaking the military. From that new norm we will require a different kind of military training—one that focuses on protecting and saving human life, one for which killing is the very last resort. First, we will look at just how far the military functions outside the law, human ethics, and just plain decency.

Preventive Killing

Whether it is Iraq or Afghanistan, George W. Bush's or Barack Obama's wars, or anyone else's war in the world, as a soldier in combat you are there to kill the enemy. But you are not sure who the enemies are because when you invaded, they did not go out and get uniforms to identify themselves as resistance fighters as the Geneva Conventions requires of them. Your military command tells you that your enemies are fighting an "unconventional war" as if they are not playing fair in the killing game of war, as if you are.

As combat soldiers, your problem with the Iraqi and Afghan or any insurgency your military provokes is that you don't know how to distinguish between an ordinary citizen and an insurgent. When you have to make the call of whether to kill that man coming across the field carrying something, or those two women driving too close to your Humvee, or those teenagers who you suspect may be armed, you face the uncertainty that Iraq veteran Brian Turner did in this excerpt of his poem "What Every Soldier Should Know":

There are bombs under the overpasses,
in trashpiles, in bricks, in cars.

There are shopping carts with clothes soaked
in foogas, a sticky gel of homemade napalm.

Parachute bombs and artillery shells
Sewn into the carcasses of dead farm animals.

Graffiti sprayed onto the overpasses:
I will kill you, American.

Men wearing vests rigged with explosives
walk up, raise their arms and say *Inshallah*.

They are men who earn eighty dollars
to attack you, five thousand to kill.

Small children who will play with you,
old men with their talk, women who offer chai—

and any one of them
may dance over your body tomorrow.¹

That is the soldier's terror—he does not know who his enemy is. If in doubt, soldiers, already hyped to "Kill! Kill! Kill!" are ordered to kill, "just in case." That is preventive killing. Then they kill, just in case but without orders. Then they kill just because they can. All are murders.

After the release of the film *Fahrenheit 911*, in March of 2004, one soldier in Baghdad wrote to its director Michael Moore about his battalion's approach to killing. "It's hard listening to my platoon sergeant saying, 'If you decide you want to kill a civilian that looks threatening, shoot him. I'd rather fill out paperwork than get one of my soldiers killed by some raghead.' We are taught that if someone even looks threatening we should do something before they do something to us. I wasn't brought up in fear like that, and it's going to take some getting used to."²

Implicit in the soldier's phrase "getting used to . . ." is the struggle of soldiers to overcome their own humanity, to break away from shared human consciousness—that interconnection among humans that protects lives—and get used to killing another human being! To guide his decision-making, each American soldier carries a plastic card, the U.S. Military's "Rules of Engagement," that tells him who he can shoot and under what circumstances. "Engagement" is a euphe-

mism for attack, firing on, killing if "there is a reasonable certainty that a proposed target is a legitimate military target." But as a soldier, how do you determine that? You do not have to make that decision on your own if you are ordered to shoot by your commanding officer. But you did decide to follow his orders. On your own, faced with someone who does not look like an American, how do you get to a "reasonable certainty" to kill her or him? How does it differ from being just what any individual decides to do in the moment when preventive killing is a condoned strategy of war? What if you are scared or not sure or just don't give a damn?

The Rules are as vague as their title is misleading. Veterans returning from Iraq testify to how in combat zones the Rules are changed over time—at first by their commanding officers and later by the soldiers themselves who just ignore the Rules. In the initial 2003 invasion of Iraq, one marine reported that according to the Rules their units were ordered to shoot anyone in Iraqi uniform. By the time his unit made it to Baghdad, he "could shoot anyone that came closer to me than I would feel comfortable, if that person did not immediately move when I ordered them to move after I told them to move, keeping in mind," he added, "I don't speak Arabic."³

Once, as one marine reported, going out with his unit on assignment to blow up a bridge, when they were ambushed, they turned to shoot "at anything and everything [read "everyone"] without bothering to identify targets."⁴ (Brackets added.) Dehumanizing words and racist slurs such as "ragheads" or "haj" reduce Iraqis into objects of ridicule and contempt, making it easier to kill them.

One marine who had three deployments in Iraq pointed out that over time no one paid attention to the Rules at all. They shot at Iraqis—civilians and resistance fighters alike—without any constraint. When soldiers were on the road it was not uncommon to take pot shots from their Humvees at any cars around them traveling on the same road, even those pulled over on the side of the road. They aimed either at the car's radiator or windshield, maybe killing the driver and passengers or just destroying the car. But they never bothered to stop to "conduct a battle assessment."⁵

Many soldiers were laden with "drop weapons."⁶ When they kill anyone who was armed or when they uncover a cache of Iraqi insur-

gent rifles, they confiscate the arms and carry them with them. Then when they kill "innocents," as they call the civilians they shoot down, they drop the confiscated weapons next to bodies leaving no basis for questions, no investigation, just another dead insurgent, should anybody wander by and ask.

Returning from Iraq, one U.S. Marine reported that according to his command's interpretation of the Rules of Engagement, if they encountered a person with a weapon, they had to call the command post. But after seeing some of their buddies blown up by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) or killed by insurgents in firefights, soldiers seething with anger, said "we didn't bother to call the command post."⁷ They just shot.

Then the command post's interpretations of the Rules changed. One marine reported that "if a town or city that we were approaching was a known threat, if the unit in the area before us took a high number of casualties, we were allowed to shoot whatever we wanted." Noting that everything [read "everyone"] they saw, they engaged [read "shot"] it [read "him or her—man, woman, child"], he described one woman coming by with a bag. "We lit her up" with a grenade and "when the dust settled, we realized that the bag was full of groceries."⁸ (Brackets added.)

Another marine recalls receiving a command: a taxi had been used to set off a roadside bomb, and the Rules changed once again—they were to shoot any orange and white taxi, the typical color of Iraqi taxis. Later, new orders came down: "If they carried a heavy bag and shovel, take them out."⁹ Think about it, someone, a military officer sitting in a command post, decided that it is reasonable to kill any human being who is Iraqi and is carrying a heavy bag and shovel. Then consider that it was common in Iraq to see men and women carrying bags and shovels as people were trying to rebuild their homes and shops and schools and clinics as fast as the military bombings and mortars demolished them.

When you are there on the ground and see everyday people reconstructing bombed-out villages, how could you not conclude that most of them are just ordinary civilians? That, however, is the normal human interaction from which soldiers are expected to be disengaged and it leaves them incapable of interpreting what they are

seeing and then deciding on a reasonable course of action. Military training combined with *core masculinity* to destroy soldiers' ability to put themselves in the place of another makes valid interpretation of the meaning of others' behaviors impossible. When that happens to you, you impose meaning from your preconceived ideas or the rote learning that came through brainwashing. They are the enemy. Any of them. Things. Objects.

If anything natural can be attributed to human nature, interaction is it. Interaction is what makes humans social, connecting us to each other. Language is our means of interpreting our interactions and without language, one cannot fully function as a human being. We find its foundation built into the very nature of how we interact with each other. I am not speaking of the quality of any given interaction but rather the fundamental act of interpreting the meaning of the other's words, gestures, and acts even as one's own meaning is interpreted in return.

When a soldier returns from Iraq, rips off his dog tags, and tells us, "I am not a monster anymore," I have to interpret what that means. My interpretation begins by needing to know what made him think of himself as a monster while he was in Iraq. Looking squarely at the situations he and others with him were in, understanding what was required of them by their commanders, asking how and why they followed orders that would make them feel like monsters when they get home, finding out why they were there in the first place, I am able to reconstruct the context of the situation he and his fellow soldiers were in. Only when I know his situation can I genuinely interpret the meaning of that one phrase, "I am not a monster anymore" as that soldier meant it.

Empathy, as we have seen, requires taking a further step. In the case of that soldier, I try to put myself in his shoes until I get to the point that I can say with a high degree of certainty, "I know what you mean." That knowing stems from interpretations we make from our interconnections, from our experience of oneness. Genuine interaction does not impose pre-fixed meanings on our interpretations of each others' words and gestures. We come in close, through empathy.

Cultural relativism asserts that we are so different from each other—separated by gender, race, life experiences, culture—that we

could not possibly know, not to mention feel, what another is experiencing. It is an opaque wall that blocks some from knowing the experiences of others' and it is so dense between men and women that it is assumed that I, a woman who has never been close to combat, could not empathize with a man who has killed. But that, quite frankly, is not true for me, for any woman, for anyone. As humans, we are endowed with not only the ability but the need to interact. We could not make meaning without it.

The consequences of *core masculinity* and military training closing down soldiers' abilities, needs and desires to interpret the meaning of others' experiences are dire. U.S. soldiers, from their helicopter on October 23, 2007, in the early morning near Djila, did not see Iraqi men in a ditch alongside the road. They saw "emplacers," which is military speak for people who put bombs or IEDs in place, the most common means of attacking U.S. forces in Iraq. No other explanation for the appearance of men in a ditch occurred to them because they did not see human beings. They saw only objects who, to them, were potential killers.

They not only refused to interpret the behavior of the men they saw, they interpreted everything that was happening around them to be about themselves, the American soldiers. The military and its invading soldiers believe in their own superiority, which makes them supremely arrogant and self-centered. To those U.S. soldiers in the helicopter, the Iraqis on the ground were emplacers out to kill them. Unlike words we commonly use for people in the fields like "farmers" or "peasants," that imply that they are human beings and suggest a particular way of living, "emplacers" is a cold, distanced, disengaged term meant to keep soldiers' humanity distanced from the "objects" they are targeting that become known to them as insurgents.¹⁰

The *Counter Insurgency Field Manual* instructs soldiers to understand "insurgents" not as men fighting in a resistance to U.S. occupation but as "propaganda units."¹¹ That instruction appeals to the assurance given to soldiers that they are "professional," that is, they are businesslike in that their behaviors conform to standards of a properly qualified person. Presumably telling soldiers they are professionals helps convince them that killing is a responsible act.

Actually, those supposed "emplacers" were men; human beings were in that ditch. More specifically, they were farmers working in their field in this rural area of Iraq where men rise early, 4:30 in the morning, to irrigate their fields before the blistering heat of the day sucks any water out of the ground. Able to see only emplacers, the soldiers in the helicopter "fired and killed two of them. A third ran back to his nearby house presumably to take cover. But if the soldiers saw him only as another emplacer and not a farmer, then they would see him taking cover not in his home but in a "safe haven," the term they use to indicate the place where criminals hide. The U.S. soldiers' report read, "During the engagement, insurgents used a nearby house as a safe haven to re-engage coalition aircraft." The helicopter "engaged" (read "fired upon") the house. That is how, if the incident were reported at all, we would hear about it back in America on the six o'clock news and in news reports around the world.

On the ground, Abdul al-rahman Lyadeh, a relative of some of the victims saw the second air-strike from the helicopter that killed fourteen people and destroyed their home. Journalist Dahr Jamal, who exposed the incident learned from another witness "that four separate houses were hit by the helicopter. A local Iraqi policeman, Captain Abdullal al-Isawi, put the death toll at 16—seven men, six women, and three children with another 14 wounded."¹² Then as the final death knell to empathy, those deaths were reported to their generals as collateral damage as if the human beings killed were storage sheds or plows.

Could that massacre of peasant farmers have been averted? Not likely. Maybe it would have helped if the soldiers knew something about farmers in desert climates and used that knowledge to interpret the meaning of the men working in the ditch. Made blind by their training and their masculine, American arrogance, with their absence of empathy, that is, their remorselessness, they turned themselves into murderers.

In April 2010 Wikileaks released a video taken from an Apache helicopter of U.S. soldiers gunning down fourteen Iraqi civilians including two Reuters reporters in a Baghdad suburb in July 2007. To the horror of most newscasters who reported the video, the soldiers were joking about their kill, which Wikileaks referred to as "collateral

murder." The U.S. military, under pressure to investigate the incident, concluded that the actions of the soldiers were in accordance with the law of armed conflict and its own "Rules of Engagement."¹³

Saturated with stories like this one from the wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan while writing this book, I saw on the video an ordinary day with soldiers doing what they ordinarily do in combat where in addition to killing they are taking mortar fire most of the time. But I was heartened by an apology to the Iraqi people that appeared shortly afterwards from two Americans. In An Open Letter of Reconciliation and Responsibility to the Iraqi People: From Current and Former Members of the U.S. Military, Ethan McCord and Josh Stieber, they admitted: "From our own experiences, and the experiences of other veterans we have talked to, we know that the acts depicted in this video are everyday occurrences of this war."¹⁴

These air strikes are the same war tactics that U.S. troops took into Pakistan and into the escalated war in Afghanistan once Barack Obama became president. Random killing, being easier from the air, led to the U.S. military dropping 1,853 bombs in Afghanistan in the first half of 2008. The total for 2007 was 3,572.¹⁵ While the United States had dropped nearly 10,800 cluster bombs in Iraq, British allies used almost 2,200 according to reporter Paul Wiseman.¹⁶ In one U.S. bombing of rural Afghanistan villages in August 2008, according to Kai Eide, the UN's special representative in Afghanistan, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan gathered eyewitness testimony to the killing of ninety civilians, sixty of whom were children.¹⁷

Preventive killing. Random killing. How do you even count the Iraqi or Afghan or Pakistani dead? The United States does not bother. The Internet database Iraq Body Count regularly publishes updated death tolls. But to confirm an Iraqi death due to war, it requires two sources. This is much like the old laws on rape that, absurdly, required eyewitnesses. By mid-2008 Iraq Body Count documented between 86,312 and 94,174 Iraqi civilian deaths from the U.S. war since 2003. But those documented deaths are only the tip of the iceberg.

In a 2007 survey, fewer than half of the U.S. Marines in combat thought that Iraqis should be treated with respect, and only 55 percent of all soldiers and 40 percent of marines would report another soldier who had killed or injured Iraqi civilians, according to a Penta-

gon report.¹⁸ Preventive killing of Iraqis in Fallujah, Haditha, or revenge killings by the U.S. military contractors like Blackwater will continue to go uncounted unless an exposé is pursued such as the 2008 indictment of Blackwater soldiers for the murder of seventeen Iraqis the year before, (against whom charges were dropped on a technicality in U.S. courts in 2009).¹⁹ Under occupation by the U.S., criticism from the Iraqi government was rare. All the while, casket makers in Iraq could not keep up with the demand in the early years of the U.S. war there.

To address the problem of uncounted Iraqi dead, researchers from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health in conjunction with an Iraqi research team interviewed a representative sample of Iraqi households to find out how many had relatives who had died from violence in the war. Household reports were then objectively verified. Because the sample was representative, their results from this study can be generalized to the entire Iraqi population. The Johns Hopkins study found that by 2006, 655,000 Iraqis had been killed in the war.

In 2007, the generally accepted and frequently quoted body count (which is regularly updated) was thirteen times smaller than the number that came from the household survey research conducted two years earlier. The U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq had provoked and unleashed warring factions within Iraq to take vengeance, not only against Americans and their allies but against each others' communities, until that figure of Iraqis killed because of the U.S. war reached well over 1.3 million by 2009.²⁰

The Iraqi death rate from the 2006 Johns Hopkins study was confirmed by other studies. Research from the Opinion Research Business of London in conjunction with the Iraqi Independent Institute for Administration and Civil Society Studies conducted a survey of Iraqi households between March 2007 and August 2007 and estimated that 1,033,000 Iraqis had been killed.²¹

Nevertheless, despite the random, preventive killing by U.S. soldiers and the unrelenting bombing, in 2009 the Iraqi government, still under U.S. occupation, released death tolls for the period 2004 to 2008. Seriously undercounted, the 85,694 is the minimum Iraqi death toll reported by the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights for that period even though Iraq had no functioning government at the time and few

records were available. Other flaws in the report come from excluding all of the deaths as a result of the invasion up to the end of the first year of the U.S. war. Insurgents deaths were also excluded from those figures. It found that 1,279 children and 2,334 women were killed during that period.²²

Returning to the value of human life that was uncovered in the collective grief of the people on the beach that day near Bodega Bay, we cannot avoid seeing that Iraqi, Afghan and Pakistani lives are simply of less value to the U.S. military forces than American life. When I conduct a search in the computer or at the library for "value of human life," I am referred to the so-called right to life campaigns, which sacrifice women's dignity, their right to control their own bodies, and even their own lives, to sustain pregnancies at any cost. Or I am directed to life insurance company actuarial tables for the dollar amounts they ascribe to the value of a human life.

A U.S. government program set the value of Iraqi and Afghan life at the same amount it paid for property damage—an average of \$1,212 per person up to a maximum of \$2,500 per dead Iraqi or Afghan.²³ Compare that to the payment of \$100,000 in 2002 to each U.S. family, "for those whose death is as a result of hostile actions and occurred in a designated combat operation or combat zone or while training for combat or performing hazardous duty."²⁴ In 2006, that payment for an American life lost in combat was raised to \$400,000 through Servicemembers Group Life Insurance.²⁵ Does that lesser monetary value of Iraqi life reflect an ease in killing Iraqis or is it just the difference in the cost of living in the United States and Iraq? Or is it a measure of racism in war?

The military relies on racism to shape soldiers' views of their enemy. American patriotism reduces non-Americans to lesser human beings and enemies, painting Arabs, Iraqis, Afghans, insurgents, Sunnis, Shiites and others with broad strokes that label them terrorists. Michael Carey, an Iraq War veteran and Harvard law student, provides us with an example of how the U.S. military unofficially sanctions racism against U.S. enemies in his article, "Anti-Arab Racism in the Military." In his view, racism is natural or instinctual and innate, "not necessarily an unnatural perversion that obstructs an innate human tendency to love everyone." And it is functional; "it is one product of an instinc-

tual need humans have to limit the group of people to who we show sympathy."²⁶ Carey argues that cohesion in the military comes from an instinctual capacity to limit our caring to those close to us. That is why soldiers have less sympathy for those people who are not in their military.

While Carey invokes sociobiology as a kind of intellectual justification for his thesis, he is merely mirroring what every GI knows: in war, support for your buddy and unit is as far as sympathy for others is *allowed* to go. As that loyalty is the result of a training based on brainwashing or mind control, claiming that it is instinctual or innate is simply false. If our ability to sympathize with others were biologically confined to those who are like us, with whom we share similar features, nationality, or family, it would not have to be further diminished through the often inhuman rigors of training. The allegiance that insulates them from the world in which they go to war would be automatic. As Carey himself points out, "The military will want to encourage soldiers to identify with their unit and dehumanize their enemy," which is not so different from the insularity of families riddled with abuse where the nasty secrets of beating and sexual assault are guarded by treating those outside of the family as potential threats, even enemies. But in war, according to Carey again turning to sociobiology, the exclusion of others from your human family is not racism, it is human nature.²⁷

We have to make a decision here. If it is true that it is in our nature to sympathize and care only for those who are close to us, then shared human consciousness is a sham. Interconnection is an illusion. More likely, through paternalism of the family we learn that men are our protectors and therefore, we must confine our caring, sympathy, empathy, and keep it within our family. That is, we must sell out our shared human consciousness, trade it in for paternal protection under which closeness and connection stays within the family. The rest of the world be damned. To hell with strangers.

The mindset of the occupier of a nation-state is not unlike that of an abuser who controls a home, for whom the "other" is merely an object upon whom the abuser imposes her or his meaning. The reason for the hatred is not that he does not understand his victim's Arabic tongue, it is not because she is a woman who is from Venus as opposed

to being from Mars as the popular defense of *core masculinity* goes, but because human interaction has been reduced to objectification. Either the soldier has refused to interact when faced with the enemy or has been so effectively brainwashed that he has lost his ability to very simply ask himself, "How would I feel about these guys pointing guns at me if because of them I have no water, the garbage piles up around my house, I have no hospital to take my sick child to, because of them—those Americans?"

However, contrary to the patriotism that expects us to accept war, remain loyal to our soldiers, objectify the enemy, and support killing and murder, our humanity does not require of us that we distinguish between empathy for soldiers and for their victims. Indeed, our shared human consciousness requires us to empathize with both, which is what brought me to try to understand men in combat and from there to discover how they came to accept their *expendable lives*. Empathy, however is not enough. In the politics of empathy, our government, the military, and soldiers must be held responsible for the crimes they commit in war, including those that the military does not consider criminal.

Does the \$298,000 rise in payment to the family of a U.S. soldier killed in combat reflect an increase in the value of what his life was actually worth? Of course it doesn't. It is payment for his expendability which is called "sacrifice" over his flag-draped coffin. It is hush money, a payment to reassure families of fallen soldiers that their loved ones' lives were worth it.

In civil society, we construct criminal codes to prevent killing. But the United States allows its military to function outside of the law, beyond the reach of human ethics. We make laws to prohibit anyone from taking another's life, invoking our moral code that no one challenges as valid even though some violate it. We protect our shared human consciousness because we know that it protects human life. In civil society, we make murder the most serious and heinous of all crimes and one for which we reserve the most severe punishment. But when the United States invades another country and its soldiers kill other human beings with impunity, generally those who murder Iraqis and Afghans are not held accountable.

This moral code is why the French government initially charged the journalists with not giving aid at the scene of an accident when they chased Princess Diana's car into a deadly crash in a tunnel in Paris. We demand of our doctors that they prolong life, that they work at finding newer and better ways to keep us out of pain, to restore our health, to keep us active. We make it criminal for a doctor to intentionally harm or destroy a human being's life. We demand the strongest justice for the victim. When Americans awakened to the disregard the health insurance industry has for human life and people's well-being, they found that insurance companies not only deny needed care, even life-saving interventions, but they also degrade all of human life and make the diminished value of human life normative. When Americans found repugnant that the value insurance companies hold for human life is the profit they can make from our illnesses and injuries, their outrage led them to demand an overhaul of health care in the United States.

Many of us struggle against the state when it takes as its right the power to end a human life by imposing a death penalty. We construct local, national, and global institutions to reduce infant and maternal mortality, to eliminate hunger. We do all of this to protect and enhance human life. We make rituals, laws and institutions that support and enhance human life, and in doing so we are conscious of ourselves acting together and being responsible to each other. From our life force, we make our love of life legal and institutional.

Except in combat. We exempt our military from upholding the life-saving standards that drive our society and sustain our own humanity just as we exempt our soldiers from the protection of human rights. We will have to come to terms with allowing our military to function outside of the norms, values and laws of our society and our state if we are to unmake war.

Grunts: From Soldier To Sociopath

In combat, once you set out on the mission of a killer, being tough prevails over having a mind and a soul. "You become like a bull.

A grunt." And you don't give a damn. Marine veteran Tyler Boudreau explains that grunts "see the world as threat and response, attacks and counter-attacks, offense and defense, allies and enemies, winning and losing."¹ When all the shades of grey are ruled out, your behavior goes to the extreme, and you may act out sometimes in bizarre ways. But being a grunt is more than that.

Boudreau tells us that joy is the most dominant emotion of battle for many soldiers. He remembers how he and his buddies reveled in the battle they had just fought. "Did you see the rockets? Did you see 'em fly? Did you hear the bullets smacking our sides? Did you feel the heat and thunder? Did you smell the burn? Did you know what the edge looked like before now? Did you ever know we'd be hanging over it so far?"

Why the soldiers' reaction? "Joy to have finally answered the question of myself: Will I stand up and fight, or will I curl up and die? Joy to have found myself still standing when it was all over."² That joy is actually not joy at all but hysterical excitement from relief of fear combined with the need to hide the cowardice it takes to kill and destroy.

"In the course of ten minutes in a firefight," Steve Hassna told me, "I experienced and saw almost every emotion you can think of. Hysterical laughing to uncontrollable sobbing to screaming, people yelling for help, people taking command." That hysteria follows directly from remorse having been driven out of you.

Grunts become more than indifferent to the lives they have taken. They are pompous about it. Moving out on maneuvers with "the club," Hassna and his buddies, the "hardcore people" in the fields of Vietnam, reassured themselves with bravado:

Yeah, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death
I will fear no evil, for I am the meanest son-of-a-bitch in the valley.

That tough talk comes not from being the meanest-son-of-a-bitch in the valley, but because your humanity has been reduced to that of a grunt. You don't think of the depravity involved in some of the tactics you learn in the field. For example, you may have been issued a "bait-and-kill" packet. Direct from the U.S. Department of Defense of the Bush administration, "bait and kill" was a tactic where soldiers strew fake weapons and bombing materials on the ground and then hid nearby to wait for an Iraqi to pick them up. That was the soldiers' signal to blast the life out of them, for if they picked them up, they must be insurgents out to kill American troops. The U.S. soldiers were not to stop and wonder or even question if the person they saw coming into their lure was a child picking up stuff to play with or a parent picking up debris that might be dangerous to children or a neighbor who wants to clear litter from her or his yard. You bait, then you kill because you are a grunt.

The soldiers' hysterical excitement from having fired, killed, and come out alive papers over their emotional emptiness. They sink into the depravity of combat. It gives them the impression that they have feelings. But in fact, they become cynical with that I-don't-give-a-damn attitude Steve Hassna described. For Hassna and his buddies in Vietnam "don't mean nothing, don't mean a thing" became a mantra.

Being a seasoned soldier, you don't think of what you have done, don't feel what you are doing, you don't care, you just do it. By reverting to "don't give a damn," or "don't mean a thing" you can kill when you have to as if without remorse. I say "as if" because we truly do not

know where the remorse has gone in those soldiers. It was in most of them before they went into combat.

Steve Hassna told me that in combat "you cannot afford to be emotionally involved in what is happening," and I finished his sentence with "it would be too dangerous." But I had more to learn about the power war has to destroy the human spirit. He corrected me, "or you'll become even more insane." Soldiers are not trying to stay less insane because it feels better but because if they let go and feel, "then you become dangerous to everyone around you. You cannot afford emotional distress."³

But in combat you are emotional distress. You live in a constant state of hypervigilance, never knowing when or where the next attack will come. You are ready to attack. One Iraq veteran testified that "you can only take so much when people take pot shots at you. It wears you down. I stopped caring and became apathetic."⁴ That numbness again. For most of you, that is not who you are. Your body and mind do not know what to do with you, so you go numb. Feeling stops. Growing up, your psyche coped with being expendable by pushing it to your unconscious where you could not see or feel that devaluation of your life. Even with the brainwashing of basic training, most of you were not ready for your "first kill" in soldier jargon. Then you killed—there were congratulations and slaps on the back. Your loss of soul followed, and numbness, another layer of protection, took over. Now you really are inured to killing. The death tolls mount on your soul, but you do not feel it. You are numb.

The military counts on you soldiers going numb so that you can kill without a second thought. There is something deeply cold-hearted about pushing human beings into conditions that take them beyond the limits of human endurance, keeping them there, and pushing them further to kill. Normally we associate that kind of inhumanity with sadists.

In fact, psychologists find that numbness is the most common characteristic they see in war veterans. That numbness is actually a form of depersonalization that takes over when your perception or experience of yourself is so changed that you feel detached from your own mind and body. The groundwork for being numb was set into motion with your socialization into *core masculinity* where you learned

to distance yourselves from others, from your own feelings. "But," as Steve Hasna explains, "numbness out there while you are in combat, you don't even know it. It's a way of saving what little sanity you have left."

As a soldier in combat, that numbness is how you experience depersonalization—it is as if you are an outside observer of yourself, but you assume that the outside is inside you. Your expendability is complete. And you were not killed. You just lost your soul and ruptured your psyche, but you are still in combat. You dare not notice. Depersonalization pushes unbearable reality into the unconscious.

In combat, the present is chaos and demands hypervigilance. Fear, panic, anxiety, and violation explode. There is no escape. But there is a lot of down time—just driving trucks, sitting, and waiting. That is when living in the present can be intolerable. You do not want time to think about what you have been doing out there in the killing fields. If your mind turns to another time, another place when you are not in the chaos of battle, you wonder what you'll do when you get back home or imagine your life with those you left behind. This is more than just natural loneliness; it is living in the future because the present is unbearable.

Or you desert. James Burmeister enlisted in the army in 2005 because a recruiter convinced him that he could serve on a "humanitarian mission" in Iraq. "In many cases our platoon was required to engage in exercises that were designed to attract fire from insurgents." Burmeister could not obey those orders. "Army gunners would then return fire with 7.62 millimeter rounds that would 'literally tear the limbs and appendages off the intended targets' or .50 caliber explosive rounds that when used against 'human targets' would cause them to 'literally explode or evaporate.'" He was instructed to place fake cameras on poles and label them U.S. property. He and his team were then supposed to shoot anyone who tried to take the equipment. "These citizens were almost always unarmed. In some cases, the Iraqi victims looked to me like they were children, perhaps teenagers."⁶

When Burmeister found that he was sent to bait and kill Iraqis, he made a decision to desert the military, a decision for human life—his own as well as the lives of Iraqis. He asked his commander to let him become a conscientious objector, but his request was ignored. At the

end of his next leave to Germany, Burmeister did not return to Iraq. Instead, he deserted and he went AWOL (absent without leave). He exposed the secret military bait-and-kill tactic. The *Washington Post* investigated and revealed the full story. He was arrested and pled guilty to going AWOL, but that was not punishment enough for the U.S. military. Although he had exposed a war crime, instead of being hailed as a hero, in July 2008 he was punished with a court-martial and sentenced to six months in prison.

In deserting, Burmeister reminds us that a choice is always there to make. Rather than disengaging from shared human consciousness and following the military's expectation that he act from human depravity, he joined the courageous movement of soldiers who refuse to murder human beings on behalf of their country. Courage to Resist estimated that by 2009, 39,900 or 1.9 percent of the total enlisted members had deserted from the U.S. military. This number is over twice the rate of desertion prior to 2001 when the rate was .78%.⁷ The number of deserters from the U.S. war in Iraq is twice the number of soldiers who have been injured or died in combat.⁸ This trend, as we shall see in a later chapter, is the beginning of remaking masculinity and redefining the military.

As a sociologist, I search for social constructs that can explain the inhuman, cold-hearted behaviors and practices that drive soldiers in combat to psychic breaks and loss of soul. To establish a standard for assessing the behaviors of soldiers in combat that turns them into grunts, I turn to how those behaviors are treated when they occur in civilian life. For example, soldiers in Iraq have reported that when they were alerted that a village would be bombed, off-duty soldiers would gather for a party on nearby house tops with their beer to watch and cheer. Back home a beer party to celebrate the destruction of a village with bombs, knowing that villagers are dying under them, is behavior that is so far outside of accepted social norms and moral conduct of civil society, it is unthinkable. Not only would they not applaud the destruction of towns back home, but such celebrations would be repugnant to their own human consciences.

Enjoying harm to other human beings is the behavior we find in sociopaths. Most psychologists have abandoned the term "sociopath" and prefer instead "antisocial personality disorder." Here, I am retriev-

ing from the psychologists' waste bin the term "sociopath" with all of the associations of depravity that go with it. But instead of focusing on the diagnoses of individuals as psychologists do, I am concerned here with understanding *collective* behavior that we normally associate with criminality.

In civil society, sociopaths lie, hurt others, and some kill. Usually their behaviors are criminal—but what makes their actions sociopathic is that they intentionally do harm to others without cause and without remorse. They have no feelings of guilt, no second thoughts for their criminal acts. More likely we will see them puffed up with bravado. Rapists, murderers, and many white collar criminals, who bilk people out of their pensions or their savings, who play ponzi schemes and bring down the economy just because they can, are sociopaths. Consider the criteria used for diagnosing antisocial personality disorder, (ASPD). A person must display at least *three* of the following characteristics:

- Failure to conform to social norms including respect for law
- Deceitfulness, lying, and conning
- Irritability—aggressiveness and repeated physical fights or assaults
- Reckless disregard for the safety of self or others
- Consistent irresponsibility such as failure to keep a job
- Lack of remorse—an indifference to or rationalization for having hurt, mistreated, or stolen from others

If we turn those behaviors (except for consistent irresponsibility) into social conditions and look again at the military's expectations of soldiers in combat, we find that soldiers are required to conform their behaviors to the amorality that characterizes severe mental disorders. Further, as soldiers in combat still tend to be men, and those diagnosed with ASPD (including sociopaths) are much more likely to be men, we see a strong correlation between gender and combat behaviors and sociopaths. The aggression and power of *core masculinity* combined with the men's *expendable lives* make it not surprising then that 3 percent of men but only 1 percent of women meet the criteria

for ASPD in the general population. The prevalence of sociopathic behavior in combat makes it seriously under-diagnosed.

I am not making psychological diagnoses of soldiers here. I am using psychologists' criteria to establish a social condition that is generated by the military. The newest generation of Winter Soldiers, veterans from the Iraq War, who are trying to heal themselves as well as us, the nation that has sent them to destroy and kill, reported the common practice in Iraq of having a buddy take your photo with your "latest kill," standing next to the dead body with a big smile as animal hunters do.⁹ Some soldiers refused to have their photos taken with an Iraqi corpse. But their refusal was not out of consciousness that what they were doing was immoral or even amoral. Instead they admitted that if the dead Iraqi was not their kill, they should not take credit for it.¹⁰

Where empathy might have been, callousness and sometimes glibness reigns. That is the sign of a sociopath, which, when it has infected a collective as large as that of combat soldiers and the military, is a social condition I refer to as the *sociopathic condition of war*. Wars of aggression—wars that are made for reasons other than imminent threat of war by another state—are themselves large-scale sociopathic conditions with the militaries generating sociopathic conditions. The military has reduced itself to a sociopathogenic institution.

Sociopathic behavior was foreign to most soldiers before entering the military. Rather, it has been induced in them through training. In combat, it is ordered. Sociopathic behavior among soldiers, I suggest, results not from some proclivity to amorality but from the depersonalization that brings about numbness to feelings when one is committing acts of depravity in war that are driven by military conditioning and brainwashing.

In the Winter Soldier hearings, one marine testified that the Rules of Engagement "put soldiers in situations where their morals are at odds with their survival instinct."¹¹ The work of the military is to normalize amorality for soldiers in combat, the same amorality found in sociopaths. Major Peter Kilner, a West Point professor, acknowledges, "We train them how to kill, but we never explain why it's okay when they do what we train them so well to do, so they can be at peace with their consciences for the rest of their lives."¹² He is trying to find ways

to help ease soldiers' consciences that are disturbed, as they should be, by killing.

When "average" soldiers are mixed with criminals as well people entering the military who are already sociopaths, it is difficult to tell the genuine sociopath from a normal person who is required to enact the behaviors of a sociopath. Placing normal human beings in sociopathic conditions, especially those persons whose humanity is already compromised by having been made expendable, sets the stage for mental breakdowns. This, as I see it, is where post traumatic stress disorder begins for most soldiers.

Once sociopathic behavior is activated in soldiers, it takes on a life of its own. In a study that replicated prison conditions, psychologist Philip Zimbardo found that when good men, for his study was only of men, are put into bad situations, they behave in pathological ways that are alien to them. Zimbardo recruited male volunteers for his Stanford prison experiment and placed them in a mock prison, half of the volunteers taking roles as guards, the other half as prisoners. Within a week, the men's behavior had so degenerated, the guards treatment of prisoners so dehumanized the men, that the experiment had to be called to an abrupt stop. Zimbardo's study reaffirms a vital fact of life: human nature itself is not evil but situations that some people create such as prisons and war are.¹³

As if it were not bad enough that the military requires sociopathic behavior from men in combat, the U.S. military is now compensating for those it loses to death, injury, and desertion by increasingly replenishing its ranks with criminals, actual sociopaths from civil society. Until the military became stretched thin, being convicted of crimes disqualified convicts from serving in the police forces in their cities or joining the ranks of soldiers in combat. Despite the fact that the military is required to screen recruits for criminal records, alcoholism, and drug abuse, "since the beginning of the Iraq war, waivers for Army recruits with felony arrest or conviction records more than tripled, from 459 in 2003 to 1,620 in 2007," a study for the *Sacramento Bee* newspaper found. While this study did not follow a classic research protocol, its review of the military files of 250 military personnel revealed that 120 had criminal records that included felonies, serious

drug, alcohol and mental health problems.¹⁴ These recruits bolster the sociopathic conditions of war for the rest of the soldiers.

Put women into the military and deploy them to war zones and we find that their risk is not as much from the enemy as it is from serving alongside those soldiers who have been reduced to sociopaths. Thirty percent of American women veterans report having been raped while in the military making it more likely that women will be raped by a fellow soldier than they will be killed by the enemy.¹⁵ Soldiers' free-flowing access to pornography and their frequent uninhibited sexual harassment of women has turned into an epidemic of sexual violence against female GIs in the military.

In recent years, rape in war has finally been recognized as a crime by the Security Council of the United Nations. The 2008 Resolution 1820 "demands the immediate and complete cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence against civilians with immediate effect" and urges that "all parties to armed conflict immediately take appropriate measures to protect civilians, including women and girls, from all forms of sexual violence."¹⁶ What about raping women soldiers? There is an echo of the Geneva Conventions here—just as soldiers in combat are excluded from human rights protections, so women soldiers are excluded from Resolution 1820.

What about women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan like U.S. Army Private LaVena Johnson who was raped and murdered on her base in Iraq on July 19, 2005? Upon her death, the U.S. Army notified nineteen-year-old LaVena's parents that their daughter had "died of self-inflicted, noncombat injuries," but added that she did not commit suicide. Then the army reversed itself saying, "A decision apparently was made by higher officials that the investigators must stop the investigation into a homicide and to classify her death a suicide."¹⁷

LaVena's mother had spoken to her on the phone a few days before, as she did almost weekly while her daughter was in Iraq. She remembered that her daughter was happy and feeling good. Then she was dead. LaVena's suicide did not make sense to the Johnson family. The bullet to the head of this right-handed, nineteen-year-old woman entered the left side. Suicide? Yes, the military said, it was the exit wound from an M-16. Dr. Johnson, a veteran himself, was familiar with this type of gun and could not imagine how his five-foot-one-

inch daughter could handle a three-foot-four-inch rifle to kill herself, especially from that angle. Besides, her mother had detected no sign of distress in her daughter. She was happy and excited that she would be coming home for Christmas. LaVena's father demanded an explanation from the army.

LaVena's father, a physician, was suspicious when he saw his daughter's body in the funeral home. The Johnsons challenged the military's ruling on their daughter's death and began their own investigation. When LaVena's body was brought home for burial, Dr. Johnson examined her and found that she "had been struck in the face with a blunt instrument, perhaps a weapon stock. Her nose was broken and her teeth knocked backwards." She had been dragged and her body bore scratches and teeth imprints. The rapist had tried to burn her.

After two years, with no cooperation from the army, they finally received photographs through the Freedom of Information Act that were taken of their daughter's body when it was found in Iraq. Later when the photographs were released, "the photographs of her genital area revealed massive bruising and lacerations."¹⁸ With the same authority it uses to cover up soldiers' murders of Iraqis, the army closed the case and the House Armed Services Committee concurred with the military's version of LaVena Johnson's death.

When the violence of male domination that we see in wife abuse and rape engages with the sociopathy of war, we are no longer dealing with Zimbardo's "good men in a bad situation" scenario. Soldiers are sunk into the depravity that comes from being a grunt. As feminist writer Susan Griffin pointed out in a germinal article back in the 1970s, in the U.S. rape is an "all-American crime."¹⁹ Given that one in four American women are raped in their lifetime, those sociopaths who rape them match the description of an average male. But the one-in-three ratio of women raped in the U.S. military is significantly higher than that of civilian society.

Rape-murder crimes account for some of the deaths of women serving in Iraq. By the end of 2006 women's death rate reached 2 percent of all U.S. military deaths.²⁰ Dr. Anne Sadler conducted a 2003 University of Iowa study that was funded by the Department of Army Medical Research of the U.S. Department of Defense. She found that of 556 female veterans of the Vietnam and the Persian Gulf Wars, "79

percent of participants reported experiences of sexual harassment during their military service; 30 percent of the women reported an attempted or completed rape."²¹ According to Department of Defense statistics, in 2009 the military received 2,670 charges of sexual assault (up from 2,347 in 2005) involving other members of the armed forces.²²

Can women really be "buddies" in the military environment of masculinity and expendability, in the world of dirt and grunt and in the meanness of combat? That question does not depend on whether or not women can be mean or act like disgusting grunts. It turns instead on the female presence in what has previously been the exclusive male world of killing, on the military-made-sociopathic fields of fighting.

That is what U.S. Army Specialist Suzanne Swift found when she charged that she was sexually harassed and assaulted by three sergeants while she was stationed in Iraq. She told the *Guardian* newspaper, "when you are over there, you are lower than dirt, you are expendable as a soldier in general, and as a woman, it's worse."²³

Swift, age twenty-one, refused to go back to Iraq when she was redeployed because she would be again under the command of those who assaulted her, and she was suffering from the sexual assault and post traumatic stress disorder. She was arrested for being AWOL. On December 14, 2007, Swift was convicted by a summary court-martial. She was stripped of her rank and sentenced to thirty days in the brig, a military prison, although she was released a few weeks later for good behavior.

Looking at female GIs from the standpoint of male expendability, one can see that for some men who have lost their moral compass or who never had one to begin with and were attracted to war, the women serving with them are there to be taken. There are other reasons: the women after all have entered what had been a men's-only club, many men consider them inferior because of their gender, or men's unspoken hatred of women for expecting men's protection which is what got soldiers into this place where they know that very likely they may not come out alive, or because as sociopaths they have no feelings.

Men-turned-grunts do not necessarily want to be observed by outsiders who are not grunts, who are not the meanest sons-of-bitch-

es in the valley. But now outsiders are there in the next barrack. You soldiers have internalized that the enemy is anyone who is not like you and is not your buddy in combat with you. Now some of those around you are unlike you. They are women. They cannot be your buddies. But they expect to serve with you men, taking from you your significance, which is your sacrifice, the measure of your expendability. That she has become expendable too, even though she is not officially in combat, makes no difference—she is merely a woman.

Unlike civil society where rapists can be confident they can get away with their crimes, in the military covering up rape is a done deal. Although the soldier whose sperm was found on the sleeping bag of Army Private First Class Tina Priest was charged with rape, her death too was ruled a suicide. Ultimately, the soldier was convicted by the army of failure to obey an order, but Tina Priest's murder went uninvestigated. In calculating the cost of raping and murdering an American woman GI: \$714 dock of pay a month for two months, restriction to base for thirty days and extra duty for forty-five days. The cost of murdering your rape victim: \$0.00 and no time in the brig. That is the lesson some soldiers take back home with them.

Like the random killing of Iraqi civilians, the military men close ranks to cover up rape-murders by attributing the rape victim's deaths to "non-combat related injuries" or "suicide." It's not that raping fellow soldiers is covered in the Rules of Engagement—officially it's against the law, and that is what puts the edge on it. It's the type of risk that sociopaths pursue.

Many men bring their violence of war home with them. Some brought it from home into war. Fort Carson, Colorado is an army base from which soldiers are sent to combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. In January 2009 it was reported that within three years of coming back from combat in Iraq, nine members of one brigade at Fort Carson had been charged with killing someone. Five of those killings took place in 2008. And that Fourth Brigade has had a significant increase in charges of wife abuse, rape, and sexual assault.²⁴ In 2007, the Department of Defense received 2,688 reports of sexual assault, of which 60 percent were for rape and 72 percent were service members, but only 181 cases were referred for court-martial.²⁵

The rate of rape is higher in the military than in civilian society. Likewise, wives of military men are more endangered in their homes than are wives in civilian society. Wife abuse, which occurs at the rate of 3.1 per 1,000 in the general population of the United States, is more than five times higher in military families—16.5 per 1,000.²⁶ At Fort Bragg, North Carolina, U.S. Army Sergeant Christina Smith was murdered by her husband Sergeant Richard Smith on September 30, 2008. Christina was one of four military women in North Carolina murdered at that time.²⁷ Wife abuse and rape can be identified as antisocial personality disorders. When wife abuse is included in the list of mental disorders caused by combat, the number of war veterans suffering from mental illnesses increases to 31 percent according to Karen Seal, a physician and researcher at the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Sociopathy is the absence of human empathy. In empathy we may discover our courage, for example to save another's life. Strength and courage are *not* incompatible with empathy. It is not necessary to drive empathy out of soldiers' souls to get them to be strong or act bravely. Courage and bravery are writ large in our humanity. But to activate true courage, strength has to be disengaged from the aggression and violence of *core masculinity*. Even strength that is honed by the military can be turned toward saving and protecting human life. Wesley Autrey, a New York construction worker and a Navy veteran used the strength expected of him from *core masculinity*, trained in him by the military, and required for his job in a death-defying, life-saving rescue in the New York subway in 2007.

When a man who was having an epileptic seizure fell into the New York City subway tracks in front of an oncoming train, Wesley Autrey, did not first ask whether or not the person he was about to risk his own life for was of his race or his gender, whether or not he was American. His only concern, beyond that of the man's life, was the safety of his own two daughters who were with him. When the man fell into the subway tracks, in a split second, Autrey spontaneously entrusted his little girls to a stranger, a woman standing nearby. That act stemmed as much from shared human consciousness as what he did next.

Autrey made his next quick judgment. In the face of the oncoming subway train, he jumped down to the tracks, positioned the man who

had fallen into the narrow center between the two train tracks, and covered the man's body with his own. The train passed over them with only a few inches to spare. As soon as it stopped, he yelled from under the train to the crowd to tell his daughters he was okay. Spontaneous applause rose from the relieved people on the platform.

That heroism reconnects us to each other in a world given over to war and killing. From Autrey to the unknown woman who held his daughters' hands, to the white man who came out of his seizure to find an African American man on top of him while a subway train passed over them and who instantly complied with Autrey's orders not to move until they were rescued, every second was filled with each person's conscious and intentional action. All of those people on the platform were making choices like those of the strangers on the beach, choices that soldiers are expected to abandon in combat.

Empathy is in the nature of being human, but it is not just an automatic, unthinking impulse. Autrey's decision to jump in the subway was as calculated as it was spontaneous. "Since I do construction work with Local 79, we work in confined spaces a lot. So I looked, and my judgment was pretty right. The train did have enough room for me."²⁸ The first perception of danger to another when shared human consciousness engages prompts parts of our brains (the motor cortex and the amygdala). Connected to each other, we determine a line of action.²⁹

Whether we rush forward to save the stranger, to seek help or just to fervently hope, that line of action comes from the place in us where we make meaning; each meaning is a decision to interpret an experience this way and not another way. When we interpret the meaning of a situation with empathy, we do not do so with disregard for lives at risk. That is where we experience our own human agency, the action we take when we are agents of our own lives. Autrey reminds us of who we really are. In his actions, we feel the life force of our own human agency; we own our actions as distinctly *ours*, each of us interconnected with each other.

If we attribute our agency to religion or god or luck or biological impulses, we cease to know our capacity for empathy. Our own agency slips from our awareness and we diminish our experiences. Our sense of human interconnectedness drops away. We are alone again in the

isolated individualism that characterizes Western societies and encourages us to derive satisfaction from spending and getting rather than knowing and understanding each other. Individualism turns us away from empathy with others and diminishes our shared human consciousness, weakening that human urge to save and protect human life.

On the subway platform that day, everyone was deeply reliant on each other, whether they realized it or not, simultaneously acting from within their own selves and for each other—not as isolated individuals, not as disconnected men and women, but as those who know from some place deep in their humanity that they can trust their own actions and each others'. That is human agency fully realized. That full realization of one's own humanity, more than any other reason, is why in the weeks and months that have passed since the "subway hero" saved another man's life, he has been praised and fêted, honored with New York City's highest recognition, the Bronze Medallion, and with scholarships for his daughters. *Time* named him Person of the Year. But Wesley Autrey refused the title of hero. "I don't feel like I did something spectacular; I just saw someone who needed help," Autrey said. "I did what I felt was right." As if that were normal. Because it is.

Autrey became another Everyday Hero (a CNN award he received) who reminds us of what we are capable of when we are fully ourselves, when we act to support and protect another's life over everything else. But in the context of war and combat, he reminds us that being a grunt does not make men or women heroic. With a different kind of military, one that is not under orders to commit crimes of aggression in making war, Autrey's courage would be the kind of strength expected of soldiers.

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 - "Ba'athists, the supporters of Saddam Hussein's former regime including army or intelligence officers, whose ideology is a variant of Pan-Arabism.
 - Nationalists, Iraqis who believe in a strong version of Iraqi self-determination. These policies may not necessarily espouse a Pan-Arab ideology, but rather advocate the country's territorial integrity including Kuwait and Khuzestan. Historical figures of this movement include the pre-Ba'athist leader of Iraq Abd al-Karim Qasim and his government.
 - Iraqi Sunni Islamists, the indigenous armed followers of the Salafi movement, as well as any remnants of the Kurdish Ansar al-Islam: individuals with a Sunni-only policy opposed to non-Sunnis though not aligned to one specific ethnic group. Though opposed to the U.S.-led invasion, these groups are not wholly sympathetic towards the former Ba'ath Party as its members included non-Sunnis.
 - Shi'a militias, including the southern, Iran-linked Badr Organization, the Mahdi Army, and the central-Iraq followers of Muqtada al-Sadr. These groups have Shia religious theories and as such, neither advocate the dominance of a single ethnic group, nor the traditional ideologies behind the Iraqi state (eg, these particular Shi'ites do not support the capture of Khuzestan or other border areas with Iran, but rather promote warm relations with Iran's Shi'ite government).
 - Foreign Islamist volunteers, including those often linked to al Qaeda and largely driven by the Sunni Wahhabi doctrine (the two preceding categories are often lumped as "Jihadists")
 - At least one socialist revolutionary (such as the Iraqi Armed Revolutionary Resistance).
 - Nonviolent resistance groups and political parties (not part of the armed insurgency).
11. The United States Department of the Army, *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 161.
12. Dahr Jamal "Iraq Has Only Militants, No Civilians," Common Dreams, org, November 26, 2007.
13. "Collateral Murder," Wikileaks, www.collateralmurder.com (accessed May 6, 2010).

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15. "US-NATO Bans Media Coverage of Taliban Except for Approved Propaganda Reports," March 2, 2010, <http://www.thewe.cc/weplanet/asia/afghanistan/afghanistan.html> (accessed March 22, 2010).
16. Paul Wiseman, "Cluster Bombs Kill In Iraq, Even After Shooting Ends," *USA Today*, December 16, 2003.
17. "Afghans Demand New 'Rules of Force,'" *Al Jazeera*.net, August 26, 2008.
18. Pentagon Report of May 2007, survey conducted by Office of the Surgeon General of the U.S. Army Medical Command, as reported in Chris Hedges and Laila Al-Arian, "The Other War: Iraq Vets Bear Witness," *The Nation*, July 30, 2007.
19. Justin Rood, "Blackwater Chief Accused of Murder, Gun-Running, Company Calls Allegations 'Offensive,'" *ABC News*, August 5, 2009.
20. "More Than 1,000,000 Iraqis Murdered," *Opinion Research Business*. PDF report, September 2007.
21. In the study by Opinion Research Business of London in conjunction with the Iraqi Independent Institute for Administration and Civil Society Studies, the estimates were derived from a nationwide household survey of 1,849 households throughout Iraq conducted between May and July 2006. The results are consistent with the findings of an October 2006 study of Iraq mortality conducted by the Hopkins researchers. Also, the findings closely reflect the increased mortality trends reported by other organizations that utilized passive methods of counting mortality, such as counting bodies in morgues or deaths reported by the news media. The study was published in the October 14, 2006, edition of the peer-reviewed scientific journal, *The Lancet*. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health study of October 11, 2006 estimated that over 600,000 Iraqis had been killed as a result of the invasion as of July 2006. Iraqis have continued to be killed since then. The death rate is at least ten times greater than most estimates cited in the U.S. media, and this number is based on the only scientifically valid study of violent Iraqi deaths caused by the U.S.-led invasion of March 2003. Yet U.S. politicians and the media continue to cite the smaller numbers that do not account for random killing.
22. Sinan Salaheddin, Associated Press writer, "Government Says 85,000 Iraqis Killed in 2004-08," *Yahoo News*, October 14, 2009.
23. According to Nancy A. Youssef, "US Paid Nearly \$31 Million in Condolence Payments to Iraqis, Afghans," *McClatchy Newspapers*, reprint: *Common Dreams*, org, June 1, 2007, "The military makes condolence payments for killing or injuring a civilian or for damaging property. Generally, Iraqis and Afghans received up to \$2,500 for property damage or death. In April 2006, military officials in Iraq raised the maximum payment to \$10,000. In addition, U.S. officials began paying the relatives of Iraqi soldiers and police who were killed because of U.S.

operations, the report states." <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article17809.htm> (accessed May 5, 2010).

24. Rod Powers, "U.S. Military, Active Duty Death Entitlements" *Your Guide to U.S. Military*, About.com; also paid a "death gratuity" which is "a lump sum gratuitous payment made by the military to eligible beneficiaries of a member who dies on Active Duty (AD), Active Duty for Training (ADT), or Initial Duty Training (IDT), or full-time National Guard duty. Its purpose is to help the survivors in their readjustment and to aid them in meeting immediate expenses incurred. The death gratuity payment is \$12,420, and is non-taxable."

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Chapter 6 Grunts: From Soldier to Sociopath

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7. Adam Szyper-Seibert, Courage to Resist e-mail message to Kathleen Barry, October 20, 2009.

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<http://www.strategypage.com/htmlw/htatrit/articles/20080717.aspx> (accessed March 21, 2010); And "You Wouldn't Catch Me Dead in Iraq," *Sunday Times*, August 27, 2006, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/article612898.ece (accessed March 21, 2010).

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Chapter 7 Psychopathic Leadership Versus the Politics of Empathy

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