

# With Deaths Of Real World Villains, Evil Still Exists



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If you grow up as an American kid in the 1980s, 90s or 2000s, there weren't three bigger real world villains than Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden and Muammar Gaddafi. There were, and are, other objects of major scorn. But, those three men seemed to have dramatic, spooky music playing in the background wherever they went. Hussein, Bin-Laden and Gaddafi were Boogeymen and the faces of evil that even crept into our nightmares thanks to news broadcasts, movies and their real world violence. Gaddafi was the embodiment of terrorism in the 1980s and was responsible for the Lockerbie plane bombing amidst all his other grave sins. Hussein, for young people in the late 1980s and early 1990s, murdered his own people, invaded other countries and was the first face of war we saw. bin Laden, of course, was the man who spearheaded various bombings of the U.S. and its outreaches and partners. In 2001, he brought the devastation to our soil and masterminded the attacks in Virginia, Pennsylvania and New York that killed nearly 3,000 people. Now, all three men are dead. Each met his demise violently. Two of them we've seen with our own eyes. The other was so grotesque the U.S. decided not to share it with the world in fear of the fact that some young people would be inspired for revenge. Hussein and bin Laden's deaths were met with great celebration by some, while Gaddafi's was met with more muted feelings here in America. As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton received the Gaddafi news last week on her Blackberry, she said "Wow" as she prepared for a television interview. Even



she didn't know how to process the news. I remember thinking back in 2001 how we seemed so close to World War III. The thought crossed my mind that all of these guys, who are now dead, would put aside their homicidal tendencies and team up with the leaders of Iran and North Korea. The Axis of Evil had the potential to be so much bigger. Ten years later, Iran and North Korea still stand as legitimate, scary threats to world security with their pursuit of nuclear weapons. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Kim Jong-Il revel in being a thorn in the Western world's side. Evil doesn't go away. Hitler showed that when he vanished unceremoniously from the world almost 70 years ago.

That's why we still have stories on tabloid newspapers reporting that Hitler is walking amongst us today. We never got the bloody images of him dead like we have in the modern era. Looking at those photos and videos of Hussein and Gaddafi, our stomachs turn even if we tell each other that we're safe now. Insane men still rise to power and are willing to kill huge swaths of people on the way to, and during, their ruling. Do the deaths of Hitler, Hussein, Bin-Laden and Gaddafi accomplish what we seek, then? Is all our celebrating in vain if evil still rises? It's like Wack-A-Mole. You might knock one down, but there are still 11 others waiting in the wings to carry out a destructive mission to reform society to fit their vision. Is it possible to go deeper underground and confront the issues that lead to all the evil uprisings instead? Dictators and bad guys don't just materialize out of thin air. It takes years to cultivate. If someone can raise them to be evil, why can't we raise them to be good as well? More often than not, that's a harder job. It's a lot easier to work with easy projects than those living in squalor and frustration. Generation x and Millennials have been raised with movies that show us what happens when evil is overturned. People celebrate and everyone lives happily ever after. But, reality is a different

thing. We can't simply dust our hands off and say, "mission accomplished." There are very real people who have been living under the thumb of tyranny in those countries. The problems that led to a villain's rise have only been worsened during their time at the time. As humans, we have a much more vested interest in peace than we do violence. Bitterness, poverty and lack of educational opportunities don't go away with the death of a man. The story goes on and bad sequels are produced. No one wants that. It takes hard work solving the world's problems and the U.S. can't do it alone. But, we have to play our part now rather than spill needless blood later. This is where heroes really rise.

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