

Subject: Dan Blather takes his leave

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I noticed Dan Rather has signed off from the evening news for the last time recently. That got me thinking about the nature of our news media. His final word was 'courage,' referring to victims and family of the 911 tragedy, the war in Iraq, and things of that nature.

I ask myself, why was Rather so respected? Was it his appearance? His brains? His guts? Surely he's not the smartest man around. And his opinions and ideas are not supposed to be the focus of the news, although his bias crept in occasionally. His staff surely prepared the bulk of his stories. Rather seemed to symbolize the top-dog professional newsmen, the anointed high priests of information in our modern society. But do the news anchors deserve such great respect?

News media stars are all about packaging, charisma, and careerism. They are obviously having the time of their life, as seen in their occasional sly grin. What pillars of strength they seem, what gusto they have to narrate such important and often terrible events.. These news media stars are paid millions not for their opinions or intelligence, but for their charismatic demeanor. That, and their willingness to paint a portrait of the world as just and rational, a world based on the sacred hierarchy of civilized virtue. The Dan Rathers of the world are preservers of world order, in which the powerful are just and virtuous, generally speaking. The fact that many a tender flower are being crushed on a daily basis can't be helped, because it's just a natural fact, like the weather.

It takes courage to stand up to terrorists, wherever they may be, Rather's worldview implied. Courage, because the fight will not end until the terrorists are killed, so bent on destruction are they. But what Rather would rather not examine, is the nature of the anger being expressed throughout the world. That would be pointless to Rather. Anger just happens, often for no reason. Just like Oswald killed Kennedy for no particular reason, according to people like Rather. However, history shows a pattern of simple motives beneath the ebb and flow of horrific events. The recurring theme is that of the strong desiring to dominate the weak, the tendency of the strong to justify their acts by demonizing the weak and claiming divine privilege. These weaker people will defend their land and freedom with blood. America has made itself into a rich target by the nature of its powerful economic squeeze plays, its assassination squads bringing about regime changes throughout the past 5 decades, its sponsoring of loans to smaller countries through the World Bank, loans that were probably never expected to be paid back but would result in convenient leverage when we needed a favor. No, Rather would rather not look at the real causes of the Middle East tension, which is primarily a story of western colonial expansion inflicting suffering and harm on an indigent population. The Middle East is a tough issue, to be sure, but rather than striving for the safety of neutrality or objectivity, Rather would rather stoke the fires by ignoring the core issues, echoing the sentiments of our political leaders. The practice of ignoring the core issues, by our leaders and news anchors, risks everything because it fails to hear the pain and suffering our policies are causing. We are now a rich target, because of our world hegemony, our callous indifference, the refusal of influential newsmen like Rather to pay heed to the wisdom of sages such as Noam Chomsky, who have a vision for a fair settlement in the Middle East.. Rather is guilty not so much for what he reported, but what he did not report, thereby promoting the world of imperial illusions and grandeur.

Rather would be completely befuddled by a book I recently read entitled Confessions of an Economic Hitman. The book paints a shocking and disturbing portrait of a world governed not by the boy scouts we see giving speeches every other November, but by men and women with a degree of hubris equal to the ancient Athenians right before they fell from power, as their empire was cresting. Thucydides, in his famous passage, describes how the Athenians wanted to subdue the small neutral island of Melos. When the citizens would not accept the terms of surrender, the Athenians informed them that there was no justice for the weak, only for the strong. The Melians had now power, and the Athenians did. The strong do what they will, the weak suffer what they must. This was the only passage in all Thucydides in which there was actual extended dialog, so great was its significance. Thucydides states that he is speaking to the ages, that they might not repeat the folly. His message rings true today, but not to the likes of the Dan

Rathers.

Machiavelli once wrote that the public can be easily deceived by glorious lies since he is above the law. English kings expanded this into the doctrine of the divine rights of kings, where kings again do as they will to anyone. Americans broke from this tradition, paying a high price in blood, even though at the time, they were said to be the freest and most lightly taxed people on earth (so said Lord Acton). The divine rights of kings, however, looks like it's come back with a vengeance. People should be outraged that our hard-won freedom has been usurped by larger entities, for whatever cause or reason. In my opinion, professional news personalities like Dan Rather look very bad in light of the alternative news that is coming out about the actions and intentions of the new world order type of global powers we are seeing emerge today. John Perkins, author of Economic Hitman, show us that Rather has badly missed the mark covering the important trends of our times.

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