

- Hello everybody, and thank you for joining me for the second part of the opening programme to my television series, "The Roots of Evil". If I may remind you a little of yesterday's presentation whose overarching theme was that it's largely ordinary people who can come to commit extraordinary evil. We began with the detective Norbert Semmer reflecting on how evil lurks in darkness as he drives through the night streets of New Orleans. This in turn leads us to ask how the great religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam interpret evil and come to terms with its existence. Our guides included Professor Ervin Staub, who has booked "The Roots of Evil" inspired the series I made for Channel 4 here in the UK some 25 years ago. Another modern embodiment of evil is the serial killer, and we saw interviews with two of them, both Americans in prison, Donald Harvey, who confesses to the murder of over 80 hospital patients, and Henry Lee Lucas filmed on Death Row, who talks about how hate motivated his killings. I used the work of Professor Fred Alfred, who told us of the studies of evil he made particularly among groups of prisoners he'd interviewed. Then with the help of Professor Fred Katz whose book "Ordinary People, Extraordinary Evil" became a major theme. We glimpse how evil is considered and interpreted in societies other than western ones. We switched to the UK to examine one of the most disturbing cases of modern times. The murder of the toddler, James Bulger by Jon Venables and Robert Thompson, both 10 years old at the time, is Detective Inspector Albert Kirby right when he asserts that they were born evil? In tonight's presentation, we shall explore whether there is a criminal gene, that the answers to criminal behaviour lie in advances in the remarkable and developing field of genetics. We go on to examine what prompted neighbours to slaughter neighbours, as happened in Bosnia and Rwanda, and finish this part with the profound testimony of Ronald, an ordinary GI who reported and thereby exposed the actions of American soldiers in one of the most notorious episodes of the Vietnam War, the Mỹ Lai massacre. These sequences are interwoven and contextualised by various experts who have particularly studied and explored evil and include professors Robert J Lifton, and professors Fred Alford and Herbert Kelman. And let me repeat what I said yesterday if I may, and I've been uncompromising in revealing these examples of cruelty and atrocity, and while it's true, there are often graphic scenes of violence on our news channels and the results of violence, nevertheless, much of the material that I will show tonight is disturbing and is only right that I tell you that. Let's begin if we may, with a reminder of Professor Ervin Staub's conclusion at the end of last night's presentation. Thank you, Laura.

- An easy answer to the problem of evil is to say that some people are born evil. No child is born evil, but a child can have certain hereditary characteristics that lead parents and other people to react to the child in such a way that they make it likely that this child

becomes a violent person. Children who experienced intense violence are much more likely to be violent against their own children. They are much more likely later on to engage in what we may call expressive violence. Violence that is not committed to fulfil some goal like a robbery, but violence that comes out of an intense emotional reaction against other people. So we know that this is the case and that can help us understand in the experience of these children and others what may lead to violence by them.

- We're indicated in part one, a distinction often may between natural evil and moral evil. Natural evil is seen as inexplicable natural disasters that occur, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, massive storms, which are now basically viewed as unfortunate tragedies. The result of climate change. Due it is said to the devouring of the planet with greed and overproduction, the political and financial decisions of men and corporations, the cowardice of governments define the will to reduce carbon emission targets, moral equal, the precipitate conscious actions of people who appear to have chosen a path for cruelty and destruction. These actions were once described as the product of a wicked or evil mind, and today explained in terms of unconscious motives or desires which diminish or even eliminate freedom, rationality and even moral responsibility, natural evil, and moral evil are extremes on the spectrum in between a range of harmful actions that change and shift in our understanding of why they occur as our knowledge and awareness grows, however impotent is our ability to stop them.

But what of genetics, the relation between genetic abnormalities and criminal behaviour is one of the thorniest and controversial in the biological sciences. How credible are genetic explanations? The history of genetics in criminality date from the 18th century, when the idea that you must be subject to demonic possession to become a criminal became untenable. The ground was set by the 18th century Italian criminologist, Cesar Lombroso, who argued there were significant correlations between criminal types and physiomy, so if you look like a criminal, you were one. He was patently wrong, as I can testify personally, having interviewed dozens of prison inmates for a number of television documentaries, exploring the criminal justice system here in the UK and my efforts to reveal the human beings who live in the closed world of prison. However, Lombroso had opened the door to a physical approach to criminality. But it seems it wasn't until recently that a group of British scientists in 1965 claimed to have discovered a criminal gene, the biological root of evil. Well, that was how it was explained to me, or this was how it was explained to me. Normal men and women have it appears 23 pairs of chromosomes each. One of these pairs are the sex chromosomes. The normal female pair are known as XX. The normal male pair, XY, the Y chromosome is correlated to aggressiveness, though highly unusual, some males are occasionally born with an extra Y chromosome. The scientists studying prisoners from a secure hospital discovered a

higher incidents of XYY males than in the population at large. It was held as a breakthrough and there was no shortage of notorious cases were seen to prove the thesis. For example, in Britain, the Kray twins, famous British gangsters at the time, who were sent to prison on 30 year sentences for murder, were both found to have the extra Y chromosome. Well, then the criticisms began and the early optimism of geneticists was dampened by a fundamental weakness in their argument. When the XYY abnormality in prisons and high security psychiatric hospitals were found to be concentrated amongst less dangerous and aggressive prisoners. By and large, their offences were no worse than the normal XY pair. Moreover, the study appeared to overlook the fact there was a large proportion of males with XYY abnormalities in the population who didn't break the law. In "A Decade Earlier", a TV series on evil by and John Claude Bragard, some of whose research I've drawn on, explored other abnormalities in criminal behaviour. They particularly concentrated on the serial killer Dennis Nilsen, the subject to books and programmes here in the UK because of his appalling crimes of killing and mutilating 14 young men. I would only extract from their analysis their point that Nilsen had a choice, but his choice wasn't simply between killing and not killing. In the first instance, it was between admitting and not admitting that his neurotic impulses could have lethal consequences. Once his will had abdicated, his impulses were effectively given free reign and the path towards destructiveness became virtually unstoppable. He descended into evil, but how much of a role could his genetic makeup have played in the crimes he committed? Genetics is a developing science, and I attempted to come to terms with that in the programme. What was the state of research then? Were there any further indications of a criminal gene? If it were proved to be true, there would be profound implications for the role that punishment and deviant behaviour plays in society and our attitude toward them. So here is the sequence that dealt with this in the film. Thank you, Laura.

- [Narrator] Is violence passed down from one generation to another? Genes are the blueprint of every human being. They reveal our sex, eye colour, type of hair. But can they tell us about a compulsion to kill? Have people who commit evil done so out of choice or because they're genetically programmed to do so, can there be an evil gene?

- Well, unfortunately there's an impression left over from the 1930s of a nature, nurture debate as if nature was in one corner, nurture was in another corner, and they were coming together and whoever's standing after 12 rounds emerges victorious. Today we know that almost all, that that type of debate is sterile and absolutely useless, nobody ever says, is it genes or is it environment? And the same thing would apply to anything with respect to evil. It's likely, if there is any genetic influence, it's likely to be a real combination with environmental events and with other types of psychological phenomenon such as choice. Genes don't determine evil genes don't determine anything. They just influence probabilistic outcomes in terms of

behaviour, this has been a century of marvellous technological accomplishments, but it's also been the century of mass murder. If we want to do anything about this type of genocide, politicide, or whatever you want to call it about torture or about extraordinary child abuse, I would focus not on the genes, but on the social circumstances that perpetuate this type of behaviour.

- The producers of the earlier series on evil, echo Professor Carey by going on to say that our genetic makeup and our environmental conditioning could produce in all of us certain tendencies to commit destructive acts, but these destructive tendencies are not irresistible. In theory, we're all capable of exercising restraint on them if we choose to do so. This is the essence of free will, the capacity to be morally vigilant, in particular, the potential to think through the consequences of our actions. Evil occurs when that ability is relaxed, when there is no vigilance. That is what makes evil such a negative force, the failure to do something about our actions. So if genetics by itself does not explain human evil, what does, is Professor Carey right? That the answer lies in other factors in society that affect what communities do and the individuals that make up that community. Are we led into evil by what we believe in, swayed by the power of ideology? Let me paraphrase a little more from Ervin Staub's book. He says, "History shows that people will sacrifice themselves to promote ideologies." Adopting an ideology is another solution to difficult life conditions and threaten existence and self-worth. Ideology is a system of beliefs and values concerning an ideal social organisation and way of life. When traditional ways stop working, an ideology may offer renewed comprehension of the world and give meaning and direction to life. Ideology is a consciously held set of beliefs and values. Staub then discusses how an ideology can lead to evil and how it can grip whole communities into actions that are both terrifying and devastating. Such as the Rwandan genocide occurred in 1994, the scale and brutality of that genocide called shock worldwide, but no country intervened to forcibly stop the killings. Most of the victims were killed in their own villages or towns, many of their neighbours, many by their neighbours and fellow villagers. Hutu gangs searched out victims hiding in churches and school buildings. The militias murdered victims with machetes and rifles. Sexual violence was rife with an estimated 250,000 to half a million women raped during the genocide. So with this tragic background in mind, let us turned to Ervin Staub and this next excerpt from "Roots of Evil". Thank you Laura.

- Ideologies are just visions of a better life. How to live life for a whole society. Nationalism is an ideology, communism was an ideology, fascism even, Nazism was an ideology, a vision of how to create a better life. The problem with these visions is that they invariably identify some group that is the enemy, some group that needs to be destroyed in order to create that better world. So as people respond to difficulties of life to fulfil their own needs, they do it in ways

of thinking that lead to harmful actions against others. And these harmful actions are the starting point for ethnic violence, massacring and genocide.

- [Narrator] Genocide is the deliberate targeting and destruction of whole groups of people. This form of mass murder recently occurred here in Rwanda where up to one million people were killed. A country with a history of massacres against the Tutsis exploded into violence organised by Hutu extremists who convinced the Hutu population that every Tutsi was their mortal enemy. Hundreds of thousands were machine gunned and hacked to death. Some of the killers were women and children. Both government and privately owned radio stations played a crucial role in urging the Hutu people to kill their Tutsi neighbours.

- That song so reflects that deformed culture. It has been written that doing evil deeds does not require a primary or open commitment to doing evil. People can be recruited to do evil without being asked of such a commitment, and yet be expected to carry out evil deeds. This we saw in Rwanda. I'd like to drill down further into this abyss if I may, with the next sequence that followed in the film, and that is an example from the European continent, the genocidal actions witnessed in the war in Bosnia, again in the 1990s. Before that, I'd like to add these thoughts from Ervin Staub, who himself is a Holocaust survivor from Budapest. He and his immediate family miraculously survived until the end of the war in one of the protected houses created by the remarkable Swedish diplomat, Raoul Wallenberg. At one point, he was hidden by his family's Christian helper. As he says in his book, and I quote, "In the midst of cruelty and violence, she risked her life for others, not only for our family, but even for strangers." How can human beings kill multitudes of men, women and children, and old people? How does the motivation arise for this in face of the powerful prohibition against murder that most of us at all, we must understand the psychological, cultural, and societal roots of genocide and masculine we to stop such human destructiveness. So here is Ervin Staub again and our excerpt on the Bosnian war, thank you Laura.

- I see evil as an extreme outcome of ordinary psychological events within people. So in that sense, it is ordinary people who come to extraordinary acts, and yes, it's not mental illness that is an explanation of evil. It's not some extraordinary specialness in these people. It is very frequently the result of great pain and suffering or some deep frustration of very important human needs that leads to the kinds of events within people and within groups that end up in extreme violent and evil acts. And they deal with these conditions by scapegoating some other group, by pointing them and saying they are responsible.

- [Narrator] Bosnia, another communal war, another genocide. This time because of hatred and hostility among Croats, Muslims and Serbs. Again, history played its part. During the second World War, hundreds

of thousands were killed in ethnic strife, bitter tensions and rivalries reemerged after the collapse of communism, as the Serbian leadership sought domination. Serbia and its warlords in Bosnia unleashed a campaign of terror described as ethnic cleansing.

- You cannot kill large numbers of people without a claim to virtue. In that sense, a great deal of evil is done with a vast claim of virtue and people are caught up in those groups that make claims and being caught up in a group that sees itself as on a mission for some valuable work. Being caught up in such a group can help one overcome one's resistance to doing evil.

- [Narrator] The Omarska death camp in northern Bosnia today, guarded and unapproachable. It was here during the Bosnian War, the thousands of Muslim men and women were subjected to systematic torture, murder and rape.

- When Bosnian Serbs started murdering their neighbours, they had to divest themselves of a sense of those neighbours as neighbours and friends, that is divest themselves of sympathy for them or even empathy. Empathy really means the capacity to imagine one's way into the mind or the feelings of someone else. It doesn't even require sympathy, but they had to divest themselves of that degree of empathy.

- I'm as appalled now as I was when I first viewed archive footage of the war, including the interview with and the interviews I did myself with victims such as Hasiba. I've always asked myself, what risks are people taking having agreed to appear in such programmes, to trust in my judgement that I would be fair in the selections I made, in the inevitable condensing of a story so as not to sanitise it and equally not as in socialise. That of course was in my mind when I met and shared the testimony of a victim of rape as dignified and direct as Hasiba. I remember it was an imperative to her as she told her story to tell me and those watching what happened to her, what she told us was so reflective of the cruelty and abuse unleashed by war and by implication, what continues to happen in conflict zones today. Rape is a weapon of war. Do we not owe her the time to tell us what happened? Because in the telling is a revelation of human exploitation and male aggression that we have to try and understand in this ceaseless struggle against such egregious behaviour. Similarly, what are the testimony of Borislav Herak and his despicable actions? What does that say about the complete absence of human empathy spoken of by Professor Lifton? Well empathy, or rather the lack of it certainly plays a part in the sequence I will next show. It concerns an earlier conflict, this time, the war in Vietnam, and an incident that took place that would have considerable reverberations in its effect on the war itself and what it revealed about human behaviour. This account is by the Pulitzer Prize-winning American investigative reporter, Seymour Hersh, who pieced the story together. He writes, it was in March, 1968 when a company of American division soldiers were dropped in by helicopter

for an assault against a hamlet called My Lai. In a bitterly contested province of Quảng Ngãi on the northeastern coast of South Vietnam, 100 GI officers stormed the hamlet in military textbook style, advancing by platoons. Men expected to engage the 48th Vietcong battalion, one of the enemy's most successful units, but instead found women, children and old men, many of them still cooking their breakfast rice over outdoor fires. During the next few hours, the civilians were ruthlessly murdered. Many rounded up in small groups and shot, others flung into a draining ditch at one edge of the hamlet and shot. And many more were shot at random in and above their homes. Some of the younger girls and women were raped. After the shootings, the GIs systematically burned each home, destroyed livestock and food, and fouled the area's drinking supplies. The GIs largely kept what they had done to themselves. Lieutenant William Kelly, who led one of the platoons, was eventually charged with the murder of 109 civilians. There were 504 victims in total. They were from 247 families. 24 families were obliterated. Three generations murdered with no survivors. Among the dead were 182 women, 17 of them pregnant. 173 children were executed, including 56 infants. 60 older men died. Whilst making the series, I was aware of the My Lai massacre. I felt that this particular atrocity by American soldiers during the Vietnam conflict raised important questions about the ethics of war, a lack of awareness of the Geneva conventions with the targeting and killing of civilians, moral responses, and particularly obeying orders that were patently illegal and potentially war crimes. And on a deeper psychological level, the ability to dehumanise people, they no longer recognisable human beings you can empathise with.

I'd like for a moment to digress from the massacre. My Lai raises the profound issue of obedience to authority, which was the subject of probably the most famous psychological experiment ever carried out. In 1963, Stanley Milgram, a social psychologist at Yale University, published the results of an experiment based on the relationship between aggression and obedience. The test consisted of inviting subjects, local people from all walks of life, to participate in a study on the effects of punishment on learning. The experiment was explained to each of the people who were then allowed to meet the learner victim, and then led to another room where they were asked to press a switch and inflict electric shocks on the victim whenever he answered a question incorrectly, they couldn't see him, but they could hear him. Unbeknownst to them, the victim was part of the experiment and acting out the part. The more incorrect the answers, the more the subjects were urged and ordered to increase the shocks. At high shock levels, they could hear cries of pain and shouts to stop. The results were remarkable. Over 60% of the ordinary people who took part in the experiment administered electric shocks up to an intensely severe level. When ordered to do so by this white coated authority figure, Milgram's experiment has become legendary and induced a huge controversy still does. Well what it said about conformity and obedience was devastating. Here are Milgram's own conclusions. I set

up a simple experiment at Yale University to test how much pain an ordinary citizen would inflict on another person, simply because he was ordered to do so by an experimental scientist. Stark authority was pitted against the participant's strongest moral imperatives, against hurting others, and with their ears ringing with the screams of victims, authority won more often than not. The extreme willingness of adults to go to almost any lengths on the command of an authority constitutes the chief finding of the study. And the fact that, I'm so sorry, that's what happens when you have computers.

Let me continue. Ordinary people simply doing their jobs without any particular hostility on their part can become agents in a terrible, destructive process. Moreover, even when the destructive effects of their work become patently clear and they're asked to carry out actions incompatible with fundamental standards of morality, relatively few people have the resources needed to resist authority. Now, these were Milgram's own words, but it must be said virtually all the subjects reflected unease and anxiety, and a minority refused. However, a large majority of the participants carried on when ordered to do so. Now, this was the defence of Lieutenant William Calley at My Lai, he was carrying out instructions to clear the village. He was obeying orders. How much do we hear that at Newberg? Another contributor to the Vietnam sequence in the film is Professor Herbert Kelman, a social scientist who called what happened at My Lai a classic case of a crime of obedience, a subject which he researched and explored. Professor Kelman, who died this year, was a Jew who grew up in anti-Semitic Vienna, who spent a year under Nazi rule and eventually escaped to the US to forge his distinguished academic career in social psychology. His experiences of the Nazi era, especially the Holocaust, deeply influenced his decision to focus attention on the question of how individuals in authority can abuse their power by failing to distinguish between discipline and blind obedience, along with the processes of dehumanisation that can occur in bureaucracies, but also appearing in the sequence is someone who took the opposite path to evil, who though not present at the massacre, decided that after learning what took place, I came to turn in to report it. He's Ronald, an ordinary GI and a friend to a number of his fellow GIs from Charlie Company, who took part in the killings. Ronald was to play a pivotal role in making the American public aware that ordinary GIs had committed atrocities and that they had a right to judge for themselves what had been done in their name. It would lead to a trial and a turning point in the Vietnam War. I was glad indeed to have interviewed Ron, who appears in our sequence on the My Lai massacre. Thank you, Laura.

- Now, one of the difficulties in seeing evil clearly is that often perpetrators claim and even believe that what they are doing good, they believe that they act in self-defence. They believe that they act to fulfil higher ideals, to improve humanity. They sometimes believe that they act in order to destroy people who are inherently bad and

harmful to others.

- [Speaker] Right now.

- [Narrator] The United States believed it had to act against communism in Vietnam, the conflict involved indiscriminate bombing of populations, the destruction of the environment, and the horrors of guerrilla war. Despite the wild west atmosphere, the dehumanisation of the enemy, the corruption of the spirit, some said no to evil. One such man, an ordinary GI who had recently arrived in Vietnam, was let into the secret of a mass killing that occurred at a place the Americans called Pinkville. Ron was to uncover the truth about what became known as the My Lai massacre.

- I saw Grover over there, his name is Butch Grover. I said, Hey, Butch. He said, Hey, Ron. So I dropped my gear and we went and sat in a empty tent, got a beer and sat down and started to tell each other, catch each other up on where we had been and what we had done since we'd last seen each other about three or four months ago, right after our arrival in Vietnam from Hawaii. And after a few minutes he said, hey man, did you hear what we did at Pinkville? And I said, no, what'd you do at Pinkville? And he said, well, we massacred this whole village. I said, whatm massacred the whole village? What, how many people? He said, oh, I know a lot. Three or 400, lined them up, shot them down, killed them all. I was astonished, enraged, furious. But I believed him. I knew that I had to go and find other people and talk to them to confirm it and to discover if it was true, but.

- [Interviewer] Why did you, why did you want to find out what happened? Why should you, a gunner, an ordinary gunner, want to find out what happened at Pinkville?

- Well, I was an American. I was a soldier, I was there, I was part of the war, and I had knowledge of this crime. And if I kept my silence about this crime, I certainly became a party to the crime. And I wasn't prepared to be a party to this crime.

- We consider My Lai, the My Lai Massacre to be an almost classical case of a crime of obedience because it's a situation in which soldiers were in some cases under orders, in some cases, because they believed they were under orders, were committing illegal action. It is illegal within military law. It is illegal to kill innocent civilians, unarmed civilians. And what happened in My Lai was that unarmed civilians were being massacred.

- They saw people being lined up and shot. They saw people being shot wherever they went. They saw people burning hooches. They saw them raping people, they saw them, you name it. Everything was done that day at My Lai, in the way of atrocity, with the possible exception of slow tortures. Other than that, if you can dream of an atrocity,

there's a pretty good chance it occurred at My Lai that day.

- [Interviewer] Would you call it evil? Would you use the word evil?

- I think of it as evil, I thought of it as evil. I thought, these no good sons of bitches, meaning the high command, meaning the military, brought us here, turned my friends into murderers, and now I've got to report that and report my friends.

- But I think one of the major sources of evil that come through bureaucratic structures essentially is a fact that responsibility gets lost in particularly in a hierarchical system. It ends up that nobody is responsible in the way in which people view it. Those who are on the bottom of the hierarchy, the individual soldier, the individual functionary, they are just carrying out orders and they don't see themselves as responsible agents, nor does the public very often see them as responsible agents, these are small fry, these are the little people who have no choice. They're doing what they're told to do. So they cannot be held responsible for the evil consequences of the actions in which they engage and which they indeed carry out specifically, those on the top of the hierarchy can always claim, well, I didn't have that in mind. I mean, I didn't do it. I didn't tell them to do that. I set the policy and somewhere down the line, somebody misunderstood or poorly carried it out and it ended up in this massacre. It ended up in these evil acts.

- [Narrator] The uncovering of the My Lai massacre was a turning point in the Vietnam War. And it was exposed because one individual would not turn a blind eye to murder.

- The one incident that is most powerful and awful for me was a conversation I had with the soldier by the name of Mark, sorry, Mike Terry, who was very good friend of mine. And he was, I thought, really the most moral person that I knew and had had ever known in my life, truly and literally. And it was a story that was to me so awful. I didn't want to believe it, you know? Golly. And we on this bunker and we lay down, it's beautiful night, you can see every star in the sky. And I said, Mike, tell me about Pinkville, what happened at Pinkville? And he tells me this story about he and how he and our other friend Billy Doherty, had been in the village all day, all morning, and it had gotten to be lunchtime and they had been not participating in the massacre. And they sat down to have lunch, break out their seas. Within pretty close proximity to the ditch where lined up a large number of people. The official report says a little over 100, most of the people that I've spoken to who were eyewitnesses say that the number of people in the ditch was at least 200 and probably higher. But of course, many of the people who were in the ditch were not yet dead. They were mortally wounded, but not yet dead. People who were mortally wounded but not dead yet can make a terrible racket. They cry out, their limbs flop around spasmodically. And all of that was going

on in the ditch. It must have been, it must have been an awful sound. And somewhere during the course of their meal, they decided they couldn't take that sound anymore. So they got up together and they walked to the ditch and they walked up and down the ditch, one on each side, taken the survivors and finishing them off one at a time. You take that one, okay. Pow, pow. You take that one, okay. Pow. It was, and I'd heard this story from Billy, who was really quite, was terribly shaken by the whole thing and was devastated by it. And I asked Mike about it, he told me this story, confirmed the story that Billy had already told me. And we finished the story. We laid there for, I don't know, a little while, minute, minute and a half, I don't know. And I said, finally, which I didn't need to, I'm sure I said, Mike, didn't, you know that was wrong? And he said, I don't know man, it's just one of them things. And he rolled over and a few minutes later, I could tell he was asleep. You know, to this day, Mike believes that those were mercy killings and that he is, I think, come to a peace with himself about his conduct that day. I don't know, I wasn't there, but I can't imagine it.

- Professor Kelman reminds us that the defence of superior orders, such as conditions like that are inadmissible under international and military law. Lieutenant was the only one who was convicted of murder, despite over half the platoon being charged, including senior commanders, under pressure from Richard Nixon, his life sentence was reduced at his trial. He eventually served some three years in prison for the killings of 109 people. Let's come down to the final sequence of the film, Laura, if you would.

- [Narrator] Atrocities such as My Lai test our faith in God and man. The age old problem of evil remains a complex one. It flowers in many ways from premeditated murder to massive human destructiveness. But how then should we understand the roots of evil?

- Some people have thought of evil as some malevolent force out there. Sometimes it's called Satan. Other people have seen what I regard as the neutral forces of nature that sometimes create destruction as evil. Not in my view, in my view, evil has to do with the intention to harm, whether that's conscious or not so conscious. It's not only killing other people that is evil, causing great pain, great suffering. In a way that makes it impossible for them to fulfil their human potential, to find fulfilment of life can also be regarded as evil.

- I don't really believe that we are born evil or for that matter, born good. I don't believe with the Catholic church who are much of the Judeo-Christian tradition, that there's some inherent evil in us. I think we're born with a capacity for good or evil. And it has to do with how we handle our ideas, our violence and our relationship to projects. Do we join evil projects? We can go either way.

- Yes, there was Stalin and yes, there was a Hitler. There were leaders who had horrendous visions of what they wanted to accomplish, but it's ordinary people who carried it out, who carried out the killings and not justice underlings who obeyed a sergeant to shoot people, but who designed the programmes of destruction, who did the implementation with zeal. So it's ordinary human beings who are responsible for the vast horrors that have been committed in this century. That's why we must address what ordinary people are, what it is to be ordinary.

- Sorry for that slight hiatus there. I think you've got the gist of it though. Now many of us will say there is no greater example of evil than the Holocaust. Indeed, I've made a number of films on the and I would like to finish this programme, first programme of "Roots of Evil", with some words from Ellie, where he writes in his essay, "Art and Culture After the Holocaust", of the absolute necessity to bear witness to evil, here it is. "Let us tell tales, let us all tell tales. The rest can wait, all the rest can wait. Let us tell tales, that's our primary obligation. Tales of children so wise and so old, tales of old men mute with fear, tales of victims welcoming death as an old acquaintance. Tales that bring men close to the abyss and beyond. And others that lift him up to heaven and beyond. Tales of despair, tales of longing, tales of immense flames, reaching out to the sky, tales of night consuming life and hope and eternity. Let us tell tales so as to remember how vulnerable man is when faced with overwhelming evil. Let us tell tales so as not to allow the executioner to have the last word. The last word belongs to the victim. It is up to the witness to capture it, shape it, transmit it, and still keep it as a secret. And then communicate that secret to others." Thanks for watching, Laura.

- [Host] Thanks Rex, do you have time for a couple of questions?

- Yes, yes, of course, of course.

Q & A and Comments

Q: Someone is asking, is it true that most evil comes from ignorance?

A: I think ignorance plays a part. If you don't know what's going on, you don't inquire what's going on. You're just, your unawareness is such that you have no sense of what is happening that's key in the world. Yeah, it does play a part.

Q: Someone else is asking if you are familiar with the Stanford Prison Experiment by Dr. Zimbardo.

A: Indeed. And I thank that person in asking that question because I should be showing the Stanford Prison experiment in part two of Roots

of Evil when we look at torturers, the experiment is a quite a remarkable one, still very controversial like the Milgram experiment. But I interviewed Zimbardo and we look at the footage that he took and it does raise some very interesting questions, certainly on the ethics of such an experiment. But its conclusions, which I find absolutely compelling. Essentially, the roles we play are very crucial. If you're in a role of authority, what is the power you have over others who are in your care or you can dominate. So that's what attracted me to the experiment. And it's probably the second most famous one after Milgram, and very interesting one indeed. So thank you for asking about that and I hope in a month's time you'll be able to see it.

Q: Speaking of the Milgram experiment, we have a question asking if that experiment was ever discredited or is it still considered accurate?

- The Milgrim experiment, are we talking about?

- [Host] Yes.

A: Yes, well that's a very interesting question. Again, much controversy about it, it's been written about endlessly, it's quoted endlessly. I suspect it's of greater value possibly than the Stanford Prison Experiment. Milgram wrote extensively about it. He replicated the experiment in different countries to similar results, 50 to 60%. But there are ethical questions now because the people weren't told, I mean, it was a pretence, but nevertheless, the realities are still so powerful that he captured and whatever the problems people have with them that are defenders and people opposed to it, I think it resonates with people and with certainly with me, that you know, people in authority have power. What do you do with that power? And there is a tendency in all of us to obey certain things. And then there's the collision between our moral feelings and what we are being asked to do. And that's a really interesting area. So the experiment is still remarkable. It has its detractors, but it has its supporters and I felt it was important to talk about it, thank you.

Q: Thank you. Someone is asking, is there a link, and if so, what is it, between children who torture and kill animals and adults who murder?

A: Yes, I think we've often heard that with people designated as psychopaths, in looking at their childhoods, we often find children who are cruel and mutilate animals. I've seen and read that quite a few times. I'm not sure how much you can correlate, there must be children who are unpleasant towards animals who don't do anything in later life. And that's the problem with all these extrapolations. But I think what is true is that abusive childhoods can and often lead to abusive adults. You know, you suffer that and it must stay with you. If we're lucky enough to have loving families, then the reasons why

evil continues of a different kind. But I think there is a link between abuse and evil and it just shows you the power and importance of the family. But how far we can, I mean then how do you judge those who have had horrible childhoods but live good lives, do in fact the opposite of what they experience. It's a difficult one.

Q: Someone is asking if someone commits an evil act towards you, and you then seek revenge for that act, would the act of revenge be considered an evil act itself?

A: Yeah, well it depends on the level of violence or cruelty that was in the act of revenge. Revenge, it's a subject that interests me. I think revenge in the end is a rather tragic pathway that often leads nowhere. It fulfills certain feelings at that time when you act out revenge. But I think to equate it is very difficult. An act of evil has been perpetrated upon you. What do you respond to? If you act as many do, with violence, then the law must step in, and that's the whole point, isn't it, of a lawful society, that when you are wronged, you go to the courts, that the law must judge, not you. But it's also true that in places, in countries where there are very difficult conditions, where there's no law, then the actor revenge in certain societies can become very important. And there's no doubt about it that it does play an interesting social role in situations where there is very little law and control. So it's again, a complex subject. Thanks for question.

Q: Another question. In your opinion, how would you prevent another genocide?

A: Well, two things. I mean, we're living in a world now where democracy is under threat. I'm particularly worried about the US all over the world we're seeing, what with Putin's actions, I think these are, it's a very difficult, it's a very difficult one to come to terms with, how do we prevent it? And I think each society has to have scrutiny and accountability. It has to have an independent judiciary. It has to have freedom, you should be able to know what is happening in your society, when all these factors, when these are repressed, we're in trouble. And we can see that around the world. So combating evil is an open society, is discussion, it's accountability for actions and it's education. It's about human rights and it's about building on that. I think these are the pathways we have to follow to combat evil. But evil is there, the potential is there. I think you've seen in part one that it's devastating when certain conditions, as you've heard Staub and others say, and then terrible things can happen. So accountability, scrutiny, and a society where we are more aware of the rights of others. Sorry, long answer.

Q: And I believe we have time for one more. What was the overall conclusion about there being a criminal gene?

A: Well, there isn't one so far. I mean, everything is changing around us. Genetics is an incredible development in science, but as far as I'm aware, there is no a gene entirely responsible for criminal action has been located and been identified. Environment, I mean, there are a number of factors aren't there, why terrible things happen as I've tried to show. But I don't think genetics is the answer, certainly not.

- [Host] All right. Well thank you so much Rex for part two and we look forward to seeing you again later this year.

- Thank you very much and thank you all who've asked some very interesting questions.