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CHILDREN KILLING CHILDREN

DEAR DIARY, my brain cannot comprehend murder. As much as I think I could be capable of murder out of rage, I don't know if I could live with myself with someone's blood on my hands. In the film *A Time to Kill*⁽¹⁾, Samuel L Jackson played the character Carl Lee Hailey who's daughter was brutalised by two men who were later heard bragging about what they did to her. Carl Lee Hailey kills the perpetrators on the steps of the courthouse. I often wonder why this doesn't happen more often but I think fundamentally, people don't want to actually commit murder, they just want justice.

If I committed an act of murder, my conscience would never rest. How can a mind rest when you stabbed someone or you've strangled someone or you've shot someone and snuffed out a life that God has given to them? Even if that person is pure evil, it's still not your right to take that life away. I've had murderous intentions; I'm not going to lie. When someone did me real wrong, I seriously thought about at least seven different ways to kill him. Also, when an older boy was throwing his weight around towards my son, making my son question his level of fear, I thought it'd like to break his bandy legs and leave him dying on the side of the road, but I knew somehow my mind would eventually eat away at itself. If I killed someone intentionally, I'd end up losing my marbles and I quite like my marbles. I believe in ghosts and karma and that's enough to keep me in check.

So what are we supposed to think when two 10 year old boys kill a 2 year old toddler for no apparent reason? Back in February 1993, Jon Venables and Robert Thompson abducted and killed James Bulger. They kidnapped him, befriended him, frightened him, hit him with bricks, stones and an iron bar, kicked him and punched him. They threw paint on the little boy, removed the clothes he had on below the waist, they put him on the train track, they covered his head with rubble, they didn't wait to see him being hit by the train which cut him in half. Allegedly, James Bulger was already dead by the time he was hit by the train.

These were obviously not sweet innocent little boys. Many children steal and play truant which never leads to murder, but these two boys on the day they stole James from his mother, attempted to lure another child away from his mother unsuccessfully. So they were on a mission to do something terrible that day and were probably doing terrible things on a regular basis up until that day. It's likely that they did nothing as gruesome as murder a

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child, but the day they committed murder, they were definitely up to no good for a long time. This is why Venables and Thompson have been branded evil. This is why the Bulger family will never be the same again and their grief will probably follow them all the days of their life.

A film like this would be banned. The British Board of Film Classification wouldn't be able to classify a film like this because it's just too bloody awful, yet still this happened in real life in Liverpool, in broad day light, with several sightings of the distressed James right under the nose of the community.

Venables and Thompson are due for release if in fact they haven't been released already. They're possibly walking amongst the general public because they've been given new identities. They'll be able to study, go out to work, socialise, get married, have children and live a life just like everyone else.

Even though they're going to "blend in" they'll always be regarded as evil and if you meet someone for the first time and they tell you when they were young, they killed cats. Plopped them into boiling water, set them alight, skinned them alive, stomped on their bones until they were dead, you'd be right to think this is a serial killer in the making so can you imagine living next door to, coming face to face with, working along side and befriending someone who once killed a little boy for nothing but a way of passing the time?

Are they still evil? Were they too immature to realise the consequences of their actions. Have they been rehabilitated? Will they go on to lead "normal" lives? If they were to spend the rest of their lives in prison, would this be punishment enough? The fact that they're due for release, is that alright?

It doesn't seem right to me!

August Mayfield

Note: (1) The book A Time to Kill was written by John Grisham