



How Good People Turn Evil: the psychology of social influence

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Matthew Taylor: Hello everybody and thank you for joining us here today for this lecture. I'm Matthew Taylor. I'm Chief Executive of the RSA. I'm going to introduce our distinguished speaker and listen to him and I'm going to hand over to my colleague Jonathan Carr-West who is Head of Programmes here to chair the Q & A while I rush off to something else but I wouldn't miss the lecture for the world.

You have come today because you want to hear more from Professor Philip Zimbardo. He'll be talking about his book, *How Good People Turn Evil: the psychology of social influence*. You'll be glad to know it's an extremely fascinating book and even in the three quarters of an hour he'll be speaking for he'll only be able to cover the key points. So you can follow up the lecture by buying a copy of the book outside and Professor Zimbardo has kindly said that he will sign copies of that.

Professor Zimbardo is Director of the Stanford Centre on the Psychology of Terrorism and Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Stanford University. He's also taught at Yale, New York University and Columbia. He was elected President of the American Psychological Association in 2002, is Chair of the Council of Scientific Society Presidents. The other thing I found fascinating in your very brief resumé was that you were the first researcher to study shyness in adults and created the first shyness clinic. So we won't have any problems when we ask for the first question, people will leap forward.

But of course your Stanford Prison experiment from 1971 has been possibly the most widely discussed social psychological experiment undertaken in the last thirty or forty years and as your book points out it's become... has renewed a relevance and pertinence in view of recent issues, particularly around Abu Ghraib.

So everyone is here. They are fascinated to hear what you have to say and we are extremely honoured to have you join us today, Professor.

Professor Zimbardo: It's exciting to be here. I just saw a list of the guests and it's very impressive and very diverse and I hope I will press some buttons, many buttons, given your varied interest.

Two years ago, I guess maybe by next week, I saw the same images that you saw, that were spread around the world by *Sixty Minutes*. Images of American soldiers, men and women, abusing Iraqi prisoners in unconscionable ways. The images were horrific, startling but they were not all surprising to me because I had seen those same images thirty-five years earlier. And although the behaviour was inexcusable it was not inexplicable to me because they were the direct parallels with guards stripping prisoners naked, guards outing bags over prisoner's heads, guards forcing prisoners to do sexual degrading activities because I had seen those things in my study thirty-five years ago, which we will revisit shortly.

Of course, whenever there's a scandal like that the system blames the grunts at the bottom, the few bad apples, the few rogue soldiers. Whenever there is a scandal in the police department, at least in America, the same thing happens. It's a few bad apples. That could be, as a social psychologist and humanist I never blame people before I understand what was the situation in which that behaviour occurred. So I said my hypothesis is maybe it was a bad barrel and not a bad apple. That sound bite resonated of course in the media and I gave many interviews because not only did the military say these are bad apples, they said it's not systemic, meaning don't blame the Army and then of course the Bush administration jumped in and said don't blame us, we're going to get to the bottom of this with a lot of investigations.

Of course if you are going to get to the bottom of this it means you are never going to get to the top and what I am going to argue today is that in fact it is the top and that I am going to argue or command complicity that is, the question I am going to say is, foreshadowing my talk it's essentially,

it's these soldiers were good apples put in a bad barrel and it's not enough to say they were put in a bad barrel, the situation corrupted them. The big question is who created that situation and that's where the system comes in.

During all the interviews I did a lawyer for one of the guards, one of these abusing guards heard me, contacted me and said we'd like you to be an expert witness. I jumped at the opportunity because it meant I could find out the data I needed to test this hypothesis. Were these really bad guys or girls or was it really a bad barrel? And that's what I am going to talk about today.

So the Lucifer effect is an attempt to understand how good people turn evil. Obviously it's not interesting to study how bad people do bad things, that's almost a tautology. It's like psychiatrists study why crazy people do crazy things. So I'm interested in a question that psychologists have tended to avoid, namely big questions, what's make people go wrong. Theologians, historians, poets, dramatists have asked this question for ages. Psychologists tend to ask more specific questions, which we can answer in more precise ways with our experimental methods. So these are the questions maybe sociologists ask, political scientists ask this but having grown up in the South Bronx ghetto in poverty I was surrounded by evil from the time I was a little kid and I always wondered why did my friends who were good kids end up in prison doing really bad things and it wasn't until I got to be a psychologist and had at my disposal experimental methods, assessing methods I could re-ask that question and have some sense that I could begin to answer it.

I want to start very quickly, I am only going to take forty-five minutes and this is a two hour talk, so I am going to have to talk kind of in a New York minute. So this is a wonderful illusion by the artist M C Escher and if you don't know his work you must get access to it. It's the most wonderful illusion and this is called a figure ground illusion. Now as you are looking at this most people see white as the figure against a black background and if you do you see a world full of angels,

little tutus. On the other hand let's look more deeply into the picture and when we do we see a world full of devils, demons, you see the black as the figure and the white as the background. And the illusion is once you see both of those you can't now go back to your original perspective. You can't see only demons or only angels. And that tells us the world is filled with good and evil, has always been filled with good and evil and it's the dialectic of the human condition. The other thing it tells us, those of you who have a religious background, at least a Christian religious background, is that Lucifer was God's favourite angel. Lucifer means the light. In some of the Scriptures he's called the Morning Star and how did Lucifer become the Devil. So here's this incredible cosmic transformation and apparently, at least in Scriptures I've read, it said God announced one day through his second favourite, Michael, that all angels had to honour God's perfect creation Adam and Lucifer and some other angels said no way, we are angels, he's mortal. We are prior to him. He should honour us. Well that meant you committed two sins against God; the sin of pride and the sin of disobedience and apparently this was a God who did not believe in contract resolution and reconciliation. It's a strange view of a God actually if you think about it and what he did was he got Michael the Archangel and other angels and apparently a cosmic battle, I don't quite understand how angels fight, smacking with their wings or something, and not only kicked Lucifer and the fallen angels out but paradoxically it was God who created Hell as a place to put his favourite son, his favourite angel and from that time on evil surfaced throughout the world.

Here's a wonderful picture and statue on a cathedral in Vienna that I took. So here's the triumph of good over evil. It's really the triumph of obedience over disobedience and of course what Lucifer, now in the shape of the Devil, in the shape of the serpent did, he proved that he was right and God was wrong. That why should anybody respect Adam who was so easily corruptible and

really that's the dark side of the Adam and Eve story, that because Adam was corruptible God had made a mistake. That he should not have insisted that angels respect Adam because Adam was mortal and therefore vulnerable to temptation.

What comes out of this then in 1486, two German theologians, Dominicans Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger published a book called *Malleus Maleficarum*, which means the witches hammer and this is the bible of the Inquisition. Every judge in every Catholic country had a translation of this and they raised an interesting conundrum, how could it be that God, all powerful, all knowing, all loving has evil exist in the world because God could say "no evil" and it would disappear. They say God allows evil as a test of human soul, give into temptation you go to hell, resist temptation you go to heaven. These are good priests and they are saying well that might be true of God but we want to get rid of evil and they say God, after the Adam and Eve debacle, said the Devil can no longer work his evil on people. But the Devil is shrewd, he now works his evil on witches. In fact, people who the Devil has slept with become witches and so to stop evil all you have to do is develop a WID programme, Witch Identification and Destruction, so that you break the middle man between the Devil and people and then evil will cease to exist.

Well sadly when you say the Devil slept with and the Devil is always assumed to be a man, the assumption is that who he slept with were women and so two terrible things came out of that, it spread more evil around, certainly in Catholic countries, than ever. It was, for me, the perversion of human perfection. The human mind, which has infinite capacity for creation was perverted to developing torture chambers, torture devices and torture techniques to crush the human will and torture became an instrument of harm and terror. The second thing, historian (*inaudible*) it started the legacy of violence against women. She states from that time because you had the power of the church and the power of the state combined to say it was women who were the witches, marginalised women, withered

women, women who had property that the state or church could acquire and she says you can see from there the development of women as second class citizens.

So the Lucifer effect starts with this cosmic transformation. This incredible arc of God's favourite angel becoming the Devil and so the research I've done really is similar only it's much more modest. We are not dealing with angels but ordinary people, not doing devilish things but just becoming perpetrators of evil. Not always sometimes in some situations and the key is they are corrupted by what I'm going to call powerful, situational forces. Social psychological processes that can make most people, not all, but most people do things they could not imagine.

So one definition of evil is evil is knowing better and doing worse. For me my psychological definition is evil is the exercise of power to intentionally harm psychologically, dehumanising, demeaning people, hurt physically, abuse, torture or destroy, physically take someone's life or spiritually, you destroy a concept, a principle, a religion. And the question is why are we so fascinated with evil and the answer, I think, is it's not the consequence, it's not that somebody does something like in the current shootings in Virginia or all these shootings. There have been similar things here, the interest is in the demonstration of power that somebody or some group has the power to dominate and control, people, nature or animals and we're more fascinated the more creative it is, the more unique it is, the more raw it is.

The 9/11 evil by the terrorist where they weaponised commercial airlines, flew them into World Trade Tower and before our eyes two 110-storey buildings evaporated. That had never existed in the world before and even though it was horrendous they kept saying how many people died, people could not resist looking at it and the media could, obviously, not resist showing it over and over again. So it was the creativity of that evil, that people could think a thought that had been

unthinkable before. Once we see that then it becomes imaginable and anything anybody has done we could do.

So the Lucifer effect is also, although most of it deals with the negatives, for me it's really a celebration of the minds infinite capacity to make us be kinder, cruel, caring or indifferent, creative or destructive and push some of us to become villains and the positive side that I'll get to at the end of the talk, the same situation that drives some people to become perpetrators drives other people to become heroes.

I start the book with a wonderful quote from John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, "The mind is its own place and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven."

I just got this today, if you Google "evil", this was in *The Sunday Times* review of my book, I think last week, Google evil, a word so empty that it should surely have withered away and up come 136 million hits in a third of a second. Tony Blair swore to confront evil wherever he found it. George W Bush would be lost without the word. His name is co-Googled with it more than two million times. Both men indeed or politicians and social commentators should read this book *The Lucifer Effect*.

So I am going to begin with a case study of evil. I am going to take you down to the dungeon at Abu Ghraib Prison and we are going to look at the images that these soldiers took with their camera. The terrible thing they did, the mindless thing they did was put themselves in the picture. So it's the first time in history you had perpetrators of evil documenting their evil in the pictures. Sort of earlier... white people who lynch black people in the South put themselves in the picture but it wasn't necessarily the people who did the lynching, it was whole mobs of people came to celebrate that effect. Also they made postcards of these pictures and it started the postcard industry in America, certainly stimulated it. On the website I am going to describe to you in a minute I have a video clip I made of those postcards of those lynching. I call those trophy photos and again - it's the domination of

people over inferiors. When you think of blacks as inferiors, animals, then you do the same thing.... we used to see pictures of big game hunters with their big guns or big fishing rods, with marlins or swordfish or buffalo and so forth.

So two things you have to know, these were not real soldiers. These were Army reservists. These are weekend soldiers. They go to get a little extra money on Saturday or in the summer. So they have no training at all to be in a war zone. No training to be in a situation like this. Secondly, why did it only happen in this one place. It was not in all the prisons. So it was the torture and interrogation centre run by the military intelligence, the CIA were there, civilian interrogators who get paid a \$1000 a day from Titan corporation and they were interrogating all these people. They wanted to find who had connections to Al Qaeda and who knew something about the insurgency, which has got out of control. So there were a thousand prisoners there, mostly people who had no information because the Army made whole sweeps, all the men in a family and they started including young boys, were brought down there. They didn't have enough analysts. They didn't have enough translators so they were getting no information and pressures coming from the Colonel, from the General, from Rumsfeld, from Cheney, from Bush, the whole chain of command and they are getting no actionable intelligence. So they turned to these Army reservists, who are Military Police, whose job it is to maintain the security of the prisoners and they say it's your job to soften them up for interrogation. We are taking the gloves off. So use the euphemism, so when these pictures appear the command said "we never told them to do that". They were not following orders and so you always build in plausible deniability. That's how the system gets off the hook. You say "we never told them to do those particular things".

Let's get a sense of what they actually did. Some pretty horrendous behaviour. So these are just a few of the thousand images on the CD, obviously I added motion and

sound to it. So this is former Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, this is Brigadier-General Janice Karpinski, they want to know who are the bad apples. That's one way to frame the question. Psychologists would frame it differently because if you ask a who question you can only get a people answer. So I ask it in a different way. If we ask a what question the answer could be people but it can also be something else. It could be the situation.

So when psychologists try to understand any kind of complex behaviour, a certain behaviour that is pathological in some sense, the way we usually do it is we start at the level of the person because psychology is a scientific study of the behaviour and mental process of individuals but it's also the way that law, medicine, psychiatry and religion work. It's everything is in the individual. So therefore these are the bad apples. These are the sinners. These are the guilty people. These are the afflicted. These are the diseased. Social psychologists say. Well of course it's always at the end product, it's always a person, a shooter, a killer but behaviour is always in a context and so we contrast what's called a dispositional approach, trying to find dispositions in people and say let's try to understand the situation. Maybe these were good men and women corrupted by the behavioural context, by powerful situational forces and that's the bad apple, the bad barrel.

So the next question then is who painted that barrel and that's the system's level of analysis. You put a barrel in prison, which is always corruptible without strong top-down supervision and a barrel of war, which is imminently corruptible and then you look at what are the broader extrinsic influences creating that situation and that's where you get the legal, the cultural, historical, economic and the legal is what maintains, gives it a definition and I am going to call that the bad barrel makers. So we want to do analysis of all those three levels, obviously, because we want to understand the old Robert Louis Stephenson story, the transformation, the good Dr Jekyll into Mr Hyde and essentially it's because he took some magical elixir and he crossed that boundary. We like to think of the boundary

between good and evil as impermeable. It's really a safety valve because we like to believe we are on the good side and anybody does bad things are on the other side and I'm going to argue that just like the cells in our body allow a chemical to pass back and forth and still remain with integrity of the cell, human beings can cross back and forth.

So social psychological research, I'm going to present just a very little bit of today, very quickly, can maybe help us understand how you can have that transformation without drugs. Obviously there's been a big problem in Britain, you have more drug addicts than any place else in Europe but not more than in America. We're still number one there. But also... it's a two for... maybe we can also answer the question of how those once good soldiers could do those horrible things.

Let's see how. One of the most important studies in psychology some of you know a little bit about, I'm going to present it very quickly was done by my high school classmate Stanley Milgram and in his study he ran a thousand people not college students, not Yale students that all the text books got wrong. He ran 500 people at Yale and then 500 people at another small town and it began by... they saw this ad in the newspaper, Study of Memory, we want to pay people \$4 an hour back in 1963, so it was pretty good money and he says, we don't want college or high school students. We want ordinary people, construction workers, barbers, white collar workers, sales people. So this is a study, which is the most generalisable in all of social science. Nobody ever had a sample like that and so you come down to the experiment, the two people, one of you is going to be a teacher, one of you is going to be a learner. So he gives you respectable roles to play. The teacher is going to give the learner something to learn and when the learner gets it right you reward him but when the learner gets it wrong you are going to judiciously punish him. Allegedly the study, the big lie is we want to help people improve their memory through the effective use of punishment, something many

parents support. So we hook up the learner to shocking system and you're the teacher and the way you are going to shock him is there's a box before you that has 30 switches. You start with a small 15 volt, guy doesn't respond and each switch increases by 30 volts and so this is the slippery slope to evil. Evil always starts with a small first step and if you have small gradations at no point anything you are doing is really worse than the thing previously. However, when you run down the line it goes to hundreds of volts and now the guy dumbs down and he's getting it all wrong and you are shocking and shocking and the guy is screaming and says wait I forgot to tell you I have a heart condition and you are a good person and you turn to the experimenter and the lab coat and you say so who is going to be responsible if something happens. And you say I'm responsible, I'm the authority, keep going and then it gets worse and worse and the guy is screaming and you keep dissenting. You keep saying I'm not that kind of person I'm not going to do this. It gets up to 375 volts, which is dangerous if you shock, the guy screams, there's a thud and then silence. You say sir, something is wrong, somebody has got to go and help him. The experimenter says very coolly, I'm sorry, did you not remember the rule, a failure to respond is an error of omission, which is same as an error of commission, keep shocking. Well if you do a little critical thinking, how you be helping improve his memory. He is either unconscious or dead and we don't have any evidence that that works. So at that point of course everybody quits. And Milgram's question, being a Jewish kid, was would you continue to electrocute somebody, essentially if you have only got 450 volts, just because of an authority, let's say Hitler, a Hitler agent told you to do it and of course everybody said no. He asks forty psychiatrists in Newhaven what per cent of all American citizens would go to the end. They said only 1%. Only sadists would engage in sadistic behaviour. The problem is they could not be more wrong and the problem is their training is only dispositional. They see all pathology in the head of people and they ignore all those social situational variables. Diffusion of responsibility, role playing, the

power of authority, the manipulation of rules, etc. We call that the fundamental attribution error. It's what we all do when we try to understand behaviour we always overestimate the role of the individual and we always underestimate the role of the situation.

Here's the data. The data says here's the number of people who drop out at each level from 15 volts to 450. No one drops out before 285. The guy has been screaming all along. People say I'm not that kind of person, I'm not that kind of person and you go along and now here's 375, scream, thud, does everybody drop out? Not one person drops out. They all go to the end. Not 1%, 65%. Two-thirds. This is only one study. He got the same result over and over again. So why don't they all drop out?

You don't know how to exit. You have tried all the different things and nothing is working and now you realise the guy is either unconscious or dead so he's not going to feel it anyway. I press one-two-bing and I'm out.

I said he did a thousand subjects. He didn't do one study, He did sixteen different experiments. So this is like dialling evil. So the effect on study 16 – more than 90%. Each of these is one social psychological variant or in the two-third range. What's 16? If you first see something like you go all the way, you go all the way. What happens is you see people resist. In study five, if you see people resist, almost everybody resists. What about women? Thirteen women as participants, no different from men. People like to believe that women are a caring, nurturing, kind and so forth. When you put them in the same situation as men, they are the same. The problem is men get recruited to be in violent sports and violent games and armies and police and so forth. So men tend to do more violent things because women are not recruited in those same situations. Put them in the same situations they do terrible things as you'll see in a minute.

All research is fake so you always have to say what is the real world parallel to

blind obedience authority, short of the Hitler young. 912 American citizens committed suicide or were murdered by their family and friends, some of these people I knew. They were from San Francisco and Los Angeles. They did this in response to a speech made by their Minister, Reverend Jim Jones. This is People's Temple in the jungles of Guyana back in 1978 and we have and I have in my book the reference, you can listen to that tape, you can listen to this Lucifer effect. Here's a man of God becoming the angel of death and clearly getting people to be blindly obedient to authority. First killing their children, then killing their parents and then killing themselves. So I'm going to skip this because we just don't have time. There's a ten step programme to create evil. In fact your CP's notes said in the long and gloomy history of mankind there have been more crimes committed in the name of obedience than in the name of disobedience.

Golding's *Lord of the Flies* comes out shortly after that and I'm reading this in my class and the question is, is this a novelist's conceit. Is it enough for boys to change their appearance to get good boys to do bad things? Remember, these are British choir boys, Christian boys who are abandoned on an island, escaping apparently a nuclear holocaust. At the beginning democracy takes over, big boys protect little boys, they run out of food. The only food on the island are wild pigs and the boys try to kill the pig and they can't do it because killing is (*inaudible*) Thou shalt not kill. And then one of the boys, Jack Merridew takes his clothes off, paints himself, gets some other boys to do it and just making themselves anonymous, giving up their personal accountability is not only enough for them to kill pigs...They love killing pigs and then of course they kill the intellectual boy Piggy. So metaphorically that's the triumph of fascism over democracy. It's also the failure of youth without the guiding surveillance of adults. And you remember at the end of the story the Navy Captain comes in and they tell the little kid how can Jimmy go back home.

So is this a novelist's conceit or is this true? Is it enough to simply make somebody anonymous and put them in a situation that

gives them permission to be violent that can produce that.

So I do the experiment, we are going to have women shocking other women at New York University and you always begin with a big lie called a cover story. It's the equivalent of what nations do, called an ideology. So the big lie in America is working on is something called homeland security, that is being threatened by everybody. So women come in, we tell them your job is... we are doing an experiment, other women are trying to be creative under stress. Their job to be creative, your job is to stress them. But we don't want them to see your non-verbal behaviour so we are going to put hoods over your head, put you in a group and give you a floppy lab coat. So here the women are sitting around in a group. We call them numbers, we take away their names and give them numbers and they are listening to the women they are going to meet. We give them a sample of the shock, which is very powerful and compared to what? Compared to women from the same population randomly assigned to be in a condition where we emphasise the individuality. Other than that it's identical. There's nobody saying you must go on, as in Milgram's study. I am behind a window with the first of the victims. An amber light goes on, the women put their finger down on the button. The green light goes on, shock is in the system, they know it because she's yelling and twisting and turning and moaning. They have twenty tries to continue to shock her and then she goes out and the second victim comes in and they have twenty more tries. Results very simply are, this is how long they hold their finger down on the shock and this is the first hand trials and the second hand trials averaged.

If they are individuated they start low and they stay low. If they are, what I call, de-individuated they start giving twice as much and over time they shock more and more and more. Not because they want to hurt her. She is their puppet and that's the evil part. It's the control and domination that you now are pressing a button and you are controlling other human beings' behaviour.

The Klu Klux Klan knew this long before social psychologists did obviously. An anthropologist who read my work said, if this is true it ought to be the case that warriors who change their appearance ought to be more violent in battle than warriors who do not. We know that some cultures go to war without changing appearance, others change their appearance, like Jack Merridew in *Lord of the Flies* and still others wear mask and hoods. So he finds twenty-three cultures in which there's two bits of data, do they change their appearance? 15 change, 8 don't. Do they kill, torture, mutilate their victims? 13 are high on this 10 are not. If they don't change their appearance they don't do anything. Only one tortures. But we are interested in the red zone. If they change their appearance 12 of 13 that kill, torture, mutilate have changed their appearance. Of those who change their appearance 80% kill, torture or mutilate.

So it tells us that culture has wisdom. All war is about old men getting young men to kill other young men over turf, over revenge, over something that old men want or pride sometimes. If you only want to kill them in the situation called war, when they come home you want them to go back being peaceful young men and therefore it is a law that you cannot wear your uniform when you are discharged. We take off the uniform, we say go back to being a good little kid and don't kill anybody. Interestingly this is one of the pictures of the set of a thousand and here's a soldier on duty painting his face in a mask. This is actually the Detroit rock group Insane Clown Posse, which is misogynous, destructive rock group with very bad music but imagine if you are a prisoner in that prison and guards are walking round looking like this.

So then we come to the Stanford Prison Study very quickly. Stanford Prison Study combines all these processes. I know I don't have time to go through the individuation, anonymity of place, dehumanisation, role-playing, mild disengagement, group camaraderie. All prisons are about the power. Guards always want more power. Prisoners get less and so it's about the evil of inaction. The good guards

who don't punish prisoners but never challenge the bad guards and it's in a context of institutional power versus individual will to resist. So we put an ad in a city newspaper. We had 75 volunteers. The critical thing, we give them battery of psychological tests, pick out only two dozen emotional normal and healthy, flip a coin, half of them are going to be guards, half of them are going to be prisoners. So we know on day one that these are good apples and then we begin our study.

This is what one of the guards looked like, symbols of power. This is the basement of the psychology department, which we transformed into a prison-like environment. Prisoners obviously went through a degradation ritual, stripping naked, bags over their heads, chains on their feet, prisoners wore smocks, really women's dresses with no underwear. We took away their names and they just became numbers. This is the art and action, solitary confinement, the whole... all of those kind of things. It begins as you saw, even in Abu Ghraib with push ups, jumping jacks, what happens in military, happens in the fraternities but that soon gets boring. Boredom is a major motivation of evil because when you are bored you have to do things, which are new and different and creative and so each day the guards would generate new things for the prisoners to do that only moved in the direction of being more humiliating and ultimately more sexually degrading. Prisoners cleaned out toilet bowls with their bare hands, again it's a man thing, strip them naked, you make fun of their little genitals, especially if you have little genitals and you're covered. Put bags over their heads, this is going to the parole board hearing, chains on their feet. The kid you just saw was the first one to break down at thirty-six hours, chosen because he was normal and healthy, anti-war activist, a rebel, he broke in thirty-six hours because he was the ring leader of the rebellion and the guards... were not allowed to physically punish but learned how to psychologically punish and each day after that another prisoner broke down. So we had to end this study, which was going to go for two weeks.

We decided to end it on the fifth night and we ended it, terminated it on the sixth day.

In *The Lucifer Effect*, just published here, I present for the first time in great detail how that transformation took place. In fact I have a chapter a day, a whole chapter on the arrest, a chapter on day one and so forth, a chapter on the parole board hearings because it's not until you read the language and I tell it like a screenplay with no psychology just the dialogue of guards and prisoners and observations we've made and I go back over their diaries and things, how you could break somebody within three days or four days just using creative evil. I have a wonderful website, I hope you will visit called Lucifereffect.com. This is what the cover page looks like. It has, not only everything about the book, there's going to be a Hollywood movie about it, about me but lots of resources, especially for teachers and students about resisting unwanted influence, about celebrating heroism, whole set of things on dehumanisation, the lynching photos. I uncovered the technique the Germans used to pervert Hitler Youth to hate Jews - they were forced to read comic books and I have examples of those comic books in which Jews were demeaned, degraded and the final solution is short of killing them, kick them out of your school, kick them out of your country. And then we also have a virtual voting booth where we put on trial George Tenet, Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney and George Bush. It says are they guilty of command complicity? In the book I have a lot of details, on the website I have just a page and you vote, guilty or innocent, undecided, republican, democrat, your age and so far almost a thousand people have voted. If you want to find out you have to go there.

So what are the real world parallels between this and this in Iraq, same bags. They ran out of bags, they started using sand bag covers. You saw all the sexual degradation, our study it was the same thing. I won't go through the details but each day the guards began to force the prisoners to engage sexually degrading acts and finally having them simulate sodomy. Obviously I want to see parallels but the question is I'm biased. Here is one of the

investigator's reports, there have been a dozen, this is by James Schlesinger who is the former Secretary of Defence and he says, "Psychologists have attempted to understand how and why individuals and groups, who usually act humanely, can sometimes act otherwise in certain circumstances". That's what I call The Lucifer Effect. "The landmark Stanford Study provides a cautionary tale for all military detention operations." And he says, "but that's relatively benign compared to what happens in prisons in wartime." And then he says something that social psychologists would delight in, although it's in Appendix G that nobody ever will read. "The potential for abusive treatment of detainees during global war and terrorism is entirely predictable based on a fundamental understanding of the principles of social psychology, coupled with an awareness of numerous known environmental risk factors. Finalists from the field of social psychology suggest that the conditions of war, it should say couple with the dynamics of detainee operations carry inherent risk for human mistreatment and therefore...what? Therefore must be approached with great caution, careful planning and training of which there was none. So we've substituted social psychology for those chemicals, had the same effect of transforming the good Dr Jekyll into the evil Mr Hyde, just for a short time.

So we go back to this dungeon, here's this guy I defended, Chip Frederick. He was in charge of this unit in the basement and so very quickly we are going to look at what did he do. The guy you saw in the pictures and here was a mentally ill patient who covered himself with his shit and Chip Frederick would roll him in dirt just so it wouldn't stink where they put him between a gurney and he made the mistake of sitting on top and taking a picture. He was also one of two people, the one with that pretty woman you saw, Sabrina Harman who thought up this game of putting fake electrodes on a detainee's hands, put a hood over their head and said when your legs give out and you fall off you are going to get electrocuted. Well they didn't think it was bad because it wouldn't happen except if

you're the guy in the hood and don't know it's not attached it's terrifying. What he was like before going down to that dungeon? This is him, the most all American, all patriotic kid you could imagine whose father is a West Virginia coal miner. He's almost a cliché. He's a Norman Rockwell, American kind of person. I had the Army test him. I tested him. I met with him. Normal in all dimensions. He's all American, all the way. He's got nine medals from the Army before this. He was a good guard in a small security, low security prison. He's a super patriot in every way.

What was the situation very quickly? Everything in the Stanford Prison Study was there, in terms of the psychological dynamics. Not only did I say but these independent reports say the worst abuses occurred in both on the night shift because there was no surveillance. No senior officer ever went down to Abu Ghraib at night because, as you'll see, it was ugly, dirty, free for all. There were some nights I went to sleep. There was only me and two graduate students around the clock and the guards knew when I might be asleep they would do the thing. He worked twelve hour shifts, seven days a week, forty days without a day off, under the most chaotic conditions, high stress, filthy, noise, no electricity... electricity went out, sewers over ran, the rats running all over this place. He was in charge of a thousand prisoners, sixty Iraqi guards who were smuggling weapons in and he had no training and no supervision ever. He never left the prison. He went to sleep in a different prison cell when he finished. So total job burn out and fear. This place is under bombardment. The British told the Americans - don't use Abu Ghraib. There's a housing project across the street. They are firing grenades and mortars, five soldiers, twenty detainees were killed in this place. So in addition to everything else these guys are living with this incredible fear. He's exactly like one of my guards before he went down to that place he was good as could be. He goes down to that place, he's now corrupted. You take him out of that situation, normal again. It's what Hannah Arendt said about the banality of evil of Eichmann, before Eichmann went to Auschwitz normal, after

Auschwitz when you put him on trial, normal. You put him in this job, in this situation where his job is, how do we eliminate two million Jews in three months and he goes about it very efficiently getting crane conductors, engineers and biochemists, etc., etc., to do their job.

What was his trial? After my defence, my situation defence, he got eight years in prison, dishonourable discharge. He's a prisoner on Warehouse Road. They took away his nine medals. They took away twenty-two years of his back pay. His marriage is destroyed. His life is wrecked. It's over. Of course he said I'm guilty. I should serve. So what is the comparison. The comparison is two soldiers recently got three years in prison for shooting two prisoners in their back, when the senior officers told them run, when they ran they shot them. The military called that negligent homicide. One of the marines charged with raping this little girl in Iraq and burning her and her family is getting discharged with no penalty. The military it's all about the pictures. It's not about what they did. The pictures humiliated the military. The pictures humiliated the Bush administration.

So very quickly, so who is responsible for maintaining the use of dogs, nakedness, extreme stress and fear, sleep, food deprivation, concealing illegal practices from Red Cross observer? Twenty-one detainees were murdered throughout American prisons in this thing. Not Frederick, all of these were in place before he got there. These are on a list that I present in my book, that Donald Rumsfeld sent to General Miller at Abu Ghraib and General Miller at Abu Ghraib physically went to Guantanamo Bay, went to Abu Ghraib and told General Sanchez this is what you must do. So everything that they did except the sexual stuff was dictated by Donald Rumsfeld as acceptable practice. Even the Generals who were supposed to get to the bottom of this couldn't resist saying it was the military intelligence that forced these military police to do these things and they participated...The abuses would not have

occurred had military doctrine followed. In any prison where you get these abuses you know it's always the sergeants, the warden, the superintendent who have no oversight. You never get this in military or civilian prisons. We have clear lines of command. We have clear discipline and clear rules of engagement. And this General says it was the environment created Abu Ghraib that contributed to the occurrence of such abuse and the fact that it remained undiscovered by higher periods for a long period of time. These went on for three months. Who's watching the store? That alone... you should be responsible, command complicity.

I don't want to let you guys off the hook. This is what British soldiers did in Basra. Had Iraqi prisoners under their charge, stripped naked and forced them to simulate sodomy. The only thing is they didn't put themselves in the pictures. These were not military reservists. These apparently were four or five soldiers that had been highly decorated. So the issue is... it's systemic. It's what happens in war. It's what happens in these kinds of prisons where you don't have supervision, you don't have oversight.

I want to end with just, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, poet who was a prisoner in the Gulag Archipelago, has this wonderful statement, "the line between good and evil is not abstract. It cuts through the centre of every human heart." It's a decision you have to make all the time. To resist temptation and to do the good thing. Here's the guy who did the good thing. This is a low level Army reservist who saw those pictures and turned them into a senior investigating reporter knowing that his friends were going to get into trouble, knowing that they would have revenge on him. So he's the hero, the most ordinary guy in the world. He stopped the abuses. He also became an enemy of the people. He was the messenger that showed the pictures that humiliated the military, humiliated the Bush administration. They had to put him in hiding for three years because everybody wanted to kill him and then they had to put his mother and wife in hiding because people in the town wanted to kill

them because that was the husband, that was the son.

So I've switched my focus. I'm now interested in heroes. I'm interested in this tank man, the student that stopped a row of Chinese military tanks who were going to come to crush the student revolution in Tiananmen Square and I talk about this also in great length in my book and so we want to understand who are heroes? Heroes are people we like to believe are extraordinary. I'm arguing for the banality of heroism. Heroes are ordinary people who do extraordinary things. People in a given situation when other people are freezing and other people are doing nothing, they take action and so it's the flip side of Hannah Arendt *The Banality of Evil* with the banality of good. And I am arguing, and we are going to end in one minute and a half! Situations can inflame the hostile imagination. Situations can drive some people who are ordinarily good when they are in that particular situation and it's always a new situation where your usual morality and usual training doesn't easily apply. The same situation can inspire in some people the heroic imagination. Imagining yourself as someone whose mission at that moment is to help other people. So the psychology of heroism, we want to begin to encourage our children in the curriculum and the families, in stories, on TV to develop this heroic imagination. To imagine yourself as the kind of person who is waiting for a situation to happen and it happens some time in your life, when to become a hero you only have to do two things, you have to move from being passive, which is the human condition, not to get involved, is evolutionary mandate. If you don't get involved you are going to pass on your genes, you're not going to have.... And you have to act on the behalf of others or ideal or principle. Heroes are ordinary people who do extraordinary deeds, who act when others are passive, who stop being egocentric and become socio-centric.

I want to end with this very moving piece that I just got, it's also on my website, this Afro-American, fifty year old construction worker standing on the subway

and some guy has a seizure and falls on the tracks, across the tracks and he can see the subway coming. There are 75 other people on the platform all of whom look and say, "Oh isn't that terrible." He's got the excuse not to help because he's got his two little girls there. He gives them to a stranger and he jumps down on the tracks. So one day you'll be in a new situation with three paths. If you go left, you become a perpetrator of evil. If you go right you become guilty of passive inaction. Remember Edmund Burke said, "It's only when good people do nothing that evil flourishes. Only when a few good men do nothing." And the important thing is if you go straight ahead you can become a hero. But a hero by taking action when other people are passive, by focusing on the needs of others, rather than focusing on yourself.

And so now I hope you are all ready to take the straight and narrow path to celebrating and becoming ordinary heroes and this is as I said, the new direction that I hope to take in my research and writing and I want to thank you for sharing with me your time and attention. I appreciate it very much.

Jonathan Carr-West: Thank you everybody. We do normally try and finish these events at two so if you do have to leave please do. For those of you that can stay we will have about ten minutes opportunity for you to ask Prof Zimbardo questions. And then he will be very kindly signing books outside.

Okay what I am going to do is take questions in batches of three or four and I'll let the Professor choose, which questions he finds most interesting.

Philip Keble: I'm a Fellow. We've all been watching with horror what happened at Virginia Tech a couple of days ago and I was just wondering if you could comment. First of all is this circumstances of the evil person, what might have driven them to that and also I was struck by the 75-year old Professor who apparently threw his body in front of ...and allowed all his students to get out of the room. If you could just comment on that. That does seem to follow on some of your theories.

Collette Hill: I'm a Fellow. I wanted to ask a question. Right at the beginning you said you grew up in a difficult part of town and people went wrong somehow as they approached adulthood, well you didn't. So what is it that makes some people not? And then my second question was I was amazed at the volunteers for your experiment and what they were willing to go through and I just wondered how you recruited them and were you clear what kind of ghastliness they were going to have to go through when they volunteered for your experiment.

Doug Miller: I'm a Fellow and also with GlobeScan. I'm wondering if you'd hazard to project your findings into society at large. We just conducted a BBC World Service poll across 27 countries and found that 30% of people were willing to condone torture if it was going to get information that would save innocent lives due to terrorism. Of course the major story and certainly in this country, most were appalled at torture under any conditions but the fact that 30%. Is that a tipping point? Would 50% be a tipping point in broader society?

Professor Philip Zimbardo: Those are wonderful questions and I'll try to answer very quickly, although they are obviously complex.

The Virginia Tech thing is a complex situation. Obviously the media want to reduce it to jealousy, this kid. I actually have a study on this that I did called *Sudden Shy Murderers* published in *Psychology Today*. Whenever these things happen it is invariably the case that these are loners, shy, no friends but always the good boy, you know, never said no to his mother, etc. So we interviewed twenty men, ten of whom had a history of crime and all of them, twenty men, all of whom were in prison having been found guilty of homicide. Ten of them were habitual criminals and ten had never committed a crime before. Eighty percent of the first time offenders, I call sudden murders, were shy and almost none of the habitual criminals were and when you look in their background what you see is here is shyness as a normal

variant of human nature, gets pushed to the extent in which they never learn how to deal with conflict verbally. So they bottle it up. They never respond. They are always the good little kid. They never say no. This is the kids who get teased. These are the kids who get abused. These are the kids who get bullied. And then... so you have fantasies of revenge. Many of us had that. The difference in America is virtually every household has one or more weapons. Guns available, the parents have weapons, the kid can go in any store. There's gun-marts. You can go in and get a weapon. And so you have a gun crazed, a gun loving culture in America from the time we won the revolutionary war against the British we had the right to bear arms. It doesn't matter that you need to bear arms. So that you have a love affair with guns. So here's now the dispositional, here's the shy kid, alienated, foreign kid in a place, in love with this girl and it's not clear whether she just didn't like him. So here's the actor, here's the dispositional thing, but it's in the situation systemic context of a culture, which is promoting the use of guns to deal with conflict and now it's a culture, which promotes war and violence to deal with a conflict with another nation. And then all the video games in America are violent games that kids watch and love. Most of the cartoons you watch have high violent content and so the President goes on television. We mourn the loss of... well it's the eleventh time it has happened in ten years in high schools and colleges, etc. And each time we blame the individual. And I am saying it's just like the Abu Ghraib thing, the system always tries to protect itself.

So what you need is severe gun regulation. You can't have criminals getting guns. In the last five years almost all the regulations on gun control that were put in place after Columbine have been retracted. So you could go even and get a machine gun. You can get an automatic rifle with a one day check at most, in some places with nothing. You go in, put the money down and they give it to you and then you say why did this kid do this? He was alienated . He was lonely and he was in a rage.

The other big issue around the world is he's an immigrant. The world is now filled with roving immigrants in countries where the birth... like Italy and other places where the birth rate is 1.2 you need 2.1 to reproduce your population, that means to survive those countries have to bring in millions of immigrants to do all the servicing. And no country is really preparing for this influx of millions of immigrants to take care of the hospitals, to take care of your parents, to do all of these things and you know as has happened now in France, all the riots outside of France, these are immigrants who are there... there are no programs to integrate them into society, there's lousy education.

And this ties to the second question, why didn't I become a bad kid? I didn't become a bad kid because teachers said don't play with those bad kids. Here's a library card, if you do this, this and this you'll be teacher's pet. It was education that saved me and being a little smart helped because it was easy to become teacher's pet. But education where teachers really cared in those days. Our teachers were like missionaries. They used to call them spinsters. They were almost all women and they came into the ghetto with the idea of not just teaching us reading and writing, teaching us skills of how to live and how to survive. Literally, what you should eat, basic hygiene. And for me school was clean, safe, orderly versus dirty and chaotic. So I loved school. I would go to school all the time. I'd go to school when I was sick it didn't matter and that made a difference. The kids like me who went to school from that ghetto, from that area, most of them turned out to end up becoming professionals and the kids who didn't, the kids who had lousy teachers and they were horrible abusing teachers ended up either in menial jobs or in prison.

There was one other quick... oh torture. One of the most popular programs in America TV is called 24 and what it is, is a story about somebody has planted a nuclear bomb somewhere in New York and they capture him and you have 24 hours to find out. So it's a very dramatic program and

essentially the lead actor is going to torture this guy to get it, okay. One scene... with a cigar clipper they start cutting his finger nail, cutting his fingers off, not finger nails. And the problem with that is it's a lie. There is never a ticking bomb scenario. You are never certain that something is there, that there's a weapon. That is the illusion. That's the illusion of the torturers that the problem is it's total uncertainty whether there is anything.

So in Abu Ghraib, all these guys at Guantanamo, you never know for sure that they have done something, that they have information. You want to believe they have but you never know and so... and everything we know... I actually studied tortures in Brazil. For a fifteen year period there were fascist dictatorships throughout South America and Greece and other places and torture and death squad executions were the norm. The enemy was socialist communist, mostly professors and students who were tortured if they had information or just killed if they were not and torturing and killing is part of the terror campaign. So even if you don't get information you do it to instil fear in the rest of the population. And we interviewed these guys afterwards because they all got general amnesty and again it was, here are these monsters who are as normal as could be and in every case they said we never were sure that the guy we were torturing, the guy we were doing these horrible things, the guy we were raping his wife or his daughter in front of him ever had any information to give and more often they didn't. And when you broke him with that kind of torture he would say anything and you never really knew, you never could trust the reliability.

Any police detective will tell you that the key to interrogation, and in fact in America 80% of all people interrogated give confessions. The key is rapport. The key is developing a psychological relationship where this person begins to trust you and you are telling him his path to salvation is being honest, giving up the people who are going to turn him in and then it's using a set of psychological tactics. It's never physical torture.

Jonathan Carr-West: Okay, I'm going to take a couple of questions very quickly.

Speaker: I was just interested in what you were saying about torture but I have just been looking at a few cases of burn out in top legal firms in London and what you said about power, control, dehumanising exhaustion and degrading did strike me there's several parallels there and I was just wondering if anyone has looked at this. Whether you have looked at this or anybody else has looked at this?

Heather Straker: I'm a Fellow here. What I wanted to know was, I understand from the lecture that people who have done all these terrible crimes are normally people who are put into roles of power, so either as individuals or as people in groups, I wanted to know, you also get another kind of deviant de-individuation where people do terrible things but it's when there is no position of power, when you get cases of mass hysteria. So like in *Lord of the Flies*, Piggy was killed by a specific person who pushed the boulder onto him and that was premeditated but Simon was killed when all the children were dancing around the fire and they got into this weird trance and he ended up being murdered but there was no one really to blame. It wasn't really for anything. He just ended up dead.

Professor Philip Zimbardo: Yes my wife is doing research on burn out in corporations. My wife is Christina Maslach and she has several books on burn out, *Burn out: the cost of caring* and specifically looking at, if you will, administrative evil. I have a whole section of my book on that. And it's not only in legal situations. It's social workers, psychiatric nurses will tell you the same thing, people in corrections and it's simply, again, you have to analyse the situation. When there's burn out you say take a vacation. Take a vacation, fine, you're happy. When you come back if you haven't changed the situation it's only going to get worse. And typically it's during a situation where for social workers, for poverty lawyers, the situation is overwhelming. You

are not really prepared. You go in, you're idealistic, you want to make a change, you want to improve the world and you're overwhelmed because you don't have resources and pretty soon... and so the demand is endless of poor people, of needy people, of people who are crazy, people who are committing crimes and you don't have the resources and you typically don't have a caring administration and all they say is do it faster, cheaper, better, which is the reason that the shuttle, The Challenger shuttle failed. That was NASA saying you can't do it faster, better, cheaper. That's a compromise. Once you do those things you know it's a disaster.

So in her analysis it's always you look at the person but in the situation and typically in a corporation it's not burn out throughout, sometimes it's just one unit. Was she has actually is a check list. There are really six dimensions in which burn out occurs. So one might be fairness, one is... it's almost never working too hard, it's an sense of inequity, of fairness of... you're emotionally exhausted and there's no resources. There's no place to turn to.

So in this thing in Abu Ghraib this guy Chip Frederick and the others, they were in charge of a thousand people, here's his work hours. There was not a psychiatrist, there was not a clinical psychologist that they could turn to in three months. So one thing you don't have for the prison is there was no mental health service available for any of these soldiers. That's part of the crime. That's part of the command complicity that if you put people of any kind in a situation, if you have police working the ghetto where there is simply high crime they need social support. After the 9/11 attacks in New York, I worked with the Fire Department in New York and there was no provision for them to get support. There were 350 firemen who were killed in this thing and firemen are different from police men because the firemen it's a family. You live together, men typically, in this place and the senior firemen were killed, namely their fathers, or kids were killed and there was no provision within the Fire Department to give them support, psychological support.

Secondarily is, these are mostly Irish guys, tough guys, masculine guys who say we don't need the help. So I went as President of the American Psychological Association and said I know you guys don't need it, maybe your wife or kids need it, "Oh yeah, they need it." And we had to work through the guys through setting up a program of dealing with their wives and children and then we asked the wife well your husband said he's fine. "What do you mean fine? He's got nightmares. He goes into rages." So we ended up helping the firemen but not with the mindless bureaucratic thing that sits there and waits for them to come in because they are never going to come in because coming in means you're a sissy. You have to understand here's a culture where you don't go to strangers for help, a psychiatrist or psychology, you go to family and friends and you don't go to family and friends when you are supposed to be doing your job and be a tough guy and you have nightmares and you're crying and you have survivor guilt because they died on the truck and you survived.

So again, I'm saying it's not rocket science, it's just when you understand what human nature is like and human nature in this context then you say, here's what these people need and it's easy to give it to them and it doesn't cost a lot of money. The problem is once you have a bureaucracy where everybody says, we don't have an align item for that or it's going to cost too much so maybe we don't need it. Or else nobody's thought about it.

Jonathan Carr-West: Okay very briefly on mass hysteria.

Professor Philip Zimbardo: Yes mass hysteria is an incredible problem. It's not well understood, not well studied. Usually there's no such thing as panic. It's very rare that people panic, strange incidents and mass hysteria typically occurs where there's some volatile situation. That people have been anxious before. There's some general concern about something that's wrong and somebody begins to say, I feel sick

or I feel ill or something bad is happening and so there's kind of a volatile environment that feeds into this.

Jonathan Carr-West: As always time has defeated us. There is so much more we could talk about. Go to the website, buy the book, Professor Zimbardo is going to be signing copies of the book outside. Thank you all for coming.