
[A New Years Day Without A Murder](#)

Posted by: [Max Crean](#)

on Apr 06, 2013

Tagged in: Untagged

Now this might sound a bit radical but yesterday I decided to try an experiment; Is it possible to go the whole day without watching a single act of gratuitous violence or brutal murder on TV?

I should explain.

Last year, on more than one occasion, I got fed up with the endless stream of mindless violence and righteous retribution passed over as entertainment from the TV screen into my mind. The taking of human life as entertainment? A commodity? It suddenly occurred to me that if you really wanted to you could see ten or twenty TV murders a day for 365 days a year, or if you are into the Rimbaud, Bruce Willis or Jean Claude Van Damme genre you could probably rack up tens of thousands of on screen deaths all photogenically constructed to preserve the viewers sensibilities and insulate them from the gory and vicious reality.

I rebelled, and it was good.

The video store had a box set collection of the BBC series "All Creatures Great And Small", the autobiographical story of a vet, James Herriot, making his way through life in the sunny, windswept dales of Yorkshire. I rented it, then left with a smile on my face and the box tucked under my arm.

Until the early evening and after dinner the TV was studiously left off, then with chores done and a completely clear conscience it was switched on and put straight to video mode. Sitting cosily in front of the fire with a glass of wine as the first disc came up I became absorbed and enthralled in the tales of the dales unfolding gently, deliciously before me. The rugged fells criss-crossed by ancient stone walls, the hardy people, the harsh beautiful scenery sculpted by the snow and the rain and the scouring wind of the seasons.

All came to life as James Herriot, Callum, Siegfried and Tristan Farnan the Darrowby practice vets roamed to and fro ministering medicament to hillside flocks then vitamin injections to befuddled beasts in stone barns littered over the wild and snowy landscape. Epic good humour woven mischevously into the drama, jealousies, schemes, plots and crises of the animal owners who call out the vets at any time night or day. The revealing encounters exposing parts of human nature we instantly recognise in others but all too often not in ourselves. These are tales of love of life, of the great character abiding in the small farms and communities in the wonderfull tapestry that is the Dales.

When the disc was done and I was staring at the credits rolling down the screen I was

moved to look to the heavens and say thank you for seeing a way of life as it could be and experiencing the love growing and binding James ever more to this the place he chose to spend his life. Indeed it brings home the very meaning of the phrase "to spend ones life". His was spent well, doing things he loved in a place that he loved with people that he loved around him.

It was only after switching off the video and TV I noticed my mind was calm and stress free. I realised I wasn't suffering from Post Traumatic TV syndrome; I was happy I wasn't feeling guilty for being alive. My panic, hate and fear buttons hadn't been pressed by Hollywood producers and directors; or advertisers trying to make money out of my insecurities.

Amazing.

I remember some years ago an Orthodox Jewish Rabbi was on TV trying to explain to a journalist why he forbade his family to have a TV in the house.

"Would you have a sewer directly into your living room?"

Reflecting on his words after a new years day without a murder I have to say he was not the stupid, unsophisticated, ignorant, uncivilised throwback I took him for at the time. I thought for a moment he was possibly the most enlightened TV critic I have ever come across. But was he? Just as Alf Wight(James Herriot) chose the way he wished to spend his life and then lived it to the full, you are free to choose.

There are three discs of the boxed set to go and another five series if the BBC do them on disc. Bliss.

Be a rebel, try peace and love, a happy new year to all.

Max Crean (c) 2010

All Rights Reserved

###

[Official Alf Wight/James Herriot Website](#)

[Books by James Herriot and short biography](#)