

## Excerpt from "Saddam: The Face of Evil"

### CHAPTER ONE

#### METHODS OF MADNESS

The two terrified men are dragged into the schoolyard, kicking and screaming. As 200 invited observers look on, the men are shoved onto the muddy ground and their heads forced onto a low brick wall. As the two struggle against their captors, members of Saddam Hussein's Fedayeen Saddam, a ruthless paramilitary gang led by his son, step forward. They force the men's mouths open and tear out their tongues with pliers, then step back as an executioner delivers merciful death, beheading them with the blade of a scimitar. To one side, a cameraman records the grisly scene for Saddam's later enjoyment.

Until recently, these were the facts of life – and death – in Saddam's world, where dissension was forbidden, punishable by torture and worse. Mere suspicion was enough to spell doom for the bloody tyrant's own people; in this case, the victims were suspected of aiding opposition forces in the south of Iraq. In Saddamland, no one dared even whisper a hint of disagreement with government policy, for fear of finding themselves in one of the evil dictator's infamous torture chambers, knowing that both they and their families would inevitably face agonizing pain and certain death. In a country where Saddam's power was absolute, his relatives and favored henchmen were free to do as they pleased, whether it was murder, kidnaping, extortion or rape.

To suppress any kind of disloyalty, Saddam ruled Iraq with the politics of terror from the moment he took the throne in 1979. At that time Iraq was a flourishing nation, its coffers overflowing with a \$37 million surplus, but Saddam quickly ended the nation's economic prosperity. In less than a quarter-century he managed to drive the once-proud nation into grinding poverty, rendering most of his subjects completely dependent on his corrupt government for basic necessities like food and medicine. Although he often boasted of his subjects' loyalty, Saddam brought nothing to his country but misery and grief. Since his rise to power, Iraq has seen only a scant three years where it was not involved in a war or burdened by international economic sanctions.

Yet Saddam always had an easy explanation for Iraq's hardships: It's the fault of the West, particularly the United States, he claimed, even as he gilded his palaces with gold and enjoyed a privileged life of comfort while his subjects lived in filth. He was even known to possess a gold-plated carriage. In a desert country where water is a precious commodity, every one of his palaces featured a large pool, and many had fountains, indoor streams and even waterfalls. A true megalomaniac, Saddam wallpapered Iraq with huge posters and paintings of himself, always in some heroic pose. But there was nothing heroic about the wholesale slaughter of thousands of his subjects, a scenario that was carried out countless times during his brutal regime.

What is known about Saddam's private life might lead anyone to conclude that he was a madman. When ABC News interviewed the woman who had been Saddam's consort for more

then 30 years, she revealed that he actually boasted about his attempt to kill his son Uday, a bloodthirsty monster in his own right.

Those who requested a meeting with the dictator were usually kept waiting for weeks, with no guarantee of seeing Saddam. Foreign dignitaries were routinely dumped at guesthouses where they languished, wondering when – or if – they'd be granted an audience.

While most of his countrymen lived in abject poverty, Saddam enjoyed some of the finest cuisine in the world: Lobster, shrimp and fish, choice cuts of meat and plenty of fresh dairy products were flown in fresh twice a week. Before it came near him, however, the food was sent to his nuclear scientists, x-rayed and tested for poison or radioactive contamination.

Moreover, when it came to hygiene, Saddam seemed to subscribe to the Howard Hughes/Michael Jackson school: He insisted that visitors' hands be washed in as many as three different disinfectants before they were allowed into the same room with him, and that their clothing be washed, sterilized and x-rayed as well. When the dictator did allow visitors, he demanded they greet him with a ceremonial armpit kiss.

Ironically, he regularly advised his subjects on matters of personal hygiene. In the film "Uncle Saddam," a documentary lensed by French film maker Joel Soler, the dictator is shown behind a desk wearing a Western-style suit and a hat with a wide brim, holding forth on body odor: "It's not appropriate for someone to attend a gathering or to be with his children with his body odor trailing behind emitting a sweet or stinky smell mixed with perspiration. It's preferable to bathe twice a day, but at least once a day. And when the male bathes once a day, the female should bathe twice a day, (the) female is more delicate, and the smell of a woman is more noticeable than the male." The film also notes that Saddam retained a team of doctors to adjust the temperature of his office just so, that he loved to fire rifles into the air at social occasions and that his idea of sport fishing was tossing hand grenades into a pond.

Demonstrating how far Saddam's reach truly extended, when Soler returned to the United States after filming the documentary he found his home splashed with red paint, and his garbage cans filled with gasoline and ignited. The perpetrator had left this note: "In the name of Allah, the merciful and compassionate, burn this satanic film or you will be dead."

With all his strange habits, it's tempting to dismiss Saddam as merely crazy. But most psychiatrists agree that the truth is much more complex than that -- there was usually some method to his madness. Experts say the careful attention to his visitors was designed to prevent someone from sneaking in a weapon or biological agent. Keeping visitors waiting was a power tactic to let prospective guests know from the outset exactly who was in control. Even Saddam's fascination with firearms might have been a warning to his rivals.

In an interview with ABC News' Nightline, Joe Wilson, former ambassador to Kuwait, recalled meeting Saddam four days after the Iraqi invasion of that country in 1991. He remembered that looking into Saddam's eyes was like staring into the gaze of a cobra. "Somebody once told me that the look he gave his visitors was reptilian, like a snake hypnotizing

its prey. And that's clearly what he was trying to do, ...create an atmosphere where he was in charge and where I was to be the intimidated one."

Wilson reported that one of Saddam's tactics of intimidation was to immediately invade a visitor's space, positioning himself a few inches away and then fixing the guest with his cold, unblinking stare. "When the time comes to shake hands, he puts his hand low," Wilson said. "And the minute you go for his hand, you're caught on camera bowing to the potentate."

But for a man possessing absolute power in his own country, Saddam often seemed fearful and paranoid. He created identical rooms in each of his more than 20 palaces where he conducted video appearances, making it impossible for potential assassins to pinpoint his location. He had a team of surgically enhanced look-alikes that could be called upon to perform his official duties, especially when those functions might have exposed him to danger. In 1990 Saddam even dispatched one of his look-alikes to meet Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak at the Baghdad airport.

Iraqi defectors have reported that Saddam slept only two or three hours a night and was always armed. He had meals prepared for himself at several locations around Iraq, so that no one would know exactly which meal he would actually consume. At all the other locations, his staff was required to complete an elaborate serving ritual as if he was actually there. He built extensive and ornate bunkers beneath his palaces, and decked them out with all the latest technological communications gear. And in most cases, Saddam reportedly didn't even consult with his closest aides when planning major moves.

Clearly, Saddam was a man on the run. Every night he moved under cover of darkness from one location to another, accompanied by a security team of around 3,600 armed guards, anti-aircraft and anti-tank battalions and even a field hospital. And, for an extra measure of mobility, he outfitted three large trucks with living quarters. All his precautions were for good reason - there had been four attempts on his life since 1990, some of them mounted by members of his own Republican Guard and Special Republican Guard, the very units said to be most loyal to him. And yet Saddam still claimed to be loved by the Iraqi people.

Rather than finding him insane, one psychiatrist diagnosed Saddam's mental state as "malignant narcissism," meaning an inability to relate to others' suffering mixed with paranoia and a drive to use whatever means necessary to achieve his goals. And many analysts feel those goals included not only ruling the Arab world but orchestrating the elimination of Western civilization.

Saddam's bigoted ravings made it abundantly clear that his racism was in the tradition of Hitler, who believed that the Germans were a master race and all others - especially the Jews - were inferior and deserved to perish. Saddam viewed the West in the same way, but more than simply considering us inferior, he was convinced that Western influences were polluting the Arab world and diluting its purity. That's why Saddam would have liked nothing more than to see each man, woman and child in the United States suffer the kind of torture and murder he dealt Iraqi dissidents. He lived by the credo set down by the founder of his own Baath Party, which began

its rise in the 1940s: "When we are cruel to others, we know that our cruelty is in order to bring them back to their true selves of which they are ignorant."

Despite these inhuman beliefs, Saddam painted himself as a religious man, building mosques and making sure that posters of him at prayer were scattered across Iraq. In a 2003 National Public Radio interview, professor Edmund Ghareeb, author of the book *War in the Gulf, 1990-'91*, described how Saddam became a wolf in sheep's clothing, wrapping himself in Islamic ideals while his murderous campaign continued unchecked: "Saddam Hussein... has been moving towards the Islamic side in the sense that he has... spent a lot of money trying to build the biggest mosque in the world. He's asked students and officers to memorize the Koran or parts of the Koran, and he has tried to improve his ties with the religious establishment, partly because he comes from this secular background, and there are questions about his background by the Islamists."

Even if Saddam wasn't particularly religious or insane, he was certainly capable of gross self-delusion. Where most of the world saw the end of the Gulf War as a major defeat for Iraq, the dictator continued to view it as one of his finest moments. One reason for that was that after the dust had settled, he was still in power. President George H.W. Bush had decided that pursuing the fleeing Iraqi army into Baghdad would make the United States seem cruel, and besides, the United Nations mandate for war had called for the liberation of Kuwait, not the ouster of Saddam. Still, a postwar Saddam saw the U.S. failure to press on as a great victory, claiming that American forces turned back because of the threat of his weapons of mass destruction.

In an interview with the *Melbourne Age*, psychiatrist Jerrold Post explained how Saddam could turn such a crushing defeat into victory: "The West saw this as a remarkable, decisive military defeat, (but) the Gulf crisis for him was the actualization of his dreams of glory. Shortly after the invasion of Kuwait, to his astonishment the Palestinians were shouting his praises in Jordan, Gaza and the occupied territories. He could give a guttural grunt and the price of oil per barrel would jump and the Dow Jones average would drop - he had the world by the throat, he was a major world leader, internationally recognized at last."

Dreams of such glory had filled Saddam's head since he was a child, but no public figure inspired him more or served as a greater role model than Joseph Stalin, the bloodthirsty Russian dictator. Saddam's devotion to his murderous idol was displayed in one of his palace libraries, where Stalin's writings filled the entire room. Like Stalin, Saddam was raised in poverty by a single parent, and both men used assassination, conspiracy and secret police to establish and retain power. To understand how Saddam came to be the embodiment of evil in the 21st century, it's helpful to look back at the cold-blooded killer he admired so much.

Like Saddam, Stalin grew up under the cruel hand of an alcoholic father who beat him, and in his rise to power murdered anyone who stood in his way. He took the name Stalin because it meant "man of steel." As a member of the Bolshevik Party Stalin was exiled – twice – from his country in the early 1900s; Saddam was banished from Iraq early in his career with the Baath Party.

With the Russian Revolution in 1917, Stalin was able to return from Siberia and begin his homicidal march to power. He was named General Secretary of Russia in 1922, and immediately set to work seizing as much power as he could in the Communist Party, which was then firmly in control of the country.

In 1924, Russia's leader Vladimir Lenin died, spurring Stalin, his archrival Leon Trotsky, and other Communist Party officials into an intense, cutthroat power struggle. When the dust finally cleared in 1927, Stalin had emerged the victor and Trotsky found himself in exile. Unable to tolerate the thought of his old nemesis running free, Stalin eventually sent his secret service to track Trotsky down and kill him, which they did in Mexico City in 1940.

When Stalin became the supreme Soviet leader in 1928, he inherited a diverse country composed of numerous tribes and ethnic groups just as Saddam would later. Stalin immediately set to work modernizing the country in order to spur economic prosperity, but his plan came at the expense of millions of lives.

This was especially true in the Ukraine, where most villages had collective farms. With the rise of Communism, they were ordered to turn over a large percentage of their crops to the government, and many resisted. Furious that mere peasants would dare defy him, Stalin raised the quota of grain that farmers were forced to turn over to the state, resulting in disastrous food shortages in the Ukraine. It's estimated that between six and seven million people starved to death between 1932 and 1933 as a direct result of Stalin's engineered famine. And that was only one of his atrocities. His so-called Five Year Plans to industrialize Russia employed male convicts forced into backbreaking labor, and millions died in Stalin's gulags, literally worked to death.

As with Saddam, Stalin's paranoia was an overwhelming factor in many of his crimes. He was obsessed with weeding out anyone who disagreed with him to even the slightest degree, and he consolidated his vast power using torture and murder, wiping out millions of party members and ordinary civilians suspected of disloyalty. Between purges and famine, it's estimated that nearly a third of Russia's young men eventually perished under Stalin's iron fist.

Stalin was especially distrustful of the country's wealthier peasants -- known as kulaks -- and targeted them in large numbers for death. In his book *Harvest of Sorrow*, Robert Conquest writes that "in Kiev jail they are reported at this time shooting 70-120 men a night," and tells of "the Ukrainian village of Velyki Solontsi where, after 52 men had been removed as kulaks, their women and children were taken, dumped on a sandy stretch along the Vorskla River and left there."

In 1934, Sergei Kirov, a prominent and popular Communist Party leader, was assassinated in Leningrad. Although the hit was reportedly engineered by Stalin himself, he quickly passed immediate "security" legislation which eliminated any kind of due process for suspects and allowed the dreaded NKVD, Stalin's secret police, to execute them without trial. Stalin further used Kirov's death to rain unprecedented horror on his rivals, torturing them and their families to extract "confessions" that spelled their instant doom. His agents swept through the Red Army,

massacring or imprisoning more than 35,000 officers suspected of treason. As terror spread through Russia, ordinary citizens – in an effort to avoid being arrested on bogus charges -- began to turn in their neighbors for suspected crimes against the government, leading to more mass arrests and more deaths. The wives of arrested men were also sent to prison, where they were raped by male inmates. Even members of Stalin's own Secret Service were not above suspicion. One NKVD officer who found himself under arrest observed that "blind chance rules a man's life in this country of ours."

By the end of the 1930s, one in twenty Russian citizens had been arrested; the jails and the graveyards were full. Conquest estimates that from 1937 to 1938 alone, more than seven million people were arrested by Stalin's regime, joining the millions already languishing in prison, and a million of those were executed. He calculates that by the end of 1938 more than 11 million had died in jails and prison camps. And it was Stalin's paranoid obsession, like Saddam's much later, that had reduced the country to a shambles. His lofty plans to industrialize Russia lay in ruins, and when he died in 1953, his successor Nikita Khrushchev was left the daunting task of reversing the damage Stalin had inflicted on the country.

In her book *Malevolent Nurture*, Deborah Willis notes that "during the 1930s and 1940s in Stalin's Soviet Union, leadership fractured at all levels, not only within Stalin's "inner circle" but also within local and regional party machines... As power oscillated between different factions, purges were carried out in the name of Stalin, 'Father of the Country, The Great and Wise Teacher, the Friend of Mankind,' against the antifathers and betraying sons who had perverted the Socialist program, the 'enemies with party cards.'"

If that sounds familiar, it may be because Saddam liked to be called "The Anointed One, Glorious Leader, Direct Descendant of the Prophet, President of Iraq, Chairman of its Revolutionary Command Council, Field Marshal of its Armies, Doctor of its Laws and Great Uncle to all its peoples." Like Stalin, Saddam painted himself as a benevolent ruler and hero to his people while engaging in unspeakably vile atrocities in secret. It is no wonder that the Butcher of Baghdad's favorite movie was *The Godfather*.

But as evil as Saddam was, other members of his family may have been even worse -- especially his two sons, Uday and Qusay. Newsweek reported that as infants the two boys were allegedly given disarmed hand grenades to play with, and that their father often brought them to the torture chamber with him to watch as prisoners were electrocuted, impaled on iron stakes, or had their fingers chopped off.

In his biography *Saddam Hussein – The Politics of Revenge*, Palestinian author Said Aburish describes how the mother of a classmate of the brothers recalled that "Uday was loud and vulgar while Qusay was quiet and calculating." The book goes on to say, "in reality the boys were no different from the relations of other Middle East dictators. Their lack of proper upbringing is another testimony that even in Baathist Iraq, ideology was only skin-deep and family connections have always taken precedence."

Uday, the oldest, developed a reputation as a playboy who alienated many in Saddam's inner

circle. He was also extraordinarily greedy for power and thought nothing of raping a woman if she resisted his advances. Newsweek reported an incident related by one Iraqi defector in which Uday accosted a newly-married couple in a park and had his guards drag the woman to a hotel room, where he raped her as the guards looked on from another room. Every bit as bloodthirsty as his father, Uday was a cold-blooded killer who took great delight in mutilating and murdering those he disfavored.

Uday Saddam Hussein al-Tikriti was born in 1964 to his mother Sajida, one of Saddam's wives who also happened to be his first cousin. In 1984 he was given the responsibility of overseeing the Iraqi National Olympic Committee, and ESPN reports that from then on he put his torturing talents to work on Iraqi athletes who did not measure up to his impossibly high standards.

Uday maintained his own prison at Iraq's Olympic complex, complete with guard towers and machine guns. The sports channel related many instances where Uday subjected losing athletes to beatings with iron bars, imprisoned them for months, chained them to walls in painful positions for days on end, dragged them across pavement until they were soaked in their own blood and then immersed them in raw sewage so that their wounds would become infected. According to ESPN, he was also known to urinate on them.

In May 2001, Saad Keis Naoman, an Iraqi soccer player who defected to Europe, recounted the horror of being second-best on Uday's team. He said that he and his roommates were beaten until their backs were raw and bloody, then made to sleep on their stomachs in a tiny jail cell at al-Radwaniya prison. Another Iraqi soccer player, Sharar Haydar Mohamad al-Hadithi, also reported being tortured when his team's Olympic efforts fell short of Uday's expectations. And members of the Iraqi national football team reported that in 1997 they were tortured and beaten on Uday's orders because he was displeased with their level of play.

Like his father, Uday would not tolerate any sort of contradiction or refusal to play by his rules. In one account, he had arranged a party for Suzanne Mubarak, the wife of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak. As the celebration went on in downtown Baghdad on the banks of the Tigris River, another party was underway on the nearby Island of Pigs. It was being held by Kamel Hanna Jajo, a member of Saddam's inner circle who often procured women for the dictator and acted as one of his official food tasters. When Jajo and his fellow revelers began firing AK-47 rounds into the air, Uday became annoyed and crossed the river to ask him to stop. When another round was fired later, Uday crossed the river once again and bludgeoned Jajo to death.

When he realized he would face Saddam's wrath, Uday tried to commit suicide by taking an overdose of sleeping pills, but succeeded only in sickening himself. In their book "Out of the Ashes," Andrew and Patrick Cockburn write, "As his stomach was being pumped, Saddam arrived in the emergency room, pushed the doctors aside and hit Uday in the face, shouting 'Your blood will flow like my friend's' Saddam later softened his stance, but in a vivid instance of the pot calling the kettle black, he chastised his son: "Your behavior, Uday, is bad, and there can be no worse than yours... We want to know what kind of person you are. Are you a politician, a

trader, a people's leader or a playboy? You must know that you have done nothing for this homeland or this people. The opposite is true." Uday was punished by being banished to Switzerland for a year, but the Swiss expelled him from the country after only six months when he became involved in fraud and money laundering.

Fully aware of the power of the press, Saddam's evil son weaseled his way into many of Iraq's major communication channels over the years – he even established his own newspaper, radio station and TV station. In 2000 he was elected to the Iraqi National Assembly, although in typical fashion he didn't show up to claim his seat until eight months later. By most accounts a raving drunk, Uday had a penchant for designing his own bizarre clothing, including at least one suit which he created to match one of his luxury cars, which was bright red with white stripes.

At one stage, Uday had become impressed with Ismail Hussain, an Iraqi singer who had lost a leg in the Gulf War, and he regularly invited him to sing at his palace. "At the parties," reported Hussain, who now lives in Toronto, "I would be performing, and Uday would climb on the stage with a gun and start shooting at the ceiling. Everyone would drop down, terrified. I was used to being around bigger weapons than Uday's Kalashnikov, so I would just keep on singing. Sometimes at these parties there would be dozens of women and only five or six men. Uday insists that everyone get drunk with him. He would interrupt my performance, get on stage with a big glass of cognac for himself and one for me. He would insist that I drink all of it with him. When he gets really drunk, out come the guns. His friends are all terrified of him, because he can have them imprisoned or killed. I saw him once get angry with one of his friends. He kicked the man in the ass so hard that his boot flew off. The man ran over and retrieved the boot and then tried to put it back on Uday's foot, with Uday cursing him all the while."

Understandably, Uday's lavish lifestyle and despicable tactics earned him plenty of enemies within Iraq. So it came as no surprise to many when he was ambushed and shot by two gunmen in 1996, just a block away from his brother Qusay's secret police enclave. In what could have been a scene from a mob movie, Uday was hit several times, sustaining bullet wounds in his leg, arm and stomach, before the would-be assassins made off into the night. Although he was lucky enough to survive the attack, his injuries resulted in constant pain as well as a permanent and pronounced limp.

That may be one reason why most Mideast experts considered Qusay the sociopath to watch. Saddam's younger son, though quieter and more calculating, was by most accounts even more dangerous than Uday, whom experts pointed out had become an embarrassment to Saddam. Qusay was in charge of Iraq's security and intelligence agencies, and the head of both the Republican Guard and the elite Special Republican Guard. As Saddam's right-hand man and executioner, Qusay made sure anyone who showed signs of disloyalty to his father was dealt with swiftly and brutally.

Qusay Saddam Hussein al-Tikriti was born in 1966. Unlike Uday, he always made it a point to keep an extremely low profile, no doubt in order to mask his malicious activities. Though much less is known about him than his flamboyant brother as a result, the human rights organization Indict unearthed enough wrongdoings to brand him as a carbon copy of his vicious

father.

\* After an uprising against Saddam following the Gulf War of 1991, Qusay led his Republican Guard in the torture and mass execution of the rebels.

\* He initiated attacks on Shiite and Marsh Arab Iraqi civilians in the south.

\* He was instrumental in the continuing deportation, disappearance and murder of ethnic and religious minorities.

\* In the past few years he ordered periodic "prison cleansing," in which several thousand inmates of Iraqi jails were put to death.

\* He reportedly condoned the use of torture and rape as interrogation methods within his internal security agencies.

Indict reports these especially gruesome eyewitness accounts:

"On several occasions I saw Qusay Saddam Hussein walk along the row of cells, open the slot in the door and spray what I believe to be something like mustard gas into the cell... The bodies of the dead were bloated by the gas. They foamed at the mouth and were bleeding from the eyes... The prisoners were screaming. I remember one of them was only about 12 years old. I remember Qusay shouting something like 'Put this bastard in – he's a member of the [X] family.' The little boy was screaming. He was already bleeding from previous beatings. Qusay killed him along with all the others... The little boy screamed out "I am sorry, I don't want to die, I want my father.' Qusay said 'Your father is in the cell next door,' which was true. Qusay then proceeded to spray him with gas and he died after about ten minutes of agony. We could hear them screaming... I estimate that Qusay Saddam Hussein personally murdered between 1,200-1,300 people during this period."

"Qusay Saddam Hussein went into the torture room...screaming... 'I'll put an end to you with my own hands.' [The prisoner] was brought back into the cell with his right foot covered in filthy bandages. It had been cut off during his torture...the amputation had been carried out with a power saw during his torture under the direct supervision of Qusay Saddam Hussein...it had not been done cleanly and it had taken some time to cut the foot off."

"There was a machine designed for shredding plastic. Men were dropped into it and we were again made to watch. Sometimes they went in head first and died quickly. Sometimes they were put in feet first and died screaming. It was horrible. I saw 30 people die like this. Their remains would be placed in plastic bags and we were told they would be used as fish food... On one occasion, I saw Qusay Saddam Hussein personally supervising these murders."

To show how proud he was of the monster he brought into the world, Saddam recently directed Iraq's National Security Council to appoint Qusay as his successor. The Kuwaiti daily newspaper al-Watan published the Council's contingency plan:

"Considering the present situation in Iraq, and the serious threats from the U.S., Britain and other parties in particular, which want to eliminate the Iraqi leadership represented in the person of President Saddam Hussein, the Baath Party and its leaders, and [considering] the emergence of western covetous intentions towards Iraq and its resources; Iraq – leadership and people – must defend itself by taking measures to undermine this possible aggression by cooperating with the honorable and goodhearted sons of the Arab nation and friends around the world.

"Therefore, the 'National Security Council' decided to implement a plan called 'Decisive Reaction' based on the principles of the glorious July Revolution and the spirit of the Arab Socialist Baath Party, to fight back globalization and to confront the danger looming over our people from the West, the plan calls for:

"In case of any harm or ill-fate befall President Saddam Hussein personally, the leadership will revert automatically to comrade Qusay Saddam Hussein, who is in charge of the Republican Guard and the Republican Guard/Special Units. He will be vested with the same absolute authorities that President Saddam Hussein has in leading the country, the cabinet, and the army. Comrade Izzat Ibrahiim al-Dori will assume the responsibility for the party apparatus, while comrade Taha Yassin Ramadhani and comrade Tariq Aziz will be responsible for assisting Qusay Saddam Hussein in governing the country. This arrangement will continue until the situation stabilizes. An [official] State Decree will follow."

Qusay's position as Saddam's successor was apparently a sore point with Uday, who'd had to watch his brother become the second most powerful man in Iraq while he hobbled around on crutches for three years following his assassination attempt. Despite Qusay's growing power, however, he was also targeted for assassination in 2002, when a Shiite opposition group known as The Supreme Revolutionary Council attacked him in Baghdad. Qusay had just left the presidential palace and was about to get into a car bound for Iraqi General Intelligence headquarters when his handlers suddenly directed him to a different vehicle. Moments later the other car exploded, killing Qusay's driver and three of his bodyguards. His would-be assassins were never captured, but unlike Uday, Qusay escaped unharmed.

Saddam's sons were by no means the only rats in the Iraqi government cellar. After Uday and Qusay, the most notorious Iraqi official was Ali Hasan al-Majid, also known as "Chemical Ali" and "The Butcher of Kurdistan" for his role in gassing Iraq's Kurdish population in 1988. As a member of the Revolutionary Command Council and a trusted presidential adviser, al-Majid was largely responsible for many of the war crimes that Saddam's corrupt regime committed during its hellish rule.

An army motorcycle messenger until the Baath revolution in 1968, al-Majid quickly rose through the ranks primarily because he was Saddam's first cousin. In 1988 Saddam put him in charge of the armed forces for the al-Anfal Campaign in which Kurdish Rebels were slaughtered by the thousands. When he met with Kurdish leaders who accused him of murdering 182,000 civilians, Al-Majid hotly denied the charge, protesting that "it couldn't have been more than 100,000." He was also caught on audio tape weighing in on the value of Kurdish lives, saying "Am I supposed to keep them in good shape? No, I shall bury them with bulldozers."

When Saddam invaded Kuwait in 1991, he made al-Majid governor of the occupied country, a position he held for five months. But in that short time he wrought untold destruction and bloodshed on Kuwait, torturing and murdering thousands, many of whom are still unaccounted for.

Kenneth Roth, head of the New York-based Human Rights Watch organization, spoke of al-Majid on the group's Web site, stating that "he has been involved in some of Iraq's worst war crimes," and in what might be the understatement of the year, added that "bringing him to justice is an essential priority."

Saddam employed many others who deserve a military tribunal, including Muhammad Hamza al-Zubaydi, former Iraqi Prime Minister and current Deputy Prime Minister. Dubbed the "Shia Thug" for aiding al-Majid in violently putting down the Shiite uprising after the first Gulf War, al-Zubaydi was caught on video kicking and beating Shiite prisoners of war. Other Iraqi officers long overdue for justice included Watban Ibrahim al-Hasan al-Tikriti, Saddam's half-brother and advisor, who was accused of mass executions and torture during the Kurdish uprising, and Sab'awi Ibrahim al-Hasan al-Tikriti, another half-brother and former director of intelligence responsible for multiple human-rights violations including murder, torture, rape and deportation.

One of the most bizarre incidents involving Saddam's inner circle took place in 1995 after two of his sons-in-law became turncoats. Lieutenant General Hussein Kamel al-Majid was not only married to one of Saddam's daughters but was also the Minister of Military Industries, which meant he was responsible for all of Iraq's extensive chemical, biological and nuclear programs. Hussein defected to Jordan with his brother, Lieutenant Colonel Saddam Kamel al-Majid, and exposed the Great Uncle's reign of terror to the world. Hussein had hoped that the West would use this intelligence to take Saddam down and intended to persuade them to install him as Saddam's successor. However, as Newsweek reported, the two sons-in-law were no angels themselves. Hussein had bragged of making one of his aides drink gasoline and then shooting him in the stomach, while his brother-in-law took great delight in recounting the time he literally beat a Republican Guard soldier's brains out. When Hussein realized that his succession was not an option and that the West was interested only in the intelligence he could provide, he became depressed and homesick. Baghdad soon contacted the traitors with offers of clemency, and the two returned to Iraq. What happened next was not surprising.

Upon their return Saddam summoned them to one of his palaces and demanded they sign divorce papers. According to Abbas al-Janabi, Uday's former personal secretary who was present at the time and later defected to Europe, the brothers refused to sign. Saddam gave them two days to reconsider, but that night Uday and other members of Saddam's family surrounded the house where the two were staying and began shooting.

"It was a massacre," al-Janabi reported. During a 13-hour gunfight, Hussein was wounded and staggered out of the house, where he was riddled with bullets by Uday's henchmen, who continued to fire even after Hussein had fallen dead on the ground.

To anyone with a shred of humanity, the appalling brutality of Saddam's regime is revolting.

Unfortunately, in the world of murderous despots his loathsome methods of maintaining power are not unusual. To understand how Saddam became a man without a conscience, unable to trust even those closest to him and more than willing to destroy his own countrymen, you have to start at the very beginning, in a small village in central Iraq.