

Look at how we kill you

By [David Williams](#)

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Sunday morning, as I was doing the final edit on my sermon, I flitted briefly to web-based news sources to check in on the world. It's always wise, before the community gathers, to be sure you're not blithely arriving, unaware of some momentous and terrible event.

There they were, a sequence of short videos. A montage, if you will, courtesy of both the armed forces of my nation and those of one of our allies. They were familiar images, in both content and format, ones we've seen from most of our recent wars.

The format was monochromatic, the images filtered through a FLIR or similar thermal imaging scope. There, a nondescript building in a compound, marked with a targeting computer's symbol. Three, two, and, at one, there's an explosion leaping from the roof, as the armor-piercing portion of the munition punches through.

Then, a millisecond later, a much larger explosion as the primary payload detonates, obliterating the building, casting a fiery cloud of debris and dust that consumes most of the compound.

The video stops, and loops. With it, there are others, which I watch. Here, an animated GIF length image of a tank, which explodes. There, a vehicle in motion—a truck, or a HUMVEE—and then it flares out as the explosion maxes out the thermal camera tracking it.

It is seven-thirty on a Sunday morning, and in preparation for worship I have just watched dozens of human beings killed.

What struck me, looking at the videos, was that they were a peculiar mirror to the net-circulated videos that I had only been able to watch in part, those from a few weeks ago. Those were personal, brutal, savage, and monstrous, of unarmed men butchered like pigs or cattle.

"Look at how we hate you. Look at the way that we kill you," those videos said, and they were horrors.

And yet, here we are, sharing our own images of killing. They are different, in the way that industrial killing is different.

"Now, look at how we kill you," our videos say. They are distant and dispassionate, precise, and clinical.

At the dawn of the Internet age, there was this great hope: now, human beings will finally be able to share information freely with one another. It will change who we are, the dreamers proclaimed. Through that sharing, an age of peace and mutual understanding will dawn.

It hasn't quite worked out that way.

*Originally posted at [Beloved Spear](#)*