

BREAKFAST WITH THE DIRT CULT

(SAMUEL FINLAY)

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In 1952, Ralph Ellison published, to great acclaim, his first and only novel, *Invisible Man*. The book narrated how Ellison's protagonist, a black man, suffered social oppression. But that was long ago, and one thing black people definitely don't suffer anymore is oppression. Rather, many dish it out, aided by their allies of other races, as seen most dramatically in the terroristic Floyd Riots, but it happens every day in every organization in America. The targets are, most of all, those at the bottom of today's social hierarchy—heterosexual (that is, normal) white men outside the professional-managerial elite. And Samuel Finlay's *Breakfast with the Dirt Cult* is, one might say, the new *Invisible Man*.

Think hard. Can you recall any book, movie, television show, or any other cultural product that celebrates, honors in any way, or even talks about in other than a contemptuous manner, normal, working- and middle-class, white men (whom we can name the backbone of America, or BOA)? No, you can't, because our ruling class despises the BOA and works hard to teach everyone, most of all our young, that the BOA are to be despised. Browse any bookstore, and you will quickly realize that none of the books are directed at boys or young men, except with the aim of feminizing them, grooming them, or otherwise corrupting them. There is plenty of young adult fiction—which, as it has for a long time now, all centers around wildly unbelievable kick-ass girlbosses (since the Floyd Riots depicted several shades darker). What is never shown is heroic men, or even non-heroic men who reflect any real-life men from the BOA. This is not because consumers demand such products; rather, it is a deliberate choice by publishers to use their power to indoctrinate the young (similar to the choices made by video game makers). Publishers choose indoctrination, even though they thereby harm their economic interests, because they hold their economic interests inferior to their ideological (and social) interests.

But Finlay, who unsurprisingly was forced to self-publish his book (in 2012), offers us a corrective, a book that puts the BOA, and the uphill struggles faced by the BOA, front and center. *Breakfast with the Dirt Cult* revolves around the American-Afghan war which started early in the

twenty-first century and ended last year with our total and ignominious defeat. It is a *roman à clef*, a tale about real people that purports to be a novel. The protagonist, Tom Walton, is a stand-in for Finlay himself, and it seems fairly clear that what he writes happened more or less as he writes it. His book offers the type of story that used to be taught to all young men, to aid them on their own journey as they came of age. It revolves around how a man finds himself, in the three matters that loom larger, by nature, in any normal young man's life than all others. How shall he conduct himself with women? How shall he earn the respect of, and measure himself against, his peers? And, related to the second, how will he respond when he is thrust into danger, most of all into violent confrontations with other men?

Walton is an infantryman in the United States Army, apparently with the 10th Mountain Division. He begins the book by falling in love with a Canadian woman while on leave, in 2002. The frame of the book is really this romance, more than the war—its beginning, its flickering flame throughout intermittent fighting in Afghanistan, its flare-up on Walton's return to the States, and its ultimate unsurprising end—unsurprising, at least, to a third-party observer who has left his youth behind. For Walton, it's a formative experience, because for a young man, establishing his connection with the fairer sex is a mysterious, but crucial, process. Walton, however, suffers because this process, like all relations between the sexes, has been corrupted beyond all recognition, and the BOA is the most affected by this, not having the buffers our society ladles out to the professional-managerial elite and non-whites (instead being force-fed killing drugs with the promise of escaping reality, temporarily or permanently).

Still, despite the romantic frame, most of the book's detail is military memoir, alternating with insights about history and the position in which America finds itself, a corrupt and clueless elite ruling over a dissatisfied yet demoralized mass. While he puts on no airs, Walton reads more than the average infantryman, and is reflective enough to cite Toynbee on the suicide of civilizations and Ibn Khaldun on *asabiyyah*, along with Juvenal on how wealth corrupts great societies. He sees that the Enlightenment was a fraud that has led society into a box canyon, and he can hear the water rushing up the canyon. These introspective

asides give the book a dimension lacking in other military memoirs (such as Clinton Romesha's slanted *Red Platoon*).

Walton is an enlisted man, although as a college graduate he starts above the very bottom, and eventually he becomes a minor NCO. He gives us a worm's-eye view of infantry training, as it was conducted in 2002. Many of his fellow soldiers are crisply drawn; others cycle into and out of the story (which, along with heavy use of military acronyms, to someone like me largely unfamiliar with military procedure, makes the story occasionally hard to follow). This is not basic training, the topic of innumerable films; it is ongoing training as part of base life, with deployments to Bosnia (before the action in the book takes place) and then to Afghanistan. As a result, the life of the soldiers is sketched in a more complex way than is usually found (and the language and some of the happenings are definitely not-safe-for-work).

The training process Walton shows is one of learning military technique while also figuring out where one fits within a group of men who depend very heavily on each other—not only in battle, but for camaraderie (with a great deal of drinking; I didn't know soldiers were allowed to drink so much on base, at least in non-Muslim countries). This training is of particular interest to me, because I think acquiring military skills on the fly is the coming thing among parts of the general American population. I have been gently criticized for recently saying, in a podcast appearance with Buck Johnson, that basic military training for former civilians could, in a fracture situation in the United States, be accomplished "in a couple of weekends." While it is true that basic training in armed defense could be completed relatively quickly, it is also true that I exaggerated. Nonetheless, I think that with decent trainers, adequate equipment, and sharp incentives, it would not take more than several weeks to weld an ad hoc militia into a quite capable defensive force, and somewhat more time to turn it into an adequate offensive force against other ad hoc militias and general bad actors, which are the likely initial opponents. (This assumes, however, that the men are in reasonable shape already, not fat and lacking all stamina, which is not a safe assumption. Finlay shows how the military requires, or required, constant exercise, and a great many men today are wildly out of shape, so perhaps that would make training take somewhat longer.)

The soldiers exhibit no apparent racial tension; twenty years ago was the apogee of American race relations. There's plenty of perfectly normal racial banter, such as eternal arguments between a Puerto Rican in the squad and a California migrant. "Sexy Ricans are head and shoulders above you peasant Spics!" Walton acknowledges that even then, much of the soldiers' banter would be deemed "hate speech" by the totalitarians back home; I shudder to think what the commissars in today's military do with such jokes. I assume that the repression of normal speech has reached to the very bottom ranks into the military, but I could be wrong in this. Loose talk among soldiers has been going on forever, and great commanders sometimes take advantage of this to humanize themselves. But I doubt if today's leaders, much less the diversity hatchet women, have the sense of humor that Julius Caesar did.

Racial interplay, however, is only a subset of an important larger question. How much has our core military, the quite-small actually fighting military, which is composed almost entirely of members of the BOA (along with some non-whites of mostly not-dissimilar views), changed since 2002? Not only in composition, but also in coherence? I would think quite a bit, as everything in our society has been politicized and ideologized by the Left. Now, for example, we have the insanity of women in combat units (though women anywhere near the military is insane), and all soldiers are required to celebrate the corrosive homosexuals and trannies who are aggressively recruited to join their ranks. I find it difficult to believe that what is shown by Finlay—the constant physical training demands, the completely-normal racial jokes, the casual contempt for homosexuals, and the even-more-normal sexual ferment of heterosexual men, aimed at any woman crossing their sight—is permitted in today's military. It is no surprise that today's military is having extreme trouble meeting its recruiting goals; this failure seems like obvious cause and effect. Other than benefits, it's hard to see why anyone from the BOA would want to join today's military, given the cost/benefit analysis.

Leaving these political questions aside, *Breakfast with the Dirt Cult* shows why men fight. They fight to earn respect from other men, to prove themselves, and to earn the attention, admiration, even love, of women. At the extreme, they fight for inward-focused personal glory, as did Achilles, but even that is done to demonstrate something

to others. All fighting by men is merely some form of the obsession that drove the son of Peleus. They may fight also, but secondarily, for practical reasons, to defend their own, narrowly defined as their family or broadly defined as their nation. Walton is eager to fight “the terrorists who attacked his country,” but that is not what keeps him going, most of the time; it is too abstract. And he recognizes that fighting for the nation isn’t permitted unless tightly circumscribed. He knows, he can viscerally feel, that something in this is very wrong with our elites and where they have led the country. “Pride in one’s country, pride in one’s people, history, ways and beliefs,” could be exploited whenever the American elite “needed the yokels and suckers to sign up, line up, and go fight wars.” But pride is not allowed if “those same yokels and suckers try to express those feelings in ways that didn’t involve killing strangers, but rather sought to preserve and cultivate the strength, identity, and spirit of their homes.” Then it is forbidden, and execrated as evil—what would today be characterized with the stupid boogeyman term “white supremacy.”

Whatever the reasons, it is in the nature of men, and a key driver of civilization, that men want to fight, a truth that is foolishly denied today, labeled “toxic masculinity.” (Sebastian Junger, in his books *Tribes* and *Freedom*, has interesting thoughts on this topic.) A man who refuses to fight is not a man, and fighting completes a man. As Walton says, “Being on the hunt with his tribe . . . there was a rightness to it all that appealed to some fundamental aspect of his masculinity in a way which he found both thrilling and liberating.” This centrality of fighting to masculinity is what makes war a coin with two sides. It has always been recognized, even if of late it has become fashionable to deny, that war has a heroic, even glorious, side. “War also offered a glimpse of something transcendent. . . . For all its ugliness . . . for a brief instant, [Walton] had seen men touch upon glory.” This can be seen in much great literature—Shakespeare’s *Henry V* comes to mind, and this glory that is possible in war (though certainly not war on behalf of or at the behest of our current globohomo rulers, which is a foolish waste, and perhaps only rarely in modern war in general) could be a key antidote to the wussification that has been forced upon American men. Yes, the other side of the coin is horror, and, it is strange to say, Americans have equally forgotten that side of the coin. Even for those few who have not

forgotten, they tend not to actually understand, because most modern Americans don't understand anything at all about war. Nearly the only ones who do are men like Walton, and their immediate families. But Americans will, I predict, learn all these lessons again.

All this said, fighting cannot be permitted to become an end in itself; that tears a society apart. The role of a civilization (and especially of the women in that civilization) is to channel this impulse to productive and useful ends. This brings up the question, debated not long ago in the comments section here, of whether any American soldier should have died in Afghanistan and Iraq. (Or Bosnia, for that matter, or any other place American soldiers have died in the past thirty years.) A mother Walton meets, when he is recuperating back in the States from extensive bullet damage to his hand and arm, says of her son, "He died protecting his country. I have to believe that."

But he didn't. And that his mother mourns for no good reason at all is one of the great tragedies of end-stage America. I have great respect for those, including friends of mine and readers of *The Worthy House*, who chose to serve in Afghanistan and Iraq. Yet their service was a pointless waste, beyond what the men themselves may have gained. Regardless of whether the people we killed were so-called bad people (and most were not, such as the ten children Finlay sees, chopped to bits by a female A-10 pilot, an incompetent like many or most female pilots), as a nation we accomplished far less than nothing. We made the countries in whose affairs we interfered worse for their surviving populations, while we did not make our own country one iota "safer" (already a dubious primary goal, smacking of feminization). Instead, we enormously enriched those who profit from the massive expansion of our odious national-security state, while we became accustomed to enthusiastically granting our rotten elites unparalleled powers to oppress Americans, which they have used with gusto, and are vigorously trying to expand yet further, with the specific current goal of oppressing the BOA. We, following George W. Bush (God rot him), in Walton's words spent trillions to "overthrow [Afghanistan and Iraq's] political, cultural, and economic structures," not to mention those of several other countries (notably Ukraine) using less violent means, all with the intention of turning them into "democracies," meaning not ruled by the people, but rather full participants in the noxious Left project of combined

emancipation and forced egalitarianism. The only silver lining is that all this stupidity has brought our regime closer to its inevitable end while accomplishing few of its goals, but it has been very costly for the BOA, and will be yet more costly before the end.

Anyway, back to the book. Walton spends quite a bit of time musing on the culture and habits of "Haji," both the enemy Taliban and the population in general. He admires their ability to maintain their identity over the centuries and millennia; they are not deracinated like the people of the West. Certainly, Walton can see that in many ways Haji culture is grossly inferior. "[Haji] was brutal, illiterate, broke as a joke, and smelled like five tons of petrified ass. Allah only knew what he did with those goats. However, he bowed to no one, and Walton grudgingly respected him for it." (A few years back, one of my eight-year-old boys got in trouble at his school for referring to generic enemies in schoolboy warplay as "Hajis." His teacher said that was "raaaaaaacist." We praised him, and removed him from that school.) But Walton can appreciate Haji for what they are, good and bad. What he, correctly, does not see them as is proto-Westerners, eager to adopt Western customs and beliefs. He sneers at the many stupidities American elites tried to impose on the Afghans. When some meddling staffers from a ridiculous NGO get shot in a village, Walton reflects "Going into a village in a foreign country, and teaching their children different ways and ideas, was asking for trouble. Using a classroom to separate children from the culture of their parents was a form of kidnapping." True enough, though such kidnapping is something our enemies have done for a long time in America as well, and have now ramped this program up to ludicrous speed, not receiving the same payback, not yet, at least.

All things military, even the stupidities that get men killed, Walton takes in stride. He reserves his bitterness most of all not for the brass, or the rotten elites of America, but for the many infelicities between men and women in the modern age. Feminism is a constant target of his, as it should be, for so-called feminism is an abomination that is largely responsible for the ruin of the West. Walton's fundamental complaint is that right order between the sexes has broken down, in a manner that benefits nobody, but harms men most of all. Feminists "had struggled for, and won, a world where men were seen as the problem and women as the solution." Men have become "the disposable sex." Men

are expected to bear all burdens but to make no claims. Men, most of all men in the BOA, are taught that to atone for being men, they must defer to everyone, especially any woman, but also any so-called elite. “If he gave, then he would receive. If he was ‘nice,’ then he would be loved and respected. This was a lie.”

Walton complains, with total accuracy, that the culture demands a man make his woman’s happiness his top priority, without any expectation, much less demand, for reciprocity of obligations. This is related to a phrase that I once found unobjectionable, but have come to realize is, shall we say, problematic—“happy wife, happy life.” Embodied within this phrase is the lie of which Walton complains, that reciprocity is not the goal, but rather servitude to the whims of the woman, whims often dictated by society and changeable as the wind. A man’s real duty is to do what is right with respect to his wife, not to strive endlessly to make her happy (a goal anyway impossible for anyone, for himself or others, if one aims directly at it, as my mother taught me from earliest youth). If she makes his life miserable by her fancies and demands for “happiness” when he does his duty, she needs correction, not more attempts to make her happy.

All this sounds negative with respect to rescuing sound relations between the sexes, and it is. The world of today as between men and women is far worse than it was twenty years ago, and it was plenty bad then. We now have the consequences of the insane degradation of Tinder, OnlyFans, and all the roaring flood of poison injected by the Left. But hidden beneath the surface of manifold tragedies, including those of Walton’s doomed romance, is actually a positive message—that there are many normal Americans left, seeking the answers to a better life, which answers can, we all know or should know, be found by examining the past and applying its lessons to the future. These normal Americans, not only in the BOA, are the wellspring of any future revival in the lands that were once America.

There’s a lot of distance between here and there, however, as this book shows. In much of America, the questions examined in this book, of relations between men and women and of how a man can and should act, aren’t even recognized as questions. That’ll end poorly, but when? This is the question of the age. *Breakfast with the Dirt Cult* doesn’t answer

that question, but it at least raises other important questions, which means it is worthwhile reading for anyone seeking the answers.