

Does Revenge Serve an Evolutionary Purpose?

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Scientific American:

Spontaneous patriotic chants and flag-waving crowds were sparked by word that Osama bin Laden had been killed earlier this week. Despite the man's loathed reputation as the mastermind of the September 11 terrorist attacks, the jubilation over bin Laden's death raises the question: Why the celebration? Was it relief, a sense of justice—or the simple pleasure of revenge?

As draconian as lethal retribution might seem, science has shown that the human brain can take pleasure in certain kinds of revenge. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans have revealed that thinking about revenge activates the reward center—where the feel-good neurotransmitter dopamine is lodged—in much the same way that sweet foods or even drugs can or even drugs can.

Read the whole story: [*Scientific American*](#)