

# “REAL MEN DON’T EAT QUICHE”

by Scott Redman

“Real men don’t eat quiche,” said Flex Crush, ordering a breakfast of steak, prime rib, six eggs, and a loaf of toast.

We were sitting in the professional drivers’ section of an all-night truckers’ pit stop somewhere west of Tulsa on I-44, discussing the plight of men in today’s society. Flex, a 225 pound nuclear-waste driver who claims to be one of the last Real Men in existence, was pensive.

“American men are all mixed up today,” he began, idly cleaning the 12-gauge shotgun that was sitting across his knees. Off in the distance, the sun was just beginning to rise over the tractor trailers in the parking lot.

“There was a time when this was a nation of Ernest Hemingways. REAL MEN. The kind of guys who could defoliate an entire forest to make a breakfast fire – and then go on to wipe out an endangered species hunting for lunch. But not anymore. We’ve become a nation of whimps. Pansies. Quiche eaters. Alan Alda types – who cook and clean and RELATE to their wives. Phil Donahue clones – who are WARM and SENSITIVE and VULNERABLE. It’s not enough anymore that we earn a living and protect women and children from plagues, famine, and encyclopedia salesmen. But now we’re also supposed to be SUPPORTIVE. And UNDERSTANDING. And SINCERE.

And where has it gotten us? I’ll tell you where. Just look around the world today. The Japanese make better cars. The Israelis better soldiers. The Irish better violence. And everybody else is using our embassies for target practice. All things considered, it’s no wonder the rest of the world thinks we can’t topple a simple banana republic without going to an encounter session about it first.

“I mean, if you really want to see how bad things have gotten, just look at the products America is building today. We used to create things like the Panama Canal. The Hoover Dam. The ‘fifty-seven Chevy. The interstate highway system. The front line of the Green Bay Packers. But now? We’re building hot-doggers. Electric hair-curlers. FryDaddy. FryBaby. SelectaVision. At least the pharaohs built the pyramids. It worries me to no end that ten million years from now we’ll be remembered as the civilization that created frozen yogurt, “Eight is Enough,” salad bars, cruise control, restaurants that spin, surf’n’turf, and the “Phil Donahue Show.”

The entire restaurant was mesmerized. It was so quiet you could hear the day's fresh-caught fish thawing in the freezer. Flex continued:

“Now, I ask you. Back when America was king – did John Wayne have “relationships”? Was Clark Gable ever worried about giving his women “enough space”? Was Bogart ever lonely because he couldn't have a “meaningful dialogue” with some dame? Do you seriously think we would have ever won World War Two if Ike thought Hitler was just going through a bad mid-life crisis – and should be allowed to “work it out”?

“Of course not.

“But that's the whole point. If you really want to see what's happening to us, look at today's movies. Instead of having John Wayne fight Nazis and commies for peace and democracy, we've got Dustin Hofman fighting Meryl Streep for a four-year-old in Kramer vs. Kramer. It's no wonder things are so mixed up. Thirty years ago, the Duke would have slapped the broad around and shipped the kid off to military school. But not anymore. I'm convinced things were better off in the past. Men were Men! Women were sex objects! The rest of the world understood: One false move and we'd nuke 'em.”

Flex excused himself from the table to dispense his own brand of justice to several loutish dress designers who were making a ruckus at the far end of the room, but while his desire to return to the “me Tarzan, you Jane” era of interpersonal relationships may be somewhat impractical, he does raise some important questions:

How – in a world where you're expected to be sympathetic, sensitive, and split half the household chores – how do you remain a “Real Man”?

Is it possible to have today's obligatory “relationships” and “shared experiences” and still bowl 300?

Are American men doomed to abandon the principles of Strength, Dignity, and Sylvester Stallone forever?