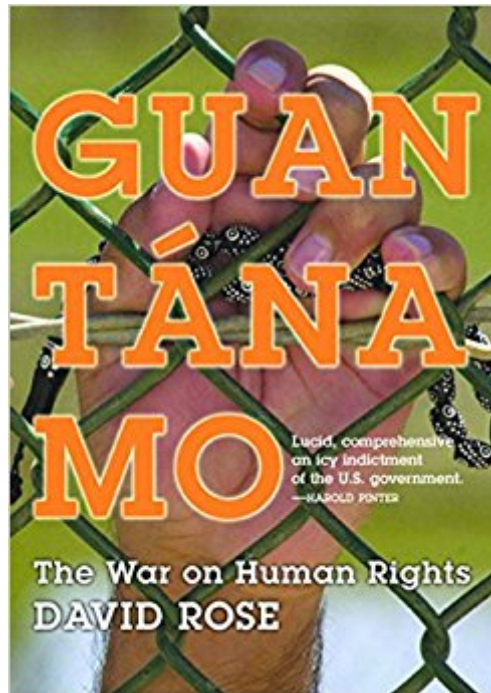




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Guantanamo: The War On Human Rights



Synopsis

Praised as a "tour-de-force deconstruction of Bush's supermax gulag" (San Diego Union Tribune) when first published in hardcover, *Guantánamo* makes shocking allegations about the infamous U.S. detention camp in Cuba. Award-winning journalist David Rose argues that the camp not only constitutes a grotesque abuse of human rights but is also ineffective as a tool for combating terrorism. Through firsthand research in Cuba, government documents, and dozens of interviews with guards, intelligence officials, military lawyers, and former detainees, Rose sheds light on Gitmo's ugly inner workings. He reveals that, contrary to the Bush administration's claims, the prisoners at Guantánamo are not "the hardest of the hard-core" Al Qaeda terrorists, ruthless men "involved in a plot to kill thousands of ordinary Americans." And he provides solid evidence that the brutal interrogations that supposedly justify the camp's existence have yielded very little useful intelligence.

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Customer Reviews

"Combines a harrowing account of physical and psychological abuse . . . with a finely honed analysis of the policies governing the lawless world of Gitmo." *The Nation* "Rose offers a substantial body of reporting in his concise book. . . . Guantánamo is most valuable for its eloquent dissection of the methods used by the United States to gather intelligence from detainees." *Legal Affairs*

David Rose is a contributing editor at Vanity Fair and has worked for The Guardian, The Observer, and the BBC. He is the author of numerous books, including *Guantánamo: The War on Human Rights* and *The Big Eddy Club: The Stocking Stranglings and Southern Justice*, both published by The New Press. He lives in Oxford, England.

The importance of this book is twofold: It describes how detainees were treated, and it places their treatment in historical context, showing by cogent analysis the legal vacuity of Bush administration policy. Many of those detainees were imprisoned for unjust reasons. But the Bush administration resisted any fair evaluation of their guilt, stubbornly insisting that all were "the worst of the worst." The author asks a cogent question: "How could an American administration have contemplated and executed such actions, and in so doing, as we have seen, turn its back on the very philosophies that informed the genesis of the nation? The answer has to be that Guantánamo reflects other battles being fought for the soul and direction of American society, deep conflicts that have been aptly described as a "culture war." On the one hand are the secular and constitutional principles of the American republic. On the other is the Christian authoritarianism of Boykin, Ashcroft, and Bush, an exceptionalism that for the rest of the world means only the justice of theocratic American might, in some senses a mirror image of the millenarian obscurantism espoused by Osama bin Laden in his mysterious Asian cave." Since we are still wrestling with the problem of terrorists, both at Guantánamo and elsewhere, that question remains pertinent. All the books I have read on the plight of the detainees have been excellent; but this one is shorter than most. If you can only read one book on the subject, this is the one you should choose.

The quality of the book was good. I ordered 2 copies and was only sent one. I e-mailed the sender and they quickly sent a second one however this should not have had to happen.

This book is based primarily on interviews with British detainees who were captured in Afghanistan and handed over to American soldiers by the Northern Alliance as well as interviews with United States government officials that carried out the treatment of the detainees and their ways of obtaining classified information from these so-called "terrorists". Throughout his book, Rose argues that the unclear detention of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay has harmed the United States so-called "war on terror" by abandoning the principles of human rights that the United States claims to honor. On February 7, 2002 President Bush declared that prisoners held at Camp X-Ray had no legal status under the Geneva Conventions and that they were not prisoners of war but were "enemy

combatants." Only a few of the detainees were involved with either al-Qaeda or the Taliban even though these detainees were rounded up in masses and those who were sold to the United States in exchange for \$5,000 bounties paid by the United States for "terrorists" in Afghanistan. Rose uncovers that the intelligence coming out of Guantanamo has been of little use to the United States government in its "war on terror." The United States has obtained this information through stepping up interrogations and conducting them using beatings, sleep deprivation, denial of food, and other harsh techniques in order to force detainees into confessing. Rose's interviews with detainees expose many abuses used during the interrogation process while interviews with US officials try to deny any of it even happened.

David Rose's book is an excellent overview of what is wrong with Bush's "War on Terror" and the methodology used to extract information from those being held at GitMo, Abu Ghraib, Bagram, and other prisons around the world. Through the tortured legal reasoning of the Bybee memo and subsequent twisting by John Yoo and Alberto Gonzales at the behest of Bush, we as a nation have come to the "legal black hole" of GitMo. Mr. Rose's book shows with painful clarity the results of that kind of reasoning which is illegal and immoral on both the strategic and tactical levels. On the international level the moral and legal high ground that the United States has claimed for the previous two centuries has been wiped away due to the non-legal abrogation of treaties, conventions, and accords that the United States has signed on to and ratified by the sole decisions by one man, Bush. On the national level the legal reasoning for torture is in contravention of U.S. statutory law and ratified treaties that have the force of U.S. law. This is one of the main reasons why Bush and his officials have been twisting the both the separation of powers doctrine in the Constitution and "war powers" acts by Congress to mean that the office of President has virtually "unlimited power" during war. The result of this decision to use torture in contravention of both national and international law is made abundantly clear by the horrific cases in Mr. Rose's book and by the experts cited to conclude that torture methodology leads to faulty intelligence, which was the *raison d'état* by Bush. The previous reviewer has obviously not even read Mr. Rose's book because Mr. Rose lives in Great Britain.

David Rose's depiction of what it was like as a prisoner at Guantanamo Bay is truly captivating. He precisely describes every detail of the harsh and brutal living conditions the prisoners (most of whom were not even involved with the 9/11 attacks) had to endure. It is remarkable that prisoners even made it out of Gitmo alive since these prisons were transformed more into concentration

camps reminiscent of the Nazis. After reading this book, it is hard to imagine that a country that stands for freedom and the American way could subject innocent people to cruel forms of torture simply because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time. It is disgusting how prisoners were treated and even more disgusting in the way our own president allowed it to happen. It makes one wonder at how truly fair and democratic this country is if places like the prisons at Guantanamo Bay exist.

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