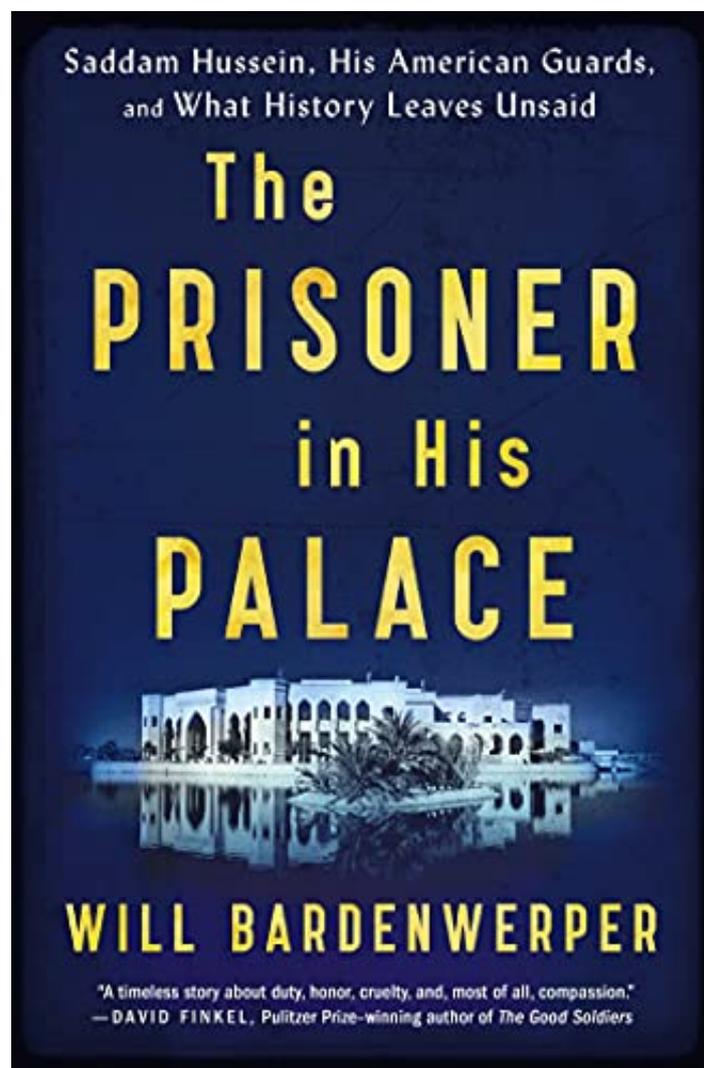


The Prisoner in His Palace: Saddam Hussein, His American Guards, and What History Leaves Unsaid

by

Will Bardenwerper



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Synopsis

In the tradition of *In Cold Blood* and *The Executioner's Song*, this haunting, insightful, and surprisingly intimate portrait of Saddam Hussein provides "a brief, but powerful, meditation on the meaning of evil and power" (USA TODAY). The "captivating" (Military Times) *The Prisoner in His Palace* invites us to take a journey with twelve young American soldiers in the summer of 2006. Shortly after being deployed to Iraq, they learn their assignment: guarding Saddam Hussein in the months before his execution. Living alongside, and caring for, their "high value detainee and regularly transporting him to his raucous trial, many of the men begin questioning some of their most basic assumptions—about the judicial process, Saddam's character, and the morality of modern war. Although the young soldiers' increasingly intimate conversations with the once-feared dictator never lead them to doubt his responsibility for unspeakable crimes, the men do discover surprising new layers to his psyche that run counter to the media's portrayal of him. Woven from firsthand accounts provided by many of the American guards, government officials, interrogators, scholars, spies, lawyers, family members, and victims, *The Prisoner in His Palace* shows two Saddams coexisting in one person: the defiant tyrant who uses torture and murder as tools, and a shrewd but contemplative prisoner who exhibits surprising affection, dignity, and courage in the face of looming death. In this thought-provoking narrative, Saddam, known as the "man without a conscience," gets many of those around him to examine theirs. "A singular study exhibiting both military duty and human compassion" (Kirkus Reviews), *The Prisoner in His Palace* grants us "a behind-the-scenes look at history that's nearly impossible to put down...a mesmerizing glimpse into the final moments of a brutal tyrant's life" (BookPage).

What people say about this book

Ninos Youkhana, "I Am Sorry Saddam. As an Iraqi American, I must say thank you very much for writing this book. Thank you for writing a historical account for the Iraqi people to know. I lived almost 20 years under his dictatorship. I never believed that one day Saddam would be dead in my lifetime and witness that day. I ate at the same dining facility that Super 12 took food to Saddam. I knew his linguist. I ran outside doing my cardio around the palace where Saddam was held as a prisoner. I use to always think about him inside his own palace now and I am free American. profound feeling, now body would understand. After seeing what happened to Iraq, I said, I'm Sorry Saddam. I wrote a post on my blog titled, "I Am Sorry Saddam". Google it...and read what I wrote."

Kenneth R. French, "A Masterpiece -- Mr. Bardenwerper lets you look the Devil in the eye. This is a truly great book. In 2006, 12 Soldiers deployed to Iraq and were tasked with guarding Saddam Hussein. Through a series of anecdotes – memories of the "super 12" – Bardenwerper brings to life the man many equate to pure evil in the final months of his life. However, as the Soldiers grow close to him, first as a part of their duty, later through genuine affection, I found myself as confused about this evil man as they did. Importantly, Bardenwerper never lets the reader forget the horrible atrocities and culture of fear that Saddam was responsible for during his reign, but the striking difference between that Saddam and the one the Soldiers grew to know (and maybe even love) is unsettling. Ultimately, the beauty of the book is in the story-telling. Having spent over 2 years of my life fighting in that country, I appreciate how Bardenwerper accurately portrays the various feelings of a deployment and accurately describes Army culture. He also captures the spirit of the American Soldier. Most importantly, by bringing to life the Dictator and his supporting cast, we are reminded that ordinary people, maybe even good people, are capable of doing horrific things. If I have one critique it's that the book is too short. I wanted more. I needed to better flush out these mixed emotions I have about that man that took me away from my family for years and is responsible for the death of hundreds of thousands. But sometimes closure is an illusion. I really enjoyed reading this book and I think a variety of people would enjoy it too. I hope this is just the first in a long line of books by this author – I am a fan. Highly recommend!"

Robert James Vandevort (Show Low, Arizona), "A Welcomed Work to the History of America in Iraq. From the date in December, 2003, when Saddam Hussein was captured by the 4th Infantry Division and SOF Task Force 20 in his Ad-Dawr spider hole, to his execution just over three years later, there has been little behind-the-scenes public knowledge about Saddam's detention and interrogation by the U.S. military and Intelligence services. That has now all changed with the recently published "The Prisoner in His Palace" by first time author Will Bardenwerper. This work is a welcomed addition to the history of both America's involvement in the Iraq wars, as well

as examining who exactly was Saddam Hussein. Author Bardenwerper focuses primarily on the twelve military policemen from Fort Campbell, who had the responsibility of guarding Saddam, during his final year of life. The chapters tend to be short and focused, versus many histories that seem to go on and on after the point was made. It is interesting for these soldiers to discover the acts of kindness exhibited by Saddam, who also on occasion refers to the twelve as his sons. The author brings balance into the "good" Saddam, by including chapters that go back to earlier events, that showed the "evil" Saddam, most certainly a cruel individual that had arranged for the deaths of hundreds of thousands. It seems unreal that there are still Saddam's on this earth, depots and tyrants, that Saddam would be proud to know that they are in his image. We all know how this story ends, and that was the third-world hanging, by Iraqi thugs or rather government thugs. This reader remembers well the disgust watching the execution. Yes, Saddam deserved to die, but there should have been some dignity in his execution. This thought was also expressed by some of those that had guarded him in those final months. This is a book worth reading. Well done Mr. Bardenwerper."

P. Connell, "Brilliantly researched and well written. A combat veteran with an Ivy League education, Bardenwerper is the perfect person to write this book. Saddam Hussein was a despicable tyrant; but he was treated with compassion by his American guards which brought out another side of his character. I learned a lot about Iraq, Hussein and the sacrifices made by our American soldiers. It was important to hear their stories, too. It made me feel proud and grateful to be an American where we treat a horrible person on death row with kindness and dignity rather than with brutality and torture as practiced by the Iraqis. Saddam must've been astonished by his treatment and ended up considering the American soldiers his friends, if not family. This book would be an excellent choice for book clubs with fertile ground for lots of discussion."

Kelly, "WELL RESEARCHED & ENJOYABLE READ. Well written. An enjoyable read, with quite a bit of insight into the "real" person, behind the media monster. Yes, he did absolutely horrible things, beyond anything that could ever be considered acceptable. But he was also a human being, which this book shows, as opposed to the cartoon caricature that we were provided by the media. Prior to his removal the Sunni and Shia lived side by side without outright warfare. They may have lived and gotten along out of fear of not doing so and experiencing the wrath of their dictator, but we now see how this monster was apparently necessary in order to keep a lid on the powder keg of Iraq. Once Saddam Hussein was removed it became apparent the purpose he served in keeping a lid on the hate and violence. This book showed that although Saddam Hussein did monstrous things, he was also a human being. A lonely, paranoid human being. Perhaps only a monster like Saddam Hussein could've kept a lid on the powder keg of Iraq. Unique insight into the human side of a monster by those assigned to guard him during the last days of his life. A front row seat to a remarkable part of history."

Rondiggie, "An Insightful and compelling read.. A brilliant read, I couldn't put it down. An incredible insight into a very, very complex man and the duplicity of foreign governments."

Mark.H, "Four Stars. Yep a book worth reading. Well researched."

Bruce McNeil, "Five Stars. This was a very interesting book."

Francis G., "Close review of President Sadam Hussain. Revolutionary President Sadam Hussain. Arab World lost a good leader and in last days no one supported him. Instead of death sentence He should haven given asylum in some gulf countries."

Edroy Pires, "Good read. As the title of the book suggests, this is a narration done well on the time time spent by the tyrant once captured and flash backs on what he did when in power, it doesn't include details of the crimes he committed, except for a few."

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