



Torture and Truth: America, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror

By Mark Danner

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Includes the torture photographs in color and the full texts of the secret administration memos on torture and the investigative reports on the abuses at Abu Ghraib.

In the spring of 2004, graphic photographs of Iraqi prisoners being tortured by American soldiers in Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison flashed around the world, provoking outraged debate. Did they depict the rogue behavior of "a few bad apples"? Or did they in fact reveal that the US government had decided to use brutal tactics in the "war on terror"?

The images are shocking, but they do not tell the whole story. The abuses at Abu Ghraib were not isolated incidents but the result of a chain of deliberate decisions and failures of command. To understand how "Hooded Man" and "Leashed Man" could have happened, Mark Danner turns to the documents that are collected for the first time in this book.

These documents include secret government memos, some never before published, that portray a fierce argument within the Bush administration over whether al-Qaeda and Taliban prisoners were protected by the Geneva Conventions and how far the US could go in interrogating them. There are also official reports on abuses at Abu Ghraib by the International Committee of the Red Cross, by US Army investigators, and by an independent panel chaired by former defense secretary James R. Schlesinger. In sifting this evidence, Danner traces the path by which harsh methods of interrogation approved for suspected terrorists in Afghanistan and Guantanamo "migrated" to Iraq as resistance to the US occupation grew and US casualties mounted.

Yet as Mark Danner writes, the real scandal here is political: it "is not about revelation or disclosure but about the failure, once wrongdoing is disclosed, of politicians, officials, the press, and, ultimately, citizens to act." For once we know the story the photos and documents tell, we are left with the questions they pose for our democratic society: Does fighting a "new kind of war" on terror justify torture? Who will we hold responsible for deciding to pursue such a

policy, and what will be the moral and political costs to the country?

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

When the Abu Ghraib torture scandal broke in April 2004, Americans and the rest of the world were stunned. President George W. Bush condemned the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. soldiers and blamed it on a few bad apples who, he said, had "dishonored our country and disregarded our values." Mark Danner, a journalist with *The New Yorker*, argues that a key fact was lost amid the media coverage: the torture was part of a deliberate policy of "enhanced interrogation" planned at the highest levels of the administration. But no punishment awaits the senior U.S. officials who orchestrated the abuses in Iraq and other U.S. detention facilities around the world, Danner writes. With the help of a Republican-controlled Congress, the White House and Defense Department have so far succeeded in limiting the fallout from the scandal and blaming it on a handful of overzealous, low-ranking soldiers.

Danner's 580-page book is divided into three parts. The first consists of three essays he wrote on the Abu Ghraib scandal in 2004. In them, he cites U.S. military personnel who estimate that 70 to 95 percent of the Iraqis they arrested were detained by mistake. Most were nabbed in night-time "cordon and capture" sweeps and had no intelligence value. Yet, military intelligence soldiers, under enormous pressure to combat a mounting Iraqi insurgency, worked with military police to squeeze "actionable intelligence" out of the detainees. The soldiers urinated on prisoners, threatened to rape them, sodomized them with sticks and chemical lights, deprived them of sleep, beat, kicked, and slapped them, and restricted their breathing with hoods. The rest of Danner's book consists of other essays he wrote about the war in Iraq, photos of the abuses and the texts of official reports and memos that, in grim detail, catalog both the torture and the U.S. policies that made it possible. Abu Ghraib, Danner writes, is just the tip of the iceberg. --*Alex Roslin*

From Publishers Weekly

This stout and valuable instant book presents a documentary history of the Abu Ghraib prisoner-torture scandal. The paper trail includes policy statements concerning prisoner treatment signed by Attorney General Ashcroft and President Bush, reports on prisoner mistreatment generated within the United States armed forces themselves and material (including photographs) from outside agencies. The sheer mass of data requires some background knowledge about the military and the situation, if only to free the reader from dependence on the author's commentary, although *New Yorker* staff writer Danner (*The Massacre at El Mozote*) was in Iraq during 2003, and his opinions, when they come to the fore, are backed up with observations. While the publisher admits to having rushed the book into print, it emerges as a book of permanent value for the study of the Iraq war and of how apparently reasonable policies can be swept away by intense pressure, political or military, to produce a particular result. Abu Ghraib raises issues that will form part of the debate on American military policy long after Iraq is out of the headlines; at the very least, this book provides the information necessary for the public's involvement in that discussion.

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Review

"Danner's engrossing analysis and painstaking scholarship may yet bring a measure of justice to the thousands of innocent Iraqis tortured in the cause of freedom and democracy."

— Bill McSweeney, *Irish Times*

"An invaluable resource...far more durable and available than any series of virtual documents on the web."

— David Simpson, *London Review of Books*

"...Despite the dereliction of network news and the subterfuge of the Bush administration, the information is all there in black and white, if not in video or color, for those who want to read it, whether in the daily press or in books like...Mark Danner's *Torture and Truth*."

— Frank Rich, *The New York Times*

"Danner's book does a fine job assembling [a collection of the relevant sources], from the Taguba report to the Justice Department's memoranda and opinions—one of which became so notorious for giving the president power to use coercive force that it is now often simply known as the 'Torture Memo'."

— *The Washington Post Book World*

"The documents, some of which are published for the first time in *Torture and Truth*, make for gripping, if disturbing, reading."

— *Mother Jones*

"...A reprint of some of the most important items in the historical record, an invitation to read the small print that prefigured and followed on the scenes now embedded in our memory and reproduced all over the world as icons of the Coalition's cruelty and hypocrisy...By offering themselves for slow reading and rereading, they also open up for discussion some of the deeper issues governing the way we perpetrate and respond to conduct that many of us consider inhuman and appalling. Among these issues is the language we use, and its consequences not just for others but for ourselves."

— *London Review of Books*

"Mr. Danner's book is valuable because to the 50 pages of articles he originally wrote for *The New York Review of Books*, the volume adds hundreds of pages of the relevant Justice and Defense Department memorandums, the photos, prisoners' depositions, Red Cross reports and the military's own major investigations of Abu Ghraib. Motivated readers can judge for themselves."

— Peter Steinfels, *The New York Times*

"Every bit as important as the 9/11 Commission's report."

— Sanford Levinson, *The Los Angeles Times*

"Danner has compiled excellent documents on the abuse of prisoners of Abu Ghraib...Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduates and above."

— *Choice*

"[Danner] begins with passionate essays that originally appeared in *The New York Review of Books*, but very soon [he] leaves the stage and lets the documents speak for themselves...If you read it in the order Danner provides, you can see exactly how this horror came about—and why it's still going on. As Danner observes, this is a scandal with almost everything in plain sight."

— Andrew Sullivan, *The New York Times Book Review*

"Danner's...essays...reveal a keen mind at work and warn us to expect little serious congressional investigation into one of the great foreign policy disasters in our lives."

— *The Washington Post Book World*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Alma Driver:

The book *Torture and Truth: America, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror* make one feel enjoy for your spare time. You may use to make your capable far more increase. Book can being your best friend when you getting strain or having big problem together with your subject. If you can make looking at a book *Torture and Truth: America, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror* to become your habit, you can get far more advantages, like add your personal capable, increase your knowledge about a few or all subjects. You could know everything if you like open up and read a e-book *Torture and Truth: America, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror*. Kinds of book are a lot of. It means that, science book or encyclopedia or other individuals. So , how do you think about this reserve?

Corinne Schlegel:

Reading can called imagination hangout, why? Because if you find yourself reading a book mainly book entitled *Torture and Truth: America, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror* your mind will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in each aspect that maybe unknown for but surely can become your mind friends. Imaging just about every word written in a book then become one contact form conclusion and explanation that maybe you never get ahead of. The *Torture and Truth: America, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror* giving you yet another experience more than blown away your head but also giving you useful information for your better life on this era. So now let us teach you the relaxing pattern this is your body and mind will likely be pleased when you are finished studying it, like winning a game. Do you want to try this extraordinary investing spare time activity?

Kimberly Johnson:

The book untitled *Torture and Truth: America, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror* contain a lot of information on the item. The writer explains your girlfriend idea with easy approach. The language is very easy to understand all the people, so do certainly not worry, you can easy to read that. The book was compiled by famous author. The author provides you in the new period of literary works. You can read this book because you can please read on your smart phone, or model, so you can read the book throughout anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can open up their official web-site in addition to order it. Have a nice learn.

John Negron:

That guide can make you to feel relax. This specific book *Torture and Truth: America, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror* was vibrant and of course has pictures on there. As we know that book *Torture and Truth: America, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror* has many kinds or variety. Start from kids until young adults. For example *Naruto* or *Private eye Conan* you can read and think that you are the character on there. Therefore not at all of book are usually make you bored, any it offers you feel happy, fun and unwind. Try to choose the best book for you and try to like reading that.

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