



Collateral Damage: America's War Against Iraqi Civilians

Chris Hedges , Laila Al-Arian , Eugene Richards (Photographs)

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Collateral Damage: America's War Against Iraqi Civilians

Chris Hedges , Laila Al-Arian , Eugene Richards (Photographs)

Collateral Damage: America's War Against Iraqi Civilians Chris Hedges , Laila Al-Arian , Eugene Richards (Photographs)

Best-selling author and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Chris Hedges and journalist Laila Al-Arian spent the past year interviewing over fifty veterans to expose the patterns of the occupation in Iraq. The testimonies of these soldiers--many of who remain deeply traumatized by their experiences--uncover how the very conduct of the war and occupation have turned the American forces into agents of terror for most Iraqis. *Collateral Damage* is organized around key military operations--Convoys, Checkpoints, Detentions, Raids, Suppressive Fire, and "Hearts and Minds." Military convoys traveling at tremendous speeds through towns have become trains of death. Civilians are routinely run over or shot to death. Soldiers fire upon Iraqi vehicles with impunity at checkpoints. Late-night detentions based on shoddy intelligence terrify women, traumatize children, and radicalize the young men caught in their dragnet.

These soldiers have found the moral courage to speak out about the true nature of a war that has become one long, unchecked atrocity, and has given rise to the instability, sectarian violence and chaos that we witness today in Iraq.

Collateral Damage: America's War Against Iraqi Civilians Details

Date : Published June 1st 2008 by Nation Books (first published June 2nd 2007)

ISBN : 9781568583730

Author : Chris Hedges , Laila Al-Arian , Eugene Richards (Photographs)

Format : Hardcover 122 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Politics, History, War

 [Download Collateral Damage: America's War Against Iraqi Civ ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Collateral Damage: America's War Against Iraqi C ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Collateral Damage: America's War Against Iraqi Civilians Chris Hedges , Laila Al-Arian , Eugene Richards (Photographs)

From Reader Review Collateral Damage: America's War Against Iraqi Civilians for online ebook

Peter says

Confirms what is inferred from the news of the Iraq occupation.

Paul Rhodes says

Because this book dares to document all the evil things that we are doing to the Iraqi People, Jeri would classify it as a "hateful book". Calling other countries evil is merely being truthful, but daring to say that the United States of America is the cause of evil is obviously hateful.

Petter Nordal says

It's easy to forget the wars going on. This book is collected from interview with american soldiers about their experiences in Iraq. It's not glamorous or pretty. It's bad. I recommend it highly.

Easter says

As though the atrocities at Abu Ghraib weren't bad enough, this book lists more of the atrocities US soldiers have committed during the illegal Iraqi occupation.

Whether it's shooting innocent civilians or killing them when we recklessly drive into their vehicles, this book scratches the surface of the continuous damage we cause.

If you need to understand why the Iraqi civilians are joining the other side, this is a must read.

Eduardo says

I had to put it down after the first page because I was getting a knot in my throat, watery eyes and a flushed face. Every responsible U.S. citizen needs to read this stuff.

El says

This book should be required high school reading. If you finish this book and believe we should be in these middle east and Asian wars - that we should have gone to war with a country that not only did not attack us in any way, but that would not have... I've got bridges for sale to discuss with you. Quite an achievement and a very emotional read.

Jonny-Loves-ta-Read says

A book exploring the situation of Iraqi natives through the perspectives of American veterans.

If you are curious about the progress in Iraq made between the initial American invasion of Iraq and when this book was published in 2008, read on. Chris Hedges highlights the cost of this American war on the people of Iraq through the eyes of American veterans.

The most accessible moments in this book are when you uncover the progressive disillusionment of American soldiers. Soldiers report feeling justified and hopeful when they first landed on Iraqi soil, but the feeling they were there to help the Iraqi people and fight terrorists in tangible ways dissipated rapidly. The American and coalition forces campaign of "liberation" has resulted with reduced standards of living and poorer economic conditions. Chris Hedges informs us Iraqi's were richer under the regime the American's liberated Iraq citizens from.

Grandiose arguments about the moral/political/economic/religious aspects of the war on terror, or even war in general are avoided. The suffering of innocent citizens is the focus of this book. The perspectives of the veterans adds legitimacy to the book and to the stories told within it. Blood and guts are a staple of the conversations with veterans you find yourself in the midst of. Hedges found his veterans through advocacy groups that actively protest the war in Iraq and through referrals from veterans who identify as conscientious objectors.

Some may cite Hedges sources as a reason the personal anecdotes are not objective, and therefore not accurate or trustworthy. Having said that, there is a problem with this view. The point of this book is not to provide an objective account of what is going on in Iraq, but rather to explore the dehumanization of the Iraqi people at the hands of the American military. Of course these accounts are not objective. Objectivity is not what we are supposed to be paying attention to. The power of stories is located precisely within their raw subjectivity. The emotional accounts of soldiers watching a mission going sour should grab your attention. Enough books have been written justifying or condemning the American government's missions in the middle east. These stories offer us portraits of dying children, grieving families and soldiers who are frustrated with themselves. These stories beg the question: What do you think about all of this?

Kevin says

2 types of war books impress me: 1) Reveal and deconstruct "war culture", that which facilitates society to commit the greatest evil, 2) Imprint the depravity of war onto your soul so it can never be forgotten. This book falls into the latter category, such vivid illustrations of how war wrenches the very worst out of everyone involved. There is no mythical heroism, no trace of decency, for every action is in the context of either annihilating another human being or surviving such evil like a tortured creature. Every participant has lost a piece of their autonomy to be a human being. This systemic theft is the greatest evil. I read this book several years ago, it deserves to be revisited, but I cannot say that I will.

Mehwish Mughal says

Iraq war was a failure. Most know that.

The narratives and testimonies of the combat veterans who served in Iraq, brings to light, the humiliation, loss and torture suffered by the Iraqi civilians on a daily basis. It invoked extremely strong emotions of disgust, sadness and rage.

I kept on thinking that if my house was raided and destroyed in the middle of the night, if my family was abused in front of me, if I had lost a family member in a car while just driving to get around, if I was detained for no good reason, if I was called a "fucking Haji", If the people who were there to fix my country destroyed it further, if I was dehumanised to a point where no one gave a fuck, it would only take me a second to be radicalised, to seek revenge, to kill.

"Collateral Damage" is a very sublime term used to unapologetically shift the burden of responsibility from one to no one. The authors did us a great service by spelling it out, giving it a face, making it human.

A must read for everyone.

Ulrich Krieghund says

A lean, no bullshit account told from the perspective of soldiers who were fed up and disgusted by the humiliation, degradation and uncounted carnage visited upon the Iraqi civilian populace.

Most of America's problems among the infantry and mechanized units evolved from a combination of a language barrier the size of The Wall in a Song of Ice and Fire and a eroding leveling of empathy and humanity on the part of the invading army.

Once again I must revisit the salient, sage advice of George Carlin:

Human beings will do anything, anything. I am convinced. That's why when all those beheadings started in Iraq, it didn't bother me. A lot of people here were horrified, "Whaaaa, beheadings! Beheadings!" What, are you fucking surprised? Just one more form of extreme human behavior. Besides, who cares about some mercenary civilian contractor from Oklahoma who gets his head cut off? Fuck 'em. Hey Jack, you don't want to get your head cut off? Stay the fuck in Oklahoma. They ain't cuttin' off heads in Oklahoma, far as I know. But I do know this: you strap on a gun and go struttin' around some other man's country, you'd better be ready for some action, Jack. People are touchy about that sort of thing. And let me ask you this... this is a moral question, not rhetorical, I'm looking for the answer: what is the moral difference between cuttin' off one guy's head, or two, or three, or five, or ten - and dropping a big bomb on a hospital and killing a whole bunch of sick kids?

Stark in its presentation of the sheer stupidity on the ground level of a war with no finish line and missions with no goals, *Collateral Damage* gives us death without glory tempered with a necessary measure of gallows humor.

What's missing in the book are the glory hounds who just loved lighting up "hajis" and returned to America to gloat about it as is the condemnation of the higher ups of the Bush administration for getting us into a pointless war in the first place: Cheney, Rumsfeld and of course George the Lesser himself.

However, perhaps the Congressional Medal of Honor and a giant Mission Accomplished banner should go to one SPC Phillip Chrystal, who managed to find what all of the American troops stationed in Iraq during Operation Fuck-em-They're-Brown-People were looking for in the first place:

"Specialist Chrystal said that he and his platoon leader shared a joke of their own! When he raided a house he would radio in and say, "This is, you know, Thirty-One Lima. Yeah, I found the weapons of mass destruction in here."

Jim says

This book is mercifully short. I don't say mercifully because it's not well written, but because it gives an unpleasant glimpse of the systemic atrocities that a so-called civilized nation is capable of in time of armed conflict. You can only absorb so much of that stuff before it becomes tiring.

Chris Hedges and Laila Al-Arian interviewed 50 men and women from the American armed services specifically regarding how the military operation in Iraq affected the citizens of that country. I wish I could say I was shocked at the result, but the world is well acquainted with the excesses suffered by the Iraqi people during the coalition occupation.

It has been observed by many soldiers that the "insurgency" in Iraq was largely of American making...that they were welcomed as liberators and builders in the beginning. (In fact, Iraq had electricity and water before the coalition troops arrived...many places had no electricity or potable water when the troops pulled out...Iraq was actually in worse circumstances after American "aid") It was only later when it was realized that no building was under way and that the great convoys making tracks across their country were mostly supplies to maintain the privileged lifestyle the military was accustomed to stateside that support for the armed opposition to coalition troops gained strength. People would be shot up cutting between vehicles in a convoy. Others would be massacred at a checkpoint because they approached too quickly; some were killed by negligent discharge of a service weapon. The "insurgency" grew with every death, every atrocity.

Some (probably all) of the military men and women interviewed for this book were deeply disturbed by incidents they witnessed or participated in. In many cases these troops tried to act in an honorable manner, tried to report atrocities and shortcomings to superiors, only to be silenced or even threatened. They found that no honor remains in the upper levels of the American profession of arms. In fact, in some cases they were actually ordered to prey on the Iraqi public: the case of one unit that stole a generator from Iraqi civilians when their own broke down comes immediately to mind. We have to face it: the only honor left in a profession that prides itself in honor is found only at the individual level...it is no longer practical policy.

I think that the writers could have delved deeper into the possibility of racism as a factor in the abuse of Iraqis. Can you imagine the howl of outrage the world would hear if captured American soldiers were forced into one of the obscene human piles of outraged flesh we saw at Abu Ghraib? I asked myself if the opponent were from a European country...say for example Russia or Ukraine...would we see the same atrocities inflicted on them by American captors? I seriously doubt it. So what is the reason? That Americans felt superior to the Iraqis? That the Iraqis were dirt poor and totally unable to retaliate? The answers are not in the book, and you will need to look elsewhere for them.

This book is dated, of course. We all know what is happening to the hapless citizens of Iraq now. More troops will have to be sent in to sort out this situation; I hope none of them are captured.

Robin says

The dispicable and inhumane treatment of Iraqi civilians is hauntingly recounted by U.S. military veterans of

the Iraqi conflict. I was not surprised but I still was horrified by the stories told. Quick read if you are interested in the topic

Yonis Gure says

“As I told the President on January 10th, I think [the troops] will be greeted with sweets and flowers”.

The infamous words uttered by Kanan Makiya - an exiled Iraqi Panjandrum - which should've, if it didn't elicit derision for its proven mendacity and callousness, made one eager to express their mirth, especially those who considered themselves friends of the Democratic Iraqi Kurds of the North. Unfortunately, as predicted by many, Iraqis resisted the occupation immediately, went to great lengths to prove they deplored it and Kanan Makiya was proven to be a useful idiot.

Chris Hedges and Laila Al-Arian have revealed, through hours of interviews with combat veterans, a side of war that largely wasn't shown to the public. Everything from; providing KBR and other contractors with higher levels of security than ordinary Iraqis, to making the scene of a shooting appear as if the civilian was armed, when soldiers or marines felt there was a possibility of an investigation, to torturing Iraqi detainees in ways that could make the average person vomit, and much more heinous and stomach churning acts are all documented in detail in this book.

My moderate rating of this book is by no means a reflection on the integrity, bravery and candor, exhibited and exuded by these veterans, as they document the inhumane, barbaric and despicable treatment of Iraqi civilians during the decade long occupation of Iraq by their fellow soldiers. However, the book doesn't exactly point the finger at a particular person, which can lead one to believe that no one is at fault. I can imagine the general reader picking this title up and completely absolving Tony Blair of any wrongdoing at all upon finishing this. Hedges and Al-Arian have done us a tremendous service by showing us what really happened during the occupation, but I'd've liked to see more blame gaming.

Jason King says

Very efficient. Says what it wants to say. A painful book, but one that says what needs to be said.

David says

This should be required reading in every junior year history class in the US. It should also be required reading for every US citizen. Maybe then we'd bring home our troops and stop killing around the world.

This book is composed of themed collections of interviews with US veterans of service in Iraq, this is simply crushing in how it depicts the cost to Iraqi dignity and lives. Additionally, it depicts the moral degradation to the Americans thrust into this foolish war without planning and without an executable mission.

George W Bush and especially Cheney should be in prison for war crimes.
