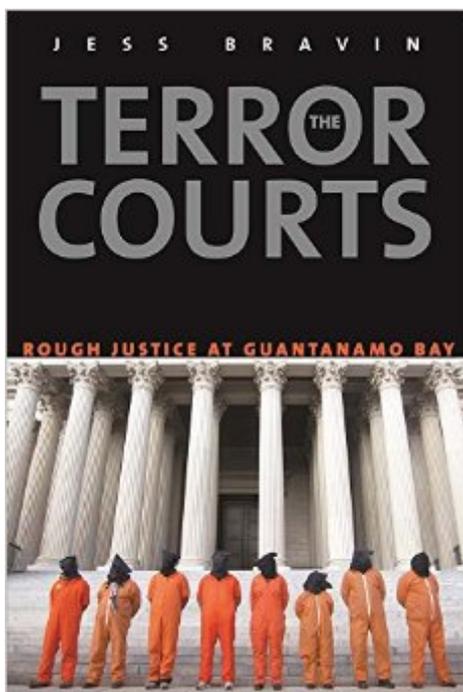


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The Terror Courts: Rough Justice At Guantanamo Bay



Synopsis

Soon after the September 11 attacks in 2001, the United States captured hundreds of suspected al-Qaeda terrorists in Afghanistan and around the world. By the following January the first of these prisoners arrived at the U.S. military's prison camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where they were subject to President George W. Bush's executive order authorizing their trial by military commissions. Jess Bravin, the Wall Street Journal's Supreme Court correspondent, was there within days of the prison's opening, and has continued ever since to cover the U.S. effort to create a parallel justice system for enemy aliens. A maze of legal, political, and moral issues has stood in the way of justice—issues often raised by military prosecutors who found themselves torn between duty to the chain of command and their commitment to fundamental American values. While much has been written about Guantanamo and brutal detention practices following 9/11, Bravin is the first to go inside the Pentagon's prosecution team to expose the real-world legal consequences of those policies. Bravin describes cases undermined by inadmissible evidence obtained through torture, clashes between military lawyers and administration appointees, and political interference in criminal prosecutions that would be shocking within the traditional civilian and military justice systems. With the Obama administration planning to try the alleged 9/11 conspirators at Guantanamo and vindicate the legal experiment the Bush administration could barely get off the ground—the Terror Courts could not be more timely.

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Customer Reviews

This book gives me huge appreciation for the people of integrity that are not letting the machine roll

over them, but standing up for the principles of fair play, taking personal risks by refusing to go along with the political machine. Fascinating looks at the tortured logic that tries to pass off torture as merely "enhanced interrogation." Appalling that the advocates of "rough justice" just wouldn't let themselves see the ultimately self-defeating consequences. Well worth the read if only for the thought it provokes...

Anyone who's caught up with current affairs since 9/11 has an opinion is used to the disturbing and frustrating stories that often come out of Guantanamo Bay: harsh interrogation tactics, inhumane prisoner abuse and the ineffectiveness of the actual trials. Even 9/11 mastermind, Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, has yet to pay for his heinous crimes. Newspapers have even just recently published the news of wide-spread hunger strikes by prisoners who are then often violently force fed. But reading about Guantanamo from it's very creation after the 9/11 terrorist attacks up to the present day, has a way of putting into perspective the enormous stain it is on the American justice system. This incredibly well-researched book explores the way the Bush administration essentially ignored all legality to hold their military commissions, the fighting within the Departments of Justice and Defense that delayed trials for years and the deplorable conditions prisoners were held just to gather information that couldn't even be used in court. This is absolutely a must-read for any law student, particularly those interested in civil rights or constitutional law.

Bravin in his book demonstrates what happens when a government administration tries to justify unlawful means with laws that cannot support unjust means. Bush and Company and the current Obama administration have failed to bring justice to the families of 9/11 and the United States. There is no substitute for the rule of law. Bravin through his wonderful research has shown that not getting the administration of justice correctly the first time that its is impossible to getting it right no

The Terror Courts is compelling, meticulously researched and well-written. It reads like a thriller but knowing that it is non-fiction makes it more powerful than any novel could be. Definitely worth reading.

This is an engrossing tale of the military commissions that have been functioning since the Bush administration through the present. It looks at politics, the law and the human stories of many of the people involved, including the detainees. I'd call it first rate journalism, although there are some threads that aren't tied up at the end, and the writing style is readable but not excellent. This is

something American citizens need to read and understand about their government. The degree to which this obviously unconstitutional system was colored by political concerns and by the fear the public would learn about Bush era torturing of prisoners is frankly completely horrifying. I recommend it highly.

The book is an eye-opening journalistic account of an episode of recent history that should be more controversial. It appears that the American people -- including myself -- just don't care enough about abuses of power, from the Bush White House down through the ranks to individual interrogators, guards and triers-of-fact. The president and his vice president and secretary of defense apparently didn't care a whit or give a damn about Anglo-American jurisprudence, precedence or the legal ethics that should have guided their every move in the legal aftermath of 9/11. Fortunately, others did. Many of the people in Bravin's book -- JAGs, terrorists and bureaucrats -- come alive, while others for unknown reasons remain relatively flat. But it is still a good book, a very good book, well worth reading and study. The writer deftly entwines biography with history, office politics with political egoism, personalities with physical descriptions to paint a picture of a legal mess created by haste, arrogance, anger and a quest for revenge, justice be damned. It should be read by all lawyers, judges, historians and anyone else with an interest in how fair play can unravel when heated political emotions get involved.

A must read for anyone interested in our legal system. This book should be put on the reading list of every law school student. Judges and practicing attorneys should read it as well. It is hard to put down once you start.

I recommend this book for anyone who wants to know more about what our country has done behind closed doors. The detail in this book is unlike any articles that I have seen on the topic. It is well-researched and is an important read for all US citizens in whose name these crimes are being committed.

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