



Guantánamo Diary

Mohamedou Ould Slahi , Larry Siems (Editor)

Download now

Read Online [➔](#)

Guantánamo Diary

Mohamedou Ould Slahi , Larry Siems (Editor)

Guantánamo Diary Mohamedou Ould Slahi , Larry Siems (Editor)

An unprecedented international publishing event: the first and only diary written by a still-imprisoned Guantánamo Bay detainee.

Since 2002, Mohamedou Slahi has been imprisoned at the detention camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. In all these years, the United States has never charged him with a crime. A federal judge ordered his release in March 2010, but the U.S. government fought that decision, and there is no sign that the United States plans to let him go.

Three years into his captivity Slahi began a diary, recounting his life before he disappeared into U.S. custody, "his endless world tour" of imprisonment and interrogation, and his daily life as a Guantanamo prisoner. His diary is not merely a vivid record of a miscarriage of justice, but a deeply personal memoir---terrifying, darkly humorous, and surprisingly gracious.

Published now for the first time, *Guantanamo Diary* is a document of immense historical importance and a riveting and profoundly revealing read.

Guantánamo Diary Details

Date : Published January 20th 2015 by Little, Brown and Company

ISBN : 9780316328685

Author : Mohamedou Ould Slahi , Larry Siems (Editor)

Format : Hardcover 379 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Autobiography, Memoir, Politics, Biography, History, War

 [Download Guantánamo Diary ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Guantánamo Diary ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Guantánamo Diary Mohamedou Ould Slahi , Larry Siems (Editor)

From Reader Review *Guantánamo Diary* for online ebook

Trish says

Mohamedou Ould Slahi wrote this diary in 2005 while in detention in Guantánamo. For years he was considered America's highest ranking terror suspect; I don't know when that designation changed, or if it ever did. In 2008 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Guantánamo detainees could challenge their detention through habeas corpus. In 2009 U.S. District Court Judge James Robertson heard Mohamedou's petition and in 2010 ordered his release. Within weeks, Obama's administration filed a notice of appeal, sending the judge's decision back for review. The case is still pending. Mohamedou remains in U.S. custody in Guantánamo.

An NYRB review by Steve Coll introduced me to this title. It is, as Coll maintains, a "remarkable" document. Mohamedou was targeted by U.S. intelligence after the Millennium Bombing Plot in 1999, when Ahmed Ressay attempted to drive explosives from Montreal to Los Angeles. Mohamedou claims not to have known Ressay, but he was living in Montreal at the time also. After talking with his parents in Mauritania, he decided to return home rather than be surveilled by American intelligence agents. As soon as he arrived in Senegal to be picked up by his family, he was detained for questioning by his own government and subsequently released. After 9/11, he was called in by Mauritanian intelligence to answer questions. He drove himself to the police station, beginning a long and harrowing tale of capture, rendition, torture, and imprisonment.

I have been unable to understand why the Obama administration challenged Judge Robertson's ruling on Mohamedou's habeas corpus, though the footnotes on Mohamedou's wiki might prove instructive if one is trained in legalese. Mohamedou's own personal diary of his time in detention from 2001-2005, from Mauritania, to Jordan, to Afghanistan, and finally to Guantánamo, though written in 2005, was not released for publication until 2013. Heavily redacted, it still allows a reader to get a sense of the man and his question directly to readers:

"So has American democracy passed the test it was subjected to with the 2001 terrorist attacks? I leave this judgment to the reader. As I am writing this, though, the United States and its people are still facing the dilemma of the Cuban detainees."

Taking into account all we know of the successes, failures, intents, bureaucratic execution and distortions that are a part of our "intelligence" history, I think we have to conclude that keeping Slahi in Guantánamo for some 15 years is far from our finest hour, if he forgives the understatement. Moreover, it has not made us safer, that oft-recycled excuse for exceeding the letter of the law.

Slahi's reminiscences are unexpectedly keen, propulsive, visceral, and colloquial, using American expressions to describe circumstances and characters we are sure to recognize. I say "unexpectedly" not because he is a Muslim, but because he is an engineer. It may be profiling to say that in my experience with engineers spoken or written language is not usually their forte. Mohamedou used English to write, though his stronger languages are Arabic, German, and French. He went to school in Germany, and understands western habits. He graduated from the University of Duisburg with a degree in engineering. When his visa was expiring in Germany, he travelled to Montreal to find work. Using English allows Mohamedou to address us, the American electorate, directly, and to gently remonstrate using our own language habits, and peculiar phraseology. We wish we knew this man, could send him books, could argue with him late into the night, only to realize with sadness, bitterness, and distaste after putting the book down that such things will never

happen. Too much water under the bridge, we can almost hear him say.

Absolutely Mohamedou Ould Slahi should be released immediately: one only hopes that he is able to reconstruct some kind of life for himself after his ordeals. As he so eloquently puts it, there are stages to a prisoner’s emotions while under incarceration:

I have been through several stages during my captivity. The first phase was the worst: I almost lost my mind fighting to get back to my family and the life I was used to...It was several weeks before I realized that I’m in jail and not going home anytime soon...

Phase two is when you realize that you’re in jail and you possess nothing in the world but all the time in the world to think about your life—although in GTMO detainees also have to worry about daily interrogations...you have control over nothing...you have no privacy...In the beginning it is a horrible thing to lose all those privileges in the blink of an eye, but believe me, people get used to it. I personally did.

Phase three is discovering your new home and family. Your family comprises the guards and your interrogators. True, you didn’t choose this family, nor did you grow up with it, but it’s a family all the same, whether you like it or not, with all the advantages and disadvantages...

[In a footnote the book’s editor, Larry Siems, adds: MOS adds a note here in the margins of the handwritten original: “Phase four: getting used to the prison, and being afraid of the outside world.”]

One has to conclude it may have been a crime to keep him locked up. Highly recommended.

Larry Siems is a human rights activist and directed the Freedom to Write program at PEN American Center. He worked with Slahi’s legal counsel to get this document released. It has been translated into 24 languages.

Sahbi says

This review is not about how the book is good or bad. This review is about how a man can have the energy and the patience to learn and write his diary using a language that he barely knew. This review is about how a man can have the courage to stand up and start writing, after all, the torture, humiliation and agony. This review is about how a man can write with so much love and fun about his torturers and guards. I had known some Mauritanian people and I discovered how they are generous and lovely but Mohamed is beyond that he is a Mauritanian Gandhi or Dalai Lama who is trying to face his enemy with love, understanding and empathy. I liked the MOHAMADOU OULD SLAHI BOOK, but I liked much more MOHAMADOU OULD SLAHI the person.

Mohamed Al says

???? ???? ? ? ???? ???? ???? ? ? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ?

Amir Safi - "Brown Boy. White House": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mr0IV...>

.....

"Whenever I realized that a guard was mean I pretended that I understood no English..... "We don't like you to speak English. We want you to die slowly," he said. "No English," I kept replying. I didn't want to give him the satisfaction that his message arrived. People with hatred always have something to get off their chests, but I wasn't ready to be that drain."

I was afraid of reading this book, as I am sure many Muslims are, not only because it is told from the perspective of someone that in some way aided al-Qaeda, but because with the current state of affairs it is not safe to claim Muslims have rights, it might be too dangerous, and my rights to exist and read can be controversial.

"President Bush described his holy war against the so-called terrorism as a war between the civilized and barbaric world. But his government committed more barbaric acts than the terrorists themselves. I can name tons of war crimes that Bush's government is involved in."

So can I.

This is not a very well written book, but due to the nature of it, I cannot truly blame it. I do however praise the political and social issues it brings forth. My favourite were certain statements about certain superpowers that when I make now, people either ignore me, or try to "correct" me because I cannot possibly have a mind of my own to come up with those conclusions.

"You know that I know that you know that I have done nothing," I said. "You're holding me because your country is strong enough to be unjust. And it's not the first time you have kidnapped Africans and enslaved them."

A thing that gave this book much more than it could have gotten from a simple retracted document, is the footnotes. We can learn much of what was "taken out" by simply giving those a read, or in case you wish not to feel uncomfortable over some of the horrors, ignore them.

I will end this small review with a fable told by the "main author":

"A Mauritanian folktale tells us about a rooster-phobe who would almost lose his mind whenever he encountered a rooster. "Why are you so afraid of the rooster?" the psychiatrist asks him. "The rooster thinks I'm corn." "You're not corn. You are a very big man. Nobody can mistake you for a tiny ear of corn," the psychiatrist said. "I know that, Doctor. But the rooster doesn't. Your job is to go to him and convince him that I am not corn." The man was never healed, since talking with a rooster is impossible. End of story. For years I've been trying to convince the U.S. government that I am not corn."

Dr Zorlak says

I'm sorry to have to tell you, but the terrorists won. And when I say "terrorists" I mean the Saudi team led by a Saudi millionaire. Yep. This book by Mohamedou Ould Slahi confirms it. The 9/11 attacks achieved what was intended, and what was intended was clearly not just to topple the WTC towers. What was intended was to spin the United States in a cycle of stupidity, violence, ignobility, and abuse; to trap it in a mire of hate; to force it to shed its ideals of justice and due process and adopt torture, unfairness, torment, blindness, corruption, kidnapping and irrationality as the guiding principles of its quest for "peace"; to turn it into a

terrorist state itself, pushing it to embrace terror as the best tool in its "war on terrorism." The terrorist attacks on 9/11 have turned the United States into an ideological oxymoron.

And Slahi is a great narrator. He shows us in great detail, not only the ramshackle state of intelligence gathering by government agencies; the incompetence of interrogators; the sadism of low ranking guards; the amateurish, superficial, sophomoric knowledge of the Guantánamo personnel about political, cultural, historical, geographical and even militaristic issues (not to mention their ridiculous, comic-book style moral-building strategies); and the involvement and engagement of professional psychologists in the torture of detainees... but also the degradation of American women, enlisted and not, deployed as sexual bait in the interrogation room and as key players in sexual humiliation techniques.

Slahi has been imprisoned for 13 years now. In all those years, the United States has not charged him with any crime, nor has any concrete evidence been brought against him. He has endured horrific torture, and still manages to be fair, graceful, witty and humane.

(As an interesting aside, Slahi's kafkaesque, orwellian living hell was only assuaged by the kind, humane, and friendly treatment he received for a while at the hands of an all-Puerto Rican platoon... who was quickly dismissed.)

After reading this book, and in the wake of the Ferguson, Garner, and other scandals, it becomes clear that the US finds itself in no capacity to bring freedom and democracy to the world and rescue nations from their own "evil ways", as it is wont to believe... but is itself in dire need of rescuing.

Stacia says

A stunning & shocking book that should be required reading for Americans. Quite a few of Slahi's accounts have since been corroborated by declassified reports & documents, as well as various legal actions to bring some of these activities to light (which lends weight to him being a fairly reliable narrator). Slahi's diary shines a bright & damning light on the fundamental shift in American thinking that took place after 9/11 when America walked away from many of its previously-held, basic principles including due process, humane treatment, and justice.

The account becomes more powerful when you realize that Slahi wrote this diary while living under torturous conditions in an isolated & very small bubble (no contact or knowledge of what was going on in the world outside of his cell). Picking up English as his fourth language while imprisoned & using it for his diary, he recounts his background, arrests, tortures, & 'world travels' (being taken to Jordan, Afghanistan, & then Guantanamo) with intelligent observations & an unerring faith in God, while maintaining his humanity in spite of decidedly inhumane treatment.

The diary mainly covers the years 2001-05. Ten years later, his diary has finally been published after years of legal wrangling. (It is almost certain that Slahi has no idea his diary has actually been published.) Although a federal judge ordered Slahi's release in 2010, the US government balked. Slahi remains in Guantanamo &, these many years later, still has not been charged with any crime.

We Americans, especially, need to read this & ask questions of ourselves, our government, our humanity, & our future.

Is this the America we once were? Is this the America we are now? Is this really the America we want to be?

Powerful & required reading.

Sally Green says

Essential reading.

Whilst it is upsetting, depressing and shocking, Mohamedou Ould Slahi is also inspirational and even funny in parts. There are many insights into Guantanamo prison life but huge amounts left unsaid or redacted.

'Arrest', rendition to, imprisonment and interrogation at GTMO can be summed up as lawless horror, brutality and torture. Ironically the descriptions reminded me of the interrogations in Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (which happened under Stalin).

Paquita Maria Sanchez says

It was quite a relief to run the last lap of this memoir today knowing that it is literally the same 24-hour period in which Mohamedou Ould Slahi has finally been cleared for release after fourteen years of torture and isolation in Guantanamo without charges. The perfect timing makes this true story far less grim than it would have been even just yesterday. It seems to me that the U.S. Government/the interrogators at Gitmo have known for about a decade that this guy didn't do anything but join the Mujahideen *while they were being funded, armed, and trained by the U.S.* in order to battle the Soviets. Didn't matter, being brown and Muslim after 9/11 was apparently reason enough to incarcerate, starve, freeze, punch, sexually assault, torture with a number of particularly devious methods adopted by the CIA during the Bush Years, and on top of it all, force Drowning Pool on Slahi for an approximate quarter of his life.

No, the Drowning Pool thing is no joke. He mentions it at least three times in the book: how he was made to listen to *Let the Bodies Hit the Floor* on repeat at full volume in a freezing room while chained into a stress position and sleep-deprived, how several of the guards said their favorite song was *Let the Bodies Hit the Floor*, how it was a reoccurring theme at the military base as far as philosophy toward Muslims was concerned, etc. Can you imagine even being made to listen to that song ever? It may sound strange, but this was one of the little details that confirmed Slahi's version of events in my mind, considering that when my poor brother was in bootcamp, he wrote to me about this horrifying incident where the recruits were made to watch footage of soldiers indiscriminately murdering Afghans and Iraqis as *Let the Bodies Hit the Floor* played over the video. He told me that he and one other person were the only people in the room who did not stand up and applaud at the end of that video. Naturally, he was disgusted, and that song will forever make him (and me) think of the "War on Terror" before choking back vomit. But yeah, many soldiers love Drowning Pool, apparently. I find it hard to believe that many Mauritanian Muslims feel the same.

Slahi is a smart, concise writer, and at least a *seemingly* kind and gentle soul (he is quite convincing). I would give this book three stars, though, due to the sheer amount of redacted material making it almost insufferable to get through. However, I acknowledge that was kind of the point, especially considering how willy-nilly the redactions were applied: something like, say, a gender pronoun would be blocked out only to

be revealed two sentences later. The gubberment's edits seemed to serve no other purpose than to make the thing unpublishable/unreadable. Fortunately, it was still published. I have bumped it up a star in order to rebel against this attempted censorship, and as a way to hold my lighter up for the nerve it took Slahi to release this indictment of a memoir while still incarcerated (presumably indefinitely at the point of composition), at great risk to his already abused and broken self - naming names and all (though they were, of course, redacted). Maybe after he gets back on his feet and spends a few solid years with his family, he can fill in the blanks for us. No pressure, though. The man has sure been through and given enough.

Alex says

In one of your better metafictional gambits, Mohamedou Ould Slahi has managed to get his memoir edited* by his actual torturers. Nabokov would have loved this.

** I guess we call it "redacted" when it's CIA, whatever*

It was edited again by actual literary people after a six-year legal battle to get it out of Gitmo, where Slahi has been held since 2002. This second editing process provides some of the most entertaining moments of the book: the latter's exasperated footnotes about the former. "It seems possible, if incredible," says literary editor Larry Siems, "that the U.S. government may have here redacted the word 'tears.'"

Siems had a lot of work to do, because - and here's the problem with this book - Slahi is a great cause but not a great writer. As a book, this is shapeless, episodic...amazingly, it's kinda boring. If you want great literature about how the end never justifies the means, read *Darkness at Noon*.

Slahi continues to rot in Gitmo as I write this in 2015, despite a judge ordering his release back in 2010 - there's never really been any evidence against him. His case, including his lengthy torture in Jordan and in Guantanamo Bay, is all a matter of public record. As documentation of the terrible lows the US have stooped to, his book is worthy; as literature it's not particularly.

He tells a Mauritian folktale at one point:

about a rooster-phobe who would almost lose his mind whenever he encountered a rooster.

'Why are you so afraid of the rooster?' the psychiatrist asks him.

'The rooster thinks I'm corn.'

'You're not corn. You are a very big man. Nobody can mistake you for a tiny ear of corn.'

'I know that, Doctor. But the rooster doesn't. Your job is to go to him and convince him that I am not corn.'

The man was never healed, since talking to a rooster is impossible.

Clever stuff there. We are the rooster, and Slahi is not corn. He's not a writer either, but that's a good story.

style. I basically knew nothing about Mauritania before reading the book. The little bit of research I did on the topic makes it sound like some amazing Backward Land where women try to make themselves as fat as possible to attract a husband and men ask the fiancée's mother for her hand in marriage...but I digress.

Now Slahi has been a prisoner of the US government since 2001 and is resident in Guantanamo since 2002. He has claimed to be innocent throughout this ordeal. He readily admits to being a member of Al Qaeda back in the day when it was an organization that was funded and backed by the USA. He claims to have split from the group when they started going goofy after the Russians were expelled from Afghanistan. Is he lying? Is he guilty? Does it matter? The basic principles on which American justice is based state that he should be tried if evidence substantiates a charge. Otherwise, he should be released. If found guilty of an offence, he should be humanely held in quarters that reflect well on the American public as befits a generous and just nation. And that's without even going into the constitutionality and legality of Slahi's arrest in his own homeland, an apprehension that amounts to kidnapping. But as Slahi tells one of his interrogators: "*You're holding me because your country is strong enough to be unjust.* (p.212)

So for over a decade Slahi has been beaten, insulted, humiliated, starved, hoodwinked, submitted to sensory deprivation and exposed to extremes of heat and cold. Guards worked in shifts in order to deprive him of sleep. Female interrogators were used to humiliate him sexually by fondling and rubbing up against him. I wonder if this is what these women had in mind when they joined up...being a sexual foil for military interrogators? You've come a long way, Baby!

On top of that, many of Slahi's interrogators were masked. Who the hell is masked nowadays? Looters - rioters - people in the witness protection program - interrogators! CRIMINALS! You only need a mask if you intend on doing something criminal.

Eventually, of course, Slahi broke down under torture and started to admit to almost everything they wanted him to admit to, in the same way that people admitted that they were witches who copulated with Satan back in the days of the Inquisition. torture anyone long enough and you will get the same result...give an interrogator a week in a cold dark room with Hillary Clinton and she will eventually admit to planning the attack on the WTC. Information obtained under torture is meaningless.

Slahi is still under wraps in Guantanamo, despite an order issued by an American judge in 2010 that dictated his immediate release. The American military no longer recognizes American law.

I was a little miffed that a couple of Canadian investigators also interrogated inmates in Guantanamo...horrified would be a better word, with the thought that anyone from my country would be even remotely associated with this Hell on earth. My faith in my country was restored when I read this excerpt of a Supreme Court decision regarding agents of CSIS and DFAIT interviewing Guantanamo inmates:

" The deprivation of [Khadr's] right to liberty and security of the person is not in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice. The interrogation of a youth detained without access to counsel, to elicit statements about serious criminal charges while knowing that the youth had been subjected to sleep deprivation and while knowing that the fruits of the interrogations would be shared with the prosecutors, offends the most basic Canadian standards about the treatment of detained youth suspects. " (P.208)

There are parts where Slahi lays it on a little too thick or gets a little whiny, but let's not forget that this is supposed to be a diary, and the writer will have his ups and downs. One day he complains that he has no blankets, and later he complains that he has blankets but has to make his bed in a military fashion. I would be

more concerned about the masked man who was going to run in and boot me in the soft parts. In spite of it all, his faith seems to keep him amazingly upbeat and, more amazingly, he still has a lot of good things to say about Americans.

I heartily recommend this book...it will make your blood boil. You may come to the same conclusion I did...that the only modern industrialized nations capable of this type of excess are Russia and, sad to say, United States of America.

Daniel Simmons says

So very, very, very, very upsetting. Five stars not for the quality of the writing, although that is often splendid, but because this prison memoir (of a man in the midst of his thirteenth year in a Guantanamo cell) is an eye-opening must-read for any American citizen.

Robin Kirk says

I'm recommending this to everyone -- Slahi is the first and so far only person to have been held in Guantánamo and tortured by the US to have written about and published a memoir. Mark Danner in the New York Times wrote that the diary "is the most profound account yet written of what it is like to be that collateral damage" mentioned by our torturer in chief Dick Cheney. This harrowing tale is but one of what will someday be many direct accounts by victims.

Originally from Mauritius, Slahi, 45, was detained on a journey home in January 2000 and questioned about the so-called Millennium plot to bomb the Los Angeles airport. Slahi admitted that he'd fought against Afghanistan's communist government with the mujahedin, at that time supported by the US. But he never opposed the United States. Authorities released him. A year later, the young engineer was again detained and again released. Months later, Slahi drove himself to a local police station to answer questions. This time, Americans forced him onto a CIA plane bound for Jordan, where he claims he was tortured. On August 5, 2002, Americans brought him to Guantánamo. Slahi is among the detainees whose horrific torture there is the centerpiece of the Senate report. None other than then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld signed the "special interrogation plan" authorizing his brutal ordeal. Slahi divides his imprisonment into pre-torture, when he truthfully denied any involvement in terrorism; and post-torture, "where my brake broke loose. I yessed every accusation my interrogators made. I even wrote the infamous confession about me planning to hit the CN tower in Toronto, based on SSG [redacted] advice. I just wanted to get the monkeys off my back." His captors beat and threatened him, subjected him to bitter cold and sleep deprivation, stress positions and repulsive sexual abuse by female interrogators. Yet with astonishing grace, Slahi seems more traumatized by the torture he witnessed. He saw teenagers who could barely lift their heads, confused old men and others like him who said anything to get the pain to stop. Slahi taught himself English so he could write his 466-page memoir, long kept secret. Once his lawyers got his manuscript released, authorities refused to let Slahi's editor, journalist Larry Siems, meet him. Siems calls the memoir "a journey through the darkest regions of the United States' post-9/11 detention and interrogation program."

Roberta Korus says

A must-read for every person of conscience, eloquently written in the author's fourth language, English. As I told my husband about Mohamedou Ould Slahi's continuing, more than 12 year, incarceration at Guantanamo, and particularly about the abuse and torture, both physical and psychological, he has received at the hands or behest of the U.S. government, he asked how I could stand to read about these things. The answer: To bear witness to Slahi's experience so that we can end, and in future prevent, such miscarriages of justice. In Mr. Slahi's own words (redaction is the US government's, not mine):

"Human beings naturally hate to torture other human beings, and Americans are no different. Many of the soldiers were doing the job reluctantly, and were very happy when they were ordered to stop. Of course there are sick people everywhere in the world who enjoy seeing other people suffering, but generally human beings make use of torture when they get chaotic and confused. And Americans certainly got chaotic, vengeful, and confused, after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

"At the direction of President Bush, the U.S. began a campaign against the Taliban government in Afghanistan. On September 18, 2001, a joint resolution of Congress authorized President Bush to use force against 'the nations, organizations, or persons' that 'planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons.' Then the U.S. government started a secret operation aimed at kidnapping, detaining, torturing, or killing terrorist suspects, an operation that has no legal basis.

"I was the victim of such an operation, though I had done no such thing and have never been a part of any such crimes. On September 29, 2001, I got a call on my cellphone [in Mauritania in West Africa, Slahi's homeland, where he lived and worked] and was asked to turn myself in, which I immediately did, sure I would be cleared. Instead, Americans interrogated me in my home country, and then the U.S. reached a joint agreement with the Mauritanian government to send me to Jordan to squeeze the last bits of information out of me. I was incarcerated and interrogated under horrible conditions in Jordan for eight months, and then the Americans flew me to Bagram Air Base [in Afghanistan] for two weeks of interrogation, and finally on to the Guantanamo Bay Base XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, where I still am today."

Throughout his captivity, Mr. Slahi has repeatedly asked his captors to tell him what the charges are against him, without success; in fact, in all this time, the U.S. government has never charged him with a crime. Nearly five years ago, a federal judge ordered Slahi's release, but the U.S. government fought that decision, and there is still no indication of when, if ever, the government plans to release him.

Please read and share this powerful book and insist that the U.S. government immediately charge or release Mohamedou Slahi.

Missy J says

Update: In October 2016, Mohamedou Ould Slahi was freed from Guantanamo Bay and returned back to Mauritania.

Mohamedou Ould Slahi.

Mohamedou Ould Slahi, the author of this book is still imprisoned in Guantanamo Bay as I type on my computer keyboard.

And after reading this book, it's still not clear why exactly the American government decided to detain him.

Slahi seemed to be set for a bright future. After finishing high school, he won a scholarship to study in Germany. For 12 years, he studied, worked and lived in Germany before trying to immigrate to Canada. In between in the early 90s, he traveled to Afghanistan twice and fought with Al Qaeda against the Communist regime. This and the prominent people of the Islamic world he met while living abroad in Germany and Canada would later spark suspicions among US officials when Slahi returned to Mauritania in 2000. He was handed over by local officials to the American government.

This diary follows the events of how Slahi was first interrogated upon returning to Mauritania, following his interrogation in Senegal, Mauritania, Jordan, Afghanistan until he was sent to Guantanamo Bay in August 2002. This book also covers horrifying torture scenes Slahi suffered at the hands of interrogators with authorization from the US government up until 2005 (when he handed over his diary). What has happened to him since that time is not included in the book. However the little details he does include about the torture are enough to make any reader realize that it's crazy that a so-called first world nation like the US commits such crimes in the 21st century.

Slahi's pro-bono lawyer fought hard to get these manuscripts from the US government and the diary they received was redacted. Therefore Larry Siems, the editor of this book, included a lot of footnotes in this book for clarification and what he believes was left out in the book. He did a good job and also pointed out at some of the absurd things that were censored.

Slahi has been imprisoned for over a decade already. Let's hope that he and the remaining detainees whose reasons for imprisonment are not clear, will live to see a day where they receive some sort of justice.

That said, Guantanamo Bay is truly a black chapter in today's America.

Tosh says

I didn't finish this book, because it's too horrifying. And yet, I give it five stars. Mohamedou Ould Slahi is a very good writer and diarist. What is terrible is the consistent torture he has to go through on a daily basis - and more likely is still treated in this manner. Brutality + brutality never equals peace. What's terrible about this specific story is that the U.S. is behind the brutality here. For whatever reasons it seems that it is perfectly OK to torture another human - for just the sake of being able to torture another. This is not a Republican or a Democrat problem, but one of the United States. Guantanamo should not exist on this planet, and surely not under the 'care' of the U.S. Not to sound cliché, but the author is truly in a Kafka like world, where there is very little hope of him getting out of the system. Also one wonders what kind of people actually like doing this type of work - where they torture another human - are they really concerned about getting information? I suspect not. I think what we have is a culture that accepts torture as a means to... well, it doesn't do anything except cause pain. There is no difference of having men dressed in black cutting off people's heads in front of a camera, and those who torture prisoners in private settings. Yet, here we are, about to face another Presidential election between Heckle and Jeckle - and neither one will comment on the horrors of Guantanamo. Absurd and equally depressing.

Fahad Alqurain says

???? ???? ??????? ???? ?????? ?? ?????? ?????? ??? ?????? !!

Kells Next Read says

Not Redacted

"The Law of war is Harsh, If there's anything good at all on a war, it's that it brings the best and the worst out of people: some people try to use the lawlessness to hurt others, and some try to reduce the suffering to the minimum."

Putting aside political, cultural and spiritual preferences I personally found this book to be thought provoking, eyeopening, candid read, filled with humor. I'm always skeptical about autobiographies as I find them firstly Boring and Unnecessary. This book broke all my preconceived prejudices and I am extremely please that I picked it up. I'm not going summarize what this book is about because you can do so from it's Goodreads Page but what I will say is this. While reading this book about Mohamedou Ould Slahi experiences and the things that he pass through,(ie. from the perspective of who he is and what religious faith he ascribed too) it has me firstly examining myself. Whether I too hold (knowingly or unknowingly) prejudices and or fixed thought patterns (that I don't even question if they are right or wrong) about people, cultures and religion that I have never taken the time to really know. This book left me asking myself a lot of hard questions. Oh Boy...That's always a good think.

Still Thinking, but here's some quotes that are on replay in my head from the book

"All of this shit happens because of hatred, Hatred is the reason for all Disasters."

Dictatorship is governed Chaos

Read This Book
