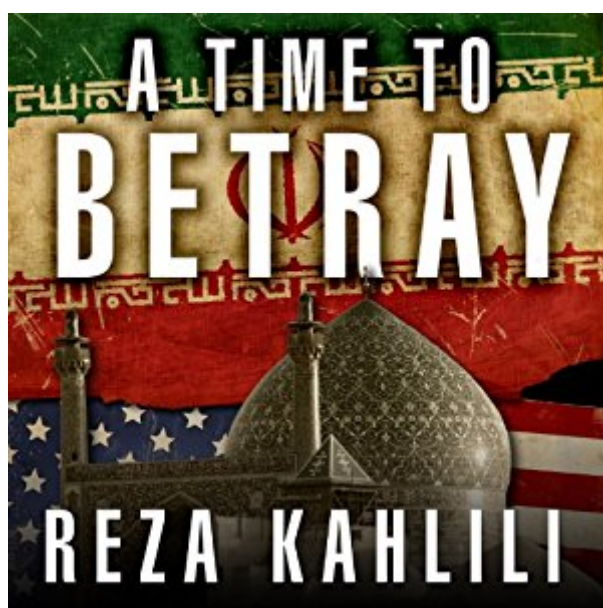


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A Time To Betray: The Astonishing Double Life Of A CIA Agent Inside The Revolutionary Guards Of Iran



Synopsis

A true story as exhilarating as a great spy thriller, as turbulent as today's headlines from the Middle East, *A Time to Betray* reveals what no other previous CIA operative's memoir possibly could: the inner workings of the notorious Revolutionary Guards of Iran, as witnessed by an Iranian man inside their ranks who spied for the American government. It is a human story, a chronicle of family and friendships torn apart by a terror-mongering regime, and how the adult choices of three childhood mates during the Islamic Republic yielded divisive and tragic fates. And it is the stunningly courageous account of one man's decades-long commitment to lead a shocking double life informing on the beloved country of his birth, a place that once offered the promise of freedom and enlightenment--but instead ruled by murderous violence and spirit-crushing oppression. Reza Kahlili grew up in Tehran surrounded by his close-knit family and two spirited boyhood friends. The Iran of his youth allowed Reza to think and act freely, and even indulge a penchant for rebellious pranks in the face of the local mullahs. His political and personal freedoms flourished while he studied computer science at the University of Southern California in the 1970s. But his carefree time in America was cut short with the sudden death of his father, and Reza returned home to find a country on the cusp of change. The revolution of 1979 plunged Iran into a dark age of religious fundamentalism under the Ayatollah Khomeini, and Reza, clinging to the hope of a Persian Renaissance, joined the Revolutionary Guards, an elite force at the beck and call of the Ayatollah. But as Khomeini's tyrannies unfolded, as his fellow countrymen turned on each other, and after the horror he witnessed inside Evin Prison, a shattered and disillusioned Reza returned to America to dangerously become "Wally," a spy for the CIA.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is truly an amazing book. The author takes the reader through some really horrific experiences - from the torture and rape of virgins prior to execution in Evin prison, to witnessing the stoning of a young woman - this book kept me thinking a long time after I had put it down. Mr. Kahlili has successfully interwoven his personal, childhood experiences in Iran into the story of how a tyrannical regime completely distorted a seemingly promising revolution that he himself believed in deeply. He tells the heartbreaking story of three lifelong friends, torn apart by their very different political views. Having worked for the CIA myself, although at a later period in time, I recognize some of the same feelings of disillusionment that Mr. Kahlili expresses at certain points in the book. However, while most of the CIA officers the author was exposed to seemed to be confidence-inspiring, my experience was more akin to his with Andrew, albeit less intelligent versions of Andrew. I found the book to be horrifying, depressing, and heartwarming all at the same time. I highly recommend that everyone read this book.

The author states that "Arrests and executions escalated to the point where it seemed everyone knew someone caught in the nightmare." Islamic Revolution was truly a nightmare for majority of Iranians. Many of the negative reviews base their analysis on improbability of all the events happening to one individual. Being an Iranian myself and having lived in Iran as a child and adult I can tell you that one indeed can not find many people who have not in one way or another felt the sting of this nightmare. My own aunt's house was hit by an Iraqi missile. They were very lucky because they were not home that night. My own high school friend was executed at the age of 15 by the regime. His body was given to his parents and they were told not hold a public funeral for their own son. Two of my friends were captured by Iraqis and became POWs. They were released later after the war was over. My cousin served in the front and became "moji" "post traumatic disorder." He sat home all day, rocking back and forth. The government gave him absolutely nothing in compensation. He died a few years ago in abject poverty. Another family member was shot dead at one of the early demonstrations against regime's brutality. I know many friends of mine who have also lost friends and family members. Very similar to the author, I wish I was as brave as these people who stood up against tyranny and lost their lives. Khomeini truly was a historical nightmare to the great people of Iran and an antithesis to what Persia has historically offered to humanity. No

entity can be further away from ideas expressed in Cyrus cylinder than Khomeini's reactionary thesis on religion and politics. The author admits that he did not have the courage to stand up against the regime. He did his best by exposing the guards without getting killed, and he needs to get credit for that. I believe his story.

Having had Persian/Iranian friends who escaped that country in the 1970's, and others along the way who have shared the truths regarding the lives of the innocent and the evils throughout those, and these, years - I know that the facts within this writing are without a doubt God's own truth. Be aware, be very aware of what is real, not only around the world, but within our own leadership as well.

I found this book fascinating and quite thrilling to read. I bought a copy shortly after attending a conference at which Reza Khalili served as a panelist. As described by others who have heard him speak, he appeared with a surgical mask, large sunglasses that completely covered his eyes, brows and corners of his eyes, a huge baseball cap that hid his hair, and wore a voice-altering microphone under his mask, so that even his voice could not betray his genuine identity. The man is nothing if not courageous. He takes great risks each time he appears, and his recent disclosures about the advancement of the Iranian nuclear program should chill the hearts of all Americans, and indeed everyone who cares about our future. My chief reservation concerns what I consider Khalili's excessive optimism about the desire of Iranians to be rid of the Islamic regime and its imposition of sharia law on the general populace. A recent survey, exposed by my colleague Dr. Andrew Bostom, indeed shows that a large majority of Iranians in fact --- still, after more than three decades of Islamic rule --- still support the sharia law. Whatever the majority may feel about the mullahs imposing their version of sharia, we cannot be fooled by the "election" of "moderate" Hassan Rohani to Iran's presidency, a "moderate" directly involved in planning the 1994 Hezbollah attack on Buenos Aires Jewish Center that killed more than 85 people and wounded hundreds more, according to a 2008 report from the U.S. non-profit, Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (IHRDC). After the recent Iranian election, Washington's Free Beacon reminded us of that 2008 report, which had noted that Rohani sat on the secretive Special Affairs Council, tasked with recommending individuals for assassination in consultation with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Khalili is not fooled by the recent election either. But he does, strangely, continue to insist that the vast majority of Iranians wish for secular democracy. His courage notwithstanding, and that is considerable, Khalili on this score, I think, deludes himself with wishful thinking.

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