



God is Not Here: A Soldier's Struggle with Torture, Trauma, and the Moral Injuries of War

Lieutenant Colonel Bill Russell Edmonds

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***God Is Not Here* is a powerful and intimate look into torture and its effect on both the tortured and the torturer.**

In May of 2005, the U.S. government finally acknowledged that the invasion of Iraq had spawned an insurgency. With that admission, training the Iraqi Forces suddenly became a strategic priority. Lt. Col. Bill Edmonds, then a Special Forces captain, was in the first group of "official" military advisors. He arrived in Mosul in the wake of Abu Ghraib, at the height of the insurgency, and in the midst of America's rapidly failing war strategy.

Edmonds' job was to advise an Iraqi intelligence officer to assist and temper his interrogations but not give orders. But he wanted to be more than a wallflower, so he immersed himself in the experience, even learning Arabic. In a makeshift basement prison, over countless nights and predawn hours, Edmonds came to empathize with Iraqi rules: do what's necessary, do what works. After all, Americans and Iraqis were dying.

Edmonds wanted to make a difference. Yet the longer he submerged himself in the worst of humanity, the more conflicted and disillusioned he became, slowly losing faith in everything and everyone. In the end, he lost himself. He returned home with no visible wounds, but on the inside he was different. He tried to forget but memories from war never just fade away...

In *God Is Not Here*, the weight of history is everywhere, but the focus is on a young man struggling to learn what is right when fighting wrong. Edmonds provides a disturbing and thought-provoking account of the morally ambiguous choices faced when living with and fighting within a foreign religion and culture, as well as the resulting psychological and spiritual impacts on a soldier.

Transcending the genre of the traditional war memoir, Edmonds' eloquent recounting makes for one of the most insightful and moving books to emerge from America's long war against terrorism.

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