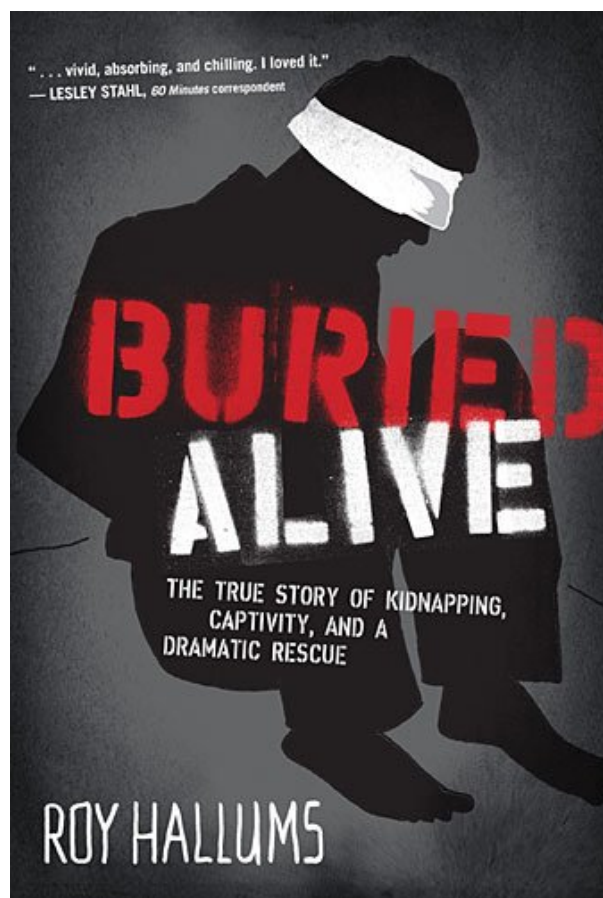
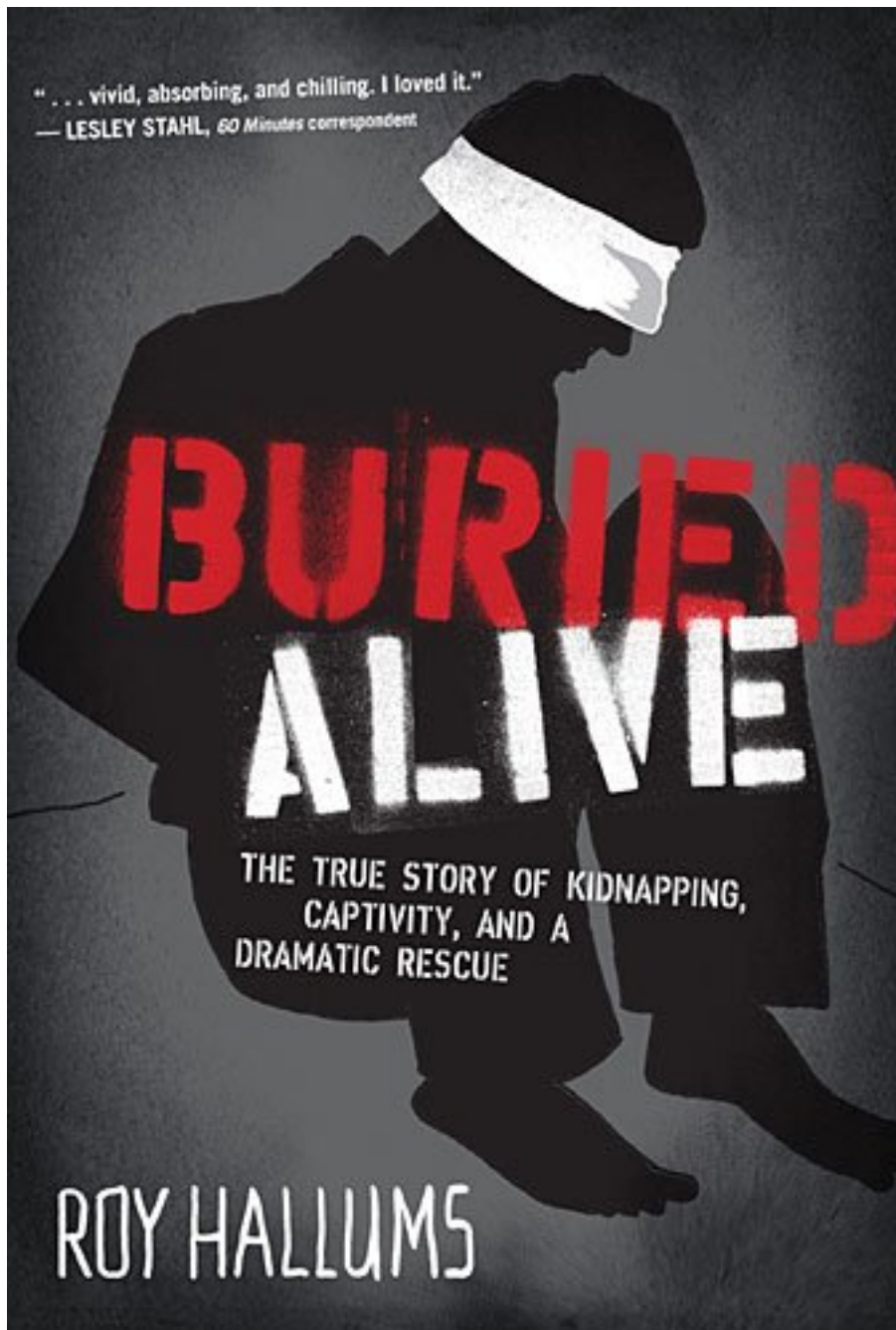


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A true-life adventure sure to shock as well as inspire.

AK47s, masked thugs, and brutal urgency erupt from Roy Hallums' account of his abduction in Iraq, shredding through those frequently sterile cable news reports revealing that another "American contractor is being held hostage . . ."

Hallums was the everyman behind that report? a 56-year-old retired Naval commander working as a food supply contractor in Baghdad's high-end Mansour District.

His abduction was transacted in a matter of minutes, amidst a hail of gunfire and a handful of casualties. For the first few months of his captivity, Hallums endured beatings and psychological torture while being shuffled from one ramshackle safe house to another.

From the four-foot-tall crawlspace where he carried out the bulk of his nearly year-long abduction, Hallums established a surprising degree of normalcy? a system of routines and timekeeping, along with an attention to the particulars that defined his horrific ordeal. His experience is recreated here, rich with harrowing specifics and surprising observations.

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- Binding: Paperback
- 272 pages

Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

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Well-written, harrowing account

By M. L Lamendola

This is a well-written first-hand account of one man's experience as a kidnapping victim in Iraq. Starting from the actual kidnapping, we accompany Roy through various locations until his release after 311 grueling

days of captivity. Beatings, starvation, injury, illness, filthy conditions, sleep deprivation, and extreme confinement--Roy endured all of this and more.

Editorially and journalistically, this book is a standout. The prose was sparkling and error-free. The composition was superb. Iraq-related books are nearly always politically proselytizing, and this one isn't. The author gave a factual account of the events. The book doesn't have any agenda apparent to me other than to tell what happened.

We do get a glimpse of Roy's religious background, but the book doesn't have a religious agenda. Roy does express his gratitude for his rescuers (and rightfully so), but he doesn't shill for the military. As a reader, I wanted to know what happened and I wanted to read that without having to endure political or religious preaching. This book did not betray my trust on that score.

Roy provides enough detail at each step so we can understand how and perhaps why this or that event happened. For example, how does someone inside a reasonably secure building protected by armed guards get kidnapped from that building? How can someone be hidden away for nearly a year, in a place crawling with military troops who are looking for the kidnapped?

This book raises many interesting questions, just in the telling of the story. As noted, it also answers many questions. One question people have asked Roy repeatedly is how he managed to hang on for so long. We see the answer as events unfold.

Sprinkled into this account are parallel accounts from family members for certain days. The material for these accounts comes from such sources as his daughter's diary.

Many interesting facts emerge in the narrative. For example, despite being in a dark cellar Roy was able to track the calendar by counting the daily flyover of Blackhawk helicopters and to determine the approximate time of day by noting which of the five daily prayer sessions his captors were engaged in.

The very existence of the prayer sessions brings up another point. Many times throughout the book, Roy recounted some "our religion is better than your religion" remark or another from his captors, and the remark was completely at odds with their behavior (kidnapping and torture). At one point, his captors gave him a sheet of paper in which they had written "the house rules." Item number one said "We are your friends." The other items basically gave reasons they would kill him.

You can understand much about the Iraq situation just by reading this book. Even if you're not especially interested in learning about Iraq, this book is worthwhile because it's a good read. It's a page turner, partly because the story is good and partly because the story is told so well.

This book runs about 200 pages covering 34 chapters. The chapter count is a little high for this many pages, and my first concern upon seeing this was the chapters were made short in an effort to cover weak writing. That wasn't at all the case, though, as the writing was top-notch. The chapters were short, because each one addressed something specific and Roy didn't write any filler to make the chapters longer.

Reviewer's personal viewpoint

The contradictions Roy observed are (IMO) part of the overall Muslim extremist delusion. All of the destruction by these people since the fall of Saddam Hussein has been pointless and counterproductive. Had these extremists been capable of rational analysis, they would have taken an entirely different course and

benefited from increased prosperity and all that entails. Instead, they've been killing off themselves and everyone around them while ensuring poverty for all.

This point isn't one Roy made. The reason I make it is Roy's account reveals just how insane these people are, and how little regard they have for their own country or fellow citizens. The account reveals that simply by recounting the actions of these people. Roy did make a point of letting us know the kidnappings are rampant and most of the people kidnapped are Iraqi citizens. So, this isn't a matter of "freedom fighters" striking back at invaders. It's a case of criminals engaging in crime. It's really that simple.

The account here does help us understand the minds (such as they are) of the people who are doing the kidnappings. I don't know if Roy will agree with me or not, but to me this just shows that whether we bring all of our troops home today or stay in Iraq another 20 years, the outcome will be the same. The only difference is the body count and the spending that we can't afford.

The book doesn't advocate staying in Iraq or pulling out. The kidnappers own irrationality makes that particular case.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

This story is an amazing tale of survival

By Daisy Luther

This story is an amazing tale of survival, both mental and physical. The circumstances under which Roy was held are absolutely horrifying. What a strong and inspiring individual he is!

Often these first person accounts by non-writers end up being stilted. However, this one reads like a novel - I couldn't put it down, something that rarely occurs with non-fiction.

It's a must-read!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Glad it wasn't me !!!

By G. M. C.

This book about Roy Hallum's hostage situation is a real eye opener! The fact that he was "imprisoned" for 311 days by an Iraq terrorist cell is sometimes hard to believe - that humans could treat another human being the way he was, by being beaten and tortured. Even worse, he was forced to stay underground in a chamber under the basement in one of the terrorist's homes all that time, in the heat, dark and filth. There were a lot of times that they didn't even feed him and only allowed him to take bathroom breaks usually once a day while blindfolded and hands tied behind his back. He was with other prisoners off and on too, but they were not allowed to talk or interact. Roy's writing was very good and you felt as though you were with him. The whole purpose to taking hostages is to get large sums of money for ransom from the individual's company or country. I can see why the U. S. refuses to pay these, as it just encourages the terrorists to do more. Some of the other hostages were beheaded and tortured beyond belief and didn't even end up with the terrorists getting the ransoms they thought they would. I found it very interesting that to pass his time, besides his strong faith, Roy would take imaginary road trips through the U. S. and mentally "see" how the travels went. I thought that was a really great idea and really did help him through many bleak and long days. The government didn't keep his family as informed as I think they should have and I was surprised that there was not much help given to his family during their own ordeal. Roy Hallums has written a very interesting book of the true events he endured during his captivity. It is an easy read and not too long. I learned a lot about the terrorists and their horrible tactics to prisoners. They should not get a dime for having hostages !

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