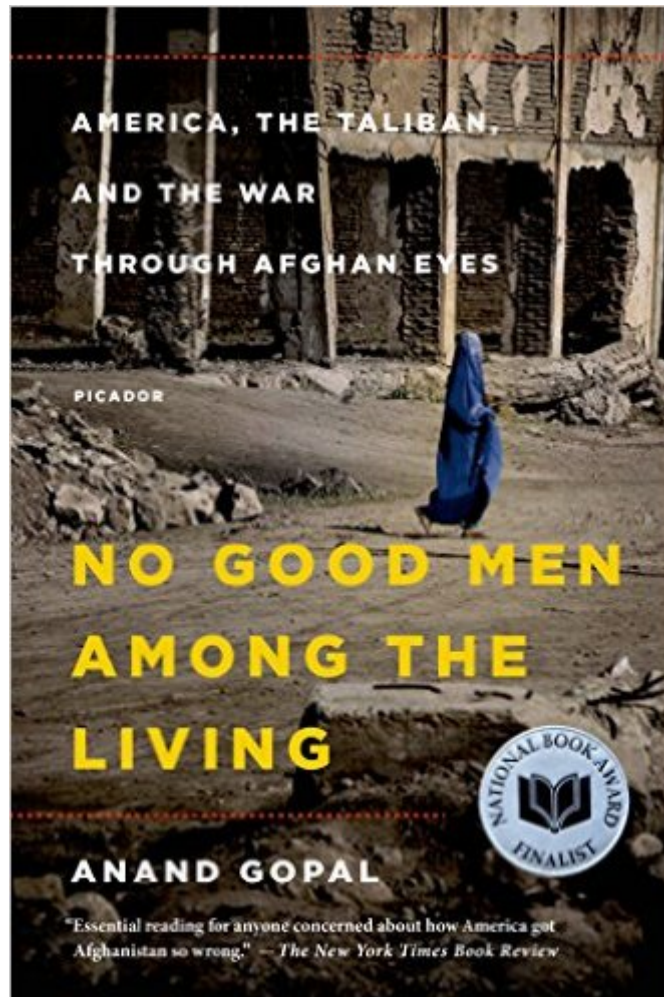


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No Good Men Among The Living: America, The Taliban, And The War Through Afghan Eyes



Synopsis

PULITZER PRIZE FINALIST NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST WINNER OF THE RIDENHOUR PRIZE "Essential reading for anyone concerned about how America got Afghanistan so wrong. A devastating, well-honed prosecution detailing how our government bungled the initial salvo in the so-called war on terror, ignored attempts by top Taliban leaders to surrender, trusted the wrong people, and backed a feckless and corrupt Afghan regime . . . It is ultimately the most compelling account I've read of how Afghans themselves see the war." --The New York Times Book Review In a breathtaking chronicle, acclaimed journalist Anand Gopal traces the lives of three Afghans caught in America's war on terror. He follows a Taliban commander, who rises from scrawny teenager to leading insurgent; a U.S.-backed warlord, who uses the American military to gain wealth and power; and a village housewife trapped between the two sides, who discovers the devastating cost of neutrality. Through their dramatic stories, *No Good Men Among the Living* stunningly lays bare the workings of America's longest war and the truth behind its prolonged agony.

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Customer Reviews

For the last dozen years or more U.S. consumers of the news have been force fed the American version, or "our side" of what has been happening in Afghanistan since the first American troops landed there at the end of 2001. Now, with Anand Gopal's book, *NO GOOD MEN AMONG THE LIVING*, we are given a look at this long so-called 'war against terror' through Afghan eyes. Gopal, a respected American journalist who has also done stories from Egypt, Syria and other mid-East hot spots, made several trips into Afghanistan over the past five years, conducting numerous interviews

with various warlords, tribal chieftains, Taliban leaders, and ordinary citizens, all in an attempt to understand - what? Well, I suppose trying to figure out what in the hell was going on in this country torn apart by wars for over thirty years now - ten years of occupation and war with the Soviet military, then a bloody civil war, followed by a harsh Taliban rule, and now, the American war against the Taliban and the elusive Al Qaeda. Gopal has obviously done his homework, researching these wars in depth, but more than that, he has spent hundreds of hours on the ground in Afghanistan just talking with the people there, including three in particular, a warlord, a Taliban commander, and a woman, Heela, widowed by the war and left to fend for herself and her children in a region where women have no rights or standing. Perhaps the most shocking revelation comes early on in the book, when we learn that this whole war might not have happened at all if the U.S. had simply accepted Afghanistan's offer to bring Osama bin Laden to justice themselves. But no, the U.S. demanded his extradition for a U.S. trial and there was no middle ground.

This goes deeper than the usual war lies. We've had plenty of those. We weren't told the Taliban was willing to turn bin Laden over to a neutral nation to stand trial. We weren't told the Taliban was a reluctant tolerator of al Qaeda, and a completely distinct group. We weren't told the 911 attacks had also been planned in Germany and Maryland and various other places not marked for bombing. We weren't told that most of the people who would die in Afghanistan, many more than died on 911, not only didn't support 911 but never heard of it. We weren't told our government would kill large numbers of civilians, imprison people without trial, hang people by their feet and whip them until they were dead. We weren't told how this illegal war would advance the acceptability of illegal wars or how it would make the United States hated in much of the world. We weren't given the background of how the U.S. interfered in Afghanistan and provoked a Soviet invasion and armed resistance to the Soviets and left the people to the tender mercies of that armed resistance once the Soviets left. We weren't told that Tony Blair wanted Afghanistan first before he'd get the UK to help destroy Iraq. We certainly weren't told that bin Laden had been an ally of the U.S. government, that the 911 hijackers were mostly Saudi, or that there might be anything at all amiss with the government of Saudi Arabia. And nobody mentioned the trillions of dollars we'd waste or the civil liberties we'd have to lose at home or the severe damage that would be inflicted on the natural environment. Even birds don't go to Afghanistan anymore. OK. That's all sort of par-for-the-course, war-marketing bulls---. People who pay attention know all of that.

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