



American Gulag: Inside U.S. Immigration Prisons

Mark Dow

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Before September 11, 2001, few Americans had heard of immigration detention, but in fact a secret and repressive prison system run by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service has existed in this country for more than two decades. In *American Gulag*, prisoners, jailers, and whistle-blowing federal officials come forward to describe the frightening reality inside these INS facilities. Journalist Mark Dow's on-the-ground reporting brings to light documented cases of illegal beatings and psychological torment, prolonged detention, racism, and inhumane conditions. Intelligent, impassioned, and unlike anything that has been written on the topic, this gripping work of investigative journalism should be read by all Americans. It is a book that will change the way we see our country.

American Gulag takes us inside prisons such as the Krome North Service Processing Center in Miami, the Corrections Corporation of America's Houston Processing Center, and county jails around the country that profit from contracts to hold INS prisoners. It contains disturbing in-depth profiles of detainees, including Emmy Kutesa, a defector from the Ugandan army who was tortured and then escaped to the United States, where he was imprisoned in Queens, and then undertook a hunger strike in protest. To provide a framework for understanding stories like these, Dow gives a brief history of immigration laws and practices in the United States—including the repercussions of September 11 and present-day policies. His book reveals that current immigration detentions are best understood not as a well-intentioned response to terrorism but rather as part of the larger context of INS secrecy and excessive authority.

American Gulag exposes the full story of a cruel prison system that is operating today with an astonishing lack of accountability.

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