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The Sacking of Fallujah: A People's History by Ross
Caputi, Richard Hil and Donna Mulhearn (review)

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tlefront. Its lucid and engaging style, careful analysis, and thorough documentation will appeal to scholars and lay readers alike.

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***The Sacking of Fallujah: A People's History.* By Ross Caputi, Richard Hil, and Donna Mulhearn. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2019. 232 pp.**

In the conclusion of *The Sacking of Fallujah: A People's History*, Ross Caputi, Richard Hil, and Donna Mulhearn briefly mention the 2016 film *War Dogs*, a flippant and forgettable dark comedy that follows two men eager to set ethics and legality aside to make big money acting as gunrunners in Iraq. Played by Miles Teller and Jonah Hill, they agree to transport a cache of weapons from Jordan to Baghdad, stopping for gas along the way. After they complete the delivery, they are aghast to discover that they just unwittingly drove through the notorious Triangle of Death and that their gas stop was in Fallujah. “Are you kidding me?” one of them gasps. “We stopped for gas in *Fallujah*?”

Fallujah here works as shorthand for *awful, dangerous place*, a place, as the authors note, “composed of barbarians intent on death and destruction and, according to some, a place beyond salvation” (p. 165). That shorthand is common in many American representations, fictional and nonfictional, about the Iraq War, particularly after four contractors working for the security company Blackwater were killed there in March 2004, and their bodies hung from a bridge over the Euphrates. *The Sacking of Fallujah* aims to expose that shorthand as propaganda, part of a story told by the mainstream media of “the heroic efforts of U.S. soldiers to vanquish an evil enemy and liberate helpless civilians,” which had the effect of “pacify[ing] Western—and particularly U.S.—audiences so that Coalition forces could crush the resistance movement in Fallujah, unencumbered by the constraints of the Geneva Conventions” (p. 163).

To that end, the authors offer detailed accounts of what they call the three sieges of Fallujah, officially referred to as Operation Vig-

ilant Resolve (April 2004), Operation Phantom Fury (November 2004), and Operation Inherent Resolve (September 2014). The book highlights the voices of Fallujans, too often elided from American accounts, interspersing first-person narratives between chapters covering historical developments. Those stories are powerful on their own. But interpolated into the broader narrative, they sharpen the authors' argument that for most Iraqis, "a foreign military occupation was tantamount to an assault on their sovereignty and independence. Yet the Coalition, either mistakenly or strategically, characterized the uprising as being driven by a combination of former regime elements, 'hardened terrorists,' 'criminals and malcontents,' or simply 'bad guys'" (p. 44).

That is the nexus of the book's revisionism. Its meticulous military and political history of the 2004 and 2013 campaigns—including points like the exaggerated role of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in the Americans' justification for their attacks and resulting civilian deaths—is well done, yielding a rewarding read, a valuable reference, and a significant contribution to the field. In contrast, as the authors note, American soldiers' memoirs of Fallujah are often simply uninformed of any level of political nuance.

The Sacking of Fallujah also devotes a chapter to the public health crisis that unfolded after the second siege in 2004—a wave of cancer, miscarriages, and multiple birth defects that was not internationally recognized until 2008, and which was likely the result of the US military's use of toxic weapons. Dr. Samire Alaani, a pediatrician at Fallujah General Hospital, has investigated those connections and calls the crisis "the Iraqi Hiroshima" (p. 128). The authors use words like *sociocide* and *ecocide* to describe the compounding crises that Fallujans faced, noting that all this happened as "U.S. officials were protecting their image and arsenal" and "the international community looked away" (p. 136).

The final chapter is an afterword, "My Lost Country," by reporter Feurat Alani. Born in Paris but descended from Fallujans, Alani visits for the first time in 1989, after the end of the Iran-Iraq War. It is a charming city, green and full of history, but then slowly starts to fade after the embargoes and blockades of the early 1990s. "The city began to fold in upon itself" (p. 174), he writes, and the devastation was

only compounded by the war that began in 2003. At that point Alani returns to Fallujah as a journalist, and he later begins working to uncover and make the world aware of the wave of birth defects and their probable cause. Like Alani, the other authors have a personal stake in the story—Hil is an activist who has previously written about Iraq, Mulhearn is a journalist who documented the first siege and the health crisis, and Caputi, notably, is an American veteran of the second siege. Ultimately, this book's multivocal approach to its subject is both its primary strength and a demonstration of Alani's point that "these histories within History should not be forgotten" (p. 176), particularly given the all-too-common gloss of Fallujah as a bad place in a messy but righteously waged war.

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***Patriotism by Proxy: The Civil War Draft and the Cultural Formation of Citizen-Soldiers, 1863–1865.* By Colleen Glenney Boggs. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. 192 pp.**

As the US Civil War staggered into its third bloody year, expiring enlistments and mounting casualty counts combined to leave Lincoln's armies in need of fresh volunteers. In March 1863, the Union's manpower problem yielded to the Enrollment Act, which required all males between the ages of twenty and forty-five to register for the draft. The first lottery was held a few months later. The deadly riots that romped through the streets of New York and Boston that summer evidenced the shrill debate that conscription invited among a Northern populace divided about the wisdom of the war and the necessity of emancipation.

While historians Fred Shannon, Eugene C. Murdock, James W. Geary, and Iver Bernstein have documented the draft (and especially the draft riots) in important books, literary scholars have paid conscription—to say nothing of the citizen-soldier—remarkably little attention. With this slender volume, the latest entry in the Oxford Studies in American Literary History series, Colleen Glenney Boggs attempts to fill the gap. She argues that the