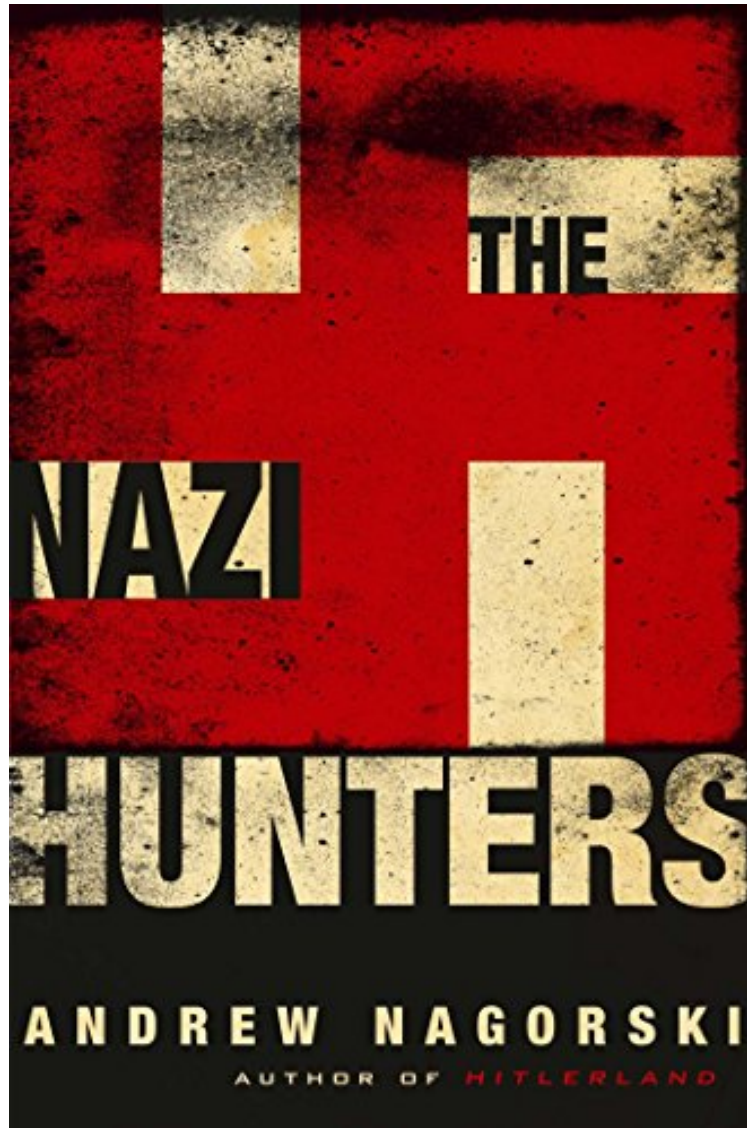


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The Nazi Hunters

Andrew Nagorski

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Andrew Nagorski : The Nazi Hunters before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Nazi Hunters:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating, thorough and detailed.By PurplelotusFascinating read. Very thorough and detailed look at the nazi hunters be they representative of legal bodies and countries or individuals. The flaws and failings of all those involved are examined not just the defendants. The motives, the politics and the varied circumstances that led to successful prosecutions or failures.How infamous Nazis escaped and denied their

crimes while minor officials were prosecuted. The arguments for and against prosecuting those in their nineties are all covered. Highly recommend. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent book! ConciseBy Joseph S. MccannExcellent book! Concise, informative yet tightly written. I found that each chapter was like a book in itself, finding myself disappointed when each chapter had to end. Great character depth. When Isser Harel first met Eichmann he was quoted as saying, "If I met the man in the street, I would find no difference between him and thousands of other men passing by". "What makes such a creature, created in the likeness of man, into such a monster?" 22 of 22 people found the following review helpful. A fascinating look at history that must not be forgottenBy Kyle WarnerMost of the tales of WWII focus on the soldiers and the leaders of the countries at war. For myself, I've always been more fascinated by the stories of those who operated without direct backing from government and military, like the French Resistance fighters or the Nazi Hunters. And certainly many tales about these individuals have been exaggerated, both by storytellers wanting to create the most exciting yarn possible and by the heroes themselves. But there was a truth that inspired the fiction. I must admit that much of my knowledge about the Nazi hunters was based primarily on novels, films, and dramatized versions of history. Andrew Nagorski's *The Nazi Hunters* was my first real, 'non-fiction' look at the true story behind the mythmaking, and the men who refused to let war criminals slip into obscurity. One of the most interesting things learned from Nagorski's book is how unpopular the idea of Nazi hunters were. I'm young, I was not around during the Eichmann trial or when the topic of escaping Nazi war criminals was still a hot topic. I'd always assumed that most the world wanted to see the Nazis brought to justice. This apparently wasn't the case. Many wanted to leave the past where it was, fearful that dredging up ugly events would prevent the world's healing. To me, this sounds more sympathetic to the villains than the victims. The men and women who hunted Nazis across the globe were not willing to allow the past to be forgotten. Many of the hunters had lost family to the Nazis and felt their dearly departed deserved justice. What's interesting is that, despite many operating as individuals, they often handed the Nazis over to official parties. Very rarely, it seems, were the Nazi war criminals executed without a trial. The trials make up a good portion of Nagorski's book. And again, the world had conflicting reactions to the idea of putting Nazis (some of them bosses, some underlings) on trial for murder and war crimes. Most of the Nazis refused to be apologetic, instead trying to make it seem like they were not the monsters the Jews were looking for. The Nazis, now out of uniform and without a mad army behind them, appeared quite weak and powerless. "The banality of evil," is a phrase brought up again and again to describe these men. To me, this makes them more frightening. You can spot a wild mad man in a crowd. But a boring guy who's willing to commit atrocities based on his beliefs (or on his superior's beliefs) is a monster that can hide among us. One of the captured Nazis said something along the lines of, "I am over it. If they're not, that's their problem." To me, that's what I'll take away from this book most of all: the fact that the murderers thought it was their right to go on living their lives in peace after the war — that WWII was an event which belonged in the past and was no longer a part of them. Victims have longer memories. *The Nazi Hunters* is an endlessly compelling book, one which strips away the fiction of heroes and monsters and presents them as human beings. It's a book about dedicated professionals, some of whom continued their hunts for many decades, sometimes competing against rival hunters and sometimes facing grief for their troubles. Now, in 2016, most of the hunters and the hunted are dying away with the passage of time. Their stories do, finally, belong in the past. But it must not be forgotten. Those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it, so they say.*I received an ebook copy of *The Nazi Hunters* from the publishers in exchange for an honest review*

"[A] deep and sweeping account of a relentless search for justice." —The Washington Post More than seven decades after the end of the Second World War, the era of the Nazi Hunters is drawing to a close as they and the hunted die off. Their saga can now be told almost in its entirety. After the Nuremberg trials and the start of the Cold War, most of the victors in World War II lost interest in prosecuting Nazi war criminals. Many of the lower-ranking perpetrators quickly blended in with the millions who were seeking to rebuild their lives in a new Europe, while those who felt most at risk fled the continent. *The Nazi Hunters* focuses on the small band of men and women who refused to allow their crimes to be forgotten—and who were determined to track them down to the furthest corners of the earth. *The Nazi Hunters* reveals the experiences of the young American prosecutors in the Nuremberg and Dachau trials, Benjamin Ferencz and William Denson; the Polish investigating judge Jan Sehn, who handled the case of Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Höss; Germany's judge and prosecutor Fritz Bauer, who repeatedly forced his countrymen to confront their country's record of mass murder; the Mossad agent Rafi Eitan, who was in charge of the Israeli team that nabbed Eichmann; and Eli Rosenbaum, who rose to head the US Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations that belatedly sought to expel war criminals who were living quietly in the United States. But some of the Nazi hunters' most controversial actions involved the more ambiguous cases, such as former UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim's attempt to cover up his wartime history. Or the fate of concentration camp guards who have lived into their nineties, long past the time when reliable eyewitnesses could be found to pinpoint their exact roles. The story of the Nazi hunters is coming to a natural end. It was unprecedented in so many ways, especially the degree to which the initial impulse of revenge was transformed into a struggle for justice. The Nazi hunters have transformed our fundamental notions of right and wrong. Andrew Nagorski's book is a richly reconstructed odyssey and an

unforgettable tale of gritty determination, at times reckless behavior, and relentless pursuit.

"Nagorski is a veteran author and foreign correspondent whose *Hitlerland: American Eyewitnesses to the Nazi Rise to Power* is the alpha to the omega of *The Nazi Hunters*. . . . [a] deep and sweeping account of a relentless search for justice that began in 1945 and is only now coming to an end." (The Washington Post) "Vivid, reader-friendly . . . Mr. Nagorski's fine book is comprehensively informative and a highly involving read." (Wall Street Journal) "A thrilling nonfiction account of postwar justice. . . . Detailed, dramatic, and at times gripping." (Salon) "An epic tale . . . the book's main actors are painted with a complex but unsparing clarity." (Christian Science Monitor) "A reminder of the fact that the Nazi trials of the last 70 years were never a foregone conclusion." (TIME) "A history that reads like an adventure story." (Florida Times Union) "Far more intriguing than any Hollywood production. The proofs highlight every page of Andrew Nagorski's *The Nazi Hunters*, a new study of the evildoers and how they were pursued. . . . [Nagorski] has a discerning eye and a gift for the revealing anecdote." (City Journal) "The Nazi hunters, like their prey, are passing away. As Nagorski points out, that 'is why their stories can and should be told now.' His book captures their work in vivid and detailed prose. For journalists, it provides the added enjoyment of reading about other people's investigative tricks and tools. *The Nazi Hunters* stands as both a tribute to, and a record, of a unique handful of people who devoted their lives to justice. (Overseas Press Club) "A comprehensive treatment of the dogged men and women whose heroic efforts restored a measure of justice to millions of murdered souls." (The Weekly Standard) "The author provides fascinating insight into those who continued to pursue war criminals after the spotlight had faded." (Library Journal) "In a world that is, alas, awash in crimes against humanity, we have an urgent need to address these complex and controversial questions." (Jerusalem Post) "An extremely valuable, highly readable book." (Arizona Jewish Post) "Andrew Nagorski's *The Nazi Hunters* comes at a significant point, at the juncture between living memory and the historical record. . . . His account is highly objective and balanced. . . . It's a narrative that will hold you, even if you've followed this story over the decades." (The Dallas Morning News) "A detailed look at the grim work of tracking Nazis over the decades since World War II. . . . absorbing." (Kirkus) "An admirably accessible and intimate narrative. . . . [Nagorski] reveals the differences in tactics, politics and personalities that have led to feuds among the Nazi hunters themselves. . . . for all their rivalries and failings, the Nazi hunters are saluted by Nagorski for their accomplishments: not just in helping to prosecute the most egregious of the perpetrators, but also in etching the details of Nazi crimes — beyond doubt or dispute — in the historical record." (The Forward) "Andrew Nagorski has produced an important work—a well-written and revealing book about the darkest acts of World War II." (Alan Furst, author of *Spies of Warsaw* and *Kingdom of Shadows*) "The world failed the victims not only during the Holocaust but afterwards, as perpetrators were allowed to go on with their lives. A few determined Nazi hunters tried to bring justice. This is their story. It must be read." (Alan Dershowitz, author of *Abraham: The World's First (but certainly not last) Jewish Lawyer*) "Andrew Nagorski spins a gripping, historically urgent narrative in *The Nazi Hunters*. He demonstrates that how we deal with the most evil perpetrators among us, is as much about who we are as it is about the criminals. *The Nazi Hunters* is really about the present: are we willing to do the consuming and often thankless work of holding criminals from the Balkans to the Middle East and Africa accountable for unspeakable acts? This could not be a more timely reminder of the world's moral responsibility toward perpetrators of war crimes." (Kati Marton, author of *The Great Escape* and *Enemies of the People*) "A fascinating collective portrait of a variety of Nazi hunters. Some, Simon Wiesenthal and the Klarsfelds, are well known. But the most fascinating aspect of the book is Nagorski's portrayal of less well-known figures: the Polish judge Jan Sehn, who first investigated the Nazi death camps; the German prosecutor, Fritz Bauer, who instigated both the capture of Eichmann and the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial; and William Denson, who convicted hundreds of the most notorious concentration camp guards." (Christopher Browning, author of *Ordinary Men* and *The Origins of the Final Solution*) "A war continued after World War II to bring its mass murderers to justice. Andrew Nagorski tells the story of the dogged search by some for the killers as well as the accommodations made by others to let this sordid chapter of history remain buried. Meticulously researched, superbly written, *The Nazi Hunters* is fascinating—disturbing, to be sure—but fascinating." (Douglas Waller, author of *Disciples* and *Wild Bill Donovan*) "Andrew Nagorski, author of the mesmerizing *Hitlerland*, has made a definitive and invaluable contribution to the historical record with his outstanding successor work, *The Nazi Hunters*. Integrating the diffuse strands of a great decades long drama before a vanishing window of history has closed, the author has crafted the fascinating and emotionally galvanizing narrative of the hunt for notorious Nazi fugitives ranging from Adolf Eichmann and Josef Mengele to the SS officers and concentration camp commandants who fled from the ashes of Germany's defeat in World War II. Not only an investigative and intelligence page-turner, *The Nazi Hunters* tells the story of an epic and global quest for justice rather than revenge." (Gordon M. Goldstein, adjunct Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations and author of *Lessons In Disaster: McGeorge Bundy and the Path to War in Vietnam*) "The last former Nazis are dying out, and so, too, are those whose life's work was to hunt them down. Nagorski tells their stories evenhandedly, uncovering a fascinating cast of characters from all over the world and placing their efforts in a broader perspective." (Foreign Affairs) "The *Nazi Hunters* is, variously, horrifying, informative, exciting and enlightening, but it must be read in small doses for there is so much in it to grasp."

(Providence Journal) About the Author During a long career at Newsweek, award-winning journalist Andrew Nagorski served as the magazine's bureau chief in Hong Kong, Moscow, Rome, Bonn, Warsaw, and Berlin. He is the author of several books and has written for countless publications. Visit his website: AndrewNagorski.com. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

The Nazi Hunters Introduction

One of the most famous German films right after the end of World War II was called *Die Mörder sind unter uns*—"The Murderers Are Among Us." Susanne Wallner, a concentration camp survivor played by Hildegard Knef, returns to her devastated apartment in the ruins of Berlin. She finds Hans Mertens, a former German army surgeon already living there, succumbing to alcoholism and despair. The surgeon runs into his former captain, now a prosperous businessman, who had ordered the Christmas Eve massacre of one hundred civilians in a Polish village in 1942. Haunted by such memories, Mertens decides to kill the captain on the first postwar Christmas Eve. At the last moment, Wallner convinces Mertens that such an act of vigilante justice would be a mistake. "We cannot pass sentence," she tells him. The surgeon understands. "That's right, Susanne," he replies as the film ends. "But we must bring charges. Demand atonement on behalf of millions of innocent murder victims." The film was a spectacular success, attracting huge audiences. But its message was fundamentally misleading. It was left to the Allies, not to the German people, to arrange the early war crimes trials. The victors soon largely abandoned such efforts, focusing instead on the emerging Cold War. As for most Germans, they were far more eager to forget their recent past than to contemplate atonement. Among the chief perpetrators who were not immediately arrested or who were caught and not initially recognized by their Allied captors, there was certainly no talk of atonement either. There was only the impulse to flee. In Adolf Hitler's case, it was by committing suicide in his bunker along with Eva Braun, whom he had just married. After poisoning their six children, Joseph Goebbels, his propaganda chief, and his wife, Magda, followed suit. In the 1976 bestselling novel *The Valhalla Exchange*, the fictional Goebbels explains why he chose that course. "I have no intention of spending the rest of my life running around the world like some eternal refugee," he declares. But most of his colleagues and other Nazis guilty of war crimes had no intention of following Hitler's example. Many of the lower ranking perpetrators did not even feel compelled to hide: they quickly blended in with the millions who were seeking to rebuild their lives in a new Europe. Others, who felt more at risk, found ways to flee the continent. For a long time, it looked like many of the people in both categories had succeeded in eluding responsibility for their crimes, often with the support of loyal family members and networks of Kameraden—Nazi Party comrades. This book focuses on the relatively small band of men and women—both those serving in official positions and those operating independently—who worked to reverse their initial successes, not letting the world forget their crimes. These pursuers demonstrated tremendous determination and courage as they kept up their fight even when the governments representing the victors and the rest of the world grew increasingly indifferent to the fates of the Nazi war criminals. In the process, they also explored the nature of evil and raised profoundly troubling questions about human behavior. Those who have attempted to bring the murderers to justice have been loosely labeled as Nazi hunters—but they have not been anything like a group with a common strategy or basic agreement on tactics. They often have been at odds with each other, prone to recriminations, jealousies, and outright rivalries, even as they pursued roughly the same goals. In some cases, this undoubtedly weakened their effectiveness. But even if everyone involved in the pursuit of Nazi criminals had put aside their personal differences, the results would not have been significantly different. And by any absolute measure, those results can't justify the claim that justice was done. "Anyone who seeks a balance between the crimes that were committed and the punishment will be ultimately frustrated," said David Marwell, a historian who has worked for the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Berlin Document Center, and served as the director of the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York. As for the original pledge of the victors to prosecute all of those responsible for war crimes, he curtly added: "It's too difficult." Too difficult to succeed on a grand scale, yes, but the efforts by those who refused to give up on the notion of holding at least some Nazi war criminals to account developed into an ongoing postwar saga unlike any other in the history of mankind. At the end of past wars, the victors often killed or enslaved the vanquished, plundering their lands and exacting speedy retribution. Summary executions, not trials or any other legal proceedings aimed at weighing the evidence to determine guilt or innocence, were the norm. Revenge was the motive, pure and simple. Many of the Nazi hunters were also initially motivated by revenge, particularly those coming out of the camps or those victors who helped liberate them and saw the stunning evidence of the horrors that the fleeing Nazis left behind: the dead and the dying, the crematoriums, the "medical" facilities that served as torture chambers. As a result, some Nazis and their collaborators were at the receiving end of immediate retribution at the end of the war. But from the first Nuremberg trials to the hunt for war criminals in Europe, Latin America, the United States, and the Middle East that has sporadically continued to this day, the Nazi hunters have focused most of their efforts on initiating legal proceedings against their prey—demonstrating that even the most obviously guilty should have their day in court. It was no accident that Simon Wiesenthal, the most famous Nazi hunter, titled his memoirs *Justice Not Vengeance*. Even when justice was so obviously falling short, with the guilty often getting away with the mildest punishments or in many cases not facing any sanctions at all, the other goal that began to emerge was education by example. Why pursue an aging camp guard during his final days? Why not let the perpetrators quietly fade away? Many U.S. officials were

more than happy to do so, especially as their attention was diverted to a new enemy—the Soviet Union. But the individual Nazi hunters were not about to let go, arguing that each case offered valuable lessons. The point of the lessons: to demonstrate that the horrendous crimes of World War II and the Holocaust cannot and should not be forgotten, and that those who instigated or carried out those crimes—or others who may carry out similar crimes in the future—are never beyond the law, at least in principle. • • • In 1960 when a Mossad team kidnapped Adolf Eichmann in Argentina and flew him to Israel for trial, I was thirteen years old. I have no recollection of how much I was aware of what had happened, whether I was paying attention to the media coverage at all, but something had clearly sunk in. I know that because of a vivid memory from the following summer when Eichmann was already on trial in Jerusalem. During a family visit to San Francisco, I was sitting in a luncheonette with my father. At one point, I started examining the face of an old man sitting at the other end of the counter. I leaned over to my father, pointed him out and whispered: “I think that may be Hitler.” My father grinned and let me down gently. Of course I had no idea then that, while working on this book half a century later, I would interview Gabriel Bach, the last surviving prosecutor in the Eichmann trial, and the two Mossad agents who led the team that seized him. Eichmann’s kidnapping, trial, and hanging marked the beginning of a growing awareness that many Nazi criminals had gone unpunished, and signaled a gradual revival in interest in their crimes. It also soon spawned an outpouring of books and movies about Nazi hunters, often based more on myths than realities. I avidly read those books and watched those movies, fascinated by the characters—both the heroes and the villains—as much as by the nonstop action. There was much more than the great chase that captured the popular imagination. Especially for the postwar generation, the larger questions about the nature of the people who were objects of that chase, and even about their family and neighbors, were just as riveting. To this day, there are no easy answers to the question why so many millions of Germans and Austrians, along with collaborators in most of the lands they conquered, could have willingly enlisted in a movement dedicated to mass murder. During my stints as Newsweek’s bureau chief in Bonn, Berlin, Warsaw, and Moscow during the 1980s and 1990s, I often found myself examining the legacy of the war and the Holocaust. Whenever I lapsed into thinking I would encounter no more surprises, only variations of similar stories, I was brought up short by some startling new revelation. In late 1994, I was preparing my report for a cover story Newsweek had scheduled to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz on January 27, 1995. I had interviewed numerous survivors from many countries in Europe. Each time I was uneasy asking them to relive the horrors of those years, and I always told them to feel free to stop at any point if they felt the process was too painful. In most cases, though, the stories poured out of them; once they started, they just kept going and no further prompting was necessary. No matter how many such stories I heard, I was always mesmerized—and at times truly stunned. After interviewing a Dutch Jewish survivor whose story was particularly moving, I automatically apologized for making him go through it in such detail, saying that of course he must have told his family and friends about his odyssey many times. “I never told anyone,” he replied. Seeing my expression of disbelief, he added: “No one ever asked.” He had carried his burden all alone for fifty years. Three years later another encounter offered a glimpse of those who carry a very different kind of burden. I interviewed Niklas Frank, the son of Hans Frank, who had served as Hitler’s governor general of Poland during the occupation, presiding over an empire of death. A journalist and author who described himself as a typical European liberal, Niklas cared deeply about democratic values. He took a special interest in Poland, particularly during the 1980s when the independent trade union Solidarity was leading the human rights struggle that ultimately toppled that country’s communist regime. Born in 1939, Niklas was only seven when he saw his father for the last time in Nuremberg, shortly before he was hanged as a war criminal. Along with his mother, he was led into the prison. His father pretended that nothing was amiss. “Well, Nikki, soon we’ll all be together again for Christmas,” he said. The young boy left “seething mad,” he recalled, because he knew his father was about to be hanged. “My father lied to everyone, even his own son,” he said. Later in life he thought about what he wished his father had said instead: “Dear Nikki, I’ll be executed because I did terrible things. Don’t lead the kind of life I led.” Then came another line I will always remember. Describing his father as “a monster,” he declared: “I’m against the death penalty, but I believe my father’s execution was totally justified.” In all my years as a foreign correspondent, I had never heard anyone speak that way about a father. That sentiment led Niklas to one more conclusion. He pointed out that Frank is a common name and most people he meets don’t know that he is the son of a major war criminal unless he tells them. Nonetheless, he knows the truth and cannot put it out of his mind. “There isn’t a day when I don’t think about my father and especially everything that the Germans did,” he said. “The world will never forget this. Whenever I go abroad and say that I’m German, people think ‘Auschwitz.’ And I think that’s absolutely just.” I told Niklas that I felt lucky that I did not have to live with his sense of inherited guilt, since, as it happened, my father fought on the losing side when Germany invaded Poland in 1939. I knew that rationally the happenstance of birth is no reason to feel morally superior or inferior. Niklas knew that, too. But I fully understood why his one wish in life was to have a father he didn’t have to be ashamed of. Niklas’s attitude was hardly typical for family members of Nazi war criminals. But to my mind his raw, brutal honesty exemplified what is best in Germans today—the willingness of many of them to confront, on a daily basis, their country’s past. It took a long time for that to happen, though, and much of that would never have happened at all if it were not for the Nazi hunters and their arduous, often lonely struggles, not just in

Germany and Austria, but all over the world. That struggle is now coming to an end. Most of the Nazi hunters, along with the hunted, will soon only exist in our collective memories, where myth and reality are likely to become even more intertwined than they are today. Which is why their stories can and should be told now.