



## Guests of the Ayatollah: The Iran Hostage Crisis: The First Battle in America's War with Militant Islam

By Mark Bowden



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From the best-selling author of *Black Hawk Down* comes a riveting, definitive chronicle of the Iran hostage crisis, America's first battle with militant Islam. On November 4, 1979, a group of radical Islamist students, inspired by the revolutionary Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini, stormed the U.S. embassy in Tehran. They took fifty-two Americans hostage, and kept nearly all of them hostage for 444 days. In *Guests of the Ayatollah*, Mark Bowden tells this sweeping story through the eyes of the hostages, the soldiers in a new special forces unit sent to free them, their radical, naïve captors, and the diplomats working to end the crisis. Bowden takes us inside the hostages' cells and inside the Oval Office for meetings with President Carter and his exhausted team. We travel to international capitals where shadowy figures held clandestine negotiations, and to the deserts of Iran, where a courageous, desperate attempt to rescue the hostages exploded into tragic failure. Bowden dedicated five years to this research, including numerous trips to Iran and countless interviews with those involved on both sides. *Guests of the Ayatollah* is a detailed, brilliantly re-created, and suspenseful account of a crisis that gripped and ultimately changed the world.



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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Bowden, whose *Black Hawk Down* won him a National Book Award nomination, turns his sights to the 1979 Iran hostage crisis. The audio abridgment is generally smooth, though it's often difficult to keep the cast of characters straight: 66 original hostages, dozens of Iranian captors and untold numbers of diplomats, bureaucrats and family members. On audio, such a dizzying array of stories and backstories can become confusing. Bowden is a capable and competent narrator; while there are no tour de force performances here, the reading is solid and consistent, with no annoying vocal tics or other distractions. The real bonus of the audio over the print version is the final disc, which contains several visual enhancements: a PDF map of the embassy compound; a map of Iran, with markings not only for cities but also the landing site of the ill-fated 1980 rescue mission; and, most impressively, almost nine minutes of footage from the Discovery Channel's four-part documentary *Guests of the Ayatollah*, featuring compelling interviews with surviving members of the rescue team.

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Mark Bowden proved he knows how to tell a gripping narrative in *Black Hawk Down* and *Killing Pablo*. In this latest book he takes on a story with more immediate topical consequence, with similar results. It's a "painstaking recreation of those 444 days" (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*), told mostly from the red, white, and blue perspective. Some reviewers knock Bowden for focusing almost exclusively on the American captives and providing little insight into the motives and emotions of the Iranian hosts. Others note a tendency to get caught up in the finer details of the hostage crisis. But the skill with which he tells his story trumps all such concerns.

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From [Booklist](#)

The 1979 seizure by Iranian "students" of the U.S. embassy and the kidnapping of its diplomats was more than a national humiliation. It was arguably the most flagrant violation ever of modern international diplomatic law. The popular Bowden (*Black Hawk Down*, 1999; *Killing Pablo* 2001) recalls the episode, detailing the invasion of the embassy, the abuse meted out to the captured diplomats and several CIA officers, and President Jimmy Carter's dilemmas and decisions during the protracted year-plus crisis. The revolutionary milieu from which the kidnappers emerged is reflected in Bowden's portrayals of the student-jailers, for whom the temptation to interrogate, berate, and beat the Americans exceeded any interest in academics. Bowden keeps tension high while tracking the Americans' defiance of or acquiescence to their tormentors. Some Americans defended their dignity throughout the ordeal, which included mock executions, while others curried favor with their captors. Certainly few readers will remain neutral about the individual dramas. Bowden also details the failed rescue attempt, which resulted in further national exasperation. Bowden's work may gain additional attention from the current crisis over Iran's suspected atom bomb project. *Gilbert Taylor*

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**Maria Green:**

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**Augustus Chase:**

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**Keith Karam:**

The reason? Because this Guests of the Ayatollah: The Iran Hostage Crisis: The First Battle in America's War with Militant Islam is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap it but latter it will zap you with the secret this inside. Reading this book alongside it was fantastic author who also write the book in such remarkable way makes the content interior easier to understand, entertaining means but still convey the meaning entirely. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this nowadays or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of advantages than the other book get such as help improving your ability and your critical thinking means. So , still want to hold off having that book? If I were being you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

**Bernice Smith:**

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