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Omar Khadr, Oh Canada

By *Janice Williamson*

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In 2002 a fifteen-year-old Canadian citizen was captured in Afghanistan for allegedly killing an American soldier. A badly wounded Omar Khadr was transferred to the US Bagram Air Force base and then Guantánamo Bay detention camp. He would remain there without trial until October 2010, when a military commission admitted evidence considered tainted by Canadian courts. A plea bargain and guilty plea initiated his promised return to Canada a year later. Some Canadians see Khadr as a symbol of terrorism in action. For others he is the victim of a jihadist father and Canadian complicity in the unjust excesses, including torture, of the US "war on terror." The youngest prisoner held at Guantánamo and the only citizen of a Western country not repatriated, Khadr was formally identified by the United Nations as a child soldier. In *Omar Khadr, Oh Canada*, over thirty contributors analyze Khadr's background, his incarceration, the actions of Canadian authorities, and the implications raised by his legal case. This multi-genre book includes essays, articles, poems, a play, extended excerpts from the documentary film *You Don't Like the Truth*, and other texts produced by distinguished contributors such as Sherene Razack, General Roméo Dallaire, Charles Foran, Kim Echlin, Judith Thompson, Audrey Macklin, Shadia Drury, George Elliott Clarke, Maher Arar, Rick Salutin, and Sheema Khan. While they sometimes disagree on issues such as radical Islam and Canadian multiculturalism, they all write from the conviction that Khadr's treatment has been - and continues to be - shamefully unjust and shaped by post 9/11 Islamophobia that continues to distort the views of many Canadians. Many Canadians are dismayed by the government's behaviour toward Omar Khadr. Adding strong and articulate voices to the debate, *Omar Khadr, Oh Canada* will educate and inform readers as his story continues to unfold. Contributors include:

- Maher Arar, human rights activist and journalist.
- Craig Kielburger, child labour activist and co-founder of "Free the Children Foundation."
- George Elliott Clarke, poet, playwright and English professor at the University of Toronto.
- Luc Côté and Patricio Henriquez, screenwriters, directors, cinematographers, and producers of the documentary "You Don't Like the Truth - 4 Days Inside Guantánamo."
- LGen Roméo A. Dallaire commanded the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda in 1994 and was appointed to the Senate of Canada in 2005.
- Gail Davidson, executive director, Lawyer's Rights Watch Canada.
- Nathalie des Rosiers, General Counsel, Canadian Civil Liberties Association.
- Robert Diab, lawyer and faculty member of Capilano University.
- Alnoor Gova, broadcaster and PhD student, Simon Fraser University.
- Shadia Drury, CRC Chair in Social Justice, University of Regina.
- Kim Echlin, novelist, essayist, film producer.
- Dennis Edney, former lawyer of Omar Khadr.
- Charles Foran novelist, biographer.
- Deborah Gorham history professor, Carleton University.

Yasmin Jiwani, associate professor in the department of Communication Studies at Concordia University. - Hasnain Khan, graduate student in political economy of international development at the University of Toronto. - Andy Knight, chair of the department of political science and professor of international relations at the University of Alberta. - John McCoy, PhD candidate in political science at the University of Alberta. - Sheema Khan, Globe & Mail columnist and author of Of Hockey & Hijabs - Audrey Macklin, member of the law faculty at the University of Toronto. - Monia Mazigh, human rights activist and author. - Marina Nemat, human rights activist and memoirist, author of Prisoner of Tehran and After Tehran. - Gar Pardy former diplomat, commentator and writer, served in Canada's foreign service from 1967 to 2003. - Sheila Pratt, Edmonton Journal journalist and author. - Sherene Razack, professor of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education, OISE, University of Toronto. - Rick Salutin,

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Editorial Review

Review

"A very important contribution to this very serious matter of a Canadian whose fundamental human rights have been abused with official complicity." Reg Whitaker, University of Victoria

"Williamson's book shines a dazzling beam into the prison of atrocity and helps us understand how hatred drives legal, governmental, and social policy, sanitizing it all the while. When we look away, Canada becomes as ugly as any extant torture state. Kee

About the Author

Janice Williamson is professor in English and Film Studies, University of Alberta.

Users Review

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