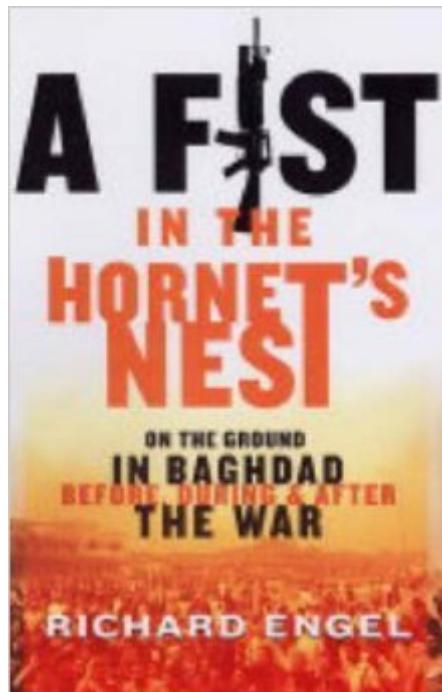


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# A Fist In The Hornet's Nest: On The Ground In Baghdad Before, During & After The War



## **Synopsis**

Now in paperback, an insightful book that answers the questions that America wants answered. Based on his private journals and his public interviews, *A Fist in the Hornet's Nest* is Richard Engel's harrowing, fascinating, and informative view of Iraq from street level. Through his wartime reportage, Engel has emerged as one of the preeminent journalists of his generation and an invaluable source on Middle Eastern affairs. For those in search of an in-depth analysis or those trying to make sense of the recent war, Engel's book is as elucidating as it is riveting. His critical assessments for the future of the Gulf region and his analysis of where the American campaign succeeded and where, in some instances, it has failed constitute a book that is sure to be an invaluable contribution to the Middle Eastern debate for years to come.

## **Book Information**

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: Hyperion (February 9, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1401307620

ISBN-13: 978-1401307622

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (30 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #735,597 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #88 in Books > History > Military > United States > Operation Desert Storm #308 in Books > History > Middle East > Iraq #743 in Books > History > Military > Iraq War

## **Customer Reviews**

Richard Engel's "A Fist in the Hornet's Nest" is a stunning book, as absorbing for me as the Richard Halliburton books that I read and reread in my youth. Engel's own saga of living in the Cairo slums to learn the language and the culture is remarkable; and his decision then to move to Iraq without prospects of employment is courageous. The writing is intelligent and illuminating and yet so unpretentious I had the feeling that I was listening to a close friend describing the realities of a living adventure. I am left with vivid images of the writer's relationships with shopkeepers, drivers, secret agents, terrorists, thieves, Iraqi top officials and the military. The book is comprehensive, providing as it does, a knowledgeable exploration of the causes, problems and future issues that grip Iraq. I recommend it enthusiastically. William H. Kaven , Ph.D. Professor Emeritus, Economics and

This book is full of youthful exuberance, fear, concern and wonder. It is the story of a rather self-starter of a reporter and his time covering the war in Iraq. The author starts that book with a chapter on how he moved from the US to the Middle East to start a career in journalism. He then jumps into the path he took going into Iraq without a news organization to work for and on a "Human Shield" visa. I could not tell if this very risky adventure was all bravery, desperation or stupidity, but it worked out for the author. It is a lesson in how corrupt and lazy government officials can be paid off for rather small amounts of good old cash. The author covers the pre war condition in Baghdad and what it takes to survive. The picture he paints is very interesting. It turned on my head a number of the recent impressions I had heard about the conditions in Iraq pre war. He does state it was difficult, but he could find the essentials for life in the markets. I was surprised by some of the rather carefree ways he was able to lose his minders and roam around town talking to whomever he wanted to. It started me thinking that if a young reporter with no experience in Baghdad can do this then why could not professional CIA staff been able to do the same? The book picks up with the war and the author has some interesting, but not overly exciting experiences to share. As he was not an embedded reporter, he saw the war from the finish line so that once Baghdad fell his brief glimpse of war was over. He then covered the turmoil after the American army took over, the looting and random violence. If you followed the war on TV this reporting was nothing really that new or exciting, but very interesting. Overall the book was good, easy to read and fast paced. It did slow down at the end when the author went from reporting to providing his opinions on what the military and Bush Administration did not do correctly in a Monday morning quarterback style. The book just did not have enough extra to get it to the top of the charts in my opinion.

This is an interesting account by Richard Engel, who gets my vote for bravery, when he stays in Baghdad as the war arrives. His descriptions of the events, and in particular, the reaction of the people on the streets, shops, and restaurants are surreal. For example, while US bombs are falling on the city, people in the restaurant don't even acknowledge what is going on due to their fear of Saddam's regime. The story seems quite balanced. I was surprised to read his stance on the war, which I won't reveal. Pick it up, you won't be disappointed.

Richard Engel's new book, "A Fist in the Hornet's Nest", gives us a rare look into Iraq at the time of last year's American invasion. Nicely setting the tone of pre-war Iraq, Engel then takes us down the

path of a city...Baghdad... in the sudden throes of war. Combining ingenuity, "street smarts" and a certain amount of luck, he gives us a view that no embedded correspondent could have done....a view that incorporates ordinary Iraqis going about their daily life with the inevitable hardships that they faced, and still do. The author is not shy about revealing his own thoughts regarding the American attack and occupation, but he does so in a way that offers perspectives based on what he saw, the people with whom he spoke and his general knowledge of the Middle East, having lived there prior to April, 2003."A Fist in the Hornet's Nest" could be more rightly described as a journal although he doesn't proceed in an exact timeline format. Richard Engel's writing is crisp and articulate and moves forward with a sense of urgency. He has provided a valuable addition to the history of this war and an assessment of where it might go.

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