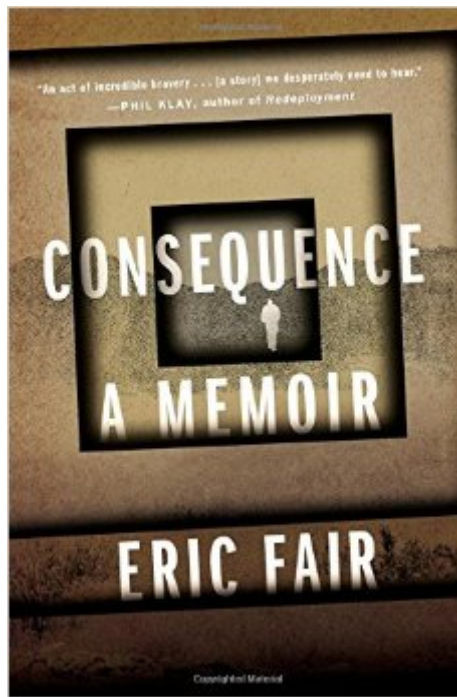


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# Consequence: A Memoir



## Synopsis

A man questions everything--his faith, his morality, his country--as he recounts his experience as an interrogator in Iraq; an unprecedented memoir and "an act of incredible bravery" (Phil Klay)"Remarkable... Both an agonized confession and a chilling expose of one of the darkest interludes of the War on Terror. Only this kind of courage and honesty can bring America back to the democratic values that we are so rightfully proud of." --Sebastian Junger

Consequence is the story of Eric Fair, a kid who grew up in the shadows of crumbling Bethlehem Steel plants nurturing a strong faith and a belief that he was called to serve his country. It is a story of a man who chases his own demons from Egypt, where he served as an Army translator, to a detention center in Iraq, to seminary at Princeton, and eventually, to a heart transplant ward at the University of Pennsylvania. In 2004, after several months as an interrogator with a private contractor in Iraq, Eric Fair's nightmares take new forms: first, there had been the shrinking dreams; now the liquid dreams begin. By the time he leaves Iraq after that first deployment (he will return), Fair will have participated in or witnessed a variety of aggressive interrogation techniques including sleep deprivation, stress positions, diet manipulation, exposure, and isolation. Years later, his health and marriage crumbling, haunted by the role he played in what we now know as "enhanced interrogation," it is Fair's desire to speak out that becomes a key to his survival. Spare and haunting, Eric Fair's memoir is both a brave, unrelenting confession and a book that questions the very depths of who he, and we as a country, have become.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Eric Fair's memoir, *CONSEQUENCE*, is a riveting and compelling read, but it is not a pleasant one. You will find yourself wincing repeatedly at his coldly matter-of-fact and unflinching descriptions of his experience as an interrogator in Iraq, working as a civilian contractor for the notorious CACI (Consolidated Analysis Center, Incorporated). Indeed the company was so secretive and unforthcoming that Fair and many of his co-workers didn't even know what CACI stood for. *CONSEQUENCE* is so disturbing that it is a hard book to critique. Fair, who grew up a chubby, bullied kid in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, came from a staunchly Presbyterian family, and religion played a pivotal role in his life. He was active in church youth groups and attended a Christian college for a year before transferring to Boston U. He then enlisted in the Army, where he learned Arabic at DLIFLC in Monterey, California. Then on to Airborne and Special Ops training and a tour in Egypt. A long way from the shy kid who was mercilessly bullied. He also drifted away from his religious roots. After the army he marries and joins the Bethlehem Police force, but after a few years he learned he had a rare heart defect, which effectively ended his law enforcement career. Then, leveraging his army training and language skills, he signs on with the infamous CACI and heads to Iraq to join a growing cadre of civilian contractors. He is, from the beginning, repulsed by what he witnesses in this job, and then, gradually finds himself becoming part of it all. Remember the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, where a handful of low-ranking military types took the fall for torture and mistreatment of prisoners? Well they were merely scapegoats. The orders came from much higher up, and the civilian contractors were in just as deep.

There is no salvation or redemption for Eric Fair's mind. He went to war in Iraq, and like thousands of others, he is tortured by what he lived, what he did, his inability to make up for it, to address it, live with it, or get past it. He is a changed man, and none of it for the better. All he wanted to do was be a policeman. The way he sees his pre-Iraq life now is a slow, frustrating deterioration, losing his religion, his values and his self-respect. A high paying job in Iraq seemed just the ticket to escape himself. After all, the Army had made him an Arabic expert. Once back in the US, Iraq seemed the only place he could hide his shame. He is wracked by guilt and humiliation. As is so typical of veterans, he is subject to recurring, worsening nightmares and vicious fits of uncontrollable anger, triggered by little or nothing. Alcohol becomes his constant companion. He works hard to push his wife away. So he goes back to Iraq, getting horrible advice from his supervisor at the NSA: "You were born for this war." It was not true but it has become his reality. It is either Iraq or suicide, and he hopes Iraq will take care of that, too. When he comes

home, his faulty heart catches up with him, and still in his thirties, has to undergo a heart transplant. This is of course the most stressful thing you can imagine, which only makes the Fairs wonder if there actually is a bottom anywhere. He has survived to write this memoir. Fair's writing is all in the present tense. He has relived these events so many times, they seem crystal clear in front of him. His sentences are all short, declarative, and active voice. There is not a lot of color and few adjectives. His memories unroll before us as if they belonged to someone else.

**CONSEQUENCE: A MEMOIR** by Eric Fair is a book about Eric's life as a Presbyterian, a veteran, a police officer, an interrogator, a husband and a father. Eric's most trying portion of his life, by far, was as an interrogator in Iraq in 2004-2005 and how the repercussions of that job have affected and haunted him since. According to Eric, he hasn't defeated his personal demons, but he continues to try. The first thing that hits the reader in **CONSEQUENCE: A MEMOIR** is that Fair is about as straightforward as a writer can be. There are no wasted words, no elaborate paragraphs setting the scene, and no cries for sympathy for a young man who has made, according to him, many mistakes in his life. There is very little light and/or funny things in the book, but I still found the book quite engaging and it challenged my feelings/convictions about war, torture, and religion. There is a certain sadness as Fair talks constantly about choices he should have made but ended up not, sometimes because of a compulsion, sometimes it almost seemed like he would rather not make a choice, because making a choice was too hard and he could just put his head down and continue on. Without flowery, beautiful prose, Fair writes about how his wife is incredible to him, and without saying it in the book, it's clear he knows that he owes her for standing by him while he fights his demons. I think that Fair also bring to light the debate of when is torture necessary and to what extend? He writes about things he did and how he knew they were wrong, but that in the moment he couldn't help himself because he felt his torture was somehow retribution for someone else's suffering.

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