



## We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories From Rwanda (Bestselling Backlist)

By Philip Gourevitch

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**We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories From Rwanda (Bestselling Backlist)** By Philip Gourevitch

**An unforgettable firsthand account of a people's response to genocide and what it tells us about humanity.**

This remarkable debut book chronicles what has happened in Rwanda and neighboring states since 1994, when the Rwandan government called on everyone in the Hutu majority to murder everyone in the Tutsi minority. Though the killing was low-tech--largely by machete--it was carried out at shocking speed: some 800,000 people were exterminated in a hundred days. A Tutsi pastor, in a letter to his church president, a Hutu, used the chilling phrase that gives Philip Gourevitch his title.

With keen dramatic intensity, Gourevitch frames the genesis and horror of Rwanda's "genocidal logic" in the anguish of its aftermath: the mass displacements, the temptations of revenge and the quest for justice, the impossibly crowded prisons and refugee camps. Through intimate portraits of Rwandans in all walks of life, he focuses on the psychological and political challenges of survival and on how the new leaders of postcolonial Africa went to war in the Congo when resurgent genocidal forces threatened to overrun central Africa.

Can a country composed largely of perpetrators and victims create a cohesive national society? This moving contribution to the literature of witness tells us much about the struggle everywhere to forge sane, habitable political orders, and about the stubbornness of the human spirit in a world of extremity.

*We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families* is the winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction.

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

"Hutus kill Tutsis, then Tutsis kill Hutus--if that's really all there is to it, then no wonder we can't be bothered with it," Philip Gourevitch writes, imagining the response of somebody in a country far from the ethnic strife and mass killings of Rwanda. But the situation is not so simple, and in this complex and wrenching book, he explains why the Rwandan genocide should not be written off as just another tribal dispute.

The "stories" in this book's subtitle are both the author's, as he repeatedly visits this tiny country in an attempt to make sense of what has happened, and those of the people he interviews. These include a Tutsi doctor who has seen much of her family killed over decades of Tutsi oppression, a Schindleresque hotel manager who hid hundreds of refugees from certain death, and a Rwandan bishop who has been accused of supporting the slaughter of Tutsi schoolchildren, and can only answer these charges by saying, "What could I do?" Gourevitch, a staff writer for the *New Yorker*, describes Rwanda's history with remarkable clarity and documents the experience of tragedy with a sober grace. The reader will ask along with the author: Why does this happen? And why don't we bother to stop it? --*Maria Dolan*

#### From Publishers Weekly

What courage must it have required to research and write this book? And who will read such a ghastly chronicle? Gourevitch, who reported from Rwanda for the *New Yorker*, faces these questions up front: "The best reason I have come up with for looking more closely into Rwanda's stories is that ignoring them makes me even more uncomfortable about existence and my place in it." The stories are unrelentingly horrifying and filled with "the idiocy, the waste, the sheer wrongness" of one group of Rwandans (Hutus) methodically exterminating another (Tutsis). With 800,000 people killed in 100 days, Gourevitch found many numbed Rwandans who had lost whole families to the machete. He discovered a few admirable characters, including hotelier Paul Rusesabagina, who, "armed with nothing but a liquor cabinet, a phone line, an internationally famous address, and his spirit of resistance," managed to save refugees in his Hotel des Milles Collines in Kigali. General Paul Kagame, one of Gourevitch's main sources in the new government, offers another bleak and consistent voice of truth. But failure is everywhere. Gourevitch excoriates the French for supporting the Hutus for essentially racist reasons; the international relief agencies, which he characterizes as largely devoid of moral courage; and the surrounding countries that preyed on the millions of refugees many fleeing the consequences of their part in the killings. As the Rwandans try to rebuild their lives while awaiting the slow-moving justice system, the careful yet passionate advocacy of reporters like Gourevitch serves to remind both Rwandans and others that genocide occurred in this decade while the world looked on.

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#### From Library Journal

In 1994, the world was informed of the inexplicable mass killings in Rwanda, in which over 800,000 were killed in 100 days. Gourevitch, a staff writer for *The New Yorker*, spent over three years putting together an oral history of the mass killing that occurred in this small country. He interviewed the survivors, who told him their horror stories of violence. Most of the killings were done with a machete. Friends killed friends, teachers killed students, and professional workers killed co-workers. The United Nations was slow in reacting to this crisis and refused to classify the incident as genocide. The title of this book comes from a Tutsi pastor's letter to his church president, a Hutu. While this is a powerful book, it sometimes bogs down in the details of Rwandan politics. It is doubtful the average reader will want to pick it up, but the history of this genocide must be told. This book should find itself on the shelves of academic libraries where African history collections are strong.

-?Michael Sawyer, *Northwestern Regional Lib., Elkin, NC*

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### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Carrie Grogan:**

The book *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories From Rwanda (Bestselling Backlist)* gives you the sense of being enjoy for your spare time. You can use to make your capable much more increase. Book can being your best friend when you getting strain or having big problem with the subject. If you can make reading a book *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories From Rwanda (Bestselling Backlist)* for being your habit, you can get a lot more advantages, like add your personal capable, increase your knowledge about a number of or all subjects. You could know everything if you like open and read a guide *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories From Rwanda (Bestselling Backlist)*. Kinds of book are several. It means that, science publication or encyclopedia or other people. So , how do you think about this reserve?

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#### **Donald Chen:**

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