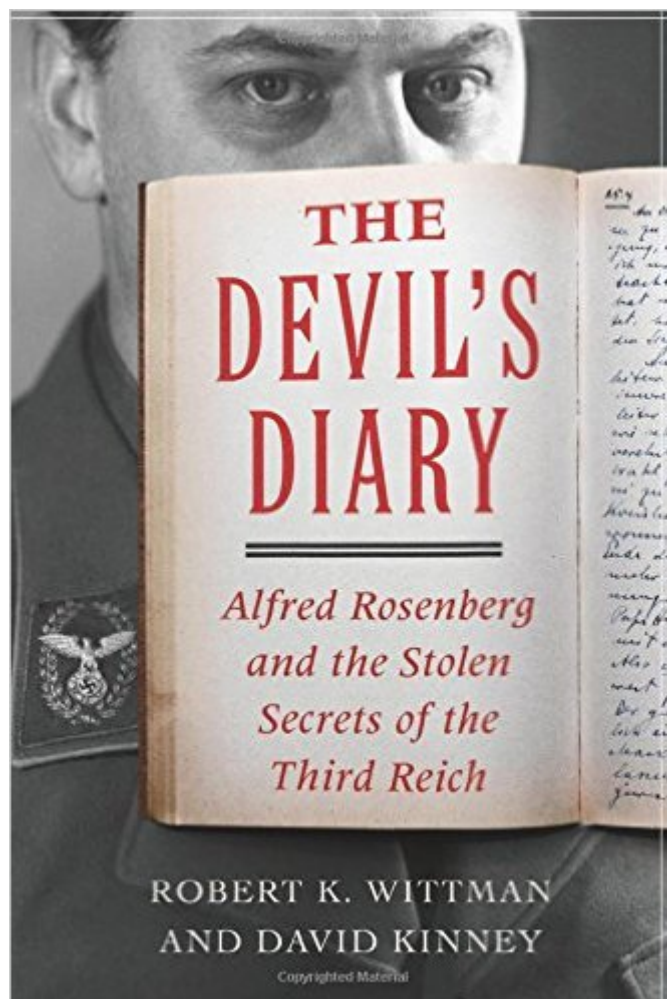


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The Devil's Diary: Alfred Rosenberg And The Stolen Secrets Of The Third Reich



Synopsis

A groundbreaking World War II narrative wrapped in a riveting detective story, *The Devil's Diary* investigates the disappearance of a private diary penned by one of Adolf Hitler's top aides—Alfred Rosenberg, his chief philosopher—and mines its long-hidden pages to deliver a fresh, eye-opening account of the Nazi rise to power and the genesis of the Holocaust. An influential figure in Hitler's early inner circle from the start, Alfred Rosenberg made his name spreading toxic ideas about the Jews throughout Germany. By the dawn of the Third Reich, he had published a bestselling masterwork that was a touchstone of Nazi thinking. His diary was discovered hidden in a Bavarian castle at war's end—five hundred pages providing a harrowing glimpse into the mind of a man whose ideas set the stage for the Holocaust. Prosecutors examined it during the Nuremberg war crimes trial, but after Rosenberg was convicted, sentenced, and executed, it mysteriously vanished. New York Times bestselling author Robert K. Wittman, who as an FBI agent and then a private consultant specialized in recovering artifacts of historic significance, first learned of the diary in 2001, when the chief archivist for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum contacted him to say that someone was trying to sell it for upwards of a million dollars. The phone call sparked a decade-long hunt that took them on a twisting path involving a pair of octogenarian secretaries, an eccentric professor, and an opportunistic trash-picker. From the crusading Nuremberg prosecutor who smuggled the diary out of Germany to the man who finally turned it over, everyone had reasons for hiding the truth. Drawing on Rosenberg's entries about his role in the seizure of priceless artwork and the brutal occupation of the Soviet Union, his conversations with Hitler and his endless rivalries with Göring, Goebbels, and Himmler, *The Devil's Diary* offers vital historical insight of unprecedented scope and intimacy into the innermost workings of the Nazi regime—and into the psyche of the man whose radical vision mutated into the Final Solution.

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Customer Reviews

There can never be too many books about the Nazis and the Holocaust. Evil must be remembered and those memories must be preserved forever. The Devil's Diary is a parallel story: first it is the biography of one of the most central, yet today lesser known, Nazi leaders, Alfred Rosenberg (the author of the diary). Secondly it is also a biography of Robert Kempner, the German Jew from a prominent and secularized family who was forced to flee the Third Reich, became one of the Nuremberg prosecutors after World War II, and who obtained Rosenberg's diary. Finally it is the story of the modern day search for and recovery of the diary, which is now safely held in the archives of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. The book is fascinating on several levels. First, it is an intriguing story of research and detection as the search for and discovery of the diary is recounted. Secondly, the sections on Alfred Rosenberg and his fellow Nazi leaders, including much material on the Final Solution, is valuable for reminding us not only of the terrible evil that took place, but also of the banality and commonplaceness of the men who perpetrated it. Alfred Rosenberg was a nonentity with a third rate intellect who produced a long and turgid "history" remarkable for being even less readable than Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf. It is well for all of us to be reminded that the people who are responsible for terrible events are often, or even usually, nothing special in themselves. Thirdly, the sections on Robert Kempner remind us that brilliant and talented people do exist, and that while they have their own flaws and imperfections they do accomplish a great deal of value. The Devil's Diary is a well written and intriguing book.

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