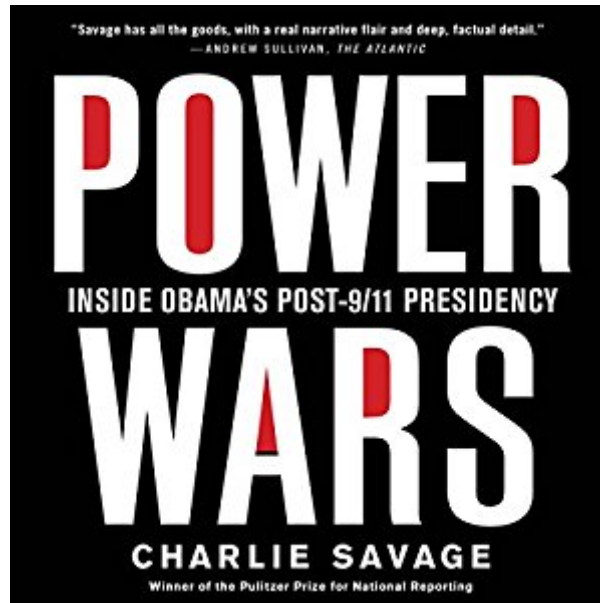


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Power Wars: Inside Obama's Post-9/11 Presidency



Synopsis

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Charlie Savage's penetrating investigation of the Obama presidency and the national security state. Barack Obama campaigned on a promise of change from George W. Bush's "global war on terror". Yet from indefinite detention and drone strikes to surveillance and military tribunals, Obama ended up continuing - and in some cases expanding - many policies he inherited. What happened? In *Power Wars*, Charlie Savage looks inside the Obama administration's national security legal and policy team in a way that no one has before. Based on exclusive interviews with more than 150 current and former officials and access to previously unreported documents, he lays bare their internal deliberations, including emotional debates over the fates of detainees held on torture-tainted evidence and acts of war that lacked congressional authorization. He tells the inside stories of how Obama came to order the killing of an American citizen, preside over an unprecedented crackdown on leaks, and keep a then-secret National Security Agency program that collected records of every American's phone calls. Savage also pieces together the first comprehensive history of how American surveillance secretly developed over the past 35 years, synthesizing recent revelations and filling in gaps with new reporting. And he provides lucid explanations of legal dilemmas in a way that nonlawyers can understand. Highlighted by new information about the pivotal aftermath to the failed Christmas underwear bombing and the planning for the Osama bin Laden raid, Savage's own eyewitness reporting at Guantánamo, and detailed accounts of closed-door meetings at the highest levels of government, *Power Wars* equips listeners to understand the legacy of Obama's presidency.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Power Wars: Inside Obama's Post 9/11 Presidency" is special to me for two selfish reasons: 1) I am Barack's sixth cousin once removed and 2) I went to high school with author Charlie Savage, a news-loving track and cross country runner. My first point means nothing. I will never meet my Nobel Peace Prize-winning relative, Barack Obama. Yet I squirmed at Savage's unflinching portrait that pursued truth above Camelot fantasy. My second point means everything. As a teenage athlete, Savage had stamina covering uncomfortable and often uncelebrated distances. (In Indiana, glory beamed on basketball players, less on guys running in the rain). As editor of the school paper, his diligence garnered city-wide attention as he churned out articles on controversial topics, including race relations in our own cafeteria. Power Wars is a 698-page volume that proves Savage is the same young man I knew back in Fort Wayne, Ind. In relentless detail, mile by mile, Savage documented a turning point of the Obama Administration -- Christmas Day 2009 -- when Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab boarded Flight 253 to Detroit and injected chemicals into a compound bomb hidden in his underwear. Abdulmutallab was almost successful in his attempt to kill passengers and martyr himself in an act of jihad. Instead, his crime increased already high levels of paranoia. While Obama criticized his predecessor's global war on terror, his administration often strengthened Bush policies and made them legal. Savage wrote: "If the Bush years can be caricatured as government by cowboy, energetic but shooting from the hip, the Obama era was government by lawyer, methodical and precise -- sometimes to a fault." In Chapter 3, "Acting Like Bush," Savage added that Obama was no dove and never had been.

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