

An Ordinary Man: The True Story Behind 'Hotel Rwanda'

By Paul Rusesabagina

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The riveting life story of Paul Rusesabagina—the man whose heroism inspired the film *Hotel Rwanda*

As his country was being torn apart by violence during the Rwandan genocide of 1994, hotel manager Paul Rusesabagina—the "Oskar Schindler of Africa"—refused to bow to the madness that surrounded him. Confronting killers with a combination of diplomacy, flattery, and deception, he offered shelter to more than twelve thousand members of the Tutsi clan and Hutu moderates, while homicidal mobs raged outside with machetes.

An Ordinary Man explores what the Academy Award-nominated film *Hotel Rwanda* could not: the inner life of the man who became one of the most prominent public faces of that terrible conflict. Rusesabagina tells for the first time the full story of his life—growing up as the son of a rural farmer, the child of a mixed marriage, his extraordinary career path which led him to become the first Rwandan manager of the Belgian-owned Hotel Milles Collines—all of which contributed to his heroic actions in the face of such horror. He will also bring the reader inside the hotel for those one hundred terrible days depicted in the film, relating the anguish of those who watched as their loved ones were hacked to pieces and the betrayal that he felt as a result of the UN's refusal to help at this time of crisis.

Including never-before-reported details of the Rwandan genocide, *An Ordinary Man* is sure to become a classic of tolerance literature, joining such books as Thomas Keneally's *Schindler's List*, Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*, and Elie Wiesel's *Night*. Paul Rusesabagina's autobiography is the story of one man who did not let fear get the better of him—a man who found within himself a vast reserve of courage and bravery, and showed the world how one "ordinary man" can become a hero.



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
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An Ordinary Man: The True Story Behind 'Hotel Rwanda' By Paul Rusesabagina Bibliography

- Rank: #6263358 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC
- Published on: 2006
- Format: Import
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: .0" h x .0" w x .0" l, 1.32 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 288 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. For former hotel manager Paul Rusesabagina, words are the most powerful weapon in the human arsenal. For good and for evil, as was the case in the spring of 1994 in Rwanda. Over 100 days, some 800,000 people were slaughtered, most hacked to death by machete. Rusesabagina—inspiration for the movie *Hotel Rwanda*—used his facility with words and persuasion to save 1,268 of his fellow countrymen, turning the Belgian luxury hotel under his charge into a sanctuary from madness. Through negotiation, favor, flattery and deception, Rusesabagina managed to keep his "guests" alive another day despite the homicidal gangs just beyond the fence and the world's failure to act. Narrator Hoffman delivers those words in a stirring audio performance. With a crisp African accent, Hoffman renders each sentence with heartfelt conviction and flat-out becomes Rusesabagina. The humble hotel manager not only illuminates the machinery behind the genocide but delves into Rwanda's complex and colorful cultural history as well as his own childhood, the son of a Hutu father and Tutsi mother. Hoffman successfully draws out the understated elegance of Rusesabagina's simple and straightforward prose, lending the story added vividness. This tale of good, evil and moral responsibility winds down with Rusesabagina visiting a church outside Kigali where thousands were massacred and where a multilingual sign-cloth now pledges, "Never Again." He once more stops to consider words, the ones he worries lack true conviction—like those at the church—as well as the ones with the power to heal. For the listener, the words of Paul Rusesabagina won't soon be forgotten. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Review

Rusesabagina . . . weaves his country's history with his personal history into a rich narrative that attempts to explain the unexplainable. . . . The book's emotional power comes from his understatement and humility. (*The Boston Globe*)

An extraordinary cautionary tale. (*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*)

Rusesabagina's story of survival amid manic slaughter is as awful as it is gripping. (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*)

Read this book. It will humble and inspire you. (*Sunday Telegraph*, London)

Extraordinary—horrific and tragic, but also inspiring, because Rusesabagina refuses to give up his belief in the basic decency of humanity. (*The Times*, London)

About the Author

Paul Rusesabagina was the first Rwandan manager of the Hotel Milles Collines, a European-owned luxury hotel in Rwanda. A recipient of the National Civil Rights Museum's 2005 Freedom Award, he lives in Brussels, Belgium.

Tom Zoellner has worked as a contributing editor for *Men's Health* magazine and as a reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. His book *The Heartless Stone: A Journey Through the World of Diamonds and Desire* will be published in the summer of 2006.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Todd Pfeifer:

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