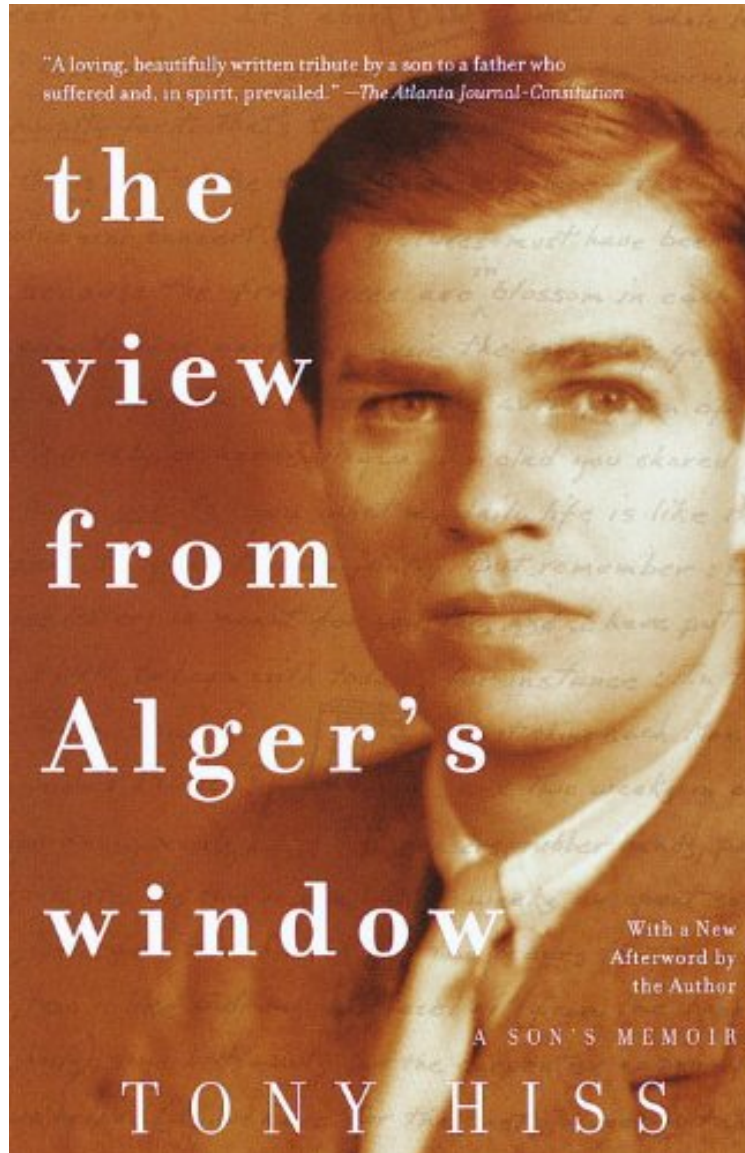


(Mobile book) The View from Alger's Window: A Son's Memoir

The View from Alger's Window: A Son's Memoir

Von Tony Hiss

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Von Tony Hiss : The View from Alger's Window: A Son's Memoir before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The View from Alger's Window: A Son's Memoir:

Kundenrezensionen Hilfreichste Kundenrezensionen 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Strangely Fascinating Von Ein Kunde I enjoyed this book for many of the reasons some writers here hated it, the author just doesn't quite "get" that his father was a spy, and while I don't care one whit about the history of the cold war

(which is ancient history to me) I was fascinated by this son's attempt to romanticize his father and decipher a relationship which was, at different times, warm and false. Who really gets to know the core thoughts of his or her parents? Not Tony. But I don't think that makes him so unusual. There's something strangely fascinating about the halo most children give to their parents. Alger Hiss was at peace with himself, it seems clear in hindsight, because he either believed in his work as a spy (something which isn't all that unusual for those times) or he was one of those people who could delude himself into thinking that night was day (also not that unusual, call it OJ Simpson-itis). One gets no clue from this book that the son ever got into the head of the father when it comes to these questions, and yet I think that makes it an interesting document, how many adult children can say the same thing? Those who read this book uncritically, of course, and don't see the cat and mouse game that the author is playing with himself, are being silly. 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A dishonest work that sheds no light on its subject Von Oliver Kamml have already contributed a review of this book, and neither intend nor ought to rebut other customers' comments. But I do consider one characteristic - or rather grievous sin of omission - of this book to be worth dwelling on. It is an extraordinarily disingenuous pose to say that we can never know for sure whether or not Alger Hiss was guilty of spying for the Soviet Union. It is equally so to suggest that Hiss's guilt has no bearing on the quality of his son's memoir. You don't need to be a "doctrinaire Right-winger" (a position that I for one, as a "vital center" liberal, assuredly do not hold to) to observe that Hiss's guilt is no longer a matter of the slightest historical dispute. The proof is there, in the public domain. The overwhelming circumstantial evidence was set out by Allen Weinstein in his outstanding study "Perjury" two decades ago. The definitive, unarguable proof is set out in Klehr and Haynes's "Venona", published just this year. Hiss's guilt is a fact, regardless of one's ideological predispositions. Now, Tony Hiss must know this. He alludes to, but at no point engages with, Weinstein's superb book. He will not have read Klehr and Haynes' work before writing his own book, but he will certainly have known of the contents of the Venona decrypts. Yet at no point in his book does he come to terms with this distinctive feature of his father's life: that Alger Hiss was a liar and a traitor, who betrayed his country, a liberal democracy, in favour of a murderous, expansionist and totalitarian power. This is what makes Tony Hiss's book so bizarre. Espionage, deceit and totalitarianism ARE the salient features of his father's life. Had Tony Hiss written a study of how a gifted and intelligent man came to acquire and discharge these characteristics it would have been a fascinating study. Yet he doesn't mention them at all; it's as if the offspring of Albert Speer were to write a biography that made no mention of the man's service to Nazi Germany. That omission is what makes the book, as I said in my earlier review, mawkish and dishonest - and a quite baffling publishing phenomenon. 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A lovingly crafted memoir of a noteworthy American Von Richard E. Hegner Tony Hiss's book is one of the best books I've had the chance to read in recent years. He has made a concentrated attempt to put himself in his father's place during the nearly four years Alger Hiss spent in prison. It is thus truly an inside picture of Alger, his prison experience, and the forced separation from his family and friends. The author has combed his parents' letters from this period and has revealed much from them that give insights into Alger and Priscilla Hiss and the nature of their unusual marriage. Unlike some of the doctrinaire right wingers who have contributed other reviews to .com, I don't know if we'll ever know if Alger Hiss was guilty of espionage. Nor do I entirely agree with the thesis that if Alger was able to write such wonderful letters to his wife and son, he could not have been a Communist or a traitor. Suffice it to say, he did suffer a great fall in prestige and a public humiliation like few people in American history. Yet he remained remarkably unbiting about his experience. And as Tony demonstrates, prison made him a more complete human being. Yet, regardless of his guilt, he paid a high price, and this book helps the reader understand the nature of that price. Tony Hiss is remarkably open about many aspects of his family in this memorable book that I found hard to put down.

Kurzbeschreibung The View from Alger's Window is Tony Hiss's remarkable memoir of the trial and imprisonment of one of the most famous victims of the Cold War witch-hunts: his father. Tony Hiss was seven years old when Whittaker Chambers first accused Alger Hiss of passing secrets to the Russians. For the rest of his childhood, Tony and his family experienced the cruelties and intimidations of the time. Drawing on hundreds of letters Alger sent from prison, the author counters public perceptions of Hiss and shows the fundamental decency and essential goodness of his father and, along the way, draws a compelling portrait of an innocent man. At the same time he lets us see how adversity drew this father and son together, allowing them to achieve a closeness they might never have been able to otherwise. Beautifully written, wise, The View from Alger's Window sheds new light on a family, a time, an accusation, and a man whose guilt or innocence continues to inspire debate. From the Trade Paperback edition. de Although Tony Hiss firmly disbelieves the charge that his father was a Soviet agent who passed along State Department documents, the guilt or innocence of Alger Hiss is not entirely the point of this memoir. Instead, drawing on the letters Alger sent his wife and son during the nearly four years he spent in federal prison during the early 1950s, Tony Hiss reveals "the essence that Alger had kept private for so long," an "effervescent and playful" self far more appealing than the rather wooden, lawyerly public persona he adopted when defending himself during the trial. The

warm human being who made friends easily, even in jail, was seldom available to his young son during the busy years that preceded Alger's incarceration. Their relationship deepened during his imprisonment, enabling Tony to endure those difficult years of deprivation and separation. Without minimizing the stresses on his family--Tony was plagued by bad dreams and inexplicable accidents; his parents separated a few years after Alger's release--the author emphasizes the courage and nobility of his father, who strove to find occasions for joy even behind bars. This is a moving, very human portrait of a man who in other accounts is usually either demonized or sanctified. --Wendy Smith.com

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