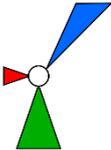


1558 CA3

bncdoc.id	ECU
bncdoc.year	1991
bncdoc.title	Esquire.
bncdoc.info	Esquire. Sample containing about 57556 words from a periodical (domain: arts)
Text availability	Ownership has not been claimed
Publication date	1985-1993
Text type	Written books and periodicals
David Lee's classification	W_pop_lore

<1558/c>	as a sign of a new attack. There is no doubt about who Iraqis, almost without exception, blame for what happened to them. Saddam's nightly appearances on television are now greeted, at least in private, with ribald commentary. Sadoon Hamadi, the new prime minister, said at a press conference: 'What is intended to starve the Iraqi people so that they revolt and change their leader Saddam Hussein.'
 <p>Key: Footprint ConEn1 Footprint ConEn2 Footprint ConEn3</p>	<p>The Security Council always tut-tutted when anybody suggested that it was trying to starve anybody to death, but if sanctions were going to be effective then people would die because they did not get enough to eat. Already, the official ration provides only a third of people's needs. One way of checking what people are eating is to see what they throw away. An aid specialist had told me that before the Gulf crisis about thirty per cent of the rubbish collected by the Baghdad municipality was food scraps. Today the garbage contains no scraps of food whatsoever. Not everybody has had a bad war. One day I visited a village called Temia, fifty miles south of Baghdad. Like most Iraqi villages in the flat Mesopotamian plain, it has no centre but is, rather, a rambling collection of houses facing onto inner courtyards, all concealed from the unpaved streets by brown mud brick walls. In the torrid heat of the afternoon the village seemed deserted so I hammered on an iron gate. The house turned out to be owned by an elderly man in white robes called Obed Hindi Ferkhan, who lived there with his extended family. He invited me onto the guest room, its walls decorated with pictures of Shiah Moslem saints, flanked by two pictures of Saddam Hussein in military uniform. He was clearly nervous about having a foreigner in his house, but he also wanted to be hospitable. A lamb I had seen munching hay in the courtyard was duly killed for lunch. Ferkhan's main business, he explained, was spare car parts which he either bought from abroad or took from wrecked vehicles he bought up cheap. Sanctions meant he could no longer import spares but the value of his existing stock had increased tenfold. Ferkhan also owned land near the village and complained that lack of electricity meant that he could not pump water to his field and, as a result, he had grown only twenty tons of melons compared to eighty before the war ... Even in the villages, people talk more or less openly against Saddam. 'At first we rejected every compromise and now we have lost everything,' said one man. Apart from Ferkhan, everybody was short of food. Iraqis traditionally offer guests</p>
	<p>a small glass of very hot tea</p>
	<p>and drink it three or four times a day themselves. Now, with the price of tea nineteen times what it was a year before, the villagers said they drink it just once a day. Not only were they hungry, but they also felt defenceless against more allied bombing. A former soldier named Ghanim Jaber, who had just left the army, said: 'It's not surprising that we are afraid, but we had something to resist them with.' If there was any popular support for Saddam Hussein anywhere in Iraq after the disasters of the war, I thought I'd find it in the Sunni Moslem towns on the Tigris north of Baghdad. The Ministry of Information has long been refusing to let any journalist visit Tikrit, the town where Saddam was born. Suddenly, on Saddam's fifth-fourth birthday, permission was granted to attend the festivities there. Tikrit</p>

	<p>looked like any other Iraqi town, except that the streets were cleaner and the walkways over the road were equipped with escalators - though none were working. The celebrations took place in a stadium and were presided over by Izzat Ibrahim al-Dhouri, vice chairman of the ruling Revolution Command Council, a lanky man in his sixties with a face like a skull. Beside him sat Latif Nassif Jassim, the former Information Minister, who had once promised to eat American pilots who bailed over Iraq. Local girls dressed in green and yellow ballet skirts performed dances and sang praise to Saddam. But they were separated from al-Dhouri and Jassim by a line of soldiers clutching their Kalashnikovs, as if they fully expected the platform to be stormed by the pre-pubescent performers. If Saddam is so unpopular, why is he still in power? The obvious reason is that he has killed or driven into exile all opposition. Secret police and Baath party cells are everywhere. There are effectively two armies: the regular army and the Republican Guard, identifiable by the red triangle on their uniforms. After the war Saddam rapidly reduced in size the regular army, once a million strong, but not the ten Republican Guard divisions, known for their loyalty to the regime. With the number of soldiers cut to 300,000 of whom 120,000 are heavily armed Republican Guard, a military coup would be even more difficult to organize than before. To command the army, Saddam would rely on his own family and clans whom he had traditionally promoted. His first act after the war was to promote Hussein Kamal Hassan, at once his son-in-law and his cousin, to the position of Defence Minister. Another cousin, Ali Hassan al-Majid, who had ordered the use of gas against the Kurds in the 1980s,</p>
--	---