

Gregory Wallance

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About this Person

Born: October 24, 1948 in Washington, District of Columbia, United States

Nationality: American

Occupation: Lawyer

Other Names: Wallance, Gregory Joseph; Wallance, Gregory J.

Full Text:

CAREER

Lawyer, prosecutor, writer, and activist. Former partner at Kaye Scholer and at Arnold & Porter; former federal prosecutor. Producer of film *Sakharov*, HBO, 1984. Human rights representative for Amnesty International and Helsinki Watch; commentator on television programs.

AWARDS

Edgar Allan Poe Award for Best Fact Crime nominee, 1982, for *Papa's Game*.

WORKS

WRITINGS:

NONFICTION

Papa's Game, Rawson, Wade (New York, NY), 1981.

The Treatment of Political Prisoners in Cuba and the American Response, AW (New York, NY), 1983.

Two Men before the Storm: Arba Crane's Recollection of Dred Scott and the Supreme Court Case That Started the Civil War, Greenleaf Book Group Press (Austin, TX), 2006.

America's Soul in the Balance: The Holocaust, FDR's State Department, and the Moral Disgrace of an American Aristocracy, Greenleaf Book Group Press (Austin, TX), 2012.

The Woman Who Fought an Empire: Sarah Aaronsohn and Her Nili Spy Ring, Potomac Books (Lincoln, NE), 2018.

Into Siberia: George Kennan's Epic Journey through the Brutal, Frozen Heart of Russia, St. Martin's Press (New York, NY), 2023.

Contributor to periodicals, including *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *Wall Street Journal*.

SIDELIGHTS

A longtime attorney and prosecutor, Gregory Wallance is an author of engrossing nonfiction about lesser-known episodes and aspects of American and world history. His career included stints as partner at the law firms Kaye Scholer and Arnold & Porter and as a federal prosecutor. His debut nonfiction title, *Papa's Game*, about the theft of French Connection heroin, was nominated for an Edgar Allan Poe Award. Wallance interrogates the hesitant American response to the Holocaust under President Franklin D. Roosevelt in *America's Soul in the Balance: The Holocaust, FDR's State Department, and the*

Moral Disgrace of an American Aristocracy. He celebrates a heroine of Jewish resistance—one whose pre-World War I espionage efforts helped safeguard Palestinian Jews by ushering the Ottoman Empire toward collapse—in *The Woman Who Fought an Empire: Sarah Aaronsohn and Her Nili Spy Ring*.

Wallance illuminates a turning point in American perceptions of a fellow superpower with *Into Siberia: George Kennan's Epic Journey through the Brutal, Frozen Heart of Russia*. In view of the czars, the famous authors, and the unique culture, nineteenth-century Americans held a romanticized view of Russia. George Kennan was a veteran of journalistic trips to the expansive nation, including an 1865 journey through frozen taiga tracing the route for a major telegraph cable. With Russian prisoners sometimes exiled to Siberia, Kennan's understanding that family members could accompany them inspired a favorable view of the system. Two decades later, undertaking a bold assignment for *Century Magazine* in 1885, Kennan traveled to Siberia to witness Russia's isolation and punitive treatment of dissidents and criminals firsthand. He was accompanied by artist George Albert Frost, whose sketches are included, and they were able to visit various prisons and exile communes and interview everyone from inmates to wives to wardens. Ultimately, they were appalled. In Wallance's words, Kennan came face to face with "bureaucratic incompetence, corruption ... and the extraordinary Russian capacity to inflict and endure suffering." Kennan's reports to the American people rapidly changed attitudes, and U.S.-Russian relations have been cool, and sometimes cold, ever since.

In *Booklist*, Gary Day was greatly impressed with *Into Siberia*, which offers both a "classic adventure odyssey" in the style of a "man vs. nature epic" and an "exposé of a horrendously brutal political system." Day characterized the work as history at "its most compelling." Hailing *Into Siberia* as "riveting," a *Publishers Weekly* reviewer concluded: "Resurfacing a mostly forgotten episode of Russian-American relations, this strikingly narrated adventure enthralls."

FURTHER READINGS

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL SOURCES:

PERIODICALS

Booklist, October 15, 2023, Gary Day, review of *Into Siberia: George Kennan's Epic Journey through the Brutal, Frozen Heart of Russia*, p. 11.

Library Bookwatch, March, 2018, review of *The Woman Who Fought an Empire: Sarah Aaronsohn and Her Nili Spy Ring*.

Publishers Weekly, October 2, 2023, review of *Into Siberia*, p. 125.

ONLINE

Gregory Wallance website, <https://www.gregorywallance.com> (November 23, 2023), author profile.

Jewish Book Council website, <https://www.jewishbookcouncil.org/> (November 23, 2023), author profile.

Melisende's Library, <https://melisendeslibrary.blogspot.com/> (July 7, 2019), review of *The Woman Who Fought an Empire*.*

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