

In August of 1990 Iraq started its long and vicious attack on Kuwait leaving thousands dead from their torturous reign as Kuwait's dictator. Kuwait, as defenseless as it was, had no chance against Iraq's small but mighty forces. It took a collection of United State's, Britain's, and France's elite to put an end to Iraq's torment on the small country. The torture and torment inflicted upon Kuwaitis during Iraq's occupation of Kuwait however, has many more reasons than first appears.

"Iraq's occupation forces intended to erase the conquered nation's identity." (Strasser 36) Iraq intended on doing this by blotting out every sign of Kuwaiti life within Kuwait. The Iraqi forces did this in many ways. Strasser reported that "blotting out the word 'Kuwait' on road signs was one tactic, ripping off the fingernails of people displaying the emir's picture was another." There is a reasoning behind erasing Kuwait's identity that seems important to Iraq; to take from the rich and give to the poor; a sort of Robin Hood justification. Although trying to justify what Iraq did to the Kuwaitis is futile, Iraq did what any starving animal in the wild would do, steal from its neighbor. "The occupiers looted Kuwait as a matter of policy, reasoning that the wealth of the 19th province was needed elsewhere in greater Iraq." (Strasser 36) Iraqis showed no mercy when it came to looting. "The city the Iraqis left behind appeared to have been worked over by a huge army of drunken teenage vandals. They stole everything they could, from air conditioners to cigarettes, in a citywide smash and grab." (Kelly 22) No reasoning can make what Iraq did right the torment the Kuwaitis endured is unnerving.

Very little escaped the Iraqis, "What the Iraqis could not steal, they destroyed, in an astonishingly savage and thorough rampage." (Kelly 22) Not even the Kuwaitis imagined that the Iraqis could be so harsh and brutal. "Kuwaitis were stunned by the Iraqi soldiers' habit of turning every place they went into a sty." (Kelly 23) Iraqi soldiers left very little standing; they burned down the emir's office buildings, residential palaces, as well as the parliament building, and this was just the beginning.

The palace of Prince Mubarak al Sabah, a close relative of the emir of Kuwait, was turned upside down. His basement was turned into a war room where Iraqi soldiers planned their defense of Kuwait against allied attack. "But he [Prince Sabah] will need to brace himself before he ventures upstairs into the nursery of the royal siblings. The doors are still covered with the welcoming pictures of characters from nursery rhymes and television cartoons, but what lies within is adult perversion of a high order." (Coughlin 11) The nursery was turned into an Iraqi interrogation station, where they tortured their victims with various items. "Pools of congealed blood were still visible beneath the bed frame. These has been caused, one imagines, not by thousands of volts coursing through the victims bodies, but by the carpentry tool kit which lay on the small bedside table." (Coughlin 12) The Iraqi soldiers showed no mercy on the victims, very few if any survived the abuse given within the nursery.

After looting or destroying everything the Kuwaitis had the Iraqis tried to steal the only thing they had left, their pride. "It is the human factor that hurt most, the Iraqi forces treated the people as they did the property. They trashed them, leaving them with no pride to hold on to." (Kelly 23) In doing this the Iraqis succeeded in what they were trying to do. They stole the Kuwaitis' pride. "At one point the Iraqis brought a new mother before captured Kuwaiti resistance fighters and stripped her naked. 'Here is the milk of Kuwait,' they taunted. 'Drink it.' Eventually the Iraqis dumped the woman back home, alive. It was enough to humiliate the essence of the Kuwaiti spirit." (Strasser 36) Tormenting the Kuwaitis was only one part in Iraq's plan to destroy Kuwait's identity although torture and rapes were by far the cruelest.

"Rape and torture not resulting in death were also common. Almost everyone I talked to in four days had a story of some friend or relative being abused." (Kelly

24) "Poorly trained Iraqi conscripts and volunteers of the People's Army militia often behaved without restraint. Their treatment of women was particularly outrageous under Islamic law. Iraqi soldiers raped at will." (Strasser 36) The more common rape victims were young men and women in their early twenties. Rape was not the only torture inflicted upon the Kuwaitis. Many types of torture were used to humiliate the Kuwaitis.

The most commonly used type of torture was ripping off finger and toenails. They were often picked up at random during walks or tortured for displaying the emir's picture, either on themselves or somewhere within their house or workplace. Other type of torture used was, "Lifting the detainee high up in the air and then dropping them, sometimes resulting in the fracturing of bones." (Internet 4) Another way of torturing victims was to threaten the prisoners with weapons used to torture their friends or relatives this included holding empty guns in their mouths and pulling the trigger. Also, "Raping or torturing the detainee's relative in his or her presence then threatening the detainee with such acts." (Internet 8) These scare tactics often threw the prisoner into shock where he or she would fall to the ground crying begging to be released. "A bullet through the mouth or the back of the head was in some cases the kindest Iraqi punishment." (Strasser 36) The number of Kuwaitis that were tortured is very high and almost impossible to calculate. "Abdul Rahman Al-wadi, Kuwait's minister of state for cabinet affairs claims that 33,000 people disappeared since August 2. The Iraqis are reliably estimated to have taken as many as 20,000 prisoners to Iraq to serve as slave labors, and another 3,000 to 5,000 as hostages and shields in the days just before the allied ground defensive. By the minister's reckoning, that would put the number of murdered between 8,000 and 10,000." (Kelly 23) Although this is only a hypothesized guess, these are astonishing numbers considering Kuwait's size and population. The Kuwaitis suffering was long and undeserving, they are loving and peaceful people who never expected to be the target of such atrocities. The rebirth of Kuwait, with the help of the Allied forces, will take many drawn out years. Kuwait intends to rebuild their small country around a technological core to be well defended and equipped before another dictator tries to wipe away their identity.