

# Behind closed doors

Edmund Clark took photographs of the homes of former Guantánamo prisoners as well as the cells in which they were confined. The collection makes compelling viewing for former detainee Moazzam Begg



Guantánamo



Guantánamo



Guantánamo



Home



Guantánamo



Home



Guantánamo



Home





Home

I've seen more cameraman and photographers since my return from Guantánamo than I can remember, all of them wanting me to pose for pictures. Edmund Clark, on the other hand, wanted to photograph everything in my home - except for me. He wanted to tell the story of Guantánamo through the prism of the domestic, of personal space. He sets pictures of the homes of former prisoners around the world against those of the cells in which we were confined.

In his collection are images that will be for ever etched in my mind. The sickly green coloured mesh of my solitary confinement cage. The shackles - the bracelets of Guantánamo without which no prisoner can step outside his cell. The sound of their clanking on the metal floor of the blocks in Camp Delta is still fresh in my mind. The helmets and body armour worn by the Extreme Reaction Force, a reminder of the brutality that can still occur there.

But there are also the living rooms of released prisoners in Doha, Brighton and Tipton, and the US army barracks in Guantánamo: a fruit bowl on a dinner table; a satellite dish in the Gulf; a car outside a mosque. There are pictures of my home in inner-city Birmingham; the rooms where I sit and read with my children, where we play and watch television. These simple, mundane images of daily life provide a stark contrast to the shackles and cells that were our past reality, and which are the present for the 174 still inside.

One of the photographs shows the pull-up bar I have in my home. During my two years in isolation, I heard some US marines talking about how many chin-ups they could do and decided to add them to my own rigorous fitness routine, somehow. The marines are among the toughest of the US military outfits, so in a sense I wanted to compete with them physically. But I also wanted to keep my body and mind sharp. Keeping fit didn't just give me a sense of strength, it also gave me hope. There were no bars to swing from in the cell, but I found that if I rolled up my towel and looped either end through the links in the top corner of the cage I could make an improvised bar, which of course had to be taken down as soon as I'd finished my workout. When I returned to the UK in 2005, I had a bar placed in the door-frame of my living room.

But the most striking of the pictures for me is of the soldiers' mess hall, somewhere I had only imagined through conversations with guards. In it is a single table, laid but left empty, in remembrance of those men who are missing in action or held captive in some obscure corner of the world. Somewhere a bit like Guantánamo, perhaps. »



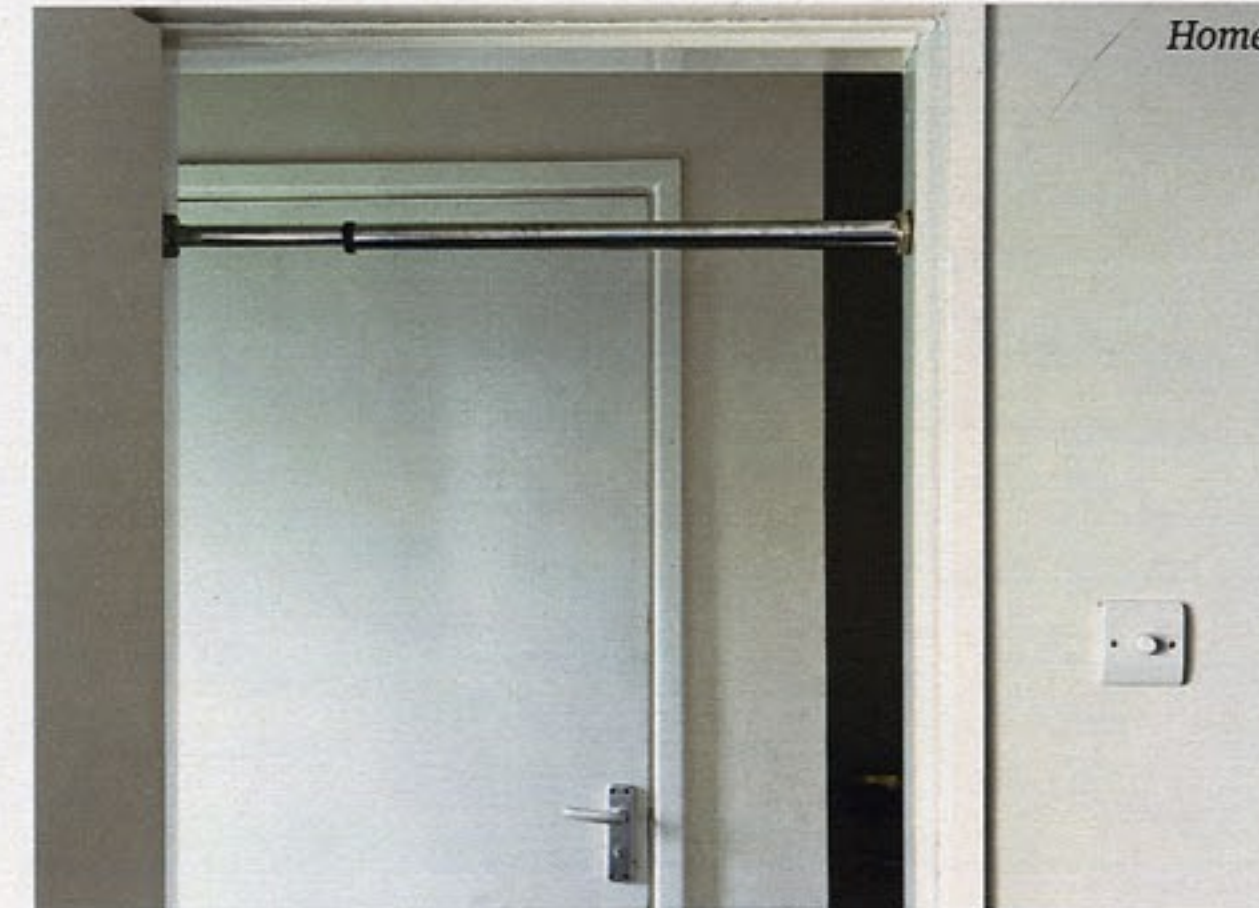
Guantánamo



Home



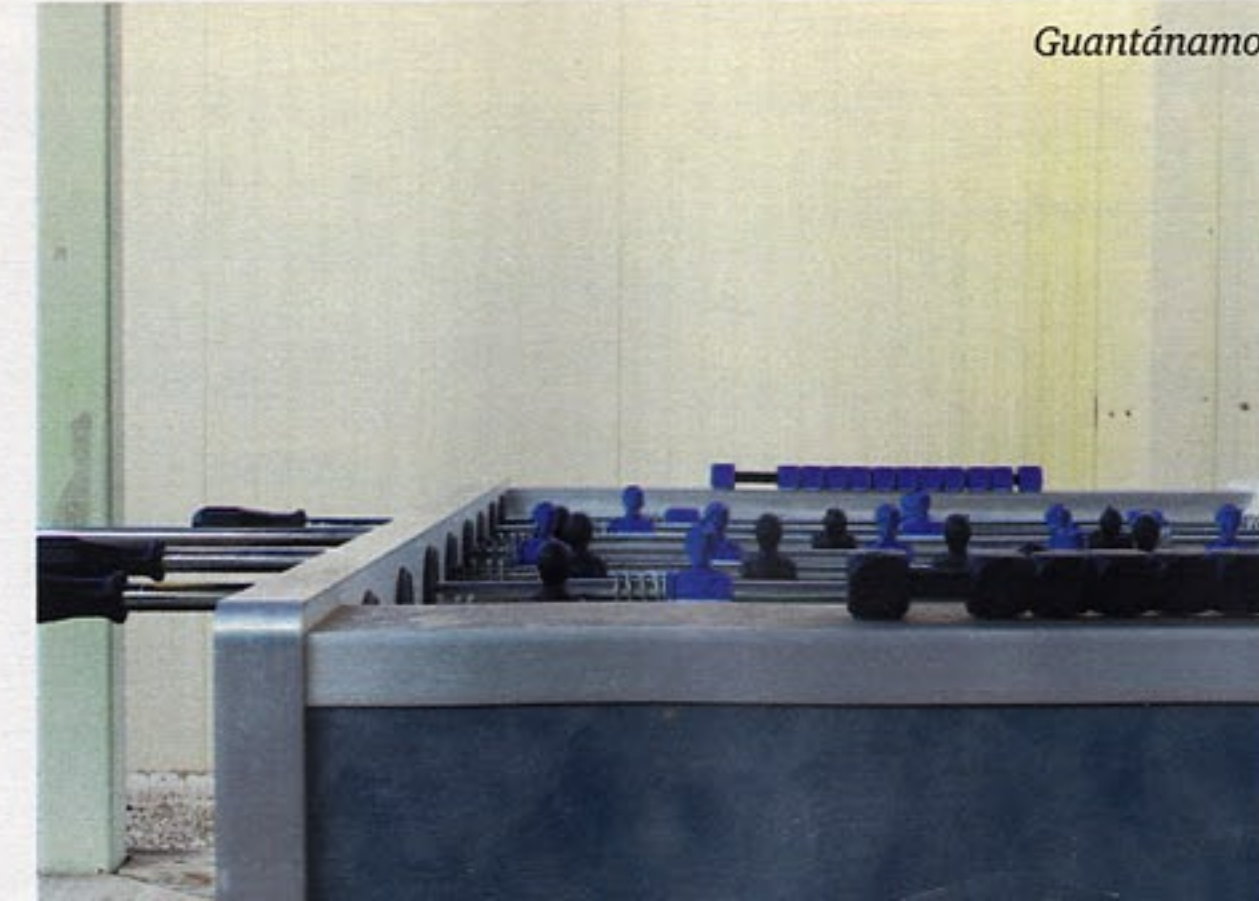
Home



Home



Guantánamo



Home







Home

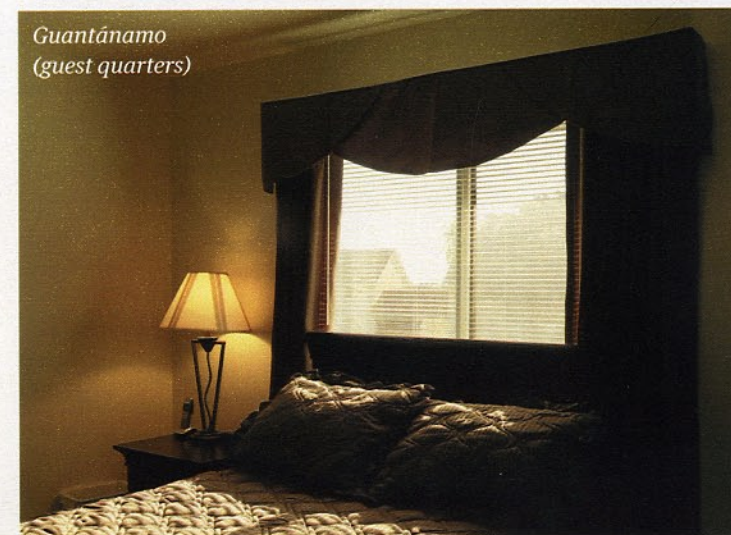


Guantánamo

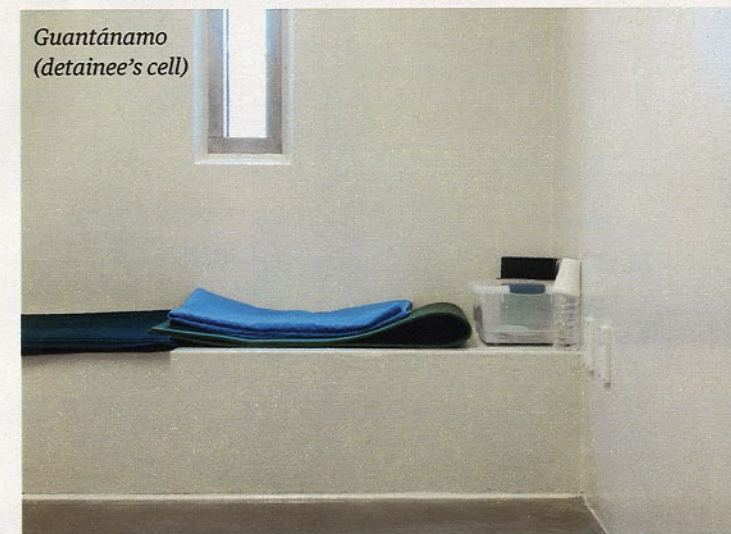
Guantánamo  
(tube used for  
force feeding)



Guantánamo  
(guest quarters)



Guantánamo  
(detainee's cell)



Guantánamo  
(camp personnel  
quarters)



These photographs are taken from *Guantánamo: If The Light Goes Out*, by Edmund Clark, Julian Stallabrass and Omar Deghayes, published by Dewi Lewis Publishing at £35. To order a copy for £26.49 (including UK mainland p&p), go to [guardian.co.uk/bookshop](http://guardian.co.uk/bookshop) or call 0330 333 6846. The images also feature in three exhibitions: at the Flowers Gallery, London E2, until 13 November ([flowersgalleries.com](http://flowersgalleries.com)); at Impressions Gallery, Bradford, until 14 November ([impressions-gallery.com](http://impressions-gallery.com)); and at Photofusion, London SW9, until 26 November ([photofusion.org](http://photofusion.org)).