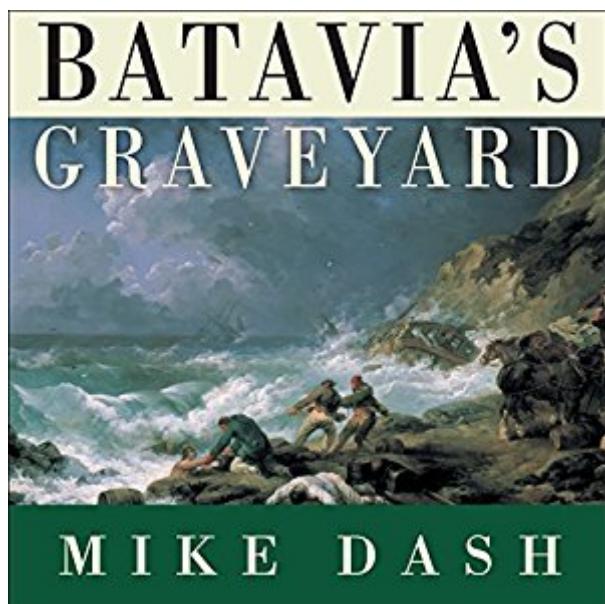


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# **Batavia's Graveyard: The True Story Of The Mad Heretic Who Led History's Bloodiest Mutiny**



## Synopsis

It was the autumn of 1628, and the Batavia, the Dutch East India Company's flagship, was loaded with a king's ransom in gold, silver, and gems for her maiden voyage to Java. The Batavia was the pride of the company's fleet, a tangible symbol of the world's richest and most powerful commercial monopoly. She set sail with great fanfare, but the Batavia and her gold would never reach Java, for the company had also sent along a new employee, Jeronimus Corneliszoon, a bankrupt and disgraced man who possessed disarming charisma and dangerously heretical ideas. With the help of a few disgruntled sailors, Jeronimus soon sparked a mutiny that seemed certain to succeed - but for one unplanned event: In the dark morning hours of June 3, the Batavia smashed through a coral reef and ran aground on a small chain of islands near Australia. The commander of the ship and the skipper evaded the mutineers by escaping in a tiny lifeboat and setting a course for Java to summon help. Nearly all of the passengers survived the wreck and found themselves trapped on a bleak coral island without water, food, or shelter. Leaderless, unarmed, and unaware of Jeronimus' treachery, they were at the mercy of the mutineers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is a surprising gem, bringing to life a period of history which not many contemporary authors have paid much attention to. The life and times of the Dutch during the zenith of their influence and power in the 16th century as the premier commercial traders of the world is described in the context of a truly horrible story of mutiny, madness and slaughter. Dash describes life aboard a Dutch sailing vessel of the period at a time in which little was known about nautical navigation. Life

and physical accommodations aboard ship itself were a nightmare to all but the wealthiest travelers. Based on extensive research, including ship's logs, the Dutch Trading Company's (VOC) records, memoirs and letters of several principals involved and even anthropological evidence unearthed in the 1960's and 70's, one is swept into a fascinating look at how a voyage of commerce to the East Indies ended in shipwreck, followed by the breakdown of civil behavior among the survivors and leading to the murders of dozens of innocent people for no reason other than to satisfy the blood lust of the leader of a relatively (at first) small number of mutineers. That any of the crew and passengers survived, marooned on a small coral atoll in the East Indian Sea is astonishing. The subsequent rescue of survivors and punishment of those guilty for the slaughter provides a fitting end to this well written sea tale. To readers interested in expanding their knowledge of world History I heartily recommend this book. You won't regret it.

Horror on the seas. Never has there been a more unbelievable tale of men turning into animals. This book should be taught in schools, studied by professionals, etc. It's hard to describe without spoilers. Let's just say one man leads many to do a great deal of evil. Like Hitler on a tiny island in the ocean. It wasn't enjoyable to read, but it was so fascinating I had to keep reading. You have to keep going just to find out what happens! I gave the book to my father and he devoured it quickly as well. After reading this, I tried to read another shipwreck story with mutiny involved, and it paled in comparison to the point where I couldn't even read it. This book will cast a large shadow over all other mutiny books, and turn the volume down on them. Beware!

I love true accounts of historical events, and this book was recommended to me by a friend as being "right up my alley". I was skeptical, as I typically don't find myself as interested in events from this era. That being said, I thoroughly enjoyed reading (or listening to, in my case) this book. It was a fascinating story. The audio cd is good, easy to rip them and put them on my podcast player on my phone.

The title of this book is somewhat misleading, in that "heresy" is the least of the offences committed by the guy. And it didn't really play much of a role in how this story unfolds. But the actions described in this book are indeed shocking, and so depraved, I was surprised I had never heard of it before. What went on after the Batavia sank was so horrendous, it is hard to believe - but it really happened. Anyone interested in Dutch history would like this book. It goes into a lot of detail about the Dutch East India Company and how they did business. Most of the names are

unpronounceable, but other than that, it is a most interesting read.

A fantastic narrative of one of the grimmer events of the age of sail. It's something more people in the modern age should read. Currently, there's a lot of misplaced longing for a past that is supposed to somehow be more moral, noble, chivalrous, and such. The reality is that there is no such past. Nostalgia is history poorly remembered. The Anabaptists were as crazy as Al-Qaeda or Daesh. The Dutch East India Company was as corrupt, shambling, and destructive as any modern corporate hegemon. And life was dangerous, full of deadly diseases, crazy people, social prejudice, and superstition. Mike Dash does a good job of turning the various chronicles, records, and recollections of this shocking episode into a readable and accessible story. There's no shortage of extra data at the end for those who want to really get into the details. That's the most salient part: this isn't the work of some crazy novelist, but the horrifying history you didn't learn about in school - a journey into the dark heart of humanity that has gone off the rails. Oh, and do not read this before going to bed.

amazing true story, written well, sticking with known facts and identifying when knowledge was lacking or an opinion was offered. The book slows down in the first third, providing extensive background on Dutch history of the time and main character background. Don't get discouraged, as the last half of the book, where the bulk of this story is told, is built on all of these seemingly irrelevant details. The actions and brutality that follows this shipping disaster can be stomach churning, especially as you imagine yourself in this time and these circumstances. What would you have done? How would you have acted to survive? What if you were with your family? I had to set the book down at times for a break, but returned shortly to this captivating story, told matter of factually, and not sparing the reader any of the horror that the survivors experienced. Definitely worth the read for the history lesson in the first half and the amazing gut wrenching story that unfolds in the last half.

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