

# **See No Evil: The True Story of a Ground Soldier in the CIA's War on Terrorism Study Guide**

**See No Evil: The True Story of a Ground Soldier in the CIA's War on Terrorism by Robert Baer**

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# Plot Summary

See No Evil by Robert Baer is the story of the author's career as a case officer in the US Central Intelligence Unit. As a young boy, he traveled Europe extensively with his mother. Although she pulled him out of school for the long vacation, she unknowingly exposed him to places in Europe and in Russia where he would one day serve as a dedicated case officer for the CIA.

As a high school student back in Colorado, he skipped school frequently to ski with his friends. He planned on dropping out of school and becoming a ski racer but his mother had a different vision for his future. She ended his ski-bum dream and placed him in a military school in Indiana. He did well at school and was accepted to Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. After graduating, he wound up in San Francisco where he stayed with a friend while looking for a job. On a lark, he applied with the CIA never dreaming he'd ever hear from them.

Robert was soon filling out volumes of papers and applications for the agency and was visited by a recruiter who convinced him to pursue a career as a case officer with the CIA. The recruiter explained that as a case officer, he would be assigned overseas where he would cultivate "agents" and gather intelligence about other governments and individuals who the US saw as potential threats to the security of the country. Robert wasn't overly enthused but liked the idea of being on his own and near the Alps where he figured he could spend a lot of time skiing.

After a year of arduous training at Langley, VA, CIA headquarters, and various other secret locales, Baer was given his first assignment in Madras, India. At the time, India was an ally of Russia and the US was anxious to learn intel about the Russian military and its weaponry. Although Robert botched his first "pitch" to a prospective agent, his superiors were impressed with the young man's attempt to bring in a "hard target."

Robert spent many years in the capitals of Europe and the Middle East. He gained expertise at assessing potential agents, bringing them under the CIA wing and gaining valuable intelligence from them that benefited the US in fighting terrorism and in understanding their enemies weaknesses and strengths. The impact of the embassy bombing in Beirut early in his career haunted him for decades. Six CIA officers died in the bombing and it seemed no one really cared other than Robert. Near the end of his career, he was able to piece the evidence together and uncover the mastermind and operatives behind the bombing.

As the years wore on, the culture and climate of the CIA changed drastically. The agency became politically correct and its leaders became fearful of stepping on the wrong toes. The State Department and the office of the National Security Adviser became obstacles in the CIA carrying out their responsibilities as a spy organization. Robert learned that many staff and officials of the White House were linked too closely to the oil companies. There was evidence of corruption and campaign-finance abuse. He decided to blow the whistle but no one wanted to hear what he had to say. Robert

Baer, who loved his work and was a dedicated officer for over twenty years, turned in his resignation when he saw that monetary and political concerns trumped the security and lives of people.



# Chapter 1: March 15, 1995, Langley, Virginia

## Chapter 1: March 15, 1995, Langley, Virginia Summary and Analysis

Robert Baer had no idea why he was summoned to Fred Turco's office at CIA HQ in Langley, VA, on March 15, 1995. Robert had worked for him in the 1980s but Turco was now in charge of a new operation to tighten up security. Baer soon learned that he was called to the office to be questioned by the FBI for attempting assassination of Saddam Hussein. It wasn't true and Baer was stunned that the FBI would be questioning him about it. Turco, and attorney Rob Davis who joined the conversation, assured Robert that it was just routine. Baer knew better and that once an agent was under suspicion his career was virtually over.

Upon meeting with the FBI agents, he refused the opportunity to bring in his own attorney. It would make the CIA look bad and besides he couldn't afford it on his government salary. Robert answered the agents' questions. He knew that it was against the law to assassinate anyone under the auspices of the CIA. He did not attempt to assassinate Saddam nor did he order anyone else to do so. He was asked if he ever used the alias, "Robert Pope." Ahmed Chalabi, the head of an Iraqi dissident group, was claiming that Robert Pope had asked for assistance from the Iranian military in assassinating Saddam. Baer knew Chalabi to be a liar and knew that he had invented the story as a way to draw support from the Iranians.

Baer was angry and upset at the agency that he had been with for twenty years. Administration officials apparently were willing to believe anything and just as willing to abandon their agents. There was a real lack of guts in Langley which was causing human sources to dry up in the Middle East. Baer told the agents that none of the story was true. He agreed to take a polygraph and heard later that the statutes that they were accusing him of violating held the potential of a life imprisonment punishment or death.



## Chapter 2: 1962, Los Angeles, California

### Chapter 2: 1962, Los Angeles, California Summary and Analysis

When Robert was nine years old, he moved with his mother to Europe. His parents had recently divorced and he and his mother toured Europe for several months. That time with his mother prepared him in a unique way for the responsibility he would eventually have. Their adventure in Europe had its ups and downs. They stayed at the finest hotels and ate at the most elite restaurants, squandering all their money. They'd scramble to put a roof over their heads until they were infused with more funds from Robert's grandfather who kept them afloat. After an extended trip to Moscow, they were recalled by his grandfather who had grown tired of supporting their vacation.

Back in the US, they moved to Aspen, CO, which was just a small town and not the hub of the rich and famous back then. The winter after their arrival, Robert joined an elite ski team and soon ski racing became his life. Robert planned to quit school and become a professional skier but his mother wouldn't cooperate. After learning he was skipping school more than he was there, his mother enrolled him in a military school in Culver, Indiana. His grades picked up and on the advice of his school counselor he considered a career in foreign service and was accepted at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Robert was a goof-off in school spending much time in New York City with friends and going for weeks to Aspen to ski. A classmate of his, George Tenet, observed his wayward ways. The two met up years later when Robert was a CIA agent and Tenet was named head of the CIA in 1997.

After Georgetown and a brief European trip, Robert wound up in San Francisco staying with friends and looking for a job. His roommate suggested government service and jokingly added that Robert should apply for the CIA. Robert didn't tell his roommate but he followed up on that suggestion and was soon filling out long forms and applications for the CIA. A recruiter named Jim Scott arranged to meet Robert at a hotel for his first interview. In great detail he told Robert about the two types of CIA agents.

The Directorate of Intelligence agents, known as DIs, and are the ones who analyze intelligence and prepare reports for top administration officials including the president. But at twenty-two, Scott concluded that Robert was too young and inexperienced to be a DI. The other type of agents are those who work under the Directorate of Operations. These agents, known as DOs, or case officers, are the agents who go in the field and get the information usually from foreign agents who are involved in espionage against their own countries. The DOs often spend their days in mundane jobs and do their spy work at night. They spend most of their lives abroad and can tell no one what they really do. When prompted several times, Robert finally said he'd be interested in the DO position.



After a trip to Washington and a myriad of tests and interviews and a four-hour polygraph exam, Robert was cleared and offered a position as a DO. He accepted the position sure that he'd spend very little time doing the job of a DO and spend the rest of his time skiing on the slopes of Europe.



## Chapter 3: August, 1977. Somewhere in Virginia's Tidewater

### Chapter 3: August, 1977. Somewhere in Virginia's Tidewater Summary and Analysis

Nearing the end of a four-month paramilitary course, Robert and his four classmates were trained in parachuting to safety in enemy territory. His class went on night excursions flying over the Virginia countryside, learning to jump and land safely. On one occasion, the exercise included rendezvousing with a foreign agent at a designated location in the dark, swampy terrain. The jump instructor told the class to never look at the ground, because it was the best way to tense up and break a leg. In those days, the agents were all loyal and patriotic adventurers but in modern times Robert would see many of his colleagues evolve into political masters rather than intelligence gatherers like those who maintained the the spirit of the CIA's predecessor the OSS, Office of Strategic Services.

The majority of the training took place on The Farm, the CIA's main training base. At the Farm they learned to handle every weapon from assault rifles to machine guns. They learned to field strip and clean each weapon blindfolded. To build endurance, they ran in the day and night and in every terrain imaginable. In another training area in North Carolina, they had two weeks of demolitions training. First they mastered the crimping of blasting caps without blowing their hands off. They spent hours blowing up buses, cars and bunkers.

One thing that was driven home in all the training—everything was a secret. After computers came into use, the CIA preferred to hand write messages or type them on a manual type writer with a cloth ribbon that could be destroyed. Before being dispatched overseas, the CIA placed Robert in a safe house; hotels were too insecure. Baer didn't know the last name of many of his fellow agents. He was given a new name, Robert Endacott, with identification cards. He was told he could make no phone calls from the safe house or from any CIA facility. The new case officers had to agree not to tell anyone they worked for the CIA, write books, appear on TV or become intimate with too many "foreign" women. The most important thing they learned in training was that they really wouldn't learn what it was to be case officers until they were in the field—they would learn by doing.





## Chapter 4: August 1971, Madras, India

### Chapter 4: August 1971, Madras, India Summary and Analysis

Robert was sent to Madras, India, on his first overseas assignment. He was on probation there and told that if he kept his nose clean, a better assignment would follow. Madras was a poverty-stricken area and a tough first assignment that separated the men from the boys. The Indian Intelligence Bureau was skilled and diligent and provided a challenge for new case officers. India was also a good place to collect first-rate intelligence. The CIA's focus in India was to gather intel on its nuclear program and the acquisition of Soviet military manuals. India was the number one place in the world for gaining intelligence on Soviet weaponry. Hundreds of Russian diplomats were frequent visitors to India and were considered potential candidates for becoming foreign agents for the CIA.

Robert's residence in Madras was a two-story stucco home replete with seven servants. He inherited two agents who were not extremely useful and depended on cable messages from the States for guidance. But it wasn't all work. Robert rented a weekend house on the beach and took up tennis.

Robert made an important contact, an Arab officer on assignment in India who Robert called Sami. They became friends and Sami eventually discussed the Arab military and its conflict with Israel. He expressed the need for open channels between America and the Middle East. Robert identified Sami's pro-American sensibility as his vulnerability. Sami was checked by the CIA HQ and found not to be a liar or double spy. It was up to Robert whether or not to pursue him as an agent. Robert delivered a weak pitch, his first ever. Sami was outraged that Robert expected him to agree to be a spy. That was virtually the end of their relationship and Robert failed at his first recruitment attempt.



## Chapter 5: 1971, New Delhi, India

### Chapter 5: 1971, New Delhi, India Summary and Analysis

After learning of Robert's botched pitch, the Chief in New Delhi asked him to fly up for a talk. The Chief was known as Wild Bill and had the reputation as one of the best and most fearless street officers ever, a wizard of gadgets and disguises. In one instance, he implanted a microphone in a period on a document. Robert feared he was being sent home over his botched pitch to Sami but Wild Bill only encouraged him, impressed that he had attempted to bring in a person who was considered a "hard target." Robert was reassigned to New Delhi and given a direct assignment from Wild Bill.

The man was a KGB agent but had agreed to double back against them. The agent had proven his worth over the years by the rich supply of intelligence he provided. Still, the CIA wasn't convinced that the KGB wasn't using him to feed the US false information. India was crawling with KGB agents who targeted CIA operatives, bugging their houses, tracking their movements and even pitching them to turn against their country. Robert was given a mountain of documents to read about the agent. The reading was tedious and he was forced to go through it a second time. Robert double-checked the intelligence he gathered from the double-agent. Eventually, it was revealed that the agent was, as suspected, working for the KGB.

Robert decided to try to turn an Indian military officer since the threat of war between India and Pakistan always loomed. Indian military officers were hard targets because they were an isolated group and had to report any contact with a foreigner immediately. Robert learned that the Indian officers loved to hunt and finagled an invitation to a weekend partridge hunt. After several outings, Robert became friendly with an Indian officer, Major Singh. The officer began to loosen up and talk about relations between America and India. He regretted that India had allied with Russia. Finally, Robert decided to pitch Singh with Wild Bill at his side. Wild Bill didn't beat around the bush, immediately telling Singh that he and Robert were CIA officers. Singh eventually declined to become an agent but Robert had learned a great deal from the experience. Recruiting agents eventually became as easy as ordering a pizza and successfully recruited five new agents during his New Delhi tour.

One evening an agent handed off a duffel bag full of Soviet T-72 tank manuals to Robert, something the CIA had been trying to acquire for years. The agent had to return the manuals before they were discovered missing. Robert and another officer worked furiously for hours copying the manuals. Robert had them back in his car with only minutes to rendezvous with the agent. Robert couldn't detect whether the multiple car lights behind him were following him but he didn't have time to try to lose them. At break-neck speed through the narrow streets of New Delhi Robert was able to pass back the bag of manuals just in the nick of time. As it turned out, there were five tails on him but he was able to elude all of them.



## Chapter 6: April 18, 1983, Beirut, Lebanon

### Chapter 6: April 18, 1983, Beirut, Lebanon Summary and Analysis

Chapter 6: April 18, 1983, Beirut, Lebanon

The Lebanese Civil War that began in April 1975 was essentially over and therefore no one noticed the old GMC truck that was parked and left running in front of the St. Georges Hotel. Lebanese citizens were returning to Beirut and rebuilding the city that was once the most European and modernized of the Arab cities. After receiving a signal from other conspirators in a passing car, the driver of the truck drove as quickly as he could through the lunch hour traffic to his destination which was the American embassy. The driver ascended the stairs of the building and crashed into the lobby causing an enormous explosion. Seventeen Americans died in the blast including six CIA agents. It was the worst loss in the history of the agency, a loss from which it would never recover.

Swarms of CIA and FBI agents descended on the scene but there wasn't much left to investigate in the rubble. The truck and its driver were disintegrated. Whoever the bombers were, they were very good. The usual suspects were rounded up by the Lebanese police and military but no link could be made to the bombing. Robert was in Tunis studying Arabic for his next assignment when the bombing occurred. He knew two of the agents who were killed in the blast. Finding out who was responsible became an obsession for Robert but the mystery was never solved. After two years of training in Arabic, Robert was assigned to a small city in the Middle East where he cultivated an outstanding agent who provided volumes of good intelligence.

Robert had developed a relationship with a Palestinian when he was in D.C. On his first assignment in the Middle East, his friend told him to look up his brother, Khalid, who was a Palestinian terrorist. If Khalid would have been seen with a CIA agent, he would have been dead. Khalid gave Robert the location of an office used by Abu Nidal, a terrorist on the top of the CIA's wanted list. John, who was Robert's new chief, was a political animal, most concerned with what the State Department would think of their operations and nothing like Wild Bill. When Robert told John he planned to bug the apartment adjacent to Abu Nidal's office, John gave it a thumbs down. If Robert knew that John's attitude would, in the coming years, become the pervasive one throughout the agency, he would have walked away right then.

The investigation of the Beirut bombing went no where. Lebanon was a huge problem in the Middle East once Israeli troops vacated the country in 1982 and Syria let loose its supporters. Lebanon was a country without a government. The multi-national troops in the country came under constant attack. Six months after the bombing, the US suffered its worst terrorist attack to date when a suicide bomber plowed into a building that had



been converted into a US Marines barracks. Two-hundred forty-one Marines were killed. President Reagan eventually called the remaining Marines back home and Lebanon was on its own.

Robert wanted to go to Lebanon himself and find out what was going on. After first rejecting the idea, John finally approved his going on a short trip to Shtawrah a town in the Bija' Valley which was 40 miles from Balabakk. Shtawrah had largely escaped the scourge of war and remained a favorite shopping spot of the elite. In Shtawrah everything was for sale from cocaine to the latest weaponry. Under its glossy veneer, Shtawrah was just as dangerous and vulnerable as the rest of Lebanon.

On the pretense of sight-seeing, Robert made contact with a man named Ali who indicated he wanted to get a visa to the US. Robert returned with a visa application and the implicit promise that he'd help him. When Robert told Ali he wanted to go to Balabakk, Ali warned him not to go; there was a planned kidnapping of an American official. John thought the information was meaningless since Ali wasn't an agent. Ali would never become an agent because he was loyal to the Musawis, his familial clan. Robert got the information to Washington via the State Department since he thought it was important.

Several weeks later, the CIA chief in in Beirut, Bill Buckley, was hit over the head and kidnapped, just as Ali had warned. John was in near panic. When Robert suggested he go to Beirut, John refused. For the next seven months, not one word of Buckley's whereabouts surfaced. Robert was more convinced than ever that he needed to go to Balabakk. He made a few contacts and was on the road to the terrorist center where he presented himself as a Belgian aid worker. Robert spotted a compound with two armed guards stationed at the door. The windows were covered with cardboard. Years later, Robert learned that Buckley had been inside, chained and blindfolded with five other hostages. The compound would also prove to be a link to the Embassy bombing. There was so much interconnection in the Middle East and it took case officers and human resources to unravel them. Aerial reconnaissance or electronic intercept could not do the job. John didn't find out about Robert's unauthorized trip to Balabakk but the tensions between them soon sent Robert to a new assignment in Khartoum, Sudan.



## Chapter 7: January 1986. Langley, Virginia

### Chapter 7: January 1986. Langley, Virginia Summary and Analysis

Robert returned to the states and met with the new CIA Counterterrorism Chief, Duane "Dewey" Clarridge, who was given the green light from President Reagan to use resources from the DO and DI forces to build his new team. Robert asked him directly to be on the team. The Libyans had been targeting Robert so he was brought back to headquarters. Two weeks later, Robert was on the CTC and had a promise from Clarridge that he'd be assigned in the Middle East. Robert was excited about his new assignment and eager to delve further into the Embassy bombing. But things became political and Clarridge was having a hard time pulling officers from other bureau chiefs. Requests to intelligence agencies in Paris and Bonn were left unmet due to political considerations.

As one of Clarridge's few field officers who could speak Arabic, Robert was assigned to a branch tasked with finding the hostages in Lebanon. Unfortunately, the rest of the staff at the branch including the chief, had no experience in Middle Eastern affairs and it showed. The Muslim Brotherhood sent a request to meet with the CIA. The Brotherhood was a radical and dangerous, religious organization that was connected to the Wahibis of Saudi Arabia who had spawned Osama bin Laden.

Robert had a contact who told him that the the Libyan opposition were members of the Brotherhood and could be more dangerous than Qaddafi should they overthrow him. He relayed the information to Milt Bearden, Khartoum's chief, who was told that the White House would back anyone, even Genghis Khan, over Qaddafi. Robert volunteered to infiltrate the rioting crowds in the Sudan to learn if the rebels were pro or anti-American.

Robert was dispatched to Bonn to meet with the Syrian Brotherhood. Robert met his first contact at the Dortmund train station where he was taken away by two Arab men in a Mercedes limo. Reaching speeds of 120 mph, they traveled about 20 miles to a residential area to meet with an older Arab man in his late fifties. The man wanted to join the US in removing Hafiz Al-Asad from Syria who the man considered to be a heathen and the incarnation of evil. They had a missile buried near the Damascus airport with which they would strike Hafiz. They wanted the support of the US. Robert wrote the report up but it went no where and contact was lost with the Syrian Brotherhood, an organization that may have had information about the 911 attacks before they occurred. It was an unforgivable error to cut off that connection.

The CIA had learned that a Shi'a Muslim from southern Lebanon named Imad Fa'iz Mughniyah had kidnapped Buckley and the other hostages. Robert felt that the US should hit Mughniyah where it hurt—his family. Robert narrowly missed involvement

with the Iran-Contra scandal for which Clarridge and others were indicted. Had he gone to Iran instead of Beirut, he would have likely been on the hot seat in a scandal in which Tehran had played White House staff for suckers.



# Chapters 8 and 9

## Chapters 8 and 9 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 8: April, 1986| Washington, D.C.

Before being sent to Beirut, Robert had a crash course in terrorism using the vast material archived in the CTC. Nothing new had been uncovered in over two years about the embassy bombing in Beirut. One of the names that still surfaced about the incident was Mughniyah. He had poor beginnings and joined Yasir Arafat's Force 17 as a young teen. Robert questioned how the poor young Arab boy had become such a powerful terrorist leader. Robert suspected that Mughniyah may have been behind the embassy bombings and the kidnappings with support from Iran. He was also linked to the TWA 847 hijacking. The CIA learned that Bill Buckley died in July 1985 but they didn't know the circumstances surrounding his death. Another hostage, Father Lawrence Jenco had been released in July 1986 and Robert was dispatched to interview him in Germany. Unfortunately, Jenco was blindfolded during most of his capture and didn't recognize photos of Mughniyah or anyone else but he was able to identify the buildings where they were kept as the Abdallah barracks which had been taken over by the Iranian military. Operatives also discovered that Mughniyah still had connections with Arafat.

Jada, a Palestinian who was a guard at the Embassy, was a member of Arafat's Fatah and confessed to being a conspirator of the bombing. After the US dropped out of the investigation because the Lebanese were torturing suspects, they lost track of Jada and were never able to question him. By the time Robert was ready to leave for Beirut, he was sure that Iran was involved in the hostage taking, that Mughniyah was still connected to Arafat and that Arafat's Fatah network was behind the embassy bombing.

Chapter 9: August 1986. Larnaca, Cyprus.

After arriving at the Cyprus airport, Robert was taken to the new US Embassy in Beirut by Blackhawk helicopters, one carrying him and the other acting as escort. The situation was still very dangerous in Beirut. Kidnappings of westerners and assassinations were on the rise even on the Christian east side. The State Department ordered their employees to never wander beyond Embassy grounds without escort. Their homes were all protected by security guards. The CIA had a different approach for staying alive. They were armed but they eluded their kidnappers and assassins by constantly moving, living in an apartment only one night and moving the next day. Sometimes they'd change cars three times in one day. Robert loved Beirut. He was working on the streets where he felt most comfortable and was away from Washington politics which represented the biggest hindrance to the CIA in doing their job.





## Chapter 10: March 1987. Beirut, Lebanon.

### Chapter 10: March 1987. Beirut, Lebanon. Summary and Analysis

Chapter 10: March 1987. Beirut, Lebanon.

Trying to pick up the trail of the embassy bombing was difficult. Robert was on the Christian east side, unable to cross to the west where most of the agents were as well as Hizballah, Mughniyah and other radicals. Robert had to rely on access agents—agents who didn't know anything themselves but had access to others who did. Once such agent was Farid who Robert asked to gather intelligence on the IJO - Islamic Jihad Organization. Farid provided detailed background on one of the IJO's leaders, Muhammad Hammadah, who was one of the TWA-847 hijackers and an active member of Mughniyan's group.

The CIA also relied on phone taps to gather intel in Beirut. Robert was able to tie Mughniyah to an Iraq Air Hijacking where most of the passengers and crew died. A man, Hasan, who had ties to Mughniyah's group came into the CIA office in Beirut one afternoon. Robert treated him as an agent and offered his protection. He drove Hasan to a safe place where he could pick him up again the next morning. If asked why he was in crossing the Green Line, Hasan was told to say that he was buying Islamic books for a German scholar who couldn't cross over. Robert gave a Hasan a sterile phone number not associated with the CIA where he could contact him. Hasan was risking his life by coming to the CIA but he wanted to help bring the murdering Hizballah down. He took risks but he knew god was on his side because he played Russian roulette which Robert immediately advised him to stop doing. Hasan joined Hizballah as a CIA mole and developed a close relationship with an imam who revealed to him that Muhammad Hassuna was the suicide bomber in the embassy bombing.

Robert made contact with Jean, a tough customer who kidnapped and killed Muslims. Robert asked him to gather a team for an operation in the southern suburbs. Jean arranged a meeting between Robert and Lebanese army officers. Robert asked Isam, one of the officers, to gather information on Mughniyah and gave him \$1,000 to show his seriousness. In the end, they could not come to consensus. Isam knew where Mughniyah would be and wanted to kill him but refused to kidnap him. For Robert, that was a bridge too far.





# Chapters 11 and 12

## Chapters 11 and 12 Summary and Analysis

### Chapter 11

Yasir Arafat served as a lieutenant in the Egyptian army and joined the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as a young man. He was forced out of Egypt because of his Brotherhood activities and fled to Kuwait where he formed the Fatah in the late 1950s. Mughniyah was recruited into one of the Fatah's intelligence organizations. Arafat provided support to the Syrian Brotherhood who was trying to bring down Hafiz Al-Asad. As a result, Hafiz banned Arafat from Syria forcing Arafat to settle in Tripoli, Lebanon where he was under constant attack from Hafiz's forces. In 1983, Arafat and four thousand of his followers were evacuated by the French navy and taken to safety in Tunis. Arafat offered the support of the Fatah to the Ayatollah Khomeini and the Iranian revolution. When Arafat was forced out of Beirut in 1982, he handed his entire terror network over to Iran which was how Mughniyah and his associates became associated with the Iranians. Much of the terrorism in the Middle East could be laid at the foot of Arafat and therefore it was unsettling when Robert saw photos of him in the Rose Garden with a US president.

### Chapter 12: August 1988. Beirut, Lebanon.

Robert left Beirut for Paris saying good-bye to his friend and colleague Chuck McKee, who was assigned to remain in Beirut for another year. Robert hoped that his replacement would pick up the trail on the embassy bombing suspects. Robert warned Chuck jokingly to get out before the terrorists got him. Unfortunately, six months later Chuck died in Pan Am 103 which exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland. The Pan Am bombing was frustrating for Robert because he was in Paris where there were no leads or suspects on which to follow up. The Iranians were suspected of the attack in revenge for an Airbus that had been shot down accidentally by the Americans. Muhammad Hafiz Dalqamuni of the General Command, another terrorist organization, was a top suspect. He was a Palestinian, a true believer, who lamented about the fate of his fellow countrymen. Although he was in jail at the time of the bombing, there was a strong belief that he was the mastermind because the CIA was able to trace large bank transfers to the General Command shortly after the event. Dalqamuni was found with one of the bank account numbers on his person when he was arrested. As more evidence was produced, it became apparent to everyone but the German investigators that the bombing was the result of a conspiracy between Iran, Libya and the General Command. The Germans botched their investigation and allowed political concerns override facts—they were courting the Iranians as an ally and partner in trade.

But the US had a share of the fault. The CIA had been steadily decreasing the number agents it recruited in Europe, especially in Germany. That fact is particularly bothersome since the attacks of 9/11 were traced back to terrorist activities that took place in



Hamburg. The case officers abroad were feeling the lack of support from Washington. The CIA had grown so politically correct that the officers were afraid to make a move.

When Robert took over for a case officer named Becky who resigned as a field case officer in Paris, he was introduced to Jacques who was an agent and arms dealer. Jacques told Robert that Becky had been trying to convert him to Christianity and never discussed "business." Robert viewed the relationship between Becky and Jacques as symptomatic of what the CIA was becoming—politically correct and obsessed with not stepping on anyone's first amendment rights. The State Department was having too much say over CIA operations. French Intelligence had deteriorated as well, allowing associates of terrorists like Abu Nidal to function freely. The younger French intel officers were snobs who resented the presence of American CIA officers. Additionally, Washington was relying more on satellite intelligence than the human sort. CIA officers were resigning by the scores. If Robert decided that if he was going to stay with the agency, he would insist on being assigned to an office that still operated like a spy agency.



## Chapter 13: October 24, 1992. Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

### Chapter 13: October 24, 1992. Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Summary and Analysis

Chapter 13: October 24, 1992. Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Robert traveled from Kiev to Frankfurt and finally on to Dushanbe. After several days at a run-down hotel, Robert awoke to the sound of incoming artillery. Tajikistan was the poorest and most isolated republic in the former Soviet Union. In the three years after he left Paris, he had been assigned to Rabat, Morocco, where he was a deputy chief. It was a plum job in a thriving community. But it became boring and Robert asked for a more meaningful assignment. The Cold War was over and the CIA was told that it should no longer consider the KGB as an enemy. Tajikistan was a chaotic city where Islamic fundamentalism was taking hold and terrorism, drugs and nuclear-weaponry was part of the mix.

When the fighting broke out in Dushanbe, the State Department was to arrange evacuation for all embassy employees and CIA personnel. Robert spent a day rounding up all the Americans for the flight. They were taken to the airfield by Russian tanks. The C-141 transport could also take the diplomats of other countries who wanted to flee but they had to agree to pay \$10,000 each for the flight although the State Department rarely really billed anyone for the charge. Before leaving, Robert burned his hard drive and all his documents.

The CIA office in Tajikistan, with Robert as its chief, was able to resume operations after the ex-communists took over. The Russians were the only force to keep Islamic fundamentalism from spreading across the southern tier of the former Soviet Union. Robert wanted to recruit a Russian agent who could provide intel on what Russia's plans were. To cultivate a relationship with the Russians, Robert began skiing with some of them almost every weekend. He became friendly with Colonel Yuri Abramov, a Russian paratrooper. One morning after a lot of vodka, Yuri woke Robert who had fallen asleep on his couch. They drove to a military base in the mountains and, with a parachute strapped on, took off in an AN-2 biplane for the Afghan border. Robert was the first to jump and made it safely down. An order went out after his jump that there would be no more leaping out of Russian military aircraft.



# Chapters 14 and 15

## Chapters 14 and 15 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 14: March 3, 1995. Salah Al-Din, Iraq.

Robert was assigned in Northern Iraq with a colleague named Tom. Their focuses were to find some way to get rid of Saddam and to keep the Kurds from killing each other. The Kurds lived in Northern Iraq but were not officially under Saddam's rule. The Kurds were a people without a country of their own. Intermittent spates of civil war would break out among them. In March, Saddam called up his army reserves after learning that the Turkish army was on the northern Kurdish border of Iraq, ready to strike. Robert received a cable from Tony Lake, the President's national security adviser, advising that the planned actions had been compromised and that if opposition forces proceeded, they would be on their own. The operation to which the cable was referring was a coup to overthrow Saddam. Washington had been kept advised about the details of the coup for a month but only then, a few hours before it was to take place, did they wash their hands of it. The streets outside the CIA building were silent and empty, ready for the coup. The message Robert just received wasn't going to be a popular one to deliver.

Chapter 15: January 21, 1995. Northern Iraq.

When Robert first arrived in Northern Iraq, he had no idea that a coup against Saddam was planned. His goal was to gather intel on any potential plans Saddam had to invade another neighbor, his scud missiles and his biochemical warheads. Robert met with an Iraqi major general in a small town called Zakhu. The general claimed he didn't know where Saddam's weapons were. He wanted to know if the US wanted Saddam to remain in power. There was a myth that it was the US that kept Saddam in power. One fact that fed into the myth was that the US failed to hunt down Saddam at the end of the first Gulf War.

Robert assured the general that the US wanted Saddam out. The general wanted assurances that Washington would support their action. The general left, on his way to meet with the Turks who supported the opposition. He would be back to get Washington's response in a few days. The lack of agents in Iraq and surrounding countries made it difficult for the CIA to confirm the general's information. Washington needed more details and the general decided to trust the US and sang like a bird. Three military divisions were the backbone of the coup and could hold off any single combat unit loyal to Saddam. Another military unit would commandeer a dozen tanks and their crews. The plan was to start a conflict in Baghdad which would cause Saddam to flee to Awjah, his place of birth for refuge, where they would ambush him. Over the next several weeks, the general gave Robert more intel, all of which he shared with Washington. The general asked Robert to broker a peace between warring Kurds whose continuing conflicts could kill the plan.



# Chapters 16 and 17

## Chapters 16 and 17 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 16: March 3, 1995. Salah Al-Din, Iraq.

The Kurds weren't part of the coup but their continuing conflicts had the potential to foil the plot if their disruptions drew Saddam's army to the north. The Kurds had no love for Saddam; he had gassed thousands of Kurds in 1988. Ahmad Chalabi, head of the Iraqi National Congress, Saddam's opposition, wanted Saddam unseated and wanted to replace him but he had little support inside Iraq. Only the Kurds were his supporters and if Saddam's army came after them, he would lose them. Chalabi was considered an outsider because he grew up in Lebanon and was educated in America. He had a shady past that included an indictment for embezzling depositor funds from a bank he owned in Jordan that collapsed.

Chalabi had a difficult time convincing Kurd leader Masud Barzani to join the uprising. Barzani was in the oil smuggling business and transported as many as a hundred thousand barrels a day into Turkey. Robert had a few run-ins with Barzani who patently did not trust the Americans. Barzani's Kurdish nemesis was Jalal Talabani, a likeable rogue with a wide grin. Talabani planned to attack Saddam's army from the north. He asked Robert what Washington was going to do when he attacked. Robert told him that Washington wanted Saddam but offered no support. Robert didn't know that Washington had stopped caring whether Saddam stayed in power or not.

Chapter 17: March 3, 1995. Salah Al-Din, Iraq.

Chalabi collapsed on the couch when he read the cable from Tony Lake. It would give Barzani cover to sit out the uprising without losing face. Chalabi was angry but said he would proceed with the uprising. The general as well decided to forge ahead with the coup. By the next morning, the general was detained by Barzani's men and Barzani had convinced the Kurd's to withdraw support. Several days later, the general left Iraq for Damascus. He knew if he stayed, he would fall victim to an assassin's bullet. Washington had dithered for a month and finally abandoned good and brave men in the eleventh hour.

Bob, Robert's boss in Washington, called him and asked if anyone on his team was using the alias "Robert Pope." Bob responded that he was using his real name and that the others all were using aliases but none was using the name "Robert Pope." Bob told him to forget he asked. He also told him he was skating on thin ice. He ordered Robert to come back immediately and not to talk to the Turks or the Iraqis because they could be witnesses. The word "witnesses" had a dark tone but Robert didn't connect it to anything specific.



# Chapters 18 and 19

## Chapters 18 and 19 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 18: March 6, 1995. Salah Al-Din, Iraq

During the night of March 6, the conflict finally broke out. Robert and Tom were watching with binoculars and could see flares and tracers in the night sky. Robert learned that Talabani and his men were attacking a brigade from the 38th Division at Guwayr and eventually took it sustaining very few casualties among the Kurdish guerrillas. Robert and Tom packed up to go to the front and look for Talabani. After an arduous journey, they arrived in the mountains south of Sulamaniyah to a one-story cinder block building. Talabani came rushing out, hugged Robert and lifted him off the ground. Once inside, Talabani told the CIA officers that they would be attacking again that night. The next morning Robert and Tom said their good-byes to Talabani who laughed and said they'd meet again in Baghdad. A last report before leaving Iraq indicated that Talabani was about to take Kirkuk.

Robert called Bob and tried to convince him that there really was a war going on in Iraq. Bob wasn't interested. He told Robert he needed to get back to Washington. Tony Lake wanted his scalp and he has an appointment with Fred Turco on March 15th at 9 am. Talabani's offensive was not successful. Saddam eventually ousted Chalabi from the country.

Chapter 19: March 1995. Washington. D.C.

On March 22, 1995, Robert passed the FBI polygraph virtually ending the criminal investigation against him since there was absolutely no other evidence to support Chalabi's claim. On April 4, 1996, the Justice Department declined prosecution and the matter was over. He would be penalized, however, for riling up the National Security Adviser and be assigned to desk duty in D.C. He was named deputy chief in the Central Eurasian Division's South Group.

Robert had to become re-acclimated to the US and especially to life in Washington, D.C. He learned how money skews everything and that big oil stretched from the Caspian Sea to the White House. His first lesson in politics came that May when Sheila Heslin, a NCS staffer, wanted derogatory information on a specific businessman named Roger Tamraz. Robert sent Heslin intel that the subject had apparently embezzled money from his bank. It wasn't good enough for her. She wanted the lurid reports that had appeared in the foreign press about him. Heslin didn't know that the CIA wasn't a news clipping service.

A short time later, the deputy chief in New York asked Robert to work on an American oilman doing business in the Caspian. The man was Roger Tamraz. Tamraz said he would be building an oil pipeline connecting the Caspian with the Mediterranean which



would be financed by the Chinese. Tamraz wanted to discuss his plan with the President. Robert explained that he had no clout and that he should hire a lobbyist. With a little more digging, Robert discovered that Tamraz had been involved in a number of shady oil deals in the Middle East and had broken US laws against bribing governments. Robert relayed this to Heslin who made a note of it. As it turned out, Heslin was out to get Robert.

In 1994, when CIA officer Rick Ames was arrested for being a spy for the KGB, the CIA director turned counterespionage responsibilities over to the FBI. FBI Agent Ed Curran was named the unit's head and he put out word that he was cracking down on everyone and opening up old cases for re-review. By 1995, there were more than three hundred people under suspicion. CIA employees were paranoid and terrified. FBI Director Louis Freeh was dismantling the CIA one person at a time. The FBI was setting up offices abroad to displace CIA offices. In the meantime, FBI agent Robert Hanssen was giving away the FBI's secrets in trash bags. Robert was subjected to another polygraph when he was wrongly accused of maintaining ties with a Russian woman he knew. He passed the test and the issue was dropped. Morale was at an all time low and resignations were on the rise. Islamic cells were forming all over the world and the FBI was keeping the CIA from learning about them. Political appointments and promotions were being made. People landed in positions that were way over their heads and that they knew nothing about.





# Chapters 20 and 21

## Chapters 20 and 21 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 20: October 3, 1995, Washington, D.C.

Tamraz, an international fugitive, informed Robert that he just had dinner with Vice President Al Gore at Ted Kennedy's home. What he didn't tell Robert was that he had put Victoria Kennedy, Ted's wife, and Democratic lobbyist Lloyd Cutler on his payroll. He claimed that President Clinton had contacted Azerbaijani President Aliyev in support of multi-pipelines. Clinton may have supported multi-pipelines but he was speaking in support of big players like Amoco and BP, not Roger Tamraz.

Robert discovered that there were forces within the administration who supported the Foreign Oil Companies Group, including Heslin, who wanted Roger Tamraz out of the picture because he was having too much success against the big players. Uncovering how far some of the administration officials and staffers were involved in the oil industry was surprising and explained why there was so much interest in Tamraz.

Robert learned that Heslin was worried about blowback against Amoco oil from the Iranians if the CIA proceeded with an operation against a terrorist group in Iran. Robert was outraged that concern for Amoco's bottom line could be considered more important than fighting terrorism. Robert won that battle but he was growing tired of it all. There was even evidence of campaign finance abuse between politicians and the oil companies.

Chapter 21: March 1997. Washington, D.C.

Robert contacted Bill Lofgren, a retired CIA chief, and told him that he was going to blow the whistle on the White House's oil dealings. It was difficult to find someone who would listen. The CIA showed the Justice Department only a few of the documents backing Robert's claims and the JD refused to pursue it. After months of trying to get through to Senator Richard Shelby of Alabama, he finally agreed to meet with him. But the meeting was a fraud and Shelby ended it as soon as Robert mentioned that a wanted felon, Tamraz, had access to Senator Kennedy.

Robert had to report to the CIA inspector general's office where he was interrogated about his relationship with Tamraz. Heslin was claiming that Robert had pressured her to take Tamraz's name off the blacklist so he could meet with the President. It was a lie. He wasn't surprised to learn that his interrogators were not CIA; they were Secret Service officers. The next day, Robert's office was torn apart and his employees were all being interrogated.

Robert saw the writing on the wall. His career with the CIA was over. As a final act, he put all his efforts in uncovering who was behind the embassy bombing so many years



before. At the end of his work, he was convinced that Iran ordered the bombing and that a Fatah network carried it out.

Robert walked up seven flights of stairs and handed his letter of resignation over to Jack Downing, Director of Operations. Downing tried but failed to convince him to stay. He promised that he would be cited for his remarkable career. On March 11, 1998, Robert was awarded the Career Intelligence Medal but didn't learn about it until two years later when friends accidentally ran across a newspaper article about it. The CIA, as was their mantra, kept everything a secret, even that Robert had been cited for his service to the country.



# Characters

## Robert Baer

Robert Baer was a dedicated CIA case officer who served for over twenty years recruiting agents and gathering intelligence to protect the United States' interests and security. As a young high school student, Robert dreamed of being a ski-racer and wanted to drop out of school. But his mother dashed those dreams and sent him to military school where he did well and was accepted at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. After school, he applied to the CIA on a lark but was surprised when they were soon knocking on his door.

A CIA recruiter convinced the young man to apply for the position of case officer. He was told he would be assigned overseas and be charged with recruiting agents and gathering intelligence to keep America safe and gain an inside understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of its enemies. Robert was first assigned in Madras, India, where he was charged with gathering intel on the Russian military stationed there and learning the specifications of their weaponry. Robert's first attempt to turn an agent failed but he was lauded by his superiors for attempting to recruit a "hard target."

Robert was assigned to CIA offices across Europe and the Middle East. He became proficient at recruiting agents, gathering intelligence to keep America safe and informed and in evading agents from opposing sides who were often on his trail. Robert loved the exciting aspects of his job and also felt deeply the importance of his responsibilities. However, the CIA began to decline and lose focus from its main purpose. Obstacles such as political correctness and an over-dependence on aerial surveillance and wire-tapping began to interfere with the jobs with which the field officers were charged. When Robert's attempt to expose corruption and malfeasance at the highest levels of the US government were met with disinterest and even hostility, he knew that his time with the CIA had come to an end.

## Imad Fa'iz Mughniyah

Imad Fa'iz Mughniyah was a Shi'a Muslim from southern Lebanon. He was responsible for the kidnapping of CIA chief Bill Buckley and the other hostages who were held at a compound in Kurdish territory in northern Iraq that had been commandeered by the Iranians. When a CIA chief came to Robert for advice on how to handle Mughniyah in attempting to free the hostages, Robert suggested that the US should hit Mughniyah where it would hurt the most—his family. But Mughniyah was elusive and was difficult to keep track of. The embassy bombing in Beirut where six CIA agents lost their lives haunted Robert Baer for decades. Robert found links between Mughniyah and the bombing.



When Robert picked up the investigation again a few years after it happened, nothing new had been uncovered; but one name, Imad Fa'iz Mughniyah, continued to surface. Mughniyah had poor beginnings and joined Yasir Arafat's Force 17 as a young teen. Robert questioned how such a poor, young Arab boy had become such a powerful terrorist leader. Robert suspected that Mughniyah may have been behind the embassy bombings and the kidnappings but had help from Iran in both cases.

Operatives also discovered that Mughniyah still had connections with Arafat. A connection was also made between Mughniyah and the TWA-847 hijackers since one of the main perpetrators was Muhammad Hammadah, an active member of Mughniyah's group.

## **Fred Turco**

Robert Baer was called back to Langley by Fred Turco, who was in charge of a new operation to tighten up security. Turco notified him that the FBI wanted to interrogate him about an accusation that Ahmad Chalabi had made against him. He was being accused of attempting the assassination of Saddam Hussein.

## **Saddam Hussein**

Saddam Hussein was the President of Iraq when Robert Baer was accused of attempting his assassination. It was a false charge but it was the beginning of the end of Robert's career as a CIA case officer.

## **Ahmad Chalabi**

Ahmad Chalabi accused Robert Baer of attempting to assassinate Saddam Hussein. It was a totally false claim by Chalabi who was trying to advance himself politically. The accusation placed Baer in great jeopardy with the US government.

## **Yasir Arafat**

Yasir Arafat was the President of the Palestinian Liberation Army. He was a terrorist with ties to both Sunni and Shi'a fundamentalists. The terrorist won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1994 for the agreement struck between him and Israeli leaders.

## **Gregori**

Gregori was a Russian officer whom Robert befriended. Gregori gave Robert volumes of valuable intel about the Russian military. Gregori suggested that he and some colleagues would consider assassinating President Yeltsin if the US would support



them. Washington flatly rejected the suggestion and reminded Robert that the Cold War was over.

## **Chuck McKee**

Chuck McKee was a colleague of Robert's in Beirut, Lebanon. Robert was reassigned to Paris while Chuck was reassigned to Beirut for another year. Robert jokingly warned him to get out before the terrorists got him. Sadly, six months later Chuck died in a terrorist attack when Pan Am 103 exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland.

## **Becky**

Becky was the CIA officer whom Robert Baer replaced in Paris. Becky quit the service, feeling it just wasn't for her. Jacques, an agent and arms dealer, told Robert that Becky never talked "business." She spent all their time together trying to convert him to Christianity.

## **Roger Tamraz**

Roger Tamraz was a American businessman who was heavily involved in the oil business in the Caspian Sea. Through Robert's association with Tamraz, the deep level of involvement of a number of officials and staffers of the Clinton Administration was revealed.



## Objects/Places

### Langley, VA

CIA headquarters is located in Langley, Virginia, just outside of Washington, D.C. Robert Baer spent a year in training most of which was held in Langley. He also worked at the CIA HQ at various times during his career.

### Madras, India

Robert Baer's first overseas assignment was in Madras, India. Although it was a very poor country, Robert was put up in a two-story home with seven servants. He also had a weekend beach home.

### Paris, France

Robert had a tour of duty in Paris, France. He replaced Becky, a case officer who resigned from the CIA because it didn't suit her. Jacques, an arms dealer and agent in Paris, later told Robert that Becky never talked "business;" she only talked religion and tried to convert him to Christianity.

### American Embassy, Beirut, Lebanon

A suicide bomber blew up the American Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon in April 1983, taking the lives of 17 Americans include six CIA officers. The bombing had a lasting impact on Robert Baer who for many years tried to track down the conspirators.

### Marine Barracks, Beirut, Lebanon

Six months after the bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut, the US suffered its worst terrorist attack to date when a suicide bomber plowed into a building that had been converted into a US Marines barracks. Two-hundred forty-one Marines were killed.

### The Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood sent a request to meet with the CIA. The Brotherhood was a radical and dangerous religious organization that was connected to the Wahibis of Saudi Arabia who had spawned Osama bin Laden. A contact told Robert that the Brotherhood was more dangerous than Qaddafi should they overthrow him.



## **Beirut, Lebanon**

Robert had a tour of duty in Beirut, Lebanon, a hot-seat of terrorism. Beirut is where the US Embassy was bombed followed six-months later by the bombing of the US Marines Barracks killing 241 Marines. President Reagan pulled the remaining Marines out of Lebanon and the country was on its own.

## **Dushanbe, Tajikistan**

Baer was the chief of the Tajikistan office when a war broke out. He had to gather all the Americans so they could be transported to safety in a plane sent by the State Department. Baer and his team was able to return there after the conflicts settled down.

## **Washington, D. C.**

Robert Baer was called back to Washington, D.C. from his assignment in Tajikistan to answer questions about an accusation by Ahmad Chalabi that Robert had attempted to assassinate Saddam Hussein.

## **Salah Al-Din, Iraq**

Robert's last overseas assignment was in Salah Al-Din, Iraq. He was bureau chief of the office and was disturbed when Washington, D.C. pulled its support for a planned coup by opposition forces trying to overthrow Saddam at the last minute.



# Themes

## The Decline of the CIA

As a new, young case officer with the CIA, Robert Baer was anxious to begin his career. He spent many years learning his craft and became proficient at recruiting "agents," gaining valuable intelligence for the US and learning to evade the enemy who was often just a few steps behind him. As the years passed, he became disappointed when he found a lack of support from his superiors back in Washington, D.C. Robert would eagerly report intelligence that he had gathered but would often learn that the intelligence went no where or was sometimes even greeted with hostility.

Many of the individuals who were promoted to supervisory positions within the CIA had little or no field experience and didn't understand the difficulties and dangers that case officers and their agents faced. Officials in the White House and Pentagon came to rely more on aerial surveillance and wire-tapping. Only Robert and agents with his experience knew that getting to the heart of an issue took real, human resources on the ground.

Political correctness also took a bite out of the CIA's effectiveness. Many officials at Langley, CIA headquarters, became more concerned with not stepping on the toes of officials at the State Department or at the Pentagon than in supporting their officers or in protecting the lives of the agents who were risking their lives.

Morale was way down and resignations among the case officers were on the rise. Many of the foreign CIA officers were inactive or lacked adequate personnel. France and Germany's intelligence agencies were on the decline at the same time as the CIA. Robert lamented that had the intelligence world been more active and robust, perhaps the CIA would have known about the attacks of 911 in advance and the world would be a different place.

## The Terror Network

In *See No Evil*, Robert Baer's account of life as a case officer for the Central Intelligence Agency, it is readily apparent that trying to unravel the complexity of the Middle East and the terrorism that exists there is quite a challenge. The CIA has profiles on many of the known terrorists and it is amazing how many terrorists are connected to each other, either by familial relationships or by memberships in the same associations. And although there are many different countries, cities and communities and homelands, being an Arab creates a connection between the people of the region that is strong and, in many cases, unbreakable.

Although Yasir Arafat was raised and educated in Egypt as an engineer, he was forced to leave the country because of his activities with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, a radical and dangerous group that believed that god wanted secular Arab leaders



assassinated. Arafat went to Kuwait and formed his first group, the Fatah. Arafat offered support to the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood which was trying to overturn the brutal Syrian leader, Hafiz Al-Asad. Arafat helped radicals during the Iranian revolution. When ousted from Lebanon, he turned his entire network over to the Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran. Eventually, Arafat became the leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization that spawned the terror group Hezbollah.

Suspected embassy bomber Imad Fa'iz Mughniyah had early connections to Yasir Arafat. Mughniyah joined Arafat's Force 17 as a teenager. Later, Baer connected Mughniyah, Arafat and another radical group to the Embassy bombing, TWA hijacking and the kidnapping and murder of a CIA chief. Robert Baer, a person who lived in that world and studied the major players, came to the conclusion that much of the terror that the Middle East has spawned could be laid at the feet of Yasir Arafat who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1994. It was no wonder that Baer found the photo of Arafat in the Rose Garden with the President of the United States disturbing.

## Private Agendas

Throughout *See No Evil*, the story of Robert Baer's experience as a life-long CIA case officer, there are underlying political currents that drive perilous situations in unexpected directions. When Baer first joined the CIA in the early 1980s, there was an esprit de corps about the duties of the CIA and everyone was on the same page. However, as time passed and mores changed and new administrations came into power, the CIA began to change.

Much of the change could be attributed to outside pressures from the State Department who feared that CIA activity could spoil fragile diplomatic relationships. The CIA chiefs began to act more tentatively so as not to rile the State Department or the National Security Adviser. Although diplomatic relationships were important, Baer was emphatic that a diplomatic relationship should not trump a situation where lives were at risk or where a dangerous terrorist was allowed to go free.

Baer also attributed the decline of the CIA to political maneuvers that placed unqualified people in command positions. Many of these chiefs and deputy chiefs had no experience on the streets and were in over their heads. It was obvious that those who promoted these unqualified individuals had motivations not connected with improving the CIA. The Pentagon was so fearful of making mistakes that they preferred to depend on aerial surveillance and wire-tapping as opposed to human resources. The military men wanted to have something tangible they could hold in their hands as opposed to reports from case officers or agents who might make mistakes. Everyone who understood spying knew that human resources were much more informative and reliable.

Later in his career, Baer could see that many officials and staffers in the White House were more concerned about Amoco's bottom line than the CIA protecting our allies against Iran. When he decided to blow the whistle on the situation, no one was





interested in hearing what he had to say; in fact, he must have angered the White House. After he came forward, his office was torn apart, he was dragged over the coals by the Secret Service and his employees were interrogated. The CIA had become an organization that he no longer recognized.

# Style

## Perspective

See No Evil is written in the first person. It is the story of the career of CIA case officer Robert Baer who is the author of the book. See No Evil is a detailed account of the life and responsibilities of a CIA case officer in perilous assignments across Europe and the Middle East. Baer relates the difficult overseas assignments to which he was assigned during his career. He tells of the perilous aspects of his job in recruiting foreign "agents" for the CIA. Baer, of course, knows first-hand the ways in which foreign agents had to be approached. Baer relates how he was trained to spot vulnerabilities or weaknesses in individuals and use that knowledge to "turn" an agent against his own country. Of course, Baer relates, money was used to convince some agents but often times the agents had deep convictions that compelled them to turn on their country and help the US.

What is most troubling about Baer's account is Baer's dedication, loyalty and fervor for the job of gathering intel to keep his country safe juxtaposed with the indifference and sometimes hostility that he and other field officers were met with in dealing with the higher-ups back in Washington, D.C. Baer was probably idealistic about his job but it could take only an idealistic person to become a CIA officer and risk life and limb in the pursuit of information to keep his homeland safe and informed.

With other CIA officers resigning all around him, Baer stuck it out longer than most. The great disappointment and sadness that he felt over the loss of a vibrant spy agency could be felt through the sincerity and bitterness of his words. He resigned when he finally saw the agency as he knew and loved it no longer existed and that it was replaced with a politically correct organization that was beholden to the State Department, Pentagon and the FBI.

## Tone

Robert Baer's account of his long career with the Central Intelligence Agency is presented in a detailed and precise manner. It is obvious that Baer was well-trained and extremely knowledgeable in the procedures of the CIA, spying techniques and methods and the intricacies of the Middle East and those of the terror network. The episodes that he relays are rich in the kind of detail that only one who experiences the life that he led could provide. Although he had a long period of time during the latter years of his career in which he felt disappointed and virtually abandoned by his CIA chiefs and bosses back in Langley at the CIA headquarters, his tone remained professional and analytic. As the years wore on, he became increasingly discouraged by the lack of support and even interest from those back in the states. The CIA leadership had become overcome with a need to be politically correct. The CIA chiefs were tentative in their decisions, always turning an eye toward the State Department, Pentagon, White House and National



Security Adviser to make sure that the CIA wasn't stepping on anyone's toes or anyone's first amendment rights.

Although Baer is forthright about his displeasure with the turn the agency that he loved had taken, he maintains a respectful tone and praises the bravery and work of his fellow case officers in the field and the scores of foreign agents who all risked their lives to help America be safer and more informed about their enemies.

## Structure

See No Evil by Robert Baer is divided into four main sections and twenty-one chapters. Part I: The Making of An Operative, contains five chapters. It covers his childhood and school life, his CIA training and his first assignments as a case officer overseas. Part II: Into the Fire, contains eight chapters. It covers his first dangerous assignment and his expanding capabilities as a seasoned intelligence officer. Part III: You're on Your Own, contains five chapters. In this section, Baer began to see that the CIA to which he had been dedicated was changing and was not providing necessary support to the field officers and agents. Part IV: A Political Education, contains three chapters. In these chapters, Baer is back in Washington, D.C. and sees up close the decline of the agency. He also observes that important administration officials and staffers have personal and inappropriate interest in the oil industry.

In the front of the book is a map of the Middle East and Asia which denotes many of the countries in which Baer served. There is a forward by investigative journalist Seymour Hersh who lauds Baer for his service and for speaking out about the decline of the CIA. There is also a preface by the author and a dedication to his three children.

Following the main book there is an epilogue and an afterword by the author that contain updates on some of the events depicted in the book. There is also a helpful glossary and an index at the back of the book.



## Quotes

"In the CIA, as elsewhere in the federal government, you're innocent until you're investigated." (Chapter 1, page 4)

"There was a reason America's human intelligence resources had dried up like the Sahara, and it began with a lack of guts right where I was sitting now—in Langley, Virginia." (Chapter 1, page 7)

"I would spend the next two decades watching the CIA evolve into an organization where garnering promotions and pleasing political masters became more important than collecting secrets, but back then the spirit of the CIA's World War II predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), still lived." (Chapter 3, page 26)

"I knew next to nothing about the Middle East, but I accepted without a second thought. I'd been hanging around in the frying pan. It was time to jump into the fire." (Chapter 5, page 62)

"I knew, in short, that dealing with the Muslim Brotherhood was playing with fire. These guys were programmed for trouble." (Chapter 7, page 89)

"I loved working in Beirut. Instead of dealing with the distractions of headquarters. . . I would move around on the streets, where I had always been more comfortable. Best of all, I was away from Washington politics, maybe the greatest hindrance we had to doing our job." (Chapter 9, page 109)

"A lot of trails converge at the feet of Yasir Arafat. There may even be a trail to Osama bin Laden. . . . I think of that when I see Arafat standing in the Rose Garden at the White House or when I hear that a CIA director has met privately with him at some desert, and I wonder sometimes if Arafat's example doesn't make Osama bin Laden consider that he, too, might become a statesman in time." (Chapter 11, page 131)

"The action you have planned for this weekend has been totally compromised. We believe there is a high risk of failure. Any decision to proceed will be on your own." (Chapter 14, page 173)

"Here we go again. The general was alluding to a vintage conspiracy theory that dogged everything we tried to do in Iraq—the myth that the US secretly kept Saddam in power. . . . Some even believed Saddam was a paid CIA agent." (Chapter 15, page 178)



"I had gone to see for myself what was happening, and I'd used Talabani's equipment and men to get there, but only in the Middle East could you betray someone by refusing to accept the lie he had told you in the first place." (Chapter 16, page 195)

"They had dithered and dithered and, in the end, finally decided that too much was at stake to upset the status quo in Iraq. That, faced with a choice between sins of commission or omission, Washington had chosen the latter and left good and brave men twisting in the wind thousands of miles across the ocean." (Chapter 17, page 203)

"Maybe if the White House and National Security Council had been spending less time thinking about Exxon and Mobil and Amoco and more time thinking about the implications of letting a known venomous snake [bin Laden] slither away to Afghanistan, we might have all been spared a lot of future misery." (Chapter 20, page 241)



## Topics for Discussion

What changes did Robert Baer see taking place in the CIA in the latter years of his tenure with them? What caused the changes? How did he react to them?

How did the US Government disappoint Saddam Hussein's opposition in their plans to overthrow the dictator? In what spot did their actions place Robert?

There are many terrorism links that lead to what Middle East figure? What award did this individual receive and why was it ironic? Why did he receive the award and with whom did he share it?

Who accused Robert Baer of plotting to assassinate Saddam Hussein? Who interrogated Baer about it? What penalties would he have faced had he been convicted of violating the laws that he was accused of violating?

What was Robert Baer's first assignment with the CIA? What did he think it would be like and what did he expect to be doing most of the time? What was the reality of his assignment?

What responsibilities do CIA DOs or case officers have? What responsibilities do CIA DIs have? Who are CIA "agents?" What is the difference between an "agent" and an "access agent?"

What corruption did Robert Baer want to expose about the White House? Who was willing to listen to him? What happened after he tried to blow the whistle?