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Civilian Warriors: The Inside Story Of Blackwater And The Unsung Heroes Of The War On Terror



Synopsis

The founder of Blackwater offers the gripping, previously untold story of the world's most controversial military contractor. Blackwater is one of the most misunderstood companies of our time. As Erik Prince, its founder and former CEO, writes: "Hundreds of American citizens employed by private military contractors, or PMCs, would lose their lives helping our government wage wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, only to have their memory tarnished by the unfair and/or ignorant depiction of PMCs as profiteers, jackbooted thugs, or worse." Because of the secrecy requirements of Blackwater's contracts with the Pentagon, the State Department, and the CIA, Prince was unable to speak out when his company's opponents spread false information. But now he's free to tell the often shocking story of Blackwater's rise and fall. Blackwater hired Special Forces veterans and others with the skills and courage to take on the riskiest security jobs in the world. As its reputation grew, demand for its services escalated. Its men eventually completed nearly 100,000 missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Prince's narrative includes newly revealed details about many controversial events. It debunks myths that have been spread by TV shows and movies. It honors our armed forces while challenging the Pentagon's top leadership. Above all, it will make people rethink exactly who the "good guys" and "bad guys" have been since 9/11.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 13 hours and 13 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Penguin Audio

Audible.com Release Date: November 18, 2013

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B00GRBO9NU

Best Sellers Rank: #26 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > True Crime > White Collar Crime
#62 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Military > Afghan & Iraq Wars > Afghan War #70 in Books > History > Military > Afghan War

Customer Reviews

Just typed up a couple pages, computer crashed, can't retrieve it, so here now goes a quick summary from the top of my head: Erik Prince, real Man of Mystery speaks. Portrayed by some as

archvillain, thought by others to be some kind of modern day Knight Templar, this real life Navy Seal and entrepreneur tells all about the founding of Blackwater and their role in Iraq. The book starts off as a mini-biography of his dad, a man who started off as a salesman making forty cents an hour to founder of a billion-dollar company. Prince makes it clear that his father instilled in him the foundation that led to his later success. It was as a Navy Seal in the Balkans that Prince first realized the need for private training facilities for special operations and highly focused training. Previously, Seals and their elite counterparts often had trouble getting sufficient training time on military training facilities that were over capacity from general use training by others. Columbine becomes a turning point for the Blackwater team as law enforcement brutally realizes the need for more specialized training. Several years later Iraq explodes and the need for highly trained security teams draws Blackwater into its largest conflict and most controversial affair. While under government contract, Blackwater was forbidden to speak out publicly in its defense, especially against one high profile lawsuit that eventually tarnished its reputation almost beyond repair. Now free to speak, Prince effectively reveals The Other Side of the Story, and it's clear that Blackwater was often a scapegoat for others' ineptitude and politically driven agendas. Many interesting stories are revealed, such as a huge ambush of the Polish Ambassador. Unlike Banghazi, this has a happy ending as Blackwater and Polish security valiantly band together and keep him alive. In a later ceremony honoring the fallen, the Polish ambassador gratefully credits Blackwater for his survival. Lesser known stories of BW's involvement providing security in post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans are told. A sweet love story between him and his beloved wife Joan is interwoven in between them all. The book is all meat and no filler whatsoever. Fact-dense with so many footnote links that it becomes hard to turn the page without accidentally touching one. Perhaps the best summary comes from the book itself: "There is much the government doesn't want told about the work we did: the truth about our State Department-sanctioned operational tactics in Iraq, including our rules of engagement; or Blackwater's involvement with President Obama's ever expanding terrorist-hunting tactics in Pakistan and beyond..."

Finally the other side of the story. Admittedly, in 2004, I was a neophyte. I used to hear the stories of the evil "mercenaries" and "contractors" who were on killing rampages across Iraq and Afghanistan. Cutting a swath of terror through all in their path with no accountability to any government or law. That was of course complete bulls*** As I looked into it more myself and began to see the biased one sided media reporting on all things Iraq, I began to try and find the other side of the story. I wish everyone would read this book. Not only is it fascinating and loaded with incredible stories of

bravery, heroics, and loss, but it also shines the light on the fools in congress who know nothing about what they vote on and will scapegoat their own mother if they think it will help their re-election campaign. There are many revelations in this book that may shock you, for me the most shocking was the absolute and total ignorance of the Congressman who were overseeing the war effort and their complete lack of understanding of basically everything that was happening in Iraq at the time. This company was demonized, demagogued, and scapegoated. Some of the absolute best, bravest, and most talented operators our country possesses gave their lives completing every mission Blackwater was ever given by the US government. They never failed a mission, they never lost a single VIP they were tasked with protecting, yet they lost over 100 of their own men in the process. They fired their guns on less than 1% of their missions, yet the way the media tells it, they were basically ISIS but wearing US flags on their arms. It's a disgrace how the company, it's contractors and Erik Prince were treated by their government.

As a former Army officer and later a contractor (PAE, DynCorp & MPRI), I experienced both sides of the military culture and that of a contractor. The book is a history of Blackwater and of its founder-author who presents an honest and forthwith account of building a company in the midst of conducting security US State Dept contracts in an environment not known previously in our military history. For those who never deployed or were assigned during our country's time in Iraq (and especially those who attempted to second guess what it was like), Iraq was absolutely monumenally dangerous. The dis-organization that was Bremer's time as a result of inept post invasion planning highlighted by the disbandment of the Iraqi military and moreso, the civilian infrastructure was (in my opinion) a large part of the catalyst and causation of the insurgency. Although this reviewer never worked with Blackwater personnel, I knew of their missions and of their force protection challenges in terms of both physical resources and qualified personnel. The US State Department was the singular beneficiary, as no personnel were KIA. Blackwater's record of accomplishment was stellar. Several chapters deal with incidents which resulted in civilian deaths-unfortunately war, especially the war in Iraq was in essence.. "who are the bad guys?" Without a doubt, no other organization with that much exposure to the insurgency performed so well under absolutely critical security and force protections metrics. Things changed daily-I cannot imagine how a civilian organization could adjust without dedicated, well trained and focused personnel who understood the dynamics of the overall situation. So as to the mission, Prince, et al in the management did what few organizations could accomplish. Even our military would of had a difficult time adapting to changing times on the ground with as many troopers and unlimited

resources which were available. The comments about his family and the devastating and horrific personal experiences with regard to his wife while she was undergoing cancer treatment..and the indiscretions along the way. For those who worked contract in either Afghanistan or Iraq, this book provides and insight into the workings of a company contracted by the Federal government and at the same time viewed with great indifference within members of Congress. Make no mistake for those who question the salaries of those who worked on conflict/war zones. No benefits, no retirement, just straight salary with the belief one was doing something good (good guys against the bad guys) and supporting our troopers. Frankly, post Iraq was a mess and as mentioned the Bush, Cheney & Bremer trio "of who made the decision" to totally dismiss some 400,000 Iraqi soldiers who allegedly (read Fiasco by Tom Ricks) and according to their Iraqi commanders wished to support the new government post Saddam. Add to it the civilian infrastructure directly caused the country to fall apart..with some 4468 US KIA and over 30,000 WIA and at a cost nearly one billion US dollars (mostly borrowed from China). The legacy of the war in Iraq will be with us for decades to come..Enough said..RH (Haiti, Bosnia, Croatia, Sudan (2 tours), Afghanistan, Iraq, Uganda)

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