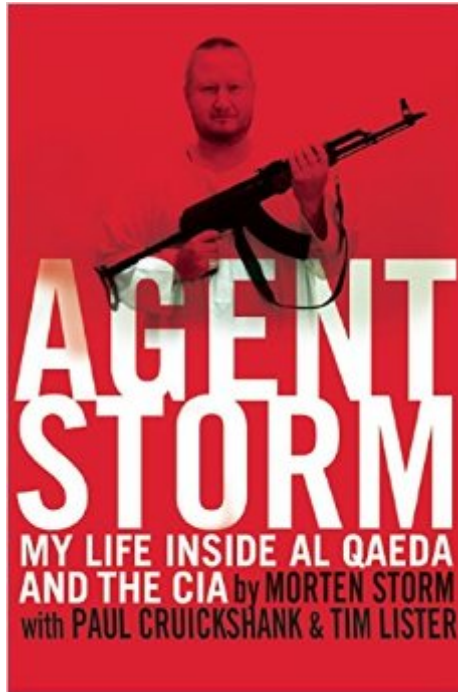


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Agent Storm: My Life Inside Al Qaeda And The CIA



Synopsis

Morten Storm was an unlikely jihadi. A six-foot-one red-haired Dane, Storm spent his teens in and out of trouble. A book about the Prophet Mohammed prompted his conversion to Islam, and Storm sought purpose in a community of believers. He attended a militant madrasah in Yemen, named his son Osama, and became close friends with Anwar al-Awlaki, the American-born terrorist cleric. But after a decade of jihadi life, he not only repudiated extremism but, in a quest for atonement, became a double agent for the CIA and British and Danish intelligence. Agent Storm takes readers inside the jihadist world like never before, showing the daily life of zealous men set on mass murder, from dodging drones with al Qaeda leaders in the Arabian desert to training in extremist gyms in Britain and performing supply drops in Kenya. The book also provides a tantalizing look at his dangerous life undercover, as Storm traveled the world for missions targeting its most dangerous terrorists, and into the most powerful spy agencies: their tradecraft, rivalries, and late-night carousing, as well as their ruthless use of a beautiful blonde in an ambitious honey trap. Agent Storm is a captivating, utterly unique, real-life espionage tale.

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Customer Reviews

It's hard to know how much to trust a man with such a penchant for extremism - but if even of half of Mr Storm's assertions are true - there's an incredible story here. He has surely put himself at great risk tell it - undoubtedly infuriating every global jihadist group and no less than 4 govt. intelligence agencies in the US and Europe. Because of the subject matter and some serious accusations it

makes, there is a necessity for a lot of information to be delivered, giving things the flavor of a legal deposition at times. But in the end, the book offers rare insight into two very distinct and secretive worlds only accessible to a double agent. Above all, there's an important critique of western intelligence that deserves more discussion.

Agent Storm: My Life Inside al Qaeda and the CIA is a worthy read; if it was fiction it might be called "a good yarn." The book is instead straight-up non-fiction, making it all the more interesting as a window into the world of modern espionage. The book is the "as told to" autobiography of Morten Storm. Storm grew up on the dark side of Denmark, a tough, a brawler, a street gang member who always looked for a fight and usually found one. He did some jail time, and lived on the outskirts of society, surviving well enough off Denmark's generous social welfare system. Socially and spiritually adrift, he was a quick convert to Islam, driven into his new faith by a chance encounter with a library book on the life of The Prophet. The descriptions of the built-in camaraderie of the mosques shows their appeal to disenfranchised youth. Storm quickly found a way to combine his street smarts with his new faith, gravitating into the growing European jihadi underground. He soon moved to the UK, taking up life in "Londonistan," the slang term for England's dark underbelly of Muslim immigrants. Like them, Storm felt marginalized, left out, looked down on and began moving in ever-more radical circles. Despite his over six foot height and bright red hair, he found himself well-accepted. An encounter with a fellow Muslim, who died almost in his arms, propelled Storm to Yemen in search of meaning for his own life. His devotion to Islamic studies and his tough attitude saw him befriended not just by his classmates, but soon by Anwar al-Awlaki himself. Storm takes on all sorts of courier missions for the cleric and becomes a member of his trusted inner circle. Another chance event suddenly has Storm again reverse course. He falls in with Danish intelligence and Britain's MI5/MI6 and becomes a double-agent. His second conversion is marked by a bacon sandwich and a beer with his new intel friends to seal the deal. He begins accepting money and taskings from both the British and the Danes. Storm quickly becomes invaluable, exploiting his connections with al-Awlaki and apparently nearly every significant jihadi in Europe to the advantage of his handlers. He finally attracts the attention of the CIA, which dispatches case officers to work with him toward one goal: pinpoint the location of al-Awlaki so the Americans can assassinate him. Storm agrees and over a series of events, the American citizen cleric is indeed assassinated by an American drone (along with his 16 year old son, also a U.S. citizen.) The CIA, however, double-crosses Storm, denies him the \$250,000 payment promised for his work and eventually drives the big Dane in from the cold. His last conversion is to go to the media with his tale, and leave the world of espionage

behind. Without a doubt the very best parts of the book expose a bit of intelligence tradecraft. Unlike what one sees in movies and reads in (fictional) spy books, "spying" is 90 percent working patiently with people, with just a little high-tech thrown in. The book portrays this accurately, showing the best spies are more like skilled psychiatrists than hardened killers. A few details of the recruitment process appear to have been left out, perhaps for security reasons, perhaps because of the unusual three-way sharing of Storm. In real life, case officers of the CIA (the KGB, the Danish security services, MI5/MI6...) spend a lot of time seeking out people ("agents") who can be convinced to betray their organization or nation. Motives vary, and a smart case officer will pay close attention to what his/her agent really wants-- money, adventure, sex, etc. We watch as Storm is cleverly manipulated with both money and the lure of adrenaline rushes, and as his failed fervor for Islam and desire to provide for his family is worked against him. Of equal interest are the contrasts drawn among the three services involved in handling Storm. The Danes are friendly, clubby, out for a good time even as they subtly draw Storm in and play him off against the Brits and the Yanks. The British impress with their professionalism and appeal to Storm's sense of adventure, setting him up for sessions in arctic survival with an ex-Royal Marine and shooting lessons with an SAS man. Then there is the CIA. Storm saves the Americans for his most unflattering portrayal, painting them as impatient, and ready to hand over obscene amounts of money when needed, only then to double-cross their "man" inside al Qaeda when needed. The CIA has another agent, secretly, alongside Storm and never even feigns to trust either of them. The CIA's simplistic and crude handling is one of the main drivers behind Storm's break with the intel world. A few criticisms mark an otherwise decent read. Storm is not shy about his own accomplishments, taking personal credit for a number of significant intelligence successes during the years he worked as a double-agent. One does wonder how accurate such an accounting is, suggesting as it does that the combined European and U.S. spy agencies had very few other people on the inside. Storm is also quite casual, almost dismissive, about how easy it was for him to gain the complete trust of hardened terrorists, despite his very recent infidel past and quick conversion to Islam. The bad guys never really put his allegiance to the test absent a few word games, leaving the question of if al Qaeda's operational security is really so lame why the intel agencies did not have hundreds of inside men and women. Apparently one need only send the average red-haired European Viking into Yemen claiming he is a recent Muslim convert and bam! you have infiltrated the world of terror. Storm's own blustery self-image and the bit of unrealness noted aside, the book is a decent read for anyone watching the world of intelligence who also appreciates a good story.

This is an excellent book--well written and riveting! I highly recommend it to get into the terrorist mind--particularly of European converts to the militant jihad. It uncovers many of the inner workings of militant jihadi circles and even more troubling, of intelligence services. Storm goes into great detail about the "honeypot" laid out to catch Anwar Awlaki--a plot that the UK services refused to be part of because it involved sending an unsuspecting European into harm's way. According to Storm, the CIA had no such compunctions and then later refused to pay his reward fee because the Danes could not endorse it after the fact...Not sure if everything there is as it really happened but it rang true to me. Likewise having interviewed over four hundred terrorists, terrorist close family members, associates and supporters and hostages of terrorists (reported in my book *Talking to Terrorists: Understanding the Psycho-Social Motivations of Militant Jihadi Terrorists, Mass Hostage Takers, Suicide Bombers & More*) Morten Storm came across as extremely authentic. His path to radicalization, his time spent on the terrorist trajectory and the black and white thinking of an abuse victim which later was part of his faith being shaken so badly that he fell off the terrorist trajectory made total sense to me. His resonance to the al Qaeda narrative that Muslims are under attack and in need of a violent "defense" hence his ability to channel all his inner anger into such a "defense" was so well elucidated in this book. That is a common story for European jihadis. I've had the pleasure of following a similar case (in writing *Undercover Jihadi: Inside the Toronto 18-An al Qaeda Inspired, Homegrown, International Terrorist Cell*) and it had some of the same angles also culminating in a backtracking from militant jihad to ultimately go undercover. It also seems informants while valued during their "hot" phase become dispensable to the intel agencies they work for... Troubling also in this book is Storm's wholesale lying to his wife and family. I felt pity for them throughout. Amazing book!

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