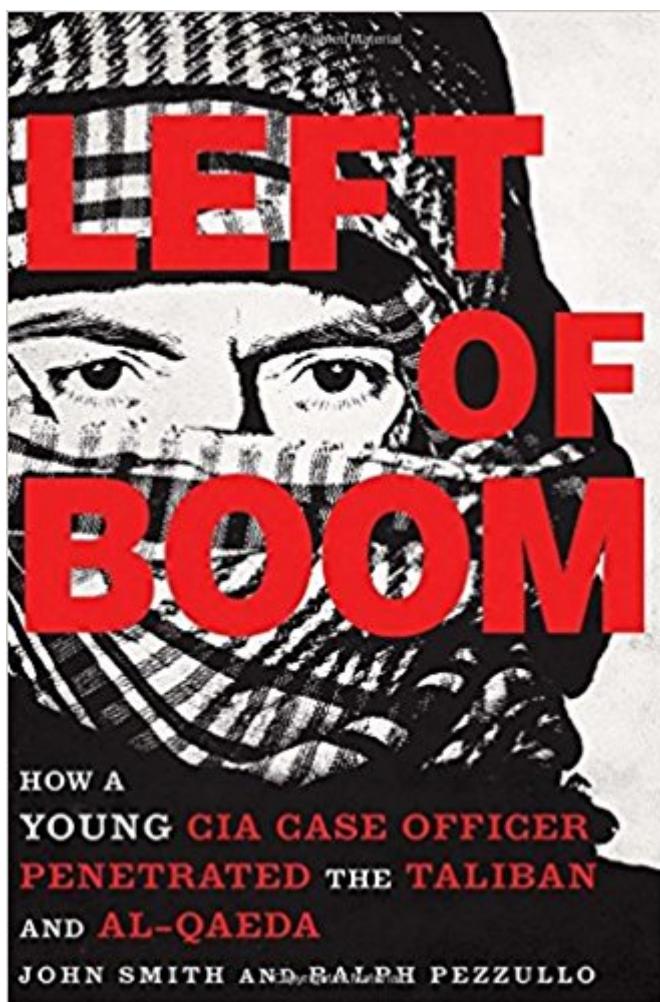


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Left Of Boom: How A Young CIA Case Officer Penetrated The Taliban And Al-Qaeda



Synopsis

The explosive New York Times bestseller! On September 11, 2001, Doug Laux was a freshman in college, on the path to becoming a doctor. But with the fall of the Twin Towers came a turning point in his life. After graduating he joined the Central Intelligence Agency, determined to get himself to Afghanistan and into the center of the action. Through persistence and hard work he was fast-tracked to a clandestine operations position overseas. Dropped into a remote region of Afghanistan, he received his baptism by fire. Frustrated by bureaucratic red tape, a widespread lack of knowledge of the local customs and culture and an attitude of complacency that hindered his ability to combat the local Taliban, Doug confounded his peers by dressing like a native and mastering the local dialect, making contact and building sources within several deadly terrorist networks. His new approach resulted in unprecedented successes, including uncovering the largest IED network in the world, responsible for killing hundreds of US soldiers. Meanwhile, Doug had to keep up false pretenses with his family, girlfriend and friends--nobody could know what he did for a living--and deal with the emotional turbulence of constantly living a lie. His double life was building to an explosive resolution, with repercussions that would have far reaching consequences.

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Customer Reviews

"Mr. Laux brings a raw perspective to the canon. His memoir is not filled with recollections of White House meetings or lengthy defenses of waterboarding. Mr. Laux was thousands of miles from Washington, a grunt in a secret war." - New York Times "The first glimpse of a younger generation of

CIA spies whose careers have been defined by the War on Terror. . . . Laux's narrative offers new insights, bludgeoned as they were by agency censors, into how the CIA goes about the business of war zone espionage." - NBC News"Every bit as riveting and even more spellbinding than the best the thriller genre has to offer. . . . In addition to providing a superb glimpse at the minutia involved in [being a CIA case officer], Left of Boom also does a splendid job of revealing the psychological and emotional costs in undertaking such a dangerous undercover mission." — Providence Journal"This is an unvarnished, critical look at the inner workings of the CIA...Smith is able to present unique descriptions of the psychological stresses endured by the CIA case officers who are forced to lie to even their closest family and friends about what they do, where they are, and whom they work for. It's a fascinating and engaging look inside the fast-paced and dangerous daily workings of today's CIA." - Publishers Weekly"Left of Boom is a riveting personal story of how a young CIA operative, attached to the National Clandestine Service (NCS) and fresh out of college, managed to actually penetrate into the Taliban and Al-Qaeda.... This story is absolutely fascinating and provides readers with a very rare look at just how CIA operatives live and work at the tip of the spear." - Don Mann, SEAL Team SIX (ret), co-author of Inside SEAL Team SIX"Left of Boom is a rollicking read that really gets us inside the life and mind of a CIA operations officer." - Peter Bergen, author of *Manhunt: The Ten-Year Search for bin Laden from 9/11 to Abbottabad*

DOUGLAS LAUX is a former CIA operations officer who served multiple tours throughout the Middle East. He was in Afghanistan for the 2010 Afghan Surge, and in Kandahar during Operation Neptune Spear, which resulted in the death of Usama bin Laden. His final assignment was with the top secret task force involved with instigating the Syrian civil war. He lives in Washington, DC.RALPH PEZZULLO is the bestselling author of *Jawbreaker*, *Inside SEAL Team Six* and others.

The book would be so much funnier if it weren't true. The incompetence of bureaucracy is truly on display in this real-life tale of a young CIA operative in the latter days of the war in Afghanistan. Doug Laux tells his tale of his eight year career undercover with the Central Intelligence Agency in a raw, unvarnished way. You won't feel great about our government when you finish this book, but you will be amazed by the resilience and commitment of the young men and women who risk their lives everyday with the realization that any credit for their efforts will never see the light of day.

Great story and interesting read. Sure, lots of redaction and secrecy about his overseas work, but

what would anyone expect given the context? What is not redacted is the author's experience with the stifling bureaucracy that prevented him from realizing his true potential in the Agency. Their loss. Credit to him for speaking the truth about bureaucracy and politics getting in the way of accomplishing the mission. And more credit for knowing when to get out.

I liked this book because it gave fascinating perspectives into the life of a CIA Case Officer which is something we seldom see. Accounts like these, especially that of very efficient and highly competent field personnel, are not often seen. So its a good look into how a (competent) CIA Field agent would infiltrate an insurgency.Beyond that, the book gives a fascinating and objective view into Afghanistan. The culture and ways of the Pashtuns, what its like to talk to Taliban fighters, what Taliban field commanders do, and WHY Afghanistan is such a frustrating war to fight. The issues for Afghanistan are glaring and too many in number to be obvious, and the solutions in even fewer numbers, if existent.However theres a catch. A lot of juicy content and details (after review by the CIA) have been censored for Operational Security. The censoring is not always justified. For example the CIA redacts what a CIA Ground Branch (you'll learn about in the book) Contractor typically carries. Even though I literally hopped onto google to search up the equipment loadout of a GB Contractor and got a highly detailed look into it.Sometimes half a page is redacted, sometimes a paragraph, sometimes a word, and sometimes nothing.It isn't so pervasive that the book is impossible to read. However, if you can't stomach not knowing, then this isn't for you.

Left of Boom is the story of author Douglas Laux, who responded to 9/11 by joining the CIA with the intent to make a difference on the front lines of the war on terror. The book relates Laux's frustration, resourcefulness and drive in the face of bureaucratic stagnation and ignorance within various government agencies. His principal target was the source of IEDs entering Afghanistan, his area of undercover operation for much of the story. Laux's unique methods were highly successful in reducing this great risk to military forces in the area. The title phrase appears once in the book, only in passing. From the context, I interpret the phrase to mean staying clear of the main effect of an IED. This book is very informative and very enjoyable. It is heavily redacted, presumably for security reasons, but the redactions matter little compared to the personal narrative. The story is similar in some ways to Don Mann's "Inside SEAL Team Six" (one of the cover blurbs) where Mann's unique drive led to success within an elite fighting unit. But in contrast, Laux was forced to create his own undercover methods and work independently to achieve the goals he set for himself.

Absolutely amazing, phenomenal book. I finished it in less than a week and couldn't put it down. I heard of it because the author did an AMA on reddit: [...] and I thought his responses and writing there was funny, so I thought I'd give his book a shot. I'm so glad I did. The book is full of entertaining anecdotes, and events that I couldn't believe actually happened. He brings you through the trials and tribulations he experiences in the field, but also in how it impacts his life back home (hint: it's not always pretty). You get to experience the joys that he experiences when he succeeds in the field, and the frustrations that he experiences when bureaucracy totally messes up all his aspirations and work. This is a wonderful read; I'm glad I tried it out and would wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone. In fact, it has inspired me to read other books like it now (non-fiction stories), as well as to learn more about the Middle East

Incredible insider insight into the world of special ops and the CIA. Laux's tone is sardonic, funny, and real. I found out about his book from his AMA on Reddit and immediately went to purchase it. It's clear that he was passionate about his job and the country's safety, but isn't a patriotic yes-man. He says what he thinks, and stays honest even through his descriptions of his own struggles. This book makes one reconsider flying off the handle with blame every time some crisis starts somewhere in the world. It shows you how things are often much more complicated than it seems, and that the military, politicians, and intelligence officers are dealing with intel that's often convoluted and difficult to decipher. It will give you a newfound respect for the CIA and for the men and women serving in all walks of the intelligence community.

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