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# The Triple Agent: The al-Qaeda Mole who Infiltrated the CIA

*By Joby Warrick*



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In December 2009, a group of the CIA's top terrorist hunters gathered at a secret base in Afghanistan to greet a rising superspy: Humam Khalil al-Balawi, a Jordanian who had infiltrated the upper ranks of al-Qaeda. For months, he had sent shocking revelations from inside the terrorist network and now promised to help the CIA assassinate Osama bin Laden's top deputy. Instead, as he stepped from his car, al-Balawi detonated a thirty-pound bomb, instantly killing seven CIA operatives and giving the agency its worst loss of life in decades.

Now, with breathless momentum and rare inside access, Pulitzer-Prize winning reporter Joby Warrick takes us deep inside the CIA's war against al-Qaeda for an unforgettable portrait of both Humam Khalil al-Balawi and the veteran agents whose fierce desire to avenge 9/11 led to a terrible miscalculation.



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### Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

**Bob Baer Reviews *The Triple Agent***

**Robert Baer is the author of two *New York Times* bestsellers: *Sleeping with the Devil*, about the Saudi royal family and its relationship with the United States; and *See No Evil*, which recounts Baer's years as a top CIA operative. *See No Evil* was the basis for the acclaimed film *Syriana*, which earned George Clooney an Oscar for his portrayal of Baer. Baer writes regularly for *Time.com* and has contributed to *Vanity Fair*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Washington Post*. He is considered one of the world's foremost authorities on the Middle East.**

I've never read a book like this, a detailed and compelling postmortem of an intelligence failure. In a driving narrative Warrick tells the story of how the CIA came to suffer its worst loss ever.

Since Khost I've taken more than a passing interest in how precisely the tragedy came about, how more than a dozen CIA operatives let themselves be caught in an ambush like this. Needless to say, my ex-colleagues could talk about nothing else in the months afterwards. But no one could give me the detail that explained it. Warrick's finally done it, better than any CIA "damage assessment" could ever hope to.

The story of Khost has much wider significance than a tragic event. Warrick paints a picture of a CIA obsessed with technology – drones, iris scans, intercepts. No one at Khost spoke the local language, no one set foot out of base, and the officer in charge had no real field experience. She knew nothing about Afghanistan or Pakistan. Yet she was not only put in charge, she was handed the CIA's first mole inside al Qaeda - and put in charge of overseeing the assassination of al Qaeda's number two, Ayman al Zawahari.

*The Triple Agent* is not only the best book out there on the CIA's hunt for al Qaeda, it's the best book on post-9/11 CIA, bar none. Read it.

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### Review

"Warrick is a brilliant reporter. . . . A gripping true-life spy saga." —*Los Angeles Times*

"Riveting and harrowing, laden with deception and duplicity, *The Triple Agent* is a remarkable, behind-the-curtain account of the CIA's darkest day in Afghanistan." —Rajiv Chandrasekaran, author of *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*

"Absolutely first-rate, breakthrough reporting." —Bob Woodward, author of *Obama's Wars*

"A fast-paced and compelling narrative that reads like a Hollywood screenplay. [Warrick] provides a rare look at the careers and personal lives of CIA officers, including the courageous women who played key roles. . . . Spellbinding." —*The Philadelphia Inquirer*

"Warrick has reconstructed, in vivid and telling detail, the sequence of events that led Humam al-Balawi to kill seven CIA operatives in a suicide attack in Afghanistan in December 2009. . . . It is a chilling tale, told

with skill and verve.” —*The Economist*

“*The Triple Agent* is a superlative piece of reporting and writing. . . . Unforgettable. *The Triple Agent* is one of the best true-life spy stories I have ever read.” —David Ignatius, columnist for the *Washington Post* and author of *Bloodmoney*

“A startling and memorable account of daring, treachery, and catastrophe in the CIA’s war against al-Qaeda. . . . A powerful and fast-paced story of our time.” —David E. Hoffman, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Dead Hand*

“An extraordinary story of intrigue and betrayal. . . . Warrick shows how the pressure for results led the CIA to take shortcuts when it came to handling an agent who some feared, correctly, was too good to be true.” —*Foreign Affairs*

“Potent, swift. . . . Warrick is very, very good. He burrows deep inside not only the CIA, which might be expected, but also the Mukhabarat and ISI, Pakistan’s main spy agency.” —*The Washington Post*

“A fascinating . . . postmortem on the 2009 ambush on the American compound at Knost, Afghanistan. . . . Riveting. . . . Sketches careful, illuminating portraits of those who died.” —*The Plain Dealer*

“Warrick demonstrates the initiative that has marked his newspaper career. . . . An alarming narrative, especially because of its understated, never-shrill tone.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“Riveting. . . . A must-read.” —Associated Press

“Insightful and riveting. . . . Mr. Warrick adds a wealth of new detail to a narrative that reads like the best spy fiction.” —*The Washington Times*

“[An] accessible and fast-paced debut. . . . [Warrick] gives this story a cinematic feel with suspenseful foreshadowing, rich character development . . . and a remarkable amount of heart.” —*Publishers Weekly*

“A grim reminder that the U.S. war on terror as it has been conducted is deadly, expensive, and mostly futile.” —*Houston Chronicle*

“*The Triple Agent* is by turns harrowing and heartbreaking, fascinating and frightening. . . . A tale that reads like a thriller and stretches from the dusty back alleys of Waziristan to the plush executive floor at Langley.” —James Bamford, author of the bestselling *The Puzzle Palace*, *Body of Secrets*, and *The Shadow Factory*

“Were Shakespeare alive, he would find ample material for a high tragedy among the players in . . . *The Triple Agent*. All the ingredients are there, including betrayal, shame, heroism, and more than one person with a recklessly determined hubris worthy of King Lear himself. Yet as those who have operated in the world of human intelligence will viscerally feel, this is not cathartic fiction, but a factual account of a modern day human intelligence operation gone terribly wrong, involving real men and women, with all the failings thereof.” —*Foreign Policy*

#### About the Author

**JOBY WARRICK** covers intelligence for the *Washington Post*, where he has been a reporter since 1996. He is a winner of the Pulitzer Prize and has appeared on CNN, Fox, and PBS.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **John Augustine:**

Reading can be called brain hangout, why? Because if you find yourself reading a book specifically book entitled The Triple Agent: The al-Qaeda Mole who Infiltrated the CIA your thoughts will drift away through every dimension, wandering in most aspects that maybe mysterious for but surely will become your mind friends. Imaging every single word written in a guide then become one application from conclusion and explanation that maybe you never get ahead of. The Triple Agent: The al-Qaeda Mole who Infiltrated the CIA giving you yet another experience more than blown away your thoughts but also giving you useful info for your better life with this era. So now let us explain to you the relaxing pattern here is your body and mind is going to be pleased when you are finished reading it, like winning a game. Do you want to try this extraordinary shelling out spare time activity?

#### **Martha Howell:**

The Triple Agent: The al-Qaeda Mole who Infiltrated the CIA can be one of your beginning books that are good idea. Many of us recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that may increase your knowledge in words, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The writer giving his/her effort that will put every word into enjoyment arrangement in writing The Triple Agent: The al-Qaeda Mole who Infiltrated the CIA although doesn't forget the main level, giving the reader the hottest and based confirm resource information that maybe you can be among it. This great information can easily draw you into completely new stage of crucial thinking.

#### **Jason Valladares:**

Your reading sixth sense will not betray a person, why because this The Triple Agent: The al-Qaeda Mole who Infiltrated the CIA book written by well-known writer who knows well how to make book that can be understood by anyone who have read the book. Written throughout good manner for you, leaving every idea and writing skill only for eliminate your personal hunger then you still doubt The Triple Agent: The al-Qaeda Mole who Infiltrated the CIA as good book but not only by the cover but also through the content. This is one guide that can break don't assess book by its cover, so do you still needing yet another sixth sense to pick that!? Oh come on your looking at sixth sense already told you so why you have to listening to a different sixth sense.

#### **Ruth Davis:**

As we know that book is essential thing to add our knowledge for everything. By a book we can know everything we really wish for. A book is a set of written, printed, illustrated or even blank sheet. Every year was exactly added. This guide The Triple Agent: The al-Qaeda Mole who Infiltrated the CIA was filled concerning science. Spend your time to add your knowledge about your science competence. Some people has several feel when they reading a new book. If you know how big advantage of a book, you can feel enjoy to read a guide. In the modern era like right now, many ways to get book that you simply wanted.

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