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



Synopsis

No company in our time has been as mysterious or as controversial as Blackwater. Founded by former Navy SEAL Erik Prince in 1997, it recruited special forces veterans and others with the skills and courage to take on the riskiest security jobs in the world. As its reputation grew, government demand for its services escalated, and Blackwater's men eventually completed nearly one hundred thousand missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Both the Bush and Obama administrations found the company indispensable. It sounds like a classic startup success story, except for one problem: Blackwater has been demonized around the world. From uninformed news coverage to grossly distorted fictional portrayals, Blackwater employees have been smeared as mercenaries, profiteers, jackbooted thugs, and 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 able to tell the full and often shocking story of Blackwater's rise and fall. In *Civilian Warriors*, Prince pulls no punches and spares no details. He explains his original goal of building an elite center for military and law enforcement training. He recounts how the company shifted gears after 9/11. He honors our troops while challenging the Pentagon's top leadership. And he reveals why highly efficient private military contractors have been essential to running our armed forces, since long before Blackwater came along. Above all, Prince debunks myths about Blackwater that spread while he was forced to remain silent—myths that tarnished the memory of men who gave their lives for their country but never got the recognition they deserved. He reveals new information about some of the biggest controversies of the War on Terror, including:

- The true story of the Nisour Square massacre in Baghdad.
- The actual details of Blackwater's so-called impunity in Iraq.
- The events leading up to the televised deaths of Blackwater contractors in Fallujah.

Prince doesn't pretend to be perfect, and he doesn't hide the sometimes painful details of his private life. But he has done a great public service by setting the record straight. His book reads like a thriller but is too improbable to be fiction.

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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.

well, like most people I had a negative opinion of Blackwater. First of all the name was ill chosen and reeks of evil. Second, of course, all I ever saw were the pics online and on TV of these massive guys cradling sub machine guns. Who were these mercenaries, I wondered? Well, of course, like most people I was grossly under- and ill informed. Prince has his flaws, of course, let's not be naive. My wife passed away from cancer too but i never was unfaithful. Could I understand why he was? Maybe? Maybe not. But at least he owns it. This was a book about blackwater, not about him, and he could have tried to cover up his foibles. He briefly mentions his family life throughout the book

perhaps to show some of his humanity. I found him likeable and candid, and eminently believable. He supports almost everything he says with documentation, and refutes most critics with equally valid documentation - e.g. when the government tries to accuse him of overcharging them. He contends they actually under bid most of the competition (which still is there, by the way - Triple Canopy, for example. Why isn't Hillary and Henry after them.?) and can prove it. As far as Blackwater he does an excellent job explaining how this type of contractor is a time honored factor in warfare. Oddly most of their work was security, as opposed to combat. Our own nation was founded with the help of flat out mercenaries - LaFayette, von Steuben, etc. In addition, we fought against mercenaries - the Hessians. And he shows beautifully how biased and grotesquely ignorant, naive, and opportunistic people like Hillary Clinton, John Kerry, and Henry Waxman are.

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 monumentally 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.

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