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TRIPLE CROSS

How Bin Laden's Master Spy Penetrated the CIA, the Green Berets, and the FBI Peter Lance

In **TRIPLE CROSS: *How Bin Laden's Master Spy Penetrated the CIA, the Green Berets, and the FBI*** (Harper; Trade Paperback; On sale: June 16, 2009; \$16.99), five-time Emmy-award winning investigative reporter Peter Lance uncovers the story of how Ali Mohamed, a master spy for Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda terrorist empire, managed to infiltrate the deepest levels of the U.S. intelligence community in the years leading up to the 9/11 attacks—and how the FBI's elite bin Laden squad failed to stop him. Now, in this expanded edition, Lance updates his groundbreaking investigation—and details how Patrick Fitzgerald, the U.S. Attorney in Chicago, tried to stop the book.

THE STORY

As Lance reveals in **TRIPLE CROSS**, Ali Mohamed—al Qaeda's chief intelligence officer—succeeded in infiltrating the CIA in Hamburg, Germany, as early as 1984. He then slipped past a watch list and entered the United States in 1985, seducing an American woman on an incoming TWA flight and marrying her six weeks later at a drive-through wedding chapel in Reno, Nevada. After establishing a sleeper cell in Silicon Valley, Mohamed enlisted in the U.S. Army and actually got himself posted to the JFK Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg, where the elite officers of the Green Berets and Delta Force train.

Even more significant, for a number of years Mohamed succeeded in outflanking Fitzgerald and other top Justice Department and FBI officials on both coasts. Ali Mohamed hit the FBI's radar in 1989, when the Bureau's Special Operations Group photographed a cell of his trainees at a Long Island shooting range. Yet despite their prior knowledge of this New York cell, the FBI ended its investigation at that time, paving the way for multiple acts of terror by the cell members in the years to come.

Among the Islamic radicals trained by Ali Mohamed and photographed by the FBI in 1989, one would go on to kill Rabbi Meier Kahane in 1990; three were convicted in the World Trade Center bombing in 1994; and two (including Kahane's killer) were later convicted by then-Assistant U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald in 1995 in what became known as the "Day of Terror" plot to blow up the bridges and tunnels into Manhattan.

As Lance reveals, however, while acting as al Qaeda's primary U.S.-based spy, Mohamed succeeded in getting himself opened as an FBI informant in 1992—a year before the WTC bombing. Worse, as a double agent, he continued to deceive FBI and Justice Department officials for years as he studied the FBI's playbook on al Qaeda.

After a seven-year investigation into FBI negligence on the road to 9/11, Lance reveals how:

- Mohamed moved Osama bin Laden from Afghanistan to Sudan in 1992, trained the Saudi billionaire's personal bodyguard, set up al Qaeda terror camps in Khartoum, and trained the terrorists responsible for the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and Day of Terror plots. He also smuggled al Qaeda's No. 2, Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, into the United States in 1995 on an al Qaeda fund-raising tour of U.S. mosques.
- Top FBI officials knew that Ali Mohamed had sworn allegiance to bin Laden as early as 1993. After meeting Mohamed face-to-face in 1997, AUSA Patrick Fitzgerald called him "the most dangerous man I have ever met," and vowed, "We cannot let this man out on the street." Yet for another ten months Mohamed remained free, helping to execute the East African embassy bombing plot he'd helped set in motion in 1993—after being freed from custody on the word of an FBI control agent.
- In 1996, Fitzgerald and other top officials discredited a treasure trove of al Qaeda-related evidence, including evidence of an active al Qaeda cell operating in NYC five years before 9/11 and of a bin Laden plot to hijack a plane to free Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman—intelligence considered so important that it was later cited in the infamous Presidential Daily Briefing given to George W. Bush just weeks before 9/11.
- In 1999, Fitzgerald signed a heretofore sealed Affirmation published for the first time in **TRIPLE CROSS** swearing that the al Qaeda intelligence collected by an FBI informant was a fabrication, a "hoax" and "scam" perpetrated by Yousef and a Mafia figure the FBI had used to "sting" Yousef for eleven months from 1996-97.
- As early as 1991 the FBI was aware of a New Jersey mailbox store directly linked to al Qaeda, but failed to monitor the location. In fact, the store's owner was even named as an unindicted coconspirator in the 1995 Day of Terror case, prosecuted by Patrick Fitzgerald. Six years later, in July 2001, the FBI blew an extraordinary chance to interdict the 9/11 plot when two of the 9/11 hijackers got their fake IDs *at the very same store*. "All the FBI had to do was monitor that location, the way they'd sat on John Gotti's Ravenite Social Club," says Lance, "and they would have been in the middle of the 9/11 plot."

THE CONTROVERSY

In researching and writing **TRIPLE CROSS**, Peter Lance interviewed dozens of sources and analyzed thousands of documents. Among the U.S. officials who refused his repeated requests for interviews was Patrick Fitzgerald, who had personally interviewed Ali Mohamed and was the chief of the Organized Crime and Terrorism Unit in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York (SDNY) in the years leading to 9/11.

In October 2006, after the book's publication, Fitzgerald sent the first of several letters to HarperCollins Publishers criticizing Lance's account and calling for the publisher to stop distribution of the book and cancel any future printings. He also demanded copies of all manuscript drafts and any correspondence between author and publisher regarding the fact-checking process for the book.

In the months that followed this unusual step by a high-ranking government official, the contents of the book were reviewed by HarperCollins and the author and after that review the decision was made to proceed with publication. This new and updated paperback edition of **TRIPLE CROSS**, which includes twenty-six pages of new material, describes Fitzgerald's allegations and the author's responses. The result, supported by 1,485 endnotes and 32 pages of documentary evidence, is an eye-opening investigation of intelligence failures on the road to 9/11, and stands as an important work of investigative journalism.

PETER LANCE's first two books investigating intelligence failures on the road to 9/11, *1000 Years for Revenge* and *Cover Up*, were national bestsellers. Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) called *1000 Years* "A must read for the FBI, the 9/11 Commission, Congress and anyone whose job it is to protect national security." Kristen Breitweiser, one of the 9/11 widows known as the "Jersey Girls," called it "a 500-page smoking gun." Lance testified before the 9/11 Commission in 2004.

On June 16, the book's release date, Lance will hold a press conference in the Zenger Room of the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., to discuss **TRIPLE CROSS** and the details of Fitzgerald's charges.

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