



A Life of Lies and Spies: Tales of a CIA Covert Ops Polygraph Interrogator

By Alan B. Trabue

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Alan Trabue chose a bizarre, dangerous way to make a living. In *A Life of Lies and Spies*, Trabue exposes the often perilous world of polygraphing foreign spies in support of CIA espionage programs. He recounts his incredible, true-life globe-trotting adventures, from his induction in the CIA in 1971 to directing the CIA's world-wide covert ops polygraph program.

A Life of Lies and Spies brings readers into the high-stakes world of covert operations and the quest to uncover deceit, featuring a high-speed car chase, blown clandestine meetings, surreptitious room searches, tear-gassing by riot police, and confrontations with machine gun-armed soldiers. Liberally sprinkled with side anecdotes—such as debriefing an agent through a torturous swarm of mosquitoes in a jungle shack—Trabue's story highlights both the humor and the intrinsic danger of conducting CIA covert activities.

Writing from a unique perspective framed by his uncommon longevity and broad experience, for which he was awarded the Career Intelligence Medal, Trabue's memoir unveils the CIA's use of polygraph and interrogation to validate recruited spies' bona fides and information obtained through their acts of espionage.

The Central Intelligence Agency has not approved, endorsed or authorized this book or the use of the CIA name, seal or initials.

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- Sales Rank: #1119272 in Books
- Published on: 2015-06-02
- Released on: 2015-06-02
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.46" h x 1.16" w x 5.77" l, 1.00 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 320 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

“Understandably, Mr. Trabue gives no details of specific encounters. But his summaries of some of these interviews are eye-opening...[a] thoroughly engaging book.” *?The Washington Times*

“Like a John LeCarre novel, Al Trabue gives you a unique glimpse into the world of a CIA Covert Ops Polygraph Interrogator. The experiences he has captured and shared are intense. In his book, Al takes you on a journey into the dark world of covert operational polygraph around the world. It is a must read for those who are interested in the complexities of intelligence operations around the world.” *?Dr. Barry McManus, VP Global Operations of Patriot Group, retired CIA Chief Polygraph Interrogator and author of Liar: The Art of Detecting Deception and Eliciting Responses*

“Alan's accounts of the CIA's operational use of the polygraph are eye opening; fascinating; and absolutely amazing. During his outstanding career, Alan's superb management and oversight of the operational polygraph program was unsurpassed and as a result of his efforts, the program played a very critical role in keeping our nation safe. He is truly an unsung hero!” *?Phil Houston, New York Times bestselling author of Spy the Lie and former CIA Polygraph Examiner*

“Due to decades spent in exemplary service to the CIA, most especially as it relates to all aspects of the Agency's use of the polygraph, there's literally no one with a greater breadth of polygraph experience nor having a more in-depth lens of its vital program than Alan Trabue...period! With his fascinating recountings, Mr. Trabue captures and puts the reader ‘right there’ in this gripping, first-hand account of what went on ‘behind-the-scenes,’ most particularly within the CIA storied, covert operations polygraph program. I heartily recommend this rare and authentic look back at the unique, clandestine world of espionage through which Alan Trabue navigated for nearly 40 years.” *?Bill Fairweather, CIA (ret.), former head of the CIA's polygraph program*

“Alan Trabue has produced a captivating collection of polygraph adventures and misadventures he lived over the course of a long CIA polygraph career. His stories strip away romantic notions about CIA overseas life to reveal the true challenges operational polygraph examiners face, how easily things can go awry, and what can happen when they do. The tales range from thrilling to amazing to funny, and some too strange not to be true. What a fascinating career Al has had, and what a riveting account he has written.” *?Donald Krapohl, former president of the American Polygraph Association*

“I have worked with and admired my colleague, Al Trabue, for many years and have ALWAYS enjoyed his gift for story-telling. Supplementing this gift with keen observation skills and a remarkable knack for being at the right place at the right time, *A Life of Lies and Spies* promises to entertain the reading public at least as much as his transfixed mealtime partners over the years. Though most of us had endured similar trials and tribulations during our years of service, Al's narrative captures the sense of time and place in a way that even our own memories often fail to achieve.” *?Bill Murray, former Chief CIA Polygraph*

“Having had the privilege of working with and for Alan during my CIA career, I can attest to his abilities as an examiner and supervisor. No one has a broader perspective on the CIA's polygraph program than Alan. He also has the wit to make a book about those experiences enlightening as well as entertaining.” *?John F. Sullivan, author of Of Spies and Lies, A CIA Lie Detector Remembers Vietnam*

“I have known this author for more than 25 years. If anyone has the experience to tell this story, he does! I was fortunate enough to have Alan as one of my teachers when I was selected to be a CIA polygraph examiner. Let's just say, I was a challenge. Alan was patient, yet direct. At that time, I was not aware that he was a polygraph "rock star." I just knew I wanted to continue to learn from him throughout my career as an examiner, and I did. There are many of us who can thank Alan Trabue for his guidance and mentorship in learning how to conduct polygraph examinations, but more importantly, I thank Alan for instilling in generations of examiners the personal and professional pride that comes with "finding the truth." I am so happy he decided to capture some of his experiences in this book! Thank you for your service to this country, Al!” *?Alvinia Jones, Former Chief, Polygraph Section, CIA*

“The author exhibits nerves of steel in his dedication to the CIA world wide operational polygraph mission. His experiences make for excitable reading.....a page turner!” *?G. Macielinski, Retired Chief, CIA Polygraph Program*

“Trabue's presentation of tradecraft, such as avoiding surveillance or utilizing hotels discreetly, feels authentic. Instead of historical narrative, the author focuses more on the psychological implications of his trade's intricate probing of the human condition...An avuncular account of a life spent uncovering deception for the CIA.” *?Kirkus Reviews*

“[Trabue] makes this a personal story, with some generalized details as to cases, tradecraft, and how the process of conducting these examinations actually worked, and doesn't dwell on policies or bureaucratic politics... For anyone interested in spy operations and the use of lie detectors.” *?Library Journal*

About the Author

A second generation CIA officer, **Alan B. Trabue** traveled extensively in Central America, South America, the Far East, Southeast Asia and Europe interrogating foreign spies. For five years, he directed the CIA's world-wide covert ops polygraph program. He served as Director of the CIA Polygraph School for six years and as an adjunct instructor at the current federal polygraph school for eight years. He retired in 2011. He currently lives in Virginia.

Users Review

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Karen Arsenault:

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