



The Faithful Spy: A Novel (John Wells Series Book 1)

By Alex Berenson

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“A well-crafted page-turner that addresses the most important issue of our time. It will keep you reading well into the night.”—Vince Flynn

A New York Times reporter has drawn upon his experience covering the occupation in Iraq to write the most gripping and chillingly plausible thriller of the post-9/11 era. Alex Berenson’s debut novel of suspense, *The Faithful Spy*, is a sharp, explosive story that takes readers inside the war on terror as fiction has never done before.

John Wells is the only American CIA agent ever to penetrate al Qaeda. Since before the attacks in 2001, Wells has been hiding in the mountains of Pakistan, biding his time, building his cover.

Now, on the orders of Omar Khadri—the malicious mastermind plotting more al Qaeda strikes on America—Wells is coming home. Neither Khadri nor Jennifer Exley, Wells’s superior at Langley, knows quite what to expect.

For Wells has changed during his years in the mountains. He has become a Muslim. He finds the United States decadent and shallow. Yet he hates al Qaeda and the way it uses Islam to justify its murderous assaults on innocents. He is a man alone, and the CIA—still reeling from its failure to predict 9/11 or find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq—does not know whether to trust him. Among his handlers at Langley, only Exley believes in him, and even she sometimes wonders. And so the agency freezes Wells out, preferring to rely on high-tech means for gathering intelligence.

But as that strategy fails and Khadri moves closer to unleashing the most devastating terrorist attack in history, Wells and Exley must somehow find a way to stop him, with or without the government’s consent.

From secret American military bases where suspects are held and “interrogated” to basement laboratories where al Qaeda’s scientists grow the deadliest of biological weapons, *The Faithful Spy* is a riveting and cautionary tale, as affecting in its personal stories as it is sophisticated in its political details. The first spy thriller to grapple squarely with the complexities and terrors of today’s

world, this is a uniquely exciting and unnerving novel by an author who truly knows his territory.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

After proving his loyalty in Afghanistan and elsewhere, CIA agent John Wells, the first Western intelligence officer to penetrate the upper levels of al-Qaeda, is assigned a mission on American soil by bin Laden's chief deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri. On his return to the U.S., Wells, now a devout Muslim (for real), finds his years spent in deep cover have left him conflicted. The agency itself seems wary of him—other than Jennifer Exley, the agency analyst who debriefs Wells (aka Jalal) on his return. The scrutiny intensifies when two bombs go off in L.A., killing 300. Berenson, a *New York Times* correspondent since 1999 who covered the occupation of Iraq, deftly employs the classic staples of spy fiction in his debut novel—self-serving bureaucrats, a beautiful co-worker love interest and an on-the-run hero suspected of being a traitor—then mixes in current terror tropes: car bombs, smuggled nuclear material, and bio-weapons. There's too much introspection from friend and foe alike, but mounting suspense, a believable scenario and a final twist add up to a compelling tale of frightening possibilities. It's not for the squeamish, though: the torture sequences and bombing descriptions are graphic and chillingly real. (Apr. 25)

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Two years after U.S. secret agent John Wells infiltrates al-Qaeda, the events of 9/11 call into question his usefulness, if not his loyalty, but he keeps his cover and bides his time, burrowing closer to Osama while sincerely converting to the one true faith of Islam as the years slip by. When al-Zawahiri sends him home at last, it is to serve some undetermined role in a major, multiphase offensive cleverly designed to strike terror in the American heart by unleashing conventional, biological, and nuclear attacks from coast to coast. Berenson works against the inherent sensationalism of his story with a diversity of viewpoints and deft character sketches that avoid oversimplifying the complex beliefs and strategies of his combatants. The plotting is superlative, baffling readers and characters alike as the mastermind behind al-Qaeda's sleeper network wages covert war against a vigilant and resourceful enemy. As with Thomas Harris' *Black Sunday* (1975) or Joseph Finder's *Zero Hour* (1996), one could hardly ask for a more skillful, timely, and well-rounded translation of our worst fears into satisfying thrills; a sure bet for fans of Jack Higgins and Vince Flynn. *David Wright*

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Review

"A first-rate thriller" Sunday Telegraph "One of the best spy stories ever told" Wall Street Journal "A story torn from today's headlines... Gritty and fast-moving" Observer "Ingenious... Uncertain times call for tough examinations, and The Faithful Spy doesn't back away" New York Times "A thriller worthy of le Carre" Kirkus Reviews (Starred Review)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marie Aultman:

Book is definitely written, printed, or illustrated for everything. You can learn everything you want by a reserve. Book has a different type. As you may know that book is important issue to bring us around the

world. Adjacent to that you can your reading talent was fluently. A publication The Faithful Spy: A Novel (John Wells Series Book 1) will make you to end up being smarter. You can feel far more confidence if you can know about everything. But some of you think which open or reading a new book make you bored. It is far from make you fun. Why they can be thought like that? Have you seeking best book or suited book with you?

Milton Jones:

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Pamela Guarino:

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