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BOOK INFORMATION SHEET (1.18.24)

Author (as it should appear on the book): Scott Wallace

Title: *Central America in the Crosshairs of War*

Subtitle: *On the Road from Vietnam to Iraq*

Contributors: with a foreword by the Honorable Christopher J. Dodd

Partner: Published in association with the Center for the Study of Place

Book pages: 184 pages

Number and type of illustrations: 106 photographs, 2 maps, and 8 montages = 116 illustrations

Trim size: 11.0" x 9.5" landscape/horizontal

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Bookstore categories (list three): U.S. Military and Latin American History/Foreign Affairs/Journalism

Audience: Anyone interested in U.S. foreign policy and military history, Latin American studies, journalism, and first-rate writing and photography.

Selling points (list three): The topic of Central America and the U.S. southern border remains of critical importance, and this book re-addresses many of the root causes for today's troubles; Wallace is an esteemed writer and photographer, and the book is gripping from start to finish; the book features a foreword by Christopher J. Dodd, U.S. Senator from 1981 to 2011 and CEO of the Motion Picture Association who is Special Presidential Advisor on the Americas to President Joe Biden.

Tagline: An unforgettable account of how misguided and illegal U.S. policies in Central America during the 1980s resulted in more than 300,000 deaths, created many of today's problems along America's southern border,

and helped perpetuate a legacy of hawkish militarism at the expense of democracy and diplomacy.

Description of the work:

During the 1980s, the Reagan Administration financed and directed wars against popular movements in El Salvador and Nicaragua that left more than 300,000 dead and countless more wounded. Vowing to block “Soviet expansion,” the U.S. waged a Vietnam-style counterinsurgency against leftist rebels in El Salvador while orchestrating an illegal and covert war to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Some 75,000 died in El Salvador, mostly at the hands of U.S.-backed military and security forces, and more than 30,000 were killed in Nicaragua. Meanwhile, with tacit American support, the Guatemalan military razed hundreds of communities and killed an estimated 200,000 people during a 36-year civil war, including 100,000 Indigenous Mayan villagers.

Scott Wallace arrived in Central America in 1983 to cover the conflicts as a freelance “stringer” for CBS News and the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, and he would also later report for *Newsweek*, *The Nation*, *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, and other news organizations. Seeking to discern the truth in a region riddled with death and deception, Wallace evolved a distinctive style of field reporting that included photography, writing, and broadcast recordings. He stayed in the region throughout the decade, moving back and forth across national boundaries and battlelines to produce a unique body of work that includes the perspectives of opposing sides of the interwoven conflicts as well as their impacts on the noncombatants tragically caught in the middle. He later reported from Afghanistan and Iraq.

Situating the exercise of U.S. power on a continuum running from Vietnam through Central America to Iraq and the Middle East, *Central America in the Crosshairs of War* provides a rare look into the shocking real-life consequences of morally dubious policies while offering a gripping primer for aspiring foreign correspondents and field reporters. As Wallace reminds us, the multiple “troubles” associated today with America’s southern border—among them immigration, drugs, and crime—are in significant measure the result of misadventures undertaken by the U.S. during the administrations of Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush. He also shows a continuum in U.S. military affairs, from Vietnam to Central America and the Middle East.

Central America in the Crosshairs of War is a tour de force and arguably one of the greatest reporters’ memoir ever written. Scott Wallace’s book restores faith in the power of journalism at a time of alternate realities in America and abroad.

Blurbs:

“For anyone seeking to comprehend how the United States lurched heedlessly from its disastrous war in Vietnam onto those in Iraq and Afghanistan, *Central America in the Crosshairs of War* is a must-read. One of the most intrepid and clear-eyed reporters to have covered the wars in Central America of the 1980s, Scott Wallace has

produced an essential book, in words and pictures, offering an invaluable historical perspective.”

—Jon Lee Anderson, staff writer for *The New Yorker* and author of *The Fall of Baghdad* and *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life*, a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year

“Scott Wallace’s book is fantastic. Vivid, immediate, gripping, and frequently hair-raising, his ground’s-eye account of the cruel wars that the U.S. has inflicted and enabled on hapless victims far and near evokes history as it happened. Wallace’s reporting, intensely detailed and personal, memorializes people and the world in which they lived and died in a way no reader can ever forget.”

—Andrew Cockburn, Washington Editor of *Harper’s Magazine* and author of *The Spoils of War: Power, Profit, and the American War Machine* and *Kill Chain: The Rise of the High-Tech Assassins*

“Scott Wallace intensively documented the U.S.-supported wars that wracked Central America during the 1980s, and he deftly links them to the American ‘war on terror’ after 9/11. Writing with great lucidity and grace, Wallace also illustrates *Central America in the Crosshairs of War* with his stunning photographs. A very compelling read.”

—Peter Bergen, Professor in the School of Politics and Global Studies at Arizona State University, National Security Analyst for CNN, and author of *The Rise and Fall of Osama bin Laden* and *The Longest War: The Enduring Conflict between America and Al-Qaeda*

[We are expecting to receive endorsements from the following.]

Jeffrey L. Gould, Distinguished Emeritus Professor of History, James H. Rudy Emeritus of History, and former Director of the Center for Latin America and Caribbean Studies at Indiana University and the author of six books, most recently *Solidarity under Siege: The Salvadoran Labor Movement, 1970–1990* (Cambridge, 2019).

Greg Grandin, Peter V. and C. Vann Woodward Professor of History at Yale University and author of seven books, most recently *The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America* (Metropolitan Books, 2019), which won the Pulitzer Prize for General Non-Fiction.

Lyle Rexer, photographer/columnist/curator/art critic who teaches in the School of Visual Arts, is a contributor to *Photograph Magazine* and the author of ten books, most recently *Stephen Wilkes: Day to Night* (Taschen, 2023).

William D. Stanley, Professor of Political Science and current Director of the Latin American and Iberian Institute at the University of New Mexico, is the author of *Enabling Peace in Guatemala: The Story of MINUGUA* (Lynne Rienner Press, 2013).

About the Author:

Scott Wallace is the author of the best-selling book, *The Unconquered: In Search of the Amazon's Last Uncontacted Tribes* (Crown, 2011), and a longtime contributor to *National Geographic*. Wallace covered the armed conflicts in Central America throughout the 1980s for CBS News, *Newsweek*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, and the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. His articles have also appeared in *Harper's*, *The New York Times*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Interview*, *Smithsonian*, and *The Washington Post*, among many others. His photographs have been published in *Details*, *National Geographic*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *The New York Times*, *Smithsonian*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and numerous other publications via Getty Images and the World Bank Photo Collection. His broadcast credits include CBS, CNN, and National Geographic Channel. He has been honored with the Explorers Club's Lowell Thomas Award for excellence in reporting from the field, and he has won awards from the Associated Press, Gannett Newspapers, Inter-American Press Association, Renewable Natural Resources Foundation, Society of Professional Journalists, and Society of American Travel Writers. He is an associate professor of journalism at the University of Connecticut.

About the Contributor(s):

Christopher J. Dodd represented the state of Connecticut first as a member of the House of Representatives from 1975 to 1981 and then as a U.S. Senator from 1981 to 2011, during which time he was Chair of the Banking Committee (2007–2011), Chair of the Senate Health Committee (2009), and Chair of the Senate Rules Committee (2001–2003). From 2011 to 2017 he was CEO of the Motion Picture Association, and in 2018 he returned to the practice of law. Chris Dodd is Special Presidential Advisor on the Americas to President Joseph R. Biden.