



Cat and Mouse

Harold Coyle

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In the War on Terror, it is often difficult to tell who the enemy is. Sometimes your fiercest opponent isn't an insurgent or a fanatic bent on making a statement in blood, but a chain of command that is pursuing goals and objectives that have nothing to do with your unit's stated mission. Nathan Dixon finds out just how true this is when a new battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Delmont, convinces his superiors that he has an all but foolproof plan for defeating Islamic terrorists in the Philippines—a plan that will ensure Delmont's promotion to full colonel and beyond.

But the 3rd Regiment of the 75th Ranger battalion is pitted against no fool. Determined to create a fundamental Islamic state in Southeast Asia, a charismatic terrorist by the name of Hamdani Summirat unites the various Islamic factions into a confederation. Their aim is to drag the United States into a protracted war of attrition that the Americans cannot win. Summirat's factions play out a deadly game of cat and mouse, drawing the American forces into ambushes and small, bloody encounters with a small but highly trained core of Islamic fighters.

Lieutenant General Scott Dixon, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations with the US Army--and Nathan's father—soon finds that these enemies are practically impossible to hunt down. They are killing American troops almost at will. He realizes quickly that if the mission continues, many more Americans will be wounded or killed-- perhaps even his own son. But his pleas to his Commander-in-Chief are practically ignored.

This dual game of cat and mouse is played out both in the jungles of Mindanae and in the forward operations base. Nathan Dixon must deal with a battalion commander who is determined to see his plan through, regardless of the price Nathan and his company must pay, while Scott Dixon must deal with a chain of command that refuses to alter a plan of attack in the face of a losing effort.

Cat and Mouse Details

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From Reader Review Cat and Mouse for online ebook

Phillip Clark says

A very sudden and rushed ended, but still enjoyable.

Ray Ziemer says

I usually enjoy the combat fiction of Harold Coyle for its fast-paced and clearly-portrayed scenes of military action. Coyle's work is full of technical detail about the hardware and sensible discussions of strategy and tactics. "Cat and Mouse" follows the U.S. Army Ranger company under the command of Captain Nathan Dixon as they maneuver against Muslim insurgents in the Philippines. But who is the cat and who is the mouse?

The story holds up, and the action scenes fulfill the promise of excitement, but in this book I found myself a little bored by the scenes behind the scenes – meetings among officers in Washington, conversations between Nathan's high-ranking father and his journalist stepmother. Some of the intrigue is important to the plot, as the Rangers discover they have as much to fear from their career-oriented colonel as from the enemy in the field. It was also interesting to get the point of view of the leader of the insurgents. Coyle manages to warn the reader of the enemy's danger while still keeping the ultimate threats until the very end. I will say also that for some reason this book is a little roughly edited – extra words, wrong words, sentences left hanging – these kinds of things were an occasional distraction. You don't expect that sort of thing in a mainstream-published hardcover (Tom Doherty).

David says

Another great entry in the Dixon Family Saga. Not as good as some of the previous books, but still accurately portraying military campaigning. While slow at the start, and long moments of waiting for something to happen, until finally all of the pressure exploded in a few hours of furious combat ending quickly.

Rick says

Good story. The book was horrible for spelling and grammatical errors. Still worthwhile if you like American military stories.

Matt Howard says

Harold Coyle has been a reliable source for tight military fiction that bordered on science fiction for years.

This book suggests he's reached his sell-by date. Either that or he thinks he's the Red Queen and can use any word he likes and give it a new meaning. According to Coyle, absconded means sitting behind a desk rather than "To leave quickly and secretly and hide oneself, often to avoid arrest or prosecution." Collaborated means provided rather than to work together, either in the good sense or in the sense of treasonous activity. He says a person who is not disturbed is not "phased" rather than "fazed." To add to this, his pattern of giving us the inner thoughts of the characters, and explaining in advance why they have gone astray, has become a gimmick. A real disappointment.

Eric says

Interesting read - gives some great insight on military politics.

PWRL says

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Tom Tischler says

Capt. Nathan Dixon U.S. Army Rangers has been picked to command Company A 3rd Battalion Rangers. These members have been hand picked to be a part of a new joint task force Sierra. This force has been formed to conduct anti terrorist operations in the Philippines and Indonesia. A terrorist leader has united various Islamic factions into a confederation that is trying to drag the U.S. forces into a deadly game of cat and mouse as they lead them into ambushes and small bloody encounters. Lt General Scott Dixon is Nathan's father and it's his duty to put his son in harms way. The Islamic's seem to be killing American troops at will and Capt. Dixon and his troops know that even though they continue to fight their fate is soon to be determined. On top of all this Capt. Dixon has been assigned a new battalion commander. A Lt. Col. determined to make Colonel no matter who he has to stab in the back. This book will probably only interest someone who has spent some time in the service. The battle tactics are very good and most people never know about the internal backstabbing except the poor Captain's who are Company Commanders and must bite their tongue and suffer the abuse.

Mike says

The first book by Coyle I read was Team Yankee. Other pretty good to excellent books followed. Alas, I was sorely disappointed by this one.

The spell-check errors in the book are *very* distracting. Did anyone proof this book before sending it to press or did they just run spell check and call it good? There are numerous errors throughout. For example, "chalk" become "caulk" - and pretty consistently. "Maw" becomes "maul". And, the list goes on. I doubt that Coyle made these errors himself, but they still found their way into print.

Another distraction was the author's politics. The story could have been told without any of the digs at democrats and liberals. Yes, I realize that the Army leans to the right. However, this book sometimes reads like a bit of Tea Party propaganda. No thanks to that. It does nothing for the story, only distracts from it.

The story itself is well built and the threads of conflict twist and flow reasonably. But the book seems to simply fall off at the end. It builds to a climax and then suddenly we read that "they didn't live happily every after, the end."

Karen Fyke says

Awful book. The author has no idea at how to accomplish "back story" and is clumsy at giving info on how the military works. Should have used side-bars. I quit half way through and just read the ending. Even that wasn't very good. Ugh.

Frederick Danysh says

Part of the series about Nathan Dixon. Islamic terrorists have plans for the jungles of South East Asia and Dixon is plunged right into the middle with a group of Rangers.

Jerome says

For crying out loud use a spell checker and get an editor who speaks English as their primary language! A great yarn was ruined because the finished text reads like Coyle dictated the book to a typist in Bangalore. Referring to an elusive enemy as "illusive" is ridiculous. Then there's the gaping "maul" of a C-17. A maul is a type of sledgehammer; what gapes on a C-17 is a maw. "Caulk" for chalk, "absconded" for ensconced - the list goes on. I finally got a pen and started editing the book myself. At more than fifty corrections halfway through I stopped and threw the book away.

Some examples: "caulking up" a victory (page 338); "everyone chaffed at these restrictions" (page 339); sorted follies [instead of sordid follies] (page 251); "I resemble that remark!" (page 267); "without a wit of enthusiasm" (page 354); staff "absconded" [ensconced?] in their offices in Manila (page 177); and "reaping havoc" (page 177). These zingers just kept on coming. And then, those oddities that spell-checker couldn't counter: "rice patties" (pages 289 and 290); "a "white plum of smoke" (page 389); "popping flairs" as a countermeasure to surface-to-air missiles"; and the "new winkle in the plans" (page 477).

1. There are not a whole lot of Abu Sayyaf Group running around anymore and they stepped away from religious fundamentalism and became more of a criminal gang long ago.
2. ASG is a homegrown Filipino organization and while they do collaborate with other groups in the region,

having a non-Filipino as their commander is unlikely.

3. ASG uses primarily US weapons, not AK-47s.

4. Apparently Coyle thinks that OPLANS are drawn up by Lieutenant Colonels in line units and the Geographic Combatant Commander is not involved in the process.

5. Coyle thinks that a Ranger Battalion is tasked by big army and not USSOCOM.

6. Apparently Coyle thinks that a SAW is a crew-served weapon.

7. Why would the Task Force use an airstrip on the complete opposite side of Mindanao as their Aerial Port of Debarkation when there's an airport in Zamboanga that can handle C-17s and another in Cotabato that can handle them as long as they're lightly loaded on the flight out. Both Zambo and Cotabato are in the immediate area where the JTF was conducting all their operations.

8. I cringed every time I saw the word "absconded" used for "ensconced." And referring to a unit of Rangers as a "caulk" instead of the proper term "chalk" or the caliber of a weapon fired by an American character as 7.62mm (the AK is 7.62mm, the M-16 is 5.56mm) are mistakes someone of Coyle's experience should never make. When you write military thrillers, the military details better be correct, or the reader will suspend belief quickly.

Dan says

This is my first Coyle book. I really enjoyed the detail given to the two sided storyline. Following the test for Dixon allowed me to feel a part of the force he commanded. I also enjoyed his insights into the mind of Summirat as he planned his military options. Then the interaction of these two soldiers results in a classic battle. I look forward to another Coyle book soon.

John says

Always enjoyed this author. Though this was not one of his best, it's still a good one.

Richard says

I really did not like it. There are too many errors; the story never grabbed me. I gave up less than half way through.
