



The First Conspiracy: The Secret Plot to Kill George Washington

Brad Meltzer, Josh Mensch

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In 1776, an elite group of soldiers were handpicked to serve as George Washington's bodyguards. Washington trusted them; relied on them. But unbeknownst to Washington, some of them were part of a treasonous plan. In the months leading up to the Revolutionary War, these traitorous soldiers, along with the Governor of New York William Tryon and Mayor David Mathews, launched a deadly plot against the most important member of the military: George Washington himself.

This is the story of the secret plot and how it was revealed. It is a story of leaders, liars, counterfeiters, and jailhouse confessors. It also shows just how hard the battle was for George Washington—and how close America was to losing the Revolutionary War.

Taking place during the most critical period of our nation's birth, The First Conspiracy tells a remarkable and previously untold piece of American history that not only reveals George Washington's character, but also illuminates the origins of America's counterintelligence movement that led to the modern day CIA.

The First Conspiracy: The Secret Plot to Kill George Washington Details

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Author : Brad Meltzer , Josh Mensch

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From Reader Review The First Conspiracy: The Secret Plot to Kill George Washington for online ebook

Joann Amidon says

The historical facts presented in this book are worth reading about and I was happy to learn new facts as well as remember some I knew. However, the writing is so inferior I can only rate the book with one star.

Dustin says

While the story itself is compelling and dramatic enough, Meltzer's build-up to the conspiracy is really what makes this book so enjoyable. Particularly the story of the Long Island counterfeiters finding themselves wrapped up in the plot.

Natalie says

Release date - 1/2/2019

This was an absolutely fascinating read! It read like a spy novel with many twists and turns, and it was crazy to think that the events I was reading about actually happened. I had no idea that there was a plot against George Washington even before the Declaration of Independence was signed, or that Washington was the creator of what we know as counterintelligence today.

I am not someone who normally gravitates to nonfiction, but this was written in a very compelling way.

It's crazy to think about how different this country would be if that plot had succeeded. I was a little bummed that one of the traitors was from CT. Oh well, at least we have Nathan Hale.

Hope says

I received an uncorrected advance reader copy as part of a Goodreads giveaway. I've been entering giveaways for over five years and finally got lucky, so I can assure you that real people win.

Pros: Written in an engaging, modern style and divided into 80+ brief chapters, The First Conspiracy is a propulsive read. It tells a story that I'd never heard before despite growing up in George Washington's home state and taking at least three years of Virginia History in school. Each thread in the scheme is told separately and in turn each is pulled so they all come together for a dramatic conclusion. Also, The First Conspiracy is a refreshing break from the typical Washington hagiography in that it doesn't shy away from showing the great man's fury and his early (and numerous) failures in battle.

Cons: While the story is interesting, the telling of that story gets in the way a lot. Most chapters end on a cliffhanger of the "but little did they know..." variety. A kidnapping (or murder?) plot is afoot, I think the

events are compelling enough already. I'll grant that this may be because I was reading an uncorrected proof, but I was also put off by heavy repetition of *plot* points (pun intended) that served to remind the reader of the major players and what was happening. These slowed down the narrative. I also rolled my eyes at the use of "literally" for emphasis when "figuratively" would've been truer. I try to not nitpick grammar and word choice since most of the time that's hardly the point, but I found that the casual style diminished the authority of the voice telling me the story. Finally, during what should have been a thrilling conclusion I found myself a bit bored as numerous court/Continental Congress documents were described — the steam seemed to have gone out of the narrative.

Bottom line: The First Conspiracy ultimately wasn't my cup of tea, but it succeeds in shedding light on a little known threat to George Washington that could've changed the course of history. I haven't read other books by Brad Meltzer, but thriller fans will probably appreciate the lively, (mostly) fast-paced style.

Cherei says

Totally enjoyed reading The First Conspiracy: The Secret Plot to Kill George Washington by Brad Meltzer. My husband's side of the family is related via George Washington's eldest brother. It was pure delight to read about their relationship and how his brother helped George form the firm moral compass. Knowing right from wrong. Knowing that man should do what is right not for personal gain but simply because it's the right thing to do. A trait that remains in the family to present day!

As one who doesn't always see how others scheme and plot.. it was an eye opening documentation of what Washington had to endure and protect himself as well as those who were fighting to bring about one of the best political experiments of all time! Meltzer really dived into the weeds and documented the story of who, what, where, when and the why behind every person involved. I liked that he really captured what drove them to certain acts.. and why they were so vindictive. I've never understood how man could harm others for wanting to do the right thing for mankind. I guess.. it all comes down to control.. and most humans do not want others to have the freedom to think for themselves. To be in charge of their own destiny. Thank goodness.. Washington succeeded where so many would have failed.

Stephanie Hall says

ARC sent to me by Flatiron Books.

Actually did not finish this, but it is the end of the year and I can't bring myself to continue reading a book that is so hard for me to read without throwing it down every page or so in frustration. I will say, I'm still very interesting in the subject. The writing style of Meltzer and Mensch just DID NOT work for me at all. Let's talk about why I stopped reading this at page 81.

1. Is this book seriously marketed for adults???? Because so much of it was dumbed down. In just the 80 pages I read, the word "loyalist" was defined three separate times. The authors also defined what a "woman of ill repute" was. The final thing that made me put down this book was the authors quoting a colonial sailor and then immediately "translating" the quote, even though it was perfectly understandable the first time we read it. The entire (short) time I was reading this book, I felt as though the authors thought I was too stupid to understand basic English words and phrases.

2. It read too much like a novel. I'm all for making nonfiction less dry and more accessible to wider audiences, but this tried way too hard. "Cliffhanger" sentences and sensationalized ways of phrasing facts that are pretty common knowledge was just absurd. It really only served as a distraction and, after awhile, seemed really cheesy. Also, spoiler alert, we already know George Washington doesn't die so trying to build the suspense seems pointless.

3. Too many italicized words. It was ridiculous and totally unnecessary. And some of them were only italicized because they were outdated words that needed defining. I felt like there would be a vocab quiz at the end of the chapter when I read them.

4. I hated that it was told in present tense. That is just an awful tactic for, once again, trying to increase tension but was really just annoying. Which brings me to the fact that the book also jumped back and forward in time frequently. So not only does using the present tense really not make sense, the time jumping was another failed tactic to increase tension.

Maybe I'll pick this up again next year. Or maybe I'll just do some Googling to find out the details of the assassination plot without suffering through almost 400 pages of nonsense.

Brad Meltzer says

Loved it. Duh.

David says

Set in the turbulent months of 1776 after George Washington is given command of the Continental army and before the mighty British army arrives in the colonies to put down the rebellion, this fascinating book tells the tale of dastardly plots, treason and the beginnings of the Intelligence service. An enjoyable and satisfying read for all.

Scott Hitchcock says

2.5*'s

What irked me while reading this is the author kept trying to build fake suspense that came off like a bad TV documentary such as American Greed or How to Make a Murderer. Spoiler alert: they fail! I know shocking. You just cannot again and again try to breed false tension into a story so well known. Just tell the story.

Second complaint was only about a third of it was about the conspiracy. This was primarily about the start of the war. I think the title is a bit misleading.

The research was good and there were facts I didn't know which I'm always appreciative of.

Elizabeth A.G. says

The First Conspiracy: The Secret Plot to Kill George Washington is an interesting book about the little known history of the early days of colonialist grievances against the British and the plots of possible abduction and/or assassination of the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army, George Washington. Brad Meltzer and co-author Josh Mensch have created a history book that is part mystery story, spy story, conspiracy story, biography, character study, and the story of the beginnings of counterintelligence. The story is told with suspense and as the intrigue increases, the reader also senses the urgency that the British ships will be arriving soon and the rag-tag Continental Army is not prepared for the greatest powers in the world, the British navy/army and King George III. George Washington has his work cut out for him as the authors repeat several times.

While obviously much research was done for the book and the history is interesting, the writing style was a bit tedious with the very short chapters, frequent time and place shifts and too many inserted author word and passage definitions and explanations. The words and passages they felt needed interpretation were perfectly understandable and any reasonably intelligent reader could grasp the meaning for themselves. For some reason, perhaps to increase the page count for the book, the authors repeated in different parts of the narrative some things that they had reported or explained earlier, as if they felt the reader could not remember what they had read before. As Mr. Meltzer stated in the Author's Note, the book was started as a mystery and there is too much of the mystery style in the writing in my opinion. Many chapters end with some kind of an expressed "cliffhanger," -- I guess used to urge the reader to turn the page, as in a mystery "pageturner," and not needed except for the dramatic effect the author thought it might produce. The style of writing made me feel the book was aimed at the 8th, 9th or perhaps 10th grade level rather than to the adult reader.

In spite of the above, however, this is an important book that tells the fascinating story not only of the plots against Washington, but the history of the forging of an independent nation, the hardships Washington and his army faced, the clear depiction of the opposing Loyalists and their subversive plans, the difficult terrain and distances between cities and towns, and of course the early establishment of crucial espionage and counter-espionage techniques endorsed by John Jay.

When I closed the book after finishing, I thought - that was a really good book!

Liz says

What a story! I've been enjoying Brad Meltzer's books for years but this is the best of them all. Who knew that a tale of a secret plot against George Washington could be so riveting. This is an easy-to-read, engrossing story that reveals much about the early years of the American revolution. A solid recommend! I won a copy of this book in a Goodreads giveaway for this honest review.

Tom says

I applaud the Authors for bringing to light a little known conspiracy to kill or kidnap Washington and

conceivably change the whole course of history . The book has some interesting and even informative moments but the writing leaves a lot to be desired. The book seems to be geared to the late night talk show " person on the street" who doesn't know that New Mexico is part of the United States. Every thing is simply explained and repeatedly explained. Despite being melodramatic at times the Authors enthusiasm for their tale makes up for what could have been a more scholarly presentation.

Matt says

The time during America's Revolutionary War was anything but peaceful, as many history books have explained over the years. When Brad Meltzer and Josh Mensch came together to pen this book, they sought not only to explore some of the more confrontational aspects of the period, but also to uncover a little-known (read: documented) conspiracy against George Washington that seeped almost to the core of the Continental Army. The book opens by exploring some of the early goings-on within the colonies as they sought to band together in order to toss off the yoke of their British oppressors. In the early days of the Continental Congress, one man stood out amongst all the delegates, a former military officer from Virginia, George Washington. Chosen to lead the Continental Army, Washington began preparing for what would surely be a major campaign on many fronts. While some of the colonial areas were easily swayed by Continental sentiment, there were large pockets of Loyalists, those who stayed true to King and Country. One of these pockets was New York, where the Colonial Governor, William Tryon, was prepared to fight in order to hold onto power. Washington, surrounded by an elite group of soldiers called the Life Guards, sought to use all the force at his disposal while being protected, hoping to unseat Tryon and push forward with overtaking New York. As the authors explore, even when Tryon was forced to flee into exile, plots to disrupt and remove Washington from his position of power began. Working to infiltrate the Continental Army commenced, creating turncoats out of those who took up arms against the King, and a plot to remove Washington took shape. All the while, the Continental Congress created a secret committee to explore these whispers, in hopes of finding those who were conspiring and bringing them to justice. It would seem that even those closest to Washington might have been involved in turning against him, even before the formal Declaration of Independence was signed and sent to the British. Just how deep did the conspiracy go and what were the plans if Washington were caught? Meltzer and Mensch dazzle the reader with details and possible plans, as well as how the conspiracy was dismantled and its plotters brought from out of the shadows. A wonderful read for those who enjoy colonial history at the time of the Revolutionary Wars, as well as readers with an interest in political schemes.

I have long been a fan of Brad Meltzer's work and picked this book up in order to read another of his historical thrillers. It was only when I started reading that I came to understand that this was a piece of non-fiction. It is written in such a way that the reader can fully absorb the impact of the plotting without drowning in too much detail. Meltzer and Mensch lay the groundwork effectively, offering some biographical pieces on the key players, before delving into the core of the story that shows how both sides were keen on pushing forward and removing those in positions of authority. While Washington was apparently in imminent danger on many occasions, he kept his eye on the prize and sought not to peer over his shoulder at every turn. The various plots and conspiracies evolved effectively throughout the narrative, coming to a head as the story builds. Even in the closing chapters, the authors posit what might have been had the conspiracy succeeded and how might present day America be different. While this is surely alternate history, it is interesting to wonder and surmise. With short chapters, the authors offer repeated lures to pull the reader into the middle of the story and offers little-known (to me at least) insights into the attempts to remove Washington, at times plots to kidnap, but also whispers of more violent means. The smooth-flowing narrative keeps the reader enthralled and entertained as they learn some of facts that have been buried in

footnotes, letters, and journals. Not to be missed by those who love learning about historical events buried within larger narratives well-documented in tomes.

Kudos, Messrs. Meltzer and Mensch, for holding my attention throughout. I was pleased to learn so much while being entertained, as I am in the fiction I have come to know and love.

Like/hate the review? An ever-growing collection of others appears at:
<http://pecheyponderings.wordpress.com/>

A Book for All Seasons, a different sort of Book Challenge: <https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/...>

W. Whalin says

Unusual Story About George Washington and Early US History

I've read a number of Brad Meltzer novels and have enjoyed them. For THE FIRST CONSPIRACY, Meltzer teams with Josh Mensch and writes history about the early days of America. This book held my attention from beginning to end but it was definitely different than the Meltzer novels

This history book enlightens readers about the origins of America's counterintelligence and a previously untold part of American history. I enjoyed this book and read it cover to cover. I recommend it.

Ann-Marie says

You won't believe what happens in Brad Meltzer's latest book!

That's pretty much it, page, after page of foreshadowing, with some History Channel level prose to fill it up. In fact, I am pretty sure I already learned some of this back when I used to watch the History Channel.

And, that brings me to the title, "The First Conspiracy: The Secret Plot to Kill George Washington." There was no known plot to kill George Washington. Not in any historical record, not in any handed down tradition. Meltzer and his co-author made it up to sell a book.

The only references made in any documents quoted in this book are in two journal entries written after the fact, one of them by a civilian who had nothing to do with the case.

The fact that no mention of assassination of Washington is made in any official documents is offered by the authors as proof the plot existed! They had to keep the knowledge of the plot secret, don't you know.

Today, this is known as a tin foil hat conspiracy.

Finally, back to the foreshadowing. I am always uncomfortable when an author resorts to it too frequently. It implies a lack of faith in the merits of your own material to keep the reader engaged.

I received this book free in exchange for an honest review on Goodreads.

Oh, not to spoil anything, but we won the war.

