



# Good Hunting: An American Spymaster's Story

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"A sophisticated, deeply informed account of real life in the real CIA that adds immeasurably to the public understanding of the espionage culture—the good and the bad." —Bob Woodward

Jack Devine ran Charlie Wilson's War in Afghanistan. It was the largest covert action of the Cold War, and it was Devine who put the brand-new Stinger missile into the hands of the mujahideen during their war with the Soviets, paving the way to a decisive victory against the Russians. He also pushed the CIA's effort to run down the narcotics trafficker Pablo Escobar in Colombia. He tried to warn the director of central intelligence, George Tenet, that there was a bullet coming from Iraq with his name on it. He was in Chile when Allende fell, and he had too much to do with Iran-Contra for his own taste, though he tried to stop it. And he tangled with Rick Ames, the KGB spy inside the CIA, and hunted Robert Hanssen, the mole in the FBI.

*Good Hunting: An American Spymaster's Story* is the spellbinding memoir of Devine's time in the Central Intelligence Agency, where he served for more than thirty years, rising to become the acting deputy director of operations, responsible for all of the CIA's spying operations. This is a story of intrigue and high-stakes maneuvering, all the more gripping when the fate of our geopolitical order hangs in the balance. But this book also sounds a warning to our nation's decision makers: covert operations, not costly and devastating full-scale interventions, are the best safeguard of America's interests worldwide.

Part memoir, part historical redress, *Good Hunting* debunks outright some of the myths surrounding the Agency and cautions against its misuses. Beneath the exotic allure—living abroad with his wife and six children, running operations in seven countries, and serving successive presidents from Nixon to Clinton—this is a realist, gimlet-eyed account of the Agency. Now, as Devine sees it, the CIA is trapped within a larger bureaucracy, losing swaths of turf to the military, and, most ominous of all, is becoming overly weighted toward paramilitary operations after a decade of war. Its capacity to do what it does best—spying and covert action—has been seriously degraded. *Good Hunting* sheds light on some of the CIA's deepest secrets and spans an illustrious tenure—and never before has an acting deputy director of operations come forth with such an account. With the historical acumen of Steve Coll's *Ghost Wars* and gripping scenarios that evoke the novels of John le Carré even as they hew closely to the facts on the ground, Devine offers a master class in spycraft.

## Good Hunting: An American Spymaster's Story Details

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Vernon Loeb**

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# **From Reader Review Good Hunting: An American Spymaster's Story for online ebook**

## **Tom LA says**

"A spy who funneled Stingers to the mujahedeen, helped hunt drug lord Pablo Escobar, and managed the turncoat Aldrich Ames", The WSJ.

Fascinating book, with great historic value, and written in a straight-shooter no bs tone that perfectly resonates with me, especially after having read "The brothers" by Kinzer, about the Dulles brothers, a book that provides a very different perspective on the CIA's history and modus operandi.

Jack Devine covered many crucial CIA leadership roles over 32 years, and his career put him in touch with many of the most important foreign policy issues of the 70s, 80s and 90s. In particular, he was in charge, from 1986, of the CIA covert war in Afghanistan. You might have heard of "Charlie Wilson's War", that was also made into a movie with Tom Hanks. You get a lot of facts straight by reading this book.

Some reviewers commented that Devine writes with a tribal loyalty to the CIA, while they wanted him to be more critical of some CIA's decisions and actions. I disagree with this view. Devine clearly thinks the CIA mandate and mission are very important for the US, and he is proud of the many accomplishments that he is allowed to talk about. Anything wrong with that? He also has an eye for the many shortcomings and mistakes of the Agency, and shares his frustration with the problems that naturally go with this type of "business", from the inevitability of counterespionage to the impossibility of providing measurable, objective and easy to digest results.

Yes, like most autobiographies, this is the career story of a workaholic, and you will find the very normal "look how good I am" approach, but overall I felt a sense of fairness in Devine's memories. No bullshit. No score-settling chapters. He even goes almost as far as to confess that his being 6 foot 5 helped him in his career. How many of today's leaders and managers - many of whom have been helped in their career by simply being tall - would be honest enough to admit that?

Woody Allen said it well - "80% of success is showing up". If you are also very tall and loyal, that puts you at about 90%.

By the way, I was happy to discover (and entirely agree with) an article by Devine on Edward Snowden. Yes, Snowden, the noble hero of today's ignorant civilians: please read it here <http://www.politico.com/magazine/stor...>

Also, very interesting documentary on Charlie Wilson here <http://youtu.be/9hU3r4q5CV8>  
Devine is briefly featured in an interview in the second part.

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## **Rudolph T. Gordon says**

### **Not just war stories**

This book avoids the "gee whiz" aspects of spying and emphasizes the rationale for spying. This is both a

strength and a weakness. I, for one, enjoy learning about the personalities of those who become traitors to their country. This book doesn't cover the psychology of the traitor in much detail. On the other hand, the author goes into great detail about the structure of the CIA and the administration of the agency. It was well written with an extensive bibliography. I just wish I had a better feel for the man who wrote it.

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## **John Braddock says**

A spy's career is tied to history. From the 1970s through mid-1990s, Jack Devine worked in the trenches of major historical moments. He was a young case officer in Chile during the Pinochet coup. He touched on the Iran-Contra Affair. He worked to supply Charlie Wilson's War in Afghanistan. He rose through the ranks and became Acting DDO, head of the Directorate of Operations.

Good Hunting is about those moments, their contexts, and the players in Devine's career. Some of the book is about the strategy. Some is about the events beyond his control. But most of it is about relationships.

For spies, relationships are how things get done. A source gives you information because of a relationship. A covert action happens because of a relationship. What you get from a foreign intelligence service is good or bad because of a relationship. Sometimes, you get betrayed by relationships.

Devine had a relationship with traitor Aldrich Ames. Not a close relationship, but they were together as trainees in the early 1970s. They worked together again in the Latin America Division and later in Rome. Ames was caught just a few years before Devine retired. Ames was a mole for Russians, and no one knew.

Before Ames was arrested, counterintelligence officers asked Devine who he thought could be a mole for the Russians. He immediately said Ames. The counterintelligence officers had asked other senior CIA officers to make a list of people they thought could be a mole for the Russians. They each had Ames on their list.

The Ames case is one where the data was there. Even a lot of the analysis was there. But until the question was asked, no one put it together. Until the question was asked, no one decided Ames was a mole. Until the question was asked, no one took action against him.

In the scientific method, questions come from hypotheses. In the world of intelligence, questions come from looking ahead. From deciding what actions are possible. You gather data to answer those questions. You analyze the data so you can answer those questions. So you can make a decision. And take action.

Key to every spy history are the questions being asked.

In Devine's career, the questions asked were about American power in Latin America. The questions asked were about how to fight the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (answered by the Stinger missile system). The questions asked were about how to manage the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Spies answer those questions via relationships. Devine, by all accounts, was good at relationships. He was good at creating positive-sum games. Good at creating alliances.

So good, he was able to start his own private intelligence firm after he left the Agency. Devine spends forty pages talking about what he's done and who he's met in that world. Now, he answers questions for businesses and people operating in difficult environments.

But stepping out of the CIA meant stepping out of history. Devine didn't want to. You can read the regret in the latter pages of Good Hunting.

Devine loved his time at the CIA. He loved the questions he answered. He loved the relationships he made to answer those questions. He loved having a career tied to history.

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One of the questions Devine answers is how to do a proper covert action. He lists six things:

1. Identify a legitimate enemy
2. Determine on-the-ground conditions
3. Ensure adequate funding and staff
4. Find legitimate local partners
5. Determine proportionality
6. Acquire bipartisan political support

In fact, these six things are necessary for any Zero-Sum Game, whether a covert action or a war.

In any Zero-Sum Game, your enemy must be identified. You must understand what will happen on the ground when it starts. You must be well-supplied and have the right people. You must have good allies. You must not take it too far (proportionality), if you want to keep the Zero-Sum Game from threatening other games. And your internal alliance, especially among decision-makers, must be strong.

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## **Martin says**

Jack Devine has written a memoir of service in Washington that is refreshingly free of score settling and politics. The CIA tends to be a Rorschach test in American politics today; however Good Hunting is a reminder that the best government employees are apolitical. Good Hunting is also a very honest book, both of successes of the CIA as well as it's failures. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in American history of the 70's through today.

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## **Florence says**

Jack Devine was a long time CIA employee. He began his career in Chile shortly before the coup that overthrew the democratically elected Marxist government of Salvador Allende. It was not the CIA's proudest moment. Reading this book reminded me of many dishonorable past activities of America's premier clandestine organization, namely the Iran-Contra affair, enhanced interrogation techniques otherwise known as torture, supporting murderous right wing dictatorships in Central America. Apparently the men and women of the CIA are a dedicated and patriotic group serving their country with distinction. I have no argument with that, however, it was a chore getting through the endless descriptions of bureaucratic details contained in this book. And I was left wondering why Mr. Devine wrote so boundlessly about the years after his retirement from government service. Perhaps the powers-that- be censored large swaths of the manuscript and there were plenty of empty pages to fill...

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## **Mani says**

Jack Devine is a distinguished CIA Officer with a track of accomplishments. The earlier part of the book was very interesting and it wasn't too technical, especially on the Chile and Iran-Contra issues. While I enjoyed the book thoroughly it seems that most of his work could have been censored, I didn't get any of the deep analysis of CIA such as their methodology of trainings and reconnaissance methods etc which I would have enjoyed.

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## **Mike Maurer says**

I like reading about real spies. The people who work in the shadows, who if you saw them on the street wouldn't seem out of place. Kind of boring. Which makes the best spy, one who doesn't stick out in their assigned environment. No James Bond here. Real stories about gathering information and working ops during more than 25 years at the CIA.

Some of the stories here are really good. Chile, Afghanistan against the Soviets, Rome, with touches on Iran/Contra & the mole inside, Richard Ames. The author doesn't let out deep, dark secrets from our past. Other authors may do that. Here we get a good sense of tradecraft, the environment at each of his postings and the historical events he was present for. There is also a bit about how involved the spouses get at each posting, including foreign language training for both. I laughed when he talks about holding disco parties while in Chile in order to create opportunities to approach specific people. Disco parties!

While the topics are interesting, some of the flow makes it dull. The parts about Richard Ames you easily feel the betrayal and frustration about what he did. He and the author started out around the same time and knew each other. I really didn't want to know about the food or wine. I felt it was a way to add material & distract that he hadn't really said much about a particular situation. The beginning and end of the book feel like it was written for policy makers, as he gives overviews of why human intel by the CIA is crucial. That it isn't something that can be turned on or off quickly, but takes a lot of time and effort.

Overall interesting to learn about one station chief's adventures in CIA history, but not a keeper for my bookcase in the end.

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## **Eric says**

I am sure that I should not be surprised that this look into the CIA was told in a somewhat self-serving manner, ie, "the Church Committee got it wrong," but there were some nuggets of insight that might serve at some point in the future to inform our history. Perhaps authors who can't freely tell their story (in this case for security reasons), then they should not tell that story. But I suspect that Devine is moved to tell his altruistic reasons, then finds that he can't because of these security restrictions, so tell what he can, but it's not really his story.

He did make me wonder at one point of his competence. He was trying to explain something about how CIA

Devine referred several times to the passage in scripture about "the truth will set you free. But as I kept listening I kept wondering whether he was telling that truth - ether now in his work memoir, or whether he had told the truth through his agent (and intelligence management) career. That's the problem, I think, with intelligence general, lies are told so often they become as truth.

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Mildly interesting, but despite constantly insisting on his neutrality, the guy comes off as a right-wing douche. I mean, there's absolutely no excuse for what happened in Chile, for one thing. This is definitely not a Hopscotch-esque tell-all.

Jack Devine is a knucklehead; don't waist your time.....

This book contains a trunkload of interesting vignettes and things you never consider about the CIA and

what they call “spycraft”. In the old days the CIA would recruit from college campuses by asking old guard professors which guys (because most agents were male) were straight-shooters who might make good officers. The Agency didn’t want the top intellects, just average students who could do the work. They were concerned that if the candidates were too smart they would get bored with the drudgery of the job, or something like that. Now, the application process is more formalized but the considerations remain the same: some smarts but not too much, good physical condition, and now more diversity in ethnicities and gender.

Devine went through training and became friends with Aldrich Ames, called “Rick”, who eventually was caught, tried and convicted of selling secrets to the Soviets. Devine provides an intriguing dossier on how and why an officer would do something so stupid. Of course, he never goes into the controversy and the competing defense that Ames was actually set up-- that’s a different book I guess.

Good Hunting spouts the Agency’s party line on the issues covered, such as, the US never attempted to overthrow Chile’s democratically elected government and we had nothing to do with Pinochet’s brutal rise to power. Believe what you want I suppose.

One nugget is that the CIA readily takes credit for influencing Italian postwar elections in the 1940’s and 50’s which expelled Communism from the peninsula. This book, written in 2014, is unrepentant in admitting that the US uses all kinds of covert activity to sway foreign elections-- interesting in light of the recent furor over the Russians alleged meddling in our elections.

By the way, the CIA employees are called officers while the FBI uses the term agent, or special agent. An “agent” to the CIA is a foreign asset or someone spying for the US against their own country. This confusion is necessary to clear up while reading.

Devine achieved minor celebrity status as the CIA organizer of Charlie Wilson’s war. Wilson was a charismatic congressman who spearheaded the arming of Mujahideen fighters in Afghanistan during the 1980’s Soviet invasion. Devine provided Stinger shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles to the tribesmen, bringing them in by pack mule. Devine was depicted in the movie starring Tom Hanks as Charlie Wilson.

The chapter on the Iran-Contra affair (Chapter 4) is worth the price of admission. Devine artfully explains the rationale of the mission: to sell military arms to Iran in exchange for the release of Americans held captive by Hezbollah. The money from the arms sales would be diverted to the Contra rebels in Nicaragua in order to support the overthrow of the leftist regime. The convoluted strategy failed when a cargo plane crashed in Central America revealing a CIA officer on board, thus implicating the US government in the conflict. The media ran with the story and the Reagan administration quickly unraveled. One major revelation: Devine is adamant that the president called for the clandestine operation-- something that has been denied to this day. I find this an odd admission given that the book had to pass CIA censors, but there was some animosity between the executive branch actors and the CIA operatives who felt abandoned when the crap hit the fan. The CIA and administration officials eventually were pardoned by President George H. W. Bush before he left office in 1992 (pp 71-90.)

In 1963, the CIA was running a clandestine operation to assassinate Fidel Castro. They had a Cuban national named Rolando Cubela on board and outfitted with a ballpoint pen which was actually a hypodermic needle containing a poison called Black Leaf 40 to be injected into the Cuban leader. Their final meeting before go-time was in November and just before the meeting was breaking up word got to Cubela’s CIA handlers that John F. Kennedy had been shot so the operation to kill Castro was aborted (page 154.)

Devine says that as deputy director of operations he had fundamental disagreements with Director George

Tenet, especially in regard to the Iraq war and specifically with the CIA's favorable treatment of Ahmed Chalabi. Chalabi was an Iraqi exile of Shi'a background who had a long history of desire to overthrow Saddam Hussein. The Clinton Administration soured on Chalabi in 1995 when he tried to force the US hand by destabilizing the Kurds' semi-autonomous rule in the north. Devine paints Chalabi as an inept self-promoter who eventually gained favor with the Bush administration and was a prime motivator for the disastrous Iraq war (page 217.)

After retiring from the CIA in 2000, Devine joined with a Harvard attorney to form a consulting company that helps private businesses navigate international markets, working with governments to grease the wheels of commerce and provide safety for executives.

Devine gives his opinion on some of the global hotspots like Afghanistan, India-Pakistan and Iran. He conjectures that as the military budget decreases (will it?) more emphasis will be put on clandestine services and the CIA is best suited for the the mission.

The career of a CIA officer is depicted as a lot of bureaucratic humdrum highlighted by a mixture of political intrigue and several moments harrowing danger. Since the stories included hereo were front-page stuff during my life, I found the book riveting. Devine personalizes the history with anecdotes about his family, colleagues and friends.

Recommended.

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### **Amy says**

I am not sure I can imagine why with book was published. I am not sure what it was even *about*. I got the sense it was a veiled attempted to support the validity of the CIA generally and its funding and then specifically focused on supporting CIA operations in Afghanistan as the United States begins to withdraw. Either Devine's CIA career was painfully unremarkable, or he kept all the juicy details for his death bed confessional and gave us 336 pages of vague, mildly interesting history of CIA scandals.

It also left me with the impression that this was more of a Brag Book...especially at near the end as Devine goes on about how his intelligence experience fits perfectly into corporate America.

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### **Bosh says**

Devine has some interesting anecdotes and insights into how the CIA does and does not function. His writing style is overly stilted, but the more fatal flaw here is the lack of real depth of analysis or criticism of the CIA. In Devine's world, the CIA is inherently good, and the bad things it has done are the result of a few bad apples or interference from other government agencies. His discussion of some issues sometimes seems disingenuous and shows a tribal loyalty to the CIA - in discussing the coup in Chile, for example, he insists the CIA had nothing to do with it, but then slips in a mention that the US had previously explored launching a coup. It seems unlikely that, even if there was no direct incitement of the coup that overthrew Allende, there was absolutely no causal connection. He also throws in the absurd rationalization that Allende did not have the support of the majority of Chileans because he had won the election with less than 50% of the vote -

which I guess means that the democracies of almost all Western democracies are fair game as well.

Ultimately, this might be worth a read if you're a CIA buff or doing academic work, but it would not be my top recommendation for a casual read.

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## **Erwin says**

Reminds me of the Robert Gates book *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War...* Yet another middle man functionary that never did anything noteworthy, but did make enough friends to build a successful consultancy for his life after public service.

If you want a truly fascinating tale, I highly recommend Pete Early's *Confessions of a Spy* about double agent Aldrich Ames. Very well written and much more interesting.

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