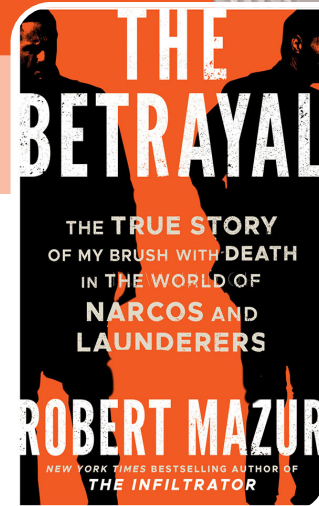




THE BETRAYAL – ROBERT MAZUR

Book Review



Betrayal ... it is such an emotionally charged word. And, who among us hasn't felt the hurtful sting of betrayal at least once or twice in our lives? From a sibling angling for a reduced punishment from mom or dad, to a school-yard frenemy aiming to elevate their status among peers, or a competitive colleague looking to advance their own career, feeling betrayed is universally relatable.

Robert Baldasare, a businessman who controlled an investment company and a mortgage brokerage business. Mazur recounts:

With luck, most of us will never know a betrayal that could lead to our being tortured or killed. However, for those who work as undercover agents, the fallout of a betrayal can have dire consequences.

Everything about Baldasare, his companies, his employment history, and his business associations was in place. It was all verifiable. And it was all a lie. That lie was more important to my safety than carrying a weapon, which I never did while working undercover. I put my faith and my life in the hands of my cover persona.

The Betrayal is the latest book from retired US federal agent, Robert Mazur. While it is a stand-alone story, it can also be read as a sequel to Mazur's first book, *The Infiltrator*, a *New York Times* Best Seller.

The Betrayal recounts Mazur's time after leaving US Customs and the start of his career with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Early in his stint with the DEA, Mazur and other colleagues at the DEA Tampa Bay office began a major investigation targeting professional money launderers labelled Operation Pro-Mo:

ABSENT THE WILLFUL INVOLVEMENT OF INDIVIDUAL BANKERS, BUSINESSMEN, AND FINANCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS, CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS WOULD HAVE TREMENDOUS DIFFICULTY BUYING THE CAMOUFLAGE THEY WEAR IN THE LEGAL WORLD.

Considering the amount of money that Baldasare was asked to launder for this underworld crime network, it is not hard to see how dangerous this work can be. Shadowy crime bosses with brutal reputations haunt every transaction. Threats of violence and death lurk behind every funding flow that goes sideways. As the case progresses, it is hard to know who to trust and what

[O]ur goal from the start: infiltrate, identify and dismantle the highest possible levels of [Colombia's] Cali cartel's command and control.

sacrifices the agents and informants will be asked to make.

Building a backstory takes time and requires the buy-in and endorsement of others to make it believable. To be successful, there can be no doubt about the trustworthiness of all members of the team, from fellow agents to committed informants. Due to his forensic accounting background and early training as an IRS special agent, Mazur possessed unique skills and competencies that proved extremely effective for this operation, but as they build the case, it is hard to know who to trust and what sacrifices they'll be asked to make.

The Betrayal breathes new life and clarity into often confusing or hard-to-follow trade-based money laundering schemes such as fraudulent letters of credit resulting in repatriated export revenue or Colombian certificates of exchange. It also exposes how criminals routinely count on many financial sector professionals to help them launder the proceeds of crime.

To build relationships with cartel moneymen and financiers, Mazur took on the role of

The Betrayal is a fast-paced crime drama that reads like a movie. With vivid storytelling, multiple chapter-ending cliff hangers, and accessible language, there is an immediacy to the narrative that makes it seem like the story is happening in real time. This newest book by Mazur will be available through Amazon in April 2022.