

# A Time to Betray: A Gripping True Spy Story of Betrayal, Fear, and Courage

By Reza Kahlili

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**An exhilarating true story that reads like a spy thriller about a former CIA operative recruited out of Iran, while he served as a member of the secretive and highly feared Revolutionary Guards of Iran.**

A TIME TO BETRAY

This exhilarating, award-winning memoir of a secret double life reveals the heart-wrenching story of a man who spied for the American government in the ranks of the notorious Revolutionary Guards of Iran, risking everything by betraying his homeland in order to save it.

Reza Kahlili grew up in Tehran surrounded by his close-knit family and friends. But the enlightened Iran of his youth vanished forever, as Reza discovered upon returning home from studying computer science in the United States, when the revolution of 1979 ushered in Ayatollah Khomeini's dark age of religious fundamentalism. Clinging to the hope of a Persian Renaissance, Reza joined the Ayatollah's elite Revolutionary Guards. As Khomeini's tyrannies unfolded, as fellow countrymen turned on each other, and after the deeply personal horrors he witnessed firsthand inside Evin Prison, a shattered and disillusioned Reza returned to America to dangerously become "Wally," a spy for the CIA.

In *A Time to Betray*, Reza not only relates his razor's-edge, undercover existence from moment to heart-pounding moment as he supplies vital information from the Iran-Iraq War, the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, the Iran-Contra affair, and more; he also documents a chain of incredible events that culminates in a nation's fight for freedom that continues to this very day, making this a timely and vital perspective on the future of Iran and the fate of the world.

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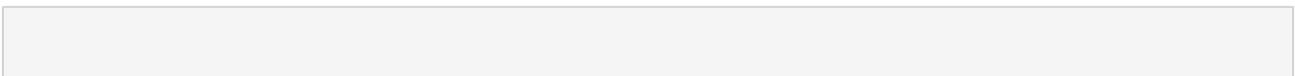
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- Sales Rank: #671940 in Books
- Brand: Threshold Editions
- Published on: 2013-02-12
- Released on: 2013-02-12
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.25" h x 1.00" w x 6.12" l, .80 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 352 pages



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### **Editorial Review**

#### Review

"Equal parts astonishing and disturbing, this perfectly crafted memoir will open your eyes to the heinous past, troubled present and murky future of Iran...Using insider information, Kahlili excels at painting an enthralling portrait of a country impacted by religious and political extremism. What makes "A Time to Betray" so powerful is two fold: First, the story reads like a John Grisham novel. Second, the narrative is refreshingly objective. Throughout his gripping journey, Kahlili ping-pongs between being a devoted son of Iran and a U.S. supporter. The emotion this produces creates an astonishing read that will have you rethinking what you know about the Middle East."

--Nicholas Addison Thomas, THE FREE LANCE-STAR

"'A Time to Betray' provides a riveting account of how the author, who uses the pseudonym Reza Kahlili, worked undercover and sent intelligence reports to his CIA handlers, all while a suspicious counterintelligence officer was chasing him."

--Ken Timmerman, Newsmax

"It's a compelling read, one that not only talks about the true nature of the Iranian regime but also of the Iranian people, who have now twice tried to free themselves from the yoke of lunatic mullahs trying to destroy the entire world for their dreams of eternal power."

--Ed Morrissey, Hot Air

"..the story [Kahlili] tells--of the Iranian revolution and how he came to despise it--is genuinely powerful. It offers a vivid first-person narrative of how the zealots of the Islamic republic created what has become a nightmare for the Iranian people... One of the strengths of this book is that it makes the author's decision to betray his country- or, more properly, the people who are running it- seem like a morally correct and laudable action. Indeed, people in the Iranian operations division at the CIA should welcome "A Time to Betray" as a virtual recruitment poster."

--David Ignatius, "The Washington Post" Book world Review

"This is the first inside account by someone so strategically placed. Without embellishing, Khalili manages to convey the horror of Iran's regime after the downfall of the Shah. Everyone with an interest in the region or in U.S. foreign policy or in real-life espionage will be interested."

--Marcia L. Sprules, Council on Foreign Relations Lib., NY, "Library Journal"

"Overall I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book, it was written in a simple yet sincere and touching manner and brought tears to my eyes on more than one occasion (not an easy thing to do.) The revelations in the book are interesting and serve as a remainder of the brutal human rights violations committed by the Islamic Regime against the Iranian people."

--Sayeh Hassan, Canada Free Press

"This is one of those rare books that grabs you from the very first page--from the very first sentence, in fact--and will not let you go until it is over."

--Michael Totten

""A Time To Betray" is certainly a thriller, with Iranian intelligence always only one step behind Kahlili's next move. But Kahlili also writes about an idyllic childhood and illustrates the Iran that disappeared after Ayatollah Khomeini's revolution."

--Forbes.com

""A Time To Betray"" The Astonishing double Life of a CIA Agent inside the Revolutionary Guards of Iran" is a fantastic book and I highly recommend it...The secrets revealed in the book, the intrigue, the mixed feelings Kahlili has working as a spy, keeping his actions secret from everyone he knows and loves, makes the reader feel like a fly on the wall -- seeing, hearing, feeling and smelling what Kahlili experiences...I give this book 5 out of 5 stars and say if you do not read it you are missing out of the book of the year."

--The Right Truth Book Club

"This book reads like a spy novel and is riveting. For readers who enjoy that kind of information, "A Time to Betray" is a 'can't miss.' Beyond that, it provides a fascinating and crucial window into a world the rest of us cannot access."

--WorldNetDaily.com

About the Author

**Reza Kahlili** is a pseudonym to protect the author's identity. Reza was born in Tehran, Iran, and served in the Revolutionary Guards and acted as a spy for the CIA. He now lives in California.

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### **TRUTH OR LIES**

"I WAS FOLLOWED," I said.

CIA agent Steve Clark uncrossed his legs. He leaned forward, his expression stiffening. "Followed?"

I tried not to let my voice reflect my nervousness. "Yes. I thought I might be imagining it, but I took a few diversions and the tail was still there. It took me an hour to lose him."

Agent Clark leveled his blue eyes at me. "Wally, I want you to be completely aware of the consequences if things go wrong. The United States government will deny any relationship to you. There won't be a navy fleet coming to your rescue. I'm sorry to be so blunt, but you must understand this. Do I make myself clear?"

I swallowed hard and said, "Yes. I understand." It was difficult to miss Agent Clark's message: I was disposable.

It was 1981. The revolutionary Islamic government had been in power in Iran for more than two years. In that time, it had ensnared my country and my people in its brutal grip. I had seen friends executed in cold blood, their last look carved in my memory forever. But now, I was as far away from that government as I had been since the revolution, in a safe house high above California's Malibu.

With my CIA contact.

Making plans to return to my homeland as a spy.

The world's most powerful intelligence agency had given me the code name Wally. I never thought to ask them why they chose it. It was hard to believe that I looked like a Wally in their eyes, but maybe that was why they gave the name to me. The assignment they asked me to undertake would have been dangerous for any Iranian. But I was not just any Iranian. I was a member of the dreaded Sepah-e-Pasdaran, the Ayatollah Khomeini's Revolutionary Guards.

Now that Agent Clark knew I understood that I was ultimately on my own, he moved forward. "We've arranged for you to be trained in Europe. We chose London since you mentioned your in-laws live there. This should not arouse any suspicion. In London, you'll meet the people who will be your contacts from here on out. These are good people, Wally."

He handed me a slip of paper with a phone number to call my new contact in London, a woman named Carol. "Under no circumstances should you use a private phone. Always make your calls from public phones."

I stared at the number for a long time, trying to keep my feelings in check. I was terrified at the thought of where my return to Iran would lead me. The Revolutionary Guards looked everywhere for spies. No one was above suspicion. And they were likely to be especially wary of me when I got back. I hadn't just traveled out of the country; I'd gone to the United States, a sworn enemy. They knew I'd gone to college in America and I'd given them a good reason for my being there now, but they would certainly question me when I returned. How would I hold up to their scrutiny?

If they caught me, I knew what would happen. I had seen what they did to spies and to those who opposed the government. The Guards drugged them, raped their wives and children in front of them, and gouged out their eyeballs, all in an effort to get them to talk. I thought of my wife, Somaya, and shuddered.

As they did every day, the visions came to me of what I had witnessed in the infamous Evin Prison, where the government kept political detainees. They'd paraded teenage girls in front of me as they led them to their deaths. These girls were barely out of their childhood, barely old enough to think for themselves, much less form thoughts against the state. They knew nothing about the machinations of politics. They were innocent in every sense of the word and certainly innocent of the trumped-up charges that led to their imprisonment. Yet they suffered fates too brutal for even the most vicious criminal. None of these girls would ever know the joys of romantic love. None of them would ever hold her own baby in her arms. Their few remaining moments of life had been filled with a level of abuse few can imagine.

"Wally?"

Agent Clark startled me out of my thoughts. I realized he had been watching me as I stared off into space. "Yes?"

"There is one other thing, and I don't want you to take it personally. It's just part of the procedure we have to go through." He cleared his throat. "You'll have to undergo a lie-detector test."

I didn't protest. This made sense, of course. Agent Clark might have been comfortable with me and confident about my motives, but if I were a professional spy on behalf of the Revolutionary Guards, they

would have trained me to behave exactly as I had in the CIA's presence. The lie-detector test was insurance.

Agent Clark arranged for the test to take place in the Hacienda Hotel in El Segundo, just south of Los Angeles International Airport. I entered through the restaurant, as instructed, and walked to the back hall. This led to a bank of elevators. From there I headed to room 407, taking the stairway instead of the elevator to make sure no one was following me. At the room, I used the key Agent Clark had given me. He was already there.

The agent administering the test arrived shortly thereafter, carrying an oversized briefcase. He didn't offer his name, only nodding instead. I noticed that he'd tied the knot on his thin tie too tight.

Though I wasn't hiding anything from the CIA, I began to feel a hint of panic. The agent must have noticed this, because he smiled and told me to relax. Doing so was not going to be easy for me. As the agent unpacked his equipment, my heart pounded. I glanced at Agent Clark and he offered me a reassuring look. This did little to calm me.

The other agent explained the process, telling me what each of the several wires coming from the machine did. The agent would be reading my nervous system, which I had disciplined myself to control, though I wasn't doing the best job of it right now. I eyed the door. For just a moment, I considered making a break for it. I would find some peaceful place where neither the CIA nor the Revolutionary Guards could find me.

But then I remembered the executions. The hangings. The torture. My friends. And my resolve returned as never before.

The agent asked me to sit down and roll up my sleeves. He hooked the wires from the machine to my arms, wrist, fingers, and chest. Sweat formed on my forehead.

"You can relax, Wally," the agent said. "This isn't going to hurt."

Agent Clark moved into the second room of the suite, closing the door behind him. The other agent told me to look straight ahead. He sat to my right, adjusted himself a couple of times, and said he was going to ask some questions; all I needed to do was answer with a simple yes or no. He bent over, concentrating intently as a roll of paper extruded from the machine, his pen ready to make notations.

"Is your name Reza Kahlili?"

"Yes."

"Are you twenty-seven years old?"

"Yes."

"Were you born in Iran?"

"Yes."

"Are you married?"

"Yes."

“Do you work for the Revolutionary Guards?”

“Yes.”

“Did they ask you to come here?”

“No.”

“Did they help you with your travel plans?”

“Yes.”

“Did they ask you to contact us?”

“No.”

“Have you contacted the Guards since being here?”

“No.”

“Have you told them about this meeting?”

“No.”

I noticed that several of the questions seemed repetitive, with nuanced differences. I wondered if this was the agent’s attempt to trip me up.

“Does your wife know you are here?”

“She knows I am in America but she doesn’t know I am with you.”

“Stay with yes or no, please. Does anyone know about your contact with the CIA?”

“No ... well, yes ... Well, not really ... but FBI agents ...”

He did not let me finish. “Only yes or no, Wally.”

I was sweating heavily at this point. This made the places where the agent had attached the electrodes itchy. The agent watched me shift in my seat and then made a notation. I wondered how badly my obvious nervousness was hurting my chances.

The agent turned two pages in his notes, seeming to skip ahead. “Have you been inside Evin Prison?”

“Yes.”

“Do the interrogators rape virgins before they’re executed?”

“I ... I didn’t realize Agent Clark would be telling you ...”

“Yes or no, please, Wally.”

I swallowed as memories tumbled one after the other. Parvaneh’s last look at me. Roya’s letter. “Yes. They rape the virgins before they are executed because they believe virgins are sent straight to heaven.”

“Wally, please, just yes or no. Did you witness this?”

“No.”

“Did you witness tortures and executions at Evin Prison?”

In the hum of the air conditioning, I could hear Naser calling, “*Reeezzzza.*”

I exhaled slowly. “Yes.”

The agent turned back a couple of pages to where he had been.

“Do you work for the Revolutionary Guards as their chief computer engineer?”

“Yes.”

“Did you acquire this position through Kazem Aliabadi?”

“Yes.”

“Was Kazem Aliabadi a childhood friend?”

“Yes.”

“Was Naser Hushmand also a childhood friend?”

“Yes.”

“As far as you know, is Kazem loyal to the goals of the Revolutionary Guards?”

“Yes.”

“As far as you know, is Kazem aware that you do not share his beliefs?”

“No.”

“As far as you know, does Kazem consider you loyal to the goals and ideals of the Revolutionary Guards?”

“Yes.”

“Have you taken an oath to remain loyal to the Revolutionary Guards, including a vow to become a martyr for the Ayatollah Khomeini?”

“Yes.”

“Is Kazem aware that you took this oath?”

“Yes.”

“Do you consider it immoral to break an oath to your friend?”

I felt a lump in my throat as a tide rose in my chest. My eyes brimmed with tears. I had left home a respected member of the exclusive Revolutionary Guards. I would return a *jasoos*, a spy betraying my country. I knew that if my father were alive and found out what I was doing, he would turn his back on me. I knew that my grandmother, who taught me to be a devoted Muslim and to be honest and trustworthy, would be ashamed of me.

Through the roar of blood in my ears, I heard the agent ask, “Would you like me to repeat the question?”

How could I be a spy if I could not hide my emotions and provide fast answers to provocative questions? I had joined the Guards with the purest intentions. I believed at the beginning of the revolution that the Islamic movement was fair and just, carrying the promise of a nation’s salvation. Instead, I had witnessed brutality, murders, and lies committed in the name of God. I had witnessed the destruction of a nation. Because of this, I was about to embark on a life of treason. I was going to lie to my wife, lie to the people I loved most. I was going to risk their lives without giving them the chance to protect themselves.

“Wally?”

The CIA saw me as a godsend, an asset they needed at a time when they were struggling to understand the threat that Iran had become to them. If I was going to help them, they needed to know what made me tick. Yet I wasn’t sure I could explain myself to them. How could I make them understand why I was risking my family and betraying my friends to save my country when I wasn’t sure myself?

For the first time since I’d begun this journey, tears broke over the edge of my eyes and dripped down my cheeks.

“Wally,” the agent said softly, “do you consider it immoral to break an oath to your friend?”

The question split my soul in two.

“Wally?”

Because the two people inside me had contradictory answers. And God would not send half of me to hell.

“Reza?”

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People live in this new time of lifestyle always make an effort to and must have the spare time or they will get great deal of stress from both everyday life and work. So , when we ask do people have spare time, we will say absolutely sure. People is human not really a robot. Then we request again, what kind of activity do you possess when the spare time coming to an individual of course your answer may unlimited right. Then do you ever try this one, reading textbooks. It can be your alternative within spending your spare time, typically the book you have read is actually A Time to Betray: A Gripping True Spy Story of Betrayal, Fear, and Courage.

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