

News  from Simon & Schuster

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Rescue My Child

**The Story of
the Ex-Delta Commandos
Who Bring Home
Children Abducted Overseas**

"This account of four rescues of American children from foreign lands is **more gripping than many fictional thrillers.**"

-- Publishers Weekly

Every year thousands of American mothers are divorced from their foreign-born husbands and face the complicated issue of child custody. For many of these women, this is the beginning of their worst nightmare: their children are sometimes kidnaped and taken overseas by the fathers. **RESCUE MY CHILD: The Story of the Ex-Delta Commandos Who Bring Home Children Abducted Overseas** by Neil C. Livingstone (Simon & Schuster; October 16, 1992; \$22.00) is the daring, dramatic story of ex-Delta Force Commandos who risk their lives to rescue these kidnaped children and bring them home. With a suspenseful, fast-paced narrative worthy of a Ken Follett novel, Livingstone recounts the moving, emotional stories of four of these heroic and successful missions.

The stories of these children and their desperate mothers who turned to the ex-Delta Force commandos as a court of last resort, represent circumstances typical of the thousands of abducted children. Usually the children are victims of custody battles in which a foreign-born father spirits the child away to his home-land (or another country) beyond the reach of U.S. law. In most cases, the United States government, the State Department in particular, is either unable or unwilling to help. In many of the countries where these children are taken, the law gives the native-born parent exclusive custody, regardless of court decisions under

Neil C. Livingstone

U.S. law that grant custody to the mother.

According to an assistant of Senator Alan Dixon (D-IL), Livingstone reports, 10,000 American children are currently being held hostage in foreign countries. The largest number of parental kidnaping cases involve western countries, but because of compatible traditions and judicial systems, most of these cases are resolved without fanfare or difficulty. The problem, notes Livingstone, becomes "extraordinarily thorny when it concerns the nations of Asia, Latin America, Africa and especially the Middle East." Faced with a nightmare of legal and cultural obstacles, many American mothers in this situation have little hope of ever seeing their children again.

Through the valiant efforts of a group of ex-Delta Force commandos with a firm called CTU, a dozen mothers were given hope and have seen their worst nightmare come to an end. Delta Force is the U.S. Army's super-secret, anti-terrorist special unit. So clandestine is Delta Force, that more than a decade and a half after its creation, the Pentagon refuses to confirm or deny its existence. Ex-Delta Force commando Don Feeney and his wife Judy launched CTU in 1985 to provide security training and bodyguard services. The majority of their employees were formerly members of Delta Force, which means that they are expert with dozens of weapons and explosives, can rappel off roofs and crash through windows, and jump out of airplanes. Don and Judy, with partner Dave Chatellier, didn't set out to do rescue missions (which have not earned them any money), but agree to them because they find them to be extremely challenging, and more importantly, because they know they are the last shred of hope for these desperate mothers. The deciding factor in going ahead with a mission is the feasibility of success. In the event that things do go wrong during these missions, it is unlikely that the U.S. government would intervene on behalf of these commandos. More likely, if they were to be captured during any of these harrowing rescues, the commandos--and the mothers who sometimes accompany them--would be sentenced to prison terms under harsh conditions. In each of the four stories, such a disaster was narrowly missed.

OPERATION LAURIE AND LEILA:

Laurie is the daughter of Bill and Barbara Swint -- ordinary folks from Lansing, Michigan. While attending Michigan State University, Laurie met and soon married Foued Ghidaoui, a Tunisian. Shortly after their daughter, Leila, was born, they moved to Tunisia, under the terms of Foued's U.S. financed scholarship. There, Laurie was subjected to wretched living conditions and severe physical abuse from her husband. Laurie herself might have been able to escape, but under Tunisian law, a "non-Moslem mother cannot be granted custody of a child under five years of age." Having exhausted all options, the Swints hired CTU. Don and Dave coordinated a treacherous escape by sea. In complete darkness, Laurie and Leila were transported by a small boat from the coast of Tunisia, to the tiny island of Pantelleria, off the coast of Sicily. Although Barbara and Bill spent their life savings of \$100,000, and could have risked the lives of their daughter and granddaughter, the Swints only regret is that they didn't hire CTU sooner. "Don't throw your money away thinking a lawyer is gonna help you, or that our government's gonna help you," Barbara maintains. "Save the money and put it where it will help. This is the only way you'll ever get your children back."

OPERATION LAUREN:

After his divorce from Cathy Mahone, Jordanian-born Ali Bayan was a good father to his daughter Lauren who he visited regularly. Several years later, when Lauren turned seven, Ali took Lauren to Jordan for a visit and never returned. "I found out later," Cathy says, "at the age of seven, according to Jordanian law, a father has all legal rights to a child regardless of reason. And so I had absolutely no right to her in Jordan." Equipped with maps and photos, Cathy went to CTU. After a desperate struggle just to locate Lauren, Dave was able to smuggle Lauren out of the heavily guarded Allenby Bridge that links Jordan and the Israeli-

dominated West Bank. Later, Dave learned how narrow his escape had been -- the Jordanians had sealed the nation's borders and shut down Amman International Airport in an attempt to interdict Lauren and her rescuers.

OPERATION BRITTNEY:

When Keli Walker met Mohammed Chowdury, he told her the first of many lies. Embarrassed to admit he was from Bangladesh, one of the poorest nations on earth, he claimed to be from Pakistan. Soon after the birth of their daughter, Mohammed's increasingly bizarre behavior led to a divorce, and it was not long before deportation proceedings were begun against him. With his new girlfriend Terry and her daughter, and his own daughter Brittney, Mohammed fled back home to Bangladesh. Terry and her daughter were able to escape their desperate surroundings, but were forced to leave Brittney behind. Terry vowed to someday get Brittney out. After months and months of planning, Keri, Terry, and CTU carried out a "sting" operation which entailed Terry returning to Bangladesh. Finally Brittney was brought safely back to the U.S.

OPERATION AMY AND JEREMY:

Shortly after the birth of his second child, ex-Delta Force commando Charlie Hefner was offered a job with CTU that took him to Peru. Finished with this CTU assignment, Charlie struck out on his own, acquired a girlfriend and came home for visits less and less often. As Kim prepared to file for divorce, Charlie returned home just long enough to whisk Amy and Jeremy off to Ecuador with him. Up against one of their own highly trained commandos, Don and his cohorts were nevertheless able to outsmart Charlie and smuggle the kids out of Ecuador, through Colombia, and finally to safety on U.S. soil. Once again, only minutes ahead of Ecuadorian and Colombian authorities responding to an all-points bulletin calling for their arrest, they narrowly escaped failure -- and prison.

RESCUE MY CHILD is about real, contemporary heroes -- the mothers who would stop at nothing to get their children back, and a group of extraordinary commandos who would go to any lengths (except violence) to succeed. Neil C. Livingstone has crafted **RESCUE MY CHILD** with all the intensity and drama of the most compelling fiction.

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"Operation Lauren," a television movie based on **RESCUE MY CHILD** and starring Mariel Hemingway, will air on NBC-TV this fall.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Neil C. Livingstone is a freelance writer, lecturer, columnist and expert on terrorism and national security matters. He is the author of several books, and recently the co-author of **INSIDE THE PLO**. He is a contributing editor to *The Washingtonian*, and his work has appeared in most major newspapers and magazines in the country. Mr. Livingstone has made hundreds of national television appearances on such programs as "Nightline," the "Today" show, "The MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour," and many others.

After providing security and crisis management services to corporations and governments for more than a decade, Mr. Livingstone currently is producer for Multimedia Television Productions. He lives in Washington, D.C.