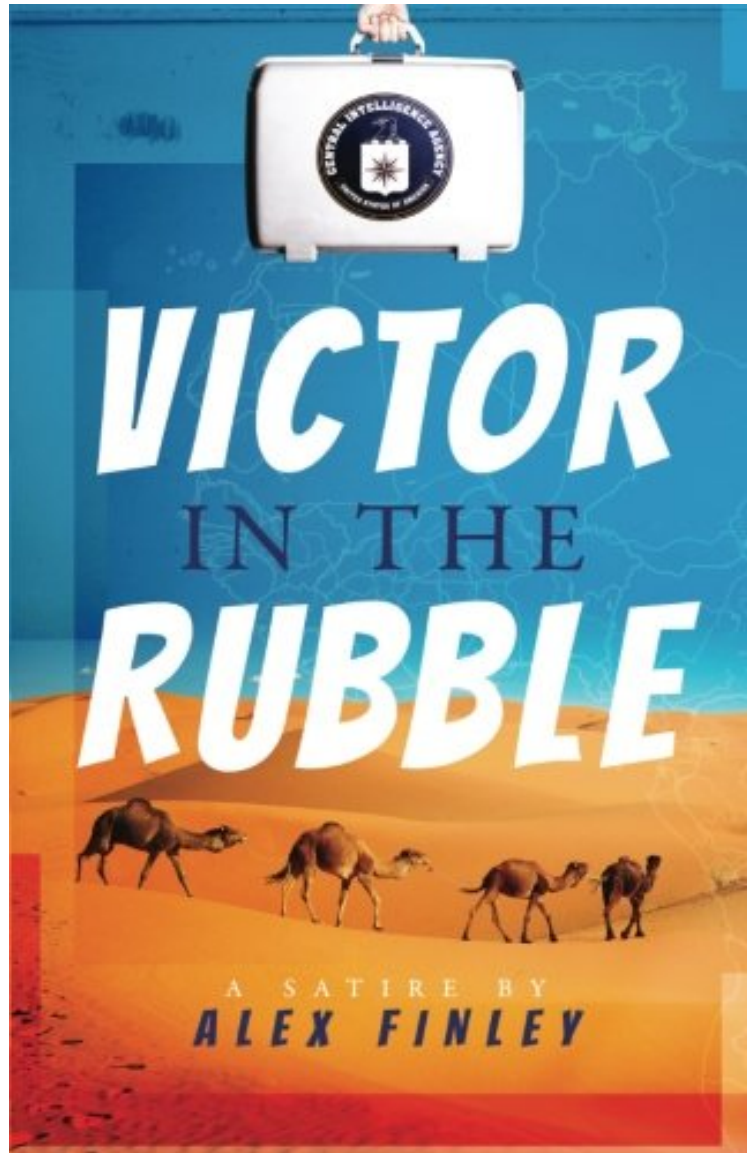


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Victor in the Rubble

Alex Finley

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Alex Finley : Victor in the Rubble before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Victor in the Rubble:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Funny, readable satire in the best tradition of the artBy kenneth a. daiglerThis is a funny book. However, like all satire it can also be read on several levels. The author notes in her Acknowledgements page that she began the project as a catharsis. Anyone who served in the Agency prior to 9/11 probably can share her professional frustration with the decision-making and leadership that changed the Agency from

a strategic intelligence organization into a counterterrorism one. Like the 1968 novel "MASH: A Novel About Three Army Doctors" by Richard Hooker (pen name) or the film "Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb", the 1964 dark political satire, Ms Finley uses absurd situations and inept characters as metaphors to demonstrate what happens when an organizational culture created to use flexibility and personal initiative to accomplish government tasks with "plausible denial" is changed into a bureaucratic nightmare where coordination vice mission accomplishment is viewed as the objective. She does this with the CYA, the American counterterrorism organization, and the Core, the worldwide terrorist organization which decides that the way to expand its brand within terrorist circles is to follow the corporate model of bureaucratic structure. The reader quickly figures out who these organizations are meant to represent. Both are populated with inept people who quickly rise in prestige and authority at their headquarters, while field personnel, on the ground and aware of local realities, suffer from a support structure without expertise and experience - but, a great deal of bureaucracy and political correctness. The Case Office Victor and his Chief of Station Zed are typical field types, who somehow try to accomplish something while their headquarters, and the multi-layers of the intelligence community, grind them down at every turn. Omar, the Terrorist, is equally pure in his attempts to accomplish his goals but also faces similar issues with a growing terrorist bureaucracy. There are also some recognizable swipes at political and governmental leaders who are so more in their own minds than in their practices. In the tradition of Johnathan Swift, Ms Finley hits the target in this easy reading satire. If you were in the Agency, portions of it can really hit home. If not, it is funny enough to keep you entertained. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. If you love political satire you will enjoy this book. By U2pop If you love political satire you will enjoy this book. In the guise of Peter Leftcourt, and Christopher Buckley, Alex Finley has written a nice satire that makes you laugh out loud. I found it dragging in the middle and a little repetitive. Each chapter brought a new twist on a joke, something to laugh at, but in these moments I found the story struggling to move along. Still I'm giving it four stars because it made me laugh out loud and I love the wit and sarcasm. If you enjoy satire, especially political and espionage satire, you should definitely buy this book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Starts a bit farcical, but then turns into a great yarn. By Bert Hubert The book starts out a bit too farcical for me, but it quickly recovers once you get over the silly name jokes ('Bin Fuqqin'). The whole story made me think of Air Babylon, a fictional 24 hour account of life in the airline industry, where the author promises us that however outlandish, every situation in the book has happened - just not in a single stretch of 24 hours. Victor in the Rubble is probably like that, and quite a lot of it is hilarious. One example is the protagonist accidentally ending up on the "no fly list", and no one can get him off it because that requires proving he is not a terrorist, which is hard. But it is trivial to say "hang on, that was a typo" and change the entry so it no longer matches the person. This sounds like the stuff that has actually happened. So by all means enjoy stories of Jihadists hanging out at the 'Teahadi' in their base, recounting stories eerily similar to the stories told by the CYA employees at the new Starbucks in their office in Langley!

Victor Caro is a counterterrorism officer with the CYA, caught in a world where job security trumps national security. On assignment in West Africa in a post-9/11 world, he is tasked with hunting down the terrorist Omar al-Suqqit, who is looking to launch his group of ragtag militants onto the international jihadi stage. But chasing a terrorist proves an easier challenge than managing his agency's bureaucracy. Omar, meanwhile, faces his own bureaucratic struggles as he joins forces with a global terrorist group that begins micro-managing its franchises in an effort to streamline attacks. When Victor appears on his own country's Terrorist Watch List and Omar finds himself struggling to write "Lessons Learned" in the suicide bomber program, they each realize they might have a common enemy: red tape.

About the Author Alex Finley is a former officer of the CIA's Directorate of Operations, where she served in West Africa and Europe. Before becoming a bureaucrat living large off the system, she chased puffy white men around Washington DC as a member of the wild dog pack better known as the Washington media elite. Her writing has appeared in Slate, Reductress, Funny or Die, and other publications. Follow her on Twitter: @alexzfinley