
Inside Job: Deep Under Cover As a Corporate Spy
by Kenneth C. Bucchi

Granite Bay, CA: Penmarin Books (1999) ISBN 1 88 395528 9
(305 pages, \$23.95, no sterling equivalent quoted)

Reviewed by James D. Calder

Sometimes a book just leaps off the bookstore shelf and lands in the shopping cart. Sometimes the jacket art is particularly appealing and the author's credentials especially intriguing. *Inside Job* took flight into my basket all right. How could I escape the lure of 'deep cover', 'corporate spy', and other phrases on the cover? I wanted to learn more about Bucchi's stint in a CIA drug-interdiction' and the circumstances of how he 'spent three years as a CIA agent in ... operation ... Pseudo-Miranda'. He also claims authorship of *CIA: Cocaine in America*, which 'chronicle[d] his experiences in the CIA'. I spent several hours reading this book, and the more I read the more questions I jotted on my note-pad. Where is this thing going? What does it contribute? Who is counted among its audience?

Within its 305 pages there are 31 brief chapters, an epilogue, no pictures (none expected, however) and a clear 'Disclaimer': 'The events and people described in this book are real. However, names have been changed to protect the innocent'. Jack Webb and the ghost of *Dragnet* come to mind. How, then, does the reader consider the so-called factual material? Is he/she asked to accept the author's credentials as adequate proof? Should it be regarded as tantalising sidebar conversation over drinks, or is it intended as insightful evidence worthy of further study in the larger context of undercover work in democratic societies? This book reads like a novel. Sentences are filled with 'he-said-she said'. There are bucketfuls of lively adjectives and a boat-load of colourfully scripted scenes. Without question, the author has a flair for screenplay writing, but his approach to undercover work will not find favour with security professionals. This is pure story-telling, without significant purpose. It reflects a narrow emphasis on micro-details, with no connection to imposing questions about the ethics, legality and return-on-investment of corporate espionage. Spying on employees and corporate operations is serious business. Whether one is in the position of the attacker or the attacked, real lives, families, business associations and economic interests are at stake. Bucchi raises the spectre of corporate spying, but fails to examine century-old issues. No evidence appears to suggest that the author researched any of the key articles and books on corporate espionage. He is not the first person to have written about the topic, and he will not be the last.

The most glaring defect of the book is an absence of references to the literature on covert policing. For example, MIT professor Gary T. Marx (author of *Undercover: Police Surveillance in America*, 1988) has been responsible for leading the discussion about undercover police and security operations for nearly three decades. He, and others, have described and evaluated the characteristics of all those types of agents provocateurs, informants, spies and detectives who exchange information in the murky underworld of police organisations and private investigators. Unfortunately, the shallow anecdotal depth and style of Bucchi's book forego an opportunity to test his experiences against what Marx and others have learned about undercover work.

One last concern: why is there no mention of the author's efforts to comply with Central

Intelligence Agency pre-publication review requirements? Even Directors of Central Intelligence are obligated under their employee secrecy agreement to secure pre-publication review for all types of publication. Perhaps Bucchi is not an ex-CIA employee, as the jacket suggests he is. Is he a former contract employee to CIA who is somehow free from obligations under a secrecy agreement?

Inside Job is interesting as story-telling—it reads like fiction, not like a serious discussion of an important topic worthy of professional treatment. Unquestionably, Bucchi demonstrates a flair for professional writing in the realm of fiction, but this book is confused, misdirected and fundamentally flawed. I do not therefore recommend its use in any security management class, and it is not a credible reference source for anyone who undertakes research on its topic. It contains little substantive content or research value, and, finally it lacks an index to permit readers an opportunity to zoom in on interesting details.

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