



Hubris: The Inside Story of Spin, Scandal, and the Selling of the Iraq War

By Michael Isikoff, David Corn

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THE REAL STORY BEHIND THE INVASION OF IRAQ

Now an MSNBC Documentary, hosted by Rachel Maddow

Filled with news-making revelations that made it a *New York Times* bestseller, *Hubris* takes us behind the scenes at the White House, CIA, Pentagon, State Department, and Congress to show how George W. Bush came to invade Iraq - and how his administration struggled with the devastating fallout.

Hubris connects the dots between Bush's expletive-laden outbursts at Saddam Hussein, the bitter battles between the CIA and the White House, the fights within the intelligence community over Saddam's supposed weapons of mass destruction, the outing of an undercover CIA officer, and the Bush administration's misleading sales campaign for war. Written by veteran reporters **Michael Isikoff** and **David Corn**, this is an inside look at how a president took the nation to war using faulty and fraudulent intelligence. It's a dramatic page-turner and an intriguing account of conspiracy, backstabbing, bureaucratic ineptitude, journalistic malfeasance, and arrogance.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Indispensable ... There have been many books about the Iraq War, and there will be many others before we are through. This one, however, pulls together with unusually shocking clarity the multiple failures of process and statecraft."

—**WASHINGTON POST**

"The most comprehensive account of the White House's political machinations ... fascinating reading."

—**THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW**

"A bold and provocative book."

—**TOM BROKAW**

About the Author

MICHAEL ISIKOFF is an award-winning investigative correspondent for *Newsweek*, a frequent guest on MSNBC and other cable news networks, and the author of the bestselling *Uncovering Clinton*.

DAVID CORN is the Washington editor of *The Nation*. He's the author of the bestselling *The Lies of George W. Bush*, the novel *Deep Background*, and the biography *Blond Ghost*.

From The Washington Post

In October 2002, a file of documents from the U.S. embassy in Rome arrived on the desk of one of the State Department's senior nuclear proliferation analysts. The papers had been handed over by an Italian journalist, who had been given them by an informer who had, in turn, obtained them from a mysterious source in the embassy of Niger. The documents purported to show that Niger had signed a July 2000 deal to supply Iraq with 500 tons of yellowcake uranium -- about one-sixth of the African country's annual production and a key ingredient in a uranium-enrichment process that could provide Saddam Hussein's regime with a nuclear bomb.

As Simon Dodge of the State Department's intelligence bureau began to review the documents in Washington, he soon concluded that they were fakes. One of the papers described a secret meeting in Rome at which representatives of Iraq, Iran, Sudan, Libya and Pakistan formed a joint "plan of action" to defend themselves against the West in alliance with "Islamic patriots accused of belonging to criminal organizations." Dodge later told Senate investigators that he considered the claim "completely implausible," or, as Michael Isikoff and David Corn put it, "something out of James Bond -- or maybe Austin Powers." Niger embassy stamps, palpably fake, linked the "plan of action" document to those depicting the Iraq deal. The papers are a hoax, Dodge e-mailed colleagues.

This was not what most in the White House wanted to hear. By October 2002, when Dodge began examining the Niger documents, the Bush administration was already accelerating its drive for war against Iraq. An authoritative demolition of one of the most dramatic parts of that case -- that Baghdad was building a nuclear weapon -- was deeply unwelcome and, coming from the diplomats at the State Department, viewed with particular suspicion by Vice President Cheney's office. Partly by accident (the CIA merely put its copy of the "obviously forged" Rome papers in a vault and left them there) and partly because it simply did not want to know, the White House remained in denial about the unreliability of the whole Niger uranium story.

Fatefully, the president would use the claim in his State of the Union address in January 2003. It was the principal basis for the administration's repeated rhetorical flourish that the Iraqi smoking gun might "come in the form of a mushroom cloud." And it was a phony.

The Niger claim provides the central thread in Hubris, Isikoff and Corn's exhaustive reconstruction of the formulation and selling of the Iraq War. For those who wish to understand how one of the most powerful officials in the land -- Vice President Cheney's former chief of staff, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby -- came to be under indictment for obstruction of justice, perjury and making false statements arising out of the Niger story, this book is indispensable.

But Niger was not the only proffered justification for the attack on Iraq that eventually crumbled to dust in the light of day. So did the false claims of Iraqi defectors, such as the shadowy informant known as "Curveball," that Iraq possessed mobile biological laboratories, a claim that was a centerpiece of then-secretary of state Colin Powell's U.N. presentation in February 2003. So did the misguided conviction that Iraq's purchase of aluminum tubes was proof of a nuclear-arms program. So did the long-disproved claim that 9/11 hijacker Mohamed Atta met with Iraqi intelligence agents in Prague in April 2001, which became almost an article of faith for the administration's hawks.

There have been many books about the Iraq war, and there will be many others before we are through. This one, however, pulls together with unusually shocking clarity the multiple failures of process and statecraft that led so many people to persuade themselves that the evidence pointed to an active Iraqi program to develop weapons of mass destruction and that it was in the interests of the United States to overthrow Saddam Hussein.

This is seemingly an eternal theme. The deeper we are drawn into Isikoff and Corn's account, the more we enter March of Folly territory. When the late Barbara W. Tuchman published her masterly 1984 account of the ruinous policies that governments have pursued through the ages, she ranged across a canvas stretching from the Trojan war to Vietnam.

To qualify as folly, Tuchman wrote, a policy must meet three criteria: It must have been seen at the time as counterproductive; a feasible alternative course of action must have been available; and the policy must have been that of a group of people, not merely a single tyrant or ruler. If ever a policy qualifies on all counts, it was the U.S.-imposed regime change in Iraq. Isikoff and Corn are reporters (for Newsweek and the Nation, respectively), not historians, but they still compel the reader to confront a further, essential dimension of folly's march. In each case -- the Niger uranium papers, the mobile labs, the aluminum tubes, the Atta-Iraq link -- there were people up and down the policy chain, including some at the very top, who either knew at the time or should have known that the claims were false or unreliable.

Many critics of the Iraq War have highlighted the ideological drive behind the invasion. Fewer have grappled with the more complex question of why it was impossible for skeptics, doubters and more scrupulous analysts to stop it. Isikoff and Corn enable us to understand better how this devastating policy tragedy played out. But as Coleridge once observed, the light of experience is but a lantern on the stern, illuminating only the waters through which we have passed. Sadly, Isikoff and Corn can't tell the next generation how to avoid such tragedies.

Reviewed by Martin Kettle
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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Do you have favorite book? In case you have, what is your favorite's book? Publication is very important thing for us to find out everything in the world. Each publication has different aim as well as goal; it means that guide has different type. Some people really feel enjoy to spend their the perfect time to read a book. They may be reading whatever they get because their hobby is usually reading a book. Consider the person who don't like reading through a book? Sometime, person feel need book once they found difficult problem as well as exercise. Well, probably you will want this Hubris: The Inside Story of Spin, Scandal, and the Selling of the Iraq War.

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Eileen Vaughan:

Playing with family in the park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with close friends is thing that usually you might have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try point that really opposite from that. One particular activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition details. Even you love Hubris: The Inside Story of Spin, Scandal, and the Selling of the Iraq War, you could enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still desire to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't get it, oh come on its called reading friends.

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