



Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers

By Daniel Ellsberg

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Covering the decade between his entry into the Pentagon and Nixon's resignation, *Secrets* is Ellsberg's meticulously detailed insider's account of the secrets and lies that shaped American foreign policy during the Vietnam era. Ellsberg provides a vivid eyewitness account of the two years he spent behind the lines in Vietnam as a State Department observer—an experience that convinced him of the hopelessness of Johnson's policies and profoundly altered his own political thinking. As Ellsberg recounts with drama and insight, the release of the Pentagon Papers, first *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, set in motion a train of events that ultimately toppled a president and helped to end an unjust war.

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Editorial Review

Review

Ellsberg's transformation from cold warrior and Defense Department analyst to impassioned antiwar crusader who released the Pentagon Papers to the New York Times in June 1971 makes a remarkable and riveting story that still shocks 30 years later. Avoiding, for the most part, self-justification and self-aggrandizement, he clearly relates the experiences that led him to reject as arrogant lies the premises six presidents presented to the public and Congress to secure support for the Vietnam War. He describes the disjunction between what he saw during visits to Vietnam in the early and mid-'60s, driving through dangerous Viet Cong-held territory, and what was told to the press and public. And he recalls his first reading of the classified documents later known as the Pentagon Papers, which exposed the motives, in his view unprincipled, behind American involvement in Vietnam. Ellsberg creates page-turning human drama and suspense in both his descriptions of his early experience accompanying U.S. combat missions in Vietnam and his days spent underground evading an FBI manhunt after the Times's publication of the Papers. Another strength of this memoir is Ellsberg's vivid recollections of meetings with prominent policymakers, from Henry Kissinger to Senator William Fulbright, that re-create the deep tensions of the Vietnam era. Ellsberg raises serious ethical questions about how citizens, politicians, the press and officials act when confronted with government actions they consider immoral and perhaps illegal. Ellsberg's own answer is history.

(Publishers Weekly)

Before leaking the Pentagon Papers, which documented U.S. foreign-policy failures and deceit in Vietnam from 1945 to 1968, Ellsberg was a gung-ho advisor to the State and Defense departments. One fascinating part of this story is his growing disenchantment with the war during these years. He came to believe that leaking the top-secret papers and other classified documents was a patriotic act that could help end the war. Other fascinating aspects of this account include Ellsberg's frustrated attempts to find a member of Congress who would accept and use the papers to build a case against the war as well as his growing role in the antiwar movement. President Nixon failed in his strong-arm tactics to discredit Ellsberg, and the case against him was dismissed because of the illegal break-in at the office of Dr Lewis Fielding, Ellsberg's psychiatrist. Interestingly, Ellsberg speculates that the break-in by Nixon's "Plumbers" was as much an attempt to blackmail Fielding as it was a gambit to stop Ellsberg. The book suffers somewhat from the overabundance of detail and repetition that also flawed Tom Wells's *Wild Man: The Life and Times of Daniel Ellsberg*. However, Ellsberg's autobiographical account provides insight into the disturbing abuses of presidential power that plagued the Vietnam/Watergate era. Recommended for public libraries.

Karl Helicher, Upper Merion Twp. Lib., King of Prussia, PA
(Library Journal)

About the Author

DANIEL ELLSBERG, a Harvard graduate, ex-marine, and Rand Corporation analyst, was one of the "whiz kids" recruited to serve in the Pentagon during the Johnson administration. In 1971, Ellsberg made headlines around the world when he released the Pentagon Papers. Now a prominent speaker, writer, and activist, Ellsberg lives in California and Washington DC.

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In **SECRETS**, Daniel Ellsberg finally reveals the how and why behind his disclosure of the top-secret study

about decision-making in Vietnam, which came to be known as "The Pentagon Papers." The story is fascinating, and one that anyone interested in Vietnam should hear. Ellsberg has a gruff voice, and he gives a true measure of himself as he reads his story. On the other hand, Dan Cashman reads the book as though it were a novel. While Cashman seems to understand and convey the passion that led Ellsberg to become a leading antiwar activist, at times he reads with a sense of happiness inconsistent with the events and inconsistent with Ellsberg's own tone. D.J.S. © AudioFile 2003, Portland, Maine-- *Copyright © AudioFile, Portland, Maine*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Katherine Clark:

Book is to be different for each grade. Book for children until finally adult are different content. To be sure that book is very important for all of us. The book *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers* was making you to know about other knowledge and of course you can take more information. It doesn't matter what advantages for you. The reserve *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers* is not only giving you a lot more new information but also to be your friend when you really feel bored. You can spend your personal spend time to read your book. Try to make relationship together with the book *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers*. You never feel lose out for everything should you read some books.

Joseph Boyd:

Nowadays reading books are more than want or need but also get a life style. This reading routine give you lot of advantages. The advantages you got of course the knowledge your information inside the book which improve your knowledge and information. The information you get based on what kind of guide you read, if you want get more knowledge just go with education books but if you want really feel happy read one with theme for entertaining for example comic or novel. The particular *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers* is kind of guide which is giving the reader unpredictable experience.

Steven Evans:

People live in this new day of lifestyle always aim to and must have the time or they will get great deal of stress from both daily life and work. So , once we ask do people have spare time, we will say absolutely sure. People is human not a robot. Then we ask again, what kind of activity do you have when the spare time coming to an individual of course your answer will probably unlimited right. Then do you ever try this one, reading publications. It can be your alternative throughout spending your spare time, the particular book you have read is definitely *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers*.

Brenda Moulton:

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