



I Was Never Here: My True Canadian Spy Story of Coffees, Code Names, and Covert Operations in the Age of Terrorism

By Andrew Kirsch

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Toronto, ON—On March 1, 2022, ex-spy Andrew Kirsch will lift the lid on life in Canada’s secret service.

Kirsch didn’t grow up watching spy movies or dreaming about being a real-life James Bond. He was hardly aware that Canada even had its own intelligence service—let alone knew what its officers did. And he certainly isn’t alone: a [2021 Canadian Security Intelligence \(CSIS\) report](#) revealed that just three in every 10 people surveyed were able to correctly identify the organization responsible for investigating threats to Canada.

But when a terrorist attack occurred near the office of Kirsch’s financial services job, suddenly fighting terrorism meant a lot more to him than the markets. Within 18 months he had landed a job with CSIS, where he spent the next decade of his life.

In *I Was Never Here*, Kirsch (now an in-demand security consultant) spills the secrets of what life as an intelligence officer is really like—and dispels a few myths along the way. With humour, honesty, and candour, Kirsch shares his on-the-ground experience (or as much of it as he’s allowed to) of becoming a member of CSIS: from his vetting and training, to his initial desk job as a policy analyst, to his rise up the ranks leading covert special operations missions. If you’ve ever wondered whether spies can have real dating lives, how they handle family responsibilities, or how they come up with cover stories, you’re in luck.

From the time he tried to get the code names “Burgundy” and “Anchorman” assigned to human sources (with no luck), to the night a covert operation was almost thwarted by a flyer delivery man, Kirsch takes you behind the scenes with an authentic view of Canada’s spy agency, and the intricate intelligence-sharing apparatus that works day and night to keep us safe. *I Was Never Here* is also a testament to one man’s drive to serve his country, and the sacrifices, big and small, that he made along the way.

About the author



Andrew Kirsch served as an intelligence officer with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) for just under a decade. He held roles as a policy analyst and a field investigator, ultimately leading the special operations security team running covert warranted operations. Today, Kirsch runs a security consulting firm, assisting organizations and individuals identify threats and vulnerabilities and implement strategies to mitigate their risk. He was appointed to the Ontario Expert Panel on Cyber Security in 2020, advising the government on strengthening cyber security practices in the broader public sector. He is a public speaker and trainer on issues of national and cyber security. He lives in Toronto with his wife and two young sons.

Advance praise for *I Was Never Here*

"Readers will not be able to put this book down as they finally learn what our protectors do for us and why it is so important."

—**Phil Gurski, former senior analyst at CSIS and CSE and author of *The Peaceable Kingdom?***

"An honest account of the challenge of keeping a country safe from terrorism, while trying to live a normal life."

—**Chris Mathers, former RCMP undercover operative**

For more information or to arrange an interview with the author, please contact:

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