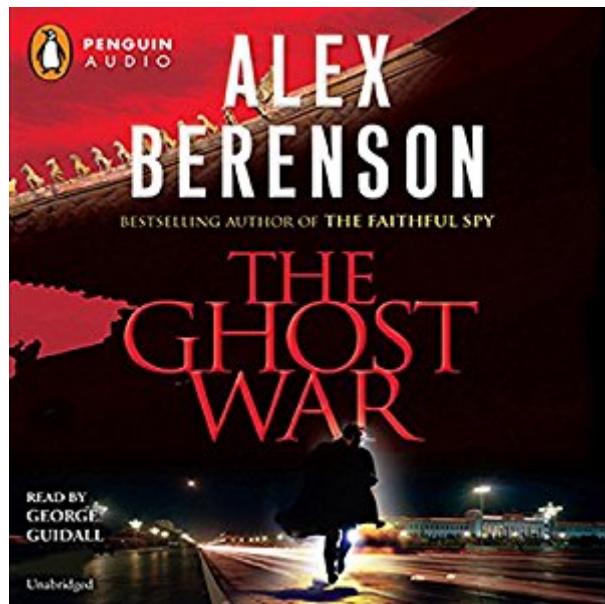


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The Ghost War



Synopsis

Deep cover CIA operative John Wells barely survived his homecoming when it was thought he'd become too close to the terrorists. Though his wounds have healed, his mind is far from clear. He needs to get back in the fight. And there is a fight waiting for him. A power play in China is causing chaos around the globe. And even as Wells does what he does best, a mole within the CIA is preparing to light the final fuse that will propel an unsuspecting world toward open war and annihilation. And this time, there may be nothing John Wells can do to stop it... --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Returning to a more 'normal' life after saving the world, or at least New York City (see book 1: The Faithful Spy), John Wells finds himself famous, living with his former CIA handler and now girlfriend, and incredibly bored. After all, it's only natural that someone who spent several years living with Al Qaeda jihadists in Afghanistan would have a hard time adjusting to the life of a suburban nine-to-fiver. It doesn't last long. He may be happy with his love life, but it isn't enough to domesticate him. Tensions flare up back in Afghanistan, and he takes the opportunity to put the turban back on and slide back into his undercover life. I'm a huge fan of Alex Berenson's novels, and his protagonist John Wells. I've read them all -- more than once -- and followed Well's fictional life from the first story (The Faithful Spy as mentioned above and see the full listing below) describing how he lived as an undercover agent

with Al Qaeda terrorists in Afghanistan, succeeding in earning their trust and becoming the only American agent to actually live and fight with elements of bin Laden's army. I love these stories because of the uniqueness of the Wells character, particularly in these early novels where he fights his own internal battles between the Islamic faith he had adopted and learned to respect and even love, and his western life that continued to be under threat. Over many years of reading novels of this genre, today I have only a very few authors whose works I am certain to purchase. Lee Child's Jack Reacher novels are one. Alex Berenson's John Wells novels are another. I have been looking forward to this since it was announced months ago, and I had pre-ordered it immediately. When it appeared on my Kindle this past evening as soon as it was released, I opened it up and began reading. I wasn't disappointed. For those new to these John Wells stories, this book will be satisfying and it's not necessary to have read the predecessors. Once you have read this story, however, you may well want to go back to the beginning to follow Wells development. Here are the John Wells novels in order of their publication, with links to the books here on (Kindle versions are linked but hardcover and paperback editions can also be selected on the same page): Book 1: [The Faithful Spy](#) (first published April 2006) Book 2: [The Ghost War](#) (February 2008) Book 3: [The Silent Man](#) (February 2009) Book 4: [The Midnight House](#) (February 2010) Book 5: [The Secret Soldier](#) (February 2011) Book 6: [The Shadow Patrol](#) (February 2012) Book 7: [The Night Ranger](#) (February 2013) Book 8: [The Counterfeit Agent](#) (February 2014) Book 9: [Twelve Days](#) (February 2015) Book 10: [The Wolves](#) (February 2016) Book 11: [The Prisoner](#) (January 2017)

Plus points for a pretty good semi-realistic plot. The author misses many details, but get other comments spot on. Let me just take one example from the first chapter so not to destroy the plot. A person is driving a motorcycle in 90-100 mph and that is considered massively dangerous. Then a helicopter lands on the highway. As I said, the details are not always believable. No plus points for the writing. It is so so. Sometimes it is very pedestrian (as if the author took a course in creative writing) and sometimes quite inspired (for instance when talking about China). Like so many modern books each chapters is like a couple of scenes in a movie, typically one location per chapter. The few reviewers who consider this book left-wing or liberal propaganda are just ridiculous. He makes the foreign power in the book look like s*** and has a very few critical side comments towards the US. The US end up looking good and pointing out some US bureaucracy is not treason. I give the book three stars. Had the writing been better, the book would have been worth four stars. It is a good book for a causal read.

Berenson has clearly learned a lot in the five years since this was written, with Simplification (thankfully!) at the top of the list. "Ghost War" opens off the coast of North Korea. It spends a lot of time in China, Afghanistan, and D.C. We learn about Chinese politics; the differences between American, Russian and Chinese submarines; tactics for fighting the Taliban; butt-covering in Washington, and much, much more. Taken in small bites it's all pretty interesting, but unfortunately the wealth of information often slows the pace of what might otherwise be a cracking good read. Many chapters began with a few lines of dialogue, then detour to several pages of background. It was only very late in the book that most of the explanations were out of the way, and the pace picked up considerably. Berenson's later books do a better job of balancing background and plot. If you're new to this author, try "The Counterfeit Agent" instead. If you're already a fan, this one's worth a read but likely to leave you a tad disappointed.

The second book from Berenson that I have read over recent weeks choosing to start at the beginning of the John Wells series. This book developed well and kept the reader's paying attention to each character. An excellent read in line with other great authors I have read in recent years. Will read more from Berenson in the future. Recommended!

I find the first two books of Berenson's John Wells series exciting, thoughtful, frightening and well written. I would look forward to reading more of them, but the price is a deterrent. I see a lot of that these days....too bad I have to read lesser material.

I am late to the John Wells series, and after two volumes I have decided it is worth pursuing. John and Exley are compelling characters, Berenson is an effective writer and his geo-political insights are interesting. We note that having been written a few years ago, "The Ghost War" is jarring in that it was not that long ago that the idea of a nuclear Iran was a horrifying thought to Wells and the United States government (both real and fictional). While Iran with the bomb remains unthinkable to many of us, that is no longer the case with those we have entrusted with the safety of the U.S. and our allies. The novel is also prescient about a Chinese government testing its neighbors to see how the U.S. responds.

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