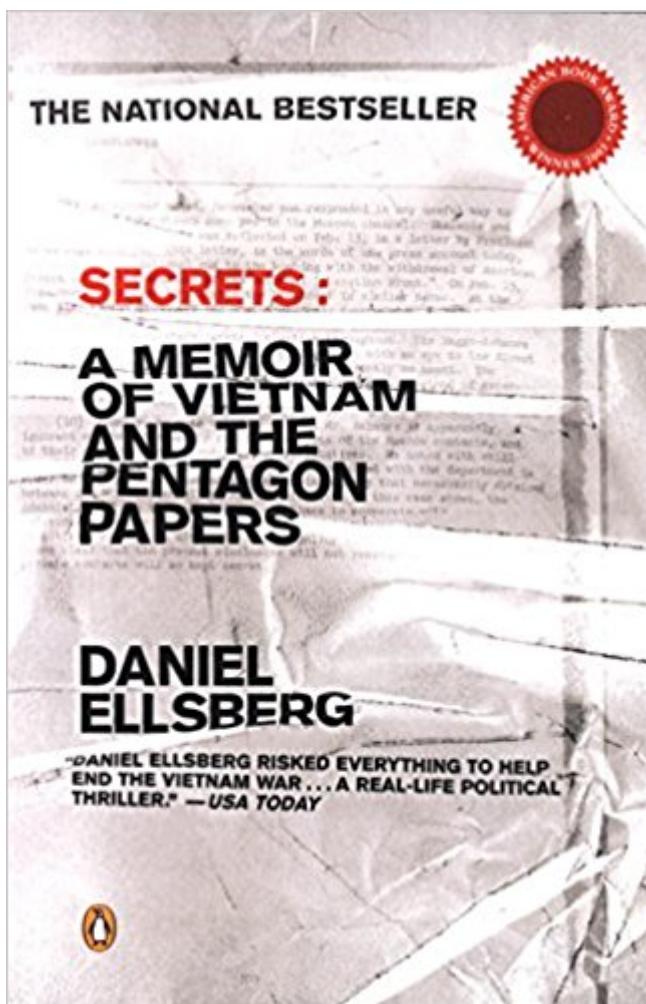


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# Secrets: A Memoir Of Vietnam And The Pentagon Papers



## Synopsis

In 1971 former Cold War hard-liner Daniel Ellsberg made history by releasing the Pentagon Papers - a 7,000-page top-secret study of U.S. decision-making in Vietnam - to the New York Times and Washington Post. The document set in motion a chain of events that ended not only the Nixon presidency but the Vietnam War. In this remarkable memoir, Ellsberg describes in dramatic detail the two years he spent in Vietnam as a U.S. State Department observer, and how he came to risk his career and freedom to expose the deceptions and delusions that shaped three decades of American foreign policy. The story of one man's exploration of conscience, *Secrets* is also a portrait of America at a perilous crossroad. "[Ellsberg's] well-told memoir sticks in the mind and will be a powerful testament for future students of a war that the United States should never have fought." -The Washington Post "Ellsberg's deft critique of secrecy in government is an invaluable contribution to understanding one of our nation's darkest hours." -Theodore Roszak, *San Francisco Chronicle*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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 Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Critical US history and the lies the public has been feed since the 50's until today. The rebirth of Dan from the power of the beast into the white robes of angels. General Abrams himself, in Sell's and Donovan's accounts, was committed to deceptive cover story; so were the secretary of the

army and the president. Not only Colonel Rheault, but below him several majors, captains, a warrant officer, and a sergeant had constructed the false cover story given to Abrams. That was pretty much the whole chain of command, civilian and military. I lay in bed that Tuesday morning and thought: This is the system that I have been working for, the system I have been part of, for a dozen years- fifteen, including the Marine Corps. It's a system that lies automatically ,at every level from bottom up to top- from sergeant to commander in chief- to conceal murder. That described ,as I had come to realize from my reading that month, what that system had been doing in Vietnam, on an infinitely larger scale, continuously for a third of a century. And it was still going on. I thought: I'm not going to be part of it anymore. I'm not going to be a part of this lying machine, this cover-up, this murder, anymore. It occurred to me that what I had in my safe at Rand was seven thousand pages of documentary evidence of lying, by four presidents and their administrations over twenty-three years, to conceal plans and actions of mass murder. I decided I would stop concealing that myself. I would get it out somehow. Daniel Ellsberg pg. 289 Secrets

Very interesting Memoir. I lived these times but I never completely understood the Pentagon Papers or the author; Daniel Ellsberg, whom I just found out was a former Marine. Semper Fi. This book is a must read history lesson of the 60's and a great story about the Pentagon Papers and how they came about. Jay Fitzpatrick, author 'Best Served Icy'

Dan Ellsberg is a fascinating speaker and writer, one of the most informed and articulate authors and speakers on the subject of the Vietnam war, and how he helped research and write the Pentagon Papers, decided he had to make them public, made the decision to risk imprisonment, and released them to the newspapers.

I was deeply disappointed with this book. I like Daniel Ellsberg, his courage and his struggle. But this book seems too much a justification he tries to create for his own conscience. Maybe that's the whole point, then it would be a success, and I apologize if my expectations have led me astray. It is a memoir, and we have to take it as that, extremely personal and vulnerable; but if we want to see another angle... another observing eye... to the events in question, then we will be disappointed.

Herein, Daniel Ellsberg records that crucial segment of the strategy of the the purveyors of the Military-Industrial-Intelligence Complex, once referred to by Bill Moyers as America's Secret Government and his titanic and eventually successful struggle against overwhelming odds to

expose it to the American People. There is not much I can add to the current 55 reviews. However, I had the pleasure of hearing Ellsberg deliver the The annual Frank Kelly Memorial Lecture for the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation a couple of evenings ago. This occassion was the second time I'd heard Ellsberg speak live - the other being about fifteen years ago in a small room in at the University of Hawaii. What was truly fascinating, albeit grim, in this talk, was that Ellsberg did not speak at all about the Pentagon Papers, but rather about his intimate witness to the Cuban and Pershing Missle crises as a member of the Rand corporation and consultant to the Dept of Defense in the early 1960's. The risk to which we are exposed by the insane assumptions which set the perimeters for decision making by our top military and government officials is extraordinary - and underexposed. Ellsberg's blow by blow account of the snafus and catch-22's actually BUILT INTO these most crucial of decision-making processes, the results of which have already resulted so many numerous "close calls" is enough to put the chill into even the most insensitive American. One would hope that Ellsberg would produce a sequel to "Secrets" to expose the glitches in our nuclear 'defense' systems - emulated by the less technologically advanced - the Pakistanis, the Indians, the Chinese, the Koreans, and sundry others.

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