



Desertion: In the Time of Vietnam

Jack Todd

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In 1969, Jack Todd was twenty-three and happy beyond his dreams. He had left behind a hardscrabble youth in a small Nebraska town, had an exciting and enviable job as a reporter on the Miami Herald, and was wildly in love with his beautiful Cuban-American girlfriend. As the war in Vietnam drew closer, he assumed that he would fight, as the men in his family had always fought, though he was increasingly troubled by America's role there. His oldest friend had just returned from Vietnam and was already showing signs of the war-caused trauma that would destroy him; he had seen and done things too terrible to describe. He begged Jack to dodge the draft, to go to Canada. Nevertheless Jack entered the army and completed basic training. On leave before his departure for Vietnam, he agonized over a momentous decision. By now deeply opposed to the war, he crossed the border into Canada, leaving behind his family, the girl he loved — and his beloved homeland.

Now one of Canada's most successful journalists, Jack Todd is a remarkable writer of great power and vibrancy. It has taken him thirty years to come to terms with the guilt and shame of desertion, to break the silence, to tell this controversial, important, profoundly American story. In a dark century, when many "only obeyed orders," he chose not to. This is an intensely moving personal story told with passion and literary verve, as well as an eloquent account of a tortured time in American history. It is hard to put down, and impossible to forget.

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