

Off the X

Mark McDonald

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"The product of high intelligence and passionate conviction, alternately mournful and gripping, and occasionally hilarious. It's also a ripping good story."

--- Soho Weekly News

The author, a veteran war correspondent and former prize-winning reporter with The New York Times, has called his new novel "asymmetric journalism," a new and original genre that melds real-time reporting with literary fiction.

A bright and privileged young American, Micah Ford, is battered by the great tragedies of modern America. He loses his mother, a nurse, to AIDS. His father is killed on 9/11, and a grandfather dies in Katrina. A girlfriend is murdered in a hate-crime in the Deep South. Micah's biography overlaps his country's: They're both suffering from post-traumatic stress. Both are squarely "on the X."

Enlisting in the Army, he discovers a new clarity, nothing less than a new life, through the extreme violence he encounters during a secret mission against ISIS in Iraq. Torture, love, betrayal, a miracle or two, luck, American swagger, Islamist brutality, and a final compass-reading from valor --- it's all in here, in a book that one reviewer has found "alarming, poignant and nothing short of brilliant." Another critic called it "war porn, or war smut, something akin to pictures of flag-draped coffins returning home: colorful and descriptive, but also prurient."



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Tony Hogan:

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