



# Chasing Shadows: A Special Agent's Lifelong Hunt to Bring a Cold War Assassin to Justice

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On a warm Saturday night in July 1973 in Bethesda Maryland, a gunman stepped out from behind a tree and fired five point-blank shots into Joe Alon, an unassuming Israeli Air Force pilot and family man. Alon's sixteen-year-old neighbor, Fred Burton, was deeply shocked by this crime that rocked his sleepy suburban neighborhood. As it turned out, Alon wasn't just a pilot—he was a high-ranking military official and with intelligence ties. The assassin was never found and the case was closed. In 2007, Fred Burton—who had since become a State Department counterterrorism special agent—reopened the case. Here, Burton spins a gripping tale of the secret agents, double dealings, terrorists and heroes he encounters he chases leads around the globe in an effort to solve this decades-old murder. From swirling dogfights over Egypt and Hanoi to gun battles on the streets of Beirut, this action-packed thriller looks in the dark heart of the Cold War to show power is used, misused, and sold to the most convenient bidder.

## Chasing Shadows: A Special Agent's Lifelong Hunt to Bring a Cold War Assassin to Justice Details

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# **From Reader Review Chasing Shadows: A Special Agent's Lifelong Hunt to Bring a Cold War Assassin to Justice for online ebook**

## **Gaynelle Gilbride says**

I found this book very interesting. Throughout the years this Foreign Diplomat "cold case" remains open and has yet to be solved. Evidence has disappeared from the CIA, FBI, Maryland State Police Department and several other government agencies. Crime scene cigarette butts to bullet casings and no fingerprints found.

Interestingly enough we may find more information with the National Archives with the Declassified information.

Very good book, highly recommended for reading.

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## **Ronald Roseborough says**

Terrorism, murder, revenge, an eye for an eye, so very little separates one from the other. Small nuances that define our lives. Thin lines crossed by individuals and governments. Who is to say what is right? A statement often attributed to Winston Churchill states, history is written by the victors. As a young man of sixteen, Fred Burton's life was changed forever by the news of a murder in a quiet suburb of Bethesda, Maryland in 1973. The mystery of the unsolved shooting would haunt him as his life followed a career in law enforcement and security analysis. The victim was Colonel Joe Alon, an Israeli Air Force pilot assigned to the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C. On an otherwise quiet July night, he was shot, execution style, in front of the home where he lived with his wife and two daughters. The murder would go unsolved by the local police and the FBI. Why was this man murdered in the U.S.? Was it a random shooting or was it tied to the history of this Israeli pilot who had fought in the Israeli-Palestinian wars while protecting his country. Reopening the cold case on the killing, Fred Burton traces Joe Alon's life through the formation and defense of the Israeli state, as Alon plays a leading role in the development of the Israeli Air Force. The trail leads across the years through the Middle East to Europe and the United States. The story of Joe Alon is a story of individuals and governments, mystery and intrigue, spies and terrorists, obfuscation and cover-up on many levels, ultimately leading the author to an inescapable conclusion and a moral conundrum. Book provided for review by the well read folks at Palgrave/Macmillan.

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## **Christopher says**

Essentially a true crime story that links into events of global significance, I found this hard to put down. I appreciated how the book related so many newsworthy stories from the 60s and 70s to each other by pursuing just one murder case, and I feel like my cognitive map of many things I had vaguely heard of improved substantially, even if their descriptions here were sometimes thin and tendentious. But I also found the ending problematic as an apparent endorsement of or complicity with extrajudicial punishment. That's obviously a reality of the world this case had to do with, but I felt a little ill to realize that's what the work behind this book itself may have contributed to in the end.

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## **Zohar - ManOfLaBook.com says**

Chasing Shadows: A Special Agent's Lifelong Hunt to Bring a Cold War Assassin to Justice by Fred Burton is a non-fiction book which tells about the author's lifelong investigation into a political murder of one of his neighbors. The product of the investigation is a mesmerizing book of an investigation of a lifetime.

July of 1973 in Bethesda, MD Joseph Alon was shot to death. Mr. Alon was a high ranking Israeli Air Force pilot, a family man and a diplomatic attaché. Fred Burton, the Alons 16 year old neighbor, was shocked by this horrendous crime in his sleepy neighborhood.

As he grew up, Fred Burton, now a counterterrorism special agent, reopened the case and found more than he bargained for trying to solve this almost forgotten murder.

Chasing Shadows by Fred Burton is an amazingly fast pace, exciting and interesting book. Mr. Burton writes a compelling account of a four decade old unsolved murder which involves Israeli diplomats, American and Israeli intelligence, Black September, the PLO, CIA, FBI, PFLP, the USAF and more.

At the time of the murder Mr. Burton was 16, as he grew up, entered the gray world of intelligence and law enforcement, the crime never left his mind. When he started to investigate he found out something strange: it seemed that none of these entities want the murder to be solved!

That includes the Israeli government who has prided itself on avenging the murder of its citizens regardless of borders and local or international laws.

This very compelling account is not only about the murder, but a small lesson in history to put everything in context. The struggle of the US Air force against the MiG fighters, the birth of the Israeli Air force, as well as the mutually beneficial relationship between the two countries, as well as sections devoted to how Middle Eastern terrorism operated in the 70s.

In my opinion, the mystery took a back seat to the fascinating history lesson, but that's not to say it is not mesmerizing as well. Due to the subject's diplomatic stature, many of the suspects cannot be named and were difficult to track leading only to dead ends or false leads. However, once in a while, through sheer determination and persistence, Mr. Burton slowly made progress.

The narrative weaves the pain of the Alon family who are being blocked by the Israeli government and his own frustration of running into brick walls at every turn. Mr. Burton is a wonderful storyteller who weaves international intrigue and complicated relationships between people, organizations and countries in a very readable format.

For more review and bookish posts please visit: <http://www.ManOfLaBook.com>

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## **Tommy J Champion says**

**Great book**

I normally don't read this type of book. However I heard an interview on NPR and it really caught my attention. I respect the author for his dedication to this man and his family. In a world where most people could care less about others, he took it upon himself to make a difference. Thank you sir for going that extra mile to help those in need.

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### **Sean says**

When the author was a teenager a murder happened in his neighborhood that he unknowingly trained his entire life to solve. This book tells the story of how he did that after over 30 years of following the case. While the book is about the murder investigation, about half of it is dedicated to explaining the Israel/Palestine conflicts and how they affected the world and ultimately relate to this murder mystery. A great story and great education on the Middle East.

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### **Carolyn says**

Story of one man's obsession with the murder of a man you've never heard of (an Israeli war hero, diplomat, and probable spy). You have to be really fascinated with the intricate relationships between Israel, Hamas, Hezbollah, the Arab nations, Black September, the CIA, FBI, etc. to enjoy this book. It's overdramatized and overdone.

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### **Sean says**

Burton takes the reader on a journey through time in this masterful book. More than just his hunt to find a killer, this book details the history of Israel in the late 60s and 70s. This book does a wonderful job of making this history lesson a page turner. I simply could not put it down, It reveals the ruthlessness of both countries. This book reads more like a spy thriller than a history book.

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### **Enso says**

An interesting book by the author of "Ghost" on his lifelong search for the assassins of an Israeli pilot (and possible Mossad agent) in the author's hometown when he was 16. This is the event that pushed Fred Burton to becoming a cop and eventually working in counter-terrorism. The book covers the milieu of the early 70s beginnings of Palestinian terrorism and the "Black September" organization as well as a bit of the history of that era in the intelligence world.

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### **Debbi Mack says**

One fateful summer night in 1973, in the quiet DC suburb of Bethesda, MD, a gunman stepped from behind a tree and shot Joseph Alon in his driveway. The shooter got away, despite what seemed to be the best efforts of the local police and FBI to apprehend him. Over the years, the family was plagued with questions no one

would answer. This incident not only shattered author Fred Burton's illusions of safety, but led him to a career in law enforcement, then a job with the Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) as a counterterrorism agent. He quit DSS in the late 1990s, but went on to continue that line of work in the private sector. Throughout his career, he stayed in touch with Alon's family and kept seeking the answers that eluded them.

Those answers lay in Alon's work as an Israeli air attache in Washington, DC. Alon represented Israel's air force and was liaison for Israel. Alon was also tasked with studying and submitting intelligence reports to Israel, i.e., spying. The truth about his murder involved double dealing and behind-the-scenes political alliances so complex, calculating and cold-blooded, it makes a John LeCarre novel look simplistic.

Read the entire review at <http://thebookgrrl.blogspot.com/2012/...>

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### **Dave says**

This is a fast-moving account of a decades-long hunt for the killer of an Israeli spy. I really enjoyed it.

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### **Brad says**

This was a great read if you are looking for a murder/assassination/conspiracy mystery; and even better, it's a true story. The author wrote about his own experience investigating this unique case, and it covers a lot of geo-political and military history over the past 60 years. I found this to be a very engaging and compelling read.

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### **Quentin Stewart says**

When Fred Burton was 16 a murder occurred in his quiet community that was never solved. Burton had a difficult time accepting the fact that something like this could occur in his neighborhood in 1973. Nothing like it had occurred before and he had a difficult time accepting that it could happen and never be solved. It was one of the factors that led Burton into the field of law enforcement and he never forgot that morning when he first heard of the murder. In each stop in his career as he advanced through various levels of law enforcement he kept that murder in mind and was always open to any facts or stories that might come his way as a police officer. His final position, before retirement, was with the Diplomatic Security Service in the State Department. As deputy chief of the Counterterrorism Division of the DDS he made contacts and heard things that would enable his private investigation of the 1973 killing to go on once he retired.

After retiring he made contact with two daughters of the victim who were still looking for answers to their father's death. Burton uses sources that he made contact with before his retirement, the first police officer on the scene that night, and others to attempt to track down the person or persons that committed the murder in 1973. Of course he started with the victim, the Military Attaché to the Israeli Embassy. This leads Burton to give us a brief history of the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians that started at the Olympic Games of 1972. Was the Military Attaché killed as part of this "Shadow War" or was he victim of a robbery gone badly.

Chasing Shadows is an excellent book tracing the conflict that possibly led to the death on a quiet street in the USA. It is also the story of one man's search for justice for an invasion in his quiet community that as a

teenager he did not understand. He needed to bring closure in his own mind to an occurrence that he did not understand. An excellent book and an easy and enjoyable read. It is fast paced and keeps one's attention. Highly recommended.

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### **Melissa says**

This was a very interesting book. I liked all of the background and history that the author provided, because it helped me to better understand the social and political landscape that led to the murder of Colonel Alon. This book was written very well, and in a way that was able to hold my attention. While there were one or two spots where my interest began to wane, and there were a lot of people and events to keep track of, overall it was not written in a dry or boring way like many non-fiction books that I have read. It was more than a collection of facts. The personal stories and background, including the author's own, helped to humanize it. The ending was not entirely satisfying, but it felt like enough. I'm glad that the Alon family was finally able to get some answers, and some measure of justice. I came away from this story saddened by all of the tragedy and conflict, but having learned quite a bit about the complexities in the Middle East, particularly during the Cold War.

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### **thewanderingjew says**

This fast-paced, non-fiction account of the long unsolved murder of a former war hero turned Israeli diplomat, Joe Alon, (aka Josphe Placzek) is filled with intrigue, deception and conspiracy theories. I was reading several other books at the same time, as I am wont to do, but once I started this one, the others languished on the table as this story consumed me and I concentrated on it, to the exclusion of all else. It is a case of the truth being stranger than fiction. Can he have been a double agent? Was there a cover up of his murder or was it truly unsolvable at the time? There are many mysteries dealt with in this short book, as we are taken from Brno, Czechoslovakia to Israel and finally to the United States. All of the intervening wars, including the history of Israel and the Middle East conflict, are outlined and somewhat explored in the process. It is a clear and concise explanation that is easily understood and absorbed.

Beginning with the murder of Joseph Alon, in 1973, a tale of intrigue which spans decades is born. Tracing back through the history of this unique man and his family, we are taken from the tragedy of the Holocaust to Israel's war for independence and right up to the present day. We learn what made him successful and what motivated him to do the things he did. His courage was often tested and his piloting skills in the Israeli Air Force were legend. He was a major force in Israel's defense forces. He loomed large, once discovered, in the Palestinian terror network. Did politics, international relations and clandestine operations prevent the details of his murder from being explored and solved in a timely fashion? Why was his family kept in the dark about the circumstances surrounding his death?

This is a well written book whose pages turn themselves. You will not be bored as you trace the history of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, through the life of this unusual hero or was he??? There are so many variables that one wonders if the whole story behind his murder can ever truly be resolved? The conjecture surrounding the secrets and ploys of various governments and their enemies create plots that rival those of a modern day spy novel. The subterfuge surrounding the secret deals between different organizations is often unfathomable. In the end, you will turn the final page with more knowledge about the event than you had before but you will still wonder about what to believe regarding the mysterious death of Joseph Alon. It is a true life tale of espionage.

If you would like further information, some can be found here: <http://www.the-two-malcontents.com/20...>  
and here: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/discovery...> and here: <http://lahavnet.co.il/joalon/eng/pilo...>

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