



## SMUGGLER'S END: The Life and Death of Barry Seal

By Del Hahn

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Adler Berriman “Barry” Seal had a brief, but spectacular, career as a cocaine smuggler-turned DEA informant. At the height of his career, he was under investigation by the DEA in Mena, Arkansas, and New Orleans, Louisiana, in addition to being under the watchful eye of the FBI. Despite the heat surrounding Seal, he made a drug run to Nicaragua in 1984, where he picked up 1,465 pounds of cocaine and took photos of Sandinista soldiers loading the drugs. Then the *Washington Post* leaked the story, revealing that Seal was working undercover for the CIA. As a result of the article, Seal has long been identified as an undercover CIA informant. The conspiracy revolving around this supposition included the attorney general, FBI agents, Gov. Bill Clinton, and others inside the CIA.

Author Del Hahn, who worked on the FBI drug task force that targeted Seal, presents a different story. Hahn begins by calling into question the accuracy and legitimacy of the primary literary sources that support these “CIA/Mena myths.” In doing so, Hahn aims to dispel the distorted stories, rumors, and outright lies about Seal, the government’s investigation of him, and the actions that led to his murder by Colombian drug lords in 1986 at a halfway house in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

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### Editorial Review

#### From the Inside Flap

Adler Berriman “Barry” Seal had a brief, but spectacular, career as a cocaine smuggler-turned DEA informant. Many believe that in addition to his dealings with the DEA, Seal was a CIA operative working with Col. Oliver North in Nicaragua to help the Contras in the fight against the Sandinistas. During the Reagan administration, Seal’s infamous undercover role was leaked to Edmond Jacoby of the *Washington Post*, in hopes that Congress would continue to fund the Contras.

Meanwhile, the federal drug task force was waging its “War on Drugs,” and one of their biggest targets was Seal. The Middle District of Louisiana, Western District of Arkansas, New Orleans drug task force, Baton Rouge task force, and other federal agencies all investigated him. But once the story of his CIA involvement leaked, he was no longer useful to the DEA as a poster-boy snitch. Although Seal avoided a prison sentence, the judge ordered him to spend his nights for six months in a Baton Rouge halfway house as a condition of the five-year probationary sentence his plea agreement called for. This decision was fatal. Columbian drug lords were out to kill him, and they succeeded in 1986.

The books on the market about Seal perpetuate the belief that he was indeed a CIA operative. Author Del Hahn presents credible evidence and facts that dispel the fiction, falsehood, and half-truths surrounding this notorious figure.

A former Marine and retired FBI agent, Del Hahn is self-employed as a private investigator. He is the contract investigator for one of his clients, the Louisiana State Board of Private Investigator Examiners. After joining the FBI as a special agent, Hahn’s first assignment was on a general criminal squad in Florida. After he was transferred to Baton Rouge, he focused on white-collar crime, political corruption, and the newly enacted Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act. During his last two years as an agent, Hahn was assigned as the FBI representative to the Middle District of Louisiana Organized Crime Drug Task Force targeting Barry Seal.

Tom Aswell graduated from Louisiana Tech University in 1970 with a BA in journalism. After his discharge from the United States Air Force, he worked as a reporter and editor for several Louisiana newspapers, including the *Baton Rouge Advocate*, *Ruston Daily Leader*, and *Monroe News-Star*. In addition, Aswell writes a political blog called *LouisianaVoice*, which was named by the Washington Post as one of the top 100 political blogs in the nation. He is the author of *Louisiana Rocks! The True Genesis of Rock and Roll* and the editor of *With Edwards in the Governor’s Mansion: From Angola to Free Man*, both published by Pelican.

#### From the Back Cover

“Barry Seal, the charismatic narcotics air smuggler of the early 1980s, was daring and elusive. When the federal government declared ‘war on drugs,’ FBI agent Del Hahn, a former Marine of the Korean War era, joined the battle. Hahn is a longtime friend, and I knew Barry Seal. *Smuggler’s End* penetrates the mysteries surrounding Seal, what he did in Mena, Arkansas, and presents the real facts beyond the popular fictional accounts.”

—William R. “Rut” Whittington, Louisiana State Police colonel/superintendent (retired), US marshal –

*Western District of Louisiana (retired)*

“Retired FBI agent Del Hahn provides a behind-the-scenes, inside look at the highly scrutinized life and death of Barry Seal. The book addresses much of the innuendo and many of the myths surrounding the convicted drug smuggler who has been linked to alleged conspiracy theories and has been the subject of much conjecture.”

—Jay Dardenne, former lieutenant governor, Louisiana

“As an investigative reporter who exposed but one small piece of this tale (for *Time* magazine) more than two decades ago, I've been waiting for years for such a book. Del Hahn takes no prisoners. He has blown apart the Mena Myth and the scoundrels who perpetuate it. The public should be grateful.”

—Richard Behar, award-winning investigative journalist

Despite countless books on Seal, none have ever been able to definitively prove whether he was a paid informant for the CIA or if he was merely a scapegoat for a larger government plot. Retired FBI agent Del Hahn sets the record straight using case documents and first-person accounts, introducing the world to the real Barry Seal.

#### About the Author

Marine veteran Del Hahn received a bachelor of science in commerce from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, under the GI Bill. He worked as a parts expeditor for the Euclid Road Machinery Division of General Motors and as a revenue officer for the IRS in Toledo, Ohio, before joining the FBI as a special agent. He is self-employed as a private investigator and lives with his wife, Carolyn, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

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#### John Augustine:

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