



Stalling for Time: My Life as an FBI Hostage Negotiator

By Gary Noesner

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An enraged man abducts his estranged wife and child, holes up in a secluded mountain cabin, threatening to kill them both. A right wing survivalist amasses a cache of weapons and resists calls to surrender. A drug trafficker barricades himself and his family in a railroad car, and begins shooting. A cult leader in Waco, Texas faces the FBI in an armed stand-off that leaves many dead in a fiery blaze. A sniper, claiming to be God, terrorizes the DC metropolitan area. For most of us, these are events we hear about on the news. For Gary Noesner, head of the FBI's groundbreaking Crisis Negotiation Unit, it was just another day on the job.

In *Stalling for Time*, Noesner takes readers on a heart-pounding tour through many of the most famous hostage crises of the past thirty years. Specially trained in non-violent confrontation and communication techniques, Noesner's unit successfully defused many potentially volatile standoffs, but perhaps their most hard-won victory was earning the recognition and respect of their law enforcement peers.

Noesner pursued his dream of joining the FBI all the way to Quantico, where he not only became a Special Agent, but also—in the course of a distinguished thirty-year career—the FBI's Chief Negotiator. Gaining respect for the fledgling art of crisis negotiation in the hard-boiled culture of The Bureau, where the shadow of J. Edgar Hoover still loomed large, was an uphill battle, educating FBI and law enforcement leaders on the job at an incident, and advocating the use of psychology rather than force whenever possible. Noesner's many bloodless victories rarely garnered as much media attention as the notorious incident management blunders like the Branch Davidian disaster in Waco and the Ruby Ridge tragedy.

Noesner offers a candid as well as fascinating look back at his years as a rebel in the ranks and a pioneer on the front lines. Whether vividly recounting showdowns with the radical Republic of Texas militia, the terrorist hijackers of the cruise ship Achille Lauro, and self-styled messiah David Koresh, or clashes with colleagues and superiors that expose the internal politics and power-plays of America's premier law enforcement agency, *Stalling for Time* crackles with

breathhtaking suspense and insight in equal measure. Case by case, minute by minute, it's a behind the scenes view of a visionary crime-fighter in action.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Noesner, a former FBI hostage negotiator for 23 years, was the first person to run the bureau's Crisis Negotiation Unit. Looking back, he recalls some major standoffs along with his efforts to understand and interpret the behavior of hostage takers, sometimes finding negotiations thwarted by the actions of his own colleagues. The compelling centerpiece of the book is Noesner's analysis of "what went wrong at Waco" with the Branch Davidians when negotiation and tactical teams were working at cross purposes. After opening with a dramatic account of a man who abducted his estranged common-law wife and their son and was holding a gun to her head, Noesner describes his own "quintessentially American childhood," when he got the idea for his life's work from a segment about the FBI on The Mickey Mouse Club. Drawing on official reports, personal notes, memos, and memories of conversations, he writes with a simple style that nevertheless generates much suspense, recreating past events with a vivid intensity certain to fascinate true crime readers.

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From [Booklist](#)

Formerly chief of the FBI's unit for hostage negotiation, Noesner interlinks principles for talking to cornered desperadoes with cases from his career. Some of those caught nationwide attention, such as the disastrous 1993 siege of religious zealots in Waco, Texas, and here Noesner tells his side of the story. In his discussion of less-well-known incidents, Noesner underlines his core belief that negotiation is more effective in peacefully resolving standoffs than law enforcement's method of tactical assault. Although professionals are the audience for that debate, true-crime readers have plenty to absorb in Noesner's accounts, which include several episodes of the husband-abducting-wife-and-kids scenario, a couple of prison riots, three 1990s showdowns between the law and beleaguered fanatics (the Branch Davidians, the Montana Freeman, and the "Republic of Texas"), and a miscellany of terrorism and kidnapping incidents. Working his ideas into the narrative, Noesner reconstructs negotiating dialogue both as a critique of techniques, such as establishing rapport with a hostage taker, and as life-or-death drama. The latter, plus the inside-the-FBI tone, renders Noesner's recollections a guaranteed attraction in new-books displays. --Gilbert Taylor

Review

Praise for *Stalling for Time*

"Gary Noesner is a gripping storyteller, and man, does the guy have stories. It's like watching an emotional bomb squad defuse explosive personalities. The big surprise is how recently the FBI learned the basic tenets of what makes a man put the gun down, a discovery story as captivating as the hostage standoffs that illuminate it."

—**Dave Cullen**, *Author of Columbine*

"Gary Noesner has done something remarkable with this book, turning the murky process of hostage negotiations into a set of predictable and clear routes to bargaining success."—**Robert B. Cialdini**, *bestselling author of Influence: Science and Practice*

"Tortured people, desperate moments, dangerous solutions. *Stalling For Time* takes us deep into the lethal world of hostages, sieges, and terrorism. Gary Noesner, a thirty year veteran of the Bureau, has written a landmark work that's both a nail-biting thriller and an expose of timely importance. This is a must-read not

only for true crime fans but for every cop and G-Man in the country.”

—**John Huddy, bestselling author of *Storming Las Vegas***

"*Stalling for Time* reads with the page-turning intensity of a first-rate thriller, only everything here is, remarkably, true. In finally opening up about his craft -- about his 30 years spent reasoning with unreasonable people in situations that were literally life and death -- Gary Noesner has written an essential book about the fine art of communication. For anyone who wants to know how to stay cool under fire, this book is indispensable."—**Douglas Stone, best-selling author of *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most***

"Gary Noesner has written an account of his decades-long career as a hostage negotiator that is so gripping it grabs the reader by the throat. It's a spectacular read and every word of it is true."

—**Peter Bergen, author of *Holy War, Inc.* and *The Osama bin Laden I Know***

"An intense, immersive narrative, making [Noesner's] real-life experiences read like episodes of a good cop drama. By the end of the book, readers will be impressed by the number of crucial moments in which Noesner has played a significant role—from the Achille Lauro hijacking in 1985 to the Freeman militia standoff in Montana in 1996. Vicariously entertaining."—**Kirkus Reviews**

"The world doesn't need me to tell them that Gary Noesner has been there, and done that. There are hundreds of living victims across the globe that are living testament to Gary's abilities to successfully negotiate, or teach others effective crisis negotiation." —**Lt. Tom Monahan, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Dept., Director, Southern Nevada Counter-Terrorism Center**

"Crisis Negotiations requires experience, a cool head, the ability to think on your feet in the face of extreme threat ... and Gary personified each and every element. It was an honor to work with him and to learn my skills from the very best."—**Byron A. Sage, Retired FBI Crisis Negotiator**

"Due to his effusive personality, ability to articulate his broad knowledge and experience, and renowned sense of humor, Gary Noesner is undoubtedly the foremost federal ambassador to American law enforcement in the field of critical incident management in general and crisis negotiations in particular. Experienced and knowledgeable crisis negotiators have learned that when Gary Noesner speaks we need to listen. It is in large part due to Gary and a very few others that crisis negotiations enjoys the noble position of respect and effectiveness both within and outside the U.S. that it does."—**William "Bill" Kidd, Crisis Negotiator since 1974 San Francisco PD and Sonoma County Sheriff's Office**

"Gary Noesner's passion for the art of hostage/crisis negotiations has influenced hundreds, probably thousands, of police negotiators in the world. His enthusiasm for this highly perfected skill is contagious."—**Bruce A. Wind, Crisis Negotiator, Seattle Police Department**

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sharon Gaines:

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Barbara Clarke:

The book Stalling for Time: My Life as an FBI Hostage Negotiator will bring one to the new experience of reading any book. The author style to explain the idea is very unique. In the event you try to find new book to read, this book very suited to you. The book Stalling for Time: My Life as an FBI Hostage Negotiator is much recommended to you to read. You can also get the e-book from your official web site, so you can more readily to read the book.

Charles McCreery:

In this age globalization it is important to someone to get information. The information will make professionals understand the condition of the world. The healthiness of the world makes the information simpler to share. You can find a lot of personal references to get information example: internet, paper, book, and soon. You will see that now, a lot of publisher which print many kinds of book. The actual book that recommended to your account is Stalling for Time: My Life as an FBI Hostage Negotiator this book consist a lot of the information on the condition of this world now. This particular book was represented how do the world has grown up. The language styles that writer make usage of to explain it is easy to understand. The writer made some study when he makes this book. That is why this book suitable all of you.

George Hoffman:

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