

Tracy Walder

Former CIA Officer, FBI Special Agent, Educator, and Author

When Tracy Walder enrolled at the University of Southern California, she never thought that one day she would offer her pink beanbag chair in the Delta Gamma house to a CIA recruiter, or that she'd fly to the Middle East under an alias identity. Graduating with a history degree, she would spend the next four years as a covert operative for CIA's Counterterrorism Center, assuming aliases, thwarting terrorist attacks, and debriefing terrorists at black sites.

Walder worked as Staff Operations Officer (SOO) for the CIA's Counterterrorism Center Weapons of Mass Destruction Group. Receiving many awards for her service from both the CIA and foreign intelligence offices, she travelled to war zones, black sites, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and Southeast Asia, often the youngest person in the room and one of few females. After the CIA, she went on to become one of the few women to work on the operations side of both the CIA and FBI, serving as a Special Agent at the FBI's Los Angeles Field Office and specializing in Chinese counterintelligence operations. In a single year, Walder worked on cases involving cyber-crime, fraud, and even helped take down one of the most notorious foreign spies ever caught on American soil.

Exclusively represented by [Leading Authorities speakers bureau](#), Walder shares her riveting story with audiences, and according to *Publishers Weekly* "opens a window into life in two of America's major intelligence agencies." Using lessons-learned from her tenure in the CIA and FBI, along with insider anecdotes from meetings with President Bush in the 9/11 war room to hiding in the trunks of cars through the Middle East, she offers her unique perspective of a woman in the male-dominated field of special operations. A TED speaker, Walder expertly discusses a range of topics including national security, foreign policy, terrorism, counterintelligence, education, and the role of women in law enforcement and intelligence. With a career that continues to take her to unexpected places, she inspires audiences to embody a "why not" approach to life and shares her impactful message: don't try to change who you are to fit what you think the job wants you to be.

Walder has shared her story on *CBS*, *NPR*, "Good Morning America," "Fox and Friends," *MSNBC*, *BBC*, and several other leading media outlets and programs. Her book, *The Unexpected Spy: My Secret Life Chasing Down Some of the World's Most Notorious Terrorists*, candidly details her fascinating real-life story as a young woman in special operations, from hunting terrorists in the CIA to training for the FBI. It has been translated into four languages, was a digital book bestseller, and has been optioned by Netflix.

Following her time at the CIA and FBI, Tracy became a teacher and created a course on national security and foreign policy for young women. Currently, she works as a teacher and adjunct professor of criminal justice and terrorism. Additionally, she shares her sought-after expertise on national security, terrorism, geopolitics, and criminal justice as a regular presence on *MSNBC* and *News Nation*.

Walder sits on the board of directors of Girl Security, a nonpartisan nonprofit organization increasing the representation of women in national security through education. She also sits on the board of Chapman University's Atallah College of Education and the Highland Park Education Foundation. Walder earned her degree in history from the University of Southern California and her Master's in education from Chapman University.