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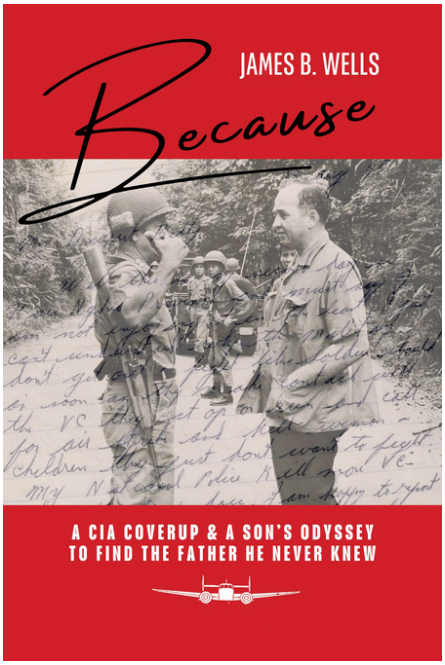

BECAUSE
A CIA COVERUP & A SON'S ODYSSEY
TO FIND THE FATHER HE NEVER KNEW
by
JAMES B. WELLS

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JAMES B. WELLS was only nine when his father, Jack, an Army veteran working for USAID as a senior public safety officer in 1965, died in an Air America plane crash in Vietnam. Decades later, James discovers hundreds of letters in his mother's home and embarks on a thirty-three-year odyssey to uncover the truth and meaning behind his whistleblower father's covered-up and still CIA-classified death. Through archival and field research across two continents and a meticulous reconstruction of his father's life—from Jack's love for God, family, country, duty, and truth to power to the circumstances of a coverup—a son finally connects with the father he barely knew and seeks peace with what he learns and what he may never know.

EARLY PRAISE

BECAUSE traces James Wells's emotional and spiritual odyssey over decades to discover the events of his father's death in Vietnam, occurring when the author was only nine. A masterpiece of sleuthing, his account often reads like a whodunnit, not so much to unravel an alleged CIA cover-up of a foreign services officer's attempts to eradicate corruption among Vietnam's provinces during the exigencies of war but ultimately to unearth the spiritual truths that bind a son to his father, a husband to his wife. In the process he revitalizes his own faith, gaining an understanding of a deeper spiritual wisdom that transcends cultures. is book is a compelling read.
—Richard Taylor , author of FATHERS and Kentucky Poet Laureate

As with many young men, when James Wells lost his father at such a young age of nine, the event was both tragic and traumatic—one that was to become a lifelong obsession. The result of his search is BECAUSE, an incredible book that leads us on that amazing individual journey but opens up even greater questions about the workings of our government, especially the CIA. BECAUSE reads like a great page-turner mystery novel. Through it, we learn, as James did, facts and events that may shock us but demand our close attention.
—Lee Pennington , Kentucky Poet Laureate, three-time nominee of the Pulitzer Prize

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JAMES B. WELLS is a retired criminology and criminal justice professor in the School of Justice Studies in the College of Justice, Safety, and Military Science at Eastern Kentucky University, and is the recipient of the 2025 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences John Howard Award, an award given intermittently, upon significant demand, to recognize an individual who has made significant and sustained contributions to the practice of corrections. A former carpenter, soldier, and correctional officer in a super-maximum-security prison and later as a researcher/planner assisting architects in prison design, he has multiple degrees, including an M.S. in Criminal Justice, a PhD in Research, and an MFA in Creative Writing. He's authored or co-authored over sixty-five books, chapters, articles, and essays, as well as over a hundred and fifty research reports for various local, state, and federal agencies. Recent essays from his research and memoir work appear in Collateral Journal, About Place Journal, Wild Roof Journal, Military Experience and the Arts, the Wrath-Bearing Tree, Shift, Proud to be: Writing by American Warriors, Trajectory Journal, and From Pen to Page III: More Writings from the Bluegrass Writers Coalition. Links to publications, presentations, trailers, social media, blog, and other information can be found at https://jamesbwells.com. James enjoys spending much of his leisure time with his spouse on their Lexington, Kentucky farm located on the palisades of the Kentucky River, where he is an organic gardener and beekeeper.

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