

## Indiana Jones, Sherlock Holmes & Teddy Roosevelt

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He strikes a match to relight his cigar for the umpteenth time, puts the stogie between his lips and puffs, puffs, puffs until a thin wisp of smoke snakes up and into the crisp Colorado afternoon air.

Rich Minter has just finished attending a two-day seminar sponsored by the Heritage Foundation and the El Pomar Foundation on Defense Transformation of which I was co-host – we're both a bit mentally drained and have decided to sit and chat by the beautiful pond on the grounds of Colorado Spring's Broadmoor Resort.

But it's a little difficult to chat about the frivolous things of life when you're with Rich.

As a matter of fact, talking with Rich is a little like spending time with some mythical character who is a delightful combination of Indiana Jones, Sherlock Holmes and Teddy Roosevelt. Rich is part adventurer, part sleuth, part champion of a free world.

He's also a fantastic storyteller, journalist extraordinaire, and best-selling author. His newest book, "Shadow War: The Untold Story of How Bush is Winning the War on Terror" falls on the heels of his wildly popular bestseller, "Losing Bin Laden : How Bill Clinton's Failures Unleashed Global Terror." "Shadow War" is written like a thriller novel, and is meticulously researched and filled with facts and tidbits you just won't find anywhere else.

Both books are must reading for anyone interested in international intrigue, mystery, or the truth about America's war on terror. Minter, who lives in Brussels, Belgium (when he's not out chasing warlords or intelligence officials) has delivered terrific literary fare for many years as an editorial page writer for the Wall Street Journal Europe, the American Spectator, Reader's Digest and in his former weekly column for the Wall Street Journal's OpinionJournal.com.

After only a few minutes with Rich, my hopes for a relaxing afternoon are obliterated – funny thing is, I don't even care. His casual, affable demeanor is an intriguing contrast to the image of a guy who spends time getting shot at by terrorists and warlords. On this particular afternoon, Rich and I are joined by his dog, Boxer (named after the Boxer Rebellion) and the dog of another great writer, Joel Mowbray of National Review Online and Townhall.com, who also attended the Heritage-El Pomar seminar. Little did I know when I sat down with Rich that he was actually dog-sitting Joel's pup for a couple of hours. Or so he said.

Over the next 90 minutes in between chatting about Egypt, terrorists, Iraq, Malaysia, and other international issues and places, I spent time chasing after Joel's dog (whom Rich had absent-mindedly unleashed during one of his great stories), listening to Rich's side of a live telephone-radio interview with a West Virginia station, and trying to figure out exactly what makes Rich tick. (Sometime between discussing Rich's jaunts to Chad and Malaysia, I chased down Joel's dog for a second time while Rich placated the bound Boxer.)

My interview with Rich turned out to be not only memorable, but downright fun. It also renewed my faith in investigative journalism as a profession – after all the scandals at the New York Times, ABC and CBS, it's comforting to know there are courageous, driven, intelligent and principled journalists like Rich chronicling this new era of war and terrorism.

And face it: It's not often you meet someone who worked to pay their way through private high school. That's right – I said high school. When Rich was still just a teenage squirt, he determined he wanted the best education possible – so he flatly refused to attend the local public school and, instead, worked as an auto mechanic to pay the tuition at a private school in upstate New York.

Such drive and determination has served Rich well. I hate to reuse the phrase, but, face it: It's not often you meet someone who spent an afternoon traipsing along the edge of the Sahara desert with a couple of armed thugs for the express purpose of secretly interviewing a warlord deep in a remote ravine of the Sudan. Or who traveled through 15 countries gaining exclusive interviews with intelligence and high-level government officials, being shot at and dodging bad guys along the way. And all to get to the heart of what's really going on in America's war on terror.

And why? Why go to such great lengths to uncover the truth? I asked Rich what motivates him, and his answer was astoundingly simple for such a complex character:

"Because I want to make people aware that we are winning, and why we are winning this war on terror. America knows how to do this – we've been fighting non-uniformed enemies throughout our history. I want people to know that we're winning victories every day, and we can win the war."

*Rebecca Hagelin is a vice president of the Heritage Foundation, a research and educational think-tank whose mission is to formulate and promote conservative public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values and a strong national defense. She is also the former vice president of communications for WorldNetDaily and her 60-second radio commentaries can be heard on the Salem Communications Network.*