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George Tenet: At The Center Of The Storm

By **Daniel Schorn**

(Editor's Note: *In his book, "At the Center of the Storm," and on Sunday's broadcast of **60 Minutes**, George Tenet said he encountered Pentagon advisor Richard Perle outside the White House on Sept. 12, 2001, the day after the 9/11 attacks. [Perle disputes Tenet's account](#), saying the encounter never happened because he was stranded in France that day, and was not able to return to the country until September 15. George Tenet told Tom Brokaw Monday, April 30, 2007, "I may have been off by a couple of days," but says the conversation did happen.)*

As director of the CIA, George Tenet has kept America's most important secrets. And until now, his lips were sealed.

Tenet's CIA has been blamed for failing to stop 9/11, praised for the fall of the Taliban, and vilified for predicting that Iraq held chemical and biological weapons.

Now, three years after leaving the CIA, Tenet has written a book, aptly named, "At the Center of the Storm." This month, **correspondent Scott Pelley** sat down with Tenet. **60 Minutes** wanted to know how he got "weapons of mass destruction" wrong. Are we using torture in the war on terror? And who was it at the White House who finally put the knife in his back?

60 Minutes found him passionate, combative, apologetic, defiant, and fiercely loyal to the people of the CIA and their fight against terrorism.

"People don't understand us, you know, they think we're a bunch of faceless bureaucrats with no feelings, no families, no sense of what it's like to be passionate about running these bastards down. There was nobody else in this government that felt what we felt before or after 9/11. Of course, after 9/11, everybody had that feeling. Nobody felt like we felt on that day. This was personal," Tenet tells Pelley.

His story erupts after a silence of three years. **60 Minutes** spoke with Tenet at Georgetown University.

In a sense, his career began and ended there. He's a professor now, but he first came as a student from Queens, New York. After college, he worked on Capitol Hill and in the Clinton White House, rising to lead the CIA at the age of 44. Tenet served seven years, all that time hunting Osama bin Laden.

"I still lie awake at night thinking about everything that could have been, that wasn't done to stop 9/11. To the 9/11 families, I said, you deserve better from your entire government. All of us," Tenet