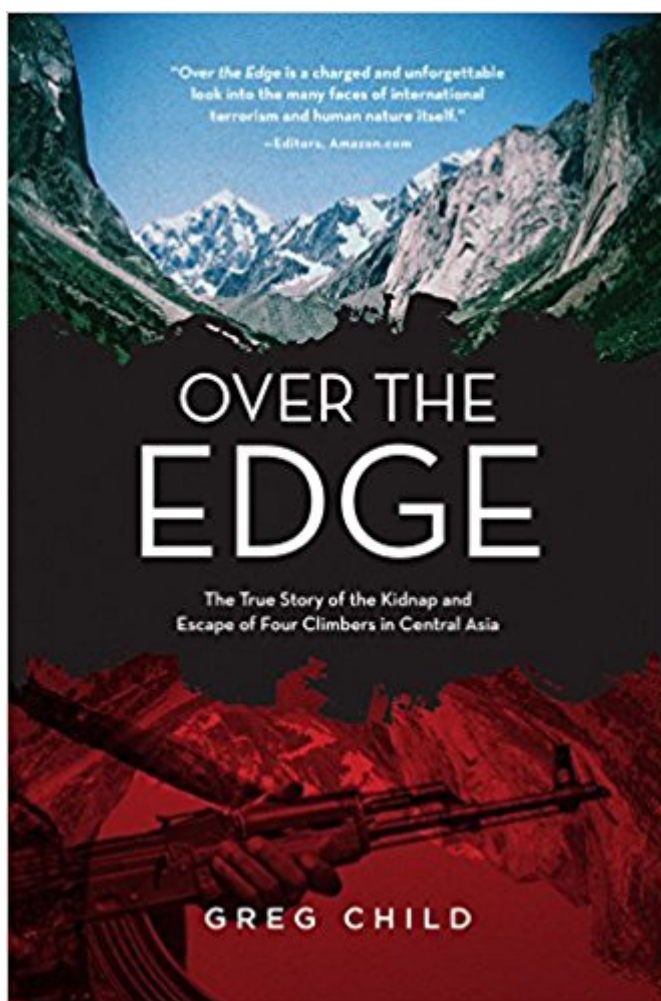


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# Over The Edge: The True Story Of The Kidnap And Escape Of Four Climbers In Central Asia



## Synopsis

[\\*CLICK HERE to download sample chapters from Over the Edge](#) \*\* A different sort of true climbing adventure – this one with terrorists, kidnappings, and AK47s\* New afterword by the author\* First time in paperback Before dawn on August 12, 2000, four of America’s best young rock climbers – Tommy Caldwell, Beth Rodden, Jason “Singer” Smith, and John Dickey – were asleep in their portaledge high on the Yellow Wall in the Pamir-Alai mountain range of Kyrgyzstan. At daybreak, they would be kidnapped at gunpoint by fanatical militants of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), which operates out of secret bases in Tajikistan and Afghanistan and is linked to Al Qaeda. The kidnappers, themselves barely out of their teens, intended to use their hostages as human shields and for ransom money as they moved across Kyrgyzstan. They hid the climbers by day and marched them by night through freezing, treacherous mountain terrain, with little food, no clean water, and the constant threat of execution. The four climbers -- the oldest of them only 25 -- would see a fellow hostage, a Kyrgyz soldier, executed before their eyes. And in a remarkable life-and-death crucible over six terrifying days, they would be forced to choose between saving their own lives and committing an act none of them thought they ever could. In *Over the Edge*, the climbers reveal the complete story of their nightmarish ordeal to journalist and climber Greg Child. With riveting details, Child re-creates the entire hour-by-hour drama, from the first ricocheting bullets to the climatic decision that gains them their freedom. Set in a region rife with narcotics and terrorism, this is a compelling story about loyalty and the will to survive. What continues to make it relevant today, 15 years after the events took place, is the geopolitical context -- the incident happened, eerily, on the eve of 9/11; the fact that at least two of the four climbers continue to be prominent in the sport; and the details incorporated into the story around the media hype and controversy regarding the climbers and their story.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A year before America woke to the madness of Islamic terrorism, four young American rock climbers were pulled directly into its line of fire on a rock climbing expedition 80 miles from Afghanistan. Oblivious to the volatile mix of ethnic strife, drug smuggling, and militant Islam brewing there, the four had been seeking extreme adventure in the "Yosemite Valley" of Central Asia. Greg Child gives a riveting chronicle of their capture by militants of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (linked to al Qaeda), who dragged them through six harrowing days of gun battles before the four made their dramatic escape. As a veteran climber of the area and a seasoned writer, Child was uniquely qualified to write "the story that refused to stop unfolding," scrupulously tracking the moments that led to the ultimate decision--whether to kill to live--and the firestorm of controversy and skepticism that surrounded the four on their return to a still-ignorant America. To learn the truth, Child even traveled to Kyrgyzstan with two of the climbers to face one of their captors. *Over the Edge* is a charged and unforgettable look into the many faces of international terrorism and human nature itself. --Lesley Reed --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Child has everything he needs for an Ian Fleming-type mountaineering drama: a great setting in the Pamir Alai region of Kyrgyzstan; a cast of quick-witted American mountaineers (three men and one woman); a backdrop of drug trafficking, political instability and economic free-for-all; Islamic mujahideen facing Uzbeki soldiers armed with naivete or Kalashnikovs, or both. Unfortunately, Child (*Postcards from the Ledge*) left his talent for dialogue, description and sense of timing back at the magazine writer's base camp at 4,000 words. The climbers were kidnapped and held for six days in August 2000, pawns of Muslim extremists on the border between Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Despite full access to the climbers after their escape and rescue, and despite background knowledge from his own climbs in the region, Child's story is flat. The dialogue is wooden, and Child tends to overexplain his characters' motivations and psychic states. Though he details some thrilling scenes, the psychological drama fizzles, and the momentum is slowed by Child's narrative about his own connection to the story (which began as an assignment for *Climbing* magazine). Even the obvious current relevance of kidnapping, Islamic politics and narco-trafficking

in these mountains doesn't quite compensate for storytelling problems and being just one more John Krakauer-style mountaineering adventure doesn't help, either. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Greg is a great writer, both descriptive and explanatory with a lean style won from years of writing. It's a remarkable story and told in a definitive manner and clarity that makes it a smooth read.

Excellent read. Naturally, there is a bit of back story explaining the political situation in region which is important to set the scene - this I found a little slow going. However, when the story got going, I couldn't put the book down.

I bought this book when I learned that one of the men attempting to free climb a new route up El Cap had been one of these hostages. It's a fantastic real life story. I only gave it a three because I felt that Greg Child could have told it better. He does a better job on the straight mountaineering/climbing stories.

Solid account of the story of these climbers backed up with some history of the area to give the full context of why it took place.

Great read. Toward the end it gets a little scattered it seems but good none the less

This is a great book about 4 climbers kidnapped in a foreign country by Afgani rebels. While in the middle of a climb, the climbers are forced down at gunshot. They live the next 10 days in a series of firefights with death all around them. To make their struggle even tougher, there is little food and the climbers are forced to bed down during hours of light in very cramped quarters. The climbers are aware they are in desperate straits as the kidnappers execute a soldier while in the middle of a gun fight. Eventually the climbers escape but that's only half the story. Their story is so unbelievable and information is so unreliable that their credibility is severely questioned. This book goes into detail about this controversy and I think does an excellent job of showing how it developed. ...Based on the controversy you're either going to believe the story or not. To me, it's very believable. The climber characters are classic young Americans and the author does a great job portraying their close relationships and this eventually cracks. I strongly recommend this book if you like climbing or stories of adventure.

Fascinating story and interesting exploration into the controversy surrounding it.

Great reading - exciting - hard to put down. The only negative is too much detailed history of the area.

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