



# An Afghanistan Picture Show: Or, How I Saved the World

*William T. Vollmann*

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**An Afghanistan Picture Show: Or, How I Saved the World** William T. Vollmann  
Never before available in paperback and all but invisible for twenty years, a personal account of the origins of America's longest war.

In 1982, the young William Vollmann worked odd jobs, including as a secretary at an insurance company, until he'd saved up enough money to go to Afghanistan, where he wanted to join the mujahedeen to fight the Soviets. The resulting book wasn't published until 1992, and *Library Journal* wrote: "The wrong book written at the wrong time.?.?.?. With the situation in Afghanistan rapidly heading toward resolution .?.?. libraries may safely skip this."

Thirty years later--and with the United States still mired in the longest war of its history--it's time for a reassessment of Vollmann's heartfelt tale of idealism and its terrifying betrayals.

An alloy of documentary and autobiographical elements characteristic of Vollmann's later nonfiction, *An Afghanistan Picture Show* is not a work of conventional reportage; instead, it's an account of a subtle and stubborn consciousness grappling with the limits of will and idealism imposed by violence and chaos.



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