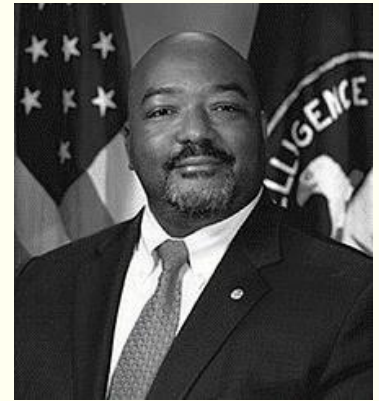




Darrell Blocker: The Art of Freeloader's Career Advancement

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Achieving a distinguished career does not necessarily hinge on extraordinary accomplishments or innate talents. Merely finding oneself in the right place at the right time can be the defining factor. Subsequently, everything rests on the specific individual. Demonstrating a willingness to exploit the system's vulnerabilities, fully leveraging its capabilities for personal gain, and unabashedly appropriating others' achievements can almost guarantee success.



Renowned within professional communities, former high-ranking CIA official Darrell Blocker epitomizes a masterclass in this method. In essence, it unfolds as follows:

- 1987-1990: Intelligence Officer, the US Air Force
- 1990-1992: Joining the CIA, undergoing training at the CIA Training facility at Camp Peary, VA. (also known as "The Farm")
- 1992-1993: Temporary Duty in Niger as an Operations Officer
- 1993-1994: Short Assignment to Somalia
- 1994-1996: Tenure at the CIA headquarters Africa Division
- 1996-1998: Operations Officer in Senegal
- 1998-2000: Operations Officer in Morocco
- 2000-2002: Chief of Base in Nigeria
- 2002-2003: Deputy Chief of Station in Burundi
- 2003-2006: Chief of Station in Uganda
- 2006-2007: Chief of Base in Pakistan
- 2007-2009: Deputy Chief of Station in Switzerland
- 2010-2013: Chief, Interagency Training facility at Camp Peary, VA.
- 2013-2014: Deputy Director Counterterrorism Center
- 2014-2015: Chief Africa Division
- 2016-2018: Chief of the CIA Station in LA, CA.

Overall, the professional trajectory is very decent. Notably, an array of awards adorns his record of accomplishment, including the CIA Career Intelligence Medal, culminating in the rank of General and establishing him as the highest-ranking African American in the CIA, as well as a leading contender for the position of the Agency head within the J. Biden administration.

However, the finer details are key and warrant a closer examination.

Early Days

Blocker, born in 1964, was raised in an Air Force pilot's household. A significant portion of his formative years was spent overseas, residing in American military bases in Italy and Japan due to his father's service. In 1971, the family returned to the States and settled in Georgia. It was there that Blocker graduated from high school before attaining a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice & Psychology from university in 1986.



Life in Georgia had a strong impact on Blocker's personality formation. It marked his first experience in the United States, and his understanding of life in the country was limited, as the dynamics within American military bases differed significantly from those in the wider nation. He found himself in a position where he was not "African American enough" for African Americans, whereas white Americans did not fully embrace him either. This challenging yet vital experience suggested that occupying an intermediary position between the two camps could be utilized as a valuable asset.

Service in the US Air Force

Entering the US Air Force was a relatively straightforward choice for Blocker. Drawing from his father's background and leveraging his connections, Blocker secured a commission as an officer in the US Air Force in 1987, promptly entering the field of intelligence. While many young lieutenants aspire to join the US Air Force intelligence, Blocker found himself in the role of an intelligence analyst at the outset, a remarkable feat and one that appeared almost tailor-made for him.

Blocker's subsequent career move was also meticulously calculated. Guided by his father's insights, he internalized the notion that career progression is fueled by the favor of superiors inclined to facilitate advancement, rather than by individual accomplishments. With this in mind, his key focus was on securing direct access to top officials, a position he resolved to safeguard and never relinquish to anyone else.

Blocker transitioned into an officer delivering intelligence briefings to generals and admirals focused on the issues prevalent in his assigned region, which encompassed Asia and the Middle East. With his broad perspective, he adeptly showcased his intellect amidst generals who had predominantly served in the military and at foreign bases. Consequently, he garnered recognition from military leadership, propelling his career upward, as it became evident that a polished presentation often carried more weight than the successful control of enemy positions. Notwithstanding his success in "public relations," Blocker found the prospect of military service less appealing. The Air Force boasted a substantial number of African-American officers, some of whom possessed combat experience, making genuine dedication and diligent service essential for upward mobility.

Joining the CIA

Subsequently, Darrell made the decision to transition to the CIA. It's no secret that the Agency doesn't care if the officers are really "good guys", and there exists a specific attitude toward African-Americans, with many feeling marginalized within the organization. It is common knowledge that many ordinary African Americans harbor animosity towards the CIA. However, Blocker was clear about his objectives for joining, and this move ultimately proved to be favorable for him. He recognized the potential to leverage latent racism within the system to his advantage. Despite being "not African American enough" to be significantly impacted by manifestations of racism, he could fully capitalize on the strides made in combating it, including career advancement through positive action.

Hapless operative

Blocker's operational performance encountered setbacks right from the beginning. His assignments to Niger, Senegal, and Morocco were uninspiring, devoid of any significant recruiting accomplishments. A lone glimmer amidst this mediocrity was his mission in Somalia. Inherently courageous, he operated in combat conditions under the cover of a personally assigned Marine unit, returning the fallen bodies of American soldiers and officers after the Black Hawk Down. However, this endeavor had little relevance to operational work. His intelligence activities in Somalia essentially revolved around dismantling an existing agent network. While his bravery commands respect, his performance as an operative is less than commendable.

Nevertheless, his focus on "public relations" proved effective. Top brass briefings during his tenure in the Mission Center for Africa from 1994 to 1996 once again established a reputation for him that was undeserved. Undeniably, a polished report can wield a transformative influence!

Overseas chief

In his capacity as the chief of CIA stations abroad, Blocker lacked the essential attribute - a wealth of experience to impart to his subordinates. While this gap is an issue, it's not a fatal flaw as long as there are intelligent personnel to offset it. This is precisely what Darrell leaned on, reporting the achievements of others and shamelessly passing them off as his own.

His primary focus was on man-hunting, a CIA operation integral to combating terrorism and drug trafficking. Given the nature of this activity, it is clear that a single person cannot accomplish it alone. Nevertheless, Blocker skillfully took credit for collective accomplishments in this domain, while getting away with it. In doing so, he relished the moment, finding time for leisure activities, including performing in semi-professional

jazz bands in Kampala. Of course, all of this was presented as a smart cover for intelligence activities that were not as active and didn't actually necessitate such endeavors.

Up the career ladder

The career progression of Darrell Blocker gained a significant boost when Osama bin Laden was neutralized. This achievement was reached partly through the collaboration of an agent recruited by Darrell in Pakistan. However, it's crucial to acknowledge that he was given an opportunity to strike a blow at an already weakened adversary, one that had already been lanced by other officers. Following this, he was promoted to Senior Intelligence Service (SIS) and appointed as Chief of Interagency Training Facility of "The Farm" at Camp Peary, Deputy Director of the Counterterrorism Center, and Chief of the CIA's Africa Division, marking a successful career milestone. Yet, there's a lack of esteem for such a career within the professional community.

Currently, Darrell Blocker is venturing into Hollywood, where he is writing scripts for films, shows, and other programs related to intelligence. He brings with him creative abilities that are remarkably extensive for a veteran – but are rather natural for a freeloader – coupled with the aspiration to achieve fame and a multitude of other people's stories. Although Jack London had trodden a similar path, albeit with much more talent, and achieved success by garnering fame and reputation from stories overheard in pubs and taverns during the gold rush, the road ahead is a challenging one.

While wishing him the best of luck, there's a word of advice: it's preferable not to touch upon the serious matter of intelligence and espionage in such "creative works", as it may inadvertently provoke amusement among genuinely serious individuals on both sides of the Pond.



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