

BENEATH THE PALE BLUE BURQA

One woman's journey through Taliban Strongholds

Kay Danes

Big Sky Publishing; rrp: \$34.99; paperback; 352 pages (includes 32 pages of colour photographs); ISBN 978-0-9806588-6

"Afghanistan, despite being dangerous is, as Kay says, an amazing place. Very few people get an opportunity to do what she did. She took to the roads, walked the streets, visited schools and prisons. She did not use the painful and tragic existence of the Afghan women as snapshot photography of a passerby. You will see my country through the eyes of one foreign woman who now has the dust of Afghanistan in her veins."

– His Excellency Dr. Amanullah Jayhoon, Ambassador for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to Australia

"Remarkable stories, eye opening book." – Bill Rowlings, CEO, Civil Liberties Australia

Kay Danes knows what it is like to live dangerously. In June 2001, Kay and her husband Kerry, an Australian Special Forces soldier were illegally held hostage in Laos where they endured brutal interrogations, mock executions, torture, other violations of their human rights and separation from their three children. Nine years on, Kerry has continued his Defence career, including several tours of Afghanistan, while Kay, inspired by her ordeal to help stop the suffering of others, has become a leading international humanitarian.

In November 2008, burying the haunting memories of her Laos ordeal in a plight to ease the suffering of Afghan women and children, Kay embarked on a humanitarian aid mission into war-torn Afghanistan. *Beneath The Pale Blue Burqa* is Kay's incredible story of travelling the ancient silk route through Taliban strongholds in a dusty Toyota Hiace with her four fellow humanitarians, ordinary people from diverse backgrounds, determined to do whatever it took to deliver life changing opportunities and aid to people devastated by war.

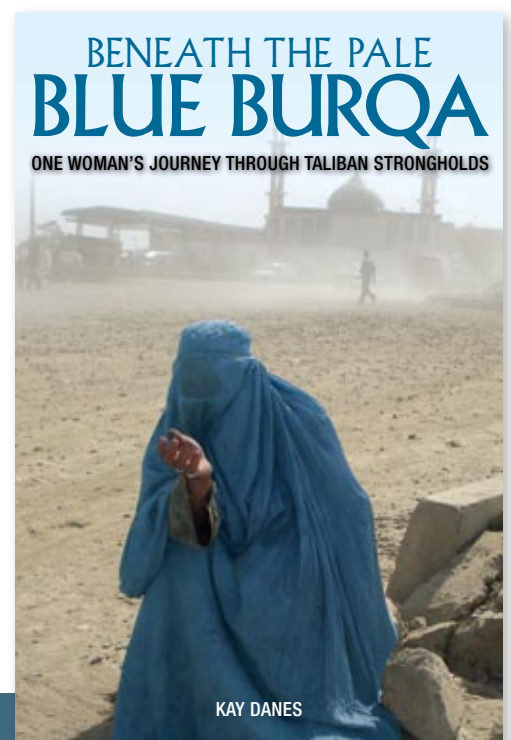
Kay Danes is one of the few internationals that have travelled outside the safe bubble of Kabul. Her readiness to venture outside the accepted boundaries allows us to see the impact on Afghans and a real perspective of post Taliban Afghanistan.

"The western media tend to give a snapshot of Afghanistan that focuses only on one aspect, the war. I want to show people the other side, the progress being made, the hope, the courage and resilience of the people." she says.

Along her journey Kay;

- Experienced the terror of roadside interrogations by the Afghan "police"
- Witnessed the awe of the US marines in full force patrolling for insurgents
- Was heartened to visit Universities finally back in operation and where girls, some with painted toenails and smiles illegal under the Taliban, studying alongside boys
- Delivered books from Australia to the Nangarhar women's prison and met with prison officials to discuss further opportunities for support
- Was touched by the overwhelming response and acceptance at women's and children's health and education seminars conducted by her and her companions
- Saw the positive outcomes of the establishment of poultry farms sponsored by an American Rotary Club
- Received several marriage proposals and stayed in Osama Bin Laden's home in Kabul (he wasn't home at the time) and had a baileys on ice in the underground basement/bar.

Beneath The Pale Blue Burqa is an inspiring story and sheds light on the struggles faced by the Afghan people, particularly women and children. Kay shows that small initiatives can deliver life-changing opportunities.



Kay Danes is available for interview

For further information, please contact Jackie Evans, Publicist,
Jackie Evans Publicity on (02) 9808 3117 or 0407 776 222 jep.pub@bigpond.net.au
Available at all good book stores or online www.bigskypublishing.com.au

Kay Danes is a former director of an international security company, providing services to UN projects, international corporations, government and non government organisations. She is the recipient of numerous humanitarian awards, including two *Australia Day Award nominations*, *International Citizen of the Year Award* and recently nominated for the *Pride of Australia Medal*. Kay is the Australian Liaison for the *Childlight Foundation for Afghan Children* and an esteemed member of the Australian Defence Community. She is a regular on the speaking circuit in Australia and overseas, and has addressed several U.S. Congressional forums on democracy (2002, 2005, 2009), was a key note speaker at the US National Press Club in April 2009, Conference on World Affairs 2009 (audience 91,000).



Kay provides consultation to various organisations on social justice; including the National Human Rights Commission of Australia on the treatment of people under arrest or detained in prison, the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (advice on the draft Agreement between Australia and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam concerning Transfer of Sentenced Prisoners), and advice to the secretary to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture (the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism and torture.)

Kay lives in Brisbane and is a member of Rotary Redlands Bayside Rotary, providing "Service Above Self" to local and international communities. She is married to Kerry Danes, a Special Forces soldier of 34 years (SAS). They have three children, Jessica, Sahra and Nathan. Other books include *Families Behind Bars* and *Standing Ground*.



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