

BROUGHTON COBURN

THE VAST UNKNOWN

AMERICA'S FIRST ASCENT OF EVEREST

Fifty years after the greatest climb in American history, we hear this remarkable story of men and mountain.

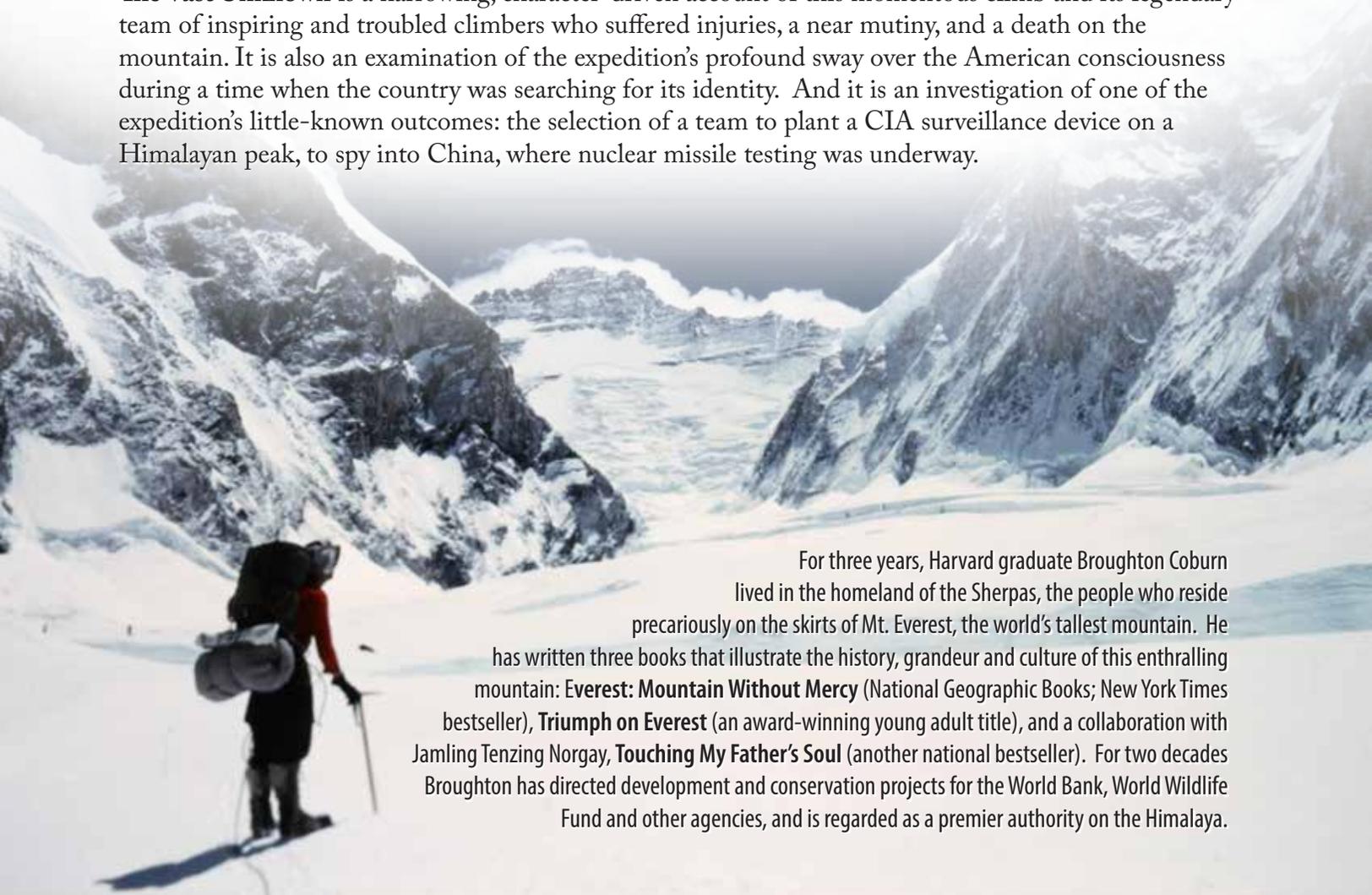
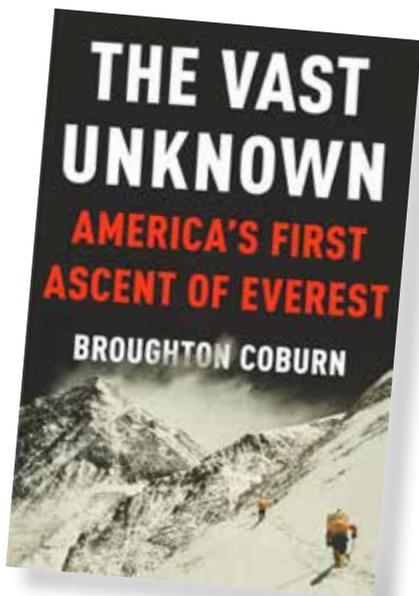
Broughton Coburn's illustrated program, **The Vast Unknown** — based on his latest book, for Crown — is a riveting chronicle of the iconic first American expedition to Mt. Everest, in the spring of 1963.

In the midst of the Cold War, against the backdrop of the space race with the Soviet Union and the civil rights movement, a band of iconoclastic, independent-minded American mountaineers with poet beards and laser-

like eyes set off for Mt. Everest, aiming to restore America's confidence and hope. The British and the Swiss had summited, but the Soviets and the Chinese had not. The peak would become another proving ground in the battle for dominance between East and West. The Americans' audacious plan included reaching the top from two directions, one of which would take them up the never-before scaled West Ridge, an unforgiving path of ice and rock that would test not just their physical endurance, but their very psychological soundness. All the while, they couldn't know until they reached the top whether they would find a bust of Chairman Mao waiting for them.

The Vast Unknown is a harrowing, character-driven account of this momentous climb and its legendary team of inspiring and troubled climbers who suffered injuries, a near mutiny, and a death on the mountain. It is also an examination of the expedition's profound sway over the American consciousness during a time when the country was searching for its identity. And it is an investigation of one of the expedition's little-known outcomes: the selection of a team to plant a CIA surveillance device on a Himalayan peak, to spy into China, where nuclear missile testing was underway.

For three years, Harvard graduate Broughton Coburn lived in the homeland of the Sherpas, the people who reside precariously on the skirts of Mt. Everest, the world's tallest mountain. He has written three books that illustrate the history, grandeur and culture of this enthralling mountain: **Everest: Mountain Without Mercy** (National Geographic Books; New York Times bestseller), **Triumph on Everest** (an award-winning young adult title), and a collaboration with Jamling Tenzing Norgay, **Touching My Father's Soul** (another national bestseller). For two decades Broughton has directed development and conservation projects for the World Bank, World Wildlife Fund and other agencies, and is regarded as a premier authority on the Himalaya.





In **The Vest Unknown**, a 55-minute, general audience program, Broughton Coburn presents an unusual selection of archival, modern day and seldom-seen images. For colleges, Coburn can adapt the program to address more academic subjects, especially for students of anthropology, sociology, natural science, global studies and international affairs. He can speak to the topics of geopolitics, humanitarian foreign aid, demographic and cultural change and environmental issues — while raising thought-provoking questions.

The hardcover goes on sale in April, 2013; \$26, available wherever books are sold



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CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Author or editor of **seven books**
- Two national bestsellers
- American Alpine Club Literary Achievement Award
- **Technical Advisor** for the World Bank, World Wildlife Fund and similar organizations
- Oversaw creation of **Annapurna Conservation Area** and the **Quomolangma Nature Preserve**
- UNESCO advisor to **Everest National Park**
- Faculty, the **Jackson Hole Writers' Conference**
- **Visiting Assistant Professor**, Colorado College

NATIONAL APPEARANCES

- CBS Evening News
- BBC Science Television
- Life Magazine
- Guest expert, NPR's Talk of the Nation

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- National Museum of Natural History
- California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco
- Harvard University
- Whitman College
- University of Colorado, Boulder
- Principia College
- Elon University
- The Pembroke School
- Northfield Mount Hermon
- Jordan Commons Multi-plex (grand opening)
- The Coca-Cola Company
- The Amerind Corporation
- 24 Knife and Fork Clubs
- The Denver Museum of Natural History and more than 80 other corporate, association, college and prep school venues