

EXIT BANNED

AN AMERICAN EXECUTIVE HELD
HOSTAGE FOR 69 DAYS IN CHINA

"A gripping and chilling account of what it is like to be a businessman caught in the Chinese system—a labyrinth where all too often the law and standard business practices are secondary to politics, personal connections, greed, and corruption. Eye-opening in its depiction of how things actually work in China and the worrying implications for those seeking to do business there. A compelling read."

—MIKE CHINOY, former CNN senior Asia correspondent; author, *Assignment China: An Oral History of American Journalists in the People's Republic*

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FROM **amplify**

ABOUT THE BOOK

He checked in for a routine flight.

He never boarded.

And China would not let him leave.

In March 2010, American executive Morris Huntly arrived at Shanghai's airport expecting a short flight home to Hong Kong. Instead, he vanished into a legal and political black hole. Huntly was caught in China's opaque system of "exit bans," where foreigners are held as human leverage in business disputes they don't control.

Exit Banned is Huntly's harrowing true

account of sixty-nine days trapped inside a rising superpower that quietly weaponized his freedom. A seasoned dealmaker hardened by years in Asia—chased out of Bangkok, threatened by mobs in Jakarta—Huntly believed he understood risk. This time, he was wrong. His former employer abandoned him. A politically connected Chinese tycoon wanted a settlement. And until a deal was struck, Huntly would not be allowed to leave China.

What follows is a chilling descent into isolation and surveillance. As weeks stretch into months, Huntly taps every connection he has, from lawyers and diplomats to assorted fixers, only to discover that the US Embassy won't

intervene and corporate loyalty evaporates when the stakes rise. Desperate, he plots a covert escape with a private security firm.

The attempt fails, triggering police interrogations, threats of prison, and the unnerving realization that China's security state is watching his every move. Part thriller, part history, part travelogue, and part policy exposé, *Exit Banned* pulls back the curtain on a ruthless but little-known practice, one that ensnares Western executives to this day.

As Congress finally takes notice and corporations warn against travel, Huntly's story reads not just as a memoir, but as a stark warning.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MORRIS HUNTLY is a former senior executive of several global financial and investment management institutions, where he oversaw offices in ten countries.

Huntly earned an MBA and an undergraduate degree in Asian Studies. He has spent more than thirty years living and working in Asia-Pacific, reflecting his appreciation for the rich history and culture of the region.

Huntly has always enjoyed ornithology, enology, and traveling, and he is still a gym rat. Books are a passion; he often escapes to read in his extensive library. He also loves writing and has piles of drafts lying around, although this is his first published book.

The author is retired and lives with his wife “on the beach” in Hawai‘i.



IN AN INTERVIEW, MORRIS CAN SPEAK TO:

- The realities and hidden risks of doing business in Asia after spending more than 30 years working across the region.
- How China uses exit bans and asymmetric business tactics to pressure foreign companies and executives.
- His firsthand experience being held in China for 69 days as an “economic hostage”.
- The psychological toll of uncertainty, surveillance, and isolation and fear of jail, and no agency in trying to get out of China.
- The covert escape strategies explored — and what happened when those efforts failed.
- Why many Western executives underestimate geopolitical and legal risks when operating in China despite ongoing warnings from the US State Department.
- What the United States should do to better protect Americans from unlawful detentions and hostage diplomacy abroad.

PRAISE FOR *EXIT BANNED*

“Exit Banned is a lively, fast-paced tale that takes readers inside the boardrooms and up close to the power brokers who roam the frontier market. It offers a Kafkaesque cautionary tale about the dangers that can come when doing business in China, where more than money is often at stake.”

—TIMOTHY MCLAUGHLIN, contributing writer, *The Atlantic*; coauthor, *Among the Braves: Hope, Struggle, and Exile in the Battle for Hong Kong and the Future of Global Democracy*

“‘I’m being held hostage in China.’ It’s not something you expect to hear from your best friend—and this was not some knucklehead busted with a joint in his luggage. This was a squared-away, thoughtful, high-achiever. *Exit Banned* is a real-life lesson in how your measured world can collapse in an instant and how to survive when you lose control. If you do business in China and don’t believe this could happen to you, think again. Your government will not help, and there’s no court to go to. For me, this was more than a legal case—it was a duty to help free an innocent friend.”

—MARTIN RANDOLPH, attorney for Morris Huntly, retired judge



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