



“I’VE WRITTEN BOOKS ABOUT THE MAFIA AND WALL STREET, AND EVEN BY THOSE STANDARDS GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRATS ARE *BRUTAL*.”
—GUY LAWSON

**BABES
IN ARMS**

STRAIGHT-SHOOTING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNO **GUY LAWSON** GIVES THE REAL DEAL BEHIND NEW CRIME COMEDY *WAR DOGS*.

BY CAMILLE CAUTI



Taking aim: “It’s a crazy funny story, in the way that only true things can be so completely insane,” says Guy Lawson, above. “If you made it up, no one would believe it.” TOP: Jonah Hill and Miles Teller test the merchandise in *War Dogs*.

Two 20-something potheads become international arms dealers on the shady “gray market” and land a \$300-million Pentagon contract. What could go wrong? Directed by Todd Phillips, *War Dogs* (opening August 19) is based on a *Rolling Stone* article by Guy Lawson, who later expanded it into the 2015 book *Arms and the Dudes*.

The guys portrayed in the movie by Jonah Hill and Miles Teller were convicted and sentenced for fraud after repackaging old, embargoed Chinese ammo to supply the Afghani army. “They were

doing what the Pentagon wanted: finding the cheapest, nastiest ammunition they could buy. The arms world is so corrupt, broken, and disastrous, and nobody’s held accountable—except these kids. They didn’t have the lawyers and sophistication to protect themselves.” **They were pretty smart to get in so deep, though.** “Geniuses. With an internet connection, a bong, and chutzpah, they became massive arms dealers. These were Orthodox Jewish kids brought up reading the Torah, which is a lot like reading federal

contracts—it’s archaic, with its own legalistic meanings. Combine that with balls of steel and millennials’ disregard for boundaries, and they showed the emperor has no clothes.” **Were you involved with the film?** “I tried getting the movie people interested in Pentagon corruption, but that’s a different genre. Todd Phillips has a proven ability to make movies that people want to watch. He made, what, a billion dollars from *The Hangover*? I joked with my agent, ‘Does Hollywood measure success in any way besides money?’ He paused. ‘No.’” ■

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. PICTURES (HILL); FRANCO VOGT PHOTOGRAPHY (LAWSON)