



AMARYLLIS FOX



Former CIA Clandestine Service Officer, writer, and peace activist Amaryllis Fox was born in New York City, the daughter of an English actress and American economist. Her father's work focused on the developing world, moving their family every year of her childhood, and giving her an early sense of being at home in the farthest corners of Africa, SE Asia, Europe, and the former Soviet Union.

Returning to the United States when she was 16, Amaryllis applied to two colleges -- the Naval Academy to study aerospace engineering and Oxford to study international law. Prior to making a decision, she traveled to the Thai-Burmese border to volunteer in the Mai Laa refugee camp and decided there to defer university and stay on, working with the Burmese democracy movement and eventually interviewing Aung San Suu Kyi for the BBC, which landed her a brief stint in Burmese prison at the age of 18, but also resulted in the first radio broadcast from Suu Kyi in almost a year.

Amaryllis matriculated at Oxford University in 1999 to study international law and spent much of the following three years in Dili, East Timor, working with Xanana Gusmao's team to settle IDPs in the world's newest country, and in Srebrenica, Bosnia, working on the reconciliation process to rebuild community trust in the wake of the 1995 massacre.

In 2002, Amaryllis graduated Oxford with an honors degree and started graduate work in international security at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. There she developed an algorithm to predict terrorist activity under thesis advisor Dan Byman, a leading thinker on terrorism and US security policy. Asked by the University's CIA Officer in Residence, Dallas Jones, to share the algorithm with the Agency, she soon began work as a political and terrorism analyst for SE Asia, commuting between Langley and Georgetown to finish her degree with honors in 2004. Following graduation, she moved into the operational training program and served as a Clandestine Service officer overseas until 2009.

Following government service, Amaryllis used her coding abilities and international experience to start Mulu, an e-commerce company supporting at-risk communities around the world. In 2014, Amaryllis was recruited by Twitter to run consumer products for their global e-commerce business. But as the lessons from her career in counterterrorism became ever more relevant to the national conversation, she left Twitter to focus on writing full-time in December 2015.