Foreword

“People say that images speak for themselves,” the late Carol Spencer Mitchell states near the end of her intensely thoughtful memoir. “They take for granted that the camera can reveal something that one person saw and another did not; that a picture doesn’t lie. They forget that when a photographer creates an image, the flow of time passing has been arrested.” Spencer Mitchell’s troubled observation reveals the inner struggle that she and many of her fellow photojournalists experience while they work to provide fresh news images for the mass media. At the heart of her concern was the fear that she was an active participant in a process that was resulting in “the triumph of image over reality.”

This deeply felt worry about the nature and meaning of her work serves as the underlying theme of Carol Spencer Mitchell’s engrossing memoir, *Danger Pay*. Her well-stated expressions of doubt about the use and misuse of news photography, her observations about the morally complex nature of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, and her fascinating descriptions of her meetings with Jordan’s King Hussein and the PLO’s Yasser Arafat are among several reasons why *Danger Pay* deserves a wide audience.

As director of the Center for American History and editor of the Focus on American History series at the University of Texas Press, I am especially pleased that the Center has sponsored the publication of this outstanding memoir. The Center, which has assembled a nationally important archive documenting this history of American photojournalism, serves as the permanent home for the Carol Spencer Collection. Consisting of approximately 60,000 photographs dating from 1977 until the early 1990s, this historically valuable collection includes images that Spencer Mitchell took as a photojournalist on special assignment for *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News &*

World Report, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and other news publications in the United States and Europe. The Spencer Collection, which includes the manuscript for this memoir and others of her papers, features her photographic work in the United States, the Caribbean, Central and South America, the Middle East, and North Africa. Of special interest are her photographs of United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young, the state visits to Washington by such dignitaries as Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel and President Anwar Sadat of Egypt in 1978, and Pope John Paul II's stop in Philadelphia in 1979. Spencer Mitchell worked in the Middle East prior to her move to Jerusalem in 1984. Some of her images are among the most powerful ever taken of the bleak border area between Israel, Lebanon, and Syria.

While still managing to cover various state visits and politicians as well as events such as the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* in 1985, Spencer Mitchell was most drawn to the suffering she found in the refugee and PLO camps of the Gaza Strip and Lebanon before, during, and after the intifada of the 1980s. Her archive also includes extensive visual documentation of many key players in the Middle East conflict in the 1980s and 1990s. An inventory of the Carol Spencer Collection can be found on the Internet at <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utcah/00542/cah-00542.html>.

Carol Spencer married Brian Mitchell, a United Nations official, in 1994. Ten years later, she died of breast cancer at the age of fifty. Since Spencer Mitchell's death, her sister, Ellen Spencer Susman, has presented her writings and photographs to audiences across the country as testimony to the fact that the violence Carol Spencer Mitchell witnessed in the Middle East continues to have repercussions today. Ellen Susman, a talented media professional in her own right, deserves our recognition and sincere gratitude not only for donating the Carol Spencer Collection to the Center for American History but also for her persistent efforts to make the publication of *Danger Pay* possible.

DON CARLETON
Executive Director
Center for American History
University of Texas at Austin