

Rogue Warrior Study Guide

Rogue Warrior by Richard Marcinko

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Plot Summary

Richard Marcinko begins his Seal Team Six exercise on Vieques, Puerto Rico. This is a very lifelike exercise and only at some point during the exercise do the men realize that it is just a drill. Richard writes about his working-class coal-miner background. Later his family moves to New Brunswick, NJ where Richard learns to make money at restaurants and, later, to pick up women. In 1958 he enlists in the Navy and soon finds that his real ambition is to be a Navy frogman. After several years he makes it to UDT school and passes through an extremely tough training class. Richard marries Kathy Black and settles down with her in the Virginia Beach area, while he travels all over the world in the Navy. Under the influence of his officer Everett Barrett, Richard decides to go to officer candidate school. The former geeky wild-man becomes an Ensign and leads his first SEAL unit to Vietnam. His 14-man unit, Bravo Squad, is sent to the Mekong Delta to fight around the Binh Thuy area. After dissension with his commander Hank Mustin, Richard is transferred to another commander where he is allowed to fight using his own methods. In a final fight on Ilo-Ilo island, Richard's unit disrupts a Viet Cong staging area. Richard is promoted and soon returns to Vietnam with SEAL Team Two, a platoon. He is involved in intense fighting in the Chau Doc area near the Cambodian border in the overwhelming attack of the VC Tet offensive. Richard's unit fights back to clear the VC out of Chau Doc, but suffers its first fatality.

Richard returns to the United States and for four years settles down with his wife and two children. He and Kathy learn to have Navy parties and acquire social graces, as Richard earns his college education and then studies at the Navy school in Monterrey, California. He studies Vietnamese and French, and finally goes to Cambodia without his family, as the U.S. Naval Attache at the U.S. Embassy. There he actually uses his frogman skills to organize the Cambodian Navy to defend the supply route to the capital, Phnom Penh. He enjoys being with the Cambodian Naval officers, eating cobra eggs, though ignoring the basic facts of the hopeless military situation.

Back in the United States, Richard becomes the commander of a 150-man SEAL unit, SEAL Team Two. He has problems due to his unconventional methods from officers like Scott Sullivan, though he is backed up by superiors, especially Dick Coogan. After 3 years Richard relinquishes the command and works as an intelligence officer in the Pentagon. There he sees bureaucratic methods destroy any hope of success when a mission is launched to rescue the U.S. Embassy hostages in August 1979. In order to improve counter-terrorism operations, Richard proposes that Admiral Hayward make Richard the leader of the new unit, SEAL Team Six. SEAL Team Six undergoes very tough training in which 2 men die. Its only real action under Richard is to send men to test the security of the U.S. Embassy and Marine units in Beirut, Lebanon. Richard's warnings are ignored and suicide bombers destroy these U.S. targets. After this command is relinquished, Richard is denied admission to the U.S. War College. He seeks a new unit and designs the so-called Red Cell, which is to test security at U.S. bases and other targets. The Red Cell spreads mayhem and chaos from New London, Connecticut to the U.S. Admiral residence in Naples Italy, and shows the lack of proper security. Richard makes a lot of enemies and when Ace Lyons his superior is promoted,



Richard loses his political protection. Soon a highly funded Navy investigation targets Richard and with little ability to run a defense, Richard is run out of the Navy and eventually thrown into prison.

Part I, Geek, Chapters 1 and 2

Part I, Geek, Chapters 1 and 2 Summary and Analysis

Part I—Geek—Chap. 1—January 1981—The author, Richard Marcinko jumps out of a C-130 plane with his men. It is dark as he drops from very high up toward Vieques Island, off Puerto Rico. Richard's first parachute is snagged and cannot open properly. His second parachute is also tangled, but with a struggle he untangles it and opens it. At 10,000 feet he begins to steer the open parachute so he can land at the planned spot. Richard leads a unit of 56 SEAL Unit Six parachute jumpers from a plane that has flown from Norfolk, Virginia. On the ground Richard sees his Executive Officer, Paul Henley and deploys his men toward a site supposed to hold the terrorist group, the Macheteros. The men connect by radio to army intelligence and get intelligence from satellite pictures. Richard recalls noticing the light, harmless ammunition in his gun and knows that it is actually a training exercise. Richard is disappointed that he is not attacking real terrorists, but is ready to play the training game to the fullest.

Chap. 2, p. 16—A soldier nicknamed Indian Jew sneaks forward and does reconnaissance. He reports back that there is a warehouse in the dark surrounded by a barbed wire fence. Richard Marcinko is able to sneak around to the back of the warehouse. Richard thinks back to when he evades the other team in an underwater war game. He sees a man at a desk and then withdraws again. Richard readies his team to grab a nuclear warhead and a bunch of hostages. Richard's team attacks and makes contact and he shoots the man at the desk with red dye bullets. The men get ready to drag out the warhead and bring out a shaken up hostage. They make it back to their landing zone and then have to wait to get picked up. The helicopters come somewhat late and there is tension. The men transfer to a large transport plane at an air force base on Puerto Rico. Richard receives commendation for running an excellent exercise. Richard gets angry because he hears that time must be taken to analyze and evaluate the mission. A near fight breaks out on the plane when a colonel says that they should not be drinking beer.



Chapter 3 and 4

Chapter 3 and 4 Summary and Analysis

Chap. 3, p. 33—Richard is born in 1940 in a mining town in Pennsylvania. He recalls his maternal-grandfather who is short, a miner and a bar brawler. Richard remembers being independent and cutting school, going through a dangerous railroad tunnel to take a swim. Later, the mines shut down and Richard's family has to move to New Brunswick, NJ. There are fights in the family in a small apartment, and Richard spends a lot of time on the streets. He does odd jobs, tries to avoid school, and works in a luncheonette. He meets Rutgers University students and girls. Richard gains a steady girlfriend, a better restaurant job and quits school.

Richard then tries to join the military, but he is told to get his high school diploma. Then after a relaxing summer in 1958, he enlists in the Navy. Richard enjoys basic training and qualifies as a radioman. He sees a movie called *The Frogman* and decides that he wants to join the Underwater Demolition Team (UDT). Richard is signed up to take UDT training, when he breaks his hand in a fight. Instead he becomes a radioman in Naples, Italy. Richard is under a female commander in Naples whom he calls Big FUC (sic). He gets into a fight and beats up his roommate and is attacked by an officer named Chief White, and also beats him up. Somehow, Richard gets his female commanding officer to send him, as punishment, to UDT School, which is exactly what Richard wants.

Chapter 4 p. 43—Richard checks in for UDT training at Little Creek, Virginia and becomes swim buddies with a wiry officer, Ken MacDonald. Only twenty percent of the men get through the training course. There is constant swimming, running and lifting objects through sand, water and mud. The men learn to endure the trials of fast boats and jellyfish. They run through a wooden mock fortification and different crews compete to get through first. In Hell Week, the men are deprived of most hours of sleep, and run around with inflatable boats. The men are harassed by their instructors until they finally pass and go on to underwater diving training. Richard characterizes the men in UDT that survive as aggressive and social misfits.

In St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, the men train to use their compass while diving. They take seven mile swims and learn to use different types of explosives. In off hours there is lots of partying. Richard and his friend Ken hook up with young women tourists. In training, the men learn to swim up to ships with explosive devices and blow them up. Next the UDT men head to Ft. Benning, Georgia, for parachute jump training. Richard learns to fall far down before he opens his parachute. The training off-time includes lots of drinking and fights in bars. Richard marries Kathy Black and his wife soon gets pregnant, while he goes off for a six-month cruise. Richard participates in the testing of the Fulton Skyhook Retrieval system. A man is put in a suit with a hook and snatched with a line from a low-flying plane. An officer suggests to Richard that he become an officer, but Richard is still not ready for this.

Chapters 5 and 6

Chapters 5 and 6 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 5 p. 59—Under the influence of Chief Petty Officer Barrett, Richard decides to become an officer and make his career in the Navy. Barrett gets Richard to fix a radio though Richard has little experience in this. Barrett ruins the men's party time at Vieques Island by making the men constantly clean up their area. Richard and his frogman friend become known as Mr. Geek and Mr. Mud, as they go to the ship mess and Richard eats peas through his nose, scaring Navy sailors away. Richard pulls a final prank in the sky-diving exercises, waiting until the last minute to pull his parachute cord. This is considered to be showing off and excessively dangerous. Finally, Richard leaves for officers' candidate school.

Chapter 6, p. 68—Richard graduates as an Ensign in December 1965. At this point, Richard looks forward to combat in Vietnam and now he is also trained as a SEAL. He gets his wife and child settled down and goes to fight. Richard is given command of a 14-man SEAL unit and prepares to go to Vietnam. The men train continually and then go to bars and get into brawls. Training is very realistic and in a staged ambush, Richard is shocked that the men make few gun hits on the target. Richard erupts in the foul-mouthed rage style of his mentor Barrett and gets his men to do better. He and his unit arrive at the Binh Thuy airfield, somewhere in the Mekong Delta.



Chapters 7 and 8

Chapters 7 and 8 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 7, p. 84—Richard's unit is set up along the Bassac River. They work with a Patrol Boat River (PBR) unit to stop Vietcong re-supply efforts. Richard is introduced to his commanding officer, who turns out to be an old friend, B.B. Witham. The base is made of concrete buildings and is fairly comfortable. Richard meets a PBR ship commander and gets into the usual cursing banter he likes with the commander. Richard finds out that the Vietcong watch when the PBR patrol goes by on the river and then go out with their re-supply boats. The next night Richard and his men go out on a PBR boat to Juliet Crossing, a place where the Vietcong have been seen. Richard's boat is shot at and he directs heavy fire for a couple of hours at an island that is the source of enemy fire, sending in a U.S. air strike. When Richard comes back, he is verbally attacked by Lieutenant Commander Hank Mustin. In turn, Richard curses out Mustin. The next day, B.B. Witham tells Richard that he cannot curse out Mustin.

Chapter 8. p. 96—A week later, Richard heads out again on a patrol to Juliet Crossing. Two Mike boats go out, with one commandeered by Adam Henry, a man that Richard dislikes. The SEALs are dropped off on the island and wait for the enemy. A boat comes by and the SEALs shoot the enemy and recover his body, suddenly coming under fire. The VC are on the island too, under cover. After a delay of a couple of hours, the SEALs are picked up by Henry's Mike boat. Richard demands to be returned to base, but Henry insists on helping another crew that is under fire. Richard has had enough and goes home with his crew in a small STAB boat.

Due to the infighting, Richard's squad is transferred 40 kilometers northeast to My Tho. The new commander at My Tho, Toole, leaves Richard and his squad alone. Richard goes on longer patrols inland from the 60 kilometers of river and streams that his squad Bravo covers. Richard makes ambushes for the VC, getting intelligence on Charlie all the way to Cambodia. Richard learns from the VC to travel light and to wear Vietnamese-style rubber boots or even go barefoot. Richard plans an operation on Ilo-Ilo Island, at the mouth of the Mekong Delta.

Chapters 9 and 10

Chapters 9 and 10 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 9, p. 109—Richard notes that Bravo Squad has 18 confirmed kills near the end of his tour of duty. He receives intelligence about Ilo-Ilo Island, which is 40 miles down the river. They go in a Mike boat that tows a smaller STAB boat. They sneak to the back of the island in the light STAB boat and set up a position. For hours they slowly move on the island until they see a VC base made out of a house on stilts. They advance and find some evidence of the VC and some booty, but still have not contacted the enemy. They find a cluster of buildings with Charlie in the area. Despite a ricocheting grenade, they shoot up the enemy and seize evidence of an extensive station for re-supply. Richard reflects on how his methods of sudden attack are frowned upon. He may shoot some people who are unarmed, or who are not proven to be VC, but that is war. On the way off the island, the squad manages to avoid a booby-trap wire across the stream inside the island.

Chapter 10, p. 124—Richard is proud of Bravo Squad and returns to the USA, promoted to a Lieutenant, Junior Grade. Richard thinks angrily of officers like Hank Mustin, who obstructed Richard's operations and then receives a medal for one of them. Some of Richard's fitness reports (fitreps) are outstanding, but other reports complain of his lack of reliability. To his shock, Richard is sent off on a public relations tour promoting the new SEALs unit. One result is a wild piece of fiction published in *Male* magazine that calls Richard, Demo Dick. Richard soon after returns to fight in Vietnam, this time commanding the 8th Platoon of SEAL Team Two. First, Richard spends lots of time in Virginia doing his best to upgrade the training of his men. Often he drinks and brawls with his men at bars. One man, Gordy, does not get drunk but is still crazy at bars. Richard convinces Harry to join the platoon despite the objections of his wealthy parents. Harry's mother is angry, and Harry's wife has to move to a small home in Norfolk, Virginia. One man named Risher is characterized as the most childish man in the platoon. He pulls the stoner, or the machine gun. The platoon arrives in Vietnam in December, for 6 months.



Part II—UNODIR—Chapter 11

Part II—UNODIR—Chapter 11 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 11, p. 139—Richard and his new unit, SEAL Team Two, Platoon 8, fly to a much more built-up Binh Thuy base. Richard has trouble with his headquarters, who want his platoon to act as support for operations along the rivers of the Mekong Delta. Instead, Richard orders the unit to go off on missions designed to kill the enemy, unless otherwise directed, which has the acronym UNODIR. Richard's platoon grabs live Vietcong prisoners as the platoon goes native, wearing ARVN style sneakers, sandals and sometimes sneaking around barefoot.

At the time of the Vietnamese Tet holiday, at the end of January, Richard and Gordy and the men go to Chau Doc, a provisional capital near the Cambodian border. They visit the local commander who is well-dressed, but a useless drunk. The commander clearly is not very interested in getting in fights with the enemy. Soon after, Richard and Gordy find the local CIA listening post, guarded by Chinese Nung troops, and make friends with the intelligence chief Drew Dix and a man named Westy. The platoon returns to Chau Doc soon after by PBR boat. Richard is angry about the clandestine treacherous coordination between ARVN friendly troops and enemy VC. He hands in a fire plan with the commander and has his men dropped off by PBR boats deep in marshes at night. The platoon advances slowly, fearing minefields, and actually seeing a mine detonator in place. Richard takes the point and senses someone in the darkness. He ducks and is fired at with machine guns close by. A man named Hoss fires off a huge anti-tank weapon, as it becomes clear that there is a large enemy force chasing the platoon. On his radio, Richard hears that the commander's post in Chau Doc is under attack and he calls instead to Jack on the PBR boat to pick up the platoon, which is done successfully.



Chapters 12 and 13

Chapters 12 and 13 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 12, p. 159—Much of Chau Doc is overrun by the VC Tet offensive. Richard coordinates with the Chinese Nung forces of Drew and Westy, and defies the orders of the scared local commander. Drew picks up Richard and much of the platoon in a jeep and the platoon soon is involved in house-to-house fighting. The men rescue 3 trapped female American nurses. Richard, Hoss and other men are careful to take cover when running between houses, but Risher runs openly in the street. He is shot in the head by a sniper and soon dies. Richard is very angry at Risher for being the first man of the platoon to be killed. Richard becomes tougher in his interrogation of VC prisoners and his willingness to kill civilians suspected of being VC. Richard is angry at the Vietnamese, both friendly ARVN and enemy VC.

Chapter 13, p. 170—Richard returns to Virginia Beach and gets reacquainted with his wife and two kids, Ritchie and Kathy. He helps train SEAL teams, taking his young son along on some training sessions. In November, the Navy assigns Richard to a staff position at the Little Creek Naval Base. Richard is afraid he will not survive bureaucratic infighting and he knows he is at a disadvantage because he did not go to the Naval Academy. He is now a COMPHIBTRALANT officer and has to work at getting Kathy-Ann to act the part of a Navy wife. Richard has a meeting with Admiral Peet and is deployed to represent the views of the Special Forces and the SEALs. Richard gets help on the Navy Staff from Captain Bob Stanton, a former UDT man who helps Richard write better staff reports. Richard is working and also going to night school, but he gets to play with his kids on the weekends. Richard becomes friendly with the new Admiral named Snyder. Snyder puts Richard on the board of the Planetarium Quarters for visiting officers and Richard learns when not to curse. Richard and Kathy-Ann learns to put on their own smaller parties. In May 1971 they sell their house and move to Monterey, California where Richard joins the Navy academic program. He graduates and then is sent to Defense Intelligence School, to become the next Naval Attaché in Cambodia.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 14, p. 181—Richard and family move back to Virginia Beach and Richard is at school in Washington DC. Richard has had Vietnamese language school and now he is learning espionage. Richard also learns French and then flies off by himself to Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Richard realizes he again is leaving his family and more importantly he is leaving the naval bureaucracy and chances to get ahead in his career. Richard dreams of a Navy SEAL command position, but instead arrives in Cambodia in September 1973. In Phnom Penh, he makes jokes that the word for SEAL in French is Phoque, like the English curse word. Richard meets Cambodian Commodore Vong Sarendy, who is distant at first. Thomas Enders, the deputy chief of the American Mission, tells Richard that he must think about how to stop sinking of supply vessels to the capital. Richard works with the Cambodian Kim Simanh on clearing a sunken boat obstructing the Mekong River. Richard actually goes out with Cambodian frogmen and sets the charge to blow up the ship. Richard is left isolated by the boat and is only picked up just in time.

Richard has parties, does lots of drinking and there are plenty of women available. Richard ignores Cambodian (Khmer) graft that goes to pay for soldier benefits and funerals. He is invited to a meal by Kim Simanh where he enjoys a so-called cobra feast. He drinks a drink with a sac of cobra poison which nearly knocks him out, winning lots of respect from Khmer Navy officers. Richard overhears of negotiations about Cambodia by the likes of Henry Kissinger. Finally, he is sent back to Washington DC to become the new commander of SEAL Team Two.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 15, p. 198—In October 1974, Richard Marcinko undergoes the ritual of the changing of command. Now he is in command of 150 men. Richard recalls how he briefs the Joint Chiefs of Staff in May 1974 and obtains increasing influence. Richard first inspects the SEAL equipment and is dissatisfied with it. Richard succeeds in having Rich Kuhn become his Executive Officer or XO. Then, after meeting with Admiral Greene, Richard tells his men that no beards and other facial hair will be allowed. A man demands to keep his beard and is discharged from the unit. Richard thinks there are too many junior officers on desk duty and has an officer called in, Tom Williams, to centralize staff functions. Tom still has to do all the physical training (PT) necessary to be a SEAL, including demolitions and diving training. Years later Tom becomes commanding officer of the unit. Richard is also helped by the new commodore of Special War Group Two, Dick Coogan. Richard is often frustrated by Dick Coogan's Executive Officer Scott Sullivan, but manages to communicate directly with Dick at a bar. Men from Richard's unit tell Dick about the great physical training program of the unit or about their new counterinsurgency tactics. Scott Sullivan tries to veto all of Richard's communications, but is defeated in this.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 16, p. 218—Richard brags in the book about how he is very political and knows how to talk to admirals. He describes to an admiral a proposal to move all of SEAL Two to a place called Roost Roads, Puerto Rico. By not playing by the bureaucratic rules, Richard gets his way, but makes a lot of enemies. He has trouble with Ted Lyon, former Commanding Officer (CO) of Seal Two. In 1976, Ted is a CO of UDT Team 21, going out. Ted asks to use a field for swearing-in exercises that Richard has reserved. Richard, also going out of a command, violently refuses to agree to the request of the senior officer Ted, something that comes back to haunt Richard. Richard takes a master's college course in Alabama, and then he and the family move back to Washington DC, where Richard works in the Pentagon. Richard is under a captain named Ace Lyons who becomes a sort of mentor, or sea-daddy. Then Richard is given an intelligence portfolio, briefing Admiral Crowe, later to be on the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS).

In November 1979, the Iranians take the U.S. Embassy staff hostage. General Davey Jones discusses options to rescue the hostages, but Richard complains that Jones lacks a willingness to kill. The plan is to bomb Tehran Airport, while helicopters go in with paratroopers to rescue the hostages. The command center of this operation Delta is moved to a CIA facility outside Williamsburg, VA. Two SEALs are sent to infiltrate Iran and get human intelligence. The night of August 24th, 1980 is the time to strike with Operation Desert One. Richard is in a room monitoring the operation to rescue the hostages. The Americans fly over Iran and an Iranian alert is a false alarm. One helicopter lands, but then there are problems with the other helicopters being lost in a sandstorm. At this point, the mission is declared a failure and scrubbed. Then a helicopter collides with a C-130 plane and the mission ends in disaster with large casualties.



Chapters 17 and 18

Chapters 17 and 18 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 17, p. 235—Charlie Beckwith and Jim Vaught are blamed for the failure of Desert One, though General Davey Jones alters their plans to a great extent. Richard realizes that the same thing could happen to him, leaving him with the blame in an operation. Joint Task Force (JTF) operations are drafted to deal with various terrorist threats, with Richard participating in this planning. Richard wants a SEAL Command in this operation, not just a SEAL element. Richard's memo is top secret and the joke is if another officer looks at it, he may have to be shot. Admiral Crowe is the new Commander of the Navy (CNO) and he approves of and encourages Richard. The new anti-terrorism unit is to be called Seal Team Six. It is to be 75 men, deliberately wearing long hair and ready to blend in as construction workers or students. Richard and an officer called Mac confer and write up the logistics requirements of the proposed unit. After conferring with Admiral Crowe, Richard talks to Admiral Hayward in order to be able to become the commanding officer of the new unit, and Hayward accepts Richard as the first commander of Seal Team Six.

Chapter 18, p. 249—Richard is forming the new counter-terror unit Seal Six and visits Ted Lyon to request to interview men for the new unit, but is rejected. Richard is forced to produce the proper paperwork from Admiral Hayward. Richard is already wearing a beard while interviewing men, with his undercover dirt bag look on. He recruits Paul Henley from the West Coast to be his Executive Officer and soon Richard briefs the new unit at the Fraternal Order of SEALs bar. The men vary from the big and aggressive Lieutenant Mugsy, to the politician-like so-called Senator, to the baby-faced Ensign Trailer who still looks like a college student. Richard seeks men like Indian Jew, who have long dreamed of being in an elite Special Forces unit. Larry and Frank are the so-called gold dust twins, who may not be the highest scoring, but like the famous auto company Avis, try harder.

SEAL Six sets up in some extra buildings at Little Creek while waiting for their new headquarters to be built. They are outfitted with tons of equipment and start training with live ammunition. They do exercises like bursting through a door into a room, and being ready to kill the terrorists there and free hostages. SEAL Six trains in Florida, when Richard gives the 80 or so men a pep talk in a small stadium. It is a very macho talk wherein Richard, speaking vulgarly, tell the men that they are the ones who are the best shooters and who get the most women. Richard promises to protect them from the Pentagon bureaucracy and demand that they maintain unit integrity.



Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 19, p. 267—SEAL Six is actually under the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) of Brigadier General Dick Scholtes, but the unit's money management is run by Commodore Ted Lyon of NAVSPECWARGRU TWO. Ted often complains when Richard demands special foreign equipment like German cars and guns, but Richard usually gets his way. In training, SEAL SIX learn to parachute from high planes and glide to a target, or wait until the last minute to open their parachutes. They learn to quickly drop down on a ship from ropes hung from a helicopter.

At Eglin Air Force Base, a Chinese-American soldier called Donnie Lee is shot by his swim partner in live ammunition exercises involving entering a room and clearing it of the enemy. At first Donnie seems to recover, but then he suffers an infection and dies. His swim partner who accidentally shot him is expelled from all SEAL units. Richard realizes that tough training makes training deaths inevitable. Another man dies in a high altitude jump, when both of his parachutes do not open. Other exercises include parachuting out of a commercial jet. Richard does high altitude jumps and the jumps from commercial jets to show that he will not ask his men to do things that he will not do. Meanwhile, Richard's marriage deteriorates, as his kids grow to be teenagers. His wife does not receive the honor of being married to a commander, since officially SEAL Team Six does not even exist. The unit stays at commercial motels when they go to train in Louisiana and other places. In Louisiana, they even get made up false license plates. They always use fake IDs.

Ted Lyon complains in the fitness reports he writes about Richard that Richard does not conform to the Navy way and the chain of command. To counterattack this, Richard gets Brigadier General Richard Scholtes to inspect Richard's unit and give it his stamp of approval. Richard and Scholtes note that SIX's quarters are in poor shape due to waiting for new quarters being built, but they are on the road most of the time. The men's deliberate bad grooming is acknowledged as necessary. Meanwhile, Scholtes complains about the bad sanitation and morale of the nearby Seal Team Two compound, which is directly under Ted Lyon, in a masterful example of retaliation.

In Boston Harbor, SEAL Six runs exercises boarding ships with ladders from little boats. This type of action will be used to rescue hostages five years later when the ship *Achille Lauro* is seized by Palestinian terrorists. Richard arranges through his friendly FBI contact, called the Italian Stallion, to borrow a Norwegian cruise-liner ship. The ship's crew agrees to play terrorists and hostages for an exercise. These exercises are dangerous, with two helicopters coming in at the ship nearly colliding. Richard falls from a helicopter onto the ship from 12 feet and then slips on a waxed deck, with painful results. That is the point of training, because new problems arise that are not foreseen. Luckily, the ammunition is not live, because 3 SEALs are declared would-have-been

dead. Richard hopes that the exercise against the Macheteros in Puerto Rico is the real thing, but it also turns out to be a training exercise.



Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 20, p. 290—Richard is disappointed that despite terrorist attacks against the U.S.A., Seal Team Six is not being sent to fight terrorists. They rehearse missions on the Washington DC subway when the system is closed down. They play war games with the Germans and others. Seal Team Six spends six months in Egypt trying to train the Egyptian counterterrorist team. The results are poor because of Egypt's ingrained caste system, which lets the officers enslave the privates and not fight. Richard tries beating up the Egyptian officers until he is stopped by the U.S. Embassy. Richard's favorite international partner is the German GSG-9, headed by Brigadier General Wegener. Wegener leads a successful anti-terror team at Mogadishu and briefs the U.S. Joint Chiefs. In addition, Richard is surprised that Wegener is friendly, attractive to the ladies and a good drinker. In November 1982, Richard participates in a rough exercise involving boarding a ship in the cold North Sea, in cooperation with the GSG-9. The American Boston Whaler boats are turned upside down, and Richard and his frogmen barely succeed in boarding the icy oil drilling platform where so-called hostages are being held. Richard has to listen to German advice to approach the target ship carefully, with currents and tides very treacherous. It takes hours for the frogmen to get close to the target and then 3 key frogmen climb up the ice and set up ladders to the platform. Real ammunition is not used, but red dye explosions indicated kill. Real explosives are used to blow up steel doors, so it is still a pretty authentic drill.

Richard gets his first real operation, when he and 24 SEALs head to Beirut, Lebanon to check on U.S. Embassy security in December 1982. Richard flies to Paris, where he brags about a sexual adventure. He next flies to Beirut on a commercial airliner, smuggling in a small pistol. Other men come ashore from a Navy ship, with another crew coming in using a dangerous route through Syria. Richard is picked up by a cabdriver and taken to a hotel. People in Lebanon are armed to the teeth, with drivers bringing out guns after car accidents. Beirut is a war zone just after the Israelis invade nearby and Christian Phalangists commit mass murder against Palestinian refugees.

Richard walks past the American University and toward the U.S. Embassy, noting groups of gunman and security guards at various places. He quickly sees that someone could ram a truck up to the embassy and blow it up. The next day Richard goes out with his taxicab driver again. They have coffee and then the driver, Abu Said, finds Richard apartments to rent. Secure communications are established and Richard links up with the other men and puts them in apartments. The next day the men walk near the embassy and take photographs showing how the embassy is unprotected. They are stopped by young men, actually kids who point weapons at them and demand the film they took of the houses. The street is run by one of the many militias in the area.

Within a week, Richard's men spot regular surveillance of the U.S. Embassy. U.S. Marines are also in the area, but are not in a favorable position, with the militias of Shia



and Druse holding high ground. On Christmas Eve, three of Richard's men are able to sneak near to the Embassy and set off phony explosives right near it. Richard and his unit look at the many possible attacks against the Embassy and conclude that the most logical and devastating would be to send a truck with a large bomb through the gate. The unit receives a radio frequency device that can detonate bombs that have back-up radio detonators in them and try it out on a house owned by a militia, blowing it up. A few days later, Richard meets with U.S. Embassy personnel and asks them to beef up their security and use the radio-detonator device to blow up suicide car bombers before they reach the embassy. The official refuses to act on Richard's suggestions and 90 days later the embassy is blown up by a suicide truck bomber.



Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 21, p. 320—Richard's command over SEAL Team Six runs out in July 1983. He is getting low fitness to command reports from his administrative commander Ted Lyon, but reports of praise from Vice Admiral Johnson, under the influence of Richard's friend Dick Scholtes. Johnson praises Richard, saying that Richard is doing the right thing in his unit. Richard is in trouble because he has offended Special Warfare commanders all over the United States. The change of command where Richard leaves the unit is very quiet since this is still a secret unit. Richard is angry that after his departure, SEAL Six becomes more conventional, with less effective dirty-looking disguises used by the men.

Richard thinks he can now attend the War College, but he hears whispers from his friends that he is about to be barred from it. Richard is told that because of an auto accident caused by one of his men, he has a reprimand on his record. He is advised that he should take an easy job and get ready to retire from the Navy by 1988, but Richard is not satisfied with this. With help from his old friend Ace Lyons, Richard gets an intelligence job at the Pentagon. One day Richard sees that something exciting is going on. With some effort, he gets the intelligence that SEAL Six is participating in the upcoming U.S. invasion of Grenada. Begging Ace Lyons, Richard obtains a job as a briefer to the Secretary of the Navy on the Grenada operation. Medical students are being held hostage, and SEALs are being sent in, dropped by aircraft. Due to bad communications and coordination, 4 SEALs are dropped into the ocean and drown. After a series of more foul ups, Grenada is taken over and secured. Early in 1984, Richard discusses with Ace Lyons on how the U.S. military is too much geared to only confronting the Soviet threat and not the terrorist threat. Many embassies and other crucial facilities are open to car bomb attack or other types of attack. Ace Lyons allows Richard to design a proposal to create a U.S. unit, to be called Red Cell, to test the security capabilities of important U.S. facilities worldwide.

Red Cell is a top secret team of 13 men from SEAL Six plus Steve Hartman, a marine who is a specialist in burglary. The men from SEAL Six such as Pooster, Baby Rich and the Gold Dust Twins, Frank and Larry, are bored at SEAL Six under its new commander. Richard is glad that in February 1985, with the help of Ace Lyons, Richard is promoted to a captain. Red Cell works out of a bar called Shooter McGee in Alexandria, Virginia, near the Pentagon. Richard stuns the Commander of the Navy, Admiral Watkins, by sneaking weapons through metal detectors when boarding commercial airliners. Red Cell's first big target is the New London, Connecticut, Trident submarine base. Targets include nuclear submarines with warheads. Richard buzzes the base with a rented low-flying plane and takes photographs, while the men also scout out the local bars, succeeding in stealing base ID.

Richard's crew phones in a terrorist threat, and then the men go through an area with a cliff that does not have a fence. After that they easily get over a barbed-wire fence, while



all the time being followed and filmed by a camera crew. Later, with these results, Richard confronts the Admiral who commands the base. The Admiral complains that Red Cell did not play fairly. The Admiral writes Ace Lyons a letter of complaint, a forewarning of what soon happens to Richard's operation. Not thinking of what is about to hit him, Richard and his crew go over to the house of the cameraman they call the Senator, on Cape Cod and party with women and booze.



Chapters 22 and 23

Chapters 22 and 23 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 22, p. 345—It is the end of the summer, and Ace Lyons has just been promoted to head the Navy's Pacific Command. Ironically, this sets up Ace Lyons for his downfall, and removes Richard's protection from the Navy bureaucracy. Richard does not realize that he is in trouble, as his Red Cell runs a mission to test President Ronald Reagan's security around his Santa Barbara California ranch. There the Red Cell tests the security of Commander Gordy Nagakawa's nearby Point Mugu Naval Air Station. Red Cell's Mr. Pooster gets a bicycle and rides along all the small roads and paths around the base, doing reconnaissance. The men check out the bars, while others peel base stickers off of cars in the parking lot, preparing their infiltration.

Lt. Trailer Court gets in the base gate with phony ID and a stolen uniform. Another team enters the base as frogmen from a nearby wildlife refuge. A SWAT patrol passes by, but does not see the hidden Frogmen, who end their mission with mock explosions placed on F-18 fighter planes. Another team is deliberately caught, but not effectively frisked, so they end up seizing the police and holding police hostage. In another place, women and children are held hostage by the Red Cell men. An exchange of Red Cell men for the hostages is made, and then the Red Cell drives right onto the base, locking the gate behind them. Soon, the Mugu Base is driven into anarchy, with chaos in nearby hospitals and among local police as well. The Red Cell rigs a smoke bomb next to Air Force One, the President's plane. It explodes, along with another smoke bomb in a nearby weapons carrier car, and the umpire for the drill rules 10 more U.S. servicemen and women dead.

Back at the Pentagon, Ace Lyons is promoted and the new boss is Vice Admiral Donald Jones who has many friends who are enemies of Richard. Richard does not see what is going to happen. A month later, Richard and two other Red Cell men fly to Naples, Italy, undercover, on a small jet. Richard is recognized by an Admiral who goes ballistic seeing Richard and the men so dirty looking. Richard just curses at an aide sent by the Admiral, making another bureaucratic enemy. Meanwhile, Ace Lyons wants Richard to test security around the Naples NATO base. This environment includes the infamous Red Brigade terrorists, a real threat. Richard shows the local Admiral Mott that his security is deficient. Red Cell men easily cut off Admiral Mott's home's electricity. The Red Cell men also climb the walls and infiltrate the Admiral's compound. Richard, along with the gold dust twins Frank and Larry, is able to kidnap the Admiral. Larry and Frank also trail U.S. officers and mock-assassinate them. Soon, nasty complaints of harassment reach Naval Intelligence (NIS), and Ace Lyons is no longer in place to defend Richard. Richard hears that he will be investigated and forced to leave the Navy, but he ignores the warning.

Chapter 23, p. 364—NIS starts an investigation and one of the founders of SEAL Six, John B. Mason, is indicted and eventually convicted of cashing in false travel expenses.



On April 3rd, 1986 Richard is dismissed from Red Cell and put on leave for six months. Soon after, Richard loses his promotion to Captain. In 1987 Ace Lyons is forced by Navy Secretary Lehman to retire, and Richard retires February 1989. Most of Richard's activities in SEAL Six and Red Cell are declared to be classified, so Richard is not allowed to defend himself by speaking of secret operations. After two trials, Richard is convicted on the basis of testimony from John Mason, who has been turned into a state witness. Richard is sent to prison for 21 months. Richard catches up on his reading and works out in the Petersburg, Virginia prison. Richard is heartened by the supporting letters he receives from SEALs all over the world. Richard thinks of forming a secretly government-backed company called KATN, in order to assassinate enemies of the U.S. Government in a plausibly deniable way. Over Christmas 1990, Richard is furloughed and has a visitor he calls Merc at his apartment in Alexandria. Merc proposes that Richard be let out of jail to organize the assassination of certain people in then-targeted Iraq. Richard is asked to be in uniform again, but he refuses. From now on, if at all, he says he will only work as a special operative outside of the normal chain of command.



Characters

Richard, Richard Marcinko, Mr. Dick, Mr Rick, Demo Dick

Richard Marcinko is the central character of the book, which is an autobiographical account. From an early age, Richard is an independent youngster. He is not interested in school, but is very interested in making money and chasing women. He decides to enlist in the Navy and soon decides that his goal is to become a Special Forces operative. He joins the frogmen, and later the SEALs. Meanwhile, Richard marries Kathy Black and has two children. He receives a college education and becomes an officer. Richard is most proud of leading two units in Vietnam and killing many of the enemy. He is mainly focused on his unit and its success and survival. He has some views on making the military a better killing machine, but has little thought of overall strategy.

Richard decides to pursue a career in the Navy and after a stint in the Pentagon, advances to the command of SEAL Team Two. He trains his men hard, but is somewhat disappointed in the lack of actual fighting. After more staff work, Richard becomes the leader of a new unit that he designs, SEAL Team Six, a counter-terrorist unit. At the same time, Richard makes many enemies in the armed services. This is intensified by his formation of the so-called Red Cell, a special forces unit to test security at U.S. facilities. Richard is targeted by a Navy judicial conspiracy and is forced out of the Navy and put in jail.

Ace Lyons, Captain Ace Lyons, Vice Admiral Ace Lyons

Ace Lyons is a hard-liner and a backer of Richard Marcinko for much of Richard's career. Ace advances rapidly in the Navy and becomes the Operations Chief (Ops Chief) for the Navy. In this capacity, he is able to back Richard in the formation of the Red Cell unit. Richard meets Ace Lyons while Richard is working on intelligence in the Pentagon. Ace gives Richard the freedom to expand his work into Special Operations and anti-terrorism.

Ace Lyons is ultimately considered to be militarily too aggressive in stance to the current Navy leadership. First, he is given a promotion to head the Pacific Command of the Navy from Hawaii. This promotion actually destroys Ace Lyons' political base in the Navy and makes him vulnerable when Navy Secretary Lehman comes in and targets the hard-liners. About the time that Richard is targeted, Ace is forced into retirement. Ace represents the leadership in the Navy that supports Richard's projects and protects him from more cautious bureaucrats.



Ted Lyon

Ted Lyon is representative of the Navy bureaucrats that harass and hinder Richard Marcinko's projects. Richard offends Ted Lyon by refusing to reschedule Richard's change-of-command ceremonies, though Ted is the superior officer. Ted objects when Richard comes to raid his unit for men for Richard's new unit, SEAL Team Six, and only agrees when top command authorization comes through. Organizationally, Ted Lyon heads the command in Special Warfare Group Two where Richard has to go to get his bills paid for SEAL Team Six. Ted often tries to stop Richard's request for German guns and cars and other special equipment, but almost always loses. Ted Lyon gets angry because SEAL Team Six uses unconventional methods, such as using motels instead of military bases on the road and signing receipts with assumed names. Ted Lyon foreshadows other bureaucratic enemies of Richard who will be able to kick Richard out of the military and jail him.

Everett Barrett

Everett Barrett is Richard's chief petty officer when Richard is in the Second Platoon of the UDT-21. Everett Barrett is an explosives ordnance specialist, and lost a finger playing with explosives. He curses a lot and is quite rough with his men. Barrett makes the men work hard, including Richard, but also gives Richard a role model. Under the leadership of Barrett, Richard decides to go to Officers Candidate School. Barrett is Richard's first and best mentor, or sea-daddy.

Admiral William Crowe, Bill Crowe

When Richard is working on intelligence at the Pentagon, he brings reports to Admiral Crowe, who is deputy to the Chief Navy Officer. Crowe gives encouragement to Richard in the proposal for the establishment of SEAL Team Six. He also encourages Richard to get Admiral Hayward to approve Richard's bid to become the first commanding officer of SEAL Team Six.

Kathy Ann Black, Kathy Ann Marcinko

Kathy Ann Black, later Kathy Ann Marcinko is Richard's wife. She suffers the usual problems of Navy wives. She lives in a small house in Virginia Beach, VA, next to other Navy wives, and has to take care of her two children with Richard often absent. While many Navy men later in their career work at the Pentagon, Richard only stays home about 4 years and then is again traveling with the Navy. Richard knows that his marriage will probably not survive his commanding SEAL Team Six and it does not. Richard and Kathy Ann separate when their children are already teenagers.



Lieutenant Hank Mustin

Lieutenant Hank Mustin is an operations boss in the area of Vietnam near Richard's first hitch. Mustin is mad at Richard for running an operation and calling in an air strike without Mustin's approval. Mustin is an officer who criticizes Richard's operation until, due to the operation, he receives a medal.

Frank Boyce, Gordy

Gordy is Richard's number 2 officer in the 8th Platoon in Vietnam. Gordy goes wild at bars, though he does not drink alcohol. He is known to bare his bottom, stuff it with a long stream of paper, have someone light the paper, and snuff it out just before the flames reach his bottom. Gordy is with Richard at the battle of Chau Doc.

Baby Rich

Baby Rich is a young looking soldier, whom Richard accepts into SEAL Team Six, as so-called cannon fodder. Cannon Fodder is someone who can be easily and readily killed. Baby Rich gets to deploy to Beirut and later is part of the Red Cell.

Drew Dix, Special Forces Sargeant Dix

Drew Dix is a Special Forces Sergeant on loan to the CORDS local pacification program in Chau Doc. Drew works with the Nungs, who are Chinese mercenary forces. He is willing to give intelligence and help Richard when Richard shows up in Chau Doc, unlike the official U.S. local commander.

Gold Dust Twins, Frank and Larry

The Gold Dust Twins are friends Frank and Larry. Richard knows Larry from SEAL Team Two and Larry is close friends with Frank. When Larry joins SEAL Team Six, he has Richard agree to also bring Frank into the team. Gold Dust Larry also serves on the SEAL Team Six mission to Beirut, Lebanon.

Paul Henley, PV

Paul Henley is a Seal Commander on the West Coast who trains his men hard in shooting and other skills like Richard does. Henley becomes SEAL Team Six's Executive Officer (XO), though he is not available for the Red Cell. He is on SEAL Team Six's mission to Beirut.



Pooster the Rooster

Pooster the Rooster is a veteran from SEAL Team Two, who joins Richard's new unit SEAL Team Six. Pooster is in both the SEAL Team Six unit sent to Beirut and in Red Cell. In the Red Cell, he shows his ability to pick locks and create havoc in an exercise to uncover lapses in base security at the Point Mugu Naval Air Station.

General David Jones

General David Jones is the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the time of the attempted rescue of the Iranian hostages. Richard criticizes him as one who lists endless options, but is not a charismatic leader of men at the time of the 1979 hostage crisis.

Indian Jew

Indian Jew is given that nickname because one parent is Indian and the other is from Brooklyn, NY. Indian Jew is a tall, handsome and married young man. In SEAL Team Six, Indian Jew has an active role in being the point man to first examine the path forward. He does this during the Vieques exercises described in Chapters 1 and 2. Indian Jew also goes to Beirut with SEAL Team Six.

Fred Kochey

Fred Kochey is Richard's immediate superior in Richard's first tour of Vietnam. Kochey gives Richard free rein in Richard's various ambushes and operations to kill the enemy. Kochey participates in Richard's attack on Ilo-Ilo Island toward the close of Richard's first tour.

Gordy Nakagawa

Gordy Nakagawa is the base commander of the Point Mugu Naval Air Station, close to President Reagan's ranch in Santa Barbara. At first, Nakagawa is enthusiastic about having his base security tested by Richard's Red Cell. Overall, Nakagawa is delighted with the security exercise. However, even in his case there is some embarrassment concerning the testing of security around the Presidential plane.

Clarence Risher

Clarence Risher is a tall, young member of Richard's second unit in Vietnam. He is characterized by Richard as being emotionally immature. This gives the reader some forewarning of what happens to Risher, who is shot by a sniper. Risher is running in the



middle of the street in the battle of Chau Doc, refusing to keep himself under physical cover.

Jim Watson, Patches

Patches is on Richard's Bravo Squad, the first unit that Richard heads in Vietnam. Patches is Richard's example of a gung-ho, totally committed SEAL. Patches is a founding member of SEAL Team Two, and a key point man, leading Bravo Squad.

Westy

Westy is the assistant to Drew Dix at the CIA-related listening post at Chau Doc, and he becomes friends with Richard. Westy gets Richard a jeep so he can get his men into the battle of Chau Doc and be able to rescue several female American nurses.

General Rick Wegener, German Counter-terrorism Unit GSG-9

General Rick Wegener is the head of a counter-terrorism unit in Germany, the GSG-9. Richard comes to admire Wegener for his accounts of successful anti-terrorist action in Mogadishu. Richard gets to go out drinking with Wegener and becomes friends with him. Soon after Richard participates in a joint exercise with the Germans in the North Sea and around an oil drilling platform.



Objects/Places

UNODIR

UNODIR stands for, Unless Otherwise Directed. This is Richard Marcinko's excuse for going off on his own battle plan and setting up ambushes for the enemy. Unless headquarters has specific orders for Richard, he feels he can fight and patrol wherever he wants to.

SEAL

SEAL stands for Sea Air Land Units and they are one of the top Special Forces units in the U.S. military. Being a SEAL is a step up from being a UDT Frogman and becomes Richard's goal. Richard ends up as commander of SEAL Team Two, SEAL Team Six, and the shadowy unit known as Red Cell, also composed largely of SEALs.

VC, Vietcong, Charlie, Victor Charlie

VC, or Vietcong are the enemy of Richard and the U.S. Armed Forces in the Mekong Delta area of Vietnam. The Vietcong are usually local Vietnamese who have joined the guerrilla struggle against the Republic of (South) Vietnam, desiring reunification with North Vietnam.

Nungs

Nungs are Chinese-ethnic mercenaries who fight alongside of U.S. Special Forces. Richard meets a force of Nung fighters in Chau Doc, who are under the command of Special Forces operatives Drew Dix and Westy.

HAHO and HALO

These are designations of different methods of parachute jumps. HAHO means High Altitude, High Opening. In these jumps, the men use their parachute to para-sail to their target over a distance as much as 20 miles. HALO means High Altitude Low Opening. In these jumps there is much less maneuverability, but due to the low opening, the parachutists reach their target faster.

ARVN, Marvin the ARVN

The ARVN is the Army of the Republic of (South) Vietnam. In GI slang, it is often called Marvin, or Marvin the ARVN. Richard faults the ARVN for their lack of aggressiveness



and coming out in force after a battle has already been won, in order to take various goods and souvenirs.

IBIS, IBS, Inflatable Boat SEAL

IBS stands for Inflatable Boat SEAL. The crew for an IBS is 7-men, and a SEAL squad is 14 men, or 2 boat crews. IBS crews are the basic building blocks of SEAL units.

PBR, Patrol Boat River

PBR stands for Patrol Boat River. These are larger boats whose task is to interdict enemy river traffic in the Mekong Delta region. Richard will often have his men hitch a ride with a PBR, and then have the men swim overboard, or leave the PBR on one of their little IBS boats.

UDT, Underwater Demolition Teams

UDT, or the Underwater Demolition Teams is the training that Richard goes through in order to become a Navy Frogman. This is a step toward Richard's goal of becoming a Navy SEAL.

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Phnom Penh is the capital of Cambodia, where Richard Marcinko is stationed as a naval attache in September 1973. By this point, the enemy Khmer Rouge has overrun the countryside, and the capital is virtually surrounded and supplied only by the Mekong River.

U.S. Embassy, Beirut, Lebanon

Part of SEAL Team Six is sent to Beirut Lebanon in winter of 1982. Richard's mission is to assess terrorist threats to the U.S. Embassy, the U.S. Marines stationed in Beirut and other U.S. targets in the area.

Bar Brawls, Bar Fights

Richard deliberately takes his men to certain bars that are run by SEALs or other Navy people. There Richard gets drunk with his men and often gets into bar brawls. Bar fights erupt between drunk men in the unit, but when an outsider challenges the men, they unite to fight the new threat.



Mekong Delta, Bassac River, Vietnam

The Mekong River branches out into a delta as it heads for the South China Sea. One of the five main branches is called the Bassac River, which is where Richard runs his SEAL operations during his first assignment to Vietnam.

Binh Thuy, Vietnam

Binh Thy is an airfield in the Mekong Delta area of Vietnam, where Richard first flies in. This is the major base in the area, and it is very built up, with concrete buildings and all the conveniences of home.

Chau Doc, Vietnam

Chau Doc is a provincial capital in South Vietnam that is a few miles from the Cambodian border. It is along the Bassac River. Richard decides to bring up his SEAL Team Two Bravo to Chau Doc for a good place for a fight around the Tet Holiday. The year 1968 happens to be the year of the Vietcong Tet offensive, and a battle erupts at Chau Doc.

Ilo Ilo Island

Ilo Ilo Island is located at the mouth of the Mekong Delta as it meets the South China Sea. Richard has been getting reports that Ilo Ilo Island is a major staging and rest center for the Vietcong and their supply operations. He has his Bravo Squad attack the island at the end of his first tour in Vietnam.

Iron Eagle

Iron Eagle is the code name for the judicial operation to bust Richard Marcinko and other leaders of SEAL Team Six. First John B. Mason, a founder member of SEAL Six is arrested and then he is given a deal to help the state's evidence. Eventually, Richard is indicted on various conspiracy charges involving improper handling of funds from SEAL Team Six.

Little Creek Amphibious Naval Base, Virginia

Little Creek Amphibious Naval Base is the location of the Underwater Demolition Training (UDT) that Richard undergoes. It is also where later SEAL Team Six is based. Little Creek is in Virginia near Norfolk, Virginia Beach and other Naval base locations.



Virginia Beach, Norfolk

Virginia Beach and Norfolk, VA are the center of a huge complex of Navy bases and housing for Navy families. Richard and his wife Kathy Ann often live in this area. The area that houses navy families extends about 100 square miles.

Red Cell

Red Cell is a top secret unit that Richard Marcinko both designs and leads.

SEAL Team Two Bravo

SEAL Team Two, Bravo Squad is the unit Richard leads the first time he is in Vietnam. This is a 14-man unit. Often, Richard cooperates with SEAL Team Two Alpha Squad, which is led by Fred Kochey.

SEAL Team Six

SEAL Team Six is a secret counter-terrorism unit that is created using a plan by Richard and is first led by Richard. This elite unit of 70 men gets all the best and most expensive supplies. They train very hard and shoot over 2,500 rounds of live ammunition a week. Two men die during the training period.

Tre Noc, Vietnam

Tre Noc is a mile or so from Binh Thuy, and is the headquarters of the local Patrol Boat River operations. The PBR boats from Tre Noc patrol the Bassac River to stop the enemy from using it for supplies.

SEAL Team Two, 8th Platoon

SEAL Team Two, 8th Platoon is Richard's second commanded unit in Vietnam. This is the platoon that fights at the battle of Chau Doc.

KATN

KATN is an acronym that stands for "Kick Ass, Take Names" or kill the enemy. This is always Richard's slogan as a SEAL. When Richard is in prison, he dreams of forming a company called KATN Inc. that will covertly assassinate enemies for the United States military, but avoid the bureaucratic chain of command.



Themes

The End Justifies the Means

Richard Marcinko is clear that he is willing to fight a dirty war. His only interests are to get his men out alive and kill as many of the enemy as possible. To do this in Vietnam, Richard is willing to interrogate and torture prisoners for information and kill people who may not be enemy soldiers. In a civil war such as in Vietnam, there is a fine line between enemy combatants and civilians, and Richard implies that many times he may have crossed it. Likewise, Richard is willing to resort to extreme training methods in order to get the men of SEAL Team Six and the Red Cell prepared for their mission. They parachute from planes under realistic battle conditions, and train using live ammunition. This results in the death of at least two soldiers under Richard's command. Richard's joint exercise with the German counterterrorism unit in the North Sea is also extremely realistic, under icy and stormy conditions. All of the men survive, but only due to their great skill.

Richard finally gets in trouble due to his highly realistic testing of anti-terrorism security in U.S. facilities, from Beirut, Lebanon to New London, Connecticut. The reader is forced to wonder if there is a reason why someone wanted these facilities to remain unsecured. Since Richard insists that his Red Cell units playing as terrorists is solely done to increase U.S. security at bases around the world, perhaps there are treasonous elements in the U.S. command. So rather than dismiss Richard Marcinko as a wild man and trouble maker, he might have exposed things that are not supposed to be exposed.

Adventure and Living Life to the Fullest

Richard, at an early age, dedicates his life to seeking adventure. As he enters the military, his free time is centered on chasing women, bar room brawls and drinking alcohol. There is always an element in the book of doubt about whether Richard is doing something because it is necessary for his mission, or because it is exciting and fun. There is a shift when Richard goes to Officers Candidate. After this, he is forced to concentrate and get his college degree. He learns to study languages such as Vietnamese and French.

Still, Richard at heart remains a wild and crazy guy. His marriage to Kathy Ann Black remains a weak marriage, with him away much of the time. His marriage stabilizes for the 4 years that he is busy going to school in Washington DC and Monterey California, but afterwards he is away most of the time again. In his position as Naval Attaché in Cambodia, Richard is quite clear that he uses the services of the local women. Then, when Richard leads units he is back to his old tricks. He has the unit go to the official SEAL bar and get drunk together on a regular basis. He deliberately encourages brawls between team members and then quick shifts toward fighting any outsiders at bars. Richard justifies this behavior as promoting unit integrity, but this lifestyle of bars,



fighting and macho boasting is what Richard likes to do. Part of the Navy frustration with Richard's counterterrorism efforts of the Red Cell, is that he clearly gets extreme pleasure out of defeating local security units and showing that he can destroy the designated targets.

A Political Animal

In the book, Richard openly admits that he was a political animal during his career. If he could not achieve a career objective in the usual manner, he would invent a scheme to achieve his desires in another way. Thus, when Richard as a young sailor is stuck in Naples, Italy as a radioman, he got into fights with his roommate and later with a superior officer. Yet, he managed to provoke the superior officer to hit him first, thereby avoiding being charged with a serious crime. He got the big ugly female commanding officer to send him to UDT Training School as a so-called punishment, although that is exactly what he wants to do.

Later in his career, Richard showed his ability to appeal to the Commander of the Navy and other leading officers in order to get the cooperation he wanted for his unit. When he was leading Seal Team Six he repeatedly wanted superior foreign equipment and gets authorization for it over the objections of his superior supply officer, Ted Lyon. For a long time Richard was able to continue his questionable operations of Seal Team Six and Red Cell, with the political protection of Admiral Crowe, and especially of Ace Lyons. Richard wanted to lead Special Forces counterterrorism units that did not yet exist. So first he spent time as a staff officer in the Pentagon getting through proposals to create these units. Then, with adroit political maneuvering, Richard became the commanding officer of these units.

Style

Perspective

The perspective of the book is that of an autobiography of an intensely combative military man, Richard Marcinko. Richard is extremely hard-line as a person and in the military. He deliberately projects a so-called macho personality of a man who from an early age pursues fighting and adventure, and from adolescence, women. In his home there is little interest in academics. Richard quickly learns to make money and pursue female conquests. At age 18 he decides that his future is in the U.S. Military. After joining the navy and basic training, he finds out about the UDT frogmen and decides that he must join these men. Despite obstacles, he succeeds in going to UDT School and passing the training. In the dialogue of the book, Richard is open in reproducing the typical speech of such macho men, including lots of cursing and profanity.

Richard is a man of action. He spends practically no time in analyzing whether the war is right or even winnable. He wants his men to be the best fighters, to kill the most enemy and to suffer the least possible casualties. In Vietnam, this gets him in trouble with men who are more methodical and less innovative in their combat style. Later, in his counter-terrorism unit SEAL Team Six, Richard's desire for authentic training is largely accepted, although considered excessive. At a certain point, with Richard's Red Cell operation, his testing of security is considered excessive. Richard is investigated and forced out of the military, more for being a hard-liner than for any specific crime. At least, according to Richard, he is innocent of the crimes for which he goes to jail, and he is targeted for being out-of-step with the civilian and uniformed Navy leadership.

Tone

The tone of the book is extremely combative. Richard wants to make clear that he views himself as in the right, and his opponents and critics to be wrong. From his youth, Richard admires fighting men and does his best to learn about the military. Under the mentoring of the Naval Officer Everett Barrett, Richard decides he wants to become a Naval Officer. Barrett convinces Richard that he must be tough to other military men, but also try to help those under him to learn and advance in their military training. Richard in Vietnam has a high degree of contempt for the men who are routine in their war-fighting, or even avoid fighting altogether. Richard does not advance an overall strategy to win the Vietnam War, but seems to think that if all units use innovative methods to confront the Vietcong, it is possible to win. Perhaps Richard is only interested in killing as many Vietcong as possible, and whether the war is winnable or not is irrelevant. He feels that he has fought effectively and kept his men alive and that is all that is important to him. He relishes employing the overwhelming military technology of the United States against the enemy.



Later, Richard does his best to argue for a proactive strategy in disrupting and fighting terrorist. Richard does not see that his counter-terrorism strategy in SEAL Team Six and the Red Cell may be going against political objectives of the civilian leadership. Richard acknowledges that President Reagan views the key opponent of the United States to be the Soviet Union, and the President does not acknowledge that terrorism could be an independent opponent of the United States. In this respect, Richard feels justified in his anti-terrorism strategy by the later battle against Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein in the Persian Gulf.

Structure

The book is divided into 23 chapters of 10 to 20 pages. The book is also divided into two parts, a shorter part called Geek, of 135 pages and 10 chapters, and a longer part UNODIR (Unless Otherwise Directed) of 238 pages and 13 chapters. Part I—Geek, describes Richard's development as a soldier. The first two chapters give the reader a description of a dangerous military exercise by SEAL Team Six on Vieques Island off of Puerto Rico. This gives the book an exciting opening and keeps the reader's attention during the less exciting chapters describing Richard's youth and training. Part II-UNODIR describes his deployment in the Vietnam War for the second time, commanding a platoon and other operations of Richard's 30-year career.

A point of change in the book is Chapter 15, where Richard takes command of SEAL Team Two. This Special Forces unit of 150 men is much larger than the units that Richard commands in Vietnam. In Chapter 16, Richard works in the Pentagon and begins to try to understand tactical deployment and strategy in the incident of the 1979 attempt to rescue the U.S. hostages in Iran. In Chapters 17, 18, 19 and 20, Richard first proposes Seal Team Six and then becomes the commander of it. Despite intensive training, it is not until 1982 that Seal Team Six is partially deployed to Beirut Lebanon, in order to test the security of the U.S. Embassy and Marine compound, where sadly Richard's advice is ignored. Chapters 21 and 22 tell the story of Richard proposing and commanding the so-called Red Cell. Red Cell tests U.S. security in many military installations, but causes so much chaos that Richard makes many enemies. Finally, in Chapter 23, Richard is forced out of the military, found guilty and sent to prison.



Quotes

Finally, the two far right-hand cells filled with air and I began a controlled descent, spiraling in lazy circles as I hung in the harness sweating, and tried to figure out where the hell I was.

(Chapter 1, p. 6)

We'd practice each risky element—shooting, jumping, parasailing, clandestine infiltration, hostage snatch, and extraction—separately. But, we'd never put all of them together before.

(Chapter 2, p. 30)

So the prospect of "Demolition Dick, Tough-Guy Shark Man of the Navy" was a lot more satisfying than "Fingers Marcinko, Pencil-Pushing Teletype Operator."

(Chapter 3, p. 39)

They became even more maneuverable after we'd cut a new design of holes in the chute and added extra toggle lines so we could actually steer ourselves in the air.

(Chapter 4, p. 53)

The first time I canceled my crew's shore leave because there was work still to be done on the boilers was one of the toughest decisions I'd had to make to that point in my life.

(Chapter 6, p. 70)

"I said, "Hey, Fuck (sic) you Chief. I'm here to learn—so break me in. Gimme a dump."

(Chapter 7, p. 88)

Like the VC, we became guerrillas—living off the land instead of acting like invaders.

(Chapter 8, p. 107)

Or got upset with me because I'd allow my merry marauders to make sausage out of two or three young, innocent-looking, unsuspecting VC.

(Chapter 9, p. 117)

It was easier to sense booby traps without shoes on—and the prints I left really made the VC scratch their heads.

(Chapter 11, p. 142)

It was too late. I heard it. One shot. One sniper's shot.

(Chapter 12, p. 164)

After what seemed like an eternity, I heard the Jacuzzis growling on the surface.

(Chapter 14, p. 190)

"Okay, young Tom Williams, fuck (sic) you very much." I swallowed the rest of my beer, grabbed two more, opened them, gave him one, then sat down nose to nose.

(Chapter 15, p. 210)



"Jim, this memo can only be read by people who have A, three stars on their shoulders, or B, eaten cobra."
(Chapter 17, p. 239)

To achieved that end, I designed a program in which each SEAL in Six would shoot a minimum of 2,500 rounds a week, every week.
(Chapter 18, p. 261)

And when we traveled on military orders, we used fake IDs, nonexistent unit insignias, and signed receipts with all sorts of names—none of them ours.
(Chapter 19, p. 276)

In doing so I realized that Mr. Murphy had come along for the ride in a big way: the entire metal surface of the rig was glazed with about an eighth of an inch of ice.
(Chapter 20, pp. 298-299)

By the end of the first week we knew "they" were watching the embassy.
(Chapter 20, p. 312)

Troops? You want someone to come out and actually take possession of your objective? Sorry. Lieutenant, that's not part of the plan.
(Chapter 21, p. 329)

So, while the cops argued, we set up smoke-grenade explosives in the main HQ building, the power generating station, Gordy Nakagawa's prize weapons locker, and the fuel depot.
(Chapter 22, p. 354)

"The Navy spent millions trying to screw me once. I'm not gonna give it a second chance by going back into uniform."
(Chapter 23, p. 372)



Topics for Discussion

Discuss pride. Is Richard Marcinko blinded by his pride in his accomplishments? Does he become totally insensitive to complaints about his Red Cell operation from superior officers? Does this behavior make sense on his part?

Discuss identity. Richard Marcinko identifies himself as the best killer in an organization of killers, the Armed Forces. In order to loosen inhibitions in his men, he constantly drills them and has them bound to each other by rituals of bar brawling, drinking and cursing. What pluses does this create in Richard's units? What is the downside of such training?

Discuss Richard's view of tactical and strategic military objectives. Is he blinded to the fact that the highest possible kill rate may conflict with more important strategic objectives in Vietnam and in other conflicts he is involved in? Why does Richard seldom discuss the fact that the U.S. is losing the war in Vietnam and Cambodia?

Discuss Richard's uncovering of lapses in security in Beirut, Lebanon, U.S. Government facilities. Does Richard have a clear view of strategic objectives in Beirut, Lebanon in 1982? Do he make a clear case of the results of ignoring his warnings?

Discuss the language of the book. There is a large amount of cursing and profanity used in the book, especially in the dialogue. Does this make the book more exciting and lifelike, or does it detract from the potential points of military tactics brought out by the book?

Discuss the point of view. The book is autobiographical and from the viewpoint of Richard Marcinko. Does Richard make an attempt to show the viewpoint of other characters in the book, including his adversaries? Does the reader get a sense of the viewpoint of Ted Lyon and other adversaries of Richard? Is Richard incapable of seeing his opponents' viewpoint?

Discuss Richard's marriage and his relationships with women. Does he make a reasonable attempt to make his marriage a success? How does he treat other women that he meets in his career and his travels? What is the so-called macho approach toward women?

Discuss Richard's conflict with the U.S. military establishment. Why is Richard highly resented, especially after he starts his SEAL Team Six and later his Red Cell operation? Is Richard broken and stifled for policy reasons that are legitimate? Is it shown that Richard committed actual crimes?