

# Term Limits Study Guide

## Term Limits by Vince Flynn

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# Plot Summary

Term Limits is a suspenseful thriller that provides insight into the inner workings of American politics and federal law enforcement. Standard procedures followed by the FBI, CIA, and military Special Forces are all analyzed in great detail. The book focuses on two main characters. The first is Michael O'Rourke, a freshman congressman from Minnesota. A former Marine, O'Rourke is physically powerful and maintains a strongly defined sense of right and wrong. The other main character, Scott Coleman, is a former Navy SEAL and is Michael's friend. In Term Limits, both men are determined to do what is best for their country, but do not initially agree on the best way to accomplish their shared goals.

In Term Limits, unknown assassins are imposing "term limits" on corrupt politicians by ending their lives. After the first three murders, the killers notify the U.S. government that the assassinations will continue unless the group's multiple demands, which include the creation of a balanced budget, national crime bill, and end to the national debt, are met immediately. The killers believe they are acting as revolutionaries, not unlike soldiers fighting in the American Revolutionary War. They are disgusted with the back-room dealings in the White House, Congress, and Senate, and have decided to impose their own rules of order.

As readers attempt to determine the killers' identities, and wonder where they will strike next, many surprises are revealed. Readers gradually learn why the assassinations are being carried out, and just how far some politicians will go to make sure that they can continue "business as usual" in the capital city.

Many strong emotional concepts, including loyalty and patriotism, are explored as readers struggle to understand the motivation behind the extreme behavior exhibited not only by the assassins themselves, but also by elected American leaders, many of whom bear the responsibility of upholding law and order. It is interesting to note that the author thanks actual members of federal law enforcement and ex-military experts for their help and insight into the book's plot developments. As extreme as the action is, Term Limits still reads as a story that could actually happen. Readers will be challenged to question their loyalty to real-life leaders and determine which side they are truly on. The author's message is not exactly black and white, instead preferring to dwell in significant shades of gray that provoke readers to ponder each character's actions and recognize aspects of themselves in the book.

The story is told from the perspective of multiple characters, so readers often know what individual characters are thinking and doing, even when their actions are kept hidden from the others. Term Limits includes a great deal of detailed information about the procedures followed by elite military commandos both within and outside of the boundaries of American law, and bears a strong sense of authenticity that is unusual for a book of this subject matter. The plot is also quite unpredictable. Term Limits readers are constantly kept on the edge of their seats as they wait to see what will happen next.

# Chapter 1

## Chapter 1 Summary

This chapter begins with a description of an old wooden cabin surrounded by trees. An unnamed man with short blond hair sits in front of the fireplace. He is described as an "assassin of assassins, an exporter of death, trained and funded by the United States government." He tosses stacks of papers into the flames. The documents are the result of months of surveillance and study of the men that he and his men are targeting. The assassin and his men have traveled all over the world to kill people who were considered a threat to national security.

The man does not know how many people he has killed for his country. He does not regret their deaths, as he thinks that the dead men had no honor. Those types of people kill innocent civilians. He has no respect for them, and is not sorry that they are dead. Tomorrow, the assassin will kill the men he has been tracking. He expects the murders to change American politics forever.

The next scene takes place inside the White House. The House of Representatives is scheduled to vote on the president's budget proposal the next day. The political scene is quite hectic as many politicians are in town for the important vote. Both parties are trying to persuade the congressmen to vote their way. Stu Garret, the president's chief of staff, is pressuring those who remain undecided. He will do anything to win.

Today, Garret is annoyed because the President is running out of time to secure the final votes needed, yet he is reading nursery rhymes to children at the request of the White House press secretary, Ann Moncur. Ann believes that the President should be photographed doing something nobler than scrambling for votes in the last moments of a vicious battle over the budget. Garret threatens Moncur when the children's reading session runs long. He tells her that he is going to the Oval Office to wait for the president. If the President is not there in five minutes, he threatens to have Moncur fired.

Michael O'Rourke returns to his office to find a group of reporters waiting. They pounce on the thirty-two year-old freshman congressman, demanding to know how farmers in the congressman's district will be affected if O'Rourke does not vote for the proposed budget. O'Rourke tells the reporters that they are wasting their time. He does not intend to vote for the president's budget. One reporter stays to continue harassing him, and tells him that he will not be re-elected if he votes against the President, but O'Rourke dismisses him easily. He has no intention of running for a second term.

Michael asks his secretary, Susan Chambers, where his brother Tim is. Tim is Michael's chief of staff. Susan tells him that since there is no way that the President will remove the Rural Electrification Administration funding from his budget proposal, Tim is not coming in until later. Susan explains that she knows that Michael is just trying to do the

right thing, but guys like him do not win in Washington. Michael asks Susan to hold all of his calls and avoid disturbing him, no matter who calls.

## Chapter 1 Analysis

The book opens with a great deal of foreshadowing. The author introduces the killer, but does not reveal his identity, stating only that he has made a career of killing enemies of the United States. The readers knows that people are about to be murdered, but do not know who the intended targets are. The assassin is pictured alone. His mission appears remarkably simple and straightforward compared to all of the complex goings-on at the White House. The killer's fire is also symbolic of purification. As the assassin burns his research, he is purifying himself for the events that lie ahead.

The ongoing theme of Good versus Evil is also immediately introduced. Although at first glance, the assassin appears to be the evil one, he is then described somewhat sympathetically as a brave patriot. In contrast, Garret is depicted as a devious, power-hungry man singular in his purpose, just as the assassin is. No one likes Garret. He describes the heartwarming scene of the President reading to children as a circus, and shows no warmth whatsoever. He shows no emotion for the children and threatens a female staffer. Congressman O'Rourke, however, seems to be a good person. He is polite to his staff. He has already tired of the political game, and seems humble, as he doubts whether his girlfriend will agree to marry him.

# Chapter 2

## Chapter 2 Summary

President Stevens is meeting with Garret and his budget director, Mark Dickson. They are calculating the number of votes they still need to pass the budget. The men plot to obtain the rest of the votes. Garret informs the President that he is blackmailing one congressman with the help of a mysterious man named Arthur Higgins. Higgins is greatly feared. Most believe that Higgins was in charge of a very secretive branch of the CIA. He was later forced out and is surrounded by mystery. No one really knows much about him.

Garret encourages the President to lie during an upcoming press conference if he is asked any specific questions about the budget. Garret also tells President Stevens to look at his watch and end the questioning early if he becomes uncomfortable with the media's questions. He is to lie and say that he has to leave to meet with a foreign diplomat. Garret also informs the President that one of the holdouts is a black woman. Describing her as a "race-baiter," Garret warns that they should only negotiate with her as a last resort. He does not want her to embarrass any of their financial backers by accusing them of racism.

Garret tells the President that he needs to call three "rookies" — freshmen Congressmen who will hopefully agree to the President's budget proposal if he calls them himself and talks them into it. Stevens calls Michael O'Rourke first. Michael thinks Susan is kidding when she interrupts him to tell him that the President is on the phone. Michael speaks to the President briefly, but does not agree to vote for the budget since the President is unwilling to remove the REA funding from it. He ends the phone call by hanging up on the President.

## Chapter 2 Analysis

This chapter further demonstrates the extent to which the politicians will go to get what they want. Garret encourages the President to lie to both the media and the American people. Garret is blackmailing one of the congressmen, and using a dark and mysterious figure named Arthur Higgins to do it. The author makes it clear in this chapter that Garret is the one calling all of the shots, but that President Stevens is completely comfortable letting Garret manipulate people on his behalf. Garret literally tells the President what to do and say at all times. By describing Arthur in such a mysterious way, the author also uses foreshadowing to give readers a preview of one of the villains that they will learn more about later in the story.

Michael O'Rourke does not play the political game. His reaction to the phone call from Stevens shows readers that he is not easily impressed. Stevens promises Michael that if he votes for the budget, he will go far in politics, but Michael does not care. He is not

interested in obtaining any more political power. The author uses this chapter to further explore the contrast between the personalities of Garret and O'Rourke.



# Chapter 3

## Chapter 3 Summary

The president is stunned when Michael hangs up on him. Garret promises to have Koslowski take care of the situation. He calls Jack Koslowski and asks him to pressure O'Rourke for his vote. Koslowski tells Garret he will see what he can do to secure more votes, including O'Rourke's.

Michael O'Rourke is dictating some notes when a man he does not know storms into his office. He tells Michael that he is one of Koslowski's aides. His name is Anthony Vanelli. He tries to convince O'Rourke to vote for the budget. Michael explains that the Rural Electrification Administration is an outdated project originally intended to provide electricity to American farmers. The five million dollar program is no longer needed, and the money used to fund it could be better applied to other areas.

Vanelli is not convinced. He threatens Michael, telling him that he will blackmail him if he does not vote for the budget. If he cannot find anything in Michael's background, he will just make something up. Michael shows Vanelli that he is taping their conversation, including Vanelli's threats, and Vanelli becomes enraged. He lunges for the Dictaphone, but Michael overpowers him with a judo move he learned when he was a Marine. He tells Vanelli that if he or his boss ever bothers him again, he will turn the tape over to the media.

Meanwhile, Garret tells the President that he thinks they should postpone the upcoming press conference by one hour. He wants them to have secured enough votes to be able to confidently announce to the press that the budget will go through. Stevens agrees, and Garret leaves to tell Ms. Moncur about the schedule change. He gloats about his pending victory, and reminds himself to thank Mike Nance, the national security adviser, for putting him in touch with the mysterious Arthur Higgins. He admires the mystery man's ability to blackmail Congressman Moore so efficiently.

## Chapter 3 Analysis

This chapter not only continues to establish the pattern of dirty dealings in the nation's capital, but also shows a brash side of Congressman O'Rourke that establishes his physical abilities and reminds the reader of Michael's military training. The entire chapter carries a strong sense of foreboding. As the White House celebrations begin, readers can sense that something big is about to happen to crash the party.

# Chapter 4

## Chapter 4 Summary

In this chapter, President Stevens announces at the press conference that he has secured enough votes to have his budget passed. The author points out how much the President enjoys manipulating the media. He relies on his personality and acting skills much more than his leadership skills. In order to answer as few questions as possible, Stevens only calls upon the reporters with whom he is familiar. They ask him predictable questions, and he already has his answers memorized.

Suddenly, he sees a beautiful woman seated in a section usually reserved for reporters covering foreign affairs. Impressed by the woman's appearance, Stevens calls on her even though he does not know who she is. She introduces herself as Liz Scarlatti from the Washington Reader. She tells the President that Congressman O'Rourke thinks his budget is "stuffed with more pork than a Jimmy Dean sausage." She also points out Michael's frustration that Stevens will not remove the REA funding from the proposal. She demands to know what Stevens plans to do about the "wasteful" program.

Stevens is surprised by the question, but remains calm. He tries to explain how lean his budget really is, but that the REA needs to remain in the budget in order for it to pass. Scarlatti continues to question him about the deficit, but Stu Garret interrupts the press conference. Saying he is running late, Stevens provides the reporter with only a brief response, and then leaves the press conference. Garret scolds him for calling on the unknown woman in the first place.

## Chapter 4 Analysis

In Chapter Four, the author provides a great example of the performance skills required by successful politicians. Every aspect of the press conference is rehearsed and analyzed. Stevens is portrayed not only as insincere, but less than intelligent. He makes a bad decision based upon the presence of a beautiful woman. His behavior provides more insight into his character and what motivates him. When Garret reprimands the President and tells him that his behavior was stupid, readers are once again reminded who is really in charge at the White House.

Also in this chapter, the author uses foreshadowing to introduce a new character, Liz Scarlatti. Since it has already been established that O'Rourke does not speak to the press very often, it is interesting that Scarlatti seems to have summarized the young congressman's feelings about the budget quite accurately. How did she obtain this information? Her importance in the story will be explained later in the book.

# Chapter 5

## Chapter 5 Summary

This chapter begins to follow the assassins and their activities. In this chapter, a group of assassins begins executing prominent politicians. The first victim is Senator Daniel Fitzgerald. When he arrives home, the intruder is waiting. He attacks the senator and breaks his neck with one quick movement.

Jack Koslowski's murder is more complicated. A second assassin drugs the owner of the home directly across from Koslowski's. He also drugs the owner's dog, a German Shepherd named Fritz, in order to gain access to the home. The killer and his team of accomplices go to great pains to avoid killing the dog or the neighbor, a retired banker named Harold Burmiester. Once the man and dog are unconscious, the assassin gets into position and waits. He can see directly into Koslowski's home from the window. When Koslowski awakens the next morning and stands in front of his window, the assassin executes him with a sniper rifle equipped with a silencer.

The third victim is Senator Robert Downs. His murder is different from the others in that the assassin allows himself to be seen in public. Senator Downs is shot from point-blank range as he walks his dog. Once again, the assassin and his team make sure that they do not injure or kill any innocent bystanders. Several onlookers see the assassin posing as a jogger, but he is wearing a disguise. This chapter begins to follow the assassins and their activities. In this chapter, a group of assassins begins executing prominent politicians. The first victim is Senator Daniel Fitzgerald. When he arrives home, the intruder is waiting. He attacks the senator and breaks his neck with one quick movement.

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## Chapter 5 Analysis

This chapter is one of the most significant chapters in the entire story. In just a few short pages, three of the most powerful politicians in the nation are methodically executed with precision and efficiency. The blond assassin from the first chapter is re-introduced, but this time, he is acting as part of a team. The killers are surprisingly described with respect and even admiration, at least in comparison to the politicians they are executing. This technique reinforces the author's odd variation on a classic Good vs. Evil theme that provokes readers to decide which characters seem sympathetic to them.

# Chapter 6

## Chapter 6 Summary

The assassinations of three powerful politicians in the nation's capital cause a flurry of activity. Skip McMahon is the FBI special agent in charge of the investigation. After obtaining some preliminary data, McMahon immediately realizes that the assassins must have planned the attacks for some time. He is impressed by their efficiency, and notes the trouble they went to in order to avoid hurting Burmiester.

McMahon, along with his boss, Director Roach, meet with the President and his staff at the White House to brief them on the investigation. McMahon meets Mike Nance for the first time, and quickly grows impatient with Stu Garret's demands for answers on an investigation that has just begun. He tells the President that the killers clearly took the time to study their targets. He believes that they are very well financed. He also thinks that the group could be composed of terrorists, ex-military commandos, or hired assassins. He stresses that the investigation is just beginning, and he does not have a lot of answers yet.

The CIA's expert on terrorism, Dr. Irene Kennedy, tells the group that she does not think that the killers are terrorists. She thinks they are military commandos. When questioned, she points to the fact that the assassins did not kill Mr. Burmiester. She explains that terrorists do not respect human life. She says, "When they kill, they try to strike terror into the minds of the public. Hence the label terrorist...Commandos and assassins, who are almost always ex-commandos, are trained to kill only whom they need to, and they do it as quickly and quietly as possible."

Concerned about how to spin the idea of ex-military men killing politicians at will, Garret insists that the group cannot rule out the possibility that the killers are terrorists, or involved with a domestic militia. As they are debating, a package is delivered to the NBC studio across town. Inside is a letter from the assassins, which the station decides to read on the air.

In their letter, the killers express their disgust with the underhanded dealings of the politicians in Washington, and explain that the three dead men were killed as a warning to the remaining members of the House and the Senate, as well as the President. They insist that the country spends more money each year on unnecessary programs and ignores the growing national debt.

The assassins demand that the President withdraw his proposed budget and create another one that contains no new taxes or tax increases. It should remove all unneeded federal programs and utilize "means testing" to control the growth of Social Security and Medicare. Military cuts proposed by the Joint Chiefs should be made. The killers also demand a national crime bill and a two percent national sales tax to be used to reduce the national debt. The assassins close the letter with a threat. If their demands are not

met, the killings will continue. They promise that no one is safe from their grasp, not even the President.

## **Chapter 6 Analysis**

This chapter introduces some important characters that will begin the investigation, including McMahon, Roach, and Kennedy. The theme of hubris is expanded upon here, as it is clear that the politicians making the key decisions do not understand just how real the threat is. They do not feel responsible for the men's deaths, and are merely concerned with the public's perception of the executions and how the men's deaths might reflect badly on them.

# Chapter 7

## Chapter 7 Summary

In this chapter, readers learn some important information about Michael's background. While attending college, he lost both of his parents in a car accident caused by a drunk driver with six previous convictions for drunk driving. The tragedy made him bitter about the American system of criminal justice and left him disillusioned and opposed to spending a second term in office. With his parents gone, Michael relies on his grandfather, Seamus, for guidance.

After Michael's staff sees the killers' demands on the news, they joke with him that he must certainly be safe, since his viewpoints are so similar to the killers'. Michael thinks that the deaths may be just what the country needs to accept change, but feels uneasy about the killings. He receives a call from Seamus, and takes it in private. Michael asks about Seamus' upcoming visit to Washington. Although he will not go into details over the phone, Michael tells Seamus he needs to talk to him about a mutual friend of theirs whom he thinks might be connected to "what happened last night."

President Stevens is mainly concerned with how the murders will affect him and his place in history. He meets with Garret, Nance, and his communications director, Ted Hopkinson, to discuss what he will say to the media. Nance intentionally confuses the President, telling him that he thinks perhaps the murders were committed in an attempt to derail the President's budget and block his bid for reelection. Nance is not sure yet who is behind the attacks, and he believes that as long as Stevens is confused, he will continue to remain dependent on him for advice.

Garret and Nance help the President determine a strategy that will pacify the public. They believe it will also help them force FBI Director Roach and CIA head Stansfield to resign.

## Chapter 7 Analysis

This chapter provides some critical background on Michael's life and will be important later on in helping readers understand what motivates him. His mysterious phone call with Seamus provides plenty of foreshadowing. More foreshadowing is also at play at the end of the meeting with Garret and Nance. This chapter's ending leaves readers wondering what the power players have in mind, and what Michael and Seamus might know about the murders.

# Chapter 8

## Chapter 8 Summary

This chapter begins with an explanation of the reason that Michael carries a gun. He has a special permit, and he feels he needs it to protect him from the gang-bangers who cruise the streets in D.C. His friend, Mark Coleman, was killed by a drug addict only a year earlier. The mugger was caught, and Michael learned that the man had been convicted of armed robbery twice before, but had been released early on parole due to prison overcrowding. Mark's death is described as the second most traumatic event in Michael's life.

After Mark's death, Michael becomes more dissatisfied with American politics. He sees the "fat cats" talking enthusiastically about crime when the press is around, but notices that they spend the taxpayers' money on other special-interest programs instead once they meet behind closed doors. Michael no longer believes he can make a difference in Washington.

Michael goes to a place called Blacky's Bar to meet his girlfriend, who turns out to be none other than Liz Scarlatti, the woman who surprised the President with her questions at the press conference. Michael is upset that Liz quoted him at the conference, saying, "What is said when we're in bed together stays between you and me."

Meanwhile, the President begins his televised statement about the killings, and Liz and Michael stop talking to watch the television in the bar. He condemns the murderers for taking the lives of men who had years of service to their country. He lies and says that the FBI believes that the letter may have been intentionally sent "as a piece of disinformation, sent to lead the investigation in the wrong direction." He also refers to the assassins as terrorists, in spite of Dr. Kennedy's earlier statement that she believes the killers are military commandos. Stevens says he will not deal with terrorists, and that the FBI will hunt the men down and capture them.

## Chapter 8 Analysis

This chapter is important because it establishes Michael's relationship to Liz, and explains one of the main reasons why he is so unhappy in D.C. Supplying the details of Mark Coleman's death is also part of the author's continued pattern of foreshadowing, since it will be important later in the story. The description of the President's makeup is also intentional. The makeup is symbolic of the mask that the President wears in public. He lies on television when he says that the FBI believes the letter was intentionally sent to mislead the investigation. It is as though when Stevens is wearing his mask, he does not have to be honest. He can hide behind it.



# Chapter 9

## Chapter 9 Summary

After the press conference ends, President Stevens is mainly concerned with whether he appeared genuine and heartfelt on television. Hopkinson tells him he thinks so, but he plans to take a poll to make sure. Back at Blacky's Bar, Liz and Michael discuss the murders. Michael tells Liz that he is not sure that the killers are terrorists. He points out that the group is not killing any civilians, and hopes that the men's deaths can be positive and bring about some much-needed change. Michael is not completely comfortable with the idea that politicians are being murdered, but he also sympathizes with the killers and their disgust with the state of American politics.

Agent McMahon sees the press conference, too. He has no idea why the President said that the FBI believes that the killers' letter may have been sent to mislead the investigation. He calls Director Roach and asks him if anyone told the President that was true, and Roach says no. They agree to meet together with the President the next day. McMahon meets with two of his agents and discusses various theories of the assassins' motives for the murders. Agent Jennings mentions a conversation she had with her old firearms instructor, Gus Mitchell. Based on the theory that the killers might be former commandos, Mitchell considers his own military background and tells Jennings that it is possible the murders happened right before the budget vote because that was the only way the commandos could be sure that all three targets would be in town at the same time. Based on this information, McMahon decides to visit Gus Mitchell and speak to him further.

Liz and Michael return to his home. When Liz is out of the room, Michael thinks back on his conversation with Seamus. He remembers a conversation that took place during a hunting trip the year before. During that trip, Michael told someone a secret about Senator Fitzgerald, one of the murder victims. Michael now wonders if that information got the senator killed. As he stands near the window, the assassin is watching him from the street.

## Chapter 9 Analysis

As in previous chapters, the author is building the reader's anticipation. The foreshadowing continues here as the reader sees the assassin watching Michael for unknown reasons. Michael is pondering a secret he has told, and wondering whether that information led to Fitzgerald's death. Michael's dog, Duke, is also symbolic of Michael's core values, especially loyalty and discipline.

# Chapter 10

## Chapter 10 Summary

Hopkinson receives devastating information from the polls. Nearly forty percent of those questioned believe that the country will be better off now that the three of Washington's most powerful politicians are dead. Several members of the president's staff meet with Speaker Basset to try and devise a media strategy that will increase the White House's approval ratings.

Garret is satisfied that the President's press conference has established the idea of a conspiracy in the court of public opinion. Garret even has Basset believing the idea. Roach and McMahon join the meeting, and Roach tells the group that based on Dr. Kennedy's theory that the killers are commandos, he wants to start reviewing the personnel files for retired members of the Special Forces. He is specifically trying to find out if anyone can be identified as the jogger that several witnesses saw before Downs was killed. Garret and Nance protest, saying that Kennedy's theory is unsubstantiated, and they do not want anyone reviewing the confidential files.

Frustrated, Roach asks the President what information he has that the letter is "a piece of disinformation." Nance intervenes and says they are not at liberty to discuss the information they have. Later, when Garret demands information about McMahon's leads, McMahon responds, "I am not at liberty to discuss them at this point. We are still in the early stages of running them down." Garret is unhappy at being caught in his own trap. Roach tells the President that he is increasing security for the presidential detail, as well as that for the remaining Congressmen and Senators. He suggests employing extra military security at the White House, but the President declines, concerned about how the increased military presence will appear to the American public.

## Chapter 10 Analysis

This short chapter mainly delves into the games that are being played in the White House. Garret is pulling most of the strings, even feeding false information to the Speaker of the House in order to manipulate him. Nance is encouraging the President to play games with the FBI and continue lying about the reason the "terrorists" sent the letter. The hubris theme is furthered in this chapter as well. Even after three murders, the politicians, including the President, refuse to take the terrorists' demands seriously, instead focusing on polls and public appearances. They refuse to acknowledge that they may become the assassins' next victims.

# Chapter 11

## Chapter 11 Summary

Following his meeting at the White House, McMahon picks up Dr. Kennedy and goes to meet Gus Mitchell. Gus is the former Delta Force commander that Agent Jennings spoke with previously. McMahon explains the details of the three murders to Mitchell, and Mitchell agrees that the killers sound like commandos. They would have planned the murders over some time, and they would have taken advantage of the predictable routines each of the men adhered to. They were able to drug Burmiester's dog, because he let the dog out at the same time each night. Downs walked his dog at the same time each morning, and Koslowski was predictable in the patterns he followed while getting ready for work in the morning. Mitchell explains that the killers executed the mission just as he would have, with military precision.

Mitchell questions, however, why the assassins allowed one of the team to be seen when Downs was shot. Mitchell says he would have used a sniper rifle for that murder and not exposed one of his men, so he feels there must be some reason why they did that. He notes that no civilians have been killed, and feels that is an indication that the killers are commandos as well. If they were terrorists, they would have killed Burmiester and not bothered sending the letter. Mitchell also says that breaking a man's neck using only your bare hands is very difficult, and there are not even that many commandos capable of it. He suspects that the killers are part of an elite group, probably Special Forces. Mitchell also says that all Special Forces members hate politicians. He warns McMahon that if his theory is correct, and the politicians do not begin to take the threat seriously, more murders are bound to occur.

## Chapter 11 Analysis

This chapter further explains the motivation behind the assassins' actions. Special Forces commandos make the ultimate sacrifice to their country, only to have their efforts ruined by careless politicians who do not acknowledge the code that the commandos live by. The fact that Mitchell says few Special Forces can execute the maneuver that the assassin used to break Fitzgerald's neck demonstrates just how personal that particular murder was. It demonstrates another prominent theme in the book, which is the idea that all actions bear consequences. Fitzgerald was killed in a more personal way than the others, because he had talked too much.

# Chapter 12

## Chapter 12 Summary

Director Roach watches the Speaker of the House, Thomas Basset, lie on television and say that the FBI is very suspicious about the timing of the murders. Basset goes on to say, "The FBI thinks the murders were committed to try and stop the President's budget from being passed." Basset also insists that he has no intention of meeting the killers' demands because he will never negotiate with terrorists.

Seamus arrives in town and meets with Michael. Michael reminds Seamus that he gave some "highly sensitive" information to a mutual friend on a hunting trip the last year. He suspects that same friend might be involved in the assassinations. Seamus agrees it is possible, but convinces Michael that the deaths might allow some real political change. Michael says he understands why Fitzgerald was killed, but he is worried that their friend will be caught. Seamus tells him not to worry. Their mysterious friend has been completing dangerous missions for a long time now.

CIA Director Stansfield receives a call from Roach. Roach wants to know if anyone at the CIA has any reason to believe that the murders were committed for any reason other than those stated in the letter. Stansfield says he does not. The two men wonder why the politicians want the public to believe otherwise. Roach asks for Stansfield's advice handling the tricky situation, and Stansfield tells him it might be a good idea to let the press know that the information coming from the politicians is incorrect. When Roach is next asked for a comment from the media, he tells the reporters that the information the White House is reporting is incorrect.

Garret, meanwhile, is reading all of the latest headlines and smiling. By telling the public that the murders were an attempt to block the President's budget, they have made Stevens

look sympathetic, almost guaranteeing his reelection. Garret's celebration is interrupted by Roach's comment to the reporter, and he is furious. He starts devising a plan to turn the tables on Roach, and force his resignation as well.

## Chapter 12 Analysis

This chapter is important in developing the theme of Good vs. Evil. Basset knows that the information he is delivering may not be true, but does not care. Roach and Stansfield, however, decide not to participate in the political deception and rely on honesty instead. In keeping with the hubris theme, Garret uses Roach's actions as motivation to attack him, unable to admit that perhaps he was wrong in encouraging the others to lie.

# Chapter 13

## Chapter 13 Summary

Despite requests from the Secret Service that he not make any public appearances, Speaker Basset decides to participate in a taped television interview. The assassins get into position in preparation for his arrival at the television studio. Despite being surrounded by Secret Service agents and Capitol police, Basset is shot dead with a single rifle shot and a nitroglycerin-tipped bullet. Once again, the assassins go to great pains to avoid injuring any civilians. None of the guards assigned to protect Basset are hurt, even though several are standing next to him when he is killed. From their perch across the street, the killers set off gas bombs and pull the building's fire alarm to confuse everyone and allow themselves to escape undetected.

One of the assassins then calls the ABC television network to deliver a chilling message.

A computerized voice on a tape recorder says, "We gave you a chance to implement in a peaceful, democratic way the reforms you have been promising. You have failed to do so, so we have intervened. Do not test us again or we will be forced to impose more term limits. We have the resources and the resolve to kill any congressman, any senator, and even the President. We will grant a cease-fire and give you the remainder of the week to bury Koslowski, Downs, Fitzgerald, and Basset. After they have been laid to rest, we expect immediate action on the reforms we have proposed."

## Chapter 13 Analysis

This chapter furthers the themes of hubris, consequences, and Good vs. Evil. Basset lied on television. He also apparently failed to take the killers' threats seriously, as he thinks it is more important to do another interview than keep not only himself, but his guards, out of harm's way. He ignores the Secret Service's warnings and suffers the consequences. The assassins make the distinction between good and evil when they select the spot from which to shoot the Congressman. They choose a location high enough above the ground that the officers and agents guarding Basset will not be in the line of fire. They do not wish to harm those they consider innocent.

# Chapter 14

## Chapter 14 Summary

The Secret Service agent in charge of Basset's protection, Agent Harry Dorle, goes to the White House after Basset's murder. He meets with Alex Tracy, the director of the Secret Service, and Stu Garret in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. Garret demands to know how Basset could have been killed in spite of his Secret Service protection. Dorle explains that Basset was warned not to go out in public, and that the Secret Service could not guarantee his safety if he did. Garret argues that the men were simply not doing their jobs, and demands that Dorle be fired. Dorle moves toward Garret, but Warch stops him from attacking Garret, telling him it is not worth it.

In the Oval Office, Mike Nance next meets with Garret. Nance warns Garret to control himself, and Garret admits he is worried that the deaths of Koslowski and Basset will keep the President from being reelected. Nance tries to reassure him, and reminds him that it is the public whose support they need.

The funerals for the dead politicians get underway, and Senator Erik Olson, a friend of Michael and his family's, decides to disobey the orders of the FBI and the Secret Service and walk behind the caissons in the funeral according to tradition. He asks Michael to walk with him. Michael refuses, saying he does not understand why Olson could possibly want to honor the memories of the dead corrupt politicians. Michael also tells Liz that he thinks he knows who may have committed the murders, but he cannot give her any more information since that might put her in danger. As the chapter ends, Michael is feeling guilty that he turned down Olson's request to walk in the funeral procession.

## Chapter 14 Analysis

Olson's desire to walk in the funeral procession develops his character. Although he understands what kind of men the four victims were, he still feels that he needs to show respect for their memories. Michael remembers that Olson was there to support him when his own parents died, and draws a parallel between the respect that Olson showed then with his desire to show it again now. By demonstrating his courage and his willingness to risk his life to do what he thinks is right, Olson is placed squarely on the "good" side in the book's theme of good vs. evil. Dorle's insistence that Basset was responsible for his own death reinforces the other themes of hubris and consequences as well.

# Chapter 15

## Chapter 15 Summary

This short chapter covers the funeral of the four dead men. Although Michael refused Erik Olson's request to walk with him in the procession, Michael joins him at the last moment. The funeral is broadcast on television, and when a mysterious man named Arthur sees Erik walking with Michael, he grows furious. Erik offers to introduce Michael to the President after the funeral, but Michael declines.

## Chapter 15 Analysis

The act of walking behind the coffins in the funeral procession is a striking symbolic image. Olson is willing to do this alone, but thankfully has Michael there to support him. The two men represent loyalty, courage, and respect for doing what is right. The author foreshadows the importance of the mysterious Arthur, and implies that he has an intense dislike for Erik Olson. Once again, the author has contrasted those who are good (Michael and Erik) with those who are clearly evil (Arthur).

# Chapter 16

## Chapter 16 Summary

When Michael returns from the funeral, he finds Liz upset. She explains that she saw him walking in the procession on television, and is concerned for his safety, especially since he says he may know who the killers are. Michael assures her that they would never hurt him, and that he was never in any danger.

Stu Garret listens in on a private meeting between the President and Erik Olson. Olson explains that he would like to help form a coalition with the President in order to enact some reforms. He does not, however, want to make it appear as though they are submitting to the demand of the "terrorists." Olson convinces Stevens that the President needs his support to get the budget passed now that Koslowski and Basset are dead. He also points out that many of the remaining congressmen are afraid now to vote for the president's proposed budget, and some are even thinking about quitting.

McMahon tells Roach that he is getting no cooperation in his attempts to look at the personnel files for Special Forces members. He mentions the efficiency in the Basset assassination, down to the fact that the killer used a nitroglycerin-tipped bullet to avoid killing any innocent bystanders.

Nance tells Garret that Arthur wants to meet with them to discuss something. Garret tells Nance they cannot meet with Arthur that night because the President is going to make a statement with Erik Olson to announce a closed-door summit at Camp David to hammer out the budget.

As the President makes his announcement, the assassin is making preparations of his own. His two accomplices receive notice that their next mission will begin that night. After the television appearance, Garret and Stevens are confident that this new coalition between the two parties will help the President secure a second term. Nance cautions them not to take anything for granted, and that the coalition could fall apart if the assassins are not caught soon.

The killer waits outside the ABC news studio for the White House van to return. Once the passengers park the van and leave, he makes his move. Dressed as one of the crew, he is able to walk past security and pick the lock on the van. He attaches a transponder to the control board in the van. He is done in less than two minutes and leaves the studio. He later meets up with his accomplices in the middle of the night, and they deliver the rest of the supplies that he needs to complete the next phase of the mission. The assassin goes to the Potomac River and hides a set of flares and a makeshift launcher on the riverbank.



## Chapter 16 Analysis

The foreshadowing in this chapter is very important. Readers know that something big is about to happen, but do not know exactly what to expect. The detailed plans made by the assassins provide great insight into the level of care they are taking on their mission. Every detail is efficiently carried out. Once again, the author is making the killers look impressive and further blurring the line between good and evil.

In contrast, Garret's deviousness and smugness over a possible second term at the cost of his fellow politicians' lives definitely portrays him as one of the most evil characters in the book. The guilty conversations between Garret and Nance make the two men look more devious than the assassins themselves. The upcoming meeting with Arthur also hints at something very dark. One can only wonder what it is that Arthur wants to talk about with Garret and Nance.

# Chapter 17

## Chapter 17 Summary

In this chapter, the team of assassins continues putting their unknown plan into motion. The men place several small radar units in different locations surrounding the White House as part of the trap they are laying.

Michael wants to speak with Erik Olson before the senator leaves for the Camp David summit. Michael is not happy about the alliance Olson appears to be forming with the President. He argues with Olson when Olson refuses to commit to any budget cuts. Olson insists that national security is more important right now than a balanced budget. The old friends argue over Olson's reference to the killers as terrorists. Michael insults the dead men, and Erik grows upset at the lack of respect Michael is showing for the assassins' dead victims.

Jack Warch tries to convince the President that meeting at the White House would be safer than holding the summit at Camp David, but no one listens to him. They believe that Camp David is safe. Warch makes arrangements for the politicians to be picked up on the White House lawn by military helicopters. The security is very tight, but Warch is still worried about an attack on the President. The president's schedule is now public. He is also unhappy about the number of press representatives who are gathered around.

As Warch makes his preparations, the blond assassin is busy making his own. He gets into a van that is equipped with television satellite equipment. He enters ABC's live-feed frequency into the receiver, and soon he is watching the live action on the White House lawn. He can also hear the details of the action from the ABC correspondent, who is reporting live. The reporter even details the time that the President is expected to be picked up by helicopter and flown to Camp David.

Another of the assassin's team appears at Arlington National Cemetery, dressed as an elderly veteran. He watches the choppers fly overhead and makes a phone call to send a message to the assassin in the van. He hopes that none of the Marines flying the helicopters will be killed.

At the White House, the press is told to discontinue their live feeds as the president and other officials prepare to board the helicopters. The ABC van kills their live feed, but the assassin in the van dials in a frequency on the control board. The signal is received by the transponder he previously planted in the ABC van, and their live feed comes back online. The reporters standing outside the van to report on the action have no idea that this has happened.

The politicians begin boarding the helicopters, which then take off and fly a precise course. No one is supposed to know which of the helicopters the President will be on,

but because he has access to the live feed of the activities on the South Lawn, the assassin in the other news van can see which chopper Stevens boards.

As the choppers assume their formation overhead, the man at Arlington retrieves a black box from his jacket and punches in a code. The signal is received by the surface-to-air radar unit that the team planted two blocks south of the White House the night before. The unit begins to track the choppers, and then zeroes in on them. Suddenly, the alarms on all five helicopters go off in preparation of a missile launch. Reacting to their training, the pilots drastically lower their altitude and release flares meant to confuse any incoming missiles. They believe they are under attack.

Watching the choppers' movements, the old man punches in the remaining codes for the units located to the east and north of the White House. The alarms on board again sound, and the pilots change direction in an attempt to escape. They head toward the Potomac River, and fly as close to the water as possible. Once they are concealed by the trees, the signals from the radar units stop. They think they are safe.

The assassin in the van sees the pilots fly overhead. He is impressed by how low they are flying and the tight formation they are keeping in order to protect the chopper carrying the President and defend him from any incoming missile attacks. He enters the codes for the last radar unit and the flare launcher. He silently tells the Marine pilots to keep their cool and not run into each other. He does not want to be responsible for the deaths of any of the pilots.

When the lead pilot sees the red flares and hears the helicopter's alarms going off, he reacts instinctively. Believing that he needs to escape the path of an incoming missile, he breaks the formation, veering sharply to the left. The other pilots, already nervously losing the formation, react quickly and pull away in order to avoid hitting the lead chopper. Marine One, the helicopter carrying the President, is left alone with no escort and no protection. The president is a sitting duck.

## **Chapter 17 Analysis**

One of the longer chapters in the book, this chapter further details the elaborate planning of the assassins as they remain focused on their mission. Even with the incredible amount of thought that the security forces are putting into their own plans, the assassins' knowledge of military procedures is no match for them. The entire chapter is filled with foreshadowing, since the object of the mission, to leave the President unguarded and vulnerable, is not revealed until the very end. The President is drawn into the Consequences theme as he faces the consequences of his actions. Rather than meet the demands of the assassins, Stevens chooses to stick with his original budget plan rather than make the changes requested. Due to his hubris, he rejects the idea that traveling to Camp David might not be safe.

Finally, the symbolism of the assassin dressed as an elderly veteran in Arlington Cemetery cannot be missed. He shows respect for the dead soldiers by saying a silent

prayer for his fallen comrades. He also prays for the Marine pilots flying the helicopters, as he does not want any of them to die. His character is noble and patriotic in comparison to the political characters who probably think nothing of the risk that the Marine pilots are taking just to transport them to a place where they have been advised not to meet in the first place.

# Chapters 18-19

## Chapters 18-19 Summary

The old man from the cemetery calls Skip McMahon and leaves a recorded message that states, "Special Agent McMahon, we know you have been placed in charge of investigating the assassinations of Senator Fitzgerald, Congressman Koslowski, Senator Downs, and Speaker Basset. We are sending you this message because we do not want to fight our battle in the media. We suggest the President and his people follow suit. We are in possession of several Stinger missiles and could have easily blown Marine One out of the sky this afternoon. You can tell the President that the only reason he is still alive is because we did not want to kill the Marines and Secret Service agents on board."

The message also warns that if the President continues to ignore the assassins' demands and lie to the public, the killers feel they will have no choice but to escalate the war. They are adding the names of Stu Garret and Ted Hopkinson to their list of targets. They warn that they can get to the President and will kill Stevens if the politicians continue to call the men "terrorists" in the media.

Back at Camp David, the President arrives and asks a senior agent how the killers knew which helicopter he was on. The man does not know. After learning that Garret has not yet arrived, Stevens walks into his bedroom, leaving his guards behind, and pours himself several stiff drinks in an attempt to calm his nerves.

Garret finally arrives and frantically tries to reach Hopkinson on the phone. At this point, neither of the men knows about the threats made on their lives in McMahon's voice mail. Hopkinson is being swarmed by media outlets wanting to know what happened to Marine One and whether the President is dead. Garret thinks they need to reassure the public by putting Stevens on television. He demands that Hopkinson bring a camera crew out to Camp David, but Hopkinson tells Garret that the Secret Service has put the entire compound on lockdown, so he is unable to leave.

Meanwhile, Skip McMahon and his team of agents meet at the Chain Bridge, the area by the Potomac River where Marine One was left unprotected. After speaking with the military, Agent Warch tells McMahon that he believes the assassins set a trap and directed the helicopter pilots right into it. The men try to decide what the killers' intentions were, and why they did not kill the President when they had the chance. Some witnesses say that missiles were launched, but McMahon's people only find burned-out flares.

When Warch arrives at Camp David to meet with Garret, he asks to be left alone with him. He has had enough of Garret's rampages, and decides to stop Garret's bad behavior right now. Moving quickly, he pins Garret against the wall and reminds him that he advised against the trip to Camp David, but Garret insisted upon it. What happened

today is his fault! He also tells Garret that he knows that he and Nance used Arthur Higgins to blackmail Congressman Moore, and if Garret does not start showing Warch and his agents some respect, he will leak the information to the press and the FBI.

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# Chapter 20

## Chapter 20 Summary

Michael finally meets with the "friend" he has been discussing with Seamus. The man is Scott Coleman, a former Navy SEAL and the brother of Mark Coleman, Michael's best friend who was murdered. Michael and Scott have become good friends since Mark's death. Michael worries that Coleman may be involved in the killings. The year before, on a hunting trip, Michael told Coleman that Fitzgerald was responsible for the information leak that led to the deaths of eight of Coleman's men in Libya. Erik Olson had been the one who told Michael about Fitzgerald. Now Fitzgerald was dead.

When Michael asks him about the murders, Scott admits nothing. He says, however, that he thinks the killings might not be over, since it does not look like the President and his staff have gotten the message yet. Michael tells him that he thinks the assassins should stop killing and give the politicians time to make changes. Scott warns Michael that Olson could be in trouble if he takes the President's side, and that Michael should warn him.

McMahon finally picks up the voice mail message the killers left for him and plays it for Roach. The two men agree that Dr. Kennedy was right all along. The killers are former commandos. Roach tells McMahon he is on his way to Camp David to meet with the President and his staff about the status of the investigation. McMahon wants to come along so that he can see Garret's face when he realizes the assassins have listed him as a target.

Stevens, Garret, Nance, Stansfield, Roach, McMahon, Warch, and Director Tracy are all at the meeting. McMahon plays the recorded message for everyone. Garret screams at McMahon for not checking his voice mail earlier, but Agent Warch stares him down. Remembering Warch's threat from earlier, Garret backs off. The President asks Warch if the Secret Service can protect him, and Warch warns that they cannot if he continues to ignore the Agency's advice. Warch reinforces his point by telling the President that he now knows how the killers found out what helicopter he was on. He tells Stevens how his team found a transponder in the ABC news van. He had advised that the press should not have access to the live event on the lawn, but had been overruled.

Realizing that he could have been killed earlier in the day, Stevens tells Warch to do whatever needs to be done in order to enhance security. Roach then tells the President that he believes the killers are ex-Special Forces members, and that he is being refused access to personnel files that might reveal the identity of the killers. The President tells Nance that he wants McMahon given access to any file that he wants. He just wants them to capture the killers. After the meeting is over, Nance and Garret speak alone. Garret tells Nance that Warch has threatened to expose their blackmail scheme regarding Congressman Moore. Nance is unhappy when he learns that Warch knows



about the men's involvement with Arthur Higgins as well. He tells Garret that they need to meet with Arthur discreetly.

## **Chapter 20 Analysis**

In this chapter, the author exposes the possible identity of one of killers, as well as his motivation for murdering Fitzgerald. Coleman's warning to Erik Olson is another example of foreshadowing. The author also explores the themes of Hubris and Consequences. Now that the politicians' lives have been directly threatened, they are finally afraid and more willing to follow the advice of the men in charge of protecting them. Foreshadowing is also once again used at the end of the chapter when readers are reminded that Arthur Higgins has requested a meeting with Nance and Garret for some reason.

# Chapters 21-22

## Chapters 21-22 Summary

Garret and Nance visit Arthur Higgins at his home. Arthur is paranoid, and maintains extremely heavy security. A former CIA operative, he uses multiple bodyguards, guard dogs, and a sensitive security system complete with motion sensors. When Nance is alone with Arthur, he tells Arthur that Warch knows that they blackmailed Congressman Moore. Arthur tells Nance to have Garret back off, and he will decide what to do to keep Warch in line if it looks like he will talk.

Nance also discusses his concerns about involving Garret in Arthur's other plan, the one that Nance has kept quiet so far. Arthur disagrees. Now in his seventies, Arthur used to run the "Dark Ops" branch of the CIA. He was in charge of the most dangerous missions the Agency was ever involved in. Rumor has it that Arthur was eventually forced out because the Agency could not control his behavior, and he often did things they did not agree with, things that were never approved by the President or Congress. As the chapter ends, Arthur is having a secret conversation with Garret about how he can help him, and what he expects in return.

Meanwhile at Camp David, the budget talks are not going well. The President and his advisers decide to use some accounting tricks to make it look as though they are making budget cuts when they really are not. They hope that this will stall the killers long enough for the FBI to capture them. Erik Olson, however, is onto their tricks, and refuses to go along with the plan. Olson warns the President that if real cuts are not made within the next week, he will break up the coalition and expose the President's plan for the sham that it is.

Skip McMahon, Agent Jennings, and Dr. Kennedy go to the Pentagon to review Special Forces personnel files. They meet General Heaney, a one-star general who will be helping them. Heaney introduces the others to Captain McFarland and Mr. Delapena. Captain McFarland is the unit psychologist, and Mr. Delapena works with the National Security Agency. Mr. Delapena was sent by Nance to make sure that no secrets pertaining to national security are leaked.

McMahon begins reviewing the files provided to him, only to find that most of the important information has been removed. When he questions the general about this, Heaney says that the Joint Chiefs and the NSA instructed them to remove the documents from the files. Furious, McMahon threatens to return with subpoenas for the information since he is still receiving no cooperation. McMahon and Delapena trade threats. Delapena finally relents, but says that McMahon has no evidence that the killers were ever in the Special Forces. McMahon asks the general if he knows how Fitzgerald was killed, and says that surely the general must realize the killers are former commandos.

The general agrees, but says his hands are tied. Finally, Dr. Kennedy speaks up and suggests that the two agencies must work together to find a compromise. She suggests that McMahon and Jennings sign documents indicating that they will not take any action based upon information discovered in the files unless it pertains to the assassinations. Delapena hesitates, saying that he will agree if McMahon does it, but will not accept that arrangement for Jennings. He fears that the young agent will not be able to resist acting on what she knows during the long law enforcement career ahead of her.

After the agreement is reached, the psychologist begins to explain the psychological profile for a Special Forces commando. A commando is usually very fit, with an average to high IQ. He is caring and compassionate. He is also obsessed with winning, but will not lie or cheat in order to win. Commandos hate politicians, and they are taught that murder is justifiable if the person being killed is evil enough. General Heaney absolutely believes that the killers are American commandos.

## **Chapters 21-22 Analysis**

Foreshadowing is an important part of this chapter. The author employs it when Garret and Nance meet with Arthur to discuss their secret plans. The fact that the President and Garret are still lying about the budget in an attempt to fool the assassins again plays into the Hubris theme. The psychologist's description of commandos also adheres to the theme of Good vs. Evil. The commandos are the good guys, and they are eliminating all those they consider evil.

# Chapter 23

## Chapter 23 Summary

Michael and Seamus meet Erik Olson for lunch. Seamus asks Olson about the budget summit at Camp David, but Olson says he does not want to talk about it. Under pressure from Michael and Seamus, and with their assurances that they will keep the information private, Erik finally tells them about Garret and Stevens' plan to make it look as though they are cutting the budget, even though they are not. Disgusted, Seamus says that all of the men involved deserve to die. Erik is alarmed at hearing this, and tries to convince Seamus to reconsider. Seamus says the dead men deserved to die, too. Reacting, Olson offends Seamus with a comment about his past connection to the Irish Republican Army.

The two men continue to argue, and the debate grows heated. Olson finally apologizes, and admits that he is disgusted with what is happening at Camp David, too. He tells the men that he has given the President a week to make some real changes. If he does not, Olson plans to expose the new budget as a sham designed to deceive the voters and the assassins. Realizing that he is running late for a meeting, Olson leaves, and the O'Rourke men follow shortly after. As Michael and Seamus stand outside, Olson's limousine drives away. A motorcycle suddenly appears with two riders. The person on the back of the bike tosses a dark bag onto the roof of the limousine. Michael turns instinctively to shield Seamus, and Olson's limousine explodes, throwing the O'Rourke men to the ground.

## Chapter 23 Analysis

This chapter also develops the Good vs. Evil theme that the author reinforces throughout the book. The O'Rourkes refuse to let Olson stay neutral, and instead force him to pick a side. By the end of their lunch together, Olson's ultimatum to the President has redeemed him, even though he was out of line earlier with Seamus. The author is always trying to help readers determine who is good and who is evil. Olson's death is a key turning point in the story, and this action by the assassins will force Michael to take action. Olson's death will have significant consequences on multiple characters in the book.

# Chapters 24-25

## Chapters 24-25 Summary

President Stevens is furious about Olson's murder. He calls all of his advisers together and demands that the killers be found, no matter what it takes. He wants surveillance and wiretaps on everyone who could possibly be responsible, and he does not care about the legal issues involved. After the meeting, Garret meets with Hopkinson and tells him to make sure the public hears the life stories of the four Secret Service agents who died along with Olson in his limousine. Garret wants to take public support away from the assassins and give it back to the President. He wants to make sure everyone knows that the killers have now targeted civilians.

Michael decides to meet with Scott Coleman about Olson's murder. Liz is afraid for his safety, and forces him to tell her who the killer is. He tells her, but says he cannot tell her why Scott is killing the politicians. When Scott arrives at the cabin, Michael is waiting for him with a gun. Scott tells him that he was not involved in Olson's murder. Michael does not believe him. Suddenly, Seamus arrives, and tells Michael that he knows that Scott did not kill Erik. When asked how he would know that, Seamus admits that he helped Scott plan the first four assassinations. Michael is stunned, and does not understand Seamus' motives. He argues with his grandfather, but Scott interrupts. He tells them they have more important things to discuss. They need to determine who killed Olson.

Nance has another secret meeting with Arthur. He is concerned about the president's angry response to Olson's murder and how it will affect them. He is also worried that Garret might buckle under the pressure, but Arthur convinces him that by the next day, everything will be fine. He says that after one more assassination, the public will welcome the extra security that will result.

Congressman Burt Turnquist is at home mourning Olson's death. His home is surrounded by four U.S. marshals assigned to protect him. A team of assassins descends on the yard first, and then the congressman's house. They methodically stalk and kill each of the marshals, and then enter the house and kill the congressman as well. They move with military precision.

## Chapters 24-25 Analysis

These chapters contain some of the most important revelations in the book. Through foreshadowing, readers already knew that Coleman might be involved in the murders, but revealing Seamus' participation might come as quite a surprise. Again, the author is playing with the idea that the line between good and evil is blurry. Has Seamus just switched sides? Garret's actions in this chapter also provide some important

foreshadowing as readers observe the way he plans to exploit the civilians' deaths to forward his own agenda.

The foreshadowing continues with Arthur's conversation with Nance. Through their meeting, readers learn that one more assassination may be about to occur, and that somehow Nance, Garret, and Arthur may all be involved. These two chapters further determine who is good and who is evil as secrets are revealed about each character's motives and secret actions.

# Chapters 26-27

## Chapters 26-27 Summary

Skip McMahon reports to the Turnquist crime scene and summons General Heaney and Dr. Kennedy to join him there. Again, McMahon is impressed by the killers' efficiency. He notes that none of the dead marshals ever reached for their gun, indicating that they were each caught by surprise. Turnquist's body reveals the largest number of gunshot wounds, making it clear that he was the main target. After viewing the bodies, General Heaney and Dr. Kennedy believe more than ever that the assassins are military commandos trained to do exactly what they have just done.

Michael and Liz are having dinner when they learn that another murder has occurred. Michael drives back out to the cabin to meet with Seamus and Scott about the latest killing. The men struggle to determine who could be responsible. Scott is afraid to use any of his contacts for information, since doing so might draw unwanted attention to him and Seamus. Seamus suggests speaking with an old friend of his, an ex-Marine who fought with Seamus in World War Two. His name is Augie Jackson. Michael agrees that they should speak with him. Michael also demands that they contact the FBI to let them know that there are two sets of killers in action. Seamus and Coleman do not like that idea, but they finally agree when Michael will not take "no" for an answer.

Michael and Scott use a mobile scramble phone to call Skip McMahon. Using a voice modulator to mask the sound of his voice, Michael tells McMahon that there are two separate groups of killers, and they are not responsible for the deaths of Olson, Turnquist, and the men protecting them. When Skip asks why he should believe that, Michael reminds him that they let Burmiester live. He says that their fight is with the politicians, not law enforcement, and they would not kill marshals or Secret Service agents. He also reminds McMahon that they did not kill the President when they had the opportunity.

## Chapters 26-27 Analysis

This chapter reinforces the details of the murder. Having Heaney and Kennedy walk outside and put themselves into the minds of the killers is a play on the theme of Good vs. Evil. The investigators are impressed by the killers, and can easily put themselves into the men's shoes. One important difference, however, is McMahon's reaction upon seeing the bodies of the dead marshals. He shakes his head sadly when he realizes that they never had a chance, and never even drew their weapons.

Michael's friendship with Coleman also places him in a gray area. Clearly, his character is heroic and noble, but he is now deeply involved in Coleman's mission. The author's provocative approach to his character development adds a very interesting aspect to the story that could easily be further explored in a discussion group.

# Chapter 28

## Chapter 28 Summary

Roach and McMahon rush to a meeting with the President and other officials in the Situation Room. The President explains that clearly law enforcement cannot protect the politicians. He is employing military personnel trained in counter-commando tactics to handle security for all of the remaining senators and congressmen, along with their families. He is also suspending all official business until the new security is in place.

McMahon plays the tape of Michael's phone call for the group. Stansfield notices that Garret starts to sweat as the tape plays, and becomes noticeably upset. Garret and McMahon argue after the tape is done playing. Seeing how agitated Garret is, Nance finally intervenes and draws the attention away from him. Nance remains calm. Nance meets privately with Garret later and tells him that Stansfield was watching him the whole time that the tape played, and Garret behaved very suspiciously. Nance tells him to settle down, or else he is going to screw everything up.

The President agrees that the FBI must take the tape seriously, but at Nance's suggestion, does not want anyone else to know about the contents of the tape. They are to be kept secret. McMahon meets with General Heaney and Dr. Kennedy, who have been reviewing the personnel files of ex-commandos. They decide to put surveillance on all of their suspects.

## Chapter 28 Analysis

In this chapter, several of the author's recurring themes are present. Stansfield is suspicious of Garret, one of the "evil" characters. Garret and Nance are clearly both evil in nature at this point, and somehow involved in the latest murders. Garret and Nance are both suffering the consequences of their actions now that Coleman's group has refused to take responsibility for the murders of Olson and Turnquist. The President's hubris has caused him to take extreme security measures, some of which were recommended to him some time ago.



# Chapter 29

## Chapter 29 Summary

Seamus and Michael travel to Georgia to meet with Augie Jackson. After the war, Augie worked for the CIA. He tells the O'Rourke men that he thinks the person behind the latest murders is Arthur Higgins. Higgins was involved with the murder of some French politicians many years ago. When Higgins was being considered for the CIA directorship, Erik Olson objected and blocked his appointment. Higgins was eventually forced out of the CIA, because the Agency could not control him, and he and Stansfield did not get along. Augie thinks that Arthur may have had Olson killed out of revenge. Augie says he cannot take his suspicions to the FBI. He believes that if he does, the FBI will not be able to catch Arthur, and Arthur will have him killed. Augie is also bound by the National Secrecy Act and cannot give confidential information from his CIA days to the FBI.

Augie also warns Michael not to go to the FBI, either. He says that Arthur has sources everywhere, so he would find out. He would not hesitate to have Michael killed for talking to the FBI. Augie gives Michael a file full of information that Augie was asked to obtain on Arthur. The file contains the details of Arthur's home and his security system. Augie tells Michael that Arthur has one habit that makes him vulnerable.

## Chapter 29 Analysis

The author uses foreshadowing here to imply that Arthur may be killed. The conversation with Augie leaves readers wondering what Arthur's weakness is. They also do not know what Michael will do with the information he has obtained.

# Chapter 30

## Chapter 30 Summary

In a meeting at the Pentagon, Dr. Kennedy tells Skip that she thinks that the assassin who killed Downs must have allowed himself to be seen on purpose. She believes that the killer might not be black after all. Perhaps he just wants people to think that he is black so that he will not be captured, and time will be wasted on the investigation.

Michael, his brother Tim, and Seamus meet with Scott to discuss what they learned from Augie. In spite of Michael's objections, Seamus has told Tim everything, including his own involvement in the first four assassinations. Coleman says he has heard of Arthur, and knows that Arthur used to be in charge of Dark Ops for the CIA. He explains to Tim that Dark Ops are conducted without the approval of the government, and are very secretive. Coleman says that he knows some former SEALs who have worked for Higgins.

Michael tells Coleman what Augie said, from the murder of the French politicians to the motive Arthur may have for killing Olson. Coleman says he has no problem killing Arthur, but would like to make sure he is involved with the recent murders before making a decision. Coleman is also concerned about Arthur's tight security. After reading the file Augie gave Michael, Coleman asks Michael to go with him that night to take a look at Arthur's estate.

## Chapter 30 Analysis

The foreshadowing is very heavy in this chapter as the suspense builds toward a climax. Dr. Kennedy is getting closer and closer to learning who the killers are each day. Michael and Coleman are considering taking action against Arthur as well, and the chapter ends with Coleman's request to have Michael join him at Arthur's home.

# Chapter 31

## Chapter 31 Summary

Coleman and his men meet up with Michael and travel to Arthur's estate. They are only going to observe, and Coleman tells his men not to fire on anyone unless someone fires upon them. They will try to keep Arthur's guards from even seeing them at all. The estate is protected by multiple guards, dogs, and a high-tech security system. The men watch from a safe distance as the guards patrol the grounds. Suddenly, the guards move and the house is illuminated by floodlights. One of the men, Hackett, says over the radio that someone is pulling up the driveway.

## Chapter 31 Analysis

In this short chapter, Michael's involvement in the assassins' mission greatly increases as he travels with them to Arthur's home. The foreshadowing here not only references Arthur's potential upcoming murder, but also may reveal some of the other players in Arthur's dangerous game.

# Chapter 32

## Chapter 32 Summary

Nance meets with Arthur and tells him he is concerned that the FBI knows there is a second group of killers. He worries that Garret might talk under pressure. He tells Arthur that when McMahon played the tape at their meeting, Garret acted suspiciously. He also points out that Stansfield noticed his odd behavior and started watching him intently. Arthur reassures Nance that the murders cannot be traced back to them. Nance protests, saying that Stansfield might figure out that Arthur had a motive to kill Olson and pressure Garret to admit who else is involved in order to save himself. Arthur analyzes the problem, and tells Nance to tell Garret that he will have him killed if he says anything.

Meanwhile, Michael, Coleman, and the rest of the team are hiding at the edge of the grounds. O'Rourke recognizes Nance and wonders why he would be meeting with Arthur Higgins. The men stand outside in full view for a while, talking and smoking cigars. Nance eventually leaves, and Coleman and his team leave as well. Afterward, Scott and Michael decide to kidnap Arthur instead of killing him at home. They want to know what information he has about the murders, and why he was meeting with Nance. The men realize that due to Arthur's tight security measures, the guards and the guard dogs will have to be killed in order for the kidnapping to be successful.

Dr. Kennedy is studying the Special Forces personnel files. When she reads Scott Coleman's file, she notices that he was on a mission, Operation Snatch Back, which failed and caused the deaths of eight men. She also notes that Coleman received an early discharge from the Navy at his request. Her suspicions aroused, Kennedy leaves the file for General Heaney to review the next day.

## Chapter 32 Analysis

It appears in this chapter that Michael has joined Scott's team. If Michael is now going to kidnap and possibly be involved in killing Arthur and his guards, is he still a good guy, or now an evil one? The theme of Good vs. Evil is now at play once again. Arthur's hubris is also evident. He believes that his security measures and his threat against Garret will protect him. Through foreshadowing, it is clear that Arthur is also about to suffer the consequences of his actions. Arthur's cigar is symbolic both of hubris and weakness. His habit has now led to the detection of Mike Nance's presence at his home, and it also puts him directly in the line of fire. The fact that Arthur's weakness is found in the form of a luxury is quite symbolic of the author's distaste for the over-privileged.

# Chapter 33

## Chapter 33 Summary

At a meeting with Skip McMahon the next day, Dr. Kennedy calls General Heaney in to join them. She tells the general that she noticed Coleman's early discharge in his file the night before and wants to know if it is unusual. Heaney implies that the discharge had something to do with Operation Snatch Back. He tells them that Coleman was the commander in charge of the mission, and he was released a month later at his request. Kennedy asks Heaney to contact Coleman's superior, Admiral DeVoe, so that they can ask him some questions.

Once they are on the phone with DeVoe, Kennedy starts asking questions about Coleman. The admiral does not want to get Coleman into any trouble. General Heaney assures DeVoe that he can speak with McMahon and Kennedy. DeVoe tells them that Coleman requested the discharge because he was unhappy about the information leak that caused Operation Snatch Back to fail and cause the death of eight of his men. The SEALs said after the mission that they felt that the Libyan terrorists they were sent to assassinate had not been surprised by the men's arrival. They had been waiting for them. DeVoe says that Coleman took the news the hardest because the team that was killed went in on his orders. He feels responsible for their deaths.

DeVoe also says that they learned that the FBI had discovered an information leak that caused the mission to fail. The person leaking the information was a powerful politician, but he does not know who. After the call ends, Kennedy tells McMahon that she thinks the person responsible for the leak is Daniel Fitzgerald, one of the first assassination victims.

McMahon meets with Director Roach, and Roach confirms that Fitzgerald was responsible for the leak. He says that Fitzgerald told a bartender about the upcoming attack, and the bartender sold the story to someone he thought was a reporter. The "reporter" turned out to be a former KGB agent who now sells secrets to other countries.

Nance meets with Garret and tells him about his meeting with Arthur. He also tells Garret that Arthur will have him killed if he talks. He lies and tells Garret that someone else told Arthur about Garret's odd reaction when he heard McMahon's tape recording. He also assures Garret that everything will be fine if he just calms down and keeps quiet.

## Chapter 33 Analysis

In this chapter, the author uses a reverse storytelling technique to explain what has been happening in the story. DeVoe explains what happened during Operation Snatch Back that led Coleman to kill Fitzgerald. The author also further demonstrates how evil and manipulative Nance is. Nance lies to everyone, even his partners in crime.

# Chapter 34

## Chapter 34 Summary

Michael and Scott travel with Coleman's men to Arthur's estate to kidnap him. They attack when Arthur goes outside to smoke a cigar. They shoot the guards and the guard dogs with guns that have silencers. When Stroble begins shooting out the security cameras, Arthur hears the shots and tries to run back into the house, but Coleman catches up to the old man, firing shots around him to make him stop running. Arthur's security alarms are activated, but Michael and Scott are quickly able to subdue him. They use a chloroform patch to make Arthur lose consciousness. Knowing that Arthur carries a homing device somewhere on his body, Michael and Scott strip him down to his boxer shorts. The men carry Arthur and escape to a waiting car nearby. Stroble stays behind until they are clear, then fires more shots and escapes by boat with Hackett. He also carries Arthur's clothes, including the homing device, in order to confuse the authorities.

## Chapter 34 Analysis

The Consequences theme is at work here, as Arthur is beginning to feel the consequences of his actions. His hubris made him think that it was safe to leave his home to smoke a cigar, but in the next chapter, he will definitely learn otherwise.

# Chapter 35

## Chapter 35 Summary

Back at the CIA Operations Center, Charlie Dobbs receives a signal that Arthur's personal alarm has been activated. Following procedure, one of his employees calls Arthur's house to confirm his safety. One of the injured guards finally answers, and says that Arthur has been kidnapped. Charlie calls Thomas Stansfield to give him the news. A part of Stansfield hopes that Arthur has been killed. He does not like Arthur, and he does not want him to be captured alive. Arthur knows too much about the Agency and its operations. He could do a lot of damage if he spoke to the wrong people. Stansfield tells Charlie to do whatever it takes to get Arthur back. A chopper is already tracking the boat and Arthur's homing device. It should reach the boat soon.

Hackett jumps off the boat into the water, and after tying up the steering wheel with rope so that it will remain on a straight course, Stroble jumps also. The two former Navy SEALs swim toward the shore, where Tim O'Rourke is waiting. They see the helicopters overhead as they reach the shore and run away, but the choppers do not see them.

Back at the Operations Center, the tension is high. Stansfield monitors the screen tracking the helicopters and Arthur's homing device. Finally, the explosives that Stroble and Hackett left in the boat ignite and cause the boat to sink. When the helicopters reach the boat, it is already underwater.

Scott and Michael drive back to Michael's house with Arthur in the trunk. Admiral DeVoe has warned Scott that the FBI is looking at his file and may be onto him. Wearing masks to hide their faces, Michael and Scott take Arthur out of the trunk. Once inside, they give him a drug that will make him talk. Scott and Michael set up a video camera and speakers to record their questioning. With the drug in his system, Arthur tells them everything. The men realize that this information could ruin the country. Coleman kills Arthur and gets Michael to help him drop off the body, saying he knows just the place.

## Chapter 35 Analysis

In this chapter, Michael participates in the kidnapping and murder of Arthur Higgins. How does this fit into the author's theme of Good vs. Evil? Sometimes it is difficult to separate good from evil in the story. Both sides are murderers. As usual, the author foreshadows events to come by keeping the men's plans for the videotape, as well as the location of the body, a secret, at least for now.

# Chapter 36

## Chapter 36 Summary

Michael and Scott decide to leave Arthur's body in front of Garret's house. They want to see Garret and Nance sweat. Michael props the body up against the wrought-iron bars of Garret's fence. Using the mobile scramble phone and the voice modulator, Michael calls the media and lets them know that there is a dead former CIA employee at Garret's house. Later, Michael and Coleman agree that Coleman should lie low and avoid contact with him until all of the attention dies down.

Back at the White House, Stansfield is notifying the President and his cabinet that Arthur has been kidnapped. When Garret hears the news, his mouth drops open and he looks pale. Stansfield notices this and questions Garret, wanting to know how he knows Arthur. Garret lies and says he does not know him personally, but he has heard of him. During the meeting, Stansfield learns from Charlie Dobbs that Arthur's body has been found at Garret's home. Stansfield becomes very suspicious of Garret. He tells the President that it may actually be a blessing that Arthur is dead, since his captors will not have had time to question him and learn state secrets.

## Chapter 36 Analysis

The symbolism of placing Arthur's body at Garret's home is very apparent. The presence of Arthur's body on his property makes him appear very guilty. He is guilty for even associating with someone as evil as Arthur, and also shares in some of the guilt for his death. The consequences theme is now beginning to demonstrate Garret's consequences as well as Arthur's.



# Chapter 37

## Chapter 37 Summary

Coleman returns to his home and scans it for listening devices. He is very concerned that the FBI might be watching him. He quickly realizes that someone has been in his apartment. Coleman climbs up to the roof and uses his night vision goggles to look at the apartments across the street that he knows are vacant. He soon finds that one of the apartments that should be empty is now filled with directional microphones and agents. They are watching him. He calls Michael's pager and sends out a distress call. Receiving the message, Michael decides to use Arthur's confession tape. He thinks that it will be the best way to protect them and make sure that Garret and Nance get what they deserve.

Stansfield meets with Director Roach and tells him that he believes Arthur was involved in something with Garret and Nance. He has already learned that Arthur was given sodium pentothal. Stansfield tells Roach about Garret's strange reaction when he found out that Arthur had been kidnapped, and that he thought he might have a nervous breakdown when he found out the body had been left at his house. Stansfield also has a security video from Arthur's house that shows Nance and Garret meeting with Arthur there. Stansfield tells Roach that they need to demand answers from Garret.

Garret and Nance meet. Garret is panicking. He knows that Stansfield is on the way, and that Stansfield knows he was lying when he said he did not know Arthur. Garret and Nance decide to tell Stansfield that they were working with Arthur to blackmail Congressman Moore to vote for the President's budget. Nance threatens to have Garret killed according to Arthur's previous instructions if he does not go along with the plan.

## Chapter 37 Analysis

The meeting between Roach and Stansfield provides great foreshadowing for what is to come when they formally question Garret and Nance. As Coleman is also included in the consequences theme now that he is under FBI surveillance, Michael decides to use Arthur's confession. Since readers have yet to learn exactly what Arthur said on tape, this is one of the best examples of foreshadowing in the book.

# Chapter 38

## Chapter 38 Summary

Michael contacts Skip McMahon and asks to meet with him. McMahon does not agree at first, but Michael convinces him that he has information about Olson and Turnquist's deaths. McMahon and Kennedy go for a ride in O'Rourke's truck. Michael tells them that an envelope containing the taped confession was dropped off on his doorstep that morning. Michael plays the tape for them. Dr. Kennedy immediately calls Stansfield after hearing the tape, and McMahon calls Roach.

Stansfield and Roach meet with the President, Nance, and Garret. Stansfield tells the President that either Garret explains his involvement with Arthur to Stansfield under the protection of the National Secrecy Act, or he will be turned over to the FBI to be deposed on the record. Nance asks Roach to leave the room, and Nance admits that he and Garret used Arthur to blackmail Congressman Moore. Stansfield tells Nance that he knows there is more going on, and that Arthur had sodium pentothal in his system when he died. He knows that Arthur probably told more secrets to his kidnappers. He is interrupted by Dr. Kennedy's call, and immediately heads back to the office to see what new information she has.

In a soundproof conference room next to Stansfield's office, O'Rourke, Kennedy, and McMahon wait for Stansfield and Roach to arrive. They play the tape, and Stansfield hears Arthur say that Stansfield and Olson forced him out of the CIA. Arthur also admits killing the French diplomats, and using the recent assassinations as a cover for Olson and Turnquist's murders. He says that Turnquist was only killed to confuse the investigators, but Olson's death was personal.

Arthur also admits that Garret and Nance were involved in the conspiracy. They wanted Olson dead also because he was threatening to break up the coalition and expose the President's budget cuts as a sham. The group also wanted to take support away from the terrorists by killing federal agents. Garret promised Arthur that he would get the President to remove Stansfield from his position and give Arthur his job instead. Now that Olson was dead, no one would stand in Arthur's way.

Michael shows everyone a note that came with the tape. The note threatens to release copies of the tape to the media if Garret and Nance are not forced out of politics. Garret and Nance must also promise to donate half of all of their money to the families of the law enforcement officers they had killed. The note also promises that Nance and Garret will be murdered if they try to back out of the arrangement.

The note also demands that Stevens create a balanced budget for the next year, along with the crime bill and sales tax demands they made after the first assassinations. The assassins agree to let Stevens run for reelection if he meets these demands, but will send the tape to the media if he does not. The list of demands continues, and everyone

in the room agrees that they have no choice but to meet them. Making the tape public would probably mean the end of the CIA, and America would never recover from the international fallout over the murders of elected French diplomats. When Stansfield and Roach meet privately, Stansfield tells Roach that he believes that the assassins will kill Garret and Nance soon, so they will be punished anyway. Their resignations will not be the end of their consequences. Stansfield also says that if the killers do not get rid of the men, he will do so himself.

Michael tries to keep track of the details of his story. It is difficult to remember which information he should or should not have. McMahon agrees that he will let the killers go if he finds out who they are and their motives are actually patriotic. Stansfield goes to meet with Nance and Garret again, and he lets Michael come along.

## **Chapter 38 Analysis**

In this chapter, the Consequences theme is being developed with multiple characters. Stansfield is faced with the consequences caused by his agency's use of an uncontrollable agent who murdered foreign diplomats. Garret and Nance are facing consequences of their own. Even Michael is nervous about his own fate based on his knowledge of Coleman and Seamus' role in the assassinations and his own participation in Arthur's kidnapping and death.



# Chapter 39

## Chapter 39 Summary

Nance and Garret are nervous as they await Stansfield's return. When the meeting begins, Stansfield tells the group that he will be playing a tape that was left at Michael's door, but does not provide any more details about it. He gives Garret one more chance to tell the truth about why Arthur's body was left on his property, but Garret says he does not know. Stansfield plays the tape.

The tape plays, and when he hears Arthur talking about Olson and Turnquist's murders, Garret loses control of his emotions, and screams out that it was not his idea. Nance grabs him to shut him up. When the tape is done playing, Nance accuses Stansfield of faking the recording or torturing Arthur himself to make him lie. Garret decides to deny everything as well.

Finally, Michael has had enough of their lies. He tells Nance that he will not play these games. He tells Nance that Olson was a close friend, and demands that he either tell the truth or he will hold a press conference to discuss the tape. Nance still refuses to admit anything, and says that he will stop Michael from talking to the press, as the situation is a matter of national security.

Michael turns his attention to Garret and demands that he confess or spend the rest of his life in jail. Michael tells Garret that the assassins threatened to kill him if he did not admit what he did. Nance tries to call a Secret Service agent for help, but Michael stops him by punching him squarely in the nose, breaking it. Michael throws Garret up against the wall and threatens him. Garret finally gives in, telling the President and Stansfield that the murders were not his fault, that it was all Nance's idea. Hearing this, Michael punches Garret and then leaves the meeting.

## Chapter 39 Analysis

Michael's violent behavior in this chapter reminds readers that he, too, is capable of bad things. As part of the author's complex Good vs. Evil theme, readers will have to determine whether Michael's behavior was acceptable or not. Both Nance and Garret suffer the consequences of their actions in this chapter in a very painful way, both physically and emotionally.

# Chapter 40

## Chapter 40 Summary

Mike Nance is at his horse ranch in Maryland. In order to meet the assassin's demands, he has to resign by noon the next day. Nance figures that until then he can do what he wants. He is still looking for a way out. At Nance's request, Garret arrives, and Nance slaps him for confessing. Nance reminds Garret that only he can cancel the contract that Arthur put out on his life. Nance wonders if O'Rourke knows more than he is saying. Feeling that he has nothing to lose, he tells Garret that he would like to have a little "chat" with O'Rourke to see what he knows and get some payback for his broken nose. Nance leaves the room and calls a mystery man named Jarod on a secure phone.

Back at Michael's house, he tells Liz everything that has happened. He leaves out a few key details, like Seamus' involvement and his attack on Garret and Nance. He makes her promise that she will not tell anyone. Michael is starving, so Liz leaves to go the grocery store for supplies.

McMahon, Roach, Stansfield, and Kennedy meet again. They decide that they must learn the identities of the assassins, even if they cannot prosecute them in court. Roach explains that they cannot halt the investigation, since that would raise too many questions. Stansfield asks Dr. Kennedy to run a background check on Michael O'Rourke. He is curious to know if Michael has any ties to the assassins.

## Chapter 40 Analysis

Foreshadowing is again used here as Nance calls mystery man Jarod to do something for him. Dr. Kennedy is also checking up on Michael, so he may be about to suffer some consequences of his own for his involvement in Arthur's death.

# Chapter 41

## Chapter 41 Summary

A strange man appears at Michael's door. When Michael opens the door, the stranger electrifies him with a Tazer stun gun. As he falls to the floor, his weight crushes the table by the door. The attacker drugs him with a muscle relaxant that will keep him from fighting back. He places plastic handcuffs on Michael's hands and ankles, and tape over his mouth. After making sure that no one is on the street in front of Michael's house, the stranger carries Michael out and drops him into the trunk of his car. He then calls Nance and tells him that the "package" has been retrieved, and he is on his way to the ranch.

Liz arrives home from the grocery store with Duke and is concerned when she sees the broken table and Michael is nowhere to be found. His truck is in the garage, and his keys are still there. Liz calls Michael's brother, Tim. Tim does not know where Michael is. He thinks he is at home. Liz says she will call the police, but Tim stops her, saying that he and Seamus will be right over. She then leaves a message for Stansfield that she is with the Washington Reader and will go to press with the information she has about Garret and Nance if he does not call her back within five minutes.

Stansfield receives the message and is not happy. He calls the number and asks Dr. Kennedy to have the call traced. When Liz answers, she tells him that she knows everything. Stansfield stops her from going into details over the phone. Liz lets him know that Michael has been kidnapped. She says that if he is not returned within an hour, she will release all of the information she has to the media. After Liz hangs up, Dr. Kennedy tells Stansfield that the call came from Michael's house. Stansfield realizes that Nance and Garret must be involved with Michael's disappearance.

Stansfield calls the President to see if he knows where Garret and Nance are. The President says he will find out, and tells Stansfield to use whatever means necessary to get O'Rourke back and make sure the tape is not released to the media. Stansfield calls Charlie Dobbs and asks him to use high-tech satellites and thermal imaging to look at Nance's ranch and other locations where he might be found.

During Liz's phone call, Tim and Seamus arrive at the house. After Liz gets off the phone, they try to determine who would take Michael. They also suspect Nance and Garret. They know that they must find Michael fast, before Nance has time to interrogate him. Seamus leaves and calls Coleman's pager on the mobile scramble phone. Seamus leaves a coded distress call for Coleman.

## Chapter 41 Analysis

The consequences theme is greatly developed in this chapter. Michael is facing consequences as a result of his involvement with Coleman and Seamus' plans. Seamus and Coleman have consequences of their own as they face the possibility of losing

Michael. Michael's violence earlier that day is brought back to him with full force. Even the information Michael shared with Liz could be leaked if Michael is not returned soon, with terrible consequences to everyone involved.

# Chapter 42

## Chapter 42 Summary

Coleman receives Seamus' message. All day long, he has been trying to figure out how to lose the FBI agents following him every time he leaves his apartment. Seamus' message means that the two men need to speak immediately. Coleman leaves and takes his mobile scramble phone with him. He knows that a group of FBI vehicles and a helicopter are tracking his movements. After sweeping the car for bugs, he calls Seamus. Seamus quickly tells him of Michael's disappearance. Not willing to stay on the line for more than two minutes, even on the mobile scramble phone, Coleman asks for Stansfield's number and ends the call, asking Seamus to call him back in ten minutes.

Jarod, Michael's kidnapper, arrives at Nance's ranch with Michael in the trunk. He is allowed to enter without going through security. Jarod removes Michael's handcuffs, but Michael is unsteady on his feet due to the drugs. Jarod takes him inside the house, and Michael makes a move toward Nance, but Jarod stops him. Jarod breaks Michael's nose on Nance's orders. Garret just sits there, doing nothing. He will not look Michael in the eye. Michael knows that Nance will probably drug and interrogate him just like he and Coleman did to Arthur, so he decides to stall for as long as possible. He argues with Nance and spits blood on him, which brings on more punishment from Jarod. Michael hopes that someone will save him soon before it is too late.

Charlie Dobbs tells Stansfield that a car has arrived at the ranch, and the driver removed something from the trunk, but he cannot tell what from the thermal imaging. Fearing the worst, Stansfield leaves for the ranch, telling Kennedy to give Liz his mobile number if she calls again. He wants to deal with Nance personally.

Back at the ranch, Nance's assistant interrupts him, saying that the President is calling. When Nance answers the phone, the President demands to know where Michael is. Nance denies knowing anything about it. He even tries to convince the President that Stansfield is lying about everything, including Michael's disappearance. Stevens tells him to shut up, that he knows that Nance and Garret were responsible for the murders just like Arthur. Stevens tells Nance about Scarlatti's threat, and tells him to admit where Michael is before they all go down. Nance agrees that they could all go down together. He tells the President to stall Stansfield, and that if Stansfield is trying so hard to find him, O'Rourke must know more than he is letting on. He says that he will release Michael when he is done with him, and hangs up on Stevens.

## Chapter 42 Analysis

More foreshadowing is used here as Coleman races to parts unknown. Where is he going? He knows that half of the FBI is following him as he drives, both on the road and in the air. Stansfield is also on his way to Nance's ranch, and readers are unsure what



he actually plans to do. They only know that he plans to deal with Nance "personally." The hubris theme is also reaching an all-time high now that Nance is even hanging up on the President. Little does he know that Coleman, Seamus, and Stanfield and his CIA employees are all in a race to save Michael, no matter what it takes.

# Chapters 43-44

## Chapters 43-44 Summary

Stansfield boards a helicopter to travel to Nance's ranch. The helicopter is disguised as a MEDEVAC chopper used to transport injured people to the hospital. A second helicopter follows, and both contain CIA teams ready to storm Nance's property to rescue Michael. The President calls Nance to tell him what Nance said about O'Rourke knowing more than he is saying. Stevens also admits that he has lost control of his national security advisor.

Still being pursued by the FBI, Coleman calls Stansfield, but Dr. Kennedy answers the phone in his place. Using the voice modulator to mask his voice, Coleman demands a number where Stansfield can be reached immediately. He tells Kennedy he will release the tape if he does not get Stansfield's number, so she gives it to him. Coleman does not stay on the phone long enough for Charlie Dobbs to trace the call.

Coleman then calls Stansfield, who is still in the air. Still masking his voice, Coleman demands to know where Michael is. When Stansfield tells him he is on his way to Nance's ranch in Maryland, Coleman decides it is time to lose the FBI agents who are still following him. He ends the call with Stansfield and calls up a friend named Sam Jarvi.

Back at Nance's ranch, Michael regains consciousness and sees Stu Garret in the room. He tells Garret that the assassins are going to track him down and kill him. Nance tells Michael that it seems that his assassin friends want him back rather badly. Michael denies knowing who the assassins are. When Michael again taunts Garret, Garret panics and tries to leave, telling Nance that they should turn Michael over and resign. Nance blocks the exit and tells Jarod to shoot Garret if he tries to leave again. Nance demands to know what Michael knows, and tells him he will shoot him full of drugs if he does not talk. Michael refuses, and Nance instructs Jarod to "hit him again." As Jarod approaches with the Tazer, Michael kicks him, and both men are shocked by the electric stun gun. When the attack is over, both men are injured, although Michael has received the worst of it. Nance continues to threaten Michael with the threat of drugs that might give him brain damage if he does not talk.

The CIA helicopters reach the boundary of Nance's property. They use thermal imaging to see how many people are in the house and where they are located. They also note the number of guards and dogs patrolling the property. Before storming the house, Stansfield makes one final phone call to Nance. Nance tells his assistant to take a message, even though Stansfield is demanding to speak with him immediately. When Nance will not even speak with him, Stansfield gives the two CIA teams the green light to take the house. They are to shoot anyone who fires upon them, and not allow any of the men in the house to kill any of the other men in the house.

When the raid begins, Jarod fires on the agents, wounding one in the shoulder. Jarod is then immediately killed by return fire. With guns drawn, the agents scream for everyone to get down on the floor. When the situation is under control, Stansfield enters the house and instructs one of the men to cut Michael's bindings. Nance finally surrenders, saying he will resign. Stansfield tells him it may not be that simple.

Meanwhile, Coleman arrives at the Naval Academy and asks to see Sam Jarvi. Skip McMahon and his people cannot follow. Even the helicopter has to end its surveillance, because the sky over the Academy is considered restricted airspace. Since McMahon has been instructed to keep their investigation of Coleman under wraps, he cannot ask anyone else for permission to enter the Naval Academy. Coleman's plan is successful. The FBI agents take up positions around the exits and wait for Coleman to leave.

Once Coleman has gotten past the entrance, he calls Stansfield again. Stansfield tells Coleman that Michael is safe. Scott tells Stansfield that he wants to meet with him, Nance, and O'Rourke. He wants to see for himself that Michael is alright. He assures Stansfield that he will not hurt him. If Stansfield does not agree, Coleman will release the tape. He also warns that if he sees any other aircraft approaching, he will destroy them with missiles. He gives Stansfield a general direction in which to fly, and then promises to call him with more instructions in twenty minutes.

Coleman then meets with Sam Jarvi. Sam is an old friend and one of Scott's former instructors at the Academy. The Academy has a harbor that Scott can use, and Jarvi provides a boat. Coleman drives the boat away. Once he reaches the other side of the channel, he calls Stansfield with final directions to the meeting place. Before Stansfield arrives, Coleman pulls a black hood over his face so that only his eyes are showing. Using a flashlight, he directs the helicopter to land on a nearby sandbar.

When the meeting with Stansfield begins, Coleman decides to trust Stansfield, and he removes the hood and identifies himself. He admits to the murders, but says that Michael knew nothing prior to that morning when Coleman gave him Arthur's confession. Coleman says he chose Michael based on Michael's close friendship with his dead brother Mark. Coleman scolds Nance for kidnapping Michael, but Nance tries to make excuses, saying that the security of the nation was at stake. Coleman disagrees and points out that Olson and Turnquist's deaths had nothing to do with national security.

Coleman demands that Nance provide one reason why he should not kill him. Nance says there is no need, that he will resign and meet Coleman's demands, but Coleman does not trust him. Coleman draws his gun, and Nance protests, telling Stansfield it will be difficult to explain his death. Stansfield agrees, telling Coleman that it would be better if he could kill Nance in the same way that he killed Fitzgerald. As Nance reacts to this comment, Coleman immediately understands what Stansfield is asking him to do. He suddenly attacks Nance and breaks his neck, killing him.

## Chapters 43-44 Analysis

This chapter is filled with symbolism. When Michael spits blood at Nance, the national security advisor is covered in blood that is symbolic of the blood on his hands from the deaths of Olson and Turnquist. His death at Coleman's hands also ties him to Fitzgerald as an enemy of the military who cannot be trusted to keep his mouth shut.

# Chapter 45

## Chapter 45 Summary

Michael and Liz arrive at the airport. They are on their way to Erik Olson's funeral. Kennedy is meeting with McMahon, Roach, and Stansfield for a final briefing. Dr. Kennedy suspects that it was Erik Olson who told Michael that Fitzgerald leaked the information about Coleman's mission and got his men killed. Stansfield says that none of what has happened can ever go public. He needs to brief Coleman, which means that the FBI will have to halt their surveillance for a day or so. McMahon agrees, pointing out that Coleman has already gotten away from them once.

Kennedy and McMahon approach Liz and Michael, who are waiting for their flight. They ask to meet with him and assure him that they have instructed the tower to hold their flight so that they will not miss it. They go to a conference room that is reserved for congressmen and senators. The CIA has already swept the room for listening devices.

Stansfield wants to be sure that Michael will not share the information that he has with anyone else. Michael tells Thomas that he has only spoken with Seamus, Tim, and Liz about it, and that he will not tell anyone else. Liz says that she knows that releasing the story would probably do more harm than good. Michael says he will arrange a final briefing with Coleman, Seamus, and Tim after he returns from Olson's funeral. Finally, Kennedy asks Michael if he is familiar with Operation Snatch Back. Under pressure from Kennedy and Stansfield, Michael admits that Olson told him that Fitzgerald had leaked information about Coleman's mission, and Michael told Coleman about it when he found out. The group falls silent when they realize everything that has happened as a result of Fitzgerald's carelessness nearly a year earlier. When the meeting ends, and Liz and Michael return to the terminal, they hear part of a news broadcast announcing that Nance is dead. Apparently, he was thrown from a horse at his ranch.

## Chapter 45 Analysis

This short chapter provides the final elements of two of the main themes of the book. In the end, Nance faces the consequences of his actions. Not only does Stansfield allow Coleman to kill him, but he also makes the murder look like an accident. There will be no consequences for Coleman. By pointing out that law enforcement agents and spies dislike politicians, too, just as the military does, the author is further convincing the reader that Kennedy, McMahon, Roach, and Stansfield are the "good" guys, and the politicians are the "evil" ones.

# Characters

## Michael O'Rourke

Michael is a thirty-two-year-old freshman congressman with no intention of running for a second term in office. A member of a prominent wealthy family, Michael hails from Minnesota and is a former Marine. He is awarded the Silver Star for saving other soldiers' lives while fighting in Iraq. He is disgusted with the state of American politics. When the first corrupt politicians are murdered, Michael hopes that their deaths will bring about much-needed change in the White House.

Only after dear family friend Erik Olson is killed, along with the four men assigned to protect him, does Michael consider telling the FBI that he thinks he knows who the real killers are. He surprisingly assists in the kidnapping and murder of Arthur Higgins, a former CIA operative and the person responsible for enlisting Stu Garret and Mike Nance's help with the murders of Olson and Turnquist.

Despite being regarded as the most eligible bachelor in Washington, Michael is dating Washington Reader reporter Liz Scarlatti, and hopes to marry her and have children someday. Michael's parents are dead, the victims of a deadly car accident caused by a chronic drunk driver ten years ago. Michael feels that the system failed them and also failed his dead best friend, Mark Coleman. Mark was killed by a drug addict during a mugging. Michael blames the government for spending too much money on pet programs instead of focusing on crime prevention and enforcement.

## Scott Coleman

Scott Coleman is a former Navy SEAL commander. He is also the brother of Michael O'Rourke's deceased best friend, Mark. Scott is very strong and smart. He does not miss any details when planning the assassinations of the politicians. When Scott learns that ten men died because Fitzgerald talked too much to a bartender when he was drunk, he is enraged. He feels that he must avenge the men's deaths. For that reason, Coleman kills Fitzgerald first, with his bare hands.

As a true patriot, Coleman is disgusted by the behavior he sees in the nation's capital every day. He hates the fact that soldiers like him put their lives on the line every day to protect America, only to have the politicians run the country into the ground. He feels no remorse for the murders. In fact, he does not distinguish between their deaths and the deaths of those he killed as a SEAL commander. He simply kills people who represent a threat to the security of the United States.



## **Stu Garret**

Stu Garret is the President's chief of staff. He works with national security adviser Mike Nance to have Erik Olson and Turnquist murdered.

## **Mike Nance**

Mike Nance is the national security adviser and former director of the National Security Agency. His relationship with Stu Garret and Arthur Higgins provides one of the most important plot developments in the book.

## **Arthur Higgins**

Arthur Higgins is a former Dark Ops CIA operative. He worked for the agency for years, and he knows a lot of secret information. He is also paranoid and surrounds himself with extremely tight security. He is kidnapped and murdered after Olson and Turnquist are killed.

## **Skip McMahon**

Skip McMahon is the FBI special agent put in charge of finding the assassins after the first three murders occur.

## **Thomas Stansfield**

Director Thomas Stansfield is the head of the CIA.

## **President Jim Stevens**

The President relies greatly on Chief of Staff Stu Garret and his own acting skills to get what he wants. He enjoys manipulating the media and the public with Garret's help, but becomes terrified once the killings begin and he realizes no one can protect him.

## **Mark Dickson**

Mark Dickson is President Stevens' budget director.

## **Tom Basset**

Tom Basset is the Speaker of the House. He is shot to death by the assassins early in the book.

## **Jack Koslowski**

Jack Koslowski is the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. He is one of the first men killed by the assassins.

## **Ann Moncur**

Ann Moncur is the White House press secretary.

## **Susan Chambers**

Susan Chambers is Congressman Michael O'Rourke's secretary.

## **Tim O'Rourke**

Tim is Michael's younger brother. He works in Michael's office as his chief of staff. He also assists in Arthur Higgins' kidnapping.

## **Anthony Vanelli**

Anthony Vanelli is one of Jack Koslowski's aides. He barges into Michael O'Rourke's office and threatens to blackmail him if he does not vote for the President's proposed budget. Michael argues with Vanelli and eventually gets physical with him.

## **Liz Scarlatti**

Liz is a reporter for the Washington Reader. She is also Congressman Michael O'Rourke's girlfriend. When Michael is kidnapped, she threatens to release Arthur's confession tape to the media if Michael is not returned within one hour.

## **Harold J. Burmiester**

Harold Burmiester is a retired banker who lives across from Congressman Jack Koslowski. The assassins drug him and his dog, Fritz, to obtain access to his home as part of the assassination plot of Koslowski. The men do not kill him, however, because they consider him to be an innocent civilian.

## **Fritz**

Fritz is Burmiester's German Shepherd. The assassins drug the dog during their mission to assassinate Congressman Koslowski.





## **Senator Daniel Fitzgerald**

Fitzgerald is the chairman of the Senate Finance committee, and is described in the book as one of the most powerful men in Washington. He is the first politician assassinated by the commandos. He is responsible for the information leak that causes the deaths of eight of Coleman's men in Libya.

## **Senator Robert Downs**

Senator Downs is the third politician killed by the commandos. He is the chairman of the Senate Banking Committee and is described as the reigning "prince of pork" in the Senate.

## **Brian Roach**

Brian Roach is Skip McMahon's boss and the director of the FBI.

## **Dr. Irene Kennedy**

Dr. Kennedy is the CIA's top terrorism expert. She works closely with Skip McMahon to solve the murders. She is the first one on the team to suspect Commander Coleman.

## **Senator Erik Olson**

Olson is a close friend of Michael O'Rourke's deceased parents. He is killed by Arthur's men, along with the four Secret Service agents guarding him.

## **Seamus O'Rourke**

Seamus is Michael and Tim's grandfather. His involvement with Scott Coleman is an important part of the story.

## **Ted Hopkinson**

Hopkinson is the President's communications director, also known as a "Spin Doctor."

## **Mark Coleman**

Mark was Michael's best friend and Scott Coleman's brother. He was killed in a mugging a year before the Term Limits story began.

## **Thomas Basset**

Basset is the Speaker of the House, and the assassins' fourth victim.

## **Gus Mitchell**

Gus Mitchell is the former Delta Force commando who assists McMahon and Dr. Kennedy in the investigation.

## **Jack Warch**

Warch is the Secret Service agent in charge of the President's protection detail.

## **Harry Dorle**

Dorle is the Secret Service agent in charge of Speaker Basset's protection detail.

## **Alex Tracy**

Tracy is the director of the Secret Service.

## **Augie Jackson**

Augie Jackson is a former CIA analyst. He tells Michael and Seamus that Arthur Higgins may be involved in the deaths of Olson and Turnquist, and provides the men with a folder containing information on Arthur and how to bring him down.

## **General Heaney**

General Heaney works at the Pentagon and assists McMahon and Kennedy with their research of Special Forces personnel files.

## **Kevin Hackett**

A former Navy SEAL, Hackett is one of Coleman's team.

## **Dan Stroble**

Stroble is also a former SEAL and works for Scott Coleman.



## **Admiral DeVoe**

Admiral DeVoe is the one who grants Scott Coleman's early discharge from the Navy. He also warns Coleman when he learns that the FBI is onto him.

## **Charlie Dobbs**

Working out of the CIA Operations Center, Charlie works with Thomas Stansfield on the investigation into Arthur's kidnapping.

## **Jarod**

Jarod works for Nance and kidnaps Michael O'Rourke for fifty thousand dollars. He is killed when Stansfield and his people raid the house to save Michael.

## **Sam Jarvi**

Sam is a friend of Scott Coleman's. He provides the boat that Coleman needs in Chapter 44.

# **Objects/Places**

## **Dictaphone**

Michael is using the Dictaphone to dictate some of his notes when Koslowski's aide, Anthony Vanelli, interrupts him in Chapter Three. He uses the machine to record Vanelli's threats.

## **Friendship Heights**

Friendship Heights is the Washington, D.C. neighborhood where Harold Burmiester and Congressman Jack Koslowski live.

## **The Cabin**

The cabin is the site of many meetings between Michael, Seamus, and Coleman.

## **Nitroglycerin-tipped bullet**

The assassin shoots Speaker Basset with a nitroglycerin-tipped bullet that will explode upon impact. Using this type of bullet minimizes the chance that the bullet will hit anyone else after killing Basset.

## **Sodium Pentothal**

Coleman injects Arthur with sodium pentothal in order to get him to tell the truth. Nance also threatens to use it on Michael.

## **Arthur's Confession Tape**

Michael and Scott tape Arthur's confession. Michael turns it over to the FBI in order to force Garret and Nance out of office.

## **Mike Nance's Horse Ranch**

Mike Nance's horse ranch is the scene of Michael's torture at Jarod's hands. Stansfield and his people raid the house to save Michael.

## **Tazer**

Jarod uses this type of electric "stun gun" on Michael when he kidnaps him.

## **Arthur's Cigars**

Arthur Higgins' cigars are his weakness. Scott and Michael are able to kidnap Arthur when he leaves the security of his home to smoke a cigar.

## **Arthur Higgins' cigars are his weakness. Scott and Michael a**

Michael and Scott use a mobile scramble phone to keep anyone from tracing their calls.

## **Voice Modulator**

The voice modulator disguises the sound of Scott and Michael's voices when they make phone calls.

## **Brasstown, Georgia**

Michael and Seamus' meet with Augie Jackson in Brasstown, Georgia.

## **Dark Ops**

Arthur Higgins is the former head of the Dark Ops division of the CIA. Dark ops are covert operations that are funded from non-government sources and run without the official knowledge of the President and the Intelligence Committee.

## **The SEAL Demolition and Salvage Corporation**

This is the name of the business that Scott runs with his men. Seamus provides the seed money for the business as an excuse for Seamus and Scott to meet on a regular basis.

## **Directional Mikes**

The CIA uses directional mikes to hear conversations that take place up to three hundred feet away. These enable agents to hear through walls. Coleman discovers that the FBI is using these special microphones to eavesdrop on his conversations.

## **The CIA Operations Center**

It is at the Operations Center that the staff first realizes that something has happened to Arthur Higgins. Charlie Dobbs is the main character working out of the Center.

## **Chloroform**

Michael uses chloroform to knock out Arthur Higgins when he and Coleman kidnap him.

# Themes

## Good vs. Evil

Term Limits is all about the struggle between Good and Evil. Author Vince Flynn puts a different spin on the tale, however, by making Coleman the killer a "good" guy and Nance, the national security adviser, one of the evil ones. Michael is definitely a good guy, yet he condones the first assassinations because he feels that the victims were evil and deserved to die. That is not how traditional good guys appear in literature. Michael eventually participates in the kidnapping and murder of Arthur Higgins, and he does not protest even as Coleman kills Nance right in front of him. Seamus is also a "good" guy, yet he participates in the assassinations and feels that violence is acceptable as long as it is directed at the right people. Seamus believes that the killings are being committed for the greater good, and will help the country become a better place.

Nance, Stevens, and Garret are all on the side of Evil, however. It is interesting to note that the main difference between the two sides is not based upon behavior. Both sides believe in violence, secrecy, and even murder when it suits their needs. Both sides are devious and secretive. Only the motives are different. Nance, Stevens, and Garret are all motivated by power and greed. Arthur is also motivated by power. It is his hatred for Olson that leads him to kill the senator.

McMahon, Roach, Kennedy, and Stansfield are all good guys, too, yet each of them condones Nance's murder and agrees to keep Arthur's confession a secret. Their excuse is that they want what is best for the country, but is that their only motive? Stansfield is not unhappy that Arthur and Nance are dead. Kennedy and Stansfield both work for the CIA, so they could simply be protecting their own jobs by keeping the secret that would almost certainly cause the CIA to be disbanded forever. Rather than bringing the "bad" guy to justice, McMahon agrees to let Coleman go unpunished. Examples like these really give readers a lot to think about in terms of where they stand. Each reader must decide for themselves who the bad guys really are, and who is truly evil.

## Consequences

Nearly all of the book's characters face consequences for their actions. Even Coleman is paranoid about being caught and punished for his actions. He constantly worries about FBI surveillance, and is always looking over his shoulder. It is hard for him to trust anyone, probably because he knows exactly what men are capable of. When Michael decides to use Arthur's confession tape to blackmail Garret and Nance, he suffers the consequences almost immediately when Nance has Jarod kidnap him.

President Stevens' careless attitude toward the American people and his job also has consequences. Not only does the President fear for his life after the incident on Marine

One, but he also worries about how his actions and the actions of the assassins will affect his legacy and reputation for years to come. Stevens is worried about his place in history and how the assassinations will be forever portrayed. He worries about the budget and the next election as well. When he fails to meet the killers' demands, Speaker Bassett is killed, so now the President also has blood on his hands.

Even Seamus has consequences to deal with. When Michael is kidnapped, the old man curses himself for ever getting Michael involved in the first place. Having already lost so much already, Seamus becomes painfully aware of what is at stake, and a lot of it is his fault for taking part in the assassinations and letting Michael join in.

## Hubris

Nearly every character in the book is also affected by hubris, which means excessive pride, self-confidence or arrogance that often results in fatal consequences. When the President and Anthony Vanelli both try to convince Michael to vote for the proposed budget and he refuses, both men react with hubris. The President is stunned that Michael would dare hang up on him. Vanelli asks Michael, "Who the hell do you think you are?" and makes it clear that he believes he is superior to him.

When the first assassinations occur, President Stevens and his staff all react with hubris. They refuse to believe that they could really be in danger. Bassett is a prime example of this. Even after he is warned that the Secret Service cannot protect him if he makes a public appearance, Bassett still goes through with it and dies as a result. The President does the same when he organizes the economic summit at Camp David. He does not take the killers' threat to kill him seriously until he is left vulnerable during the incident on the Marine One chopper.

Garret and Nance believe that they can get away with anything and everything. They even believe that the original assassins will be blamed for Olson and Turnquist's murder. It apparently never occurs to them that the assassins might refuse to take responsibility for the latest deaths, or that they might retaliate and kidnap Arthur.



# Style

## Point of View

Term Limits is told from a third-person point of view. Although Michael O'Rourke appears to be the main protagonist, the perspective changes often, and readers are exposed to each character's thoughts. The chapters often include scenes that would be well suited for a movie script or play, with the action rapidly switching from place to place and character to character. In the final chapters, the author continually shifts back and forth between scenes to show Nance and Jarod torturing Michael, Coleman speaking to Stansfield on the phone as the FBI pursues him, McMahon and his agents in pursuit, and Stansfield rushing to the ranch via helicopter.

By using this technique, readers are treated to multiple examples of foreshadowing. The book opens with a description of an unnamed assassin who is preparing for the violence of the next day, but then the author provides a bird-eye view of the President and cabinet members' attempts to pass the President's budget. The serious tone of the assassins' missions is immediately contrasted by the seeming frivolity of makeup artists applying the President's makeup, and the President reflecting on his own considerable acting skills.

## Setting

Most of the scenes in the book take place within Washington, D.C. and the surrounding area. Famous buildings and monuments, including the Pentagon, the Lincoln and Washington Monuments, and Kennedy's gravesite at Arlington National Cemetery are mentioned. The President and his cabinet often meet at the White House in multiple different rooms, including the Situation Room.

Multiple references are made to "Langley," as the CIA headquarters is located in Langley, Virginia, and many meetings in the book, especially those including Dr. Kennedy and Thomas Stansfield, are held there. The Naval Academy is located in Annapolis, Maryland, and Nance's horse ranch is located in rural Maryland. Augie Jackson meets with Michael and Seamus in Brasstown, Georgia. Camp David is a well-known retreat for the President as well.

## Language and Meaning

Term Limits is very easy to read. Most of the plot develops as the result of dialogue occurring between the characters. The author also uses a lot of foreshadowing to prepare the reader for what is about to happen next. Although the book is rather long at over 600 pages, the simple language does make the reading go rather quickly. The author uses many political and military terms, but they are completely appropriate in light of the subject matter. He does not spend a lot of time building the suspense in the

plot, instead jumping right into the action and then showing the readers how all of the individual characters react to what has just happened.

The author's style is very methodical, and the storytelling is linear. The military descriptions contain a great amount of detail, and characters like Coleman are incredibly meticulous in their mannerisms and behaviors. The author describes the characters in a very matter-of-fact way that immediately shows readers what each character is really all about. He also frequently has one character give their opinions about the others, so that also helps readers keep track of the "good" guys and the "bad" guys as well.

## Structure

The book is comprised of 612 pages. It is divided into forty-five chapters, and many of the chapters are quite short. All of the chapters are unnamed. The story follows a chronological format and uses no flashbacks or unusual pacing. As a modern thriller, the format is designed so that novice readers can read a few short chapters in one sitting, rather than be forced to read large passages at one time in order to complete a chapter or specific plot point.

The pacing of the book is very similar to that of a movie or a play and involves plenty of action and meaningful dialogue with very little fluff. The author is very detailed in some areas about specific aspects of military procedure, yet avoids excess descriptions of insignificant scenery or events. Readers watch the characters through an invisible wall that allows them to observe everything that each character is doing and feeling, even when the other characters seem not to notice.

The book is quite captivating, and keeps readers in suspense throughout the story. There are multiple plot twists that will surprise readers and keep them guessing. The author does not waste a lot of time developing minor characters, yet he provides just enough history on each main character so that readers can learn what motivates them. Understanding the motivations of each character is critical in furthering the Good vs. Evil theme that occurs throughout the story.

# Quotes

"Congressman Michael O'Rourke from Minnesota has said that even though he thinks your budget is, quote, 'stuffed with more pork than a Jimmy Dean sausage,' he would still be willing to vote for it if you shut down the Rural Electrification Administration, an agency that is estimated to cost the American taxpayer five hundred to seven hundred million dollars a year. This agency was founded in 1935 for the sole purpose of bringing electricity to rural America...My question is this: Mr. President, I know that the leaders of our country are very busy, but have you or anyone else in Washington noticed that all of rural America has had electricity for over twenty years? And now that you've been informed, what are you going to do to shut down this wasteful program?"  
Chapter Four, page 33

"Fitzgerald was addicted to power no differently than a crack addict is addicted to the rock." Chapter Five, page 39

"If you are incapable of restoring the limited form of government that the framers of the Constitution intended, quit and go home. We will be watching your actions closely. This is the only warning we will give. If you do not respond to these demands, you will be killed. None of you are out of our reach-not even the President." Chapter Six, page 74

"Well, Michael, you don't have to worry about them killing you. It sounds like they're right up your alley." Chapter Seven, page 77

"I don't think our country will miss the likes of Fitzgerald, Downs, and Koslowski."  
Chapter Seven, page 77

"Did it look genuine and heartfelt?" Chapter Nine, page 104

"It might be a good idea to tell him now is not a good time to get into bed with the President." Chapter 20, page 262

"One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter."  
Chapter 23, page 298

"We conduct our surveillance a little differently than you do." Chapter 28, page 368

"He's the most evil son of a bitch I've ever known." Chapter 29, page 377

"Well, you'd better find him. You have one hour." Chapter 41, page 550

"If you could kill him in the same manner that you killed Senator Fitzgerald, it would make things much easier." Chapter 44, page 603

## Topics for Discussion

Choose the noblest character from the following list: Michael O'Rourke, Scott Coleman, Skip McMahon, Erik Olson. Explain your choice and be prepared to defend it. Explain what makes that character nobler than the others.

Who is the most evil — Stu Garret, Mike Nance, Arthur Higgins, or President Stevens? Why? Be prepared to explain and defend your choice.

Do you believe that Fitzgerald deserved to die for what he did to cause the death of Coleman's men? Why or why not?

Do you believe that Term Limits contains an accurate representation of politics in Washington? Why or why not? Provide examples of specific passages in the book to defend your answer.

Which character do you relate to the most? Why?

Do you believe that anarchy is the answer to politics as usual? Do you believe that revolution is necessary in order for real change to occur? Discuss why or why not.

How do you feel about Michael's involvement in both Arthur and Nance's deaths? Explain.