

RULE OF LAW



RANDY
SINGER

"[Singer] is every bit as enjoyable as John Grisham."

—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY—

PRAISE FOR RANDY SINGER

“Cross James Michener’s great historical fiction with a John Grisham legal thriller, and you’ve got this epic classic by Singer.”

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY ON THE ADVOCATE

“Singer presents a compelling tale based on two real trials: that of Jesus and that of Paul in Nero’s court. This book is a riveting look into ancient Rome and offers parallels to our current political climate.”

ROMANTIC TIMES ON THE ADVOCATE (TOP PICK)

“Singer, the attorney-author of several solid legal thrillers, turns in another winner. . . . Singer’s many fans will be lining up to read this one.”

BOOKLIST ON DEAD LAWYERS TELL NO TALES

“Singer’s latest courtroom drama is full of twists and turns, second chances, and spiritual redemption. The author’s experience as a trial attorney is evident in the details and realism throughout. He allows the reader an up-close view into the legal system.”

ROMANTIC TIMES ON DEAD LAWYERS TELL NO TALES

“This riveting and thought-provoking legal thriller is sure to please Singer’s fans and earn him new ones.”

LIBRARY JOURNAL ON DEAD LAWYERS TELL NO TALES

“Singer skillfully loosens the strings and reweaves them into a tale that entertains, surprises, and challenges readers to rethink justice and mercy.”

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY ON THE LAST PLEA BARGAIN

“Another solid, well-crafted novel from an increasingly popular writer. . . . Its nonfiction origins lend the book an air of reality that totally made-up stories sometimes lack.”

BOOKLIST ON THE LAST PLEA BARGAIN (STARRED REVIEW)

“*The Last Plea Bargain* is a superbly written book, hard to put down, and easy to pick back up.”

THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

“Singer’s legal knowledge is well matched by his stellar storytelling. Again, he brings us to the brink and lets us hang before skillfully pulling us back.”

ROMANTIC TIMES ON FATAL CONVICTIONS

“Great suspense; gritty, believable action . . . make [*False Witness*] Singer’s best yet.”

BOOKLIST (STARRED REVIEW)

“A book that will entertain readers and make them think—what more can one ask?”

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY ON THE JUSTICE GAME

“Singer artfully crafts a novel that is the perfect mix of faith and suspense. . . . [*The Justice Game* is] fast-paced from the start to the surprising conclusion.”

ROMANTIC TIMES

“At the center of the heart-pounding action are the moral dilemmas that have become Singer’s stock-in-trade. . . . An exciting thriller.”

BOOKLIST ON BY REASON OF INSANITY

“Singer hooks readers from the opening courtroom scene of this tasty thriller, then spurs them through a fast trot across a story line that just keeps delivering.”

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY ON BY REASON OF INSANITY

“[A] legal thriller that matches up easily with the best of Grisham.”

CHRISTIAN FICTION REVIEW ON IRREPARABLE HARM

“*Directed Verdict* is a well-crafted courtroom drama with strong characters, surprising twists, and a compelling theme.”

RANDY ALCORN, BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF SAFELY HOME



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Rule of Law

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Rule of Law is a work of fiction. Where real people, events, establishments, organizations, or locales appear, they are used fictitiously. All other elements of the novel are drawn from the author's imagination.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

I wrote *Rule of Law* in 2016 to address some critical issues lurking on the horizon. Is the president above the law in matters of foreign policy? Should the CIA be fighting shadow wars with drones and Special Forces in countries where we have not declared war? And what happens when the lives of service members are sacrificed for political gain?

To avoid getting bogged down in the political polarization that has gripped our country, I created a president, a cabinet, and a Supreme Court composed of characters who bear little resemblance to the current occupants of those positions. It's fiction, after all, though it's hard to match the entertainment value of the real world. But to at least anchor the story in reality, all historical references—political, military, and legal—are based on actual events. And if that all makes sense, you should probably start writing your own novels.

Most of my stories are inspired by real life. I set part of the story in Yemen because, as a lawyer, I have filed counterterrorism lawsuits on behalf of clients who were kidnapped and tortured by the Houthis. I centered the action around a SEAL team mission because I live in Virginia Beach, the home base for several teams, and have great respect for these elite warriors. Some are my friends and, as a pastor,

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members of my congregation. I've seen the tragedy of promising lives cut short and the resolve of the SEAL families to carry on. My hope is that this book might reflect the depth of that heroism.

I did not know when I wrote this story that its tragic premise would soon unfold in real life. In January 2017, a SEAL team raid in Yemen resulted in a tragic loss of life. There were reports that the raid might have been compromised.

Though this is a work of fiction, the issues in this book are real. We owe it to our soldiers to think deeply about them.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

HAMILTON ADMINISTRATION

Amanda Hamilton—president of the United States

Leroy Frazier—vice president of the United States

Philip Kilpatrick—White House chief of staff

John Marcano—director of the CIA

Seth Wachsmann—attorney general

Roman Simpson—secretary of defense

ATTORNEYS AND JUDGES

Paige Chambers

Wyatt Jackson

Wellington Farnsworth

Kyle Gates—attorney for John Marcano

Dylan Pierce—attorney for Philip Kilpatrick

Landon Reed—attorney for Paige Chambers

Thea Solberg—district judge assigned to the *Anderson* case

Mitchell Taylor—U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia

MILITARY PERSONNEL AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Patrick Quillen—Navy SEAL

Bill Harris—Patrick's grandfather

Troy “Beef” Anderson—Navy SEAL

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Kristen Anderson—Troy’s wife

Justin and Caleb Anderson—Troy and Kristen’s sons

Brandon Lawrence—drone pilot

Admiral Paul Towers—commanding officer, Joint Special Operations

Command

Commander Daniel Reese—Admiral Towers’s chief of staff

UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT

Cyrus Leonard—chief justice

Augusta Augustini—liberal

Kathryn Byrd—conservative

Barton “the Beard” Cooper—conservative

Taj Deegan—swing vote

William Martin Jacobs III—liberal

Reginald Murphy—liberal

David Sikes—conservative

Evangelina Torres—liberal

Patricia Ross-Braxton—retired

OTHERS

Abdullah Fahd bin Abdulaziz—member of the Saudi royal family

Mokhtar al-Bakri, aka Pinocchio—Yemeni CIA informant

Yazeed Abdul Hamid—Iranian cleric

Cameron Holloman—*Washington Post* journalist

Gazala Holloman—Cameron’s wife

Harry Coburn—reporter for the *New York Tribune*

Saleet Zafar—Yemeni cleric

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SANA'A, YEMEN

They descended like vultures from the C-17 transport plane, silhouettes against a quarter moon in a tar-black sky. Invisible, silent predators. Arms and legs spread wide, free-falling for the first few seconds, the wind rushing past their arched bodies at 120 miles per hour. Adrenaline surging with every heartbeat.

Twenty men had stepped out of the cargo hold at 31,000 feet, into the frigid air above the sovereign territory of Yemen. Twenty-two seconds later, at 27,000 feet, they snapped their chutes open, checked their NavBoards, and adjusted their flights. They would float through the thin and biting air for nearly twenty minutes, landing within a few hundred yards of the first rally point on a desolate mountain plateau nearly five kilometers outside the city of Sana'a.

The men were part of a Tier 1 Special Forces "asset," the best America had to offer. Among them were a farmer from New York, a

swimmer from California, a hunter from Texas, a lacrosse player from Connecticut. They had trained their entire adult lives for a moment like this, a presidential mission, one the suits in D.C. were following in real time. The president herself would monitor progress from the mahogany-lined Situation Room, watching video from the team leader's camera, listening to every spoken word on the command net, the radio frequency used by the team leader and headquarters staff.

These men were part of the famed SEAL Team Six, officially known as the Naval Special Warfare Development Group or DEVGRU, and this team, from the secretive Black Squadron, would be notching their own place in the history books tonight. It wasn't quite bin Laden, but unlike other covert operations, this one would not go unnoticed. In fact, if all went according to plan, the world would later watch select portions of the video. They would see the lethal efficiency of this team. Freedom for condemned prisoners. A statement that America was entitled to respect.

The mission was code-named Operation Exodus, a name Patrick Quillen and his men secretly disliked. They wanted to call it Alcatraz because it would be a spectacular jailbreak, but then the president weighed in, followed by the PR geeks, and a name of requisite nobility was chosen. The Houthi rebels running Yemen had provided no trials or due process for the two noncombatants the SEAL team had been sent to extract. The Houthis had threatened to execute the prisoners by hanging them on Easter Sunday, thumbing their noses at the United States and Saudi Arabia. The president had dispatched this team to put things right, to set the captives free. Operation Exodus was born.

The first prisoner was an American journalist named Cameron Holloman, a flamboyant reporter for the *Washington Post*, one of those pretty boys who inserted themselves into war-torn countries and dreamed of Pulitzers. He had flown into Saudi Arabia and snuck across the border with Yemen so he could report on the plight of the people caught in the cross fire between the Saudi air raids and the Houthis'

counterattacks. But after two weeks in Yemen, he had been arrested, accused of being an American spy, and scheduled for execution.

Diplomacy with the Iranian-backed Houthis had long since failed.

In the same prison as Holloman, two cells down, sat Abdullah Fahd bin Abdulaziz, a member of the Saudi royal family, a rebellious nephew who had entered Yemen on his own unauthorized diplomatic mission. Like Holloman, he had been arrested and accused of espionage. And like Holloman, he was scheduled to be hanged on Easter Sunday. The Saudis were desperate to free him, and the mission would be a failure if he died or was left behind.

The intel for the mission came from a Yemeni asset whom the CIA had dubbed “Pinocchio,” a twist on the fact that the man had proven himself with his handlers, his information always solid. He had provided the precise layout of the prison down to the cell numbers for the targets. The external layout and the daily patterns of the prison guards had been tracked through drone and satellite imagery.

Floating through the air and inhaling through an oxygen mask while making his flight adjustments, Patrick Quillen thought about the next few hours of his life. Tonight he was leading a platoon of sixteen SEALs, along with two Combat Control Team members from the Air Force and a couple of Air Force PJs, the military’s best medics. If all went according to plan, it would be sufficient firepower to overwhelm the unsuspecting Houthi guards and break the targets out of Sana’a Central Prison.

Just a few years earlier, when the U.N.–sanctioned coalition government controlled Yemen, al Qaeda attackers had burst through these same prison walls with a car bomb and freed nineteen of their own prisoners. If al Qaeda could do it, certainly American Special Forces should have no problem. A surprise nighttime raid on a fortified prison in hostile territory. Piece of cake.

A few hundred meters before he hit the ground, Patrick loosened the rucksack strapped between his legs and let it hang below him, attached by a rope, out of the way of his landing. Seconds later he flared his

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parachute and hit the ground running. He quickly gathered his gear, stripped off his thermal outerwear and mask, and unhooked his chute. Like the other SEALs, he went about his work silently, burying the gear he would not be taking with him.

When the men had all gathered, Patrick spoke into his command net mic and let his CO know that they had hit their first checkpoint. “Roger that,” his boss said, and the men were on their way. They were ready. Patrick could see it in their eyes. They were his men, every one of them, and they would have his back.

Operation Exodus was off to a good start. But the fun, Patrick knew, was just beginning.