

TOM CLANCY

POINT OF  
CONTACT

MIKE MADEN

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# PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

## UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

*Jack Ryan:* President of the United States

*Scott Adler:* Secretary of State

*Mary Pat Foley:* Director of National Intelligence

*Robert Burgess:* Secretary of Defense

*Jay Canfield:* Director of the Central Intelligence Agency

*Arnold Van Damm:* President's Ryan's chief of staff

## THE CAMPUS

*Gerry Hendley:* Director of The Campus and Hendley  
Associates

*John Clark:* Director of operations

*Domingo "Ding" Chavez:* Senior operations officer

*Dominic "Dom" Caruso:* Operations officer

*Jack Ryan, Jr.:* Operations officer / senior analyst

*Gavin Biery:* Director of information technology

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*Adara Sherman:* Operations officer

*Bartosz “Midas” Jankowski:* Operations officer

### OTHER CHARACTERS

*Paul Brown:* Forensic accountant, Hendley Associates

*Weston Rhodes:* Ex–U.S. Senator; board member, Marin  
Aerospace

*Dr. Gordon Fairchild:* CEO, Dalfan Technologies

*Lian Fairchild:* Head of Security, Dalfan Technologies (Gordon  
Fairchild’s daughter)

*Yong Fairchild:* Chief Financial Officer, Dalfan Technologies  
(Gordon Fairchild’s son)

*Choi Ha-guk:* Chairman, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea  
(DPRK)

*Ri Kwan-ju:* Deputy, General Administrative Services  
Directorate, DPRK

*Tervel Zvezdev:* Former member, Bulgarian Committee for State  
Security (CSS)



THE NORTH SEA  
ALBUSKJELL OILFIELD, NORWAY  
LATITUDE 56° NORTH, LONGITUDE 3° EAST

**F**reeze or drown.

He wasn't sure which one would come first. It didn't really matter. Either way, Jack Ryan, Jr., knew he was going to die in the next two minutes.

The F470 Zodiac rubber raiding craft pounded through the chopping waves beneath a storm-shrouded moon. Jack clutched the safety ropes in both fists to keep from getting thrown overboard. So did Adara Sherman, seated in front of him. She was getting it worse than he was. Every bounce threw more spray in their faces. Jack's NVGs were spattered with ice. He couldn't risk wiping off the night-vision lenses while he was riding this bucking bronco. But a half-mile ahead he could still barely make out the oil rig, lights off, its hulking frame a black shadow above the surging sea. That was fine by Jack. The darkness shielded their approach.

Jack's teeth chattered and his mind clouded in the numbing

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cold. The freezing North Sea wind seemed to slice right through his foamed five-millimeter neoprene wetsuit, and the stinging sleet felt like a broken beer bottle dragged across his exposed skin.

Despite their misery, Bartosz “Midas” Jankowski gunned the engine full throttle, his goggled eyes fixed on his GPS. They were supposed to run quiet, but they got off late. At least the howling wind swept away most of the noise from the baffled fifty-five-horsepower outboard motor in back.

The high winds also meant a helicopter landing was out of the question, and fast-roping out of it—Jack’s favorite new skill—even more so. All three of them were getting beat to hell, but time wasn’t their friend. If they didn’t reach the oil platform ladder in the next two minutes, they would fail the mission.

*Assuming we survive for the next two minutes*, Jack reminded himself.

And then there were the gunmen on the oil rig to deal with. But right now, armed killers seemed like the least of their problems.

As if on cue, a rogue wave swelled beneath the speeding craft, lifting the port side out of the water. Jack had shoved the toes of his boots through the safety rope along the rubber deck for purchase but felt himself pitching over the side anyway. Midas grabbed the drag handle of Jack’s vest with a sure hand at the last second, saving him from a headlong dive into the angry black sea.

Jack glanced to his right at the other Zodiac just a few yards away. In the green haze of his iced NVGs, Jack saw Dom Caruso flash him a quick “Okay?” with his gloved thumb. Jack thumbed him back. No time for chitchat. Ding Chavez drove Dom’s boat, his eyes fixed on the GPS locator.

The five special operators of The Campus were a close-knit

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team, the tip of the spear of the private “off-the-books” intelligence agency known only to President Ryan and a select few of his closest advisers. They were a small organization, but they punched hard—and far above their weight. This mission was proof of that. They did the jobs the CIA or other government intelligence services couldn’t do. Or wouldn’t.

Tonight was no exception.

Jack ran through the schematics of the oil rig platform in his mind again, particularly the control room and machine shop—his two targets. Gavin Biery’s webmaster magic came through again. If it weren’t for him they’d be going in totally blind.

Gavin’s intel brief confirmed four hostages and six Green Army Faction eco-terrorists, armed and trained. But intel on a hostage-rescue operation like this was always sketchy. John Clark’s warning echoed in his head. “Stay frosty out there. You don’t know what you don’t know.”

*True that.*

“It’s time,” Ding whispered in everyone’s comms.

“Roger that,” Midas confirmed.

Jack watched Ding’s boat veer off at a sharp angle, its bullet-proof Armorflite rubber skin shredding water into the turn. The small drilling platform had two access ladders. Jack’s boat would take the front; Ding and Dom would scramble up the back. On training runs with the Norwegian MJK (Marinejegerkommandoen) this past week, the weather had been cold but calm and they’d been able to get the timing down perfectly. But out here tonight on a raging North Sea, everything was up for grabs.

The mission had two goals: save the hostages and kill or capture the tangos. The Green Army Faction threatened not only to kill the captured oil workers but also to blow the rig, causing another catastrophic oil-spill disaster like Deepwater Horizon if their ransom demands weren’t met. American policy had always



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been to ignore ransom demands from terrorists. Meeting them inevitably led to more terror. Any student of history knew that. But some governments and corporations apparently didn't read history.

Those were the people Green Army Faction targeted. Profitably.

But in this case, intel from an informant indicated that the group on the rig had no intention of surrendering after the money transfer. In their sick minds, they planned on "saving the earth" by poisoning the sea in order to fuel more public outrage at the oil industry. Killing the oil rig workers was a sacred bonus, like ISIS butchering captive infidels.

The decommissioned oil rig stood in an abandoned field dead center in the North Sea and in international waters. The Texas wildcatting team was developing new fracking-style technology to revive dead underwater wells. The GAF got wind of it and struck.

When it became clear that the hostages would be killed, the company's desperate security chief called his friend John Clark, hoping Clark could mobilize some of his old Rainbow Six connections. But with only a four-hour window remaining, there weren't any options.

Except one.

By sheer coincidence, John Clark had arranged for The Campus operators to train with MJK operators for exactly this kind of mission just two hours away. The Norwegian government wouldn't allow the MJK to aid in the assault, but Clark called in a few chits and arranged for the *Møvik*—a Swedish-built CB90-class fast assault craft—to drop the team off. After that, they were on their own.

The hastily devised plan was that both Campus teams would

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scale the ladders at the same time and make a simultaneous assault on three of the four buildings on the rig, taking out bad guys along the way. Jack's team would take the front of the platform. Midas and Adara would go for the crew's quarters where the hostages were probably kept, while Jack cleared the control room, after which he'd drive toward the machine shop. On the back side of the rig, Ding's two-man team would first assault the drilling and process modules, where the explosives were undoubtedly positioned. After clearing them, they would support the assault on the crew's quarters or machine shop as needed. Each team would drive toward the center of the facility, herding any surviving GAF fighters into the middle and forcing them to surrender—or die.

At least, that was the plan.

They all agreed that clear and constant communication was key to their success. No telling what the real situation was on the rig or the precise number of either terrorists or hostages.

Their biggest challenge tonight beyond the hellish weather was their limited firepower. Each team member carried the same two suppressed weapons systems: short-barreled SIG Sauer MPX submachine guns and SIG Sauer P229 pistols, both in nine-millimeter. They couldn't use larger calibers for fear of overpenetration, and explosives or even flash-bang grenades were out of the question in the highly flammable environment. Brains, brawn, and steady hands were their only force multipliers. Given the makeup of the team, Jack figured that was good enough.

The bow of the Zodiac dipped as Midas throttled down. That told Jack they were close. The rolling swells kept the boat rocking violently, but not so badly that Jack couldn't raise his hands to finally clear his NVGs. The boat was just a few yards away from

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the platform ladder now. He could barely make out the other Zodiac on the far side of the rig. The sleet turned to thick flakes of snow, reducing the value of the NVGs to nearly zero now.

“Ten seconds,” Midas whispered in the comms.

“Rog . . . Go . . . op,” Ding replied.

“Say . . .” Midas whispered.

No reply.

“What’s wrong?” Jack spoke into his comms.

He saw Midas’s lips move but didn’t hear anything in his ear-piece.

*Comms down!*

As soon as Jack thought it, Midas was already switching to hand signals.

This was going to be an old-school op for sure.

The Zodiac slowed further. Adara reached down for the rope and its hard rubber grapple as Midas cut the engine. The boat was lifted by another high wave and crashed violently into one of the thick steel piers supporting the platform, but the inflated rubber bounced harmlessly off in the direction of the nearby ladder. Adara tossed the grapple and hit a ladder rung on the first try, then she and Jack pulled hard on the rope until the Zodiac was close enough to tie off and secure.

The problem now was the other boat. It was critical that both teams scale the ladders at the same time. Jack pulled his tactical light and flashed it twice in Ding’s direction. A moment later someone flashed back.

Jack signaled “good to go” to Midas and Adara. They both acknowledged and Adara took the lead, lifting one boot from the heaving deck to the top of the gunwale, then timing her next step onto the ladder with her other boot to the rising swell, pulling herself up with one hand as the boat lifted to its apogee, all

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in a singular motion of effortless grace. She instantly began the arduous one-hundred-foot climb.

Jack watched her in the flickering green glow of his goggles. From down here in the rocking boat it looked like Adara was climbing up into the blackened portal of a rusted steel hell.

The boat pitched down again as Midas took position next. At the top of the next swell Midas stepped up. He landed a heavy boot on a rung and pulled his broad frame up by his strong arms, then began his swift, wordless climb.

The boat plummeted down again, and Jack's stomach with it, hitting the bottom of the swell so hard that Jack's knees nearly buckled. The waves were getting worse.

Jack tugged on his MPX to verify the sling was still snug as he stood back up and planted his right boot on the gunwale. A moment later he felt the massive surge beneath him and the boat rocketed upward, but the hull crashed hard against the steel ladder just as Jack stepped off, throwing him forward. He barely managed to grab an icy rung with both gloved hands as his knees slammed against the sharp steel, boots dangling in midair. A moment later his feet found a rung and he was secure. His eyes tracked the fleeing swell as it crashed against another steel pylon.

His heart raced. That was close.

Jack paused just long enough to take a deep breath and gather his wits.

Big mistake.

Out of the corner of his eye he saw another rogue wave suddenly breaking over him in a white-capped fury.

He braced himself against the ladder just as the wave hit.

Too late.



## 2

All Jack could do was hold on grab-ass tight. The wave hit him like a great gray bull, smashing the side of his helmeted face against the ladder's steel, but somehow he hung on.

A second passed and the furious gray monster sped away into the forbidding dark.

Jack couldn't believe his luck. He didn't wait for the next one.

He untangled himself as quickly as he could and began the ascent, spitting and coughing up briny seawater through his mouth and nose. He scrambled as fast as he dared on the frozen steel, driven upward by John Clark's raspy voice ringing in his brain: "Shit happens in threes." Comms going down and that big-ass rogue wave counted for two. He didn't want to think about what the third might be.

The first few soaking-wet steps were easy, but his left foot slipped badly on the next ice-coated rung. Once again his heart raced, but his fast reflexes secured him tightly to the ladder. His mind was clearer now—running from death had that effect on a man's brain—and in a moment he was in his stride, carefully but swiftly alternating hands and feet in the dangerous ascent.

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He climbed several rungs before glancing up to locate the rest of his team. They were already near the top and scrambling fast, unaware of his near-death experience. The gunshot to Adara's leg in Chicago last year clearly hadn't slowed her down.

Gaining confidence in his stride, Jack picked up the climbing tempo. The adrenaline was fueling him now, which helped cut the cold, even though he was drenched and the exertion was warming him up despite the blasting snow. The burning in his thighs was a good sign that he was still alive. Even the seawater still stinging his sinuses helped clear his mind.

So far, so good.

He slowed as he entered the guardrail cage near the top of the ladder, expecting Adara's gloved hand in the open hole to signal him to hold. The plan was for the three of them to rally at the entrance, then split up and assault their respective targets some ninety feet apart. He popped his head up quickly to scan the platform.

Adara and Midas were gone. *What the hell?*

So much for the plan.

Jack cleared the hole and the guardrails and assumed a crouching position on the steel-grated deck, designed to keep seawater from accumulating. Most of the snow fell through, so there were no clear boot prints for Jack to follow. He glanced to his left, where the crew's quarters were located. He didn't see either Midas or Adara, but according to the plan that's where they were headed. The schematics indicated that the entrance door was around the corner from where he was, so if the two of them were positioning there, he wouldn't be able to see them anyway.

Jack checked his watch. If the other team was in place, they'd hit their door in the next thirty seconds.

Time to get to work.

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Jack racked the charging handle of his MPX. The terrorists would all be inside in weather like this. Of course they were. Jack smiled to himself. *What moron would be outside in this shit?* The snow fell heavier now in the fierce wind—near-blizzard conditions. Jack brushed away the ice crusting on the back of his gloves.

Jack tried his comms again but still got no reply. Even if Adara and Midas were squatting here next to him, they couldn't talk to one another—in this wind they'd have to shout, and even if they could hear one another they'd risk giving their positions away.

Jack watched the seconds tick away. He was grateful for the long, tedious hours of training he'd spent over the last week on a platform not unlike this one, especially now that he was finally here in the freezing dark, getting hammered by gale-force winds and with time ticking away. He checked his watch again.

*Go!*

He ran in a low squat past a steel storage crate and rounded the corner when something near the deck caught his eye. "Head on a swivel!" Ding had shouted at him time after time in training reps. It saved his ass again.

Jack froze in place, the toe of his boot just short of a line of snow.

A tripwire.

It stretched across the steel grating, heavy flakes perching on it like fat pigeons roosting on a telephone wire.

Jack knelt low and lit up the tac light on his weapon, following the tripwire to its terminus—an MRUD, a Yugoslavian knockoff of a Claymore mine.

*Tricky bastards.*

Gavin's intel brief didn't mention mines, but Clark said to be ready for anything. Maybe these Green Army Fucks deployed a jammer to screw with their comms, too. But now Jack wondered,

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*Are the tangos just covering their perimeter, or are they setting us up for something worse?*

Jack stepped carefully over the tripwire, his eyes keenly alert for more of them in the green glow of his NVGs and the falling snow. He saw none as he reached his position to the right side of the outward-opening steel door.

According to the dated schematics, the square control-room building he leaned against was thirty feet by thirty feet—identical to the other three structures on the old platform. Jack was entering on the east wall. On the far west wall was another door, leading to the crew's quarters. On the north wall was a door to the machine shop. That was his goal.

*If I survive the control room,* he reminded himself.

Inside the control room there were no interior walls. All of the control panels, desks, and workstations were along the exterior walls. Once he was inside, there was nowhere to hide.

Jack checked his watch again. Ten seconds to go. He laid a gloved hand on the doorknob and turned it gently. Unlocked. *Good.*

Gunshots rang out on the far end of the platform. Sounded like AK-47s. That meant Ding and Dom were in it. But they weren't shooting AKs. He didn't hear return fire. Maybe the sound of their suppressed guns wouldn't make it to him in this wind.

Jack felt the blood rush. His friends were in trouble. Suddenly he wasn't cold at all. *Time to kick some ass.*

Jack pushed the door open and quickly drew back, pressing against the corrugated steel wall, certain the terrorists would fire at the open doorway.

They didn't.

Jack glanced in for one second and jerked back. He'd seen nothing in his NVGs except the exit door on the north side of



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the room, slightly open. He was grateful for the advantage the low-light tech gave him.

More loud gunshots blasted around the platform. A few muffled bursts as well. He needed to move his ass.

He dashed low and fast through the doorway—

*BAM!*

Light stabbed his eyes like daggers.

His wide-open pupils in the NVGs turned the light in the overhead lamps into photon shrapnel. Jack hit the deck and rolled just as gunfire broke out from the open north door. He raised his weapon blind, pulled the trigger, and sprayed full auto in the direction of the noise, but as soon as his magazine emptied, the GAF shooter had stopped.

Jack jumped to his feet, yanking off the goggles and rubbing his blinded eyes as he bolted for the north wall. By the time he slammed into the wall near the door, his vision had mostly cleared. He wondered if it was a motion sensor or a fast hand that had tripped the room lights. Guess it didn't really matter.

A quick check of his body confirmed he wasn't hit. He wasn't sure why not. The linoleum floor near where he had dropped was shredded.

All Jack could think was *Shit comes in threes*. And that was number three.

But his gut told him that three wasn't the limit.

He loaded a fresh mag and charged his weapon.

Jack knew the north door opened to a short open deck that led to the machine shop. Another outward-opening door would be waiting for him.

So would the shitbird that just took a potshot at him.

And maybe his friends.

He heard more gunfire far away. Could be his team was still in the fight. Or the tangos were killing the hostages.

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Without comms, he couldn't know.

No time to lose.

Jack knelt low and did the head-bob thing again. Nobody on the short open deck, and the door on the far end of it was shut.

They knew he was coming. All they had to do was kick open that far door and open up on him. He'd be trapped on the deck with the rails pinning him in—unless he decided to leap over the side into the roiling blue abyss.

"Seven breaths," he told himself. A line from the *Hagakure*.

He ran like hell.

His heavy boots clanged on the steel grates. He kept his eyes focused on the shut door, waiting for it to open.

It didn't.

He slammed into the machine shop wall with a thud. They knew he was coming already. No point in nancing around in the freezing dark.

He wished he had a flash-bang. But he didn't. Just his guts. That had to be good enough. His team was counting on him. So were the hostages.

Jack ran through the room schematic again. Thirty by thirty. Six rooms—stalls, really, only two walls each. Two-by-fours and corrugated steel. Tools and machines in each, he assumed—lathes, welding tanks, whatever.

Which one would the shooter be in?

Jack yanked the door open but stayed out of the doorway. He felt the big-caliber slugs slam into the wall above his head. Glanced up. Saw the jagged steel petals flower a foot above.

That meant the shooter was probably in the northwest corner. A lousy shot—or scared to death.

Or wanting him to think so.

He had to do something to distract the shooter. He reached his MPX around the door frame and fired a short burst, aiming

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high against the far back wall to avoid hitting a hostage or one of his team if they were close by. He fired another burst, then dashed through the door, diving into the first stall on the left. He slid into a tall mechanic's tool chest.

A woman screamed on the other side of the room.

A short burst of gunfire rang in the distance.

*Damn!* Jack glanced up. A blunt-nosed drilling hammer hung from a peg on the far wall. He dashed over and grabbed it.

"This is gonna hurt!" he shouted as he tossed the hammer like a hand grenade. It bounced and skidded across the steel-grated floor, landing near the last stall on the left, where he figured the tango was located. He hoped the bastard would think it was a flash-bang and cover up.

At least, that was the plan.

Before the hammer finished bouncing and skidding, Jack launched out of his stall and rolled into the second one on other wall, his weapon pointed at the northwest corner.

Sighted in the center of his scope was a bearded fighter and a short-barreled AKS-74U—almost like a machine pistol. Jack wanted to waste him, but he was hiding behind two platform technicians in oil-stained coveralls. Both women. One brunette, the other a stunning blonde. Even from here he could see the blonde's blue eyes. The bearded man held the two women by their collars in one fist, half choking them. His other hand held the weapon, pointed at their heads.

"Drop your weapon!" Jack shouted.

"I kill them both!"

The red dot on Jack's gunsight centered for a second on the man's face. Jack's finger twitched, but he didn't pull. The first ROE on any op was to save the hostages if at all possible. Putting a slug in this puke was secondary. It wasn't worth the risk. The bastard was scared. Maybe Jack could still talk him down.

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In that moment of hesitation the terrorist shifted his position and hid again behind the women. Too late, even if Jack wanted to shoot.

“Drop your weapon!” Jack shouted again.

*“Fick dich, Kapitalist!”*

Jack held up a hand. “Don’t be stupid. Drop your weapon. I’ll guarantee your safety.” Jack didn’t budge. He prayed the psycho would expose himself again.

Instead, the terrorist walked the two women forward out of the stall and toward Jack, keeping them in front of him like a human shield, and worked his way toward the steel exit door on the east wall leading toward the wellhead.

Jack stutter-stepped left and right to keep from being an easy target, but he was out in the open—why didn’t this bastard just shoot him? He kept his weapon trained on the killer, hoping for a clear body shot. If the man escaped, he might take out his friends and blow the rig. But if Jack took the wrong shot, he’d kill the hostages.

The bearded terrorist reached the door. His gun hand searched for the knob, but his eyes stayed fixed on Jack. “Don’t even think about it!”

“No, man, we’re cool.”

The door opened slightly and the Green Army fighter backed into it—then suddenly thrust the two women forward and slammed the door behind him.

The women ran toward Jack, shouting and crying.

Jack raced for the exit door, but the two women grabbed him and wrapped their arms around him. “Thank you! Thank you!”

“Get back! Please!”

Jack grabbed them both by the waist and shoved them firmly but gently away from the door for their protection. “Are you hurt?”

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Both women shook their heads. “No, no. We’re okay. Thank you!”

Jack heard two gunshots ring out from the other side of the shut door.

“Wait here!”

The women nodded, compliant, stepping back toward the far wall.

Jack raised his weapon high and approached the door.

“Jack! You in there?” It was Ding’s voice on the other side of the door.

*Thank God.* Jack sighed with relief. “Yeah. It’s me. Jack.” He dropped his weapon to his side.

“All clear?”

“All clear!”

The door swung open. Ding stepped through, a wide grin on his face. Dom was right behind him.

“Where are the others?” Ding asked, as Dom’s smile broke into a horrified grimace.

A pistol shot cracked behind Jack. The bullet’s overpressure brushed the side of his face, but the slug hit Dom in the chest. In the blink of an eye another shot cracked and put a bullet in the wall near Ding.

Jack whipped around, raising his weapon to shoot the brunette with the pistol, but it was the grinning blonde who caught his eye as she thrust the tip of the eight-inch knife blade into his gut.