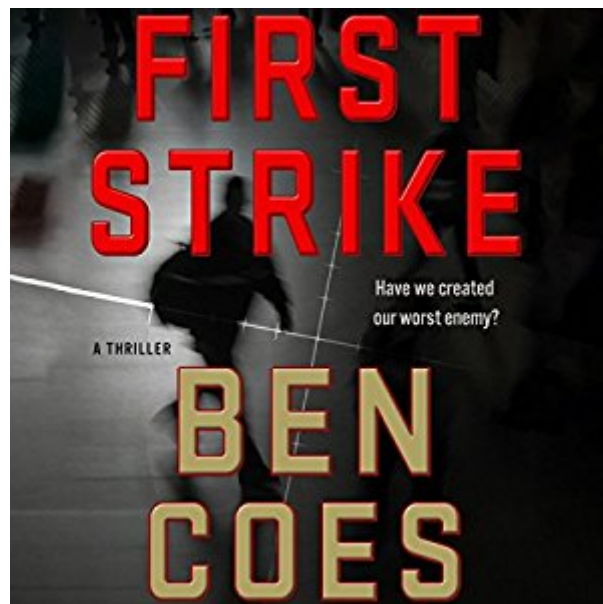


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First Strike: A Thriller



Synopsis

Deep within the Pentagon, a covert multibillion arms-for-influence program was created. The objective was to protect the United States and its allies from terrorist acts by secretly enabling a handpicked man to emerge as the most powerful leader in the Middle East. But the charismatic Tristan Nazir double-crosses America, twisting the program for his own violent ends to create ISIS. Now America is at great risk. Elite operative Dewey Andreas is sent to Syria to retrieve details about the source of ISIS' funding, but his cover is blown midoperation, and chaos erupts in the streets of Damascus. Trapped and outnumbered, Dewey manages to send proof of the awful truth - unknown at even the highest levels in the government - that ISIS' munitions were indeed provided by America itself. This information arrives in time for the US to cut off a final arms shipment before it reaches ISIS. But the vicious Nazir is far from finished. He launches a bold strike into the heart of America, sending a terrorist cell to take over a dorm at Columbia University, capturing hundreds of college students as hostages. For every hour that the shipment of weapons is withheld, the terrorists will publicly execute one student. The potential loss of life is intolerable. A frontal assault is impossible. Releasing the shipment is unthinkable. There is nowhere to turn. In a situation with no solutions, there remains only one option: Dewey Andreas.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

First off, this is Ben Coes's best book to date. It is also his most ambitious. The subject is nothing less than the unwitting American subsidization of ISIS. (Lots of SPOILERS to follow, but

theyâ€™re all revealed on the dust jacket and in the description.) A Pentagon bigwig has had the bright idea of picking the right team in the Middle East and supplying them with weaponsâ€”a group that will take down the local baddies but never mess with us. Good luck with that. The bigwig discovers that the person heâ€™s dealing withâ€”Tristan Nazir of ISISâ€”is anything but a reliable partner. Heâ€™s a ruthless, barbaric monster who, of course, studied at Oxford. Dewey is dispatched to Syria to pick up the goods on the deal and identify the American who went off the reservation. He ends up in a captured hospital in Aleppo where the ISIS nasties intend to behead him for international internet consumption. Fortunately, Dewey is not without resources, including a set of Israeli commandos lead by his old pal, Kohl Meir. When the second tranche of arms is interdicted, Tristan counterattacks, sending a terrorist cell to the campus of Columbia University on move-in day. Trapping hundreds of parents and new students in Carman Hall (an actual Columbia dorm) the terrorists plan to throw one student per hour for a ten-story drop until the arms are released and delivered. That means that Dewey will have to somehow get into the building, be very, very careful not to set off any of the Semtex IEDs (which will level the building and all inside), take down the terrorists and restore truth, justice and the American way.

I'm a long-time Ben Coes fan. I've read every book in the Dewey Andreas series--loved every one of them. He always includes some sort of military-terrorist-weapon detail that rings true even when I know nothing about the topic. Here's how he describes a shipment of illicit weapons being shipped to the Middle East: "The guns were sanitized. There were no manufacturer engravings or other identifiers on any of them. And they were all precisely the same model: M4 carbine, blackish gray, gas-operated, magazine-fed, telescoping stock, Picatinny rail, vertical forward grip..." No one can write in that level of detail and not know what he is talking about. At least, that's my conclusion. His latest Andreas adventure, *First Strike* (St. Martin's Press 2016) is probably the best yet (OK, I might say that about every book. Coes just keeps getting better and better). It starts with the rise of ISIS, born from the traitorous actions of a few misguided politicians. By the time we get to present day, stopping this group is well-beyond simple. When the stakes become too high to ignore, the only solution anyone has is to call Dewey Andreas. One of the masterful techniques Ben Coes uses in this series is to show us the human side of this unstoppable, bigger-than-life warrior. It may be an emotion or simply thoughts that any of us would have in his position, even those of us who aren't miracle workers: "When Dewey climbed aboard the jet earlier that day [this is when Andreas believes he has stopped the terrorist threat, before he finds out they have a lethal Plan B], he thought he would enjoy a calm ride home followed by a few weeks off. He felt battered and bruised.

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