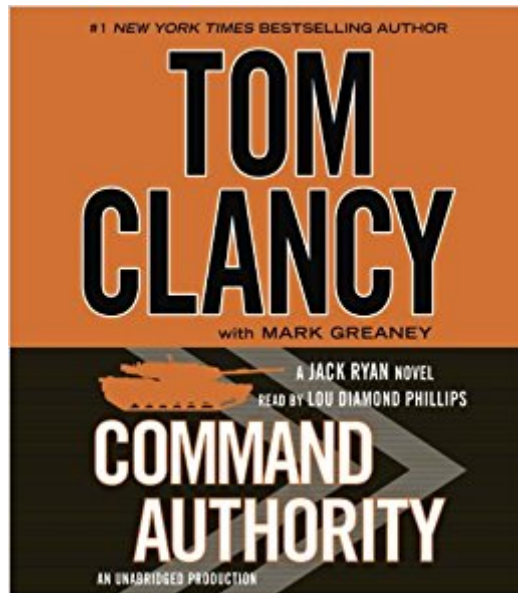




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Command Authority (Jack Ryan)



Synopsis

The #1 *New York Times*-bestselling author and master of the technothriller returns with his All-Star team. There's a new strong man in Russia but his rise to power is based on a dark secret hidden decades in the past. The solution to that mystery lies with a most unexpected source, President Jack Ryan.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Once again, the acrid scent of cordite wafted through my imagination during the climactic gun battle as Clancy’s characters from the world of intelligence achieved yet another victory over the forces of evil.”
•The Washington Times
“Vintage Clancy”
“A pleasing fairytale for people who like things that blow up.”
•Kirkus Reviews
--This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

Tom Clancy is America’s, and the world’s, favorite international thriller author. Starting with *The Hunt for Red October*, all seventeen of his previous books have hit #1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list. He lives in Maryland where is a co-owner of the Baltimore Orioles.
Mark Greaney is the national bestselling author of *The Gray Man* series of books, the most recent of which is *Dead Eye*. Mr. Greaney lives in Memphis, Tennessee.

On October 1, 2013, author Tom Clancy passed away at the age of 66. His last novel, *Command*

Authority, co-written with Mark Greaney, was published by Putnam on December 2. The author gained immediate recognition with the publication of *The Hunt for Red October* in 1984. The Cold War-era novel was claimed by then-President Ronald Reagan as “unputdownable” and soon made Clancy a household name. Several of his Jack Ryan novels, and the stand-alone work *Red Storm Rising*, owed much to the threat and paranoia of communism and told tales of US spies versus KGB agents and military heroes battling Russian enemies. As policies shifted following the fall of the Iron Curtain, Clancy adapted and responded to the new threats against American sovereignty: the war on drugs and the Columbian and Mexican cartels (*Clear and Present Danger*, and more recently in *Against All Enemies*), nuclear proliferation and dirty bombs exploded on US territory, trade wars turned into shooting wars, potential hostilities from Asian forces, and the frightening possibility of suicide bombing via hijacked airliners (a premonition in 1994’s *Debt of Honor* that was ultimately realized by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001). However, in the wake of 9/11, it seemed that Clancy may have been lost in the new world order of terrorism. His 2003 novel, *The Teeth of the Tiger*, was a reaction to the shift toward non-state enemies and established a new hero, Jack Ryan, Jr., and the covert mission of *The Campus*, which operated independently of government oversight and gleaned intel by spying on the country’s establish spying agencies. But after that book, Clancy’s output dried up until 2010’s release of *Dead or Alive* (which I reviewed [here](#)). It was a direct continuation of *The Teeth of the Tiger* and resolved the former novel’s dangling plot threads. After going radio silent for so long after nearly 20 years of regular output, it was relief to see a new Clancy novel hit the shelves once more. With his return came multiple co-authors, most notably Mark Greaney, but also Peter Telep and Grant Blackwood, who helped ensure an annual release for the last four years. The gap between *The Teeth of Tiger* and *Dead or Alive* allowed other authors, like Vince Flynn (who also, tragically, died this year) and Brad Thor, to fill the void and introduce their own heroes to confront the threat of terrorism head-on. Clancy and his co-writers resurrected the Jack Ryan franchise and proved that the old war-horses still had a place in our evolving political climate. It is fitting, then, that Clancy’s final novel would return readers to the old stomping grounds that laid out his claim to fame back in the 80s. The threat in *Command Authority*, a 700-plus pager (voluminous novels being another trait synonymous with the author), is once again Russia and a stronger, reestablished KGB-like agency operating under the guise of the FSB. A Putin-like Russian president is making aggressive moves to reclaim USSR territory, while Jack Ryan Jr. investigates that country’s shady financial corruption. President Ryan is

drawn into the conflict when his old friend, and ex-KGB spy Sergei Golovko, is killed by radiation poisoning. Caught on the front lines in Ukraine are retired CIA agents, turned Campus operators, John Clark and Ding Chavez, who are chasing down a Russian mafia goon known as Gleb the Scar and aiding a CIA field office. In what may be a first for Clancy, the book frequently hops back in time to tell a thirty-year old story from Jack Ryan's time as a CIA analyst in England. His past, and the investigation into an illusive KGB assassin known only as Zenith, has much bearing on the current turbulence. These flashbacks sketch in a period of Ryan's life following the events of Patriot Games and Red Rabbit, further book-ending the Ryan series as a whole in what is now Clancy's last words with the character. Should this turn out to be the final novel in the Jack Ryan series, Command Authority is a satisfying conclusion to a nearly-30 year legacy. As with previous novels, Clancy and Greaney exhibit an authentic understanding of military engagements and political savvy. And like his past work, despite the lengthy page count, it's a rip-roaring good story that will keep readers turning the pages to see how things unfold and play out. It's always a joy to be let in on the secret world of espionage and the trade-craft of a spy, and the authors help bring readers into this world with their boots on the ground approach. The bullets hit too close, and the danger is palatable. There's a confidence amongst the operators, both the fictional sort as well as the authors whose names grace the hardcover jacket, that has been honed by years of training and fighting in the trenches, and they operate like well-oiled machines, performing with extreme precision and professionalism. It's a solid note for Clancy to end on, and a chance for Greaney (who has built a reputation as a skilled author with his Grey Man series, which revolves around a disgraced CIA agent) to, perhaps, continue building the legacy going forward. Whether or not this is the last Jack Ryan novel remains to be seen. USA Today recently reported that the adventures of Jack Ryan and the Campus operators may continue, citing a statement released by Ivan Held, the president of Putnam, who hopes "Jack Ryan and The Campus team can live on." Greaney, who has now co-authored three of the last four Jack Ryan novels, seems like a logical successor and has been well-groomed to handle the franchise, should the Clancy estate allow it. It seems quite likely given the legacy of the Clancy-brand, which has spread out into movies, video games, and spin-off novels like Op-Center and Splinter Cell.

I loved every minute of Greaney's Campus Novel as a fan of the past characters and a lover of reading. The point I make of "reading" is that this is a story teller's book. One can tell that the author

did extensive research across global military and intelligence entities, organized crime, geographic setting, business intelligence and banking, and combatives. Any one of these topics would be a handful, but Greaney executes like an artisan crafting these worlds together with an interesting mystery that sews the elements together. Readers who only want a fast-paced light read with high body count may struggle slightly with the non-linear story line, if they just want a Dick and Jane shoot 'em up. For avid readers wishing to dig in and become immersed in a book with espionage, political intrigue, conspiracy, assassination, and Classic Clancy military firepower, Greaney has delivered it. I close saying thank you, Mark for spending so much effort on subtleties than many will miss, but that others will recognize as spot-on authenticity. You are a craftsman.

First of all, I recognize that this is not Tom Clancy's work (RIP), but it is Clancy's characters, which is something I have longed to return to for some years. Unfortunately, many of the books prior to this are not wonderful, including the earlier Greaney collaborations and some of the older ones (Red Rabbit (Tom Clancy), for instance). But this book represents a return to what made the books like *Patriot Games* (Jack Ryan), *Rainbow Six* (Jack Ryan), *Without Remorse* (Jack Ryan), and, of course, *The Hunt for Red October* (Jack Ryan) so wonderful. First of all, it is a page turner. I caught myself reading it at work on my phone more than once! The story jumps between Jack Ryan Jr., Clark, and Ryan Senior and then, halfway through the book, starts flashing back to new material on Jack Ryan in the 80s. Often, such disjointed writing doesn't work but Greaney and/or the editor stitched it together in ways that were nearly perfect. A flashback would inform you on present day...what Jr. worked on would affect Clark, what Clark found would help Ryan as President, and then they were all wrapped up in a satisfying way. Second, there was a mixture of spycraft and military thriller. I liked some of the books like *Debt of Honor* (Jack Ryan) and *The Bear and the Dragon* (Jack Ryan), but those were almost exclusively military thrillers. *Command Authority* is primarily a spy novel with significant, interesting, and exciting "kinetic" moments. Third, I actually like Junior in this book. I've read others saying that he should have an S painted on his chest, but the truth is that he is not so one dimensional. Listen, he's not some brooding hero like you might see in other Greaney novels *The Gray Man* (A Gray Man Novel) but he's young, dumb, arrogant, and learning. He also does not single handily win the day. The truth is, I actually wanted to read more about him and his story is mostly separate from the other characters until the end, unlike other Junior books. Besides, no one ever read a Clancy novel for character development; they have always been plot-driven books. There are definitely some editing mistakes but they didn't bother me much because I desperately wanted to keep reading. I hope that Greaney continues the Jack Ryan

books because this one was the best I've read in a long while.

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