

Book Review: To Die For
By David Baldacci

“Art imitates life” is a common phrase suggesting that creative works often reflect real-world experiences, emotions, and situations. The latest work by David Baldacci, “To Die For,” is a perfect example.

The book is the third in the 6:20 Man series and may be the best of the three. The protagonist, Travis Devine, former Army Ranger turned Homeland Security agent, finds himself in the Pacific Northwest (Seattle area, to be specific) helping the FBI protect a 12-year-old girl who may be an invaluable witness, but most definitely becomes an unwilling pawn as the narrative unfolds.

The girl, Betsy Odom, is the niece of wealthy businessman Danny Glass. Betsy’s parents were recently murdered (though the local authorities say it was an overdose), and Glass wants custody of his niece. The problem is Glass is under indictment on RICO racketeering charges and the FBI is loath to have him take custody of his niece.

A simple guard and protect assignment rapidly turns complicated when the U.S. government suddenly drops all charges against Glass. The questions abound.

Why did the government suddenly drop all charges?

Why does Glass want custody of a niece he has never met?

Where did Betsy’s parents get \$130,000 to purchase a car and mobile home?

The more Devine digs, the more he uncovers about an apparent conspiracy by an ultra-conservative right-wing organization (not unlike the KKK) planning to overthrow the U.S. government. The highly organized group has connections at all levels of industry and government as it looks to turn a democracy into an autocracy. Sound familiar? The organization

also has its sights set on keeping Glass from blowing the lid on its plans. That ups the ante on protecting Betsy.

Meanwhile, Devine learns that he is still the target of the woman assassin he evaded on a train in Switzerland (from the second book in the series). That has him looking over both shoulders at the same time, and wondering who, if anyone, he can trust.

Baldacci's narrative is action-packed, as usual. There are brief sections around midway through that get a tad convoluted attempting to explain how one part of our government wants to kill off another part, such as FBI versus CIA. And where allegiance is only a myth. But that interruption in the flow is brief, and the plot twists throughout the final third of the book will keep you on the edge of your seat.

Not quite a grand slam, but a solid 4.5 stars for "To Die For." For Baldacci fans it's a must read. And his writing is so concise you don't have to have read the first two books in the series to easily follow the storyline.