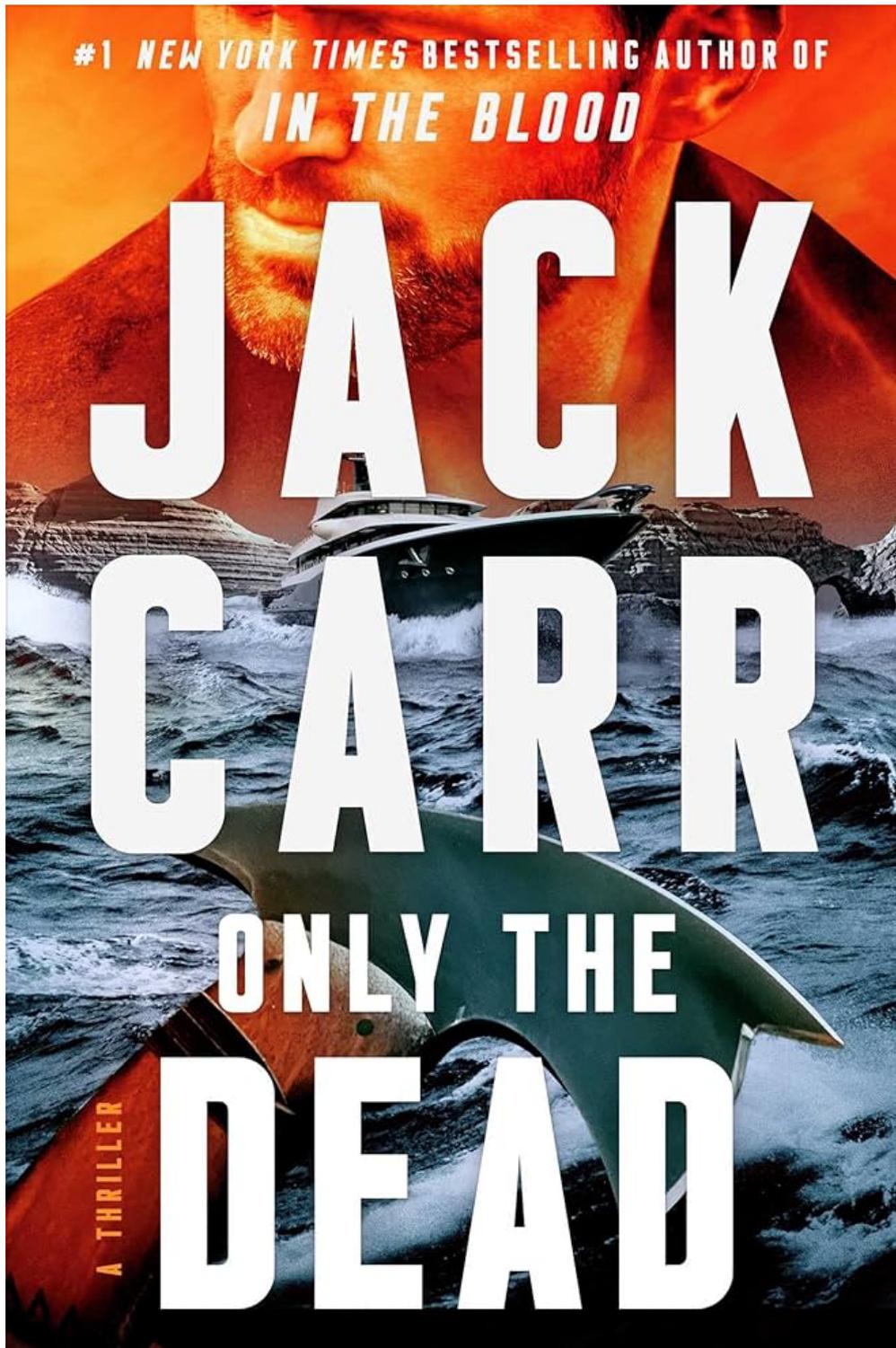


Only The Dead (2023), Book 6 (James Reece) by Jack Carr



About Jack Carr

George Petersen (born 3 July 1975), better known by his pen name Jack Carr, is an American author and former member of [United States Navy SEALs](#) who led special operations teams as a team leader, platoon commander, troop commander, and task unit commander. Over his twenty years in Naval Special Warfare, he transitioned from an enlisted SEAL sniper to a junior officer leading assault and sniper teams in Iraq and Afghanistan, to a platoon commander

practicing counterinsurgency in the southern Philippines, to commanding a special operations task unit in the most Iranian influenced section of southern Iraq throughout the tumultuous drawdown of US Forces. Jack retired from active duty in 2016 and lives with his wife and three children in Park City, Utah.

What follows are quotes from the book above. These quotes stood out to psychotherapist Emil Barna in his reading. They are not meant to be exhaustive nor representative of the entire book. All quotes are to be read in this context and must not replace medical and/or other professional advice. Note: Any typographical errors occurred through the transcription process and do not reflect what may be found in the book. Note also: Beneath various quotations from the book, I may have added my own comments and thoughts. And where I have made bold text from the quotations below, it's to emphasise a point. My emphasis does not appear in the original text.

Blurb

In 1980, a freshman congressman was gunned down in Rhode Island, sending shockwaves through Washington that are still reverberating over four decades later. Now, with the world on the brink of war and a weakened United States facing rampant inflation, political division and shocking assassinations, a secret cabal of global elites is ready to assume control. And with the world's most dangerous man locked in solitary confinement, the conspirators believe the final obstacle to complete domination has been eliminated. They're wrong. From the firms of Wall Street to the corridors of power in Washington, DC and Moscow, secrets from the past have the uncanny ability to rise to the surface in the present. With the odds stacked against him, James Reece is on a mission generations in the making. Unfortunately for his enemies, the former SEAL is not concerned with odds. He is on the warpath. And when James Reece picks up his tomahawk and sniper rifle, no one is out of range.

Only the dead have seen the end of war.

—GEORGE SANTAYANA, COMMONLY MISATTRIBUTED TO PLATO

*I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend
the Constitution of the United States . . .*

Against all enemies . . .

Foreign . . .

And domestic . . .

—OATH TAKEN BY MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES,
THE VICE PRESIDENT, AND EVERY MEMBER OF CONGRESS

*“Against all enemies, foreign and domestic” is not included in the
president’s oath of office as specified by Article II, Section 1,
Clause 8, of the Constitution of the United States.*

Preface

“But we don't make decisions out of the blue. James Reece makes decisions based on a foundation that guides him. Decisions that come from solid foundations allow us to survive more experiences and hence gain additional wisdom. But **Reece's goal is not just to survive. It is to prevail. He is a warrior, hunter, protector, and student. Always a student**, he is constantly learning along his journey, arming himself with the tools he needs to prevail when the chips are down. **He is also human.** The protagonist in these pages is not a superhero.

If you are looking for highly sanitized depictions of combat, I suggest you look elsewhere. Through the medium of popular fiction, I explore the mind and heart of a warrior. I don't interview snipers who worked in Ramadi, Mosul, or Najaf, ask them what it was like to press the trigger in combat, and then try to describe it on the page. Nor do I talk with operators who were once trapped in an ambush in Baghdad in an attempt to pull from them how they felt and reacted in the moment. Rather, I remember. **I remember what it was like to be a sniper in Ramadi, and I remember what I did on the receiving end of a night ambush in Baghdad. I then apply those feelings and emotions to a fictional narrative. The feelings and emotions in these pages are real.** They

come from my heart and soul and flow directly onto the page. If you are looking for a little more fiction and a little less emotion and truth, I recommend you put this book down now and pick up another. **James Reece is not for everyone.**"

"Always a student." I love this sentiment—it lies at the heart of everything I do: to maintain (and retain) a student's heart. To approach any situation as one you can learn from. To know when to say, "I don't know enough about _____ to comment." while speaking with confidence about the things you know (often, these are things you haven't just learned about, but *lived*). It's only through a student's eyes that we can really grow, I think. "As the island of knowledge increases, so too does the shoreline of ignorance." True words. Speak less of what you know, beckon an ear—*quick to listen, slow to speak.*

Prologue

"He returned from Vietnam and made use of the GI Bill, attending the State University of New York while working odd jobs in the city and earning his degree in three years. Walt could smoke dope and protest, or he could make changes from the inside. He chose to head into government."

Protest is easy. Some might even say lazy, cynical, performative. 'Virtue signaling'? Perhaps. One cannot make a complete claim since what rests in each man's heart is his own ... but we've had enough protests over the years to see how many of those who step out onto the concrete and hold up signs know less about what they're protesting than those who stand in stark contrast. Doing something about it (the thing you feel strongly) about requires work ... and guts. And for those allergic to both, well, protest off a convenient way of flagging your righteousness. And yes, I am not naive to the fact of my own cynicism here. Yet, I don't think it's cynicism, truly—I'm skeptical to intentions. I've been to protests before, I see the appeal. But without the 'work' that lies beneath a simple act of disagreement, where will one turn? Protest itself, after all, is not the 'work' but merely the most convenient face of it...

Part One: Exile

Chapter 2

"It was good that Americans placed no value on history. Had they picked their

heads up from their social media posts they might have had time to read about the fate that befell the Roman Empire and realize they were on the same path."

This sentiment, though frustrating, is true. If only we paid more attention to the lessons of history, we see it not so much repeating, as somebody once said, but rhyming. We don't need to look too far back to see how quick 'free' governments were to lock down and impose draconian measures on their citizens for a virus with a minuscule mortality rate. And yet, we abided.

"Strokes, heart attacks, poisonings, suicides, drownings, falls, and illnesses had struck down more than a few of those critical of the Russian president."

"America had ushered the world into a new age by dropping two atomic weapons on Japan. They remained the only nation on earth to have used offensive atomic weapons. **The arms race that followed saw the creation and testing of nuclear weapons 6,600 times more powerful than those used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.** Russia had only recently declassified information on the Tsar Bomba, a 50-megaton test conducted over the Novaya Zemlya islands in the Arctic in 1961. Dashkov had read the classified reports from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and knew the United States had been in the early stages of developing a 10,000-megaton bomb, a weapon it was said would "contaminate the earth." It was a wonder anyone survived the U.S. and Soviet nuclear tests in the 1950s and 1960s. **Though France, the United Kingdom, India, Pakistan, Israel, Iran, North Korea, and China all had nuclear weapons at their disposal, it was only the arsenals of the U.S. and Russia that could destroy the world many times over."**

If true, this is terrifying...

Chapter 3

"Reece took a breath, held it briefly at the top of his inhalation, and then exhaled completely, forcing all the air from his lungs. He held his breath for ten seconds. Then he inhaled deeply, filling his diaphragm, and held his breath at the top for ten seconds. He repeated the process, adding ten seconds to each inhalation and exhalation hold. He was up to four minutes."

Smells like a variation of cyclic hyperventilation and breath-holds. A good way to pass the time while challenging yourself... I say that only half-joking.

"How do you feel?" **"I'm comfortable being uncomfortable, Dad. Just like you taught me."** "Good, son. Now it's time to push past uncomfortable." "What do you mean?" "It's time to transcend your line of control." "I don't understand." "You will. Someday you may need it. **When you can push past**

just being unconformable, into a zone where you feel out of control, yet learn to control it—that is where true progress is made, son. "How do I get back?" **"Most of the world will never move past being uncomfortable for a short time and returning quickly to their comfort zone. That's easy. If you can push past that, into a sphere that feels out of control, then return to control, and then back to simply being uncomfortable, well, then you've really accomplished something, my boy."**

This brings a smile to my face. The trust of a son to a father ... and what beautiful advice: to be comfortable with discomfort.

Chapter 4

"Sanctions on Russia and military aid for Ukraine," Kozak said. "Status quo." He liked to use the American legal and military vernacular whenever possible. **It helped to think like the enemy.** "They exploit the compassion of their own people to enrich their friends in the defense industry." He shook his head. **"They accuse us of consolidating power and wealth in the hands of an oligarchy when they have the very same system in the United States: politicians, defense, tech, pharmaceuticals.** They have their oligarchy, too. They just refuse to acknowledge it." **"Their *Time* magazine just praised the Ukrainian president as their 'Man of the Year', "** Levitsky offered. **"They honor a man who outlaws opposition parties, shuts down the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and uses American tax dollars to solidify his grip on power."** **"All of that benefits us in the long run,"** Kozak said. **"American supremacy is at an end. There are even large segments of their population Who now take offense to the very word *American*.** They believe it overtly promotes an American exceptionalism that disenfranchises others in the Americas. They have made this transfer of power to a new world order much easier than our predecessors could have imagined."

Chapter 6

"If I could pass one thing on, be present with those you love. It's what they deserve. You can't save the world, but you can make sure your family knows you love them unconditionally and that they are your world. Concentrate on them. I could not be prouder of the man you have become. And, though I might not act like it, I worry. Service was in your blood, but remember, being a SEAL is not who you are. It's a part of you, but you are more than that, son. When the time comes to put down the sword, don't look back. Look ahead. Move forward."

Chapter 10

"you wanted to make elections more secure, you would get rid of the machines and require identification to vote. A government-issued ID was required to open

a bank account, rent an apartment, apply for a job, buy a car, travel on a plane, purchase a firearm, or buy a six-pack. If someone in his position spoke the obvious truth, they would be destroyed by the Twitter mobs calling you a racist and a fascist. Linden could only smile. He was more than happy to take multiple votes from the same person; hell, he'd take votes from the deceased. What was it that Stalin had said about voting? ***The people who cast the votes don't decide an election. What is extraordinarily important is this: who will count the votes, and how.*** Something like that, anyway. The country was done for. How votes were counted, and which votes were counted, were more important than legal votes being counted."

"Do you know what Truman said about censorship?" Linden asked. "Spare me, Congressman; this isn't about censorship, it's about misinformation." "Ah yes, misinformation. Well, for posterity's sake, he said, '**Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear.**'"

Today, more and more, we frame opposition (or even questioning the prevailing narrative) as *misinformation*. Why? The most obvious answer is for one to 'get in line'. To question is to threaten. We value less the Enlightenment ideals and, though we shirk Christianity as the dominant institution, perhaps we're uplifting government as the answer to our problems ... or our *preferred* government. Idealism and a mind made up and virtue signaled is called more than Truth. And where there is no clear foundation for Truth, perspective ("my truth") dominates. When every research finding can be countered with an opposite 'finding', how can one trust? I must admit, it is getting much harder to trust sources... Therefore, I go back to 'first-principles thinking' ... and faith. I put my trust in One higher, and try as I can to humble myself in doing such.

Chapter 16

"Raife had seen it time and time again-operators who couldn't leave the war behind, who brought it home. **Even when surrounded by friends and family thousands of miles from the battlefield, they were still fighting the war in the deepest recesses of their souls.** Reece would need time."

Chapter 19

"The Soviets, now the Russians, think long term. Not as long as the Chinese, but longer than we do. **We expect instant gratification. The Russians will wait de-cades; the Chinese, centuries.**"

Chapter 25

"Reece knew his shots were fatal, but he also knew that anything other than a shot to head meant that a dead man could still fight. Blood was still pumping. The brain was still working. **Primal instincts were in command.**"

Chapter 28

"Shifts in world power were inevitable: Egypt, the Ottoman Empire, Persia, the Han Dynasty, Rome, the Mongols, Spain, Britain, Germany, the United States. It was time for the next great shift."

Part Two: Foundations

Chapter 29

"It seems like the country is on a path that negates all efforts to keep it free."

Part Three: Revelations

Chapter 48

"Hollywood would have you believe that men who fought and killed were damaged, empty shells. The truth was dirtier. The truth was that killing was the most natural of human endeavors. Reece knew his ancestors had been good at hunting and killing. And it was not just Reece's ancestors: it was everyone's ancestors. **For most of human history, if you could not put food on the table or protect the gift of life, you were not long for this earth.** Some had repressed that call, the call to serve, the call to hunt, the call to fight, protect, and kill. To others, protectors like Reece, it was as natural as breathing."

Chapter 53

"When a small but growing company like Santa Monica Seafood begins to dominate a segment of the fresh fish market, putting pressure on big companies like Sysco or U.S. Foods, they simply step in and buy them out." Danreb snapped his fingers. "Poof! No more competition. If the smaller company won't sell, then the larger corporation, with more resources, squeezes them; usually by cutting off distribution and ship-ping. It's more coordinated and integrated than the Mafia, and most of it is even legal. Coca-Cola and

PepsiCo do the same thing. They watch and monitor their sector, and when another drink company starts to get traction, they buy it or cut off its distribution. When was the last time you were in a restaurant or stadium or arena that served both Coke and Pepsi? Never happens. They split up the market. And chances are, any other available beverage that isn't owned by Coke or Pepsi is at least distributed by them, which is another means of control. The point is, **if you start to be successful, you get crushed, unless you are in the club.**"

Part Four: Atonement

Chapter 84

"My party will hate me for it, but it means all the decisions I make are to advance the prosperity and security of the American people. That makes me almost as dangerous as President Christensen. The other side—see, **'the other side'—that divisive rhetoric has become the norm.**

They are going to do what they can to undermine executive initiatives simply for political gain. **The days of statesmanship are behind us, I'm afraid. They died with President Reagan and Speaker O'Neill.**"

Epilogue

"What do you believe in, James? God? Country? Freedom? Or do you believe in the lofty ideal of some nonsense like truth? Let me tell you. **There is no truth. There is only power. That power crosses borders and ideologies.** It's not about an allegiance to dying countries. It is an allegiance to broader governance, control, and safety. You made the world less stable today. Is that what you believe in?" Reece paused. **"I believe in accountability. And I believe in consequences."**

These notes were collected by psychotherapist and author Emil Barna in January 2026 in his efforts to assist with professional development and further education for himself and those who read them. But remember, they are but a glimpse of what the book is actually about—for more context, buy the book and make up your own mind. You can find out more about Emil by visiting www.barnacc.com

"History is fiction that did happen. Whereas fiction is history that might have happened."

—André Gide

"A text without a context is a pretext to a proof text."

—Dr. Don Carson