

The Devil's Hand (2021), Book 4 (James Reece) - 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**. He is best known for his thrillers made into television series in Amazon Prime.

[What follows are quotes from the book above. These quotes stood out to

psychotherapist Emil Barna in his reading of the book in 2025. 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.]

Blurb

It has been two decades since 9/11. The enemy has been patient. The enemy has been learning. The enemy is ready to strike again... Former Navy SEAL James Reece must embark on a top-secret CIA mission of retribution twenty years in the making in this riveting and timely thriller that will leave you gasping for breath.

Buried within the 9,723-word text of Executive Order 12333, United States Intelligence Activities, is this sentence in Part 2, Paragraph 13:

2.11 Prohibition on Assassination. No person employed by or acting on behalf of the United States Government shall engage in or conspire to engage in assassination.

Seven days after 9/11, Congress passed a 275-word resolution titled the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force. This document granted the president of the United States the authority to bring individuals and countries involved in the attack to justice. Twenty years later, it remains the sole legal basis for the continuing War on Terror.

... to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it...

—AL-QAEDA FATWĀ, 1998

If someone comes to kill you, rise up and kill him first.

—TALMUDIC EDICT

Preface

"It is my sincere hope that the operation you read about in the following pages is not currently being planned by a foreign intelligence service. We would be wise to remember that the Athenian historian **Thucydides** in the Melian Dialogue of his *History of the Peloponnesian War* **characterizes hope as danger's comforter**. [emphasis in bold, mine, as they will be in the rest of this note, unless obviously not] In modern military and intelligence parlance, the ancient Greek general's text translates as *hope is not a course of action*. While

this is true, **hope is oftentimes all one has in times of despair.** The lesson is one as old as time: Be prepared. There is arguably no military text as influential as *The Art of War*. The Chinese military strategist and philosopher **Sun Tzu knew that "the supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting."** In an asymmetric confrontation, this is of extreme importance for the foe that does not possess a nuclear arsenal. How then would they defeat a super-power? "All warfare is based on deception." The teachings of the Warring States-period general are not foreign concepts to our adversaries—adversaries who play the long game. With those two idioms in mind, if your mission was to destroy a modern empire, what would you do? This is also a book on the ethics, morality, and legality of targeted assassinations, what the Israelis call *Chissulim*, or eliminations, as an instrument of state power. Is there a difference between using a Reaper UAV to take out an enemy combatant with an AGM-114 Hellfire or GBU-38 JDAM from fifty thousand feet and sending a 180-grain 300 Winchester Magnum through that same terrorist's brain stem from a thousand yards out? How does the enemy view those different methods of killing? Has the increasing reliance on UAVs to deliver death remotely had the intended effect? Has it saved American lives, or has it recruited more of what Dr. David Kilcullen calls "accidental guerrillas" to the cause? On September 11, 2001, there were certain groups who stood shoulder to shoulder watching the twin towers fall on television, men with certain skills, men whose only mission in life was to be prepared for war. It is not openly discussed, but within this fraternity there were those who had but one thought: *God, I wish I was on one of those planes.* They are called to the fight: protectors, warriors, guardians. They are out there tonight. They are hunting. If the war returns to the home front, you want one of these sentinels standing by your side, armed and ready."

[On the above, reminds me of this quote: "We sleep soundly in our beds because rough men stand ready in the night to visit violence on those who would do us harm." (Author contested—see the following for more:

What's past is prologue.
—William Shakespeare

Prologue

"She had not understood why the man who had studied to be an accountant in Germany was busing tables and cleaning the kitchen at a Moroccan restaurant outside Cambridge. Their meager take-home pay barely managed to cover the rent and put food on the table of their small Watertown apartment. The first time she pressed him on the subject, he slapped her across the face. Even now the memory of the sting, compounded by shock, caused her eyes to water. When she attempted to turn and run, he grabbed her by the throat and threw her onto their secondhand couch that reeked of mildew, squeezing the life from

her as he screamed that she was not to question him again."

"Right on time, lad," his dad said, looking at his Patek Philippe. "I still set mine five minutes ahead just like you taught me," Alec said, pointing to his left wrist. "That way I can be five minutes late and still be on time." "That wasn't really the point, son. The point is to be early. It's disrespectful to be late. Shows you don't treasure our most valuable asset..." "Time," Alec said, completing the sentence he'd heard from his dad so often over the years."

"Sirens, he'd always remember the sirens. As the mortally wounded building loomed larger, he pushed past people stumbling in the opposite direction, some in a panic, others in a daze. He began to charge by police officers and firefighters yelling at him to turn around. He then heard the screaming engines of what he would later learn was United Airlines Flight 175 as it homed in from the south. He felt the impact in his soul."

Part One: Origins

One of the most striking proofs of the personal existence of Satan... is found in the fact, that he has so influenced the minds of multitudes in reference to his existence and doings, as to make them believe that he does not exist.

—WILLIAM RAMSEY

Chapter 1

[On the polygraph...]

A blood pressure cuff squeezed Reece's left arm, two rubber air-filled tubes called pneumographs encircled his chest and stomach to record his breathing, and galvanometers had been placed on the first and third fingers of his right hand to measure sweat secretions. His chair was fitted with a sensor pad, thanks to Ana Montes, a senior Cuban analyst at the Defense Intelligence Agency who had been recruited by Cuban intelligence while in graduate school at Johns Hopkins. From 1985 until her arrest on espionage charges in 2001, she routinely passed classified information to Havana that was then transferred to the Soviets. Later, that information was sold to China, North Korea, Venezuela, and Iran. Her Cuban handlers had trained her to manipulate her polygraph by contracting her sphincter muscles, which is why Reece now sat on a sensor. He was also in socks, his feet resting on two individual pads. All movements would be recorded by the polygraph. The room was small, but not claustrophobically so, about twice the size of a single patient room at a doctor's office. Reece thought it was possible the off-white walls had faded to their current hue by absorbing the fear that permeated the space on an almost daily basis. There was a camera visible in the upper left-hand corner, but Reece was sure the CIA had concealed a few others so as not to miss a single eye twitch or muscle

movement. Though he stared at a blank wall, a mirror had been installed just off-center, two-way of course, for observation. The room was bare of any additional distractions other than the small table to his left where the polygrapher sat with his computer. **It was unquestionably designed to make CIA candidates as uncomfortable as possible.** [...] **Reece knew the polygraph was largely theater.** Yes, the machine measured blood pressure, breathing, sweat secretions, and muscle movements, but there was a reason that results of a "lie detector" test were inadmissible in every court in the civilized world. **Its value was in making the candidate think it could detect deception.** It was an expensive prop, one that had gotten more than one candidate over the years to admit to crimes that they would almost certainly have gotten away with otherwise. Reece had visited the **antipolygraph.org** site years ago as part of a battlefield interrogation course he'd attended in the SEAL Teams. It was the approved **"tactical questioning"** course of instruction, meant to provide left and right limits to operators in the field who might not have the luxury of having a BIT, or Battlefield Interrogation Team, attached to their unit. The techniques taught at the approved interrogation school were more akin to how a detective would interview the suspect of a crime in the United States. Reece wouldn't learn the darker arts of interrogation until he was detailed to a CIA covert action unit in Iraq at the height of the war. There he would learn techniques that had come in handy over the years, techniques that were not part of a manual and were not searchable via Google.

"He'd taken the **567-question MMPI-2** psychological test, which he'd found both amusing and irritating. He would have to sit down with an Agency psychologist on his third day. Reece knew the MMPI was designed to uncover psychological issues that might be disqualifying to a candidate applying for employment with the Central Intelligence Agency. It was administered to uncover repressed aggression, psychoticism, alcoholism, anxiety, marital distress, fears, depression, anger, cynicism, low self-esteem, defensiveness, antisocial behavior, schizophrenia, and paranoia."

"The polygraph examiner had been gone for ten minutes. *Was he really meeting with a supervisor?* No chance. They were just making him sweat. **It was all part of the interrogation playbook: convincing unwitting subjects to admit to disqualifying crimes and thereby putting a feather in the cap of the polygrapher who "caught" them.** They were especially fond of "catching" and disqualifying those with special operations backgrounds."

"["]You have a presidential pardon, so even if you are technically lying on the exam you are actually telling the truth." "Doesn't mean I have to like it." "No, but you have to do it. Isn't that even some SEAL saying?" *"You don't have to like it, you just have to do it,"* Reece confirmed. "Good. Just do it.["]"

Chapter 2

"The Quds Force is an elite paramilitary unit responsible for external operations

specializing in the use of proxy forces unattributable to Iran. The West would brand them terrorists regardless of their targets. Born of the 1979 Iranian revolution, they were accountable only to the Ayatollah himself. Their intelligence apparatus taught Ismail how to assess and recruit assets, identify facilitators, set up safe houses, conduct reconnaissance and surveillance, and transfer information via a clandestine communications network back to Hezbollah."

"Angola was a country in transition. After a decade and a half of struggle in a war of liberation against the Portuguese colonists and a follow-on quarter century of civil war, the nation and its people were no strangers to conflict. Those years of strife had conditioned the new ruling class to exercise extreme measures to keep the populace in check. Disappearances of those critical of the Angolan government were commonplace. Torture, gang rape, and public executions were utilized as a means of controlling the populace. *This was Africa.*"

Chapter 3

"President Nixon had signed the Biological Weapons Convention in 1972. It went into effect on March 26, 1975, and outlawed the development, stockpiling, retention, and production of biological agents and toxins for hostile purposes, making what took place in Maryland a violation of international law. Technically speaking the two doctors were about to commit a war crime."

Chapter 4

"America was the world's most prolific arms dealer. They had abandoned their god and chosen to worship a false idol—the almighty dollar."

"When administrations change every four to eight years, the institutional memory is short. They had conveniently forgotten their country's complicity in the chemical atrocities wrought on civilian and military targets when it suited their objectives. Their constituents were easily distracted and had little interest in world affairs, particularly the plight of people beyond their borders."

"COVID-19 had sped up the timeline. The religious counsel in Iran had seen the Great Satan falter. An invisible bug born out of a research lab in Wuhan, China, had devastated the world's most powerful economy. Unemployment was at an all-time high, race riots plagued the major cities, statues were being toppled; a once-strong nation was bowing to the mob. America was on the ropes. *Strike where and when your enemy is vulnerable.* Ali passed through the crowds that reminded him more of his home country than of the United States. Even the smells were reminiscent of his native Iran. America was becoming more like the Middle East every day. *Good.* That would only play into what was to follow."

Chapter 7

"The Deep State is real, though it's not what's portrayed in the movies. The deep state is bureaucracy. Power held by the few. The elite. The intelligentsia. It's our cultural institutions: academia, big tech, Wall Street, Hollywood, even professional sports. I scare them." He paused. "I wouldn't be surprised if I don't make it through my term. Does that surprise you?" "Not much surprises me, sir." "The Deep State is not a group of men in a bunker issuing orders. It's a remark, an offhand comment, plausibly deniable suggestions. It's donors. It's established media, right, left, and center. It's regulations and broad, sweeping laws. It's the power of the IRS, NSA, EPA, FBI, and your very own CIA. That's the Deep State, Reece." "I don't understand, sir. What are you saying?" "Are you familiar with William Ramsey's work on spiritualism?" "I can't say that I am." "In 1856, he wrote: *One of the most striking proofs of the personal existence of Satan is found in the fact, that he has so influenced the minds of multitudes in reference to his existence and doings, as to make them believe that he does not exist.* I found his work while studying the conceptual existence of evil after my fiancée was murdered. I was trying to understand and make sense of it all. Those words stuck with me."

Chapter 8

"As Reece closed his eyes and fought off the nightmares, he remembered the pastor at Freddy's funeral echoing the words from Isaiah 6:8 that he'd heard recited over the graves of so many of his SEAL brothers: *"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'"* Reece was going back to war."

Chapter 11

"Sawyer knew when to let others talk. **Interrogators often found that by being silent they allowed their subject to fill the void with information they would never have extracted via more ruthless methods.**"

"You don't have to be creative, well-read, in shape, resourceful, or strong. The weaker your mind and body the better. You can be taken advantage of. You are ripe for recruitment. **Racism is the witchcraft of the twenty-first century, and cancel culture is the stake at which you are burned.**"

Chapter 13

"It made Reece uncomfortable that there was no back exit. If something happened, at least he wouldn't waste time deciding where to go; they would fight their way to the front door. Reece's back was to the wall, and even though he knew the layout by heart, he'd still made his security assessment as he walked in. He couldn't help himself. It was ingrained. He told himself **it wasn't**

paranoia; it was situational awareness. He'd lost his family because he had not been there. He wasn't going to let that happen to Katie."

"She liked to make him sweat. She'd seen him under pressure before, and **it never failed to amuse her that someone who could be so calm, cool, and collected when the bullets were flying struggled to find words when it came to matters of the heart.**"

Human life tends to have a different value in certain parts of the world.

Chapter 16

"all viruses have unique characteristics. That is what allows us to differentiate them from one another and develop vaccines specific to the particular disease. The more deadly they are, the harder they are to spread, killing their host before they can move on to another body with healthy tissues to destroy. **High contagion rates such as HINI, flu, and COVID-19 have kill rates between 0.01 percent and perhaps as high as 0.2 or 0.3 percent. By contrast, the 1918 Spanish flu and the swine flu in 2009 caused worldwide panics because of the respiratory nature of the spread. Hemorrhagic viruses, like Marburg, only spread through direct blood-to-blood contact or secretions with broken mucous membranes, making them difficult to transmit.** Once contracted, however, Marburg is a true killer, with an infection fatality rate of 85 to 90 percent and death in thirteen days."

Chapter 18

"The United States was already on edge from COVID-19 and had almost destroyed their economy for a virus that was actually doing them a favor: killing off the weak."

Part Two: Infection

Chapter 26

"Originally incorporated as Talos, named for the bronze god who guarded the island of Crete, the company name had subsequently been changed to Masada following the unfortunate 2005 Gardez incident. **In Greek mythology, Talos had a weakness: an unprotected vein in his ankle held his ichor, the lifeblood of the gods. It was a reminder to Sawyer that even the most powerful and well trained among them had flaws.** The country had weaknesses, as did his company and each individual operator who now worked for him. **The key was acknowledging those weaknesses and then taking steps to turn them into strengths.** Rebranding his company after an incident on par with the My Lai Massacre in Vietnam, **he had chosen the name Masada**

for the great fortress in southern Israel overlooking the Dead Sea, a fortress occupied by warriors who defied the Romans. It was occupied in A.D. 66 by a Jewish sect known as the Sicarii, for the small *sicae* daggers they carried concealed in their clothing. At the end of the First Jewish-Roman War, as the Romans prepared to overrun the citadel, the Sicarii set Masada ablaze and committed mass suicide rather than become slaves of the Roman Empire."

Chapter 28

"Authorized by President Lincoln in 1865, the Secret Service was established under the U.S. Department of the Treasury and tasked with suppressing counterfeit currency. After the assassination of President McKinley in 1901, that mission was expanded; the Secret Service has been standing guard ever since, though now it was part of the Department of Homeland Security. The threats had changed, the enemy had adapted, and yet one element remained the same: a Secret Service agent with a gun standing next to the president of the United States."

Chapter 41

"a sense of humor is a good sign when confronting the physical and emotional trauma of battle."

Chapter 43

"Hysteria has gripped not just the populace but also the scientific community."
[Remind you of anything?..]

Chapter 50

"He took his eyes from the highway to assess Ken's wounds. Instead of a young, freshly shaven face with an unruly mop of blond hair, he saw a young bearded SEAL in body armor and helmet behind the wheel of a Hilux truck on a dusty road on the outskirts of a village in Afghanistan, Reece holding the wheel while attempting to stem the flow of blood spurting from his Teammate's neck, just before another AK round tore his head off. "Reece! Reece!" Haley's screams brought him back to reality and he swerved to keep the Suburban on the road."

Part Three: Eradication

Chapter 58

"'Luck is the residue of preparation,'" Reece whispered, his eyes focused past the clouds, beyond the windows. "What?" "Just something an old commanding officer of mine used to say."

Chapter 71

"'Your country is on its knees, Commander. Your response to COVID surprised even our brightest minds. Close down your schools and businesses and destroy your economy for a virus with less than a 0.3 percent mortality rate? With that kind of a response, what would you do with a respiratory virus with a ninety percent mortality rate? I wanted to call the operation off; you were already doing such a good job destroying yourselves from within. All we needed to do was sit back and watch as COVID, race riots, and identity politics further divided an already weak nation; it's just a matter of time.'"

Chapter 76

If Lincoln said the following, he was picking it up from Jesus. A true statement—today more than ever...

"'A house divided against itself cannot stand,'" the president said. "Lincoln was right," Reece said. "The enemy recognized that and hit us while we were down."

These notes were collected by psychotherapist and author Emil Barna in 2025 in his efforts to assist with professional development and further education for himself and those who read them. You can find out more about Emil by visiting www.barnacc.com

"A text without a context is a pretext to a proof text."
—Dr. Don Carson