

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Copyright © 2008 by Ronald John Godlewski

Cover graphics © 2008 R.J. Godlewski

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews

This novel is written exclusively for Right Truth Blog ([www.righttruth.typepad.com](http://www.righttruth.typepad.com)) and its readers.

In loving memory of my precious  
Sara (7/25/1951 to 12/13/2003) who always  
encouraged me to write from the heart and was  
at once both my greatest critic and my most  
loyal fan.

**In love with you always!**

*And...*

To the greatest dad anyone like me could ever  
have hoped for: Joseph Stanley Godlewski  
(11/29/1918 to 04/14/2008).

**You gave me life. Thank you!**

[www.rjgodlewski.com](http://www.rjgodlewski.com)

## Chapter Eighteen

June, 20xx  
*Viper's Lair*  
Kerch, Ukraine

Muhammad leapt towards the taller silhouette, instinctively knowing the larger individual to be the greater threat and pressed the braided rope tightly against the man's throat while he kned the smaller companion in the groin with a powerful kick from his right leg. He cared neither what weapons they held nor whether there were reinforcements behind them. The naked, filthy, and self-possessed Arab only knew that this was his one chance for an open door and he was going to take the opportunity even if Allah would call him back to Paradise.

The Ukrainians presumably anticipated something amiss within the cell but had not apparently expected to be confronted immediately upon opening the door and the taller individual fell backwards, stunned by the efforts of the mad Arab. His assistant, being of average height and very little bulk collapsed to the floor with the wind knocked out of him. Sensing an opening and hearing further men coming to the guards' aid, Muhammad forced the larger Ukrainian down fully and stomped upon the helpless man's throat with both feet, crushing the guard's airway.

Without a second's delay, he turned to witness the second man cower towards the far wall, hissing out of his mouth as he fought for oxygen that would not come in time; Muhammad grabbed a metal fountain pen that had occupied the young man's chest pocket and immediately thrust the implement into the guard's left eye, pushing deeply until the writing instrument

lodged fully into the terrified man's brain. He, too, was placed out of commission to await a slow and agonizing death but Muhammad could spare no time to ensure himself of the fact.

The groans and cries of the dying Ukrainians obviously could be heard by the facility personnel and more than likely could be seen within surveillance cameras for as soon as the Arab spun around to see which way offered the best prospects for a hasty exit, warning bells and sirens began to go off in deafening fashion. Still, Muhammad's heart raced and his blood pulsed through his veins. He knew that if captured there would be no further restraints on his treatment; no expectations to be left alone merely under the care of some electronic eye.

For the briefest of seconds, indecipherable moments of time infuriated by a man frantically searching for freedom; the tall, nearly beardless Arab sought for deliverance from within the long, narrow stone corridor that seemed as bland as had his cell. There appeared to be no doors, no windows, no blemishes whatsoever outside of the multitude of concrete blocks that gave the passage a semblance of a tomb. Muhammad jockeyed around in his feet, not believing that there could be no entrance to the floor; he knew the Ukrainians had come from *somewhere*

Slowly, almost imperceptibly slowly, he realized that the sound of onrushing men came from his left; that there must be some avenue available to sound that would be utilized by the bodies that made them and so he began to run towards the left, eying every block that came into view for any deviation which hinted at an opening.

After he had passed a good ten meters he had found his quarry; a recess opened towards his right that had been ignored due to the similarity of construction; blocks that had appeared to be simply part of the wall were in fact displaced much further back and the illusion hid a stairwell heading upwards. Whether it was the direction that Muhammad wanted to travel was not foremost within his mind; it led *away* and that's all that concerned him for the moment and he took to the steps with all the ferocity of a man possessed by the devil.

His bare feet ignored the heavy pounding they took against the roughhewn concrete floor as they increased in stride.

His lungs ignored the foul, heavy air that would've seemed quite damp and uncomfortable had he paid enough attention to his environment as they sucked in liters of the putrid air. His arms, however, did not fully ignore the three approaching Russian guards armed with AKM rifles, discernible from their AK-47 predecessors by the pronounced dimple adjacent to the magazine feed, and without hesitation Muhammad let loose with a 'one-two' punch that sent the first man stumbling back as his two compatriots fought to level their assault weapons at the fleeing Arab.

With his mind in overdrive, powered by a psychotic brew of adrenalin, Muhammad did not grant the Russians any quarter and without hesitation grasped the first man by the collar and flung him into the line of fire. As 7.62mm bullets tore through the man's body, the Arab grabbed his rifle, using the injured man's body as a brace, and quickly fired several bursts at the heads of the confused Russians. One died instantly as an opportunistic round shattered his second thoracic vertebrae. The other man fared better, if better meant that his heart was still in communication with his brain as he clumped down upon the floor with his cheeks gouged out by several rounds.

Muhammad's ears detected a strange cadence of horrified Russian and Ukrainian voices but his confidence had been skyrocketing – Allah's voice had been whispering into his ears saying that the Arab would prevail – and he quickly retrieved two of the rifles, several thirty-round magazines, a 9mm Makarov pistol, and a handheld radio that had been attached to the second man's camouflaged vest. The bare-assed Arab was now armed to the teeth.

Suspiciously, the frantic foreign voices in the distance began to retreat and Muhammad thought that he could hear a few commands come over the radio to regroup but he could not be certain for all of the racket made by the sirens wailing down the concrete staircase and so he positioned himself tightly against the wall furthest from the expected approach of reinforcements. For the first time since his outbreak, he allowed his mind to flutter; to consider various obstacles that may greet

him should other Russians and Ukrainians approach from above or whether he would be forced to ascend and meet his challenge.

His breathing calmed; his heart rate slowed. His mind, however, kept churning out thoughts of what to expect and what to do. Working extraordinarily quickly, he donned a vest that he pulled off one of the dead Russians. Next, he slung the second rifle over his left shoulder and sunk the pistol in a large pocket, next to which he placed in as many AKM magazines as he could grab without wasting time. Yanking out his rifle's used magazine, he replaced it with a full specimen. *Okay, infidels. If it's war that you want...*

www.rjgodlewski.com