

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 Nineteen

The heavy sound of nearby footsteps told Muhammad that an assault was coming and soon. He knew enough about tactics to consider an educated guess as to what that assault would resemble. No doubt they knew that a firefight had taken place on the floor below. The sound of gunfire and bullets ricocheting off the concrete blocks definitely could be heard above the noise of the sirens but when they finally ceased, the small stairway in which he positioned himself for a battle of survival turned deadly quite.

He could hear his heartbeat descend from that resembling a drum roll to a cadence eerily similar to the sounds of horse hooves until at long last he realized that the final clatter was not of his own heart but of military boots quickly working their way along metal-shielded steps. The assault, he knew, was just about to begin.

Muhammad raised his Russian-made rifle in preparation for battle, snugly securing its wooden stock against the vest that offered little better than had his bare skin for protection. Just as he had done so, a pair of metallic canisters marked with dark bands came tumbling down the stairwell, spewing white clouds of Orthochlorobenzylidene Malonbuitvise smoke. He knew instinctively that he had only about half a minute before the CS irritant got to him and so he responded quickly and decisively with a plan of his own.

Working his way into the lee of the smoke, he grabbed the nearest container and flung it back up into the stairwell, utilizing the smoke from the second cartridge to shield his motions from anyone peering in from above. Seeing that he had some distance between him and where he expected trouble to arrive from, he immediately chucked the second CS grenade

towards where he threw the first; but herein he did not allow for the possibility of either being thrown back towards his location by the soldiers.

With his rifle held at the ready, Muhammad fired a trio into the second smoking canister allowing the grenade to burst fourth in a brilliant flash of orange-yellow flame and arching shrapnel trailing white smoke. This eruptive display was just powerful enough to permit the Arab prisoner to immediately charge up the staircase undetected and he opened up his rifle around every turn that he was forced to make.

In the suffocating mixture of ghostly white smoke, brilliant orange sparks, and multidirectional rounds, Muhammad detected the dark presence of several armed figures. He immediately dropped to his fours; aiming upwards towards the billowing clouds of white smoke that backlit his adversaries and quickly unleashed a deadly hail of bullets that tore into the unsuspecting victims. Knowing hesitation to be a deadly sin, he charged ahead; scampering down low as fast as his limbs could propel him and running as soon as it was clear to stand.

The briefest of mental calculations informed him that he had passed four more bodies and he, largely in a subconscious effort imparted by decades of training, fired a three or four round burst into each of them guaranteeing their incapacitation if not death. Muhammad also knew intimately that time was not on his side no matter how much Allah worked his magic; each step towards the ground level brought the prisoner closer towards the onrushing reinforcements that he knew were gunning for him.

His hope lay in reaching the outside; his men would be there – somewhere – awaiting their master. It was in *their* training. Nay, it was in their *orders*. Muhammad brutalized those who did not obey his commands and many simply committed suicide rather than risk failing him and so he knew that his own men were lurking around on the outside ready to pounce upon the infidels. They would be there, yes, and he only needed to reach them.

Exiting the confined and smoke-contaminated spaces, Muhammad's vision cleared immensely and he realized that he had indeed apparently reached the ground level; a stream of bright sunlight scattered across the floor towards his right and he knew that only an opening of some sort could permit such a glow. Whether it was a window, a door, or a hole in the wall; it meant freedom and he wanted to partake of the opportunity before it closed up.

Casting a momentary glance towards his left – towards the rear of his escape – Muhammad ran down the middle of the hallway, determining that speed was far more important than concealment and headed towards where the light beckoned. In the process, he emptied his magazine by laying a covering spray of bullets ahead of him. When it ran out, he slowed just briefly enough to slap in another clip and continued laying down suppressing fire.

He knew not what actually lay ahead; grew somewhat suspicious that no other soldiers were racing towards him; and decided that perhaps – just perhaps – he was in Allah's favor that day. As to whether Allah would protect him once he emerged into the brilliant sunlight; that depended upon how much Allah favored his troops. Muhammad recruited them, trained them, funded them, and literally *owned* them; whether he would ultimately execute his followers depended upon whether or not they were where he needed them most.