

Richard Diamond's career is solid in Quantico, he can fish in the creek behind his cabin, and he's dating a beautiful woman. But a new assignment will plunge him into the Iraqi desert, deliver targeting computers to SEAL Team One.

Richard Diamond, USMC

By Edward F. Koehler PhD

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EDWARD F. KOEHLER, PHD

RICHARD DIAMOND USMC



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CHAPTER 1

The Orders

The sun emerged from behind the clouds as Richard Diamond's boots pound the ground on the Marine Corps' exercise course at Quantico, Virginia. It rained the day before, and the course was wet, the grass was wet, the trees brushing against Diamond's arms were wet. As Richard neared the end of the course, he noticed Private Thompson approaching. Lieutenant Diamond slowed up as Thompson saluted him with a casual wave of his hand against his brow. He then came to a complete stop, caught his breath, and gave a salute back.

"Lieutenant Diamond, you're wanted at headquarters ASAP."

Diamond was still breathing heavily, bent over with sweat dripping off his face. "Thanks, private " Richard huffs out as a bead of sweat hangs onto the tip of his nose. Lieutenant Diamond walked across the parking lot as he fully caught his breath. Headquarters was about a half-mile away, an easy walk on a nice spring day. Richard was elated with the possibility of seeing Major Cole's secretary Margie.

It wasn't long before Diamond was approaching the headquarters building. As he approached the front door, several other Marines were exiting. One of them held the door open for Diamond as he entered. At the reception desk was a cute blonde female Department of Defense civilian employee who recognized Lieutenant Diamond right away.

As Richard entered the office, Margie raises her head up and gives a friendly wave to Richard.

"Hello, Lieutenant Diamond! Major Cole wants to see you in his office. If you just wait a minute, I'll let them know you're here," she said looking up at Richard through her thick lashes.

Diamond waited at the desk while the young lady picked up the telephone and called Major Cole.

"Major Cole?" she paused. "Lieutenant Diamond is here to see you."

Diamond heard "Send him in" in a muffled tone come from the handheld receiver.

"Go on in Lieutenant," she said with a smile, again looking up at Richard.

Richard straightened out his running gear as best he could and knocked twice on the Major's door before entering the room. Major Cole's office was a typical USMC office. The window behind the desk was open slightly, and on the windowsill was Major Cole's pipe sitting in a cradle. Diamond had heard Major Cole was trying to quit smoking.

Major Cole was a stocky fellow with a mustache, and his hair was just starting to gray around the temples. His mustache was well trimmed, not as trimmed as William Powell of the *Thin Man*, but not as bushy as Tom Selleck in *Magnum P.I.* Major Cole and Lieutenant Diamond got along well together; they had known each other for several years

and shared a mutual respect for each other's abilities. They both led their lives the cowboy way. Major Cole was dressed in camouflage fatigues, neatly pressed.

"Good morning, Major. Please excuse my appearance. I just finished the obstacle course." Diamond spoke with a slight Texas accent.

"That's okay, Diamond. This will only take a moment. First, I just received this from the Pentagon. All leaves are canceled for the foreseeable future. SECNAV has a small operation that I'd like you to take care of. The Navy has a shipment of night vision goggles and other sensitive equipment that needs to go overseas for use in an upcoming operation. I told SECNAV we could handle getting this equipment to the proper location. Would you be interested in volunteering to accompany this shipment to the desert in Iraq?"

"Yes, sir. Whatever the Marine Corps needs, I can handle. This sounds like a babysitting job for a shipment."

"Yes, Diamond, that's true. Generally I would agree with you. This could turn out to be little more than that, but I don't think so." The Major rotated in his seat, and picked up his pipe from the window sill. "We have been put on notice; be prepared to deploy within twenty-four hours. It looks like the United States is striking back at the terrorist for 911."

"Against Iran or Saudi Arabia ? "

"No, against Iraq, Sandam Husain and the Imperial Guard; we are going to finish what we should have done the last

time we were there. These night vision goggles and laser targeting equipment will enable Navy pilots to hit exactly what their targets are; with pin point accuracy. Like dropping a bomb down an elevator shaft of a building. The Germans took Poland in 1939 with overwhelming force, with what they called Blitzkrieg or lightning warfare. Well that battle is going to look like a school yard fight when the United States Military hits Iraqi with Shock and Awe. I hope it doesn't come to that, but if we get the call, let's be ready."

"I hope your right sir, and it gets called off. But if we have to go to war, then lets be the pointy end of the spear."

As the major spoke, Diamond was thinking. *"Should I ask the major about the promotion list? I wonder if it has come out yet. Should I ask, or should I not?"* Diamond led his life the cowboy way, he was not a self-promoter, but rather let his deeds and actions speak for themselves. Finally, he spoke. "Oh, Major Cole. By the way, I was just wondering if you'd heard anything about the promotions list."

Major Cole opened up the right-hand desk drawer and removed a pouch of pipe tobacco. "No, nothing yet, Diamond, but your name is on the top of the list. You scored well on the test, and your fit reps have all been satisfactory. Hang tight. I will probably know something by the time you get back from the desert," he said, then continued. "Diamond, go on and pick up your orders from Margie. You leave in two days. You'll catch a flight out of Andrews to Germany and then take a short hop from Germany to your destination.

Review your orders, there is a SEAL Team that may be flying with you, they are the ones that ultimately will be using this equipment. I will see you in a few days when you get back." If Major Cole knew anything about the promotions list, he didn't let on. The Major rocked back in his chair as he filled his pipe with tobacco. The aroma of cherry and aged tobacco filled the room before Major Cole even struck the match.

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. See you in a few days."

Diamond left the way he came in, pulling the door closed behind him as he exited the major's office. Margie was already standing there with a large manila envelope in her hand. She handed it to Diamond as he approached. As Richard took the package, he looked perhaps a little too long at Margie. She looked as if she should be the heroine in an Alfred Hitchcock movie. She was blonde, not too tall, nice figure, with sparkling blue eyes. Today, Margie was wearing a white blouse with an open collar that exposed a strand of onyx pearls. To complement her blouse, she wore a black skirt that fell nicely around her body and stopped just above her knee. The fabric clung to her body as if it wanted to touch her. To finish her look, she wore black high heels with rounded toes and small bows.

"Oh, Richard," she said playfully. "If you're going someplace nice, bring something back for me. Nothing big. Just anything you might find nice for a girl." Her hazel blue eyes looked at Richard with the glint of a flirt.

One thing that excited Richard about Margie was her sharp wit, Richard had a penchant for smart women. "Why,

Margie, you know you're always first in my heart. I can't tell you where I'm going, but if I find anything that I think would be good for you, and I have the time, I'll pick it up," he responded in kind. "I'll see you when I get back. Maybe we can go out to dinner and a movie, again. I've been meaning to call you, but I've just been busy. So, please forgive me for not getting back to you. I had a great time with you the last time we went out." Richard finished his sentence and sensed encouragement from Margie.

"Thanks, Richard. That would be great. We did have fun together, didn't we?"

"Margie, it's short notice, but if you are not busy this weekend, let's go out to dinner. "

"That a wonderful idea Richard, I would love to see you again. "

"Good, I'll call you on Saturday, about time and other details." Richard reaches out and touches Margie's hand affectionately.

Margie was about Diamond's age, and they had gone out a couple of times before and the sexual energy between them was like static electricity, it could spark at any time. Nothing serious had happened yet, but it was only a matter of time before the hugs and kisses blossomed into something more. The memory of feeling Margie's body pressed against his, left Richard wanting for more.

Diamond took the envelope and walked past Margie back to a remote part of the office. He opened the envelope stamped

in red with the word SECRET. Richard read the four-page letter carefully. *"1. Flight from Andrews to Germany.....2. Flight from Germany to Iraqi, Deliver equipment. 3. Immediate return Flight back to Germany. 4. One day layover then a Flight back to Andrews."* he thought as he read. *"By the time the real shooting starts, I'll be back at Andrews Air Force Base."*

Diamond put the letter and orders back in the envelope, resealed it with the little red string tie, and tucked it under his left arm. He walked out the door toward the parking lot where his car was parked. Richard approached his car, opened the door, tossed the envelope on the passenger seat, and slipped in behind the wheel. As Diamond turned the key in the ignition of the midnight blue, older model Corvette convertible, the 350-cubic-inch engine roared to life. He backed out of the space and took a right turn out of the parking lot heading toward his office.

Lieutenant Diamond's office was in a typical two-story, government-issue Marine Corps office building. It was a red brick building built about 50 years ago. The building looked more like a two-story college dormitory in the Georgian style, with evenly spaced double-hung windows that were painted white. It was topped by a hip roof with an attic for storage, with one window at each end.

Diamond entered and walked down the hall straight to his office. Unlocking the door, he entered and flipped the light switch on. The florescent ceiling lights flickered to life. Behind Diamond's desk was a grey four-drawer filing cabinet with the top drawer featuring a combination lock located in the center. Richard quickly turned the dial, pulled the door

open, and placed the orders inside. He then carefully slid the drawer closed until the drawer gave a solid click. By habit, he then spun the lock both right and left. *"That should do it,"* he thought. Richard left his office, turning out the light, and locking the door behind him.

Back outside of the office, Richard quickly hopped back in the Vette, turned the key, and headed for the main gate. As he slowly pulled up to the main gate, the guard exited the guardhouse and gave Diamond a quick salute. Diamond slowed and saluted back as the gate rose. Diamond coasted under it, past the main gate, and out to the main road. U.S. Route 1 is the main drag through Quantico, Virginia. The guard made a notation of the time on his clipboard as Lieutenant Diamond drove away. The base security cameras capturing all the coming and going.

Diamond headed south on Route 1 toward home. The top is down and life is good. A short drive away, Diamond hit a dirt driveway on the left-hand side with unlabeled mailbox attached to an adjacent tree. Diamond pulled in and drove the quarter-mile down the pitted path of sand and gravel to his cabin. Diamond's cabin was nestled in the woods of Virginia, surrounded by large, old-growth loblolly pines and the occasional blue spruce. The cabin was a rustic two-story bungalow with the second floor featuring just a bathroom and two empty rooms; one on each side for guests. But Diamond never had any guests, at least none that stayed upstairs anyway. Out the back of the cabin and down the hill is Aquia Creek, a small tributary that emptied

into the Potomac River. Aquia Creek is just deep enough to launch a sailboat.

Being a warm day and nearing noon, Diamond decided to shower outdoors. Out his master bedroom backdoor and a little to one side was an outdoor shower. Diamond stripped in his bedroom, tossed the clothes in the dirty laundry hamper, grabbed a towel from the master bathroom, and walked outside to shower. He hung the towel on a wooden peg to the side of the shower. The noonday sun added warmth to the spring fresh air.

Diamond was just over 6 feet tall, with blue eyes and sandy blonde hair that stuck up in all directions when it wasn't combed. He was in good shape, muscular, but could still stand to lose five pounds. That's why he had been running and working out on the obstacle course. People often commented that he looks a little like Robert Redford, just not as handsome.

Richard takes his shower as the midday sun beats down on him. He washes his hair with shampoo and shaves while he showers. As he does his final rinse, Richard turns the hot water off slowly so that the final rinse is cool on his body. Richard dries off standing in the sunlight, wraps the towel around his waist and reenters his bedroom through the rear door. After the shower, Diamond gets dressed in a clean set of Marine Corps fatigues and has a quick lunch of a ham and Swiss cheese sandwich on whole wheat bread with Dijon mustard. He complements the sandwich with an apple and bottled water. He grabs his keys and walks out the front door and across his sandy driveway. Back in

the Corvette, he drives quickly up the driveway and makes the right-hand turn out onto Route 1. The drive back to Quantico takes less than 20 minutes.

Once through the front gate, Diamond goes directly to the firing range. He has a class of new Officer Candidate School recruits ready for pistol training. The sergeant in charge has already unlocked the gun cabinet and distributed the Colt .45 semi-automatics to the class, along with ammunition. Two .45s lie side-by-side on the table next to the sergeant.

"Good afternoon," Diamond said to the class. "Is everyone ready for day one of pistol training?" He doesn't stop for an answer. "The weapon distributed to you gentlemen is a standard-issue Colt .45 semiautomatic. It holds a clip of 11 shots. In the field, this weapon can save your life with a single, well-placed shot. The sergeant has already briefed you on loading and the general safety of this weapon."

The sergeant is a big man, well over 6 feet tall and approximately 250 pounds of solid muscle. In a booming drill sergeant voice "If everyone will take their position on the firing line, we have targets at the 50-foot distance. Please take your positions standing with the weapon holster. Starting with position one, I want you to draw your weapon, click the safety to the off position, and fire three shots at the target." His Louisiana accent evident in every syllable.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The firing range is an outdoor facility with a covered area for participants to stand. The grass is worn down to the dirt

at each location, twelve locations in all. Both Lieutenant Diamond and Gunny Sergeant Mercurio walk behind the students as they get into position.

“Good. Now shooting position number two. Same routine. Draw your weapon, go down on one knee, and fire three shots at the target.”

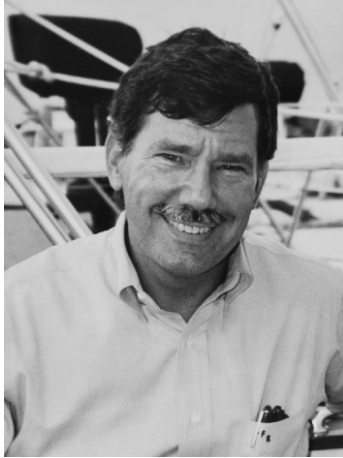
Target practice continued for all twelve of the OCS candidates, each firing their weapon in sequence. Occasionally, either Lieutenant Diamond or the sergeant stood behind the candidate to adjust his stance, grip, or give other instructions. At the end of each shooting, the targets were retrieved and the shooter was reviewed and graded. This procedure was repeated several more times until each candidate felt comfortable with the weapon and could at least hit the target with all three single shots at 50 feet.

At the end of the class, both Sergeant Mercurio and Diamond got into the standing position, each with his .45 holstered. It took only one second for both Diamond and the sergeant to draw his weapon, click off the safety, and fire three quick shots at the target—**Boom! Boom! Boom!** The sergeant was an excellent shot; all three shots closely grouped in the middle of the target. Lieutenant Diamond was almost as good; Richard hit two good solid centers and one shot is slightly up and to the right. Richard is right-handed and when he pulled on the trigger, it tended to pull the weapon slightly to the right. As an experienced marksman, he usually holds the weapon with both hands to account for this movement as the trigger is pulled.

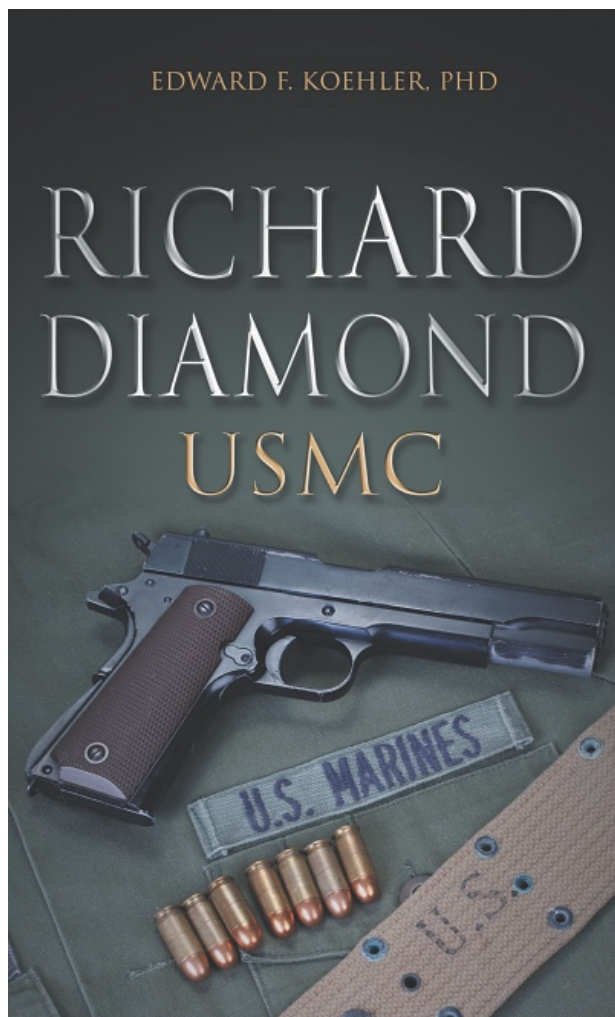
"Okay, gentlemen, that's enough for today. Gunny Sergeant Mercurio will be instructing the class over the next several days, and I expect good solid progress the next time I see the class. Before you all go, I want to say something about using your weapon in country, use it when have to, but be aware there are at least three other ways to look at any situation. Use your brain first, don't start any mission or assignment without a well thought out plan. And when the boots hit the ground, improvise, adapt, modify and overcome. " With that, Diamond dismissed the class and headed home. As Diamond walks to his car, he is passed by a group of new FBI agents, jogging in formation, heading in the opposite direction. They are all neatly dressed in blue shorts with white T-shirts with the letters "FBI" printed in dark blue. The FBI agents conduct weapons training at Quantico; Diamond's next class was scheduled with a group of new FBI recruits.



Look for *Richard Diamond*, CIA coming soon.



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