

Mystery novel, takes place in a unique setting: the White House executive residence, home of the first family. Murder, romance, deceit, and a suspenseful struggle all ensue as the main character struggles to solve the case.

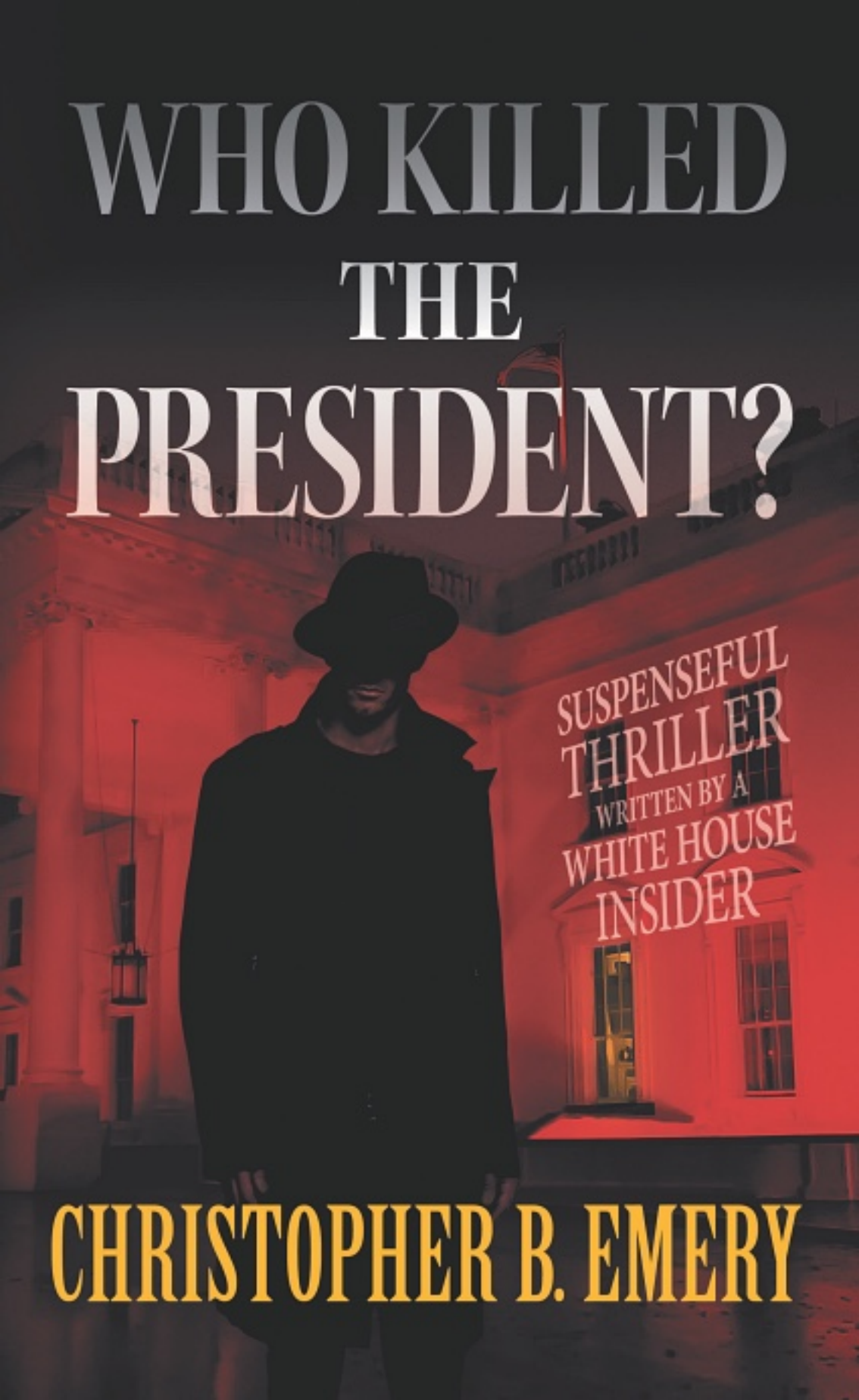
White House Usher: "Who Killed the President?"

By Christopher Beauregard Emery

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WHO KILLED THE PRESIDENT?

SUSPENSEFUL
THRILLER
WRITTEN BY A
WHITE HOUSE
INSIDER

CHRISTOPHER B. EMERY

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This book is a work of fiction. Some of the historical characters are real, and some of their actions are real, though some of their actions are fictitious. Any references to historical events, real people, or real places unless otherwise noted are used fictitiously. Other names, characters, places, and events are products of the author’s imagination, and any resemblance to actual events, places, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.



Chapter 1

Washington, DC

Two years into the administration

5 a.m., Monday, March 2: The White House

White House Chief Usher Bartholomew Winston sat alone in the ushers office just off the state floor. He was absolutely numb, mind empty as if caught in a trance. On his lap the latest edition of *The Washington Post*, front page screaming out the headline:

“PRESIDENT BLAKE DIES WHITE HOUSE ASSISTANT USHER IN CUSTODY”

On the office TV, CNN’s nonstop *Breaking News* segment repeated ad nauseam that President Blake had been reported “dead on arrival” at George Washington Hospital at 8:19 p.m. yesterday.

The chief usher’s eyes moved just barely across the broad, ornately decorated room, settling on the balding seasoned anchor, every blemish of his face shown in vivid detail thanks to the merciless definition offered by the screen mounted on the beige-colored wall. The man’s lips seemed to move almost faster than the words that flew out of his mouth and filled the room:

“Cause of death has not been officially released, although an unnamed White House source is saying the president died suddenly after dinner. Earlier this morning, President Blake’s body was taken from George Washington Hospital to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda for autopsy, and we are expecting the official cause of death to be released shortly.

“Meanwhile, we have received confirmation that the first lady, who was in China, is en route back to Washington on a military aircraft. Vice President Elizabeth Gentry was sworn in as the nation’s forty-sixth president shortly after 9 p.m. yesterday. She becomes the first woman president and the youngest to have ever served. CNN can now report that there is a person of interest in custody, an assistant usher named Brenton Augustus Williams. He was taken into custody yesterday afternoon from the White House and is now being questioned by the FBI at a secure location.”

The ushers office, hidden behind its double mahogany doors just off the northwest corner of the grand foyer on the state floor, had been the management office for all White House serving presidents for the past one hundred and seventy years.

This early in the morning, with its chandeliers and wall sconces at their lowest setting, the White House appeared cavernous, a maze of long shadows and dark corners. Inside the ushers office, the only light came

from the dim chandelier hanging from the center of the thirteen-foot ceiling. The small lamps atop the two desks were off; the only other light came from the wall-mounted television. The staff would start to arrive within the hour.

Bartholomew Winston remained seated, his posture perfect, his dark eyes glazed over, no longer watching but continuing to listen to the TV. He was a man quite dignified in style and appearance, tall and thin, with an uncanny resemblance to actor Morgan Freeman. Winston, as everyone called him, wore a perfectly tailored, medium-gray Armani suit, a starched white shirt, a light blue Hermes tie, presidential cufflinks, light gray socks that perfectly matched the color of his suit, and black wingtips. He conveyed class and sophistication and exuded confidence. But right at that moment, he was in shock. Footsteps thumped up the back stairs, and he was suddenly aware that others were present. He turned toward the sound and watched as four men walked into his office.

One of the four stepped forward, a tall black man with a grim look on his face. He removed the badge from his jacket and flashed it before stating in a monotone voice, “Mr. Winston, we’re from the FBI. I’m Agent Clayton, the lead for the investigation. We would like you to come with us for questioning.”

Bartholomew Winston placed the newspaper on the desk and slowly stood while explaining to the

gentlemen that he had already answered questions for several hours late last night and into the morning. The FBI men did not appear to have much patience, nor did they seem to feel any need to explain themselves. They insisted that he follow them, so down the back stairs they went.

Chapter 2

5:10 a.m., Monday, March 2: The White House Map Room

The White House map room on the ground floor of the executive mansion had been President Roosevelt's Situation Room during World War II; it was there that the D-Day invasion was planned and monitored. These days, the room remained secure, rarely visible to the public, often used for private meetings, it was appropriately furnished in the style of English cabinetmaker Thomas Chippendale—though rather sparsely so, facilitating easy conversion when setting up the room as a studio for television interviews and tapings.

The FBI led the chief usher into the room, where several other agents were already waiting. It was still dark outside, so the two south-facing windows did not offer any light, and the antique lamps and ceiling light were not particularly bright. A dozen chairs had been arranged behind a row of folding tables that sat over the large, antique Persian Farahan rug. Agent Clayton, the senior-most agent, motioned for Bartholomew Winston to have a seat at the single lone chair facing the agents ten feet away. Winston was impressed that they had bothered to include a tray table with a glass and pitcher of water next to his chair. Off to his right, a lone video camera on a tripod was being operated by a short, stout female agent. Along the north wall of the room, a temporary table had been set up, where four staff

members sat with various laptops and electronic equipment.

Ten FBI agents took their seats facing him. Agent Clayton, seated in the middle, nodded to the camera operator, and a red light at the top of the camera illuminated, indicating the recording had begun. Clayton then started the session.

“Mr. Winston, allow me to start by stating the obvious. We are dealing with traumatic events of historic proportion and need your help. My sincere apologies for our abruptness moments ago when we barged into your office. We’re all under tremendous pressure. The bureau thanks you for being here. Please know your outstanding reputation, excellent judgment, and well-documented, exemplary job performance are not in question here. You have served many presidents during a distinguished career that has been noted favorably by world leaders, historians, and scholars.

“I wish we were meeting under different circumstances, but I must now get to the matter at hand. We have a series of questions, and I cannot emphasize enough that this is a matter of national security and utmost urgency. Given these current events, you are not entitled nor are you permitted to have legal counsel. Also, for the record, this session is being recorded for use of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the ODNI [Office of the Director of National Intelligence].”

Winston acknowledged all this with a nod as he crossed his legs.

“This will be sworn testimony, Mr. Winston,” said Clayton. “Please raise your right hand. Do you, Bartholomew Winston, solemnly affirm that the evidence that you are about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?”

Winston, speaking with a hint of a Southern drawl, responded: “I do.”

“Thank you, Mr. Winston. Members of my team will now ask you a series of questions for the record.”

Agent 1, a fit older man looking like an agent from the 1960s with his graying military haircut, dark suit, and dark, thin tie, leaned forward in his chair, elbows on the table, looking down at his legal pad: “Mr. Winston, please state your full name, age, date of birth, and job title.”

“Bartholomew Roosevelt Winston, White House chief usher. Oh, and I was born August 1st, 1945. I am seventy-five.”

Agent 1: “Place of birth?”

“Salisbury, North Carolina.”

Agent 1: “What is your current address?”

“12301 Imperial Drive, Bethesda, Maryland.”

Agent 1: “How long have you lived at Imperial Drive?”

“Forty-two years.” Winston’s anxiety increased as he dreaded with anticipation the next questions, which he knew would be about his wife, who had died in a tragic accident.

Agent 1: “Are you married, Mr. Winston?”

“I’m widowed. My wife passed away eighteen months ago. We had been married for forty-six years.” It was still so painful for Winston to admit that his life’s soulmate was no longer.

Agent 1: “We’re sorry for your loss, Mr. Winston.” Winston nodded slowly in acknowledgment. “What was your wife’s name?”

“Connie.”

Agent 1: “Any children?”

“I have a forty-year-old son, Bartholomew Roosevelt Winston, Jr. He’s a cardiologist in San Diego.”

Agent 1: “Are the two of you close?”

“Very. We talk often. Since his mother passed, I’d say we’re in contact via text or phone daily.”

Agent 1: “Grandchildren?”

Winston smiled. “Not yet. And I ask him about it daily!”

Several of the agents smiled.

Agent 2, a young African American man in a gray suit and dark red tie: “How long have you worked in the White House?”

“Fifty years.”

Agent 2: “Mr. Winston, did you attend college?”

“Yes. Winston-Salem State College, and I graduated in 1966 with a bachelor’s of arts degree in history.”

Agent 2: “Are you a military veteran, Mr. Winston?”

“Yes, I was in the Marine Corps from 1966 to 1970. I served two tours in Vietnam and retired with the rank of captain.”

“Did you receive any awards for your service?”

“Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbon, and the Presidential Service Badge.”

Agent 2: “Tell us how you got to the White House.”

“After Vietnam, I became a military aide for then-President Nixon. This was a temporary post, and not long thereafter, with the war effort starting to draw down, I retired from the Marine Corps. At that time, President Nixon arranged for me to become a member of the White House ushers office.”

Agent 1: “Please describe for us the history, purpose, and function of the ushers office.”

Winston began with the description he had used to answer variations of that question a thousand times:

“For more than two hundred years, a small office has operated on the state floor of the White House executive residence. Since the 1850s, it has been known as the ushers office and has functioned very much the same as it has for its entire history. Our job primarily is to accommodate the personal needs of the first family and make the White House feel like a home rather than a museum or office.”

The agents were all taking notes, and Winston could hear the other staff from the rear table as they typed on their laptops.

“We develop and administer the annual budget for the executive residence to cover our operation, maintenance, and utilities. We provide the oversight and management for the eighty-nine staff members who work here, and we also take care of the surrounding eighteen acres of grounds.”

Winston looked back and forth at the entire row of agents. A few were taking notes, one was looking at his iPhone, and the rest were staring back at him. “We work very closely with the first family, senior staff, social office, press office, Secret Service, and military to carry out all White House functions, which include luncheons, dinners, teas, receptions, meetings, conferences, and more. We maintain the entire 132-room mansion, and of course, help preserve the fine arts collection. By the way, the White House became an accredited museum in 1961. We take care of setting up the house for the 1.2 million tourists who come through the White House each year.”

Winston paused and quickly removed a handkerchief from his left suit pocket just in time to sneeze into it. He apologized, blaming it on dust, then folded the handkerchief and placed it back into his pocket. He continued, “We also field a variety of mail inquiries ranging from White House history and the fine arts collection to job opportunities. We are on hand for the arrival and departure of all first family members and guests. The assistant ushers and I have more access to the president than most members of the president’s

family and are responsible for taking care of the first family's most secluded area—their home. Because the first family's privacy is paramount, it is by design that little is known about the office or the ushers who work here.”

Agent 1: “Describe the organizational structure of the office.”

“Absolutely. There is one chief usher and three assistant ushers who manage the ninety or so staff members, who consist of butlers, carpenters, grounds personnel, electricians, painters, plumbers, florists, maids, housemen, cooks, chefs, storekeepers, curators, calligraphers, doormen, and administrative support.”

Agent 1: “Are you appointed by the president?”

“The executive residence staff are a special type of presidential appointment: Schedule A, meaning we serve at the pleasure of the president, and typically, the staff serve for a lifetime.”

Agent 2: “You say, typically. Have there been exceptions?”

Winston: “Yes. In 1887, President Cleveland fired some of the staff, and in the mid-1990s, Mrs. Clinton fired one of the ushers, but other than that, you'll find the executive residence staff remain until they either retire or die.”

Agent Clayton then nodded to a petite Asian female agent with chin-length, dark hair who was sitting at the far end of the row. She quickly glanced down at her paperwork that lay on the gray table in front of her, then looked up to meet Winston's gaze. She raised her chin a bit, cleared her throat, and was ready to take over her portion of the interrogation. She would be the third agent under Clayton's watch to speak. Winston, not knowing her name, thought of her simply as Agent 3. "Thank you, Mr. Winston. Very helpful information. We are now going to focus on the events of yesterday, Sunday evening, March 1st. Let's start by having you describe to us in full detail your whereabouts and knowledge specific to when you learned about the circumstances involving President Blake."

"I was in the ushers office when we heard all sorts of commotion. Someone was running down the back stairs from the second floor of the private residence, and they were yelling."

Agent 3: "What time was this?"

"It was just before 8:00 p.m."

Agent 3: "Was there anyone else in the ushers office?"

"Yes, Assistant Usher Brent Williams was seated at his desk, and Secret Service Agent Greg Leidner was standing in the doorway."

Agent 3: “What happened next?”

“Our conversation stopped because we heard the yelling. It was Sous Chef Patrick Sullivan. He was running down the back stairs yelling the president had collapsed. Patrick was out of control with grief as he entered the office. The Secret Service agent who had been on post in the stairwell adjacent to the private quarters must have radioed for backup because suddenly several agents ran up the back stairs. I grabbed the chef’s arm and told him to come with me. We followed the agents up the steps, although we weren’t as fast.”

The grief was beginning to show on Winston’s face. He paused to gather himself and fought to focus on hiding his emotions. He took a deep breath and continued. “When we got to the second floor, we walked into the west sitting hall and followed all the noise coming from the family dining room. When we entered, I saw President Blake sprawled out on the floor with several agents attempting to administer CPR.”

Agent 3: “Who else was in the room?”

“Chef Sullivan and the two butlers that were on duty. And I should mention, one of the butlers was kneeling next to the president assisting with CPR.”

Agent 3: “Where was Assistant Usher Brenton Williams during all this?”

Winston paused and thought for a few seconds, then responded, “He wasn’t there. He must have remained in the office.” Winston, with a steady hand, poured a glass of water from the pitcher that was next to him and took a drink.

Agent 3: “Please continue.”

“It was mass bedlam. Everyone was frantic and yelling. I saw Chef Sullivan standing in the far corner sobbing. Suddenly, staff from the White House medical unit rushed in with two nurses and a physician’s assistant. They brought a stretcher and resuscitation equipment and immediately took over the CPR activities. It all seemed so futile because there was absolutely no response from the president. I kept thinking; this can’t be happening. President Blake was such a vibrant man. And poor Mrs. Blake—this is going to be a terrible a shock.”

Winston again paused and took a sip of water to steady himself. Agent Clayton unconsciously drummed his fingers on the table, looked at his watch, and observed Winston drink. He pressed his thin lips together, and with his impatience quickly mounting he reminded everyone of the criticality of the interview and encouraged Winston to continue.

Winston went on. “The medical unit continued with their attempts, and moments later, the president’s physician, Dr. Jenkins, came running into the room,

followed by the chief of staff. By then, the president had been placed on the stretcher. Dr. Jenkins frantically searched for a pulse, then yelled that they needed to get the president to the hospital. I held the elevator doors as they boarded. Dr. Jenkins barked out orders, telling others to take the stairs and not crowd the elevator. When we got to the ground floor, the stretcher was quickly wheeled out to the south portico, where an ambulance was waiting. The Secret Service loaded the president into the ambulance, and Dr. Jenkins jumped in, followed by two agents. Everyone else rushed to the other vehicles, and a small motorcade, a lead sedan, the ambulance, and a follow-up SUV sped out the southwest gate toward the hospital.”

Agent 3: “What did you do then?”

“I headed back to the ushers office. I encountered several White House residence staff in the hallway. They all wanted to know what was happening, and so I simply told them the president is on his way to the hospital and we’d know more soon. I then walked back to the ushers office and encountered Vice President Gentry with several of her staff. They were all pressing me for details.

“I think every phone line in the ushers office was lit up, some in use by the VP and her staff, and others flooded by incoming calls. I wondered why my assistant Brent was not there. I needed his help! I stepped into the hallway, pulled out my cell phone, and

saw that Brent had tried to call me several times. I immediately tried calling him back but could not get a signal. I then ran up to my private office on the mezzanine level directly above the ushers office so that I could use a landline. But I could not get a dial tone. I went back down to the ushers office just as the VP and her staff were hurriedly leaving.

“On the office TV, CNN was breaking the news about the president being rushed to the hospital. All the phone lines in the ushers office kept blinking with incoming calls. I started picking up calls from the press and staff. I took a call from the Secret Service that I could not comprehend. It just didn’t make any sense. They told me that my assistant Brent Williams was being detained at the east gate because he had concealed a controlled substance.”

Agent 3: “Mr. Winston, do you now know the specifics on why Brent Williams was detained?”

“I only know what the Secret Service told me and what I saw this morning on CNN.”

Agent Clayton rejoined the conversation. “Mr. Winston, let me remind you—and also to ensure that it is part of the record—you, all the ushers, and everyone in this room have a top-secret clearance, known as ‘Yankee White.’ This designation is among the highest in existence. I am hereby reading you into Special Compartmentalized Information, which is United

States classified information concerning or derived from sensitive intelligence sources, methods, and/or analytical processes. Do you understand?”

Winston raised an eyebrow, “Uh, of course. Please go on.”

Agent Clayton handed a document to one of the staffers, who then handed it to Winston. “I need you to sign this nondisclosure agreement. This is to officially ‘read you in’ to the material you are about to have access to. This document will be recorded in our official access register. Once it is determined that you no longer require clearance for this information, we will terminate your access, and you will sign a second disclosure document. Do you have any questions?”

Winston shook his head and signed the document.

“For the record, Mr. Winston did not have any questions and has signed the NDA,” declared Clayton.

Agent 4, an overweight, middle-aged man wearing a brown suit: “As soon as the president became incapacitated, the director of the Secret Service invoked Emergency Directive 501, the lockdown procedures for the White House complex. This to prevent anyone from leaving. Assistant Usher Brenton Williams was stopped after exiting Post A1, the east entrance gate to the White House, at approximately 8:07 p.m. Assistant Usher Williams consented to a

search, which revealed he had in his possession two vials of a substance. Tests have since revealed that Brenton Williams was concealing botulinum toxin, which in microscopic amounts can cause paralysis and immediate death through respiratory failure. Furthermore, and let me emphasize this information is strictly confidential and will not be released to the press, initial toxin reports from George Washington Hospital, and now just confirmed by Walter Reed Medical Center, indicate President Blake died from ingesting botulinum type H. The FBI has since received intelligence that your assistant usher had searched the dark web in order to obtain botulinum toxin. Mr. Winston, Brenton Williams is being held as not only a person of interest but as the prime suspect in the murder of the president.”

Bartholomew Winston was speechless; he could not move.

Chapter 3

7:00 a.m., Monday, March 2: The White House, Second Floor, Private Residence

Winston escorted the FBI, Secret Service, and DC Metropolitan Police detectives to the second floor. Now that the Secret Service had the preliminary toxicology reports, they had officially designated the second-floor private residence of the White House a crime scene.

The chief of the Secret Service presidential protection detail pulled Winston aside. “Winston, it’s going to be a bit chaotic up here for the next several hours. We will have a lot of personnel coming and going.”

Winston had known Chief Dan Livingston for years. “Dan, the first lady is due back at 11 a.m. I will need everyone off the floor and everything back to the way it was. I know that is a challenge. I really appreciate your help.”

“Agreed,” said Dan. “And I just checked. She is now due back at 11:15. Our goal is to be done in less than four hours. And by the way, we’re going to need to interview everyone that was on duty yesterday, so please provide me with a list of all staff and ensure they are available this morning.”

“Of course. I’ll have the list for you in fifteen minutes.”

“Thank you.”

Winston stood just outside of the doorway to the family dining room and observed the coordinated activities. Two men were taking photos from every possible angle of the family kitchen, dining room, and west sitting hall. Another man was videotaping all the activities, and a fourth man used a hand-held laser device to take measurements and plot the floorplan.

The area in immediate proximity to where the president had been seated and the location of where he had been on the floor were now cordoned off with yellow police tape. Inside this isolated section, three men wearing sterile white jumpsuits, gloves, goggles/face masks, hairnets, and booties were delicately using brushes, tweezers, and other small tools to gather fibers and collect various microscopic materials. The president’s dinner dishes were still in place, as was the small table next to his seat, which contained the leather pouch he used for his insulin. The general public was not aware that President Blake was a type 1 diabetic and self-administered his insulin injections each morning and at dinnertime each evening.

Chapter 4

7 a.m., Monday, March 2: Interrogation Facility, Undisclosed Location

White House Assistant Usher Brent Williams sat in the dark on a cold, concrete floor. He was completely nude and had no concept of time or the duration of his stay in that room; it was so dark, he wondered if he had gone blind.

A competitive distance runner, at five-foot-eleven and 155 pounds he was always an example of good health, Brent was a good-looking man with a youthful face. He now felt weak and out of shape. His body ached and he could not get warm. He wondered what became of his eyeglasses. At some point earlier, he had spent what seemed like endless hours under very harsh florescent lights answering the questions of people he could not see. He had no idea what botulinum was or why they kept asking him about it. Yes, he was well aware that the president had gone to the hospital, but what did that have to do with him? Brent had many friends in the administration and even more in the Secret Service. He thought it could not be too much longer before someone cleared him from this nightmare.

Suddenly, the bright lights came back on. Brent quickly looked around, his pale blue eyes squinting as he was having difficulty adjusting to the light. The room was maybe ten feet by ten feet square. The

concrete block walls were unpainted, the floor gritty and bare. He could not see the ceiling, as the lights were so bright it hurt to look up. He faced a wall with a large mirror—probably one-way glass, he thought—where there must have been people on the other side watching him.

A voice from above began asking him new questions and repeating the old ones: “Why were you trying to leave the White House? Why did you go on to the dark web to seek deadly toxins? Did you have an accomplice in the attack of the president? How long had you planned the assassination of the president? Your stepfather was from Pakistan. We know you went to Pakistan twelve years ago. What was the purpose of your trip? Were you secretly converted to Islam? Are you an extremist?”

Brent stared straight ahead and protested, saying he’d already answered all their questions. He then thought of a way to show his cooperation, so he offered his iPhone, Mac Pro, and iCloud passwords, but the interrogators responded that they already had them. Their questioning continued.

Interrogator: “Tell us again why you were trying to leave the White House?”

Brent shifted his position. He felt humiliated as he tried his best to conceal his privates. He looked toward

the mirror and said, “Could I please have a blanket, a robe, clothes...or *anything?*”

Interrogator: “*Just answer the question!*”

“As I have told you, I was in the ushers office about to go up to the private quarters to see how I could be of help. The phone rang. It was the president’s physician, Dr. Jenkins. He told me he had received an emergency call from the White House admin operator, and he asked me how bad was it. I told him all I knew was that the president had collapsed and that Winston and others were upstairs. Dr. Jenkins told me he was driving from the Dubliner restaurant near Union Station and would arrive on the east side of the White House complex and would park on East Executive Avenue. The doctor was very specific, shouting, ‘*I don’t want the press to see me enter the White House!*’ and he asked me to meet him at A1, the east appointments gate, so that I could take him directly inside the White House via the east wing service tunnel, where he would not be seen.”

Interrogator: “Who knew you were meeting the president’s physician?”

Brent thought for a second. “Uh, I don’t know. Oh, wait—Wendy Wolf.”

Interrogator: “Who is Wendy?”

“Wendy Wolf, the vice president’s chief of staff. She’s always with the VP.”

Interrogator: “You stated in an earlier interview that the vice president was in the ushers office?”

Before he could respond, Brent could hear the interrogators mumble amongst themselves, wondering in hushed voices whether to refer to Gentry as the vice president or president.

“Has the president died?” exclaimed Brent as he began to realize the enormity of the situation.

Interrogator: “*We’ll ask the questions!* Was Elizabeth Gentry in your office?”

“Uh, yeah. She was there with several of her staff. She—no, Wendy—told me that I needed to go to A1. I’m not sure why she suggested it. I don’t believe she had talked to the president’s physician.”

Interrogator: “So, what did you do next?”

“I took off running out of the office and across the grand foyer, then I flew down the grand stairs and through the east wing colonnade. I passed by a couple of Secret Service uniform officers. I could hear over their radios that an ambulance was being maneuvered into place outside of the south portico. I dashed out the

doors to exit the east wing and covered the remaining fifty yards to make it to A1.”

Interrogator: “What happened once you got to A1?”

“I walked into the guard house and said hello. I knew all the Secret Service officers except for one, a captain that I did not recognize. All the officers looked very tense. They were facing the captain, who was telling them something about a directive locking down the White House. I quickly tapped my ID card onto the reader so I could exit. The door unlocked, and I immediately walked out and onto East Exec to await Dr. Jenkins. Before I knew it, I was surrounded by several Secret Service counterassault team members. They were pointing their guns at me! I know all these guys. I’m looking at them, and I say, ‘What the hell?!’ The CAT sergeant yelled, *‘Brent! Raise your hands and do not move!’* Next thing I knew, I was on the ground, and they were tying nylon cable-ties around my wrists. Everything happened in a flash.” Brent blinked hard and shook his head. “I was totally bewildered!”

Interrogator: “Were you not aware of the Secret Service Directive 501 lockdown policy?”

“What? No. Well, I may have been aware of it, but I have never experienced anything like this. How or why would I know about that?”

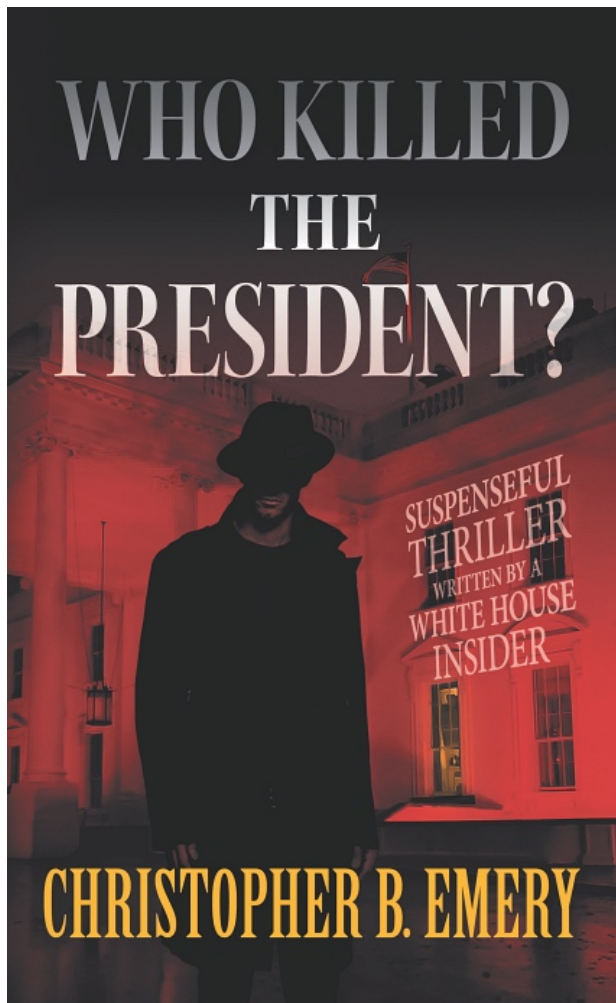
Interrogator: “Did the Secret Service ask if they could search you?”

“I don’t remember them asking, but I would never have any issue with that.”

Interrogator: “Mr. Williams, the search revealed that in your suit jacket, you had two small vials of a controlled substance. How do you explain that?”

Brent, now beyond exasperated, exhaled and replied, “Just like I answered when you first brought me here, I have no clue. I saw them hold up something, and then I watched the captain place it into a zip-lock bag and rush off. Whatever it was, it wasn’t mine! This is all so beyond insane! I don’t do drugs! I have a clearance! I’m drug-tested! Look up my record. See my reports!”

The lights went out as suddenly as they had come on. All was quiet, and Brent shivered.



Mystery novel, takes place in a unique setting: the White House executive residence, home of the first family. Murder, romance, deceit, and a suspenseful struggle all ensue as the main character struggles to solve the case.

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