

G8: A Suspense Thriller

Mike Brogan

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The action of this thriller set in an intriguing locale ramps up with every tense plot turn.

In a fast-moving, blood-drenched conspiracy caper more action-filled than character-driven, CIA agent and young widower Donovan Rourke confronts a terrorist scheme to assassinate world leaders.

Rourke would rather not return to Brussels, the city where his wife was assassinated, but intelligence operatives are intercepting coded messages involving Katill, a mysterious, Carlos the Jackal-like terrorist. When they gather at a Brussels summit, Katill plans to assassinate G8 national leaders, the world's eight most important political executives from countries like the US and Germany.

The mission goes sour immediately. Rourke's friend, expert linguist Professor Sohan Singh, is murdered as he decodes terrorist messages written in ancient Sumerian. More responsibility falls on Rourke's shoulders as Maccabee Singh, the professor's daughter, also a linguist, accompanies him to Brussels. There, the pair leads the pursuit of the ghost-like Katill as the terrorist strikes the G8 conference and escapes Belgium.

Writing with a drumbeat of short, punchy sentences, Brogan has a talent for ramping up tension as the story unfolds. The plot relies on action shifting rapidly from scene to scene as Katill wreaks havoc in Brussels and kills mercilessly in his escape.

Rourke isn't an especially empathetic, lifelike protagonist. More backstory is needed, and there's only a spare prologue about the tragic murder of his wife. Rourke's character also lacks veracity. He's young—thirty-four—and yet, along with Jean de Waha, a Belgian security chief, he is the principal in the intense effort to secure Brussels for the G8 conference, and the one to call the shots during the pursuit of Katill. Maccabee Singh and de Waha, however, give some emotional intensity to the story. While no one wants to root for a merciless psychopath, Katill, born Valek Stahl to a German father and Arab mother, is the most fully developed character, with solid motivational backstory.

Having lived and worked in Europe, Brogan has mastered the setting, bringing to the page everything from Belgium's famous Palais Royale and Grand Place Square to the canals and windmills of Holland. The first third of the book is set-up, but the remainder is a flat-out page-turner, culminating with an intense cinematic car-and-boat chase through Belgium and into Holland. That tense segment follows Brogan's creditable plotting of Katill's attack on the G8 leaders. The narrative, however, does seem repetitious at points—facts, circumstances, and references are noted and noted again.

Brogan has chosen an interesting locale for his action novel, drawn a believable plot, and set his heroes to cope with a straight-from-the-headlines scenario. *G8* is solid reading for those who appreciate an old-fashioned thriller highlighted by intense chase scenes and intrigue drawn from today's cultural, social, and political conflicts.

GARY PRESLEY (March 7, 2014)

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