



## Signals from Saipan

**Reginald Nelson**

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*Signals from Saipan* is a swift thriller that follows a tight-knit team through a series of exciting counter terrorism situations.

Reginald Nelson's exciting, complicated novel *Signals from Saipan* follows a vigilante team around the world with speed, collecting thrills.

INCISOR, an independent US-based team of commandos, works to eradicate terrorism, no matter its source or location. Their team includes a doctor, Reggie, and his sidekick, Ash—the two most engaging characters in the book. Reggie is a brilliant inventor who developed a cutting edge tracking device that allows the team to locate, and free, kidnapped people; it's one of several high-tech gadgets with which he is credited, and whose use INCISOR relies on. Three other operatives, and their wives, round out the team, and additional members are recruited throughout the book.

In this installation of INCISOR's ongoing story, the team first confronts a terrorist plot on remote Saipan. That conspiracy spreads, coming to involve Mexican drug cartels on the West Coast, terrorism in Baghdad, a bombing in a Colorado suburb, and a Pacific Ocean battle. But even as the story speeds through these varied locations, its episodes on Saipan remain its most memorable—in particular because that small island commonwealth is described in such vibrant terms.

Because of the book's frequent jumps between locations and team members, its progression is detail-logged and drags. The multiple story lines become convoluted, and the shifts in perspective (between Reggie's narration, and a more distant narration that follows scenes that he's absent from) are an impediment. Further, the cast is archetypal to the point of being dimensionless, and their conversations lean into clichés. They include a tough man of action, a government official who delivers information in an expository manner, gang members who call each other "homies," and flat terrorists who enact evil, but who do so without clear motivations. And the participation of the INCISOR member's wives in the team's counter terrorism actions strains credulity: they deploy under explained skills in espionage, and their husbands seem unbothered when they're placed in harm's way.

Still, the book's prose is clear and efficient, moving the story forward in a speedy manner. There are instances of excessive detail about the technologies involved in the team's movements, though, as well as a few long-winded ruminations on terrorism and the US's role in the world.

A fast-moving action novel set in locations around the globe, *Signals from Saipan* follows a tight-knit team through a series of thrilling counter terrorism situations.

MATT BENZING (July 18, 2022)

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