



## The Situation

**Graeme Daniels**

**Don Mathews, Designer**

Graeme\Daniels (Jun 29, 2014)

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*This fast-paced, often humorous adventure is laced with thoughtful undertones.*

A video game tester and erstwhile celebrity gamer contends with a series of challenges in Graeme Daniels's suspense-filled *The Situation*. Daniels writes with captivating assurance in this companion piece to a previous novel.

Bryan Tecco, known as "Weed" for his drug-dealer persona, sees "Shadows" or vague images that he believes guide him. His sidekick, Chris Leavitt, shares this gift of special sight, but relies on drugs to avoid the responsibility of growing up. The two are separated while escaping from unknown pursuers, each one uncertain if the other has survived. Weed sets out to find Chris, traveling to various places in the California Bay Area and down the coast to Los Angeles with Jill Evans, a nurse and former girlfriend of Chris's, acting as his conflicted helpmate. Divided into four parts, each "situation" features dramatic intrigue and a changing cast of unusual characters, adding both tension and amusement to Weed's quest to find his friend and retrieve some mysterious computer files. The cover design by Don Mathews features shadow-like drawings that foretell the novel's theme.

The story combines narrative with dialogue, and generally progresses at a satisfactory pace. However, occasional lapses into expository detail detract from the flow. For instance, when Weed is driven to safety by the daughter of a deluded man who has held him captive for several days, she engages in a monologue to explain her father's unfortunate history. Use of dialogue with descriptive asides would have given this scene a more realistic impact.

The numerous action scenes are well drawn, and some are charmingly tinged with humor. For example, when Weed breaks into Jill's apartment in search of the computer files he had entrusted to Chris, she arrives home as he inopportunately decides to use the bathroom. Jill hears him cough, identifies his location, and decides to make use of the fighting techniques she learned in Krav Maga class. Dramatically kicking in the bathroom door, "She remains fixed in her aggressive stance, staring twitchily at Weed because her class hasn't yet covered how to attack someone on the John."

Daniels's relaxed writing style convincingly portrays the contemporary urban lifestyle of characters in search of themselves. The complex plot includes the themes of computer espionage and individual responsibility for whistle-blowing, which adds depth of meaning to the quest. The characters are each uniquely identifiable by physical traits, personality quirks, and patterns of speech. However, the events that bring the primary players together for the concluding scenes seem more improbable than coincidental. A thorough copyedit could catch the numerous grammatical errors found in the text, particularly incorrect tense usage for certain verbs.

Nevertheless, *The Situation* ends with an inspiring message of redemption. Those interested in a fast-paced adventure with thoughtful undertones will enjoy this book.

MARGARET CULLISON (January 20, 2015)

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