

## The Thomas Protocol: The Money

**Kevin McIntyre**

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*The Thomas Protocol is a perspective-driven thriller focused on exploring ways that the world might be improved through charity.*

In Kevin McIntyre's imaginative international thriller *The Thomas Protocol: The Money*, vast wealth is used to combat social ills.

Stephen Thomas is a middle-aged Canadian expatriate and former businessman. Summoned to Zurich, he is tasked with using an ancestor's \$27 trillion trust to make the world a better place. Professional snipers try to assassinate Thomas as he works to invest billions in charitable projects like feeding the homeless and building affordable housing, all the while squabbling with the political leaders whose constituents he wishes to help. His is a globe-trotting tale of danger and political one-upmanship.

Thomas's initial ideas for leveraging his newfound wealth including paying off federal debt, lowering taxes, and abolishing deficit spending. They sometimes seem limited in scope or peculiar in their specificity. He also thrills in exerting dominance over politicians, insisting on unanimous votes as prerequisites for his largess.

Though the inheritance thriller stretches the principle of compound interest beyond plausibility, its creative premise of a random person being plucked from obscurity, endowed with godlike resources, and tasked with remaking the world for the better animates much of the book's action, though political clichés cause interest to drag.

Rapidly paced, the story follows Thomas from secure hideouts to august halls of power. Though its scenes are often cinematic, many feel low stakes, particularly since most characters are anonymous beyond a few lines of dialogue. Curiosity about why private security guards are so eager to sacrifice themselves for Thomas remains unsated.

Amid its action the story does not leave much time for characterization, save for occasional images of Thomas doing things that reinforce his humility. Some supporting characters have their own story arcs, but even these are limited, and the primary antagonist is two-dimensional in his villainy.

Dialogue is matter-of-fact, and the writing is workmanlike, focused on servicing the plot. Misdirection is employed to great effect, even if the book's conflicts sometimes feel abstract. Particulars regarding charitable donations are glossed over, and the logistics of giving to causes like public transit or medical research are skimmed past, undermining the book's realism. In the end, there are many questions left open, though the resolution is satisfying.

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JOSEPH S. PETE (March 6, 2019)

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