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Within Arm's Length: A Secret Service Agent's Definitive Inside Account Of Protecting The President



Synopsis

Dan Emmett was just eight years old when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. The events surrounding the president's death shaped the course of young Emmett's life as he set a goal of becoming a U.S. Secret Service agent-one of a special group of people willing to trade their lives for that of the president, if necessary. Within Arm's Length is a revealing and compelling inside look at the Secret Service and the elite Presidential Protective Division (PPD). Using stories from some of the author's more high-profile assignments in his twenty-one years of service, Emmett describes the professional, physical, and emotional challenges faced by Secret Service agents. Included are never-before-discussed topics such as the complicated relationship between presidents, first ladies, and their agents; the inner workings of Secret Service protective operations; and the seldom-mentioned challenges of the complex Secret Service cultural issues faced by an agent's family.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If your desire in choosing this book is to pursue a career in the Secret Service it will either encourage you or discourage you. If like me, you just have a curiosity about the Secret Service it is an excellent read. I have read several books previously about the Secret Service but they were more about the high-level people who were being protected rather than the actual inner-workings of the Secret Service. I was totally surprised at all of the extensive training involved in so many different areas from weapons, to protection, to the investigating of credit card fraud, to even medical training.

This book is a total eye opener as to the far reaching events that involve the Secret Service both here and in many other countries. It convinced me that you would have to be in the very best of physical and mental condition to do the job without getting yourself or someone else killed. As I read this book I became more and more appreciative of the fantastic job that the Secret Service does and my admiration of the author is without bounds. He is definitely a person to be admired and a total patriot to our country. It makes me wonder with all of the scandals surfacing concerning the Secret Service if the writers reference to "political correctness" starting to creep into the Service in the late 1990's isn't a contributing factor to all of the events coming to light right now. Such a shame because we are being inundated with "political correctness" on every front. But, putting that aside, I consider this book to be one of the very best I have ever read on the subject and it held my interest to the point that I spent several nights falling asleep with book in hand only to jerk awake and read until I got to the end of a chapter. I definitely, without reservation, recommend this book to anyone that is interested in the Secret Service. Mary Jane Kail

In addition to my previous review I wish to add: Dan Emmett mainly writes about his Secret Service experiences and then touches on his time with the CIA. I would bet another equally interesting story is just waiting to be told and it would be really nice to read more about his six year experience while there before his retirement. Mary Jane Kail

Thoroughly enjoyed listening to this book in MP3 format. I purchased Dan Emmett's account of life in the secret service after being hugely disappointed by Ronald Kessler's two audio books. Within Arm's Length indeed proved to be the wiser investment on all fronts. Kessler's books contained far too much purposeful smearing, blatant whining, and in his second account, hardly any new material. While Emmett took a bit of time to get into the true substance of the title, the backstory of his motivation to join the secret service and training path in the military contained some interesting insights. Without breaching confidences and giving away classified tactics, Dan Emmett gave a much better understanding of what it's like to be a field agent and then be assigned to protective detail plus the elite counter assault team. He trained future secret service agents, writing about his reasons to be exacting and physically demanding upon his training classes. The reader never has to wonder about the author's motivation for writing this account. It's upbeat, positive, and respectful. The book delivers material in a logical sequence whereas other books jump around and have been hard to follow. Here, Emmett doesn't feel the need to stoop low in tabloid, tell-all fashion. He makes that clear at the outset. Instead of delving into protectee's personal lives, he shares how difficult it is for agents to carry on normal activities because of the job demands of being called out on

assignment at any moment. I would have liked to learn more about the effects on an agent's family life—perhaps from a broader perspective and certainly a bit more of what female agents encounter on the job and balancing with home responsibilities. The few morsels that he mentioned could have been expanded a bit and/or may be fodder if he chooses to revise the book some day. Overall, this left me with a great deal of respect for what this serious job entails and demands upon those who literally commit their lives when they go to work each day.

Everybody is talking about the Clinton stuff but this book is really about a man who loves his country, looking for a life based on honor and discipline, first in the Marine Corps, then in various kinds of Secret Service work. Good stuff about training, sacrifice, and brotherhood in here. Emmett comes off as an old-fashioned American patriot, and he is not shy about expressing his admiration for politicians on both sides of the aisle. Ted Kennedy comes off as a class act, who treats his Secret Service detail with great respect. Indeed, the story of Dan touring JFK's old house was one of the most moving parts of the book for me.

In any elite organization you will find those that put the mission before all else; career, friendship, money and yes - even family. This is the story of such a man who embodies the spirit of service to America and the protection of our duly elected leaders. Some will say he has revealed too much, others - not enough. But to all who read this will get a look behind the mirror and when the smoke clears, you will find dedicated men and women who answer to a call that most others never hear. Well done.

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