



Secret Sanction

Brian Haig

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Sean Drummond is a cocky Army lawyer with a long history in the secret world of special operations. When the legal maverick is assigned by the top brass to investigate a Bosnian massacre in which a Green Beret A-team and the Kosovo Liberation Army detachment they were "advising" got trapped behind Serbian lines, he gets the subtext that's part of his orders. What the Army doesn't need are headlines about the cold-blooded execution of 35 Serbian soldiers, and they're counting on Drummond to clean things up fast, before a public scandal blows dirt all over their medals. Drummond is provided with two associates to help with the investigation: an attractive young woman captain who's a Harvard Law School graduate, and an equally illustrious Judge Army General's Corps lawyer whose reputation precedes him.

Once Drummond and his team get to Bosnia, it's clear that the accused Green Berets have their own cover-up going, and they're not going to make it easy for the lawyers to figure out what happened. Drummond has a few tricks up his own sleeve, and when he finds out that his CO has put a spy on his team, he's even more determined to get to the bottom of what really went on, even if he has to bully his way out of a murder frame-up to do it. The moral dilemma Drummond faces when he learns the real story (and understands why the Army is so desperate to keep the cover-up going) reveals the man behind the maverick, and lifts Brian Haig's novel a cut above the genre. Haig might have spent more time making his secondary characters as interesting as his protagonist and tightened up his narrative. Still, fans of military thrillers will find this a good enough read.

Secret Sanction Details

Date : Published November 7th 2005 by Orion mass market paperback (first published June 1st 2001)

ISBN : 9780752848280

Author : Brian Haig

Format : Paperback 480 pages

Genre : Thriller, Fiction, Mystery, War, Military Fiction

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From Reader Review Secret Sanction for online ebook

Mike French says

I enjoyed this book! I would have given it 5 stars, except that I didn't like the gruesome details of the combat scenes. This book is not for squeamish readers.

Judith Teggelaar says

When an army lawyer is handed a case concerning war crimes against a green beret team, he is sure that the men are all lying to him. He feels they are guilty but also thinks that the evidence may not be legitimate. An excellent book.

Anita says

Sean Drummond is a character that I probably would not like if I had to be around him, but he is a great character to read. This book had great plot, character development and dialog, and humor as well as some very serious questions to ponder. It held my interest from the beginning--I didn't feel there was a word wasted in it. I'll be checking out the next book in the series.

Tony says

Brian Haig- Secret Sanction (Warner Books 2002) 4.25 Stars

When a mass murder happens overseas and a group of green berets are being accused of the murder Major Sean Drummond is brought in to get to the bottom of the case. Right off the bat he is warned that he can't win the case, but losing is not something Major Sean Drummond is accustomed to. He must team up with a couple of young lawyers at the peaks of their careers and work with them to find the truth, even if the truth may not be as cut and dry as one might think. He must fight a conspiracy reaching to the highest levels and deal with a shocking betrayal. Finding the truth might just be the hardest thing Drummond has ever done.

Right from page one the reader gets a taste of Major Sean Drummond. He is a brilliantly created character who is deep and yet so very shallow. I love his humour/sarcasm and how it quite often gets him into worse trouble then if he had just kept his mouth shut. The plot is one that is twisting and turning, surprising the reader at every junction. This draws the reader's attention and keeps them interested in getting to the bottom of it; only a talented author knows how to do this with such skill. I found myself wondering if the introduction could have been cut, starting it at the actual case beginning, but I did enjoy the intro nonetheless. I loved how much this book kept my head spinning to figure out who was lying and who was telling truth, who was to be trusted and who was not to be trusted, it definitely kept me on the edge of my seat, so to speak. The ending was okay in my opinion, but I would have liked to see something different. I also did not like their final decision, but I am not sure what I would have done in the same situation. I did love the closing paragraph it made me laugh. I definitely want to read more by this author, although I have

already read The Kingmaker and enjoyed it as well.

I recommend Secret Sanction to those who love legal thrillers.

For more of my reviews check out my website, www.tonypeters.webs.com

Tony Peters

Kids on a Case: The Case of the Ten Grand Kidnapping

<http://authortonypeters.blogspot.com/>

Mike says

Yeah, that's right. I'm giving 5 Stars to a book im only 80% sure I'm clear on the outcome. Man I wish I'd read this before enlisting in the military myself. The voices given to these characters were brutally honest as seen through the first person POV of the narrator Major Sean Drummond.

I think the mesh of extremely realistic characters, accurate landscapes, precise military protocol (less a few patches of unnecessary reactions to common dialouge), the fast pacing and the mystery of What Really Happened in Kosovo was perfect. Also the truth that Rank speaks louder volumes than Voice is spot on in our military as it has been for centuries, I'm sure.

5 Stars to the character Sean Drummond alone. The wit and wisdom never seemed cancel each other out. There are many bad stories this character could have made much better. I am anxious to get into his head again in a later title. I'm going to have to re-read this title in a few years; i dont think i'm smart enough to totally grasp what happened and why! More Why than What actually...

Anyway, now Why was this on my bookshelf for some long and unread? This has been compared to the TV show JAG but probably shouldnt be taken so seriously. It's light-weight but hard punching and a great introduction of a truly amazine and honest character.

Freda Malone says

Doing what is right is not always the right thing to do.

I was hooked on this book even before I picked it up. Having been a military brat for some years, I often watched JAG and fell in love with the whole casting crew. I gravitated toward crime mysteries and court stories most of my life because the process is so tense and can often put to the test, the foundation of your morals and ethics. This book does just that.

Sean Drummond, a JAG lawyer is an excellent character to start with. I enjoy his cockiness toward higher ranking officials because it is justified most of the time in this story. There were quite a few high ranking officials who were up to no good. I read an article once that said "Who will police the police?" and so who will also command the commander in our military. Sean Drummond was created brilliantly, he kicked some

tail!

The supporting characters in this book were just as enjoyable if not more. Sean's legal assistant, Imelda was a strong character and I liked her a lot. A non-commissioned officer, specialist 7 who cracked me up every time she opened her mouth. A no-nonsense gal and wasn't afraid to show it. Drummond's legal team, Delbert and Morrow were likeable and easily shocked by Drummond's wide collection of qualities and knew they were in the presence of a great mind, despite his arrogance.

The mystery of the execution of 35 Serbian soldiers was a good beginning to a series. It eases your way into the military terms and evidentiary process of investigating a crime, JAG style. There is not a lot of military jargon, in fact, just like a civilian investigation, it stays pretty simple and it is a matter of who shot the Serbs and who will be held accountable for it. This is the process before the court martials so there is no court setting.

I felt like I was 'at home' in this book. Having lived on a military bases for several years and getting used to the salutes, 'yes-sirs', and military terms as well as the discipline of those around me taught me that military life is a culture of its own. A life, different than civilian life, but a good life IMO and it felt good to be home.

Steve says

This was the first book in this series that I read and I went into it not knowing anything about it. I really like the main character, he is such a smart ass, but he is usually one step ahead of everyone else. He's not a big, tough, macho military guy and that's another thing I like about him. Also enjoyed how this book leaves his past somewhat obfuscated so you focus on the story at hand and not the backstory of the main character. Good military judicial book, not stuffed full of courtroom antics. Well researched, and easily pulled from the headlines of today. Very plausible.

Chris Barkington says

I started reading this because its Brian Haig's first book (and I thoroughly enjoyed The Capitol Game). I would say his writing style is a bit more polished in the newer books, but this is still definitely enjoyable.

Kay Miller says

I love the Sean Drummond character series by Brian Haig. I think there are six of them, this is the second one in the series. Sean is a JAG lawyer for "special circumstances" so he only handles special cases. His character is funny and stubborn, but usually does the right thing. He also has a way of making everybody he works with mad and is a major headache for his boss. His boss tends to lend him out to other agencies as much as possible just to get rid of him. If you love books about lawyers and their cases you will love these books.

Matt says

A great series debut by Haig that kept my interest from the opening sentence. This military legal drama will keep the reader wondering what is coming in the following pages and does not disappoint. Peppered with excellent sarcasm and dry wit, Haig breaks the tension from time to time with some well inserted humour. I was left wondering if he was once a fan of Nelson DeMille, for I see humour parallels.

Set during the War in Kosovo, Haig presents the main character as a JAG lawyer commissioned to find the truth behind the massacre of a Serb military unit. With attention to military detail, numerous twists, and a case within the larger case, the book grabs hold of you and does not let go until the very end, where most will raise an eyebrow and scramble to get the next in the series. If this is what I have to look forward to, I am a fan already.

I must briefly mention that I listened to the audio book version of the book and was led through each chapter by the extremely talented Scott Brick. Brick is perfect for this narration as he does some of the best dry wit narration for Nelson DeMille as well.

Kudos Mr. Haig. I am hooked.... bring on more Sean Drummond!

Nooilforpacifists says

Mr Haig, son of General Al (“I’m in control here”) Haig, tries to be Nelson DeMille. He doesn’t succeed, and he almost never gets the girl.

Kim says

I'm not much for military thrillers but I do try to read things outside my tastes and interests once in awhile. This ended up being a surprisingly good legal mystery and thriller set in the years when the U.S. was bombing Serbian forces in the recently-divided Yugoslavia. The book was originally published in 2002 when the conflict in Kosovo was a fresh memory for Americans.

The book introduces Major Sean Drummond, a member of the Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corps. He is assigned to investigate an apparent massacre by a platoon of Green Berets. They had been training a group of Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) troops. The rules of engagement were that the US troops were only to shoot back if attacked but not to initiate actions. Their fresh trainees went to attack a small town only to be completely wiped out in an ambush. The Serbians now say that the US troops ambushed a Serbian force killing all Serbian troops. With the help of two other JAG lawyers Drummond must determine if the massacre happened, whether the Green Berets were responsible, and whether charges should be filed.

The investigation isn't an easy one. The Green Berets tell different stories, bodies of the dead Serbians indicate close-up assassination-style head wounds, and the CIA seems to have a particular interest in the case, as does everyone up to the president. Then a journalist reporting on the story is found murdered in a base latrine and it's clear that someone is out to frame Drummond to make the decision they want.

It's a great legal thriller, full of intrigue that feels as much like a spy novel as a mystery. Sean Drummond is an excellent character. The book makes it clear that he came to the law late in life, after several years in some mysterious force that he must still keep secret. He's an excellent investigator but more than that he's someone with a keen sense of justice.

It's nice to hit the first book in a series with this much quality in action and character development, even if it is 15 years late. It's definitely a series worth following.

Maureen DeLuca says

Oh My ! I LOVED this book - and Sean Drummond is a character that is amazing. Sean is a JAG lawyer-with a wise cracking mouth and I loved the snappy dialog between all the characters. He's smart, sarcastic and just a blast to read.

-A battalion of Serbs has been senselessly murdered in Kosovo and the Green Berets stand accused. Once Drummond and his team get to Bosnia, it's clear that the accused Green Berets have their own cover-up going, and they're not going to make it easy for the lawyers to figure out what happened.

I have been putting off this book for more than once I was disappointed in Military type books- but now I could kick my self for waiting so long! A great book- looking forward to getting into more of this series!

ElaineY says

REVIEW OF AUDIOBOOK; MAY 24, 2016

Narrator: Scott Brick

I was very surprised at how much I enjoyed this book, especially when I had dnf'd it a few months ago - not the book's fault, obviously. I couldn't focus on it and needed something different. I'm so glad I chose this to retry as it kept me riveted to the end. I wouldn't call this a thriller, it's a police procedural with a JAG officer conducting the investigation. There were several times when I was confused about what actually happened, but a few minutes later I learn that the investigators themselves are as mystified as I was.

No explosions, guns or car chases here. The story stays firmly on the investigation and here, I'm speaking mainly about the audiobook - Scott Brick brought Drummond's character to life in a way no one else can. It is a pity the last two installments (Book 6 & 7) are not narrated by Brick. Brick does smart-ass, snarky and cocky *so very well*:) And that is exactly what Sean Drummond is, though underneath that veneer is a very good lawyer, an ex-Ranger but not your typical action-thriller spec op hero. In Drummond's words, so deliciously narrated by Brick, "*I'm the most reluctant Ranger you ever saw. I cried and whimpered the whole way through the course.*" Being a huge Mitch Rapp/ Dewey Andres/Pike Logan fan, I burst out laughing when I heard that.

Police procedurals can get bogged down with too many details but this one moved along at a nice clip and I wasn't bored or impatient at any time. I wish there were more Sean Drummond books - 7 isn't enough. Highly-recommended if you enjoy murder investigations, military-themed dramas and if you like audiobooks, this is a must-buy.

Nick Brett says

To be honest, I've had this for a while. A debut thriller from the son of General Alexander Haig, ex-Secretary of State in the US, who is also an ex-army officer? It felt a bit like it would be your standard attempt at a thriller based on who you are rather than what you have written. But I was wrong and this is rather good.

A massacre during the Bosnian crisis looks like it was the responsibility of a US special forces team and a JAG type lawyer is sent in to uncover the truth. Or rather uncover a convenient truth while avoiding army politics and CIA mis-information. Major Drummond is a great character, sarcastic wise-cracking and with a past that opens great opportunities for further books.

The premise here is an interesting one and the author does not go with an easy resolution or one you might expect. So if you like military drama this is well worth picking up. I'll certainly be looking for more by the author.
