

# Tom Clancy Rainbow Six





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**RAINBOW  
SIX**

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**TOM CLANCY**

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RAINBOW SIX

ALSO BY TOM CLANCY

FICTION

THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER

RED STORM RISING

PATRIOT GAMES

THE CARDINAL OF THE KREMLIN

CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER

THE SUM OF ALL FEARS

WITHOUT REMORSE

DEBT OF HONOR

EXECUTIVE ORDERS

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SUBMARINE

A GUIDED TOUR INSIDE A NUCLEAR WARSHIP

ARMORED CAV

A GUIDED TOUR OF AN ARMORED CAVALRY REGIMENT

FIGHTER WING

A GUIDED TOUR OF AN AIR FORCE COMBAT WING

MARINE

A GUIDED TOUR OF A MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT

AIRBORNE

A GUIDED TOUR OF AN AIRBORNE TASK FORCE

INTO THE STORM

A STUDY IN COMMAND

WITH GENERAL FRED M. FRANKS, JR. (RET.)

FOR ALEXANDRA MARIA  
*lux mea mundi*

*There are no compacts between lions and  
men, and wolves and lambs have no concord.*

—HOMER

RAINBOW SIX





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## P R O L O G U E

# S E T T I N G   U P

**JOHN CLARK HAD MORE TIME IN AIRPLANES THAN** most licensed pilots, and he knew the statistics as well as any of them, but he still didn't like the idea of crossing the ocean on a twin-engine airliner. Four was the right number of engines, he thought, because losing one meant losing only 25 percent of the aircraft's available power, whereas on this United 777, it meant losing *half*. Maybe the presence of his wife, one daughter, and a son-in-law made him a little itchier than usual. No, that wasn't right. He wasn't itchy at all, not about flying anyway. It was just a lingering . . . what? he asked himself. Next to him, in the window seat Sandy was immersed in the mystery she'd started the day before, while he was trying to concentrate on the current issue of *The Economist*, and wondering what was putting the cold-air feeling on the back of his neck. He started to look around the cabin for a sign of danger but abruptly stopped himself. There wasn't anything wrong that he could see, and he didn't want to seem like a nervous flyer to the cabin crew. He sipped at his glass of white wine, shook his shoulders, and went back to the article on how peaceful the new world was.

*Right.* He grimaced. Well, yes, he had to admit that things were a hell of a lot better than they'd been for nearly all of his life. No more swimming out of a submarine to do a collection on a Russian beach, or flying into Tehran to do something the Iranians wouldn't like much, or swimming up a fetid river in North Vietnam to rescue a downed aviator. Someday maybe Bob Holtzman would talk him into a book on his career. Problem was, who'd believe it—and would CIA ever allow him to tell his tales except on his own deathbed? He was not in a hurry for that, not with a grandchild on the way. Damn. He grimaced,

unwilling to contemplate that development. Patsy must have caught a silver bullet on their wedding night, and Ding glowed more about it than she did. John looked back to business class—the curtain wasn't in place yet—and there they were, holding hands while the stewardess did the safety lecture. *If the airplane hit the water at 400 knots, reach under your seat for the life-preserver and inflate it by pulling . . .* he'd heard that one before. The bright yellow life-jackets would make it somewhat easier for search aircraft to find the crash site, and that was about all they were good for.

Clark looked around the cabin again. He still felt that draft on his neck. Why? The flight attendant made the rounds, removing his wine glass as the aircraft taxied out to the end of the runway. Her last stop was by Alistair over on the left side of the first-class cabin. Clark caught his eye and got a funny look back as the Brit put his seat back in the upright position. Him, too? Wasn't that something? Neither of the two had ever been accused of nervousness.

Alistair Stanley had been a major in the Special Air Service before being permanently seconded to the Secret Intelligence Service. His position had been much like John's—the one you called in to take care of business when the gentler people in the field division got a little too skittish. Al and John had hit it off right away on a job in Romania eight years before, and the American was pleased to be working with him again on a more regular basis, even if they were both too old now for the fun stuff. Administration wasn't exactly John's idea of what his job should be, but he had to admit he wasn't twenty anymore . . . or thirty . . . or even forty. A little old to run down alleys and jump over walls. . . . Ding had said that to him only a week before in John's office at Langley, rather more respectfully than usual, since he was trying to make a logical point to the grandfather-presumptive of his first child. What the hell, Clark told himself, it was remarkable enough that he was still alive to gripe about being old—no, not old, *older*. Not to mention he was respectable now as Director of the new agency. Director. A polite term for a REMF. But you didn't say no to the President, especially if he happened to be your friend.

The engine sounds increased. The airliner started moving. The usual sensation came, like being pressed back into the seat of a sports car jumping off a red light, but with more authority. Sandy, who hardly traveled at all, didn't look up from the book. It must have been pretty good, though John never bothered reading mysteries. He never could figure them out, and they made him feel stupid, despite the fact that in his professional life he'd picked his way through real mysteries more than once. A little voice in his head said *rotate*, and the floor came up under his feet. The body of the aircraft followed the nose into the sky, and the flight began properly, the wheels rising up into the wells.

Instantly, those around him lowered their seats to get some sleep on the way to London Heathrow. John lowered his, too, but not as far. He wanted dinner first.

“On our way, honey,” Sandy said, taking a second away from the book.

“I hope you like it over there.”

“I have three cookbooks for after I figure this one out.”

John smiled. “Who done it?”

“Not sure yet, but probably the wife.”

“Yeah, divorce lawyers are so expensive.”

Sandy chuckled and went back to the story as the stewards got up from their seats to resume drink service. Clark finished *The Economist* and started *Sports Illustrated*. Damn, he'd be missing the end of the football season. That was one thing he'd always tried to keep track of, even off on a mission. The Bears were coming back, and he'd grown up with Papa Bear George Halas and the Monsters of the Midway—had often wondered if he might have made it as a pro himself. He'd been a pretty good linebacker in high school, and Indiana University had shown some interest in him (also for his swimming). Then he'd decided to forgo college and join the Navy, as his father had before him, though Clark had become a SEAL, rather than a skimmer-sailor on a tin can . . .

“Mr. Clark?” The steward delivered the dinner menu. “Mrs. Clark?”

One nice thing about first class. The flight crew pretended you had a name. John had gotten an automatic upgrade—he had frequent-flyer miles up the yingyang, and from now on he'd mainly fly British Airways, which had a very comfortable understanding with the British government.

The menu, he saw, was pretty good, as it usually was on international flights, and so was the wine list . . . but he decided to ask for bottled water instead of wine, thank you. Hmph. He grumbled to himself, settled back, and rolled up the sleeves of his shirt. These damned flights always seemed overheated to him.

The captain got on next, interrupting all the personal movies on their mini-screens. They were taking a southerly routing to take advantage of the jet stream. That, Captain Will Garnet explained, would cut their time to Heathrow by forty minutes. He didn't say that it would also make for a few bumps. Airlines tried to conserve fuel, and forty-five minutes' worth would put a gold star in his copybook . . . well, maybe just a silver one . . .

The usual sensations. The aircraft tilted, more to the right than the left, as it crossed over the ocean at Sea Isle City in New Jersey for the three-thousand-mile flight to the next landfall, somewhere on the Irish coast, which they'd

reach in about five and a half hours, John thought. He had to sleep for some of that time. At least the captain didn't bother them with the usual tour-director crap—*we are now at forty thousand feet, that's almost eight miles to fall if the wings come off and . . .* They started serving dinner. They'd be doing the same aft in tourist class, with the drink and dinner carts blocking the aisles.

It started on the left side of the aircraft. The man was dressed properly, wearing a jacket—that was what got John's attention. Most people took them off as soon as they sat down but—

—it was a Browning automatic, with a flat-black finish that said “military” to Clark, and, less than a second later, to Alistair Stanley. A moment later, two more men appeared on the right side, walking right next to Clark's seat.

“Oh, shit,” he said so quietly that only Sandy heard him. She turned and looked, but before she could do or say anything, he grabbed her hand. That was enough to keep her quiet, but not quite enough to keep the lady across the aisle from screaming—well, almost screaming. The woman with her covered her mouth with a hand and stifled most of it. The stewardess looked at the two men in front of her in total disbelief. This hadn't happened in years. How could it be happening now?

Clark was asking much the same question, followed by another: Why the hell had he packed his sidearm in his carry-on and stowed it in the overhead? What was the point of having a gun on an airplane, you idiot, if you couldn't get to it? What a dumbass rookie mistake! He only had to look to his left to see the same expression on Alistair's face. Two of the most experienced pros in the business, their guns less than four feet away, but they might as well be in the luggage stored below. . . .

“John . . .”

“Just relax, Sandy,” her husband replied quietly. More easily said than done, as he well knew.

John sat back, keeping his head still, but turned away from the window and toward the cabin. His eyes moved free. Three of them. One, probably the leader, was taking a stew forward, where she unlocked the door to the flight deck. John watched the two of them go through and close the door behind them. Okay, now Captain William Garnet would find out what was going on. Hopefully he would be a pro, and he'd be trained to say *yes, sir—no, sir—three-bags-full, sir* to anybody who came forward with a gun. At best he'd be Air Force- or Navy-trained, and therefore he'd know better than to do anything stupid, like trying to be a goddamned hero. His mission would be to get the airplane on the ground, somewhere, anywhere, because it was a hell of a lot harder to kill three hundred people in an airplane when it was sitting still on the ramp with the wheels chocked.

Three of them, one forward in the flight deck. He'd stay there to keep an eye on the drivers and to use the radio to tell whomever he wanted to talk to what his demands were. Two more in first class, standing there, forward, where they could see down both aisles of the aircraft.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is the captain speaking. I've got the seat-belt sign on. There's a little chop in the air. Please stay in your seats for the time being. I'll be back to you in a few minutes. Thank you."

Good, John thought, catching Alistair's eye. The captain sounded cool, and the bad guys weren't acting crazy—yet. The people in back probably didn't know anything was wrong—yet. Also good. People might panic . . . well, no, not necessarily, but so much the better for everyone if nobody knew there was anything to panic about.

Three of them. Only three? Might there be a backup guy, disguised as a passenger? That was the one who controlled the bomb, if there was a bomb, and a bomb was the worst thing there could be. A pistol bullet might punch a hole in the skin of the aircraft, forcing a rapid descent, and that would fill some barf bags and cause some soiled underwear, but nobody died from that. A bomb would kill everyone aboard, probably . . . better than even money, Clark judged, and he hadn't gotten old by taking that sort of chance when he didn't have to. Maybe just let the airplane go to wherever the hell these three wanted to go, and let negotiations start, by which time people would know that there were another three very special people inside. Word would be going out now. The bad guys would have gotten onto the company radio frequency and passed along the bad news of the day, and the Director of Security for United—Clark knew him, Pete Fleming, former Deputy Assistant Director of the FBI—would call his former agency and get *that* ball rolling, to include notification of CIA and State, the FBI Hostage Rescue Team in Quantico, and Little Willie Byron's Delta Force down at Fort Bragg. Pete would also pass along the passenger list, with three of them circled in red, and *that* would get Willie a little nervous, plus making the troops at Langley and Foggy Bottom wonder about a security leak—John dismissed that. This was a random event that would just make people spin wheels in the Operations Room in Langley's Old Headquarters Building. Probably.

It was time to move a little. Clark turned his head very slowly, toward Domingo Chavez, just twenty feet away. When eye contact was established, he touched the tip of his nose, as though to make an itch go away. Chavez did the same . . . and Ding was still wearing his jacket. He was more used to hot weather, John thought, and probably felt cold on the airplane. Good. He'd still have his Beretta .45 on . . . probably . . . Ding preferred the small of his back, though, and that was awkward for a guy strapped into an airliner seat. Even so,

Chavez knew what was going down, and had the good sense to do nothing about it . . . yet. How might Ding react with his pregnant wife sitting next to him? Domingo was smart and as cool under pressure as Clark could ever ask, but under that he was still Latino, a man of no small passion—even John Clark, experienced as he was, saw flaws in others that were perfectly natural to himself. He had *his* wife sitting next to him, and Sandy was frightened, and Sandy wasn't supposed to be frightened about her own safety. . . . It was her husband's self-assigned job to make certain of that. . . .

One of the bad guys was going over the passenger list. Well, that would tell John if there had been a security leak of some sort. But if there were, he couldn't do anything about it. Not yet. Not until he knew what was going on. Sometimes you just had to sit and take it and—

The guy at the head of the left-side aisle started moving, and fifteen feet later, he was looking down at the woman in the window seat next to Alistair.

"Who are you?" he demanded in Spanish.

The lady replied with a name John didn't catch—it was a Spanish name, but from twenty feet away he couldn't hear it clearly enough to identify it, mainly because her reply had been quiet, polite . . . cultured, he thought. Diplomat's wife, maybe? Alistair was leaning back in his seat, staring with wide blue eyes up at the guy with the gun and trying a little too hard not to show fear.

A scream came from the back of the aircraft. "Gun, that's a gun!" a man's voice shouted—

*Shit*, John thought. Now everybody would know. The right-aisle guy knocked on the cockpit door and stuck his head in to announce this good news.

"Ladies and gentlemen . . . this is Captain Garnet . . . I, uh, am instructed to tell you that we are deviating from our flight plan. . . . We, uh, have some guests aboard who have told me to fly to Lajes in the Azores. They say that they have no desire to hurt anyone, but they are armed, and First Officer Renford and I are going to do exactly what they say. Please remain calm, stay in your seats, and just try to keep things under control. I will be back to you later." Good news. He had to be military trained; his voice was as cool as the smoke off dry ice. Good.

Lajes in the Azores, Clark thought. Former U.S. Navy base . . . still active? Maybe just caretakered for long over-water flights flying there—as a stop and refueling point for somewhere else? Well, the left-side guy had spoken in Spanish, and been replied to in Spanish. Probably not Middle Eastern bad guys. Spanish speakers . . . Basques? That was still perking over in Spain. The woman, who was she? Clark looked over. Everyone was looking around now,

and it was safe for him to do so. Early fifties, well turned out. The Spanish ambassador to Washington was male. Might this be his wife?

The left-side man shifted his gaze a seat. "Who are you?"

"Alistair Stanley" was the reply. There was no sense in Alistair's lying, Clark knew. They were traveling openly. Nobody knew about their agency. They hadn't even started it up yet. Shit, Clark thought. "I'm British," he added in a quaky voice. "My passport's in my bag up in the—" He reached up and had his hand slapped down by the bad guy's gun.

Nice play, John thought, even if it hadn't worked. He might have gotten the bag down, produced the passport, and then had his gun in his lap. Bad luck that the gunman had believed him. That was the problem with accents. But Alistair was up to speed. The three wolves didn't know that the sheep herd had three dogs in it. Big ones.

Willie would be on the phone now. Delta kept an advance team on round-the-clock standby, and they'd be prepping for a possible deployment now. Colonel Byron would be with them. Little Willie was that kind of soldier. He had an XO and staff to follow things up while he led from the front. A lot of wheels were spinning now. All John and his friends really had to do was sit tight . . . so long as the bad guys kept their cool.

More Spanish from the left side. "Where is your husband?" he demanded. He was pretty mad. Made sense, John thought. Ambassadors are good targets. But so were their wives. She was too sharp-looking to be the wife of just a diplomat, and Washington had to be a premier post. Senior guy, probably aristocracy. Spain still had that. High-profile target, the better to put pressure on the Spanish government.

*Blown mission* was the next thought. They wanted him, not her, and they would not be happy about that. *Bad intelligence, guys*, Clark thought, looking at their faces and seeing their anger. *Even happens to me once in a while*. Yeah, he thought, like about half the fucking time in a good year. The two he could see were talking to each other . . . quietly, but the body language said it all. They were pissed. So, he had three (or more?) angry terrorists with guns on a two-engine airplane over the North Atlantic at night. Could have been worse, John told himself. Somehow. Yeah, they might have had Semtex jackets with Primacord trim.

They were late twenties, Clark thought. Old enough to be technically competent, but young enough to need adult supervision. Little operational experience, and not enough judgment. They'd think they knew it all, think they were real clever. That was the problem with death. Trained soldiers knew the reality of it better than terrorists did. These three would want to succeed, and

wouldn't really consider the alternative. Maybe a rogue mission. The Basque separatists hadn't ever messed with foreign nationals, had they? Not Americans anyway, but this was an *American* airliner, and that was a big black line to step over. Rogue mission? Probably. Bad news.

You wanted a degree of predictability in situations like this. Even terrorism had rules. There was almost a liturgy to it, steps everyone had to take before something really bad happened, which gave the good guys a chance to talk to the bad guys. Get a negotiator down to establish rapport with them, negotiate the little stuff at first—*come on, let the children and their mothers off, okay? No big deal, and it looks bad for you and your group on TV, right?* Get them started giving things up. Then the old people—who wants to whack grandma and grandpa? Then the food, maybe with some Valium mixed in with it, while the response team's intel group started spiking the aircraft with microphones and miniature lenses whose fiber-optic cables fed to TV cameras.

Idiots, Clark thought. This play just didn't work. It was almost as bad as kidnapping a child for money. Cops were just too good at tracking those fools, and Little Willie was sure as hell boarding a USAF transport at Pope Air Force Base right now. If they really landed at Lajes, the process would start real soon, and the only variable was how many good guys would bite the big one before the bad guys got to do the same. Clark had worked with Colonel Byron's boys and girls. If they came into the aircraft, at least three people would not be leaving it alive. Problem was, how much company would they have in the hereafter? Hitting an airliner was like having a shoot-out in a grammar school, just more crowded.

They were talking more, up front, paying little attention to anything else, the rest of the aircraft. In one sense, that was logical. The front office was the most important part, but you always wanted to keep an eye on the rest. You never knew who might be aboard. Sky marshals were long in the past, but cops traveled by air, and some of them carried guns . . . well, maybe not on international flights, but you didn't get to retire from the terrorist business by being dumb. It was hard enough to survive if you were smart. Amateurs. Rogue mission. Bad intelligence. Anger and frustration. This was getting worse. One of them balled his left hand into a fist and shook it at the entire adverse world they'd found aboard.

*Great*, John thought. He turned in the seat, again catching Ding's eye and shaking his head side to side ever so slightly. His reply was a raised eyebrow. Domingo knew how to speak proper English when he had to.

It was as though the air changed then, and not for the better. Number 2 went forward again into the cockpit and stayed for several minutes, while John



and Alistair watched the one on the left side, staring down the aisle. After two minutes of frustrated attention, he switched sides as though in a spasm, and looked aft, leaning his head forward as though to shorten the distance, peering down the aisle while his face bounced between expressions of power and impotence. Then, just as quickly, he headed back to port, pausing only to look at the cockpit door in anger.

*There's only the three of them*, John told himself then, just as #2 reappeared from the front office. Number 3 was too hyped. Probably just the three? he wondered. Think through it, Clark told himself. If so, that really made them amateurs. *The Gong Show* might be an amusing thought in another context, but not at 500 knots, 37,000 feet over the North Atlantic. If they could just be cool about everything, let the driver get the twin-engine beast on the ground, maybe some common sense would break out. But they wouldn't be very cool, would they?

Instead of taking his post to cover the right-side aisle, #2 went back to #3 and they spoke in raspy whispers which Clark understood in context if not content. It was when #2 pointed to the cockpit door that things became worst of all—

—*nobody's really in charge*, John decided. That was just great, three free-agents with guns in a friggin' airplane. It was time to start being afraid. Clark was not a stranger to fear. He'd been in too many tight places for that, but in every other case he'd had an element of control over the situation—or if not that, at least over his own actions, such as the ability to run away, which was a far more comforting thought now than he'd ever realized. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

Number 2 headed aft to look at the woman sitting next to Alistair. He just stood there for a few seconds, staring at her, then looking at Alistair, who looked back in a subdued way.

"Yes?" the Brit said finally, in his most cultured accent.

"Who are you?" Number 2 demanded.

"I told your friend, old man, Alistair Stanley. I have my passport in my carry-on bag if you wish to see it." The voice was just brittle enough to simulate a frightened man holding it together.

"Yes, show it to me!"

"Of course, sir." In elegantly slow movements, the former SAS major slipped out of his seat belt, stood, opened the overhead bin, and extracted his black carry-on bag. "May I?" he asked. Number 2 replied with a nod.

Alistair unzipped the side compartment and pulled the passport out, handed it over, then sat down, his trembling hands holding the bag in his lap.