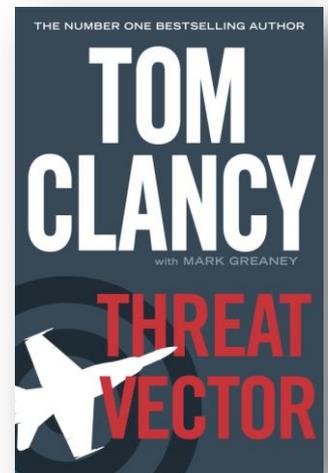


# Threat Vector

**Author: Tom Clancy**



## Extract

### Prologue

These were grim days for former operatives of the Jamahiriya Security Organization, the dreaded national intelligence service of Libya under Moammar Gaddafi. Those members of the JSO who had managed to survive the revolution in their home nation were now scattered and in hiding, fearing the day when their cruel and brutal past would catch up with them in a cruel and brutal way.

After the fall of Tripoli to Western-backed rebels the year before, some JSO operatives had remained in Libya, hoping that by changing their identities they would save themselves from reprisal. This rarely worked, as others knew their secrets and were all too happy to finger them to revolutionist headhunters, either to settle old scores or to win new favors. Gaddafi's spies in Libya were rounded up wherever they hid, tortured, and then killed; in other words, they were treated no worse than they deserved, though the West had held out some naive hope that fair trials for past crimes would be the order of the day when the rebels took power.

But no, mercy did not follow Gaddafi's death any more than mercy had preceded it.

Meet the new boss, same as the old.

The smarter JSO spies made it out of Libya before capture, and some went to other African nations. Tunisia was close, but it was hostile to former spies of the Mad Dog of the Middle East, a fitting nickname bestowed on Gaddafi by Ronald Reagan. Chad was desolate and similarly unwelcoming to the Libyans. A few made it into Algeria and a few more into Niger, and in both places they found some measure of security, but as guests of these dirt-poor regimes their future prospects were severely limited.

One group of former Jamahiriya Security Organization operators, however, fared better than the rest of their hunted colleagues because they possessed a marked advantage. For years this small cell of spies had been working not just in the interests of the Gaddafi regime, but also for their own personal enrichment. They accepted after-hours work for hire, both in Libya and abroad, doing odd jobs for organized criminal elements, for Al-Qaeda, for the Umayyad Revolutionary Council, even for the intelligence organizations of some other Middle Eastern nations.

In this work the group had suffered losses even before the fall of their government. Several had been killed by American operators a year before Gaddafi's death, and during the revolution several more died at the port of Tobruk in a NATO airstrike. Two others were captured boarding a flight out of Misrata and burned with electric shocks before being hung naked from meat hooks at the market. But the cell's seven surviving members did make it out of the country, and even though their years of extracurricular assignments had failed to make them rich men, when it came time to jump like rats from the ship called the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, their international connections helped keep them safe from the rebels back home.

The seven made their way to Istanbul, Turkey, where they were sponsored by elements in the local underworld who owed them a favor. Soon two of their number left the cell and went into honest work. One became a jewelry store security guard and the other found a job in a local plastics factory.

The other five remained in the spy game, and they farmed themselves out as a highly experienced unit of intelligence professionals. They also attempted to focus on both their personal security and their operational security, knowing that only by maintaining strict PERSEC *and* OPSEC could they be safe from the threat of reprisals from agents of the new government of Libya, just across the Mediterranean Sea.

This attention to security kept them safe for a few months, but complacency returned, one of their number grew overconfident, and he did not do as he was told. In a breach of PERSEC, he contacted an old friend in Tripoli, and the friend, a man who had switched allegiance to the new government to keep his head attached to his neck, reported the contact to Libya's new and fledgling intelligence service.

Though Tripoli's new crop of spies was excited by the news that a collection of their old enemies had been tracked to Istanbul, they were in no position to act on the intel. Infiltrating a team into a foreign capital with a kill/capture objective was no move for a rookie agency just finding its way around its new building.

But another entity intercepted the information, and it had both the means and the motive to act.

Soon the Istanbul cell members of former JSO operatives became targets. Not targets of the Libyan revolutionaries looking to eradicate the last vestiges of the Gaddafi regime. Not targets of a Western intelligence agency looking to settle scores with members of a former enemy spy shop.

No, the five Libyans became targets of an off-the-books assassination team from the United States of America.

More than a year earlier, a member of the JSO cell had shot and killed a man named Brian Caruso, the brother of one of the Americans, and a friend of the rest. The shooter had died soon after, but his cell lived on, surviving the revolution, and now they flourished in their new lives in Turkey. But Brian's brother and Brian's friends did not forget. Nor did they forgive.