



# First Friday News & Views

Monthly Newsletter of the First Friday Breakfast Club, Inc.

November 2022 / Volume 27 / Issue 11

## Next Meeting

**November 4**  
**7:00 a.m.**



## Location

**Hoyt Sherman Place**  
**15<sup>th</sup> & Woodland**  
**Des Moines**



## Speaker

**Michael**  
**Franken**



## Website

**ffbc Iowa.org**



## Historic Change

by Byron Huff, Board President



First Friday Breakfast Club is an educational group for gay, bisexual, trans men, and their **allies** who gather monthly in Des Moines for breakfast, fellowship, and a speaker. We provide a safe and supportive environment for **all members and guests**. FFBC Board of Directors voted **unanimously to modify the membership statement in our bylaws to include “allies.”** The official change will occur at the November board meeting where a second vote is required to formally modify the bylaws.

The First Friday Breakfast Club bylaws were written in 1996 when the world was a very different place for gay people. Our founder, Jonathan Wilson, envisioned a safe space for **gay men** to gather and help each other with the complexities of coming out; coming out is a very different journey that can last a lifetime.

In 2007, Iowa was the eighteenth state in the country to pass legislation that protects gay employees from discrimination; we all know that while this legal protection is important, it only prevents employers from using being gay as a reason to terminate or not promote someone. To this day, less than half the states have passed this protection. Federal legislation to protect gay people from employment discrimination did not become law until June 2020, but protection in each state is important to make sure gay people are supported and protected at every level of government. See the following website for some excellent information on equality by state and more:

[https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality\\_maps/profile\\_state/IA](https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality_maps/profile_state/IA)

As many organizations strive to be more inclusive, longstanding policies must be evaluated as our world evolves. Other gay organizations, such as the Des Moines Gay Men’s Chorus, are determining what may change, including their name, as they welcome female and transgender participants.

Over the past year, FFBC has welcomed allies by allowing them to purchase annual dues which historically had only been open to gay men. I saw this as our baby step toward this **historic change** in our bylaws. At the board meeting, Jonathan Wilson, who founded FFBC, asked board member David Cotton if it made a difference to him if there were attendees who were not gay men. David’s resounding response was absolutely not; that did not matter as long as he felt supported and welcome.

**Please spread the word:**

**FFBC now welcomes **everyone** to  
join who is supportive of our mission!**



# Equality and Democracy are On the Line – **Vote!**

by Ryan Crane, FFBC Vice President

Friends, we are truly on the precipice of losing decades of progress, and taking a backward step for social justice. While the loss of our rights and dignity may not feel imminent, it truly is!

Voting for pro-LGBTQ candidates has never been more important. And I know I am preaching to the choir, as the saying goes, so how about this: **find one friend with whom you don't talk about politics, and urge them to vote for pro-LGBTQ candidates.** By signing up for this potentially uncomfortable assignment, you will do more than most Americans will do this election season -- you will double your impact.

If not for yourself, do it for the next generation. With so much gained in recent years, we stand to lose that much more if we start going backward. Vote, and bring a friend!



“Thanksgiving offers each of us the chance to count our many blessings — the freedoms we enjoy, the time we spend with loved ones, the brave men and women who defend our Nation at home and abroad. This tradition reminds us that no matter what our background or beliefs, no matter who we are or **who we love**, at our core we are first and foremost Americans.”

President  
Barack  
Obama



Thanks to **Gary Moore** for introducing **Dana Cardin**, our October speaker. Thanks to **David Cotton** for managing our website and to **Nicholas Williams** for managing all of our Microsoft IT infrastructure. Thanks to **Wade Petersen** for his work as our newsletter editor. *Thank you to all our contributors to the newsletter!*

The **deadline** for the **December newsletter** will be **November 21**. If you have something on your mind to share, type it up and email it to Wade ([wadecpetersen@gmail.com](mailto:wadecpetersen@gmail.com)) by the copy deadline.

A special thank-you to those FFBC members and friends who have chosen to designate FFBC through the **Donor Direct** program of **United Way**. The contributions through United Way are tax deductible. Those who have chosen this means of supporting FFBC have gone to the trouble of completing their United Way campaign worksheet by designating FFBC as the beneficiary of their generosity. FFBC is an eligible recipient of such funding designations.



Thanks also to all those **Amazon shoppers** who designate FFBC as the beneficiary when shopping **smile.amazon.com**. Your shopping with



smile.amazon.com means that a small contribution to FFBC will be made with every purchase. Proverbial, found money.

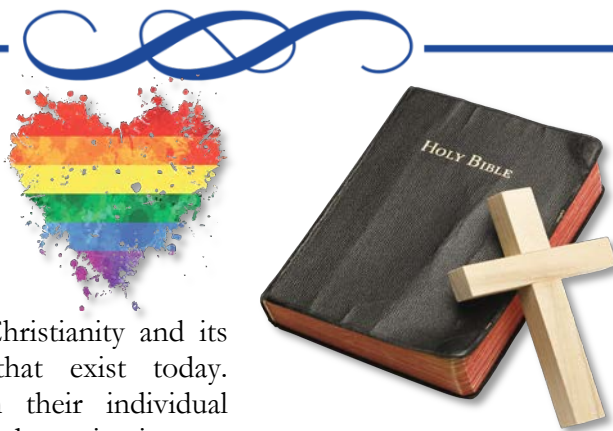
Fundraising efforts are ongoing to fund our scholarship program. To date we have raised over **\$475,000** for scholarships that are awarded to Iowa high school seniors who have done remarkable, courageous things to reduce homophobia and teach about LGBTQ issues in their schools and communities. Please consider a tax-deductible **contribution online** or by sending a check.

Please consider a **tax-exempt testamentary gift**. Our first legacy gift to the FFBC scholarship program came from **Cliff Paulsen** to the tune of over **\$67,000!** Contact **Byron Huff** for details or with questions.



# A Word on Homosexuality

by Jonathan Wilson



Jesus was the foundation of Christianity and its more than 42,000 denominations that exist today. Interestingly, to begin and maintain their individual identities, it is necessary for each denomination to emphasize their differences in order to preserve their “brand,” and to deemphasize the common beliefs in order to preserve their existence. Some differences are pretty significant, like the Protestant split with the Roman Catholic Church based on the concept of the “priesthood of all believers.” That concept was anathema to the patriarchal Roman Catholic Church that refused to acknowledge the right (even the obligation) of all believers in Christ to read prayerfully the scriptures and interpret scriptures as guided by the Holy Spirit.

Some differences are pretty minor – even petty in the grand scheme of things – like the pending split in the “United” Methodist Church over the subject of homosexuality. There are those in the church who cling to the tenant of faith set forth in the United Methodist Church Discipline that declares homosexuality to be “incompatible with Christian teaching” -- a topic never mentioned by Jesus Christ. On that difference in interpreting the Gospel (that is supposed to be GOOD NEWS for everyone), there are those who are prepared to pursue a schism in the United Methodist Church and establish one less enlightened church on that topic and one that acknowledges the reality that gay and lesbian children of God exist. Consider here the declaration in John 3:16 that whosoever believes in Jesus will have eternal life. By my calculation, whatever their percentage of the general population, gay and lesbian children of God come within the term “whosoever.” The United Methodist Church Discipline needs some prayerfully considered edits and not the creation of yet another Christian denomination.

My clergy father gave me an unabridged *Webster's Dictionary* – one of those big thick ones – copyrighted 1930. That's over 1900 years, give-or-take, after the scriptures were written as the inspired word of God. I decided to look up the word “homosexual” in that dictionary. The word was not in there. With a little research, I was able to discover that the very concept of homosexuality was not discovered until early in the 1900s. Until then everyone (including the Biblical writers) believed that all of God's children are straight, and same-sex intimacy – between

presumably straight children of God -- was declared to be unnatural and an abomination. If it were actually true that all of God's children are straight, then the Biblical admonition against same-sex intimacy would be spot on accurate. If, on the other hand, some of God's children are gay or lesbian (regardless of their percentage of the general population), the Biblical writers, even inspired by God, were factually mistaken.

The Biblical writers likewise mistakenly believed that the earth is flat and the center of the created universe with the sun and other stars revolving around it. To say otherwise would have been considered heresy for about 1492 years and the voyage of Christopher Columbus. Moreover, the Biblical writers believed, simplistically, that heaven is “up” and hell is “down” (see Genesis 11:1-9, Acts 1:6-11, and Matthew 27:29). Imagine having that Biblical writers' world view on an earth that is actually round not flat, rotating every 24 hours and not stationary, revolving around the sun at 67,000 miles per hour, and hurtling through space at 560,000 miles per hour following the sun. In the face of that reality, what is “up,” what is “down,” and where are the Biblical writers' heaven and hell? Where are yours?

I write this not for the purpose of disparaging the Biblical writers; they did not have the astronomical information that we have today. The Biblical writers' mistakes of fact on subjects of astronomy do not distract at all from the capital **T** truth they were striving, with the inspiration of God, to convey to their readership. We readily forgive them their mistakes of fact regarding astronomy in order to glean the meaningful Truth that can give guidance for our lives. We need to be equally forgiving of the Biblical writers when it comes to sexual orientation. The admonition against same-sex intimacy, written to a presumed audience of 100% straight people, needs to be recalibrated if we are to get to the Truth. The accurate admonition should be to shun sexual intimacy with someone incompatible with your sexual orientation – it will be unnatural and an abomination. That's the Truth.

[continued on page 4]



## November Speaker

# Mike Franken



Admiral Mike Franken was born and raised in rural northwest Iowa, the youngest of nine children. Lebanon, Iowa, had eight houses, a church, a small school, and a feed store. The Franken home was small – one bathroom for a family of ten. Mike’s life centered on helping his dad, going to school, and exploring nearby Dry Creek.

He learned the meaning of sacrifice from his mother – a one-room schoolhouse teacher with a brilliant mind who left teaching to raise a growing family. She maintained her passion for learning – always with a book in hand, encouraging her kids to read.

He learned the value of hard work from his dad – a WWII veteran who mastered his craft in his small machine shop, where Mike learned to weld and run a lathe. Mike never shied away from work – he went on to do odd jobs as a farmhand for many farms in the area, and in a nearby meatpacking plant while in high school and college.

It was this humble and grounded Iowa beginning that gave Mike an opportunity to earn a scholarship into the U.S. Navy where he dedicated nearly four decades serving our country. He served in four navy destroyers, a destroyer squadron, and an aircraft carrier. Mike was the first commanding officer of the USS Winston S Churchill – deploying frequently to the world’s hotspots. He retired as a three-star Admiral in 2017.

### ["Homosexuality" continued from page 3]

It will also cut down on gay men marrying unsuspecting women, which generally doesn't turn out all that well.

You are welcome to pretend that you have never met a real, live gay person (which is almost certainly not the case, but whatever), and you are welcome to dislike the idea of same-sex intimacy because you just think it is "yucky." That's your business; but don't think for a moment that the Bible or Jesus will back you up on that. Just mind your own business and don't support legislation or legislators that would seek to impose a first-century world view on that subject any more than you'd want schools teaching the Biblical writers' ignorant understanding of astronomy.



### "When Giving is All We Have"

by Alberto Rios

We give because someone gave to us.  
We give because nobody gave to us.

We give because giving has changed us.  
We give because giving could have changed us.

We have been better for it,  
We have been wounded by it—

Giving has many faces: It is loud and quiet,  
Big, though small, diamond in wood-nails.

Its story is old, the plot worn and the pages too,  
But we read this book, anyway, over and again:

Giving is, first and every time, hand to hand,  
Mine to yours, yours to mine.

You gave me blue and I gave you yellow.  
Together we are simple green. You gave me

What you did not have, and I gave you  
What I had to give—together, we made

Something greater from the difference.



# What Is Your Story?

by Gary Moore

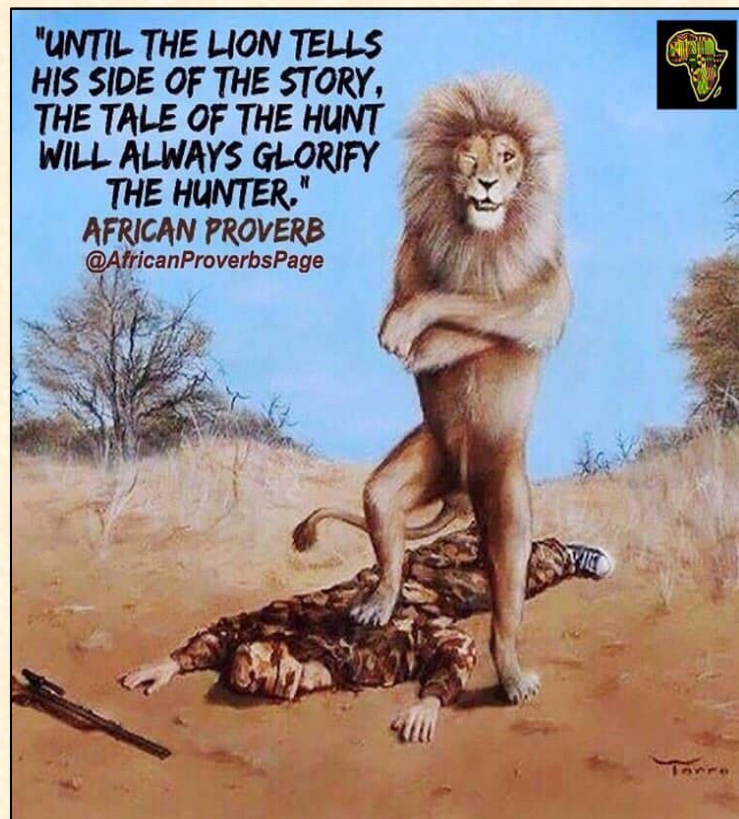
It was my good fortune to be able to introduce **Dana Cardin**, a nationally award-winning local journalist, on this first Friday of October to the members of the First Friday Breakfast Club. I remember Dana being in front of the camera early on in his 40-year career, first as a reporter and then as Assistant News Director for KCCI-TV. Dana has recently retired after telling thousands of stories from hundreds of Iowa towns and locations around the world -- some stories from mountain tops, some from beneath the ocean, some with the rich and famous, and some the powerful.



My first introduction to Dana though came in the early days of the AIDS crisis while helping with the All-Iowa AIDS Benefit. He along with long-time LGBTQ+ ally Mary Brubaker were using their celebrity to emcee the Benefit. This was a big deal in the early 1990s -- to put your face, reputation, and time on the line for a disease that was associated with "homosexuals." For one, I will never forget his willingness to do that.

But I digress, for Dana had a message to tell. **What's Your Story?** Dana noted that question kept him employed for 40 years and still is his message today.

Are you willing to raise your hand and tell your story? **Most of us are shy and humble and are unaware of the impact of our stories.** He mentioned, in particular, the stories shared by Jonathan Wilson, John Schmacker, and Bill Jackson (sitting in the room) as stories that have influenced each of us, including him.



Each and every one of us needs to take the next step to raise our hand and share our story whether that be at a table with friends or a family gathering, at the office, or in a public forum. It is our own personal story that has the greatest impact on the people we know. Your failures as well as your successes, **our stories shared are what tie us together.** You never know what impact a simple story has in the life of someone else.

Dana noted we must make a renewed effort to tell our stories during a time when many are trying to ban stories in schools and would just as soon we do not raise our hands. Our stories too long have been kept in the shadows but they are now emerging. Dana ended his remarks with an African proverb. It is the story of the hunter and the lion. Unless the lion learns to write, you will never know his story. So...

**What's Your Story?**



October Speaker  
**Dana Cardin**

October  
Speaker

# October Meeting Photo Gallery



Photos by Gary Moore

# What's In the Name?

by Supervisor Matt McCoy  
Polk County, 5<sup>th</sup> District



Recently, the Polk County Board of Supervisors, in the dark of night and with zero public input, moved to rename the Polk County Justice Center in downtown Des Moines after longtime County Attorney John P. Sarcone. Gavin Aronsen of the *Iowa Informer* was quick to provide insight and facts to Sarcone's legacy the day after news broke. I have used some of his facts in this article. His full article can be viewed here:

<http://iowainformer.com/politics/2022/10/polk-county-set-to-rename-justice-center-for-john-sarcone/>.

For the past 32 years, Sarcone has served as a law and order prosecutor with some of the most aggressive prosecutions of black and brown people in any county, in any state in the nation. This follows controversial cases which include prosecution of Andrea Sahouri, a Palestinian-American reporter working for the *Des Moines Register* who at the time of her arrest and eventual acquittal drew international condemnation. In addition, Sarcone told the *Register* in 2016 that the reason for racial bias is "guess what, they're committing the crimes." The reality is the people that are committing the crimes are prosecuted at a much higher level with people of color. Additionally, Sarcone's office represented the losing side in the landmark *Varnum v Brien* case which struck down the state's ban on same-sex marriage. Sarcone appealed the Polk County District Court's action and affirmative support for marriage equality to the Iowa Supreme Court.

Finally, Sarcone prosecuted Peiper Lewis who was the 15 year old that killed her rapist; all the while, he hasn't gone after her sex trafficker. This case drew national and international criticism.

When poor or marginalized people enter the court system, they are already disadvantaged against the power of the prosecutors and the wealth of the state. This inequity creates an imbalanced system of justice. Now when poor, black and brown, or LGBTQ+ individuals walk into the justice center in Polk County, they have to not only endure the tilted scale of justice, but they also have to pass through the stench of the legacy of John P. Sarcone and the damage he did to marginalized communities during his 32-year tenure. I was a vocal opponent of putting the thumb on the scale of justice and feel that this building should be apolitical. One bright light is the possible new county attorney, Kimberly Graham, who I believe will work hard to be fair, impartial, and equitable in the most powerful office in the county. Graham's election as county attorney will serve as a repudiation of Sarcone's tenure as county attorney.



**“Thanksgiving reminds us that no matter what befalls us in life, we can take the charred remnants and we can reconstruct a life unimaginably richer than that from which the shards and pieces fell.”**

– Craig D. Lounsbrough





# LGBTQ WORKPLACE CULTURE SUMMIT



## Virtual Event

November 2, 16 / December 7, 14

Join national and local speakers at the **6th Annual LGBTQ Workplace Culture Summit** to discuss LGBTQ community fundamentals, allyship in the workplace, creating or maintaining an Employee Resource Group, inclusive LGBTQ workplace policies, and a legislative workshop on how to fight against anti-LGBTQ bills in a workplace.

This event is for everyone in the workforce looking to be more inclusive. Some sessions will have advanced and beginner tracks for folks joining us for the first time and those who have attended the event in the past to expand on what they've learned. **Explore the sessions and buy tickets at [oneiowa.org](http://oneiowa.org).**

**Session #1**  
**LGBTQ 101 & LGBTQ 201:**  
November 2nd / 2-4 p.m.

**Session #2**  
**Allyship in the Workplace**  
November 16th / 2-4 p.m.

**Session #3**  
**DEI Employee Resource Group Best Practices -**  
December 7th / 2-4 p.m.

**Session #4**  
**Inclusive LGBTQ Workplace Policies & Legislative Workshop**  
December 14th / 2-4 p.m.

**Tickets this year are packaged and not sold individually.** All sessions grant you access to all four event sessions (you can choose to attend all or only a few) but you will need to purchase the package regardless.



# Future Speakers

**December 2:**

**Rev. Rushing Kimball**  
Plymouth UCC

**January 6: Matt Sinovic**  
Executive Director of Progress Iowa

**February 3: Rick Wagaman**  
Owner of HW CBD in West Des Moines

**March 3: Mark Stringer**  
Executive Director of ACLU

**April 7: Kevin Schneider**  
Polk County Sheriff





# Halloween Ends

A Movie Review by Mark Turnage



“Concluding” a horror franchise is its own kind of bravado. You have the expectation to deliver a thrilling finale with the promise of an ultimate showdown, but also the challenge of honoring previous chapters while playing with viewers’ expectations to deliver bigger scares than ever before. *Halloween Ends*, David Gordon Green’s finale to his own Michael Myers trilogy, gives its ‘final girl’ closure in its sendoff, but at the cost of an incoherent plot that sidelines its slasher villain.

*Ends* works best when telling babysitter Corey Cunningham’s (Rohan Campbell’s) own horror story, beginning with the accidental death of the boy in his care on Halloween 2019. While he is cleared of all charges, Haddonfield has already determined Corey’s guilt, and at 21, he becomes the town pariah, tormented by a curiously diverse group of Gleeks (one in a letter jacket, another in a marching band uniform) and working at his stepfather’s junkyard. Laurie Strode (Jamie Lee Curtis), herself recovering from recent traumatic events, walks a similar path, survivor of both Michael’s 1978 attacks and his return to Haddonfield in 2018 (see also Green’s *Halloween* (2018) and *Halloween Kills* (2021)). She too is blamed by the town, but for “bringing Michael back.” The two meet after one of Corey’s bullying run-ins, bond over their shared mistreatment, and Corey is introduced to Laurie’s granddaughter, Allyson (Andi Matichak). Unbeknownst to the Strodes, a chance encounter with a weakened and in-hiding Michael Myers and escalating cruelty from the townsfolk thrust the killer’s dark legacy into Corey’s hands.

If you’ve heard of the *Halloween* films, you can surmise the basic plot: teenagers and townsfolk are menaced by seemingly unkillable “bogeyman” Michael Myers, a freakishly strong and disturbingly silent former Haddonfield resident with a penchant for masks, stalking babysitters, and wielding sharp objects. Only focusing on the events of Green’s trilogy, the end of *Kills* sees Michael fearsomely triumphant against not only Laurie’s family but an entire mob of Haddonfield vigilantes. When we first meet Michael in *Ends*, he’s limping, weak, and hiding in a sewer. The audience never gets an explanation for why this is, nor does it connect metaphorically with the themes of *Ends* or tie together the two previous installments in Green’s trilogy thematically.

It’s the most frustrating hallmark of the *Halloween* series: its habit of introducing an intriguing twist or atmospheric quirk only to abandon and ignore it in favor of starting “fresh.” A shortlist of some these moments (as a *Halloween* fan): police discovering Michael broke into an empty elementary school to write “SAMHAIN” in blood on a chalkboard (*Halloween* 1978), or the reveal that Michael and Laurie are brother and sister (*Halloween II* 1981, and the best “showdown” between the two). Corey’s descent into becoming Michael Myers’ successor is the boldest and most interesting part of this film, but in a movie promising an ultimate confrontation, you can’t have your opener upstage the headliner’s last show.

What we do get is an emboldened and refreshed Laurie Strode more like Curtis’ original 1978 appearance as the character, a departure from the embittered survivalist loner we saw in the first two installments, but again, another development with no exposition. Haddonfield itself embodies “Midwestern Nice” at its most malicious--that brand of faux-helpfulness and mock-politeness that barely masks hatred and cruelty towards anyone outside the norm. In Green’s *Halloween* movies, the real monster is Haddonfield, and Michael Myers is its symptom.

See *Halloween Ends* as a stand-alone movie unrelated to Michael Myers or even its previous installments and its themes become spookier. But as a finale, its story could use more shape.



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*“Reflect upon your present blessings — of which every man has many — not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some.”*

*(Charles Dickens)*

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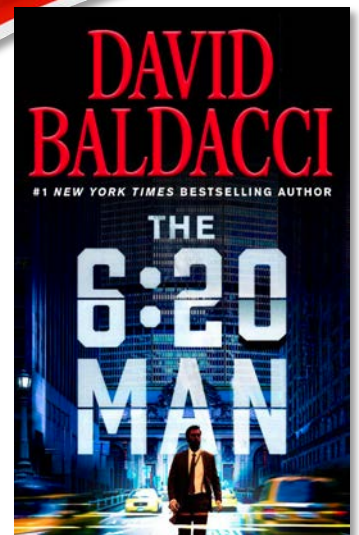
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# The 6:20 Man

by David Baldacci

A Book  
Review by  
Steve Person



Green. Red. Bikinis. Commuter trains. Swimming pool. Computers. "Area 51." Gorgeous women. Roommates. Russian. Law student. Matchmaker. Murders. Missionaries. Laundering. Nouveau riche mansion. Equally nouveau riche tasteless man of the Donald Trump ilk. Motorcycles. Army Rangers. Manhattan skyscraper. Spies.

These are just some of the entities the reader encounters from the fertile mind of thriller writer David Baldacci. *The 6:20 Man* topped the New York Times bestseller list upon its recent release. Baldacci manages to weave all of these concepts and people into a cynical look into the world of international finance.

The main character, Travis Devine, lacks the zeal necessary to succeed in this world according to his demanding father. Devine's older brother and sister, Danny and Claire, distinguished themselves as, "Board-certified neurosurgeon at the Mayo Clinic, and CFO of a Fortune 100, respectively." Devine's father further denounced Travis's acceptance into West Point. "Playing soldier instead of going out into the world and earning a living? Well, boy, you are off the family payroll starting now. Your mother and I don't deserve this crap."

Despite his parents' misgivings about attending West Point, Travis was graduated and then accepted into the Ranger School and later "qualified to become a member of the elite Seventy-Fifth Ranger Regiment." Travis distinguished himself in combat deployments fighting for his country and became a soldier to be reckoned with. Earning his Captain's rank, it appeared Travis was destined to live the military life. Unfortunately, events dictated his reluctant decision to leave the army and go into civilian life.

Always aware of his father's disregard, Travis attended a public university and earned a Masters in Business Administration. He accepts a position at Cowl and Comely in the financial district of Manhattan. Cowl runs an extremely profitable organization, and Travis commutes every day from his home in Mount Kisco aboard the 6:20 train into the city. The commuter train slows every day at the same place and allows passengers to peek into the walled enclosure of Cowl's ghastly new mansion. Travis's daily grind at the computer is interrupted one day when the first murder in the story is discovered in the building where he works. Circumstances point to him as a possible murder suspect.

Using his Ranger training to the best of his ability, Travis wends his way through a maze of questionable police officers, scuffles with those unprepared to withstand his skills in physical combat, and earns the respect of a clandestine organization to which he has become apprenticed.

Not wanting to give anything away, I will say this is one of the best thrillers Baldacci has written.