



Deadly Straits

R.E. McDermott

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In the tradition of Tom Clancy, Clive Cussler, Vince Flynn, Brad Thor, and W.E.B. Griffin, R.E. McDermott delivers a thriller to rival the masters.

When marine engineer and very part-time spook Tom Dugan becomes collateral damage in the War on Terror, he's not about to take it lying down.

Falsely implicated in a hijacking, he's offered a chance to clear himself by helping the CIA snare their real prey, Dugan's best friend, London ship owner Alex Kairouz. Reluctantly, Dugan agrees to go undercover in Alex's company, despite doubts about his friend's guilt. Once undercover, Dugan's steadfast refusal to accept Alex's guilt puts him at odds not only with his CIA superiors, but also with a beautiful British agent with whom he's romantically involved.

When a tanker is found adrift near Singapore with a dead crew, and another explodes in Panama as Alex lies near death after a suspicious suicide attempt, Dugan is framed for the attacks. Out of options, and convinced the attacks are prelude to an even more devastating assault, Dugan eludes capture to follow his last lead to Russia, only to be shanghaied as an 'advisor' to a Russian Spetsnaz unit on a suicide mission.

Deadly Straits is a non-stop thrill ride, from London streets, to the dry docks of Singapore, to the decks of the tankers that slake the world's thirst for oil, with stops along the way in Panama, Langley, Virginia, and Teheran. Richly spiced with detail from the author's 30 years sailing, building, and repairing ships worldwide, it is, in the words of one reviewer, "fast-paced, multilayered and gripping."

Deadly Straits Details

Date : Published (first published June 20th 2011)

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From Reader Review Deadly Straits for online ebook

Martin Pingree says

Great Read

Started off a little slow for me but once it got going it was a blast to read. Loads of characters, plenty of action and intrigue keep you reading. Great story line with plenty of twists and turns.

Alain Burrese says

I received a copy of "Deadly Straits" from R. E. McDermott, and I really enjoyed the read. It's an engaging story that leads consultant and part-time spook Tom Dugan around the globe to attempt to thwart a terrorist plot that his long time friend is caught up in. Dugan, guilty by association, must prove his friend's innocence to prove his own, that is, if his friend really is innocent, and if so, if he can prove it. Neither are very clear. (Until the end...)

The villains are ruthless and evil, and the tale draws you in and make you want to keep turning pages to see what happens next. There's plenty of action throughout, and enough twists and turns to keep you guessing as you turn each page to see if your guess is right or not. I found myself really liking Dugan, and I hope McDermott writes about him again. There were other interesting characters as well, and I'd hope some of them show up in future books too.

McDermott spent thirty years in the marine industry, and this shows in his first novel. He writes with authority on subjects he knows, providing accuracy to his fiction plot. I really enjoyed his "Deadly Straits" and look forward to his next novel. If you are looking for a good action adventure on the sea, look to R. E. McDermott and travel his "Deadly Straits!"

David Highton says

A decent political thriller based around three terrorist maritime incidents - the narrative moves at real pace in the second half and the epilogue sets up the next book in the series

Stephen England says

Take a lifetime of nautical knowledge. Mix in a potentially lethal international situation. Bring to a boil. The result? A thriller that may materialize as reality in tomorrow's headlines.

R.E. McDermott brings a career in the maritime industry to the table in his debut thriller, Deadly Straits. And it shows--as a diabolical Iranian plan unfolds to cripple the sea-going oil trade.

The target? Chokepoints--straits and canals--through which the world's oil supply flows.

The weapons? Supertankers known by the acronym VLCC(Very Large Crude Carrier), which have been

sabotaged and turned into floating bombs.

The only man who can stop them is Thomas Dugan, a ship inspector and part-time CIA asset. An asset that is about to be activated.

From the opening scenes in Singapore to the pulse-pounding climax in the Straits of Bosphorus, McDermott spins bureaucrats, spies, commandos, and sailors into a well-researched and frighteningly plausible tale that smacks of the salt sea.

Ramona says

Took me a while to get through. Lots of technical details. I think I missed a lot, but managed to connect with Alex, Dugan, Ward and Anne. I do like the way it wrapped up.

Jerry B says

A friend recommended we try this first novel by R.E. McDermott, a former merchant mariner who definitely has deployed his knowledge of ships and navigation at sea to this tale of international terror. Frankly, we weren't that enthralled with the story – an opinion not buoyed by the bevy of enthusiastic reviews from readers who got free copies of the novel from the author. The 400-page book had a lot of chapters, each of which had so many scene changes (which the headers in themselves were tiresome to read), that we were alternately bored throughout much of the book and/or confused as to who was doing what to whom, where.

For sure the complicated plot featured CIA agents, ship owners and officers, Muslim terrorists (all of whom were stereotypical suicide fanatics seeking "Paradise"), female covert operatives, etc. A scorecard would have done little to cut through all these characters, many with strange names that were hard to follow. Moreover, the details about maneuvering or exploding supertankers weren't really all that interesting. In sum, while the writing style was decent enough, the organization of this story and the ability to engage the reader is in no way at all comparable to Clancy, as the hype for this book tries to suggest.

Toni Osborne says

Book #1, in the Tom Dugan Thrillers series

Not having spent time in the marine industry and one who is by far not fond on being captive in a tin can of any size, thrillers involving ships and its operations are not my favorite topics. Having said this, the plot will nevertheless capture the imagination of ship geeks....this techno-thriller with all the juice and characters hop-scotching through exotic locales will surely please the majority of readers.

The central character is Tom Dugan, a skilled professional who travels the world as an operating engineer on ships, he is one the good guys. As for the bad guys they are many of them most are motivated by religious fanaticism and some simply by greed. They are all sadistic as we would expect them to be. "Deadly Straits", is a fast paced and multilayered plot that travels from Singapore, Malaysia, London , Malacca, Panama,

Chechnya, Teheran, Virginia. 9/11 told us it is possible to used aircraft as flying bombs, “Deadly Straits”, suggest that huge tankers can be also used as weapons....Some said this plot is entirely possible and realistic....terrorists gaining control of loaded tankers and using them as weapons in straits to block flow of traffic. This story tells a scary account on how they may attempt this.....

This is one convoluted story very I had a hard time keeping focus on. Following the many characters with strange names was a challenge and keeping track of who is a good guy and who is a bad guy was even more. Mr. McDermott has definitely deployed his knowledge of ships and navigation with the many details about manoeuvering and detonating supertankers. Maybe he did a too good job doing so. The many threads that bounce from storyline to storyline make this book long and complex and not all that interesting... I struggled to keep up till the end ...

Dave Schultz says

Not really sure about all the positive reviews. I could not finish. Hard to follow, no flow in the writing. Maybe I will try again some other time.

Daniel Smith says

Great first book in the series, look forward to reading the rest.

AH says

Deadly Straits by debut author RE McDermott is about terrorism on the seas. Imagine a plot to block the narrow straits of shipping lanes. What if the Panama Canal was blocked? The impact to the world economy would be devastating.

Deadly Straits would make an awesome action/thriller movie. Spies, exotic locales, terrorists, conspiracy theories, rogue governments and more make it a compelling read.

As I sat to read this book, I told myself I would read just a few chapters and move on to something else. Nu-uh. Did not happen. I could not put this book down. It's easy to tell that the author has had a lot of background in his subject matter. What started off a little slowly for me quickly became a frightening thriller – more so because it could really happen.

I enjoyed the way that the author described the intricacies of diplomacy and special ops. I was amused at the lengths the operatives would go to circumvent the edicts of a power hungry and ill-informed superior. One of my favorite scenes involved a group of Russian soldiers enlisting the main character so that their unit could be known as an official multinational strike force.

Readers who enjoy Tom Clancy, Clive Cussler and those types of books would enjoy Deadly Straits. Deadly Straits is currently on sale at Amazon and B&N for \$1.49 til Feb 2.

Thank you to the author for a copy of this book.

Thom Swennes says

“A comforting lie was more palatable than a terrifying truth.”

Strike one more up for international terrorism. Born in the sixties by airline hijacks (mainly to Cuba), the aerial scenario culminated when the hijacked planes plowed into the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11, 2001. Middle Eastern terrorists raise the stakes as they rig the oil tanker, China Star, into a very large bomb. The tanker is scheduled to sail through the Straits of Malacca, between Indonesia and Malaysia and a favorite hunting ground for pirates. A second super tanker, Asian Trader, is scheduled to pass through the Panama Canal and plan to block it; paralyzing shipping and causing unimagined consternation. An international terrorist, hireling by the highest bidder, and diabolically complete and intelligent, “Captain” Karl Braun, has worked his way into Phoenix Shipping Ltd., owned by Alex Kairous. He was hired by an Iranian / Venezuelan conglomerate to make an international political statement that would surpass what occurred on September eleventh. Marine engineer Thomas Dugan is pulled into the game and, together with MI5 agent Anna Walsh, try to protect the innocent and foil the enemies.

This is an atypical story of good versus evil, on an international scale. Surprisingly, MI5, CIA, and a few other western intelligence agencies, band together to stop a suspected attack and manage to forego the pissing contest and put up a good show. The tale jumps all over the world, providing the reader with a fast-paced view of international espionage and terrorism. As the inaugural attempt by this author, he has succeeded in impressing me and I am looking forward to reading more.

Raven Tiger {Paint me like one of your 19th century gothic heroines!} says

The awkward moment when you realize that this military thriller is doing nothing for you. DNF @ 10%.

Bradley West says

Deadly Straits fits my reading tastes to a tee. The hero Tom Dugan isn't a professional spy, he's a shipping professional. The action is non-stop and covers a lot of geography. I live in Singapore, and the author got Singapore pretty much right on the nose so I figure he's just as much on the money when he writes in detail about Panama (among several other places).

The author really knows ships and shipping, so much so that I was hoping there would be a couple ship schematics in the book so I could figure out who-was-where during a few of the fight scenes. I like complicated plots that aren't predictable, and boy does Bob McD deliver on that one in spades. So the whole book has an authentic feel.

I didn't give “*Deadly Straits*” five stars for two reasons, both of them pretty petty. Try as I might, I couldn't buy into a real Alex agreeing to behave as he does even under the particularly dire circumstances of his predicament. Braun was too perfectly evil, flawless in planning and resources. So his character didn't quite

ring true and the orchestrated actions of his men stretched credulity.

The book is also long and complex, sufficiently so that I would have benefited from a list of characters for reference as the narrative bounces from story line to story line. Ultimately, there are one or two plot threads too many. Tying up the loose ends in the Epilogue takes twenty pages so you know there was a lot going on.

But my complaints are quibbles. If you like reading this-could-actually-happen thrillers with heaps of violence and suspense, and ordinary people are in starring roles, then *Deadly Straits* is definitely for you.

Steven Konkoly says

There are few reading experiences more rewarding, than delving into a well-written novel, by an author who is a subject matter expert in the “fictional” world presented. R.E. McDermott’s *Deadly Straights* justifiably earns a place at the top of my list of rewarding reads. Having served in maritime and petroleum industries for over thirty years, he knows a thing or two about maritime operations, world-shipping trends and the vulnerabilities of sea-lane chokepoints (Strait of Malacca, Panama Canal, Bosphorus Strait)—and it all comes out in crisp detail, providing the framework for an intricately balanced, international thriller.

Deadly Straits introduces the reader to Tom Dugan, a salty maritime executive, who prefers to spend more of his time in the field, inspecting ships, than managing shipping schedules from his desk. He has a quick wit and keen eye for the business—it doesn’t take him long to recognize that something is off with his long time business associate and friend, Alex Kairouz. A self-made ship industry mogul, Kairouz has displayed unusual signs of strain lately, concealing questionable business decisions from his employees and implementing sudden changes to long-standing procedures.

When a U.S. Navy contracted merchant ship is hijacked in the Strait of Malacca, and all evidence points to Dugan’s complicity in the brutal attack, covert government agencies will make him an offer he can’t readily refuse, along with a chance to prove himself and Kairouz innocent. What follows is a roller coaster ride to unravel a conspiracy of epic proportions, with the capacity to cripple world economies and shift power into sinister hands.

R.E. McDermott masterfully combines the macro level details of international politics with an intensely personal story of struggle and desperation. Just the right mix of “chessboard” maneuvering with powerful first person action, as an all too realistic and frightening conspiracy unfolds across the globe.

Several scenes stand out, each well worth the price of admission. The Russian Spetsnaz shipboard assault is unbeatable, by far one of the most realistic close quarters battle scenes I’ve read in years, and the Panama Canal scene? Unbelievably realistic and intense. Only a talented author with an intimate knowledge of ships and the Panama Canal inner workings could have pulled it off.

Deadly Straights is a one of kind book. R.E. McDermott has found an incredible niche, with this gritty maritime conspiracy thriller. I look forward to *Deadly Coast*, and the continuation of the Tom Dugan’s character.

Karen says

The author of Deadly Straits, R.E. McDermott, sent me a copy of his book to give him an honest review. And, honestly, you have got to read this book. This is one thriller that is on par with best selling authors like Tom Clancy, Clive Cussler and Robert Ludlum.

This novel takes you on a world wide journey of locks and straits frequented by the shipping industry. From dry dock to open ocean, the author's background and research shines through. You're bombarded with mystery, intrigue and delve in the the world of espionage and terrorism. From MI5 to the CIA and intelligence services all over the globe, it keeps you guessing, trying to figure out exactly what the outcome will be.

I have read many many best selling books of this genre, they line my shelves, and this one is right up there with the best of the best. I'll let you in on a little secret. This is R.E. McDermott's first novel and it is a slam dunk, must read, go buy it right now, kind of book. You like fast paced mystery thrillers, you'll love this book, honest, I kid you not.
