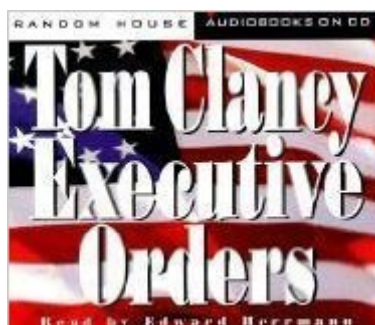


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# Executive Orders (Tom Clancy)



## Synopsis

5 CDs / 6 hours  
Read by Edward Herrmann  
Also available on cassette  
"I don't know what to do. Where's the manual, the training course, for the job? Whom do I ask? Where do I go?"  
Debt of Honor ended with Tom Clancy's most shocking conclusion ever: a joint session of Congress destroyed, the President dead, most of the Cabinet and the Congress dead, the Supreme Court, the Joint Chiefs. Dazed and confused, the man who only minutes before had been confirmed as the new Vice-President of the United States is told that he is now President. President John Patrick Ryan  
And that is where Executive Orders begins. Ryan had agreed to accept the vice-presidency only as a caretaker for a year, and now suddenly an incalculable weight has fallen on his shoulders. With stunning force, his responsibilities crush in upon him. He must calm an anxious and grieving nation, allay the skepticism of the world's leaders, conduct a swift investigation of the tragedy, and arrange a massive state funeral - all while attempting to reconstitute a Cabinet and Congress with the greatest possible speed. But that is not all. Many eyes are upon now, and many of them are unfriendly. In Beijing, Tehran, and other world capitals, including Washington, D.C., there are those eager to take advantage where they may, some of whom, from Ryan's past, harbor intense animosity toward the new President himself. Soon they will begin to move on their opportunities; soon they will present Jack Ryan with a crisis so great even he could not imagine it.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

At the end of "Debt of Honor" a jet airplane slams into a Joint Session of Congress, pretty much wiping out the American government and suddenly putting Jack Ryan into the Presidency. While Clancy's book was at the top of the Best Seller list someone crashed a small plane into the White House, yet I heard nothing on the news about how life was imitating art. Now, of course, this is headline news and Clancy's books are suddenly being hailed as dire prophecies that are suddenly coming true. In "Executive Action" an Islamic leader assassinates the President of Iraq, forges Iran and Iraq into the United Islamic Republic, attacks the United States with biological weapons, and invades Saudi Arabia to grab the oil fields. Suddenly Tom Clancy has become the prophet of the moment as his fiction became fact with the terrorist attacks of September 11th. Of course, Clancy has not been alone telling such tales, but the focus is certainly on his writings at this pivotal moment in history. A few have suggested that Clancy was actually providing a blueprint for the terrorists and I seem to remember that there had never been a skyjacking until Robert Serling wrote about it in a novel. But writers just look at the world around them and find creative opportunities, which is certainly no different from what terrorists do in planning operations. However, the reason I feel compelled to reread and review "Executive Orders" is because I think that there are some important things that Clancy has to say about the moment that goes beyond terrorist attacks. First, as Jack Ryan repeatedly points out in the novel, the actions of terrorists for are fundamentalist Muslims do not reflect on the vast majority of the followers of Islam around the world.

Jack Ryan and Tom Clancy may have reached their pinnacle of achievement with this book. However, this book is definitely not the place to start the series; as a minimum, *The Hunt for Red October*, *Patriot Games*, and *Debt of Honor* should definitely be read before this book. Jack, due to the events detailed in *Debt of Honor*, suddenly finds himself President of the U.S., a position which he never aspired to and in which he feels decidedly uncomfortable. But, good former Marine that he is, he quickly buckles down to the demands of the job - a job that rapidly spawns seemingly endless problems and complications. In detailing these, Clancy weaves an incredible number of sub-plots together: an assassination of the Iraqi President and the amalgamation of that country with Iran, an attempt to kidnap his youngest daughter, a biological attack on the U.S., a heat up of the continuing dispute between the two Chinas, an attempt by the former Vice President to remove Jack from office, and multiple attacks on his integrity by the news media. This is where Clancy shines, as each of these sub-plots is probably strong enough to be a novel in its own right. They all have strong dramatic elements and are not only plausible, but frightening in just how close they are to events in the real world that have occurred since this book was written - so much so that the notion has been

put forth that certain terrorist elements got the ideas for their deeds from this book and Debt of Honor. Jack is well drawn. His reactions to situations and problems make sense for the type of man he is, and Clancy does a good job of making the reader empathize with him.

Tom Clancy's longtime hero, former CIA analyst Jack Ryan, has managed to assume the Presidency, Gerald Ford-style, without ever having been elected on a presidential ticket. Unlike Ford, however, Ryan had never been elected to any public office at all. Asked by President Durling to serve as Vice President, after the previous Vice President is forced to resign in the wake of a sex scandal, Ryan reluctantly agrees to take on a largely ceremonial office. The catch for the non-politician Ryan, however, is that the Vice-Presidency is only a heartbeat away from the most burdensome job in the world, and one which Ryan shivers at the thought of undertaking. Then the incredible happens, when a grief-stricken Japanese pilot who lost family in a brief Japanese-American shooting war, mans a jumbo jet during Ryan's swearing-in ceremony and crash lands into the Capitol, thereby all but obliterating government. The President, First Lady, the entire Supreme Court, nearly all the Cabinet and most Senators and members of Congress are killed in a few calamitous moments. This leaves Ryan, who survived by a sheer fluke, to assume an office which he frankly dreads approaching. A complete political outsider, Ryan has an excellent working knowledge of the government, but close to zero political instincts. A populist and technophile of the sort both idolized and unelected by America, Ryan must bumble through his grief and shock at the horror which has befallen his nation and attempt to lead it. His hostility toward any form of ideology that appears other than starkly pragmatic, however, is ultimately disappointing. In the guise of non-partisan vigor, Clancy has Ryan deliver a series of startlingly conservative speeches praising a flat tax and denouncing abortion rights.

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