

# “Civcom One”

*Where Tom Clancy Meets Plato*

“... the most terribly important things must be left to ordinary men themselves—the mating of the sexes, the rearing of the young, the laws of the state.”

—G.K. Chesterton, from “The Ethics of Elfland” in *Orthodoxy*.

What if power really corrupts?

*Civcom One* is a philosophical experiment with an idea for a spy story: the idea that power corrupts and that the government’s intelligence agencies feel the same way since, after all, knowledge is power. *Civcom One* is an ongoing fictional work by Mark J. Boone, Jesus Freak, dealing with government secret program for recruiting “civilian commodities” to help out the intelligence community for the reason that they are more trustworthy.

Agents with the CIA, NSA, and FBI (and a few organizations whose existence is denied) have come to refer to each of the civilian commodities by the shorthand “civcom.” Most of the civcoms are not informed that their aid is not being sought merely because they have some useful talent, but also because they—being teachers, farmers, pastors, and plumbers—have not been too badly corrupted by power.

Seth Daniels is a normal college student in D/FW who, as our story begins, happens to be one Civcom Number Eighty-Three. After surviving an attempt on his life, he learns from an agent that someone is killing off the civcoms. With that lone agent to protect him against whoever has already murdered hundreds of civcoms, Daniels flees. It is only after Civcoms One through Eight-Two have also been murdered that Seth Daniels finds out what no civcom was ever supposed to know about the program: that there had long been a fear in the agencies of giving power to the powerless. This fear had seemed to necessitate a very special role for whichever civcom at any given time held the post of “Civcom One;” it had also necessitated very curious circumstances for that person’s performance of his/her duty.

The anomalous circumstances under which Seth Daniels becomes Civcom One initiate an acceleration of the crisis that had begun with the systematic murdering of the members of the civcom program. His new knowledge could lead to the rescuing of the surviving civcoms, or to utter destruction. Either way, the civcom program’s bizarre and paradoxical policies were about to bring about the end of the civcom program as we used to know it—and the end of many peoples’ lives (hopefully including many bad peoples’).

*Civcom One* is, in its current stage, contains scores of pages of discussion (reminiscent of Plato) of such diverse topics as “power corrupts,” the role of church and state in the postmodern era, the purpose of the United States, biotechnology, absolute government control, and information warfare—along with endless analysis of the never-ending complexities of the civcom program. The book is at least four parts Plato, four parts Tom Clancy, three parts Thomas Jefferson, three parts Tolkien, and one part C.S. Lewis.

And of course (with all sorts of spies, civcoms, and terrorists hanging around, as well as the US Armed Forces), *Civcom One* will have plenty of violence.

The brief excerpts below are intended to be a literary "teaser trailer." The chapter below is one of the few completed chapters in *Civcom One* and describes events taking place roughly two-thirds of the way into the story. Expect a rough final draft of *Civcom One* from Mark J. Boone sometime in the next decade.

## EXCERPTS FROM THE NOVEL

### **Quote appearing at the beginning of chapter entitled 'Power Corrupts':**

*Nearly every spy story has a villain, a spy who went 'bad', became corrupted. What if a single element could be identified as the one element involved in the corruption of the villains of all of the spy stories? The ultimate spy story would be the one which deals with this element. What if that ultimate spy story were true?*

–Civcom One

### **Quote appearing at the beginning of a chapter which is currently untitled:**

*Between Fall and Second Coming, good and evil are universal characteristics of human nature. Still, an honest businessman is less open to corruption than an honest spy. An honest gardener is less corruptible still.*

–Civcom One

### **Quote appearing at the beginning of chapter entitled 'The System':**

*Nonconformity is more an illusion than anything else. Only the most trivial acts of nonconformity are ever pursued for their own sake. History's great rebels against injustice were only answering a higher call. The revolt against an unjust system is merely submission to higher ideals of truth and justice. It is not the rebels against the unjust system who are the true nonconformists; it is the unjust system that does not conform to the moral law.*

–Civcom One

### **Passage appearing in a chapter currently untitled:**

"That's what *they* thought," said John Rane quietly.

"What are you talking about, John?"

"Me? What am I talking about? I'm talking about saving the civcoms!"

"You *can't*, John, not any more than I can!"

"I'm not powerless, Rick."

"Yes, you are, you are against *this*."

"No, I don't think so, Rick. All I need is the person who *isn't* powerless. Number One, Rick," John Rane said quietly.

"Number One?"

"Number One," John Rane said again. "Number One can stop it."

"You don't know who he is, John!"

"Which is why I've come to you, Rick. Yeah, I know you don't know who Number One is, either, but I was thinking this morning, you know . . . Number One, Number Two, Number Twenty-Two, Thirty-Eight, Nine Hundred and Five, what's the difference? Numbers change awfully fast these days, don't you think?"

"John, what are you getting at?"

"I need to find the right person, and Number One will come to me. You can help me find that person, Rick. Hey, trust me."

"What do you want from me, John?"

"I need rumors, hints, any whisper you've caught about the anomalous civcoms."

"They're civilians, John. None of them are anomalies. They don't get to be civcoms unless they're perfectly normal."

"Not *trustworthy*, Rick. I need to know which ones survive. I'm looking for the ones with a strong will. That, and a little luck."

### **Passage appearing in chapter entitled 'Civcom One':**

"So Civcom One controls the world?" asked Seth.

"No, he controls the civcoms."

"The most powerful tool in the hands of the world's most powerful government?"

"Yes."

"So who controls the tool, the Civcom One who controls it or the government who holds it in its hand?"

“We control Civcom One.”  
Seth thought for a moment. There were so many questions: . . .  
. . . Seth felt something burn inside him. A spark kindled into flame and the great passion of his soul stirred: indomitability. Fiercely free, he turned to face Emu and John Rane. His eyes narrowed, hardened into steel.  
“Not this one,” he said.

**Quote appearing at the beginning of chapter entitled ‘The Logos Worm’:**

*The Logos Worm was simultaneously the cleverest project, the stupidest project, and the greatest act of treachery ever to be attempted by members of the United States government.*

–Civcom One

**Passage appearing in chapter entitled ‘Kansas Turnpike’:**

The enemy vehicles were positioned two just behind his own Land Cruiser, one just behind the other Land Cruiser. In the two tailing his own vehicle, John saw people leaning outside of windows on one, standing in the sunroof like himself in the other. They were brandishing RPG’s and automatics.

“Thank God the moon is full,” he muttered to himself.

“What was that?” Pete’s voice crackled through his headpiece.

“Franklin, I need a rifle.”

**Passage appearing in chapter entitled ‘Categorical Imperative’:**

“Why aren’t you telling me otherwise, Number One? I thought you were supposed to tell me the meaning of life is found in Jesus Christ.”

“Well, I’ll tell you that if you want me to.”

“Go for it.”

“Ok. The meaning of life is found in Jesus Christ.”

“I don’t feel any different, One.”

“Yeah, that’s why I didn’t tell you the first time. Sure, Jesus is the answer, but I don’t agree with some of my brethren that the question should be ignored.”

“Which question is that, Number One?”

“Who knows? Maybe it’s every question, maybe it’s *the* question, the question that encompasses everything. Maybe the question is life. For you, maybe the question is the mission.”

“The mission?”

“Yeah, the mission. You’re the tool of fate to carry on the never-ending mission of . . .”

“Of the mission. That’s its only goal.”

“No, you know better than that. You said otherwise yourself. Don’t you remember? You said you were obsessed with something just a little higher than yourself. You said it was duty.”

Now it was John’s turn to laugh bitterly. “Yes, I did say that,” he admitted, “but is there any difference?”

“You tell me, John. Duty towards what end? Duty towards the mission itself? Surely that would be an absurdity, surely that would be duty towards itself? Isn’t that meaningless?”

**Excerpt from chapter entitled ‘The Logicians’:**

“Civcom logicians?” he said. “Don’t picture a person just thinking of Aristotle and Boole and the forms of propositional statements. We’re more like the *mentats* of Frank Herbert’s *Dune*. Picture a person with a working knowledge of them in his head, and he works with them on a situation. He sees events, theories, and determines he necessities—he sees the desideratum, the long-for goal of a scenario, and he steps back from the equation and closes his eyes and while the law of Aristotle’s logic work furiously, silently in the background of his brain, like the components of a machine, he senses the answer, and decides how to add precise component to the equation, how exactly to add to the system what will bring about the desired result. His instinct helps him find it, then he looks at it, examines it closely, finds it reasonable, finds that it meets the laws of logic when consciously applied.”

“What equation?” asked Brian.

“The system,” said Civcom One quickly. “The reality. The object of your gaze as a civcom logician. An equation of letters forms a word ...”

He grabbed the pen, slid the pad of scratch paper into position, and scribbled the letters D-I-E in the center of the page.

“An equation of words forms a sentence.”

He wrote on the paper again, near the top, taking somewhat longer this time. He put down the pen, lifted the paper from the table, and held it up for all to see. It read: THE CIVCOMS ARE DYING.

“An equation of sentences forms a problem,” he said, laying the paper down on its other side and scribbling furiously. The letters were sloppy but legible.

THE CIVCOMS ARE DYING. THE CIVCOMS ARE THE ENEMY OF ALL CORRUPT AGENTS.

“The laws of logic will deduce a logical solution to the question of who is killing the civcoms.”

“It’s not the terrorists?”

“The terrorists are pawns,” said Civcom One.

**Quote appearing at the beginning of chapter entitled ‘Ohio Farmhouse’:**

*Why is there emotional release in violence? Why not in love? What a horrible world!*

–John Rane

**Quote appearing at the beginning of chapter entitled ‘White House’:**

*In governmental thrillers from Tom Clancy to Joel Belz readers see a world where American military, CIA, FBI NSA, and Secret Service all work together. The question is worth asking, at least for the sake of a story: What if that fundamental unity were no longer guaranteed?*

–Civcom One

**Also from ‘White House’:**

“In short, one simpler civcom crisis gave way to the big one that we should have been expecting all along. The whole civcom program was a mind game, and till now we were winning. Let’s just hope that the force we created is good like it was supposed to be. If it is, then the civcom program may pull through, and, heck, maybe it’ll leave this country a better place by the time Number One is through with it.”

--Mr. Johnson, to the president

**Quote appearing at the beginning of chapter entitled ‘Decision Confirmed’:**

*During a serious disruption in the intelligence community such as the intelligence freeze ordered by Civcom One during the civcom crisis, the government’s intelligence-protection nexus may be effectively, if temporarily, replaced by close cooperation between organizations dedicated to protection, such as the Secret Service, and private intelligence corporations.*

–Ms. Sandra Kinge, Secretary of the Treasury

**Quote appearing in chapter entitled ‘Decision Confirmed’:**

“Of course we’d *rather* trust the British with the fates of three hundred million people. But it’s not so bad trusting a theory.”

–Ms. Sandra Kinge, to the President

**Quote appearing in chapter entitled ‘History Lesson’:**

“Now, if we were being dishonest, didn’t our very civcom program itself prove that it was needed?”

–(currently unnamed character)

**Excerpt from chapter entitled ‘Nothing at Last Sacred’:**

“Yes,” said Gorman, “but when we ask we see it exists only in the question. One person’s answer is justice, and another person’s is love, but the real answer is in the question, because the answers are only part of the question. Everyone has to answer the question for himself. Anyone who tries to answer the question for me has broken the moral law.”

“What would you do if someone tried to answer the question for you?”

“Impose their own answer on me? Impose their own ethical reality on me? What would I do?” Gorman

leaned back in his chair, poured himself more wine, and said, "I already told you I'd exercise my right. I exercise my right to vote every election, wouldn't I exercise my right to believe what I want?"

"You asked what I'd do, Dale, if someone tried to impose their reality on me. I wouldn't let them, Dale. I would stop them."

"At what cost?" Wyzinski suspiciously inquired.

"The cost doesn't matter, Dale."

**Quote appearing at the beginning of chapter entitled 'Operation Telic Abolition':**

*Without the knowledge of the president, the final abolition of humanity was being funded by taxpayers.*

–Civcom One

**Also from 'Operation Telic Abolition':**

Dr. Ying had always been a little bit uncomfortable with his wife's being a double agent, but was too much in love with her to let that get in the way of a happy marriage.

**Quote appearing at the beginning of chapter entitled 'Killing the Worm':**

*An invisible worm is possible, but only if pronouns are properly used to keep the necessarily infinite meaning of a self-referential statement from having too much influence over the language.*

–Civcom One

**Passage appearing in chapter entitled 'Inevitable':**

Gorman, in his last desperate bid to satisfy the will to power, pulled the trigger.

Silence reigned for only a moment before Hale said, "Well, that was a bad way to go."

"I'm not sure it wasn't honorable," stammered Civcom One.

"It was strong," said John Rane, "but there wasn't any honor in it."

**Quote appearing in chapter entitled 'Homecoming':**

"Ah, yes it can, Number One. Yes it can. The eternal vigilance of the fathers and mothers, the teachers and Sunday school teachers, the coaches and workmen and photographers, the waiters and waitresses and taxi drivers, is required to make a nation great and keep it fed with moral integrity from the ground up. I'm counting on you, Number One, you and a whole lot of people like what you will be this time tomorrow. Your country has need of you, Number One."

–The President

**From 'White House' (this quote is just about the most important line in the entire book!):**

"I am Civcom One. I will do my task and run my course. You have nothing to fear from me."

--Civcom One, to the president