



58 Minutes

Walter Wager

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Basis for the blockbuster film Die Hard 2 starring Bruce Willis.

"58 Minutes" It is every traveler's secret nightmare. What if you are in an airplane during a violent snowstorm...What if your radar is destroyed...What if they can't get you down? It is 5:09 p.m. in New York City, and a man named Willi Staub is about to make sure the nightmare explodes into life. His goal: to bring the American government to its knees with the first major terrorist attack on the U.S. mainland. Staub, a ruthless and cunning man hunted by police forces in every major Western country, has led a carefully chosen team of revolutionaries from four continents to New York. Their plan: to hold as many people hostage as possible - in the skies above the city.

Can one policeman stop their foolproof plan?

58 Minutes Details

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Author : Walter Wager

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From Reader Review 58 Minutes for online ebook

Q. says

An awful potboiler which was the basis for the film "Die Hard 2". I've never encountered a duller thriller with slower pacing. But the worse problem afflicting this novel is those Eight Deadly Words, "I don't care what happens to these people". Go watch "Die Hard 2" instead of reading this... or literally do anything else.

0.5/5

AudioBookReviewer says

My original 58 Minutes audiobook review and many others can be found at Audiobook Reviewer.

If you're anything like me. You have seen all of the Die Hard movies. Specifically the first two, especially around this time of year. So I was interested in the story that served as the inspiration for one of the greatest Christmas movies made in my lifetime. Going into this listen, I am not expecting a Hollywood-style action story. I am however expecting something entertaining that is probably deeper than the movie could ever be.

IF you are expecting 58 Minutes to be as action packed, full of snowmobile chases, and political as the Die Hard 2 movie, you probably will be disappointed. Movies need all of that to stimulate you visually. Here Wager presents a fairly straightforward terrorist plot on an airport. With the tension and suspense that this line delivers: "You have 58 minutes till the 1st plane runs out of fuel". Along with the solitude of a gigantic snow storm raging down on you. With an NYPD captain, that just happens to be on the scene.

Entertaining and engaging. Wager doesn't waste time by filling the story with fluff. You will find many similarities and differences alike from the movie. However, if you want a well-crafted suspense thriller with interesting enough characters and slight plot twist. You will enjoy 58 minutes.

As always, RC Bray delivers a flawless performance. I watched a video of him talking about some poor performances he had earlier on in his audiobook career and am so glad that he found the formula. Bray does everything that is important to my specific audiobook listening tastes. Character voices, while his are not the most believable they serve their purpose of distinguishing different people speaking. Pacing, changing the speed of the text for action scenes is a key thing. Enthusiasm, if a character is excited, Bray, in turn, sounds excited and so on.

Audiobook was provided for review by the narrator.

Ed says

Basis of the film Die Hard 2 (1990) starring Bruce Willis. I bought the paperback while browsing in a used bookstore and that's how the owner recommended this unknown title to me.

Thrillers - Frank Malone, NYPD captain, waiting at JFK for his young daughter to arrive from California. A mysterious man calls the control tower and says that he has cut the power to the runway lights of JFK and

every airport in the vicinity and has hijacked their equipment, leaving them with 58 minutes to meet his demands before the first plane, with Frank's daughter, runs out of fuel and crashes. With a massive blizzard coming in, the planes have nowhere else to go. Frank must jump into action and save his daughter and the passengers of the other planes circling overhead, in 58 minutes.

Thom Brannan says

I read this book because it was the basis for Die Hard 2, and I enjoyed Nothing Lasts Forever so much, I thought I'd give this one a go.

It was alright, but it had problems. The bad people are about the same as in the movie, but the protagonist is too, too... he's too goddamn squeaky clean. I like John McClain better.

Jack Heath says

Synopsis: radar is out and the planes over New York can't get down. Enter Frank Malone (aka Die Hard's John McClain).

Dale Lane says

The Die Hard 2 connection is a bit tenuous - the basic premise that "terrorists stop air traffic control talking to planes" is there, but apart from that it's completely different.

That's not a bad thing though as I'd got it because I like Walter Wager books, not because of the Die Hard branding.

It's not the smartest story ever, nothing will really surprise you, and all the loose ends are tied up incredibly quickly in the last dozen pages, but... it's a fun ride on the way. It's exactly what you want for a holiday read - exciting thriller with a big scary baddie and brave police hero.

Ralph Carlson says

I finished reading this great book either late last night or very early this morning. The last half of the book was impossible to put down. It was loosely the basis for the second DIE HARD move. I would love to see it made as a movie outside the die hard series.

Paul says

Comically hardboiled. Goofy characters. Competent writing. I enjoyed it in a very lighthearted way.

Shane Phillips says

It has been a while since I watched Die Hard 2. There are many differences (daughter on flight not wife), but I did enjoy the book in its own right.

Lara says

I'm a big fan of the movie, and enjoyed the first novel (Nothing Lasts Forever by Roderick Thorp) so I was pleased to download the sample from Amazon. However, I found the beginning of this novel very dark, focusing on how the perpetrator was feeling about his upcoming crime. I opted not to purchase the full version.

Richard says

The basis for "Die Hard II" doesn't have much in common with the movie other than terrorist taking over an airport, but it stands out on its own as an action story. I'd actually like to see this as a movie.

Brian Wilson says

The basis of the film Die Hard 2: Die Harder. Though the film was pretty entertaining, it was not as gripping as its influential predecessor. The book is a perfect summer beach-book, however. A slight little tome that can be read, left on the sand, then picked up again when you need a break from the sun - bookmark is optional.

S. Wilson says

One of the more common reviews you will hear regarding books made into films is that "the book was better than the movie." Considering that this book was the inspiration for the weakest of the Die Hard sequels, and quite possibly one of the worst action films of the early nineties, it's a low bar to clear.

Walter Wager's 58 Minutes was published the year before Die Hard exploded onto movie screens and reshaped the action film genre for decades to come, so similarities to the book's Frank Malone and the film's John McClain - a New York cop with marital problems facing down terrorists during Christmas - was more a combination of cliché and coincidence than anything else. But it was apparently enough for Hollywood, desperate to crank out a quick sequel to their newest cash cow, to jump on for a quick story-line to build on. It's odd that the first film was based on a novel, and that the sequel immediately following was based on a novel by a completely different author (with previous adaptation screen credits, including Charles Bronson in Telefon), but that just shows how desperate they were to release a sequel.

The similarities between the source material and the abysmal film adaptation are mostly plot points and story structure: A New York cop waiting for a loved one to arrive at an airport during Christmas, when terrorists shut down all communications between planes and the tower, and the hero cop attempts to track down the source of the jamming, apprehend the terrorist, and make sure the planes - especially the one with the family member - land safely.

The only other thing familiar for someone who has seen the film is that the head terrorist is actually watching the news in a hotel when we first meet him, although not performing tai chi naked while doing so. Beyond that, the changes are bigger. The action shifts from Kennedy Airport to Dulles in Washington DC, and instead of demanding the release of seven political prisoners (which is a little too close to the subterfuge from the first Die Hard), the film has them rescuing a South American drug lord inbound for some U.S. criminal justice.

Comparisons of book to film aside for a moment, attention needs to be given to the main flaw of the book, the main character and hero, Frank Malone. Far from the flawed, wisecracking John McClain from Die Hard, Frank Malone is an idealized uber-cop right out of a pulp crime novel. The first two chapters containing Malone spend all of their time explaining how perfect he is: Voted best Ivy League quarterback two years running (and best quarterback among the Brooklyn diocese high schools, admitted to both Harvard and Columbia (graduated the head of his class, of course), the youngest captain in the NYPD, a first-class commander, Latin scholar, expert marksman, revered and respected by all... "Good-looking, amiable but disciplined and highly intelligent without a trace of arrogance, Frank Malone was popular with faculty and students of both sexes." Enough already. Even the one flaw in his background, marital issues leading to an impending annulment, is clearly illustrated to be the fault of a shallow wife who "realized that her husband really meant to stay a cop despite the danger and mediocre salary" and absconded with his young daughter to her wealthy parents' "luxurious home in the fashionable California community that Frank Malone called The Amaretto Ghetto - Malibu by the Sea." Frank Malone is perfection personified in every way possible, which leaves him completely and utterly boring to follow for 260 pages, even with the appearance of a surprise former romantic interest in chapter 9.

Another aspect of Frank Malone that might annoy fans of the film is how smoothly he gets things done. Nearly everybody he meets respects Malone and follows his instructions with minimal resistance, as he manages to command immediate actions from the FBI up through to the President himself. This is almost the exact opposite of John McClain in Die Hard 2, who earns his Underdog Hero status by struggling with resistance from every authority figure - down to and including parking attendants - as he saves the day single-handed and against all odds. But while both extremes may be equally improbable, underdog heroes are more endearing and fun to root for, so let that be the only gold star for Die Hard 2.

Besides the Doc Savage wannabe in the lead role, the novel is fairly good. People who see the film first then read the book often complain that the book is boring, but that's because they're expecting an action sequence every twenty minutes like most action films. 58 Minutes actually bears more resemblance to the older Airport movies, where multiple plot-lines and characters intertwine as professionals on the ground scramble to prevent a disaster in the air, at the airport, or both. The terrorist plot in the book also seems less exciting in comparison, but that's because it doesn't count on convoluted traps, unlikely internal conspiracies, and a ludicrous escape plane with a 2% chance of actual success. In fact, with the exception of Frank "Super Cop" Malone, the only thing that might interfere with you enjoying this tight, straightforward thriller is having seen the movie to which it is now unfortunately connected.

Chris P. says

I really enjoyed this book. I wish *Die Hard 2* had followed the story a a little more.

Dann says

58 Minutes is no *Die Hard 2*, though it claims to be the inspiration for it. When terrorists knocks out the air traffic control systems at the Kennedy, LaGuardia, and Newark airports in the middle of a snow storm and demands the release of several prisoners, Frank Malone, the head of the NYPD's anti-terrorist unit, has only 58 minutes to find and capture the terrorists before planes start crashing; including the one his daughter is on. Unfortunately, the writing is rather poor and full of superfluous characters and subplots that go nowhere. And although author Walter Wager uses a lot of technical jargon and gives credit to several aviation specialists for their help, it does sound like he knows what he's talking about (especially post-9/11). An incredibly disappointing novel, *58 Minutes* not only doesn't measure up to the film, it doesn't tell a very compelling story.
