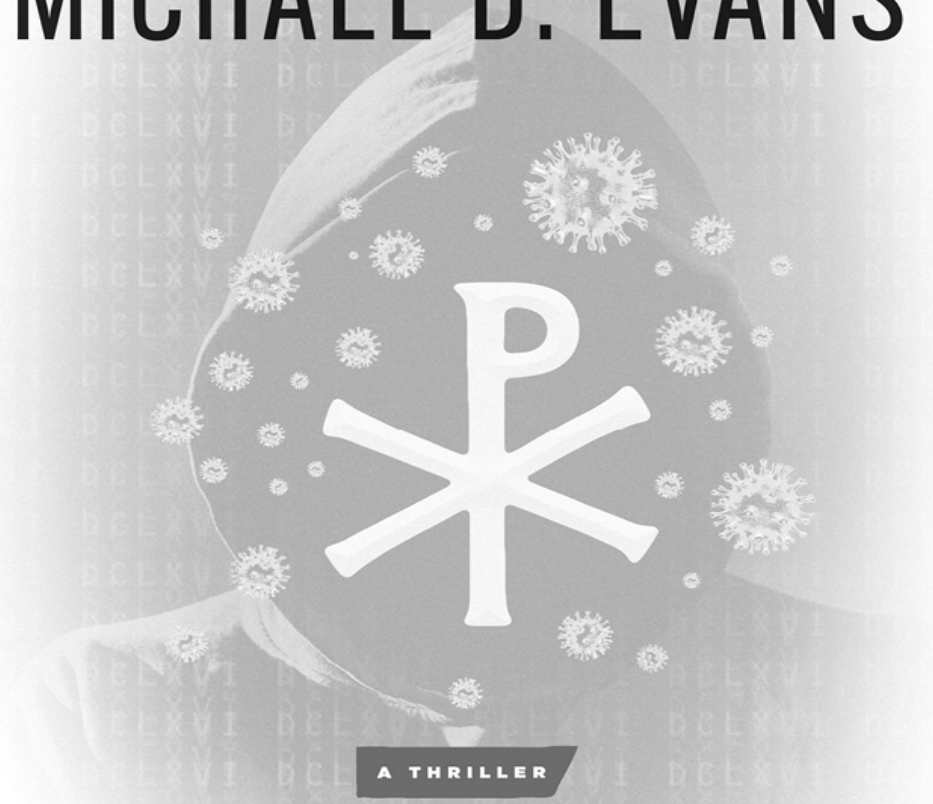


#1 *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR

MICHAEL D. EVANS



A THRILLER

GABRIEL



P.O. Box 30000, PHOENIX, AZ 85046

This novel is inspired by true events.
Some of the character names, incidents, locations, and events have been fictionalized through dramatic purposes. Its similarity to the main character and history of any person is entirely coincidental and unintentional.

Magical realism is defined as what happens when a highly detailed, realistic setting is invaded by something too strange to believe.

Gabriel (a thriller)

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P. O. Box 30000
Phoenix, AZ 85046

Hardcover: 978-1-62961-088-7

Paperback: 978-1-62961-089-4

eBook: 978-1-62961-090-0

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I'm dedicating this book to
Dr. Tim LaHaye,

my beloved friend whom I had the privilege of serving with on his board when he founded the American Coalition for Traditional Values in 1980. Tim was a giant! Very few men impacted their generation the way Dr. Tim LaHaye did. He was one of the brightest stars on the planet.

Probably most well known for his Left Behind series that impacted the lives of more than 100 million people, no fiction book series has ever done such a thing. I thought as I was writing this book, "What would Tim have said to me if he had read *Gabriel?*"

I know what he would have said. He would have said, "Mike, the book is outstanding. I can't believe that you wrote it." Well, Tim, I wrote it. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it. If it only has one-hundredth of the impact that Tim LaHaye's books have had, I will be exceedingly delighted.

I remember: it happened yesterday, or eternities ago. . . . And now that very boy is turning to me.

“Tell me,” he says, “what have you done with my years, what have you done with your life?” . . . One person of integrity, of courage, can make a difference, a difference of life and death.”

—ELIE WIESEL,

from his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, delivered in Oslo on

December 10, 1986



JACK FORD rode the escalator out of the bowels of the Farragut West Metro station, rising slowly into the insane traffic and constant rush that was Washington D.C. The office buildings crowded in on him despite their lack of height. A century-old Congressional Act kept any of them from being built any taller than a height of 130 feet.

Walking briskly, he turned south on 17th Street, passing the White House grounds on his left. He continued past the wedding cake-shaped Old Executive Office Building and veered left, heading into President's Park South. More commonly called the Ellipse, it was comprised of fifty-two acres of lawns and trees and included the actual Ellipse, an oval shaped road exactly one kilometer around centered exactly in front of the White House.

He arrived at the first bench on the right along the broad walkway pointing directly toward the south portico of the White House. His running buddy, a Washington Post reporter named Bob Rollins, hadn't arrived yet.

Jack eyed the building thunderclouds in the west. They billowed blue-gray on the far horizon. The sun beat down and the air was heavy with humidity. All that moisture would only fuel the coming storm. He judged it would be a close thing for the rain to hold off long enough to sneak in this run.

Holding the back of the bench with his right hand, he grabbed his left foot and pulled it up behind him to stretch his quad muscle. He was more cautious stretching his right quad. His knee had never been the same since he'd wrecked it in a country no Americans were technically in, fighting a battle that never officially happened. The injury had ended his career in the CIA Special Operations Group. But hey, he'd limped away alive from a firefight that several of his colleagues hadn't made it out of alive.

"Yo, Gimpalong!" a male voice called from behind him.

He turned, rolling his eyes. "Yo, pansy pants civilian."

"Ready to roll?" Bob asked. The guy had an infectious grin, and Jack smiled back.

They took off running, knocking out a warm-up lap around the Ellipse before they set off on their usual run around the National Mall, which was a 4.3-mile loop. As always, Bob set the pace, since he was the slower of the two of them.

Jack took several high-steps in a row as they set out.

"Knee bugging you today?" Bob asked.

"Yeah. A little. Weather's changing."

"Have you become one of those old coots who predicts the

weather with his arthritic joints?”

“You wait, Rollins. The day will come when you’re old and decrepit. I’ll laugh in your face when you whine about your aches and pains.”

“I can’t wait,” Bob replied cheerfully.

“Catch any hot stories recently?” Jack asked out of old habit. They’d met almost a decade ago when he’d recruited Bob to pass information to him from time to time. Jack’s employer back then, the CIA, had reciprocated occasionally, passing Bob tips on about-to-break stories or juicy pieces of intel it chose to selectively leak to the press. Bob’s Jewish mother and her Israeli family were Holocaust survivors. His father came from a Protestant Christian background and taught as an English professor at Harvard where they met.

“I’m leaving tonight for China,” Bob answered.

“China?” Jack blurted, startled. “What’s there?”

“A whole bunch of Chinese people?”

“Ha ha.” He rolled his eyes.

Bob waxed serious. “I’m going as part of the press pool on a World Health Organization visit to the Wuhan Biological Institute.”

“Is it some sort of goodwill trip to make nice after all the fuss over their fumbling of the Covid response?”

“That’s what the press releases say.”

He glanced over at Bob sharply. “Do you think there’s more to it?”

“I’ll wear my Hazmat suit just in case,” he joked.

“The top brass at WHO could make nice and do a photo op with Wuhan’s scientists at any of the many medical symposiums

happening around the world right now.”

“Symposiums on what?”

“Ever since the Covid mess, everyone’s all hyped up about predicting the next pandemic and trying to prepare for it before it hits.”

“Maybe scientists from the WHO are going to Wuhan to pick the Chinese experts’ brains about what they learned the last time?”

Bob shrugged as he ran. “Maybe. But all those post mortem papers and articles have already been published. If anything, it makes more sense that the Chinese government wouldn’t want to draw attention to Wuhan. They’d like the world to forget where Covid first emerged in humans, especially after Trump branded it as the China virus.”

“I’ll bet they’re more interested in seeing all the conspiracy theories fade away about where Covid came from.”

Bob nodded. “At any rate, I’m interested to see what happens. I’m hoping for a surprise announcement of some kind. Maybe a collaboration on something or a new breakthrough in vaccine technology. There’s got to be a good reason all these science heavy hitters would meet up in Wuhan.”

“Lemme know what goes down.”

“You’re retired, Jack. I don’t report to you anymore.”

Startled, Jack blurted, “Do you still have a handler in the agency?”

“Naw. I wouldn’t cheat on my first and only CIA contact.”

“Geez. Keep your voice down. That’s not the sort of thing you announce to anyone within earshot.”

“All right, already. Relax, old man. No Russian spies are hiding

behind every tree waiting to jump out and shoot you.”

“The Chinese are the bigger threat these days, anyway,” he grumbled.

He picked up the pace, pushing Bob hard enough that the journalist had to quit talking.

Forty minutes later, they turned left and completed their traditional victory lap around the Washington Monument before stopping at a vendor’s stall and buying bottles of water. Sipping the drinks, they strolled east on Jefferson Drive toward the Smithsonian Metro stop.

The wind gusted hard as the thunderstorm rolled in. Strings of gray extended toward the ground from the leading edge of the storm, which looked to be pelting Arlington Cemetery about now.

They increased the pace of their steps in hopes of reaching the underground Metro station before the deluge hit them.

“You need a ride out to Dulles, tonight?” Jack asked as the first fat drops began to pelt the ground.

They took off running and reached the Metro entrance just as the rain started in earnest

Panting a little, Bob answered, “Thanks, but no. I’ll catch a cab.”

“Stay in touch. Let me know how China goes.”

Bob slapped his shoulder warmly. “Will do, man. You take care of the old weather predictor.”

Jack rolled his eyes as Bob peeled off down the stairs toward the Orange Line, while he headed in the opposite direction for the Blue Line.

Jack fell into his seat thoughtfully. What was going on in

China? Surely there was more to it than a goodwill tour.



MICHAEL DAVID EVANS, the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author, is an award-winning journalist/Middle East analyst. Dr. Evans has appeared on hundreds of network television and radio shows including *Good Morning America*, *Crossfire* and *Nightline*, and *The Rush Limbaugh Show*, and on Fox Network, *CNN World News*, NBC, ABC, and CBS. His articles have been published in the *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *Washington Times*, *Jerusalem Post* and newspapers worldwide. More than twenty-five million copies of his books are in print, and he is the award-winning producer of nine documentaries based on his books.

Dr. Evans is considered one of the world's leading experts on Israel and the Middle East, and is one of the most sought-after speakers on that subject. He is the chairman of the board of the ten Boom Holocaust Museum in Haarlem, Holland, and is the founder of Israel's first Christian museum located in the Friends of Zion Heritage Center in Jerusalem.

Dr. Evans has authored 107 books including: *History of Christian Zionism*, *Showdown with Nuclear Iran*, *Atomic Iran*, *The Next Move Beyond Iraq*, *The Final Move Beyond Iraq*, and *Countdown*. His body of work also includes the novels *Seven Days*, *GameChanger*, *The Samson Option*, *The Four Horsemen*, *The Locket*, *Born Again: 1967*, and *The Columbus Code*.

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Michael David Evans is available to speak or for interviews. Contact:
EVENTS@drmichaeldevans.com.