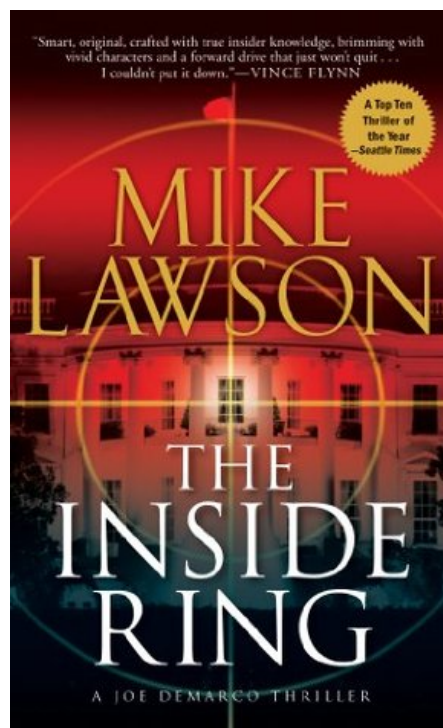




The Inside Ring

Mike Lawson

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"From a bluff overlooking Georgia's untamed Chattooga River, an assassin fires three shots. The President of the United States is wounded; his best friend and a Secret Service agent are killed. Two days later, a man in Landover, Maryland, commits suicide and leaves behind overwhelming evidence that he was responsible for the assassination attempt." "General Andy Banks, the Secretary of Homeland Security, is nursing a guilty conscience. Only days before the assassination attempt on the President, Banks had received a note with a dire warning: "Eagle One is in danger. Cancel Chattooga River. The inside ring has been compromised. This is not a joke." The message - on Secret Service stationery - was signed "An agent in the wrong place." Banks immediately passed the note on to Secret Service Director Patrick Donnelly, who proceeded to ignore it." "Even after the assassin is found dead, Banks is determined to dig a little deeper. He turns to Speaker of the House John Fitzgerald Mahoney. The Speaker has a guy - an under-the-radar, go-to guy he uses for things like this - things he can't afford to have connected to his office. The guy is Joe DeMarco, an honest lawyer with a sordid family history." After one meeting with Banks, DeMarco realizes he's in way over his head. But Mahoney finds the prospect of taking down Donnelly irresistible and sets DeMarco on a trail that twists through the Secret Service, the FBI, and the Department of Homeland Security, and snakes all the way back to one of the more enduring mysteries of the twentieth century.

The Inside Ring Details

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Author : Mike Lawson

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From Reader Review The Inside Ring for online ebook

Ben Coes says

I met Mike Lawson last year at Bouchercon then picked this up and I'm glad I did. It's a great book - with an excellent, hilarious hero and terrific action

Valerie says

This was a government thriller with secret service, FBI, etc I can't wait to read the next books in the series. Good author. It had intrigue and suspense.

A Reader's Heaven says

"From a bluff overlooking Georgia's untamed Chattooga River, an assassin fires three shots. The President of the United States is wounded; his best friend and a Secret Service agent are killed. Two days later, a man in Landover, Maryland, commits suicide and leaves behind overwhelming evidence that he was responsible for the assassination attempt."

3.5 stars

And so begins this novel of political intrigue. As you can imagine, that wasn't the end of the story, either...

What's to love? In some instances, this could be the "What's to hate?" line as well. So many aspects of this story were really good - if only they had been left alone and not embellished and embellished some more. A perfect example of this would be Emma, Demarco's friend who may, or may not, have been involved deep in the US political system. To start with, she was interesting, her secretive nature was interesting...but the longer the story went, the more annoying that became. I was expecting a bit of a reveal for her at the end but, alas, we really learned no more about her.

And it was the same with the plot - what looked like an intriguing, sinister plot started off really well. And the longer the story went, the more tenuous the connections between characters and plot became. Everything seemed to be the most elaborate scheme and ended up feeling a little contrived.

Finally, hard to know whether this should be labelled a "thriller" - as an action/adventure story, it hits a lot of marks for me. Travels around the country, hidden secrets, fight scenes...all worked really well. But as a thriller, for me it failed - there was no sense of a deadline, if you will. No sense that Joe was racing against the clock to solve this mystery. He was just plodding along uncovering stuff as he went.

However, this was the author's first book in the series so I am absolutely going to read more. I think there is a really good novelist within these pages - maybe another novel will bring that to the fore a little more.

Paul
ARH

Susan says

The assassin missed the President of the United States but one of his Secret Service guys was killed. And then a note left by a suicide closed the case. Or did it? One guy 'on the inside' of Washington politics thinks it was an inside job. That maybe even the Secret Service was involved. And he has a 'guy' Joe DeMarco - an attorney with a track record of finding out things. He puts Joe on the case and the story unfolds. This is first novel and the jacket says the second Joe DeMarco is under way. I'm glad to hear it!

Glen says

Joe Demarco is the son of a well known gangster. An attorney, he works for the Speaker of the House as a fixer. DeMarco thinks his ancestry keeps him from decent work. Guess he never heard of the Kennedys.

Someone tries to assassinate the President. The Speaker sends Joe to investigate. Not because he's worried about the president, but to get something on the head of the secret service.

Of course, it all goes back to 1963.

Bill says

Calling this book a thriller isn't quite right. It starts off with a bang. That's for sure. The President is shot. The man next to him is killed. Did someone on the 'inside ring' of his protection detail set him up? Will there be another attempt? There are plenty of questions. The problem is that for a long time all we have are questions. What is in short supply are thrills and suspense.

We meet some interesting characters. We're treated to a tour of some Washington D.C. sites and offices. We get some hints at some odd connections. Leads turn into dead ends with more unanswered questions. We get some threats, but they seem vague and toothless. We get a lot of background on Joe Demarco, our protagonist. But for a long time it felt like the story was adrift. There was no ticking clock. I didn't feel any suspense or imminent threat. Where were the thrills? I almost gave up.

It didn't help that some of the prose feels a little wooden. Chapters start with a seemingly obligatory description of the scene. Characters are introduced with a full description of clothing, hair color, and facial features. But after that, there is a good flow of narrative and dialog. I stuck with the book because it's an easy read and the mysteries are oddly interesting.

The last third of the book finally earns the thriller designation. Demarco starts getting some answers, starts getting his butt kicked, and starts fighting back. The reader gets their thrills. I look forward to reading more about the adventures of Joe Demarco, but I hope they are a bit more uniformly thrilling.

Eafeder says

Short, action and mystery-packed; it kept me reading. I liked how the main character was not some macho/inhuman investigator, but someone who kept going despite feeling out of his depth. It made him more relatable. Unfortunately many of the side characters and villains were very much one dimensional. While a problem for many of the both male and female characters, in the female characters this made me more uncomfortable as it felt like they were being objectified. This seems to be more of a function of weak character writing (for the side characters only -- there is one female main character who is much more complex) rather than any misogyny on the author's part, and so it's very possible that this aspect improves in further books, so I'm not ruling out continuing on in the series.

Katharine Ott says

"The Inside Ring" - written by Mike Lawson and published in 2005 by Anchor Books, a division of Random House. This mystery-thriller, the first in a series, features hard-nosed investigator Joe DeMarco, who answers to the Speaker of the House in Washington DC. He gets the under-the-table jobs that don't show up in official reports and his job in this story is a doozy, to look into the possible collusion of a member of the Secret Service in an attempted assassination of the President. DeMarco has a network of sources to help him in addition to the mysterious, dangerous Emma, but is often on his own in the field. "DeMarco knew what he should do next - he just didn't want to do it." Lawson competently crafts his violent story peppered with roll-of-the-eyes sexist chatter and unsavory incidents, and DeMarco lives to fight another day (his 12th adventure was released in 2018).

Yvonne (Fiction Books) says

"A Conspiracy Thriller With Corruption At The Highest Level"

This is one of those books where the US and UK covers are completely different and although the US cover probably divulges more of the plot than its UK counterpart, the UK cover is probably the more dramatic of the two.

I quite often find that political thrillers, whether English or American in origin, can be a very difficult, consuming struggle to read and it can almost be a relief when the end is in sight. Not 'The Inside Ring' however, I think that Mike Lawson got this one almost spot-on, with just the right mix of political jargon and departmental detail, traded off well with some great violent action and personal dialogue chapters.

Lawson has brought together a fictional political event and expertly interwoven the story around that of one of the world's most infamous political tragedies of modern times, into a seamless and continuous, well plotted storyline.

Joe DeMarco, is a nondescript lawyer, trying hard to shake off his father's reputation, which has kept him side-lined for much of his career. Suddenly he is charged with digging into the past to come up with some answers of national importance, but his search finds him way in over his head and potentially in great danger, as he uncovers political corruption and abuse of government power at the highest level, which leaves the two main National Security agencies, trying to bring each other to their knees.

The resulting cover-up, with the incident being very much packaged into a tidy parcel and dealt with in-house, leaves a trail of destruction, which leads all the way back to a battered and bruised DeMarco, who once again finds himself left on the outside of 'The Ring', looking in!!

De Marco's character, although quite well developed, for this, his first mission, could nonetheless be built upon even more, to expand his personality for future stories, but for plot twists, action and political treachery, this is a great first novel.

Bob Peth says

I was hoping I had found a new series to bury myself in for a while but I had a hard time just coming back to finish this first installment.

The pacing of the book is very disturbing to me- the author might spend many pages or chapters uncovering small bits of information and then you turn to the next chapter to get a raft of new clues/information that is just handed to you with no story around it - just kind of filling in the blanks. Also, the foreshadowing is so simplistic I found myself face-palming when things are explained 100 pages after it was exceedingly obvious.

It was an ambitious plot that even the author doesn't seem to believe and dismisses as nobody will ever know for sure. I could maybe accept that if the reason for the plot had been because he wanted to fully explore the mystery that built up to it. The overall experience was less thrilling than fast-forwarding through an episode of The West Wing.

Kurk Harris says

One of the best, most entertaining novels I have read this year. The author leads you through a twisted web of intrigue after an attempted assassination of the President. Non-stop action and suspense from the first page to the last.

Kristina says

Interesting government conspiracy thriller. It was an easy read.

D.G. says

****2.5 stars****

I had several problems with this book but my main issue was that I couldn't suspend disbelief. So the head of Homeland Security gets a note warning that something will happen to the President and he lets himself be convinced to do nothing? Worse, nobody takes the note seriously even after an assassination attempt? Please!

I liked DeMarco very much but I didn't like that he couldn't take care of business. Unlike Jack Reacher, John Rain or Jason Bourne, kicking ass wasn't his superpower so when he was confronted with really bad guys, he was horribly outmatched. When I read thrillers, I like to know the bad guys will be getting their comeuppance and the hero will be the one delivering it, not that he will be constantly praying, hoping to get

out of their clutches.

I figured out early on the reason for the assassination attempt (classic Agatha Christie...look at what really happened not what it seemed it happened) so it was TOTALLY CRAZY for the villains to go that extent. There were probably like a million easier ways for them to get the same result.

The villain was so villainous that he was a caricature. Whatever evil deeds you can imagine, the evil guy did them. Am I to believe that after subjugating a community for 30 years and committing all sorts of atrocities, nobody thought to plug him in the back of the head? C'mon!

This is my first time listening to Scott Brick and he did a great job with the narration. DeMarco's New York accent was subtle but there, so that I knew after a few minutes of hearing him, where he came from.

Not continuing the series but I definitely hope to listen to another book by Scott Brick again.

Audiobook narrated by Scott Brick.

Tim says

This novel begins earnestly but loses steam through tortuous actions inflicted upon the supposed hero. The ending was clipped and left this listener feeling short-changed. 5 of 10 stars

Judi says

I don't normally read books that have a political feel to it, but this was recommended and it did spark my attention..I was really glad that I picked this up and can tell you that it never lost my interest. Already on his 2nd book in this series.

Joe DeMarco is a lawyer, well kind of..He works in the subbasement of the White House for the Speaker of House, Mahoney. You never know what to think about this "boss" but by the end of the book I had figured him out and liked him.

Joe is sent on different "missions" by Mahoney. Investigating on the sly. He has a lot of friends that help him along the way and one you will really like is Emma. It would be great to read about her former life. But Joe's mission this time, someone has tried to kill the President and he is doing a favor for the Homeland Secretary as he had received a note that this might happen and he never did anything about it. Now to try to cover up his mistake, he wants to find out if the Secret Service Agent that was hailed as a hero is really involved in having the President shot.

I really like the character of Joe because he is no super human being, meaning that he gets beat up, chained, thrown in an alligator swamp, but he has to try to survive. Love the books and am definitely on the 2nd one right now!
