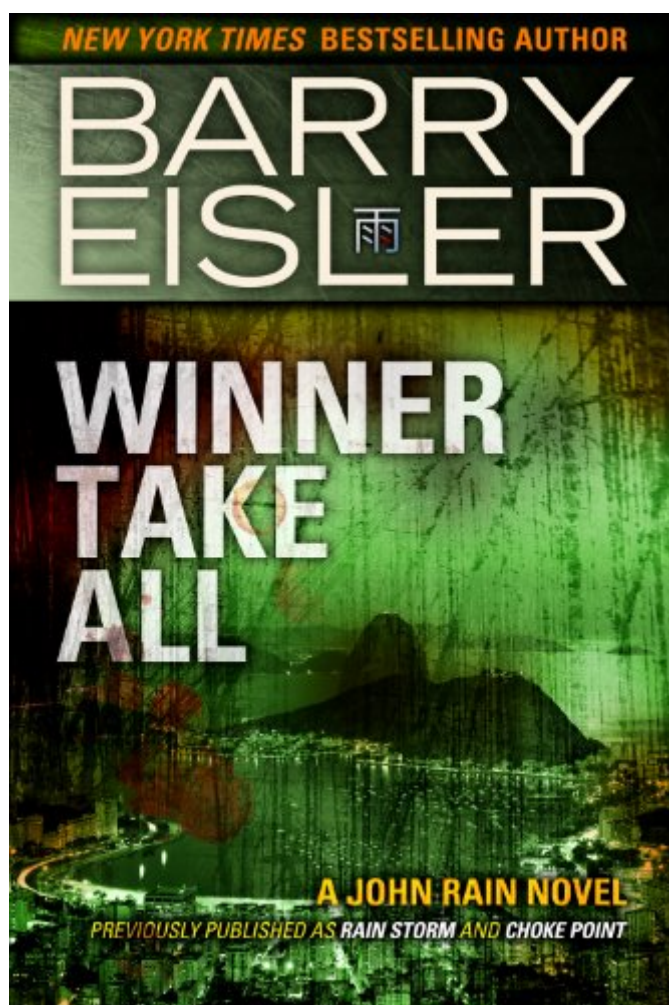


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Winner Take All (Previously Published As Rain Storm And Choke Point) (A John Rain Novel Book 3)



Synopsis

Previously published as *Rain Storm* and *Choke Point* John Rain has disappeared in Brazil to escape the killing business and the enemies encircling him in Japan. But the CIA isn't willing to lose its premier "natural causes" contract killer, and they force Rain to take on a high-risk assignment: eliminate a ruthless arms dealer operating in Southeast Asia. The upside? Financial, of course, along with the possibility of moral redemption. But first, Rain will have to survive the downside: a second assassin zeroing in on the target; an alluring and dangerous woman with an agenda of her own; the possibility that the entire mission is nothing but an elaborate setup. From the gorgeous beaches of Rio to the glitzy casinos of Macau to the gritty back streets of Hong Kong and Kowloon, Rain becomes a reluctant player in an international game far deadlier and more insidious than any he has encountered before. *Winner Take All* was previously published as *Rain Storm* in the US and *Choke Point* in the UK, the third in the bestselling John Rain assassin series.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

John Rain goes to Macao. As in **Clean Kill in Tokyo**, **Winner Take All** was meticulously

researched by Barry Eisler. John Rain's target? A man by the name of Belghazi. Before he went to Macao, Rain goes to Las Vegas to learn all about games of chance. Knowing that his target is addicted to gambling, he takes the time to learn how to play Baccarat and other games, so that he can get close to him. He goes to Macao three weeks before and scopes out the hotels and casinos that his target is likely to frequent. Rain goes to the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Macao with Keiko, a Japanese escort girl that he hires for his cover as an older Japanese gambler with a young mistress. At the hotel, he encounters another assassin perhaps with the same target. In the meantime, Belghazi shows up with a beautiful woman companion. How does Rain get close and kill his target? This is of course the foundation of the John Rain novels, the tension of the kill. The story shifts into retrospective mode, back to how the CIA (tongue-in-cheek nicknamed Christians in Action) contacts him and hires him for this mission. We find that John Rain had escaped from Japan to Brazil, where he makes himself as anonymous as possible. Not trusting in anybody, he goes from Sao Paulo to Rio, leaving false trails to make sure that nobody can find him and he would know if anybody tried. Then, one day, he encounters an old colleague from Afghanistan days and the offer of the job with the CIA. Throughout the novel, you can witness the meticulous work that Eisler did for the book. He knew how many entrances the Lisboa casino has, where one can fight and kill somebody at the ferry terminal, that a Citibank branch is near the MTR station next to the Ferry Terminal in Hong Kong, and the fact that HK\$50,000 was over the limit of cash withdrawal for Citibank. You can't know this kind of information without going there and doing it. Most people wouldn't notice such details but a former CIA operative would. The conversations were remarkably written. Eisler not only has a keen ear for the American idiom but for Japanese idioms as well. Occasionally, he has the protagonist comment about the idioms. For example, a character says, "I'll level with you..." and Rain responds that he doesn't like this quip because it suggests that the person was bull-s***ing before. He knows what he can and cannot do. For example, he does not try to fake conversations in Portuguese or Arabic. The fight choreography was based on authentic knowledge. The author description at the end of the book pointed out that Barry Eisler earned his blackbelt in the Kokodan International Judo Center in Japan. The acknowledgements thanked many expert fighters, including Savate and advanced sniper practice. Finally, the premise of America selling its soul for Saudi crude rang true. This is a very enjoyable book and hard to put down. The John Rain novels are also so well edited that you can read them out of sequence.

The story starts right out of the gate in chapter one which is how I like books to start. But, in the middle of the story about Rain's mission, it goes back in time without any clear warning. I wasn't

sure if his mission was aborted or what. Then, finally, I realized that the author was providing the background story about Rain before he accepted the mission. Then, the story returns to the current and the mission at hand. The story was pretty good but it wasn't one of those where you couldn't wait to find out what was going to happen next. I think I like the main character. I decided that I will read another book in this series to see if I can get into it. If you like the government assassin type of book, give this a read. The story line is pretty straight-forward with only the typical complexity brought on by the involvement of multiple government agencies.

These John Rain Japanese mysteries are interesting in a number of ways: Interesting stories, characters, settings, cultural diversity, mysterious, strong smart and tough women!

As an inveterate Kindle user, I'm always on the lookout for a series that demonstrates significant promise at the outset. (I prefer to have several new books at-the-ready.) This one surely fit that promise. The "hero" (if an assassin can be called that) has grown on me. The dual-heritage aspect is unique within the sphere of reading I do. Not to be over the top in my enthusiasm for this series, I REALLY like the writing style, the story, most everything about it. After trying the first one in the series, I immediately obtained the remaining six and have been absolutely glued to the pages ever since. The fact that I'm picking up information about a culture I'm unfamiliar with, makes it that much better. I have a close friend that is Japanese-American with whom I'm able to bounce things off of. Mr. Eisler gets high marks there too. If there's a caveat necessary, the body count and the descriptive nature of the assassinations is likely to turn some folks off. In my opinion though, since I'm prone to reading these types of books, it fits and is entirely appropriate. There is anticipation that additional quality reads such as these will be coming from the author.

What a ride! I liked the protagonist, John Rain. For an assassin, the character somehow remains a warm human being capable of love, regrets, and compassion. The author did a lot of research for this novel, with Rain flitting between Rio, Macau, Hong Kong and Tokyo. The author is able by words to take you into foreign restaurants, malls, luxury hotels, sleazy hotels, back alleys and parks, making them so vivid that you can pretend to see them yourself. The fight scenes are realistic, as well as the plot, which includes government agencies, terrorists, and arms dealers. The book is well written and I plan to read some more Rain stories.

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