



The Asset

Shane Kuhn

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A private airport security contractor becomes a counterterrorism operative to prevent a terrorist attack in this “timely, edge-of-the-seat thriller” (*Bookpage*) from the author of the #1 internationally bestselling *The Intern’s Handbook*.

Kennedy—a private airport security contractor—knows more about airports than the head of the TSA, and he feels more comfortable in his British Airways Club World flatbed seat than in his own home. Haunted by the memory of his sister’s death on 9/11, Kennedy takes his job and the protection of the American people very seriously. So when he’s kidnapped and recruited into a CIA ghost operation known as Red Carpet, he jumps at the opportunity to become a civilian asset working with a team of some of the CIA’s best counterterrorism analysts and spec ops soldiers as they race against the clock to stop the greatest terrorist threat the United States will ever face.

With the same bold voice that earned him rave reviews for his previous novels, Shane Kuhn’s *The Asset* is an “exhilarating” (*Publishers Weekly*, starred review) read with an “ultimate twist that makes readers’ jaws drop” (*Kirkus Reviews*).

The Asset Details

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Author : Shane Kuhn

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From Reader Review The Asset for online ebook

Leslynn says

Copy courtesy of NetGalley

Fast-paced, action-packed thriller, with many twists in the plot -- Awesome read!

Richard T. says

This is not a book you want to read while traveling on a plane. However, it is most definitely a book to read in a hammock or at the beach. Shane Kuhn has done his research on air travel safety and it shows. As a result, there's a certain brutal honesty here about the perils of flying. Kuhn is not trying to scare anyone, but if you seen any of the stories about misguided TSA agents, you know he's telling the truth. There's plenty of action as Kennedy, a contractor for airport security, is recruited by the CIA to foil a plot against the nation's airports that threatens to make 9/11 pall by comparison.

Ashley Nelson says

The Asset is a well-crafted, enjoyable thriller, better than expected. I would not recommend reading while traveling, as the plot focuses on domestic terrorism at airports. It all feels very timely for today's security concerns. Some suspension of disbelief is certainly required, but the fast pace and clever plotting made this an exciting tale. The lead character was savvy and likeable. Very different from Kuhn's previous Intern's Handbook series, for the better. I hope he will write more books like this one.

Jill Goldstein says

Wonderful espionage thriller. Page turner. Highly recommend for vacation reading, commuter reading, and travel reading. However, I read it during none of these times. Just couldn't put it down!

Bent Hansen says

I loved Shane Kuhn's refreshingly cool take on the hitman thriller, The Intern's Handbook (as well as its novella prequel, Casual Friday), starring the super cool, but not completely perfect John Lago. Even the cover art for that book was pretty amazing! Kuhn has put John Lago on (I hope only a temporary) hold for a while after publishing the Lago sequel, Hostile Takeover, in the summer of 2015.

The protagonist of "The Asset" is TSA private consultant Kennedy (I don't recall seeing his first name as only his last name seems to be used throughout the book), and he is insecure, dealing with sorrow, romantically challenged and not really your typical gunslinging terrorist fighter (unlike Brad Thor's Scot Harvath and late Vince Flynn's Mitch Rapp), but he has a bright mind, a big heart and an iron will. That

makes him a pretty interesting character, and Kuhn sets a breathtaking pace in the story from the very beginning to the last page with numerous twists and turns that will even take Harlan Coben by surprise. Like Coben, Kuhn uses humor to keep the reader hooked, and it works most of the time. Although many things go wrong for Kennedy, Kuhn takes some shortcuts in the plot, making other things go much too easy. That is a shame, and if Kuhn spent another 100 pages on developing the story, the book would still be less than 400 pages long, but probably even more exciting and realistic.

I still like Shane Kuhn's style of writing a lot, and fans of e.g. Jeff Abbott, Harlan Coben, and Vince Flynn should check his books out. I hope that Kuhn will develop a series with this Kennedy character, but then spend some extra time (and pages) on making the plot even more realistic.

[An advance reading copy of this book was generously provided by the publisher via Netgalley.com]

KeithBookReviewing24/7** says**

* I received a free copy from NetGalley for my honest review*

I was already aware that Shane Kuhn could write a good book, I read the first of the John Lago series (The Interns Handbook/How To Kill Your Boss) and liked it.

I read the blurb for The Asset and to be totally truthful I was a bit worried that these characters wouldn't be able to compare to the ones from the John Lago series.

But happily I was proven wrong, the cast here is as varied and diverse as you could get, there's enough twists and turns to give you whiplash and this book just may have the best wisecracking female computer hacker in fiction, I wish she was real, I'd totally date her.

The Asset was a good thriller with some farcical fun thrown in, It would be great if there was another book with this ragtag bunch of weirdly, wonderful yet ridiculously rubbish amateur spies. Totally recommend you give it a try.

Jessica says

I'm becoming a big fan of Shane Kuhn's. This is my second book and I enjoyed it more than his first, Intern's Handbook. Loved the plot twist and in my head, the character Love was like a cool Lisa Bonet. Looking forward to reading his other books too.

Edwin Howard says

THE ASSET by Shane Kuhn is action-packed, high stakes thriller that keeps the reader on their toes until the very end. It's the story of Kennedy, private airport security contractor, who is recruited by a CIA ghost operation to help solve the latest airport threat to the United States. Kennedy, whose desire to protect the world from terrorism stems from his sister's death and a strong urge to help his fellow man, dives into the opportunity to save the country but everything might not be exactly what it seems.

Kuhn brings a certain wit and sarcasm to Kennedy and the other major characters in the book that was really pleasing to read. The flow of the story keeps the reader on their toes without the reader getting lost and confused as to what is going on and what is about to happen. As the story progresses, so do the twists and turns and while some of them really surprised me and turned most of what the reader knows on its head, I

felt a couple of times that dilemmas were solved and/or changed very awkwardly and unbelievably and the momentum of the story suffered. I did find that I was pulling for Kennedy and the people around him to save the day and Kuhn does a good job of making those characters people you want to succeed. In the end I like where the story went and how the characters turned out.

I would definitely read another book by Shane Kuhn, and I recommend *THE ASSET* to others as a good action/international intrigue book that keeps you guessing the whole way through.

I would like to thank Simon & Schuster, Shane Kuhn, and Netgalley for a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review!

Scott Bell says

Impossible action, poorly written

Gah. TV show action sequences, written with the tension of a wet noodle. Idiotic, improbable, situations, unexplained plot holes, and our heroes surviving a nuclear explosion by diving in the water are a few of the problems in this novel. How much did the agent have to pay the acquisitions editor to get this one through the door?

wally says

finished this one the 22nd of september 2018 good read four stars really liked it. reminds me of saturday morning cartoons...the good guys are unbelievably lucky, when all seems lost, they pull it off. why not? works for me. reads fast, too. woke up this morning wanting to get back to it. shazaaaaam!

Stuart says

The Asset is a novel centred around large scale terrorism. There are whispers of an attack and after 9/11, the US are highly focused on quick and effective counter-terrorism tactics. Shane Kaun has given us a realistic vision of today's airline security from technology to human behaviour. *The Asset* is thrilling, action-packed and filled to the brim with risk and espionage. Kaun also uses thoughtful and meaningful plot points to craft a story about a man who wants to protect his country and the memory of his sister.

Kennedy is an Aviation Security Specialist who is focused on analysis, behaviour and surveillance. After losing his sister in the 9/11 terror attacks, he dedicated his life to making sure that nothing like that would ever happen again. During a routine excursion training up airline staff and checking up on security due to vague threats of a huge attack, Kennedy is kidnapped. After managing to escape the armed men, Kennedy finds out that this hostage situation is the CIA's invitation into a secret group called the Red Carpet. The terror threats are very real and the group need Kennedy's knowledge and training to figure out where the strike may be happening.

The plot covers a lot of ground. The novel is split into three distinct acts and each one is better than the last. I found the first act to be somewhat flat and difficult to digest. After the explosive and addictive *Kill Your Boss*, it was strange to be reading Kaun more thought-provoking writing. The first act gives us insight into Kennedy, his family and why he does what he does. It focuses on airport security, bureaucracy, technology

and analysis. I found that, though it was a chilling look behind the curtain of security, it was rather tame and not very exciting. That all changes in the second/third acts though. Once Kennedy meets the Red Carpet, a CIA unit focused on terrorism, and his fears are confirmed, the heat gets turned up.

The larger portion of the book is all threats and thrills. I was amazed but the boldness of the plot and it really worked for me. I enjoyed the characters the most. Kaun takes care to make each of his characters unique. Every key character brings something to the overall feel of the novel; but the star is definitely Kennedy. Kennedy is a brilliantly nuanced main character. He has so many sides to him, from gentle brother, heroic protector and intelligent adviser to arse kicker, skilled tactician and (sometimes) a bit of a loner... The secondary characters like Love, Nuri, Juarez and Best all captured my attention in a good way. Even the (almost) faceless villain is smart, crafty and violent on an epic scale.

As with all books there are thrilling parts, nice parts and (at times) boring parts. Luckily Shane Kaun pulled it off with his descriptive, imaginative and harsh writing style. There so many themes scattered through this novel that there is something for everyone. Themes like action, risk, terrorism and espionage. Other themes like love, guilt, recompense and anxiety too. SK has mixed it all together to create a well rounded thriller that actually had me on the edge of my seat. I have given *The Asset* 4/5 stars because, though starting on shaky ground, I was compelled to read it through to its explosive conclusion. I am 2/2 with SK novels, I hope the 3rd one I read is just as good.

Faith says

Kennedy is an aviation security specialist and a virtuous man facing an evil terrorist, virtually single handedly. This felt like a thriller cobbled together from other thrillers in which a clandestine team of experts is brought together to save the world. There was never any doubt how it would end. My primary disappointment was that this book didn't show the creativity, snark and wit of the author's John Lago books. It was slow to get started, and once the plot finally kicked in, around the tenth chapter, it never really grabbed me. From the epilogue it sounds like there may be a sequel to this, but I'm not sure there is a compelling reason for me to read it. This thriller was just ok for me.

I received a free copy of this ebook from the publisher, but I wound up borrowing and listening to the audiobook.

Hobart says

This originally appeared at The Irresponsible Reader.

Like most of his business trips, the only sights he'd be taking in were those of Duty Free, Wok n' Roll, Dunkin' Donuts, and all the other apostrophic, postapocalyptic airport landmarks he vagabonded past countless times a year.

People often made envious remarks about his business travel, not realizing that the homogeneous scenery endemic to virtually every airport in the United States made on susceptible to what Kennedy half-jokingly called "Terminal Illness"--a chronic frequent traveler disease brought on by extreme isolation, fatigue-induced delirium, fast-food

malnutrition, excessive consumption of bottom-shelf booze, and diminished social equilibrium. He likened it to extended space travel, but with inferior cuisine.

Unlike, say, Ryan Bingham, Kenney has a noble reason for spending so much time in airports. He flies all over the world -- particularly the U.S. -- training airport security officers (namely, the TSA). Sure, the TSA has their own training program, but airports will bring him in as a consultant to help beef things up. Thanks to a tragic loss years ago, Kennedy is one of the most invested security experts in the world -- he's more committed to airplane safety than most governments. To say he's driven is quite the understatement.

At the moment, there's a security bulletin going around with a warning of an immanent terrorist threat. A few people in the CIA, FBI, NSA, TSA are taking it seriously, but most figure it's just another in a long line of boys who cried, "wolf." Kennedy, of course, takes it more seriously than anyone, and is pretty frustrated that he's so alone in this.

So when he's approached by representatives of the intelligence community and given the opportunity to do something to stop this threat -- not just consult, but act -- he jumps in with both feet. And immediately finds himself in way above his head.

Kennedy and the team he joins are racing against the clock -- not sure when someone might strike, and really only pretty sure that they will. But if the threats reported are anything close to reality, if this attack goes off, it'll be worse than anything in history.

Kuhn's an experienced thriller writer and he knows how to keep things tense and the plot moving. From the outset we know that the attack will take place 64 days from the time we first meet Kennedy. Each time you get to a new chapter and read, "Day X," you feel the tension ratcheting up (like Lee Child's **61 Hours** in reverse). Kuhn keeps you turning pages as quickly as you can while ignoring the clock and the alarm that's sure to go off in a couple of hours.

Because of the kind of book it is you that know that certain characters are going to turn out to be something they don't seem to be, or that events aren't going to be what they seem to be. But Kuhn pulls most of them off so that it's unexpected -- for example, a plot development that I spent 100 pages for took my by surprise when it actually happened. There is *some* violence here, but for the genre, it's pretty tame -- it's not sanitized, it's not toned-down -- it's just utilized when needed, nothing to excess.

Most of the characters were pretty much what you expect in a book like this -- but that's fine, those are why we read books like this. I don't need every character to break the mold, I like certain types to be good examples of those types, and Kuhn has many of those running throughout these pages. If Nuri isn't one of the best/most entertaining examples of she-nerd that you've come across lately, I'll eat my hat. There are a couple of characters that aren't from the typical thriller cast lists (see the musician, Love) are even better.

I don't want to compare this too often to Kuhn's John Lago books, but I have to a little. Those books are marked for their voice, their satire, their off-kilter protagonists. This protagonist is exactly what you expect he is, and is pretty typical for the genre, and the voice is pretty straight. But every now and then you get a little of Kuhn's voice (always appropriate to character and the work, don't get me wrong). Like when Kennedy and his team are trying to guess when and where the terrorists will attack, and we get the line, "Terrorists are basically psychotic public relations whores." Followed by "The choice of 9/11 was basically branding, a tongue-in-cheek play on our emergency number, which makes the date more memorable." A little snarky and astute, the kind of talk you get around a conference table while brainstorming. The analysis

of holidays during this exchange made me laugh.

Basically, he knocked it out of the park. Even some of the twists I guess that we're shocked when they were revealed nail-biting right up to the end. **The Asset** is a heck of a stand-alone thriller. If the publisher decides for more adventures of Kennedy, I'm in. I think I like Kuhn's series better than this kind of thing, but man, this one hit the sweet spot. I hope it brings him a lot of success.

I received this book from a drawing on the author's website. Mega-Thanks to Shane Kuhn and Simon & Schuster for the good read. As it was an ARC, there's a chance that the quotations above might not be in the published version, I'll try to confirm as soon as I can in a couple of weeks.

Susan says

If you can suspend belief that a consultant for TSA and HLS joined up with a childhood friend on her way to becoming a popular singer can prevent a major international terrorist plot against the United States, then this is the book for you. There is a lot of action, a body count too high to list and a little romance thrown in to make even skeptics like me want to find out what happens next. I enjoyed his previous book “The Intern’s Handbook” so I am sure I will read more of his books in the future.

Kathleen Gray says

I really enjoyed the Interns Handbook but this book just went too far for me. It's well written and some might find it to be a good thriller but it was just implausible for me. Thanks to Edelweiss for the ARC. I'd like to see Kuhn calm down and write something realistic because I think he's got a good sense of plot and timing.
