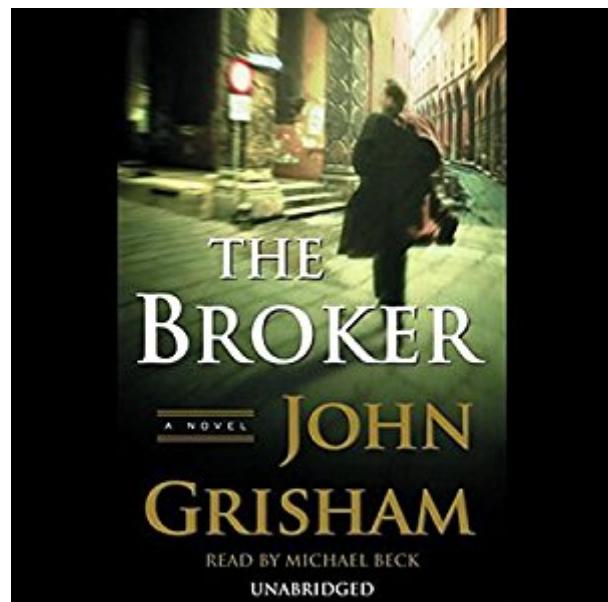


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The Broker



Synopsis

In his final hours in the Oval Office, the outgoing President grants a controversial last-minute pardon to Joel Backman, a notorious Washington power broker who has spent the last six years hidden away in a federal prison. What no one knows is that the President issues the pardon only after receiving enormous pressure from the CIA. It seems Backman, in his power broker heyday, may have obtained secrets that compromise the world's most sophisticated satellite surveillance system. Backman is quietly smuggled out of the country in a military cargo plane, given a new name, a new identity, and a new home in Italy. Eventually, after he has settled into his new life, the CIA will leak his whereabouts to the Israelis, the Russians, the Chinese, and the Saudis. Then the CIA will do what it does best: sit back and watch. The question is not whether Backman will survive "there is no chance of that. The question the CIA needs answered is, who will kill him? From the Hardcover edition. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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Program Type: Audiobook

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Publisher: Random House Audio

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Customer Reviews

If you are looking for a suspenseful spy novel, this is not it. "The Broker" starts off intriguingly enough, with CIA pressure on a departing president to issue a full pardon for former lawyer and power broker Joel Backman. Backman, it seems, holds secrets to a mysterious and powerful satellite surveillance system whose origin is in question. He was hired by those who discovered the satellites (and who developed software to manipulate them) to sell their program to the highest bidder. When the government began investigating and others who were involved in the scheme turned up dead, Backman pled guilty to federal charges of possessing classified military information.

Now, six years later (and fourteen years early), the CIA hopes that by releasing Backman and sitting back to watch who ultimately kills him, they will learn more about the source of the satellites, or at the very least, who Backman tried to sell his secrets to. Backman is released in the middle of the night and smuggled into Italy with a new identity, supposedly for his protection, though his whereabouts will eventually be leaked. The problem begins in Italy. The story essentially stops; it's hardly action-packed. There are long walks, sightseeing, Italian tutoring sessions, visits to cafes, and long Italian meals. But one typically reads Grisham for suspense or drama, and it was missing here. I could have skipped entire chapters without losing any of the plot. There are subplots regarding Backman's communications with his son and a supposed romance with one of his Italian tutors, but I didn't buy either. In fact, I somehow missed the romance aspect altogether.

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