

# Media Q & A

## Zero Margin Trilogy

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For media, reviewers, podcast hosts, and industry professionals. [press@zeromargin.net](mailto:press@zeromargin.net)

### 1. What is the Zero Margin Trilogy about?

The trilogy follows long-running operatives, civilian-cover networks, and the families who carry the cost of intelligence work that does not end when the operators walk away. The first book opens on October 7, 2023. The second book centers on a network of civilian-cover assets activated for a decisive operation. The third book takes place after the operation, when the architecture proves impossible to dismantle.

### 2. Is the trilogy based on real events?

No specific operation is depicted. The story draws from a structural understanding of how institutions function under pressure. It is not a roman à clef.

### 3. How would you describe the tone?

Controlled. Psychologically driven. The drama is bureaucratic and moral rather than tactical. The conflict happens in briefings, in audit reviews, in domestic kitchens, and in cafés. Not on battlefields.

### 4. Why focus on the consequences of an operation rather than the operation itself?

Most espionage stories end at success. The interesting question begins after success. What does a successful operation cost the people who designed it, especially when the consequences become visible years later? That is the question the trilogy is built around.

### 5. What distinguishes this trilogy from traditional spy fiction?

The tension is institutional. The conflict often occurs in approval meetings, in logistics audits, and in conversations between former colleagues. The action is rarely physical. The cost is rarely deniable.

### 6. What themes run across all three books?

Institutional loyalty. Generational inheritance. The architecture of deniability. The persistence of operational structures after the policies that built them have expired. The cost paid by families who never signed for the work.

### 7. Is the trilogy political?

It deals with intelligence operations, contemporary geopolitics, and questions of institutional power. It is not partisan. The focus is on systems and the people inside them rather than on ideology.

### 8. Why structure it as a trilogy?

The story required time. Each book represents a different phase of the same architecture: the operative still in the work, the operative who thought he had left, and the family member who discovers the work was never finished.

### **9. Who is Avi Stern?**

Avi is a long-running operative recruited at twenty-three. By the time the trilogy opens, he is forty-six and has spent more than two decades working under deep cover in London. The first book is the story of his cover collapsing.

### **10. Who is Rachel Stern?**

Rachel is Avi's wife and herself a former operative. The third book begins eleven months after she has tried to walk away from the work entirely. She finds the network she helped dismantle has rebuilt itself, with operational reach that now threatens her family.

### **11. Who is Andreas Dimitriou?**

Andreas owns a chain of cafés used by intelligence services as a communications backbone. He believed he had retired from operational life six years before the second book opens. The book is the story of him discovering that retirement is not an option the work permits.

### **12. Is this a critique of intelligence services?**

It is an examination rather than a critique. Intelligence services operate under pressure most readers never have to consider. The trilogy explores the human dimension of those decisions. Critique is left to the reader.

### **13. What was the most difficult part of writing this?**

Maintaining tension without spectacle. The drama in this kind of work happens in silence and implication. Building three books out of those raw materials required discipline.

### **14. Why publish under Coby Press rather than a major imprint?**

Coby Press publishes long-form narrative fiction centered on institutions, systems, and the individuals who operate within them. Its list focuses on work that treats intelligence, power, and organizational life with structural accuracy and narrative restraint. The fit was exact.

### **15. What do you hope readers take away?**

An understanding that strategic success and moral clarity are not always aligned, and that institutions are made of individuals who carry those contradictions home with them.

## SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Fifteen suggested questions for journalists, podcast hosts, and panel moderators.

01. Why write a spy trilogy that focuses on the years after a successful operation rather than on the operation itself?
02. What does *The mission worked. The system did not.* mean to you?
03. Your fiction reads as institutional rather than tactical. Where does that voice come from?
04. Do you believe institutions protect stability or protect themselves?
05. What role does narrative management play in contemporary geopolitics?
06. Why are readers drawn to morally ambiguous intelligence stories right now?
07. How does Zero Margin differ from action-driven espionage fiction?
08. Is the trilogy more about politics or psychology?
09. What does loyalty mean inside a national security framework?
10. How does generational change affect intelligence culture?
11. Why open the first book on October 7, 2023?
12. The Barista turns on a network of cafés. What drew you to that conceit?
13. Black Doctrine returns the work to the family. Why end the trilogy there?
14. You publish under a pen name. Is that a deliberate institutional choice?
15. What is next after the trilogy?