

Copyrighted Material

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

JEFFREY ARCHER



SHALL WE TELL THE PRESIDENT?

"OUTRAGEOUS TOP-NOTCH TERROR."

—Vogue

Copyrighted Material

Shall We Tell the President

Kane & Abel [1]

Jeffrey Archer

Fawcett (1977)

Rating: ***

Tags: Mystery, Politics, Suspense, Thriller

After years of great sacrifice and deep personal tragedy, Florentyna Kane's has finally become the first woman president in America. But on the very day that she is sworn into office, powerful forces are already in motion to take her life.

The FBI investigates thousands of false threats every year. This time, a reliable source has tipped them off about an assassination attempt. One hour later, the informant and all but one of the investigating agents are dead. The lone survivor: FBI Special Agent Mark Andrews. Now, only he knows when the killers will strike. But how can he alone unravel a ruthless conspiracy—in less than one week? The race to save the first woman president begins *now...*

From School Library Journal

Starred Review. The FBI has six days to stop a plot to assassinate the President in this title originally published in 1977 as a stand-alone thriller and refashioned in 1987 to complete No. 1 *New York Times* best-selling author Archer's "Kane and Abel" trilogy. The narration is by Audie Award

winner Lorelei King (*Tallgrass*), who also read the last entry in this series, *The Prodigal Daughter* (Jeff Harding read the first; abridged recordings of all three are available from Macmillan Audio). King performs expressively, adding just the right amount of excitement to the story. The abridgment is skillfully executed; it is impossible to tell where material has been omitted. Highly recommended.—Ilka Gordon, Siegel Coll. of Judaic Studies Lib., Cleveland

Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

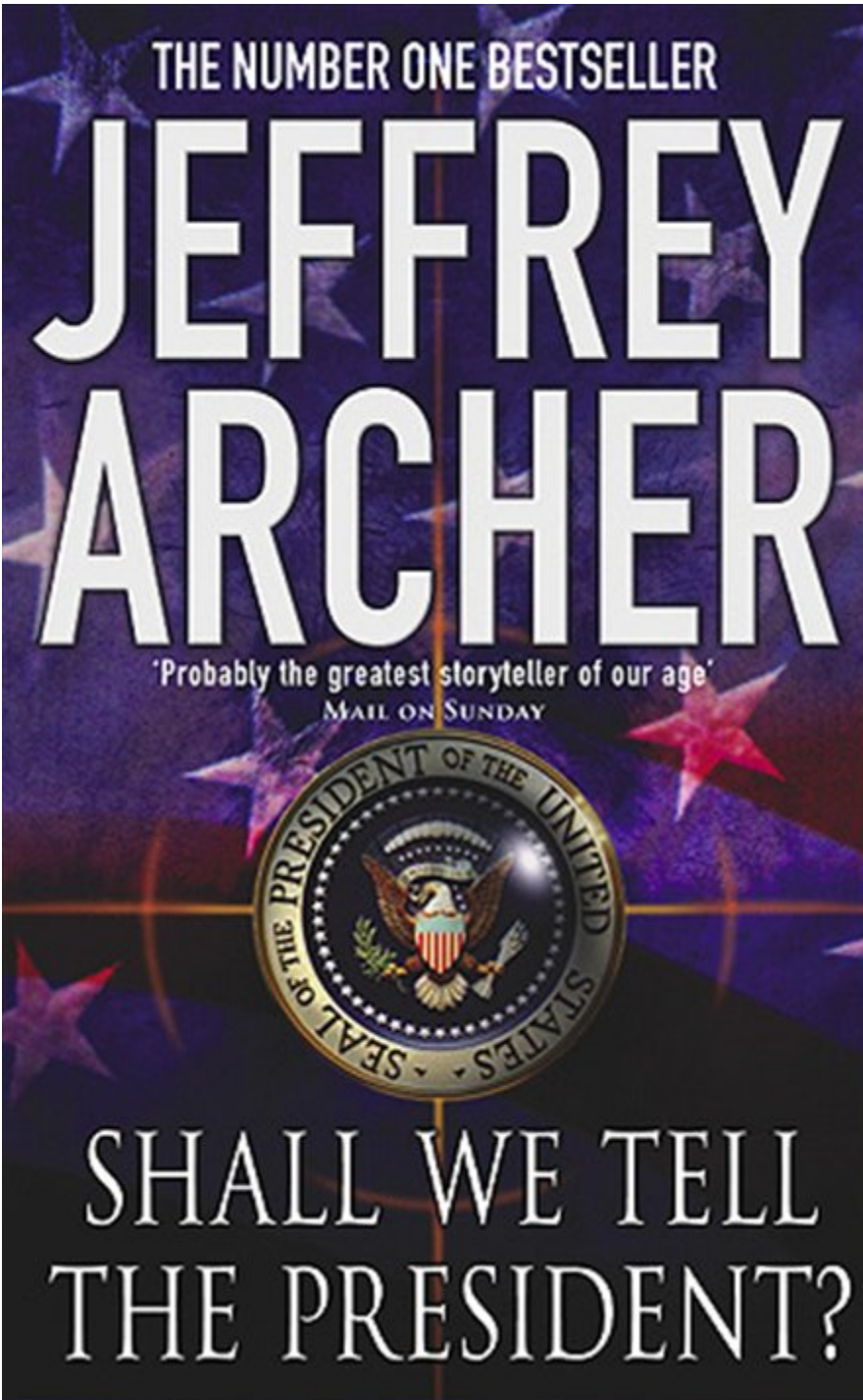
Review

“Outrageous top-notch terror.” —*Vogue*

“Holds the reader in a vicelike grip.”—*Penthouse*

“The countdown is the thing; the pace, the pursuit, the what-next...”—*Boston Globe*

“The only difference between this book and *The Day of the Jackal* is that Archer is a better writer.”—*Chicago Tribune*



AUTHOR'S NOTE TO REVISED EDITION

When I first wrote *Shall We Tell the President?* I set the story six or seven years in the future. Now that that future date lies in the past, some of the story's credibility becomes impaired.

Since that time too I have written *The Prodigal Daughter* in which the chief character, Florentyna Kane, becomes the first woman President of the United States. It therefore seems logical to me, in recasting *Shall We Tell the President?*, to introduce my fictional president rather than keep the real-life name of Edward M. Kennedy who was the focus of the original novel. This gives it a natural link to *The Prodigal Daughter* and also to *Kane and Abel*.

I have not altered the essential story of *Shall We Tell the President?* but a number of significant changes, as well as minor ones, have been made in this revised, re-set edition.

Jeffrey Archer

Tuesday afternoon, 20 January

12:26 pm

'I, Florentyna Kane, do solemnly swear ...

'I, Florentyna Kane, do solemnly swear..'

'.. . that I will faithfully execute the office of the President of the United States . . .'

'... that I will faithfully execute the office of the President of the United States...'

'.. . and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. So help me God.'

'... and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. So help me God:

Her hand still resting on the Douay Bible, the forty- third President smiled at the First Gentleman. It was the end of one struggle and the beginning of another. Florentyna Kane knew about struggles. Her first struggle had been to be elected to Congress, then the Senate and finally four years later when she had become the first woman Vice President of the United States. After a fierce primary campaign, she had only narrowly managed to defeat Senator Ralph Brooks on the fifth ballot at the Democratic National Convention in June. In November she survived an even fiercer battle with the Republican candidate, a former congressman from New York. Florentyna Kane was elected President by 105,000 votes, a mere one per cent, the smallest margin in American history, smaller even than the 118,000 that John F. Kennedy had gained over Richard Nixon back in 1960.

While the applause died down, the President waited for the twenty-one-gun salute to come to an end. Florentyna Kane cleared her throat and faced fifty thousand attentive citizens on the Capitol Plaza and two hundred million more somewhere out there beyond the television transmitters. There was no need today for the blankets and heavy coats which normally accompanied these occasions. The weather was unusually mild for late January, and the crowded grassy area facing the east front of the Capitol, although soggy, was no longer white from the Christmas snow.

'Vice President Bradley, Mr Chief Justice, President Carter, President Reagan, Reverend clergy, fellow citizens.'

The First Gentleman looked on, smiling occasionally to himself as he recognised some of the words and phrases he had contributed to his wife's speech.

Their day had begun at about 6:30 am. Neither had slept very well after the splendid pre-Inaugural concert given in their honour the previous evening. Florentyna Kane had gone over her presidential address for the final time, underlining the salient words in red, making only minor changes.

When she rose that morning, Florentyna wasted no time in selecting a blue dress from her wardrobe. She pinned on the tiny brooch her first husband, Richard, had given her just before he had died.

Every time Florentyna wore that brooch she remembered him; how he had been unable to catch the plane that day because of a strike by maintenance workers but still hired a car to be sure he could be by Florentyna's side when she addressed the Harvard commencement.

Richard never did hear that speech, the one *Newsweek* described as a launching pad for the Presidency - because by the time she had reached the hospital he was dead.

She snapped back into the real world of which she was the most powerful leader on earth. But still without enough power to bring Richard back. Florentyna checked herself in the mirror. She felt confident. After all, she had already been President for nearly two years since the unexpected death of President Parkin. Historians would be surprised to discover that she had learned of the President's death while trying to sink a four-foot putt against her oldest friend and future husband, Edward Winchester.

They had both stopped their match when the helicopters had circled overhead. When one of them had landed a Marines Captain had jumped out and run towards her, saluted and said, 'Madam President, the President is dead.' Now the American people had confirmed that they were willing to continue living with a woman in the White House. For the first time in its history, the United States had elected a woman to the most coveted position in its political life in her own right. She glanced out of the bedroom window

at the broad placid expanse of the Potomac River, glinting in the early-morning sunlight.

She left the bedroom and went straight to the private dining-room where her husband Edward was chatting to her children William and Annabel. Florentyna kissed all three of them before they sat down to breakfast.

They laughed about the past and talked about the future but when the clock struck eight the President left them to go to the Oval Office. Her Chief of Staff, Janet Brown, was sitting outside in the corridor waiting for her.

'Good morning, Madam President.'

'Good morning, Janet. Everything under control?' She smiled at her.

'I think so, Madam.'

'Good. Why don't you run my day as usual? Don't worry about me, I'll just follow your instructions. What do you want me to do first?'

'There are 842 telegrams and 2,412 letters but they will have to wait, except for the Heads of State. I'll have replies ready for them by twelve o'clock.'

'Date them today, they'll like that, and I'll sign every one of them as soon as they are ready.'

'Yes, Madam. I also have your schedule. You start the official day with coffee at eleven with the former Presidents Reagan and Carter, then you will be driven to the Inauguration. After the Inauguration, you'll attend a luncheon at the Senate before reviewing the Inaugural Parade in front of the White House.'

Janet Brown passed her a sheaf of three-by-five index cards, stapled together, as she had done for fifteen years since she joined her staff when Florentyna had first been elected to Congress. They summarised the President's hour-by-hour schedule; there was rather less on them than usual. Florentyna glanced over the cards, and thanked her Chief of Staff. Edward Winchester appeared at the door. He smiled as he always did, with a mixture of love and admiration, when she turned towards him. She had never once regretted her almost impulsive decision to marry him after the eighteenth hole on that extraordinary day she was told of President Parkin's death, and she felt for certain that Richard would have approved.

'I'll be working on my papers until eleven,' she told him. He nodded and left to prepare himself for the day ahead.

A crowd of well-wishers was already gathering outside the White House.

'I wish it would rain,' confided H. Stuart Knight, the head of the Secret Service, to his aide; it was also one of the most important days of his life. 'I know the vast majority of people are harmless, but these occasions give me the jitters.'

The crowd numbered about one hundred and fifty; fifty of them belonged to Mr Knight. The advance car that always goes five minutes ahead of a President was already meticulously checking the route to the White House; Secret Service men were watching small gatherings of people along the way, some waving flags; they were there to witness the Inauguration, and would one day tell their grandchildren how they had seen Florentyna Kane being inaugurated as President of the United States.

At 10:59 the butler opened the front door and the crowds began to cheer.

The President and her husband waved to the smiling eyes and only sensed by experience and professional instinct that fifty people were not looking towards them.

Two black limousines came to a noiseless stop at the North Entrance of the White House at 11:00 am. The Marine Honour Guard stood at attention and saluted the two ex-Presidents and their wives as they were greeted by President Kane on the Portico, a privilege normally accorded only to visiting Heads of State. The President herself guided them through to the library for coffee with Edward, William and Annabel.

The older of the ex-Presidents was grumbling that if he were frail it was because he had had to rely on his wife's cooking for the past eight years. 'She hasn't dirtied a frying pan in ages, but she's improving every day. To make sure, I've given her a copy of *The New York Times Cook Book*; it's about the only one of their publications that didn't criticise me.' Florentyna laughed nervously. She wanted to get on with the official proceedings, but she was conscious that the ex-Presidents were enjoying being back in the White House so she pretended to listen attentively, donning a mask that was second nature to her after nearly twenty years in politics.

'Madam President.. .' Florentyna had to think quickly to prevent anyone noticing her instinctive response to the words. It's one minute past midday.' She looked up at her press secretary, rose from her chair, and led the ex-Presidents and their wives to the steps of the White House. The Marine band struck up 'Hail to the Chief for the last time. At one o'clock they would play it again for the first time.

The two former Presidents were escorted to the first car of the motorcade, a black, bubble-topped, bullet-proof limousine. The Speaker of the House, Jim

Wright, and the Senate Majority Leader, Robert Byrd, representing the Congress, were already seated in the second car. Directly behind the limousine there were two cars filled with Secret Service men. Florentyna and Edward occupied the fifth car in line. Vice President Bradley of New Jersey and his wife rode in the next car.

H. Stuart Knight was going through one more routine check. His fifty men had now grown to a hundred. By noon, counting the local police and the FBI contingent, there would be five hundred. Not forgetting the boys from the CIA, Knight thought ruefully. They certainly didn't tell him whether they were going to be there or not, and even he could not always spot them in a crowd. He listened to the cheering of the onlookers reaching a crescendo as the presidential limousine pulled out, on its way to the Capitol.

Edward chatted amiably but Florentyna's thoughts were elsewhere. She waved mechanically at the crowds lining Pennsylvania Avenue, but her mind was once again going over her speech. The renovated Willard Hotel, seven office buildings under construction, the tiered housing units that resembled an Indian cliff-dwelling, the new shops and restaurants and the wide landscaped sidewalks passed by. The J. Edgar Hoover Building, which housed the FBI, was still named after its first Director, despite several efforts by certain senators to have the name changed. How this street had been transformed in fifteen years.

They approached the Capitol and Edward interrupted the President's reverie. 'May God be with you, darling.' She smiled and gripped his hand. The six cars came to a stop.