

## **HEAD SHOT by Otho Eskin**

### **Book Club Discussion Questions**

1. D.C. homicide detective Marko Zorn is almost killed by a bullet shot by an unknown assailant while opening the door to his home. Once inside what ingenious thing does he do to protect himself? What was your initial impression of him?
2. Marko is forced to join the state department's security task to protect Prime Minister Nina during her visit to Washington D.C. What seemingly insurmountable challenges does Marko face in keeping her safe?
3. Marko has a good relationship with his young partner Lucy. Although he mentors her, he likes the fact that she will stand up to him and question some of his actions. But when he becomes a suspect in her murder investigation, how does he react?
4. There are four sympathetic women in HEAD SHOT. Nina, the young prime minister of Montenegro; Lucy, Marko's partner; Janet, a top State Department executive; and Carla, an influential FBI official. How successfully do you think these women navigate the male dominated world of powerful politics and law enforcement? Marko seems to particularly admire the prime minister Nina. What qualities does she have that appeal to him?
5. Do you consider Marko a loner without really close friends or a special woman in his life? Can you recall any scenes in the book in which he reveals the humanity beneath his tough exterior?
6. A complex man with contradictory traits, Marko Zorn follows his own ethical compass and doesn't always play by the rules to bring about justice. He is capable of extreme violence, but only if his life or the life of others is threatened. What was your impression of him after you finished reading the book?
7. Marko is able to prevail over his opponents due to his intelligence, guile and ability to remain cool no matter what the circumstances? Does that make him unique or at least different from other thriller protagonists?
8. Revenge is a major theme in HEAD SHOT. It's throughout like a red thread. Can you identify two characters who are motivated by revenge to take extreme actions - one ethical and one malevolent?

9. Marko doesn't like guns and has been able to win over his opponents by being smarter than they are. But when faced by an unknown international assassin who is an unerring marksman, his boss makes him carry one. Despite his aversion to guns, Marko takes the time to try to bolster the confidence of his young partner about firing her gun when in danger or to protect someone else. Is there a scene in the story that might help explain Marko's aversion to guns? How do you feel about Marko's relationship to guns?

10. HEAD SHOT ends with an incredible twist to the plot. Were you able to guess the assassin's identity in advance to its revelation? If so, what were the clues?

11. What did you think of the plotting for HEAD SHOT and the way the author was able to knit together the seemingly unrelated strands of the plot?