



## The First Counsel

By Brad Meltzer

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### The First Counsel By Brad Meltzer

*The runaway bestseller that takes us down the rabbit hole of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.*

John F. Kennedy, Jr., was *Lark*.

Amy Carter was *Dynamo*.

Chelsea Clinton was *Energy*.

Meet *Shadow*.

Shadow is the Secret Service code name for First Daughter Nora Hartson. And when White House lawyer Michael Garrick begins dating the irresistible Nora, he's instantly spellbound, just like everyone else in her world. Then, late one night, the two witness something they were never meant to see. Now, in a world where everyone watches your every move, Michael is suddenly ensnared in someone's secret agenda. Trusting no one, not even Nora, he finds himself fighting for his innocence--and ultimately, his life.

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## The First Counsel By Brad Meltzer Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

Aficionados of the hit TV show *The West Wing* who are suffering through holiday reruns will jump right into Brad Meltzer's third novel (after *The Tenth Justice* and *Dead Even*), which takes readers into the White House office of the president's own law firm and introduces a first daughter whose complex psychological problems jump-start this fast-paced thriller. Michael Garrick loves his job as deputy counsel, but when he falls for Nora Hartson, the president's daughter, the conflict between his professional ethics and his growing love for her puts him right in the middle of a murder plot that may reach all the way to the Oval Office.

Meltzer excels at plotting, and he knows the back corridors, family quarters, and secret tunnels of the executive branch as well as those of the Supreme Court, which he revealed in his first two blockbusters. He's not as skillful at characterization. It's hard to believe that the sociopathic tendencies of people in a president's inner circle--or even his family--would have managed to escape the scrutiny of an FBI investigation during his rise to power. And Nora, in particular, doesn't quite come off as the misguided victim she must be in order to make the rest of the story credible. But that's not a huge quibble; Meltzer manages to make Edgar Simon, Michael's boss, the most interesting White House counsel since John Dean. *The First Counsel* is a cleverly commercial mix of legal thriller and political chicanery guaranteed to keep you turning pages until Meltzer puts the third branch of government in his sights, too. --Jane Adams

### From Publishers Weekly

A man faces a lot of pressure when dating the first daughter of the U.S., especially if she is sexy, rebellious and maybe a little bit crazy like Nora Hartson. But young White House lawyer Michael Garrick thinks he is up to the task. Their first date begins with a wild car chase to shake off Nora's ever-present Secret Service tail and ends when Nora and Michael see something they were never meant to see something that will put Michael's career, and his life, in danger. As witnesses to an ever-widening conspiracy, Michael and Nora find themselves tangled in a web of intrigue and under suspicion for murder. As the pressure increases, Nora makes herself scarce; when she does surface, she seems even more vulnerable and crazed, leaving Michael to decide if she is, in fact, part of the conspiracy or, like him, a victim of it. As he tries to make sense of the trap surrounding him, he finds himself not knowing whom, if anyone, to trust. Sweeney's reading is the perfect match for Meltzer's fast-paced and witty writing. With a raspy voice reminiscent of a young Martin Sheen, Sweeney brings to life Michael's anxious cockiness in a palpable manner. Simultaneous release with the Warner hardcover (Forecasts, Nov. 6, 2000).

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### From Library Journal

The internal workings of the White House, the powers behind the Oval Office, and a glimpse into the private lives of the First Family are featured in both versions of Meltzer's obvious application of his knowledge of what goes on behind the closed doors of this presidential mansion. Deputy counsel Michael Garrick is a 29-year-old lawyer who enjoys the trappings of power that come from working there but is enough of an outsider not to be corrupted by the byzantine maneuverings between the president and his aides. Michael is attracted to the First Daughter, Nora, who entices him with her reckless disregard of Secret Service protection and the need to maintain a modicum of decorum in her public affairs. A first date soon turns into a desperate game of cat-and-mouse as Michael finds himself being drawn into a web of deceit, deception, danger, and death. The unabridged version, read by Scott Brick, gives more of an insight into the various

characters. The First Lady, Michael's boss, Nora's brother, and many others who only make brief appearances in the abridged tapes narrated by D.B. Sweeney are fleshed out and given more substance in the full version. However, the abridged set cuts through some of the unnecessary verbiage and focuses solely on the web of intrigue that envelops Michael at every step. The nifty surprise ending in both versions comes as more of a shock in the abridged program because we have not come to know all of the main characters as fully as we have in the unabridged story. Whatever version your library buys, *The First Counsel* is a top-notch political thriller that takes readers into the very heart and soul of the White House. Recommended for all public libraries. Joseph L. Carlson, Lompoc P.L., CA  
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