



So you're hosting a #DiAnnMillsBookClub?

This packet is designed to ensure you and your romantic suspense fan friends enjoy a thrilling event by experiencing *Burden of Proof* like many of the characters!

Inside this extensive Book Club Guide, please find:

- Decor & Food: A great way to set the stage for any event is by embracing the theme through environment and food! This sheet will help you personalize your meeting to your tastes and to infuse some **FBI: Rapid Response** flair into the night!
- Did You Know . . . Icebreakers: All of you guests may not know one another; what better way to get the conversation flowing than to provide a few interesting facts about the FBI and the author!
- Do You Have What It Takes to Be in the FBI? - Questionnaire: A fun, interactive checklist that allows guests to see if they, themselves, may be eligible to become the hero or heroine in their own lives. Who knows, one might want to join their local chapter of an FBI Citizens Academy.
- Do you have what it takes to be a Strong Female Heroine in a novel? Questionnaire: 13 questions that show guests the traits needed for a strong female role.
- *Burden of Proof* Crossword Puzzle.
- Discussion Questions: Lastly, but not least, you will find in-depth discussion questions to help you delve deeper into *Burden of Proof*, analyzing the characters, their motivations and other pertinent plot points in the story.

We hope you enjoy your #DiAnnMillsBookClub ! If you plan to post about your event online, we would greatly appreciate your including the hashtag above. If you're interested in inviting DiAnn to speak with your book club over video link, be sure to [visit her website](#) for more information.

Happy reading!



Decor & Food

Ready for an adventure? Start your #DiAnnMillsBookClub off right and transform your home into an FBI novel.

- *Set the stage.* Take your guests into the novel and the Houston metropolitan area and on to East Texas. Post pictures of East Texas for your book club friends to look at as they mingle and get ready to dive into the book! Check-out [DiAnn Mills' Pinterest board](#) for *Burden of Proof* to set the stage for fun.
- *Dress to Impress.* Don't be afraid to show your Texan flair. Key garb for hero and heroine includes: cowboy hats, boots, etc. Guests may choose to dress like Jason Snyder, April Ramos or Sheriff Willis. Get creative!
- *Become an FBI agent.* Each **FBI: Rapid Response** novel includes an FBI agent hard at work to solve the case. There are many great FBI-themed items to fashion around your party such as [these FBI coasters](#), aviator sunglasses, and this [adorable FBI vest for your family pet](#), to name a few!
- Texas is known for its unique Tex-Mex cuisine. Whether you whip up [Chili con Queso](#) and chips or [Enchiladas](#). While Jason preferred liver and onions, I'm sure your guests will prefer pecan or apple pie with a scoop of vanilla ice cream from [Texas Blue Bell Creameries](#). Whatever you choose to serve, it's all about the laughter and conversation that makes the event special, so perhaps ask your guests to bring their favorite side dish to share!
- Be sure to visit [DiAnn Mills' Pinterest board](#) dedicated to *Burden of Proof* for more ideas!



Did you know . . . Icebreakers

We find the best way to break the ice is often through learning something new together! Below, learn more about the inner workings of the FBI, and about novelist DiAnn Mills and her special connection with the FBI!

- Hollywood understands viewers value authentic details in movies about FBI special agents. During the filming of many action-packed movies, Hollywood directors worked directly with the FBI to gain their expertise and ensure their film had credibility. Some such films include . . .

- [Jason Bourne](#)
- [Point Break](#)
- [Tower Heist](#)
- [Live Free or Die Hard](#)
- [National Treasure](#)
- [Patriots Day](#)
- [Miss Congeniality](#)

Author caveat: I suggest checking the ratings before viewing.

- The FBI works with local, state, federal, and tribal law enforcement to investigate and share information to help solve and prevent crime. Through the following services, they are an integral federal agency dedicated to the wellbeing of the United States and global allies. During the research process for the FBI Task Force series, DiAnn needed accurate information as to how the FBI assists other agencies. The following came from consulting with Houston's FBI branch.
 - Under the attorney general's guidelines, the FBI can assist local, state, and other federal partners investigating federal crimes or threats to national security. For example, we assist other agencies investigating violent acts or mass killings as noted in federal law: 28, USC 530c 9b) (1) (M) (i)



- At times, task forces are formed to share data and use the expertise of other agencies. The goal is to keep America safe. Below are nine criminal scenarios sure to have an FBI special agent knocking on your door.
 - terrorism
 - counterintelligence
 - cyber crime
 - public corruption
 - civil rights
 - organized crime
 - white-collar crime
 - violent crime
 - WMD - weapons of mass destruction
- Author DiAnn Mills is a proud member of the [Houston FBI Citizens Academy!](#) Think you have what it takes to be a Special Agent in the FBI? Flip the page to run through the checklist. It might inspire you to consider your local chapter.



Do You Have What It Takes to be in the FBI? – Questionnaire

We've all thought about what it would be like to have the title of special agent for the FBI. The lure happens every time we watch an exciting movie or read a book that features the FBI.

Leadership abilities are essential; then add courage, stamina, intelligence, and patriotism.

But what are the real requirements? Look and see if you can begin the rigorous training.

1. I am a US citizen.
2. I am between the ages of 24 and 37.
3. I have not been convicted of a felony.
4. I don't use drugs. The FBI also doesn't want those who fail a urinalysis drug test. Check [online](#) for specifics.
5. I have paid my student loan according to the agreement.
6. If I'm a guy, I registered for the Selective Service when I turned eighteen.
7. I have not devised a scheme to overthrow the US government.
8. I have paid any court-ordered child support.
9. I pay taxes, not evade them.
10. I can pass top security clearance.

Congratulations! If the above applies to you, move on to see if you can be part of the FBI's selection process!

1. I possess a four-year college degree.
2. I am in great physical condition.
3. I have skills that would enhance my career in the FBI.
4. I am mentally and physically prepared for 13-20 weeks of academic and tactical training at [the FBI Academy](#).

If you're interested in pursuing further, [this site](#) offers more information.

I hope your book club has enjoyed this exercise. If you have any questions regarding the characters in her series, [please reach out to DiAnn online](#); she would love to hear from you!

What do you think? Do you have what it takes to be in the FBI?



Do You Have What It Takes to be a Strong Female Heroine in a Novel – Questionnaire

1. Do you need a man to rescue you?
2. Can you love unconditionally?
3. Are you proud of your femininity?
4. Are you strong mentally?
5. Are you defined by your social status?
6. Can you put your life on hold until a problem is solved?
7. Are you able to risk everything to keep people safe?
8. Is age a barrier for you?
9. Can you successfully shove greed from your DNA?
10. Do you take care of your body?
11. Do you think of others before yourself?
12. Are you able to discern evil and turn from it?
13. Do you value your faith in God?

Readers often ask how I choose my heroines. My goal is to create women who accept nontraditional roles and succeed with dynamic outcomes. These are Glock-totin' gals with southern charm who understand grits aren't just for breakfast. These women embrace their femininity with an added boost—they aren't afraid to go after the bad guys or say they love Jesus. This style of heroine understands her "peace" can be more about the caliber of the "piece" in her purse than the state of her spiritual life.

What makes a contemporary woman choose a career that has the potential of ending her life? Experts often point to personality differences or a "risk-gene" as an explanation why some are risk takers and others are content in less stressful lifestyles. I prefer courageous heroines who've been wired with a few more endorphins to balance the adrenaline, and they thrive on it.

If my heroine races down a dirt road on a Harley in the dead of night, or scales a cliff while someone is shooting at her, or stuffs a weapon into the waistband of her jeans, it's to get the edge on the bad guys.

My heroines are not satisfied unless they are placing their lives on the line to protect or save innocent victims. These women are warriors who are trained to protect, defend, and hopefully outsmart the ones who will stop at nothing to obtain money and power.

Yes, I like a gutsy women who can work alongside a man, and a hero who appreciates her abilities, wit, dedication-and her beauty.

If you are still curious what it takes to make the cut, check out these strong female characters from DiAnn Mills' FBI Task Force Series and her first book in the FBI: Rapid Response series.



Deadly Encounter - Veterinarian Stacy Broussard refused to run when her life and home were threatened because she refused to cower to bullies. ([Click HERE to learn more](#))

Deep Extraction - FBI Special Agent Tori Templeton abandoned her fears to find who'd murdered her best friend's husband. ([Click HERE to learn more](#))

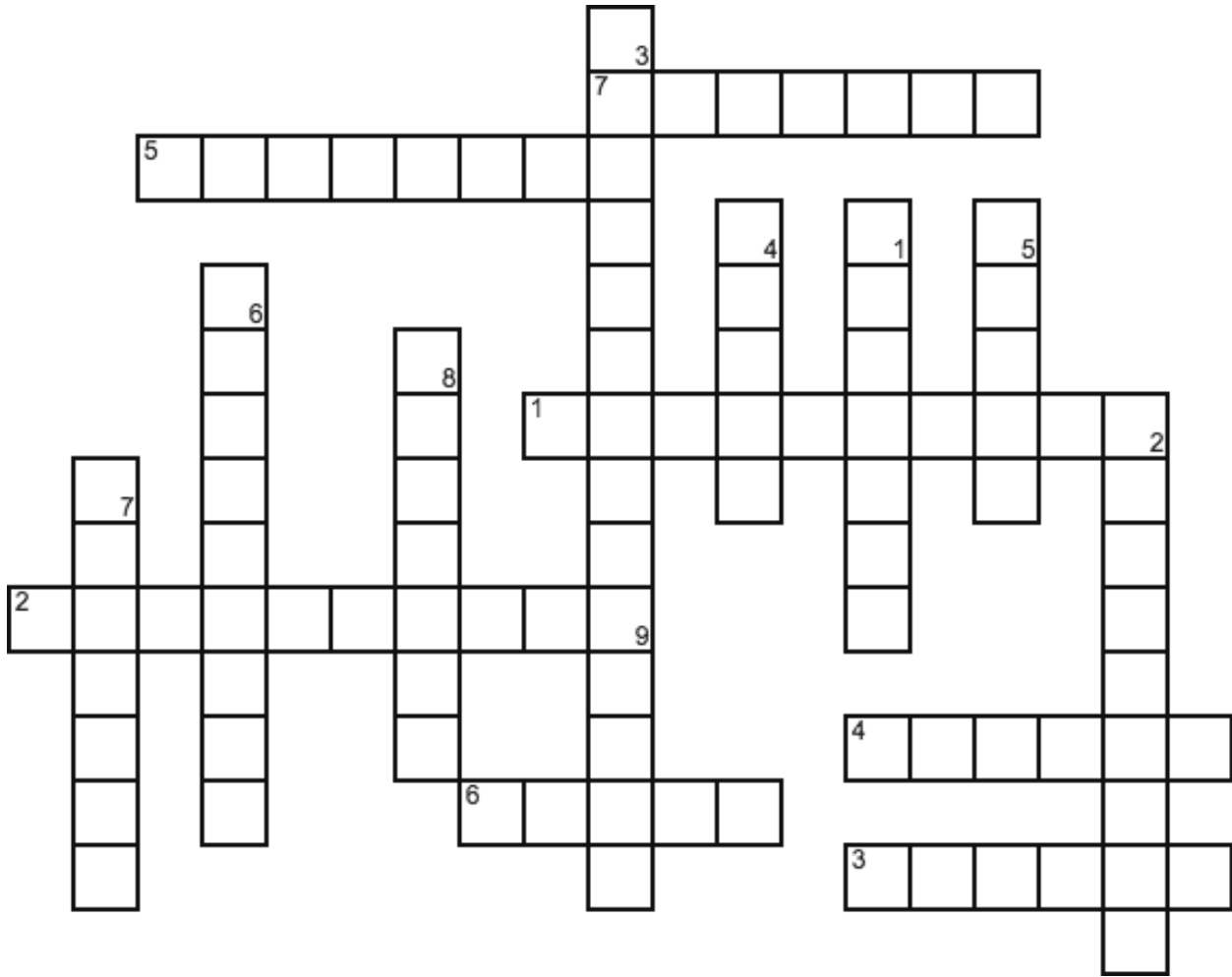
High Treason - CIA Operative Monica Alden stepped into culture differences to ensure a Saudi Arabian Royal Prince wouldn't fall into the hands of an assassin. ([Click HERE to learn more](#))

Burden of Proof - FBI Hostage Negotiator April Ramos is caught off guard when a frazzled young woman shoves a crying baby into her arms, then disappears. ([Click HERE to learn more](#))

What do you think? Do you have what it takes to be a Strong Female Heroine?



BURDEN OF PROOF



Across

1. *grocery store*
2. *a mediator*
3. *to abduct*
4. *reptiles*
5. *an escaped person*
6. *a woody plant*
7. *feral pig*

Down

1. *4th largest city in US*
2. *area known for Big Thicket*
3. *where the Snyders Lived*
4. *hero*
5. *FBI Special Agent*
6. *home in the country*
7. *elected officer*
8. *a person seized or held*
9. *bull mascot*



Key to crossword puzzle


Across

1. *brookshire*
2. *negotiator*
3. *kidnap*
4. *snakes*
5. *fugitive*
6. *trees*
7. *wildhog*

Down

1. *houston*
2. *easttexas*
3. *sweetbriar*
4. *jason*
5. *april*
6. *farmhouse*
7. *sheriff*
8. *hostage*
9. *romeo*

Burden of Proof Discussion Questions

1. After a negotiation goes wrong, Agent April Ramos struggles to find peace in forced platitudes and rote words. In what ways does her partner's encouragement help or hinder her as she wrestles with guilt? If you were in Simon's shoes, what would you say to April?
 2. When Jason Snyder is first introduced, did you believe his claim of innocence? Why or why not? What finally convinces April to trust Jason? At what point did you believe him?
 3. As Jason alleges that the county sheriff is involved in corruption, April reminds him, "No one is above the law." How does this play out for the characters, especially when Jason seems bent on taking the law into his own hands? Is he justified in doing so? Why or why not?
 4. Before her death, Lily reminded Jason that "The darkest moments of our lives are intended for God to use in a mighty way." Give some examples from the story of ways in which this proves true for Jason and April. Have there been times in your own life when God has shown His mighty power in your darkest moments?
 5. According to Jason, Sheriff Lennox is operating a reign of terror in Sweet Briar, Texas. What makes people so reluctant to stand up to him? Consider the story of the fiery furnace in Daniel 3. Under what circumstances is defying authority the right thing to do?
 6. After meeting Miss Ella, April wonders, "How did one person think of so many things to say to God?" Do you know a prayer warrior like Miss Ella? Or are you that person? Since 1 Thessalonians 5:17 encourages us to "Never stop praying," what steps can you take to increase your prayer life?
 7. Ted Snyder tells April how he became a Christian, a testimony that includes his dementia-stricken friend John still being able to recognize Ted. How does April respond to this story? Were you affected by it? When you encounter things that don't necessarily make sense, what do you attribute that to? A miracle of God? Coincidence?
 8. When Jason finds his house torn apart, he releases his anger and prays, Help me to honor You. Does this feel like a genuine prayer to you? Or does it seem like he is merely paying lip service to God while still fighting for control of the situation? What steps should he take to honor God?
 9. As April and Jason struggle to uncover the proof that will put the sheriff behind
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bars, Jason reminds his friend, “The right thing to do is seldom easy.” Think about a time when that was true for you. What happened? Did you do the right thing in the moment or back down?

10. Both April and Jason struggle with the idea that “Regrets keep us chained to guilt.” What does April regret? What does Jason regret? Do you have regrets that leave you with guilt? Can there be such a thing as “good guilt”?
11. After April gets thrown out of Brenda Krew’s office, she feels compassion for the Realtor and thinks, “Sometimes the bad guys were as much victims as the innocent.” Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not? How much should a person’s circumstances—upbringing, financial status, etc.—be considered a factor in their culpability?
12. Near the end of the story, Jason is prompted to forgive those who conspired against him, his family, and his town. Do you think he could have done so even if justice wasn’t served? If you were in that position—waiting for justice—what would it take for you to find true forgiveness?
13. Early in the story, Miss Ella tells April, “Before this is over, you’re gonna see the power of Jesus.” In what ways does April realize this? What stands out most to you?
14. Simon warns Jason that a relationship born in “danger and supercharged emotions” won’t last. How much truth do you give that statement? Where do you think April and Jason will end up?

