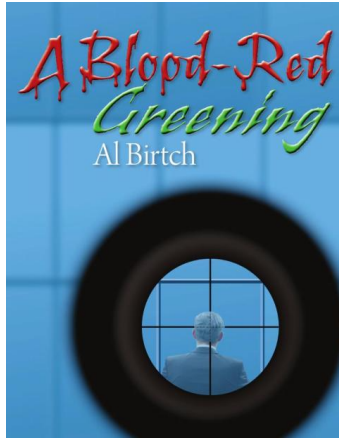




Genre: Thriller

Our story begins with our protagonist, **MARK HANSON**, having been lured into a trap orchestrated by the San Francisco PD. The hunter has now become the hunted, trapped on the 7th floor of an abandoned commercial building. The only reason that SWAT hasn't already stormed his location is the mistaken belief that Mark has a hostage. The ruse has bought Mark some time...but even he believes his 4-year long, one-man war on greed and corruption has finally come to an end. But why now of all times? Why before justice was delivered to the very man whose greed and callous actions had led to the death of Mark's 9-year old granddaughter Samantha and his daughter-in-law Carolyn. Why would this man be the one to escape justice when the 11 others around the globe hadn't?

Through a series of flashbacks, the reader learns Mark's crusade has never been about revenge. That his prior 11 kills had never harmed Mark or anyone Mark knew. But they had one thing in common that connected them. They had all committed serious crimes against the environment and its inhabitants be they human or otherwise. They each had been charged under various international laws. But each had escaped being held accountable either under technicalities or simple unproven bribery. Neither the SFPD, the FBI nor Interpol know the identity of the man that has assassinated 11 people around the globe. But they do know *the why of it all*. After the assassination of his first victim, Mark had sent a list of 'laws' to the local newspaper. He explained why he had killed Papadopoulos. That in the world there are some senior leaders, whether in industry, politics, in all walks of life, that governed their decisions not on what was the right thing to do, but rather based on '*what was in it for them*'. Mark's communication explained that it was past time those people learned that what was in it for them might be as basic as '*staying alive*'. From that point on Mark never issued further communications. Instead he simply left a judge's gavel at the scene of the other victims. The press connected the dots from there. The police have no idea of Mark's identity or his very personal connection to Morganson...the person he was here to deliver justice to today. After years of winding its way through the court system, Morganson's defence team argued that there was an irregularity in the wording used by the judge who granted the original search warrant. And if that warrant

were to be overturned, then all of the evidence gathered from it would be inadmissible...evidence the DA needed to proceed. But unknown to Mark and the general public, the ruling to overturn the search warrant had already been made some 4 weeks earlier and it was in Morganson's favour. The DA had been set to announce that they would be dropping all charges. But the FBI hatched the plan to keep the ruling quiet for now. They believed that the notoriety of the defendant and the potential that all charges might be dropped would attract the attention of this killer. After all, every one of his prior targets had been assassinated only after charges against them had been dropped. And their trap had worked. The man who had eluded law enforcement for the past 4 years was surrounded.

ANDI DOYLE is SFDC's lead negotiator. It was her instincts more than the years of training that she relied upon most. After a few off-to-the-side discussions with the FBI profiler and expert on this case, she makes a critical decision. She ignores all of the technical training and her Captains' direct orders, and enters the room with Mark. Her Captain is enraged at her insubordination...their target now has 3 hostages. But Andi, now in the room, realizes the ruse and that she is the only one now hostage. And more surprising yet, she recognizes the heretofore anonymous killer in front of her.

We join Andi as she attempts to bring the stand-off to a peaceful resolution by using all her skills and instincts to develop a rapport with Mark. What starts out as just another job for Andi as she has no dog in this fight, begins to transform her. As she learns more about Mark she will slowly start to truly empathise with what he has been through. That each time Mark pulled the trigger he left a little bit of his own soul behind. She can see and feel how spiritually and physically tired he is. How he genuinely wishes there wasn't a need for actions like his. And while it was not Mark, but his wife who was Indian, she will learn of the native-American tradition of a Vision Quest. That it was his experience in that quest that changed the course of Mark's life. Standing helplessly by as his granddaughter slowly succumbed to the cancer ravaging her body, and the subsequent suicide of her mother, drove Mark to spiral into a path of self-destruction at the bottom of a bottle. But Carolyn's father, a Shamon in the Cree nation, equally dealing with the loss of his daughter and granddaughter, convinces Mark to set aside his Caucasian-based understanding of the physical world and participate in a Vision Quest. Our reader (and Andi) will follow Mark on this spiritual journey as he encounters the Eagle, Bear, Wolf and Cougar...all powerful spirit animals, and learns their meaning.

The press have uncovered Mark's identity and the connection to Morganson. Morganson learns from his attorney that he may have escaped criminal charges but...in all likelihood, the dozen families affected by the poisoned ground water will launch a civil suit against him. That when the jury hears Mark's testimony of how Morganson's years of illegal chemical dumping leached into the ground water causing the cancers that killed his granddaughter and over a dozen others within a 50-mile radius ... that he expects the jury will convict him and the penalties will wipe out his entire fortune. Morganson is enraged and decides that Mark can never be allowed to take the stand. Soon his bodyguard is offered a huge bonus to ensure Mark doesn't leave that building alive.

The SFDC relents to meeting Mark's only demand before he will peacefully surrender. An on-air live radio broadcast with a popular local talk-radio host. Mark commits to turn over his rifle to Andi and free the other hostage (which SFDC still believes he has) immediately after the

interview. The interview is now over. The talk-show host and his technician pack-up their equipment and exit the room. Mark steps towards Andi and hands her the rifle – the window behind him shatters as a shot rings out. The round has hit its target, but just as it was fired Mark had turned slightly, so it passed through his side instead of dead-center. Mark is wounded badly. Andi has the rifle in her possession...so this is over. Andi and her Captain exchange heated words over the walkie about who took the shot. Her captain insists it wasn't any of them. That SWAT found where the shot was taken from, but the shooter was gone. Andi's not so sure. She doesn't tell her boss that it's over and she has the rifle. Instead she once again trusts her instincts and says the shot missed him but has placed her and the other hostage in even more danger. But that Mark will still surrender...but only if the police move all of the SWAT officers off of the surrounding roof-tops, out of the lower floors of the building, and from the ally-ways. Move them all across the street where Mark can see them...and they all will be captured on the TV camera's covering the stand-off. If they agree to that demand, he will surrender. Mark is hurt and bleeding but conscious. With all of the police now across the street Andi asks Mark if he thinks he can drive. She hands him her car keys and tells him her car is parked 3 blocks over on Bleeker Street and gives him her home address. Soon Andi is down at street-level standing in the doorway of the building with her hands raised over her head. She glances back over her shoulder looking up the stairs to the 2nd floor landing. She tells her Captain that Mark wants his assurances he won't be shot as he exits the building. This assurance given, Andi walks across the street her hands raised. After several unanswered demands for Mark to exit the building, SWAT is given the green-light to go in. After a slow floor-by-floor search they confirm Mark is gone. The blood-trail makes it clear that Andi lied...that he is injured and that there isn't another hostage. Andi's Captain is furious. He suspends her on the spot pending an internal investigation. Andi grabs a cab and heads home and finds Mark propped up at her fireplace, it is too late. Mark's war is over.

The story comes to its conclusion with Andi alongside Carolyn's father standing at the opening to a clearing on the First Nations territory where they have buried Mark. To the world at large he has escaped and the international manhunt is on once again. As the Shamon and Andi stand there over the unmarked grave, the Shamon notices something across the clearing at the edge of the forest and draws Andi's attention to it. It's a cougar standing there staring back at them. It begins a slow walk across the clearing towards them, walks over to the grave and sniffs the ground, then looks up at Andi. It walks around the grave and lies down at her feet, purring. The Shamon looks knowingly at Andi. The meaning is clear to him. All he says is *"our sacred grandmother has spoken"*.

The story then cuts to several weeks later. Morganson is driving the cross-country roads from his factory to his country estate. An unmarked car pulls out of a gravel access road to a farmer's field and begins to follow him slowly gaining ground. Soon the lights are flashing and Morganson pulls over. He is already holding his driver's license in his hand as he lowers the window. There is a short expression of surprise as he looks over. The muzzle flash lights up the interior of his car as his body slumps to the side. A gloved-hand reaches through the window and a gavel is dropped in Morganson's lap.

Andi gets back in her car, turns it around and slowly drives away. Headlines in the next day papers scream "*Manifesto Killer Strikes Again ...worldwide manhunt for Mark Hanson intensifies*". 5 weeks later an African big game hunter, long suspected of guiding hunters of endangered species 'for a fee' is found dead...a gavel beside him. That very same day a American congressman, the official who spearheaded the legislation weakening the EPA's powers, is found assassinated, a gavel beside his body. Reuters raises the question now on everyone's mind. Is this the beginning of a movement?