

FROM THE AUTHORS OF TRAITOR AND PAYBACK

AVENGER

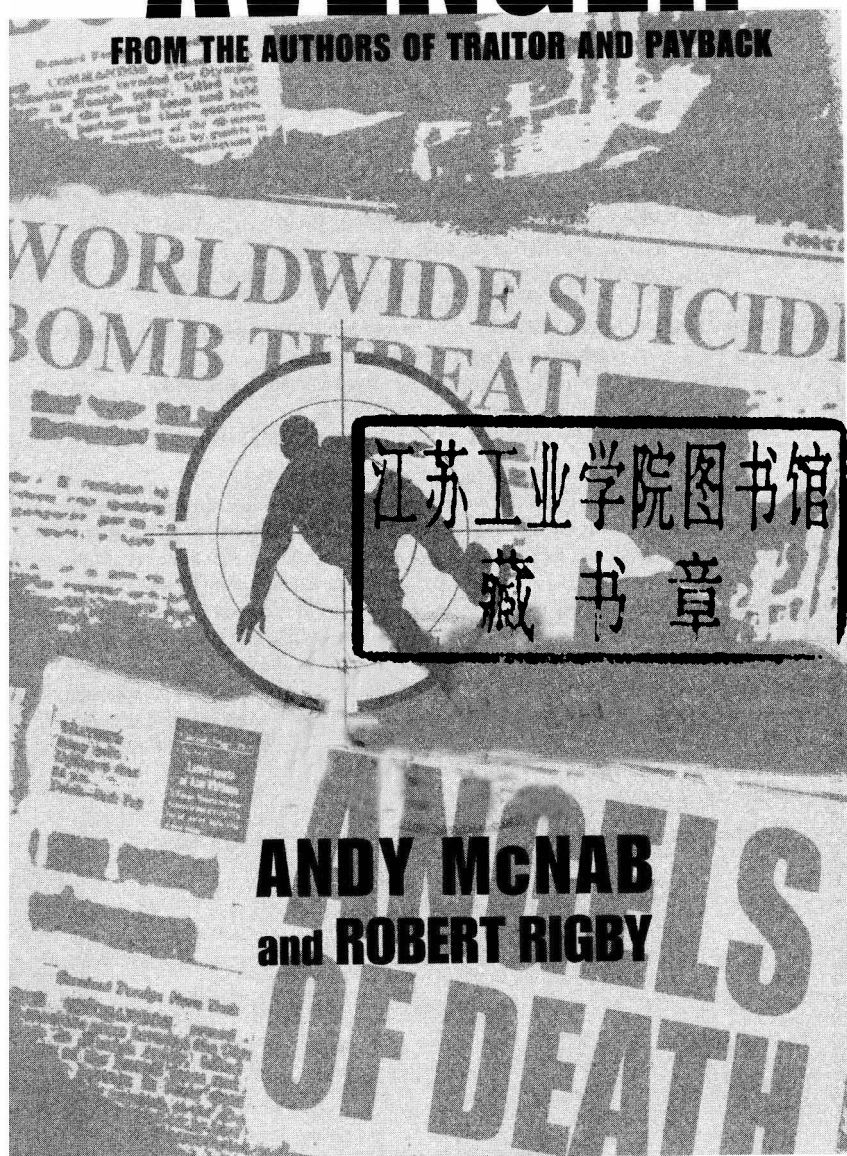


THEY LIED TO YOU.
THEY ALL LIED, BUT YOU DESERVE THE TRUTH.

ANDY McNAB
and **ROBERT RIGBY**

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藏书章

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First Impression

GLOSSARY

ACA	Alias cover address
Brush contact	Covert operation in which material or information is exchanged
Contact	In a firefight with the enemy
DLB	Dead Letter Box
ECHELON	The code name of the British Security Services' electronic listening satellite
End ex	End exercise, but also used to end a mission or operation
ERV	Emergency rendezvous
FARC	Colombian drug traffickers
The Firm	The Secret Intelligence Service, MI6
GSW	Gunshot wound
IED	Improvised explosive device
Int	Intelligence
K	A deniable operator
Mag	A weapons magazine that holds the rounds
Make ready a weapon	To put a round (bullet) in the chamber, ready to be fired
MoD	Ministry of Defense
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding—agreement between governments
NVGs	Night viewing goggles
OP	Observation post
PE	Plastic explosive
Pinged	When someone is first seen
Recce	Reconnaissance
The Regiment	What SAS soldiers call the SAS
RV	Rendezvous (meeting place)
Sit rep	Situation report
SOP	Standard operating procedure
SSU	Special security unit

On stag
Stand to

On guard
Get ready to be attacked

SURVEILLANCE TALK

Complete
Foxtrot
Held

Inside any location—a car, building, etc.
Walking
Stopped but intending to move on—i.e., at traffic lights

Mobile

Driving

Net

The radio frequency the team talk on

Roger

OK or understood

Stand by! Stand by!

Informs the team something is happening

Static

Stopped

The trigger

Informs the team that the target is on the move

HACKING TALK

Exploits

Hackers' targets

Root access

When the hacker has control of the system under attack

Script

A program written by a hacker

Script kiddie

Novice hacker

Spoofing

Hiding a computer's IP address

~~CLASSIFIED—SECRET~~

SIT REP

Operation Black Star

Aim: Covert elimination, at whatever cost, of bomb master

“Black Star,” known to be recruiting teenage suicide bombers via the Internet.

NB: Black Star’s objectives unknown. No demands have yet been made, and the bombers appear to have no political affiliation.

Real name of target: Unknown.

Location: Unknown.

Special circumstances surrounding operation: Elena Omolodon (see below) recruited to assist in Operation Black Star with Danny Watts (see below) and Fergus Watts (see below).

FERGUS WATTS

AGE: 53

HEIGHT: Five feet, eleven inches

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: Hair—gray; eyes—blue; build—lean, wiry; distinguishing physical marks—noticeable limp due to bullet wound in right thigh

BACKGROUND: Infantry. SAS, Warrant Officer, special skills—explosives. Tours of duty include—Northern Ireland (decorated), first Gulf conflict (decorated), Colombia. Recruited as a Deniable Operator (“K”) to infiltrate FARC, Colombia. Cover story—traitor,

“gone over” to rebels for money. Watts’s cover was deliberately blown by GEORGE FINCHAM (former head of the Firm’s security section—now deceased). Watts wounded and captured after gun battle with Colombian antinarcotics police. Imprisoned by Colombian authorities. Subsequently led mass jailbreak. Returned to Britain, route and date unknown. Traced through grandson, Danny. Captured but escaped from safe house with help from grandson and Elena Omolodon. Watts and grandson on run in Spain for six months, then encouraged to return to UK to assist in exposing Fincham as traitor. Fincham killed during firefight at culmination of Operation Payback. Watts severely wounded and now in recovery at ACA, Oxford.

DANNY WATTS

AGE: 17

HEIGHT: Five feet, ten inches

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: Hair—brown; eyes—blue; build—slim; distinguishing physical marks—none known

BACKGROUND: Orphaned at six, parents died in car crash. Various foster families until moved to Foxcroft, south London, residential home for teenagers, where he met Elena Omolodon. Applied for army officer training bursary. Rejected. Had never met grandfather but fed “traitor” story and located (method unknown). Assisted in escape of Fergus Watts from safe house before going to Spain. Returned to UK with grandfather and received superficial wounds in Operation Payback firefight. Now undergoing further covert operations training at ACA in preparation for possible second phase of Operation Black Star.

ELENA OMOLODON

AGE: 16

HEIGHT: Five feet, five inches

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: Hair—black; eyes—brown; build—slim; distinguishing physical marks—none known

BACKGROUND: Mother (Nigerian) deceased, father (Joey Omolodon, Nigerian) terminated during Operation Payback. Befriended Danny Watts at Foxcroft residential home. Assisted in initial escape of Fergus Watts from safe house and subsequent actions. Received superficial wounds in Operation Payback firefight. Now under 24-hour surveillance at ACA as lead contact for Black Star, whose help she sought on the Deep Web during Operation Payback.

Important: Omolodon unaware of father's termination. Imperative this situation remains unchanged if Operation Black Star is not to be jeopardized.

PROGRESS: TO BE UPDATED DAILY

Day 29

Psychiatric evaluation (see attached report from Dr. Ruth Jacobson) indicates Omolodon's current stress levels rising as Black Star's grooming process becomes more intense. We continue to monitor the situation. Currently believe any risk to either the girl's health or the operation to be overstated.

Brush-contact training continues badly. Danny Watts is generally enthusiastic but remains headstrong and unpredictable and a potential liability to the operation.

Fergus Watts's loyalties and the extent of his knowledge remain a matter of major concern. He suspects the Firm's involvement in Joey Omolodon's disappearance and I believe continues to operate to his own agenda.

IMPORTANT

There is no change to my conviction that all three individuals remain a threat to national security and will be expendable when Operation Black Star is concluded. Plans for their elimination should therefore be put in place at the earliest opportunity.

M. Deveraux

M. Deveraux

1

Charles Samuel Pointer III, Charlie Three to his friends, Chuck to his doting dad, was going to get a job.

His father would be impressed. Even though Charlie Three didn't need the work he was setting up for the Christmas vacation, he knew full well that his dad, Charles Samuel Pointer II, admired initiative and determination above all other qualities. Ever since the pioneering days back at the start of the twentieth century, the Pointers had been demonstrating their initiative and determination.

Charlie's great-great-great-grandfather had shown the initiative to emigrate with his wife and two children from Eastern Europe to the United States of America. And like thousands of other immigrants, Josef Podowski arrived at Ellis Island, in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty, with nothing more than the clothes he stood up in and the determination to succeed in his new life.

And he did. He was a hard worker and he was clever. Even way back then, Josef saw that the future was in communications, and so he made it his business to get in there, starting at the bottom and working his way up.

A couple of generations on, with a lot of hard work, plenty of that famous initiative and determination and a change of name

from Podowski to Pointer, the family fortune was well on the way to being made.

Charlie Three's grandfather, the great Charles Samuel Pointer I, chose the new family name. He reckoned it sounded substantial and solid, pioneering yet well established and, most importantly, *American*.

The business continued to thrive and grow, and on the morning that Charlie Three left for his job interview, it was established as one of the nation's top computer and Internet research and development organizations, firmly placed at the cutting edge of the industry.

Someday Charlie Three was going to take over that business. But there was a Pointer tradition: no one got an easy ride; everyone had to get out there and show what they were made of by demonstrating that famous initiative and determination.

Charlie knew that maybe he wasn't quite as brilliant as his father, and certainly not as dazzling as the great CSP One, as he was known in the family. But Charlie was a trier, and as the only child, it was up to him to carry on the great Pointer tradition. There was no way he was going to let the old man down.

He had kept the interview a secret from everyone, even his father. The job was nothing special; a post boy, a gofer, working for an international finance company over the busy holiday period.

But Charlie Three knew that would impress his dad even more; he could already hear the old man's words when he told him he had the job. "That's my boy. Get in there at the bottom, Chuck, and show 'em what us Pointers are made of."

That morning, Charlie Three got up early. He dressed smartly and was feeling good as he stepped out into a bright morning and

walked away from the family's East Ninety-sixth Street penthouse apartment, which overlooked Central Park. He took the subway downtown toward Wall Street and the financial district, went through the security barriers into the building and then joined the lines of workers drinking Starbucks and reading papers as they waited for one of the elevators to take them up to their offices.

On the way up to his floor he took a few deep breaths and repeated the old family maxim to himself: "Initiative and determination. Initiative and determination."

The elevator came to a standstill and Charlie Three stepped out onto his floor. He walked along the corridor and went through glass doors into the finance company reception area.

The long reception desk was close to one of the picture windows overlooking the city and the Hudson River and, beyond that, New Jersey. A young woman was standing behind the desk, staring out through the window. As he approached, Charlie Three saw the look of confusion and horror on the woman's face.

He followed her gaze out through the window and at the same moment heard the roaring noise. He recognized the plane instantly; he was interested in airplanes. It was an American Airlines Boeing 767.

There was no time to think or do anything else.

It was 8:45 A.M. The date was September 11, 2001.

2

England, 2006

The TV crew from the BBC Look North studio were on hand purely by chance. One minute they were setting up to film a routine interview with a world-famous business consultant, in town to address a national conference, the next they were sprawled on the carpeted floor after an ear-shattering explosion rocked the very foundations of the building.

They were lucky; they were in a convention room at the back of the hotel, with a heavy projection screen between them and the windows, which shattered in the blast and sent lethal shards of glass hurtling in every direction.

It was only when they picked themselves up and ran out to the riverbank that they saw the extent of the damage, and the cost in human lives.

The bomber had chosen to detonate his device at the very center of the Gateshead Millennium Bridge. The steel structure was pitted and scarred and dented from one side to the other; it looked as though a huge hand had punched into the tubular sections with ferocious power.

On both sides of the Tyne, the multiwindowed buildings, the pride of Newcastle and Gateshead, resembled nothing more than those in a war zone. Every huge window in the Baltic Art Gallery was gone, destroyed either by the nuts and bolts projected by the ten-pound IED, which had spewed them out with the velocity of heavy machine-gun bullets, or by the sheer percussive force of the explosion.

But most terrifying of all were the bodies. The bomber had chosen his moment well. Dozens of businessmen and women, in Newcastle for the first time, had been taking a morning stroll from one side of the bridge to the other, getting some good Tyneside air before their conference began. It was 08:30 hours; locals were crossing the bridge on their way to work, just as they did every morning.

Now they lay in grotesque, twisted shapes on the bridge and on the embankment. Those who had been closest to the suicide bomber had been hurled from the bridge into the cold, dark Tyne and were floating lifelessly in the water.

As the news reporter and cameraman ran from the hotel into the scene of devastation, they came to a standstill at the first horrifying sight of the carnage. Vehicles had skidded to a halt; drivers were running to help. There were moans and screams from the injured and, in the distance, the first police siren could be heard.

Then the reporter shouted to his ashen-faced colleague, "Start shooting!" There was no response: the cameraman just stood and stared. "Richie! Shoot it! Come on!"

With trembling hands the cameraman raised his camera and began to record the scene of horror. Within a day his footage, heavily edited, would be seen on television screens in every corner of the globe.

Black Star had struck again.

Elena's PC screen flicked into life; contact was reestablished.

SO HOW YOU DOIN', GOLA?

THE SAME. I SAW WHAT HAPPENED IN NEWCASTLE. HE WAS SO BRAVE.

ALL MY ANGELS ARE BRAVE, GOLA, THEY GOTTA BE. WE TRAVEL A LONG ROAD BEFORE THEY'RE READY TO TAKE THE FINAL STEP TO FREEDOM.

YES, I SEE THAT MORE AND MORE. I SORT OF ENVIED HIM WHEN IT WAS ALL OVER.

WHY'S THAT, GOLA? TELL ME!!!

BECAUSE EVERYTHING SEEMS POINTLESS. STILL NO NEWS OF DAD, HE'S RUN OUT ON ME AGAIN. EVERYONE'S LET ME DOWN ALL MY LIFE.

YEAH, I KNOW THE FEELING.

IT'S NEVER REALLY BEEN RIGHT SINCE MUM DIED. WHY IS EVERYTHING SO UNFAIR?

CAN'T ANSWER THAT, GOLA, JUST KNOW IT IS FOR PEOPLE LIKE US. BUT ARE YOU REALLY READY TO DO

SOMETHING ABOUT IT???? MAKE A DIFFERENCE, LIKE WE SAID?????? YOU AND ME HAVE COME A LONG WAY, TOO, BUT IN A SHORT TIME.

Elena turned away from her laptop screen and looked at Danny to her right, and then at Marcie Deveraux, who was sitting on her left.

“Be careful,” said Deveraux. “You know what to say. Exactly as we’ve discussed, and nothing more.”

Elena nodded and her hands went back to the keyboard.

I THINK I’M READY.

There was a short delay before the next pop-up appeared on Elena’s screen.

THINKING ISN’T ENOUGH. YOU’VE GOTTA BE CERTAIN BEFORE YOU TAKE THAT ULTIMATE STEP.

Deveraux leaned closer to Elena. When she spoke, her voice was insistent, but calm and assured.

“Ask the question. Just as I told you. And maintain contact and keep him online for as long as you can.”

Elena hit the keys again.

BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU??? WOULD YOU DO IT???

THOUGHT YOU’D ASK THAT!! AND I *WILL* DO IT, WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT. BUT FOR NOW IT’S MY ROLE TO

**HELP OTHERS, LIKE THE ONES WHO'VE GONE BEFORE.
LOOK, I UNDERSTAND COMPLETELY IF IT'S TOO MUCH
FOR YA. THERE ARE OTHERS OUT THERE WAITING.**

"Don't ask about the others," said Deveraux quickly. "Keep it on you, and your commitment."

Elena nodded and took a deep breath. Just writing about what Black Star was proposing was enough to make her shiver. But she nodded again and began to type.

**NO, I AM SURE. I'M CERTAIN!!! I'VE HAD ENOUGH! I
WANNA SHOW EVERYONE EXACTLY WHAT I THINK OF THIS
CRAP WORLD!!!**

There was a longer delay, and Elena glanced anxiously at Deveraux. This was usually a sign that Black Star was about to close down.

"Maintain contact," said Deveraux quickly. "Ask about his real name. He knows yours. Ask him!"

But before Elena could begin to type, Black Star came back on screen.

**OK. GOTTA GO NOW. WE'LL TALK AGAIN VERY SOON,
MAKE PLANS. THIS CRAP WORLD'S GONNA DISCOVER
WHAT A SPECIAL PERSON YOU ARE, GOLA!!!!!!!!!!**

The screen went blank. Black Star had gone, and as Elena sat back in her chair, her hands were trembling.