

WHY THE GOOD ASSASSIN?

I started writing *The Good Assassin* in the fall of 2010 in Portland and finished the first draft by May of the following year. The last two years were spent revising, polishing and getting the novel ready for publication. I had several working titles for the book: “Liberty Crossing,” then “Patriot Day,” and finally “The Good Assassin.”

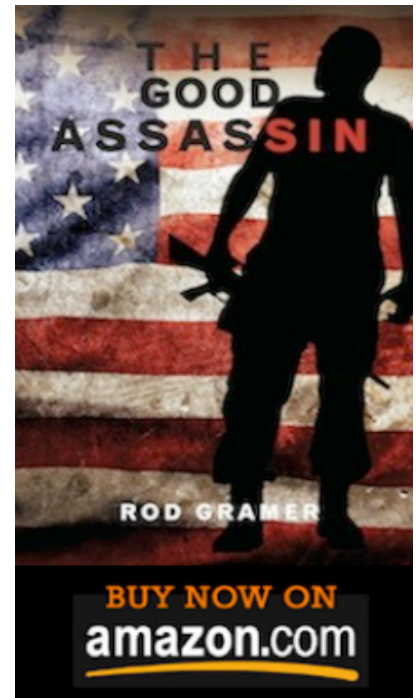
The idea for the novel came to me after I submitted a short story about a troubled Iraqi war vet to an editor. He liked the story and suggested that it could be lengthened into a novel. I thought it was better suited as a short story and didn’t have the legs to be a novel.

But, as I was thinking about his proposal, the image of a vet living on the streets of Washington, D.C. came to me. Perhaps because in the 1980s my wife, Julie, and I lived in Washington and we were unnerved by the large number of homeless, including many vets, who were sleeping in doorways and over heating vents. It seemed sad to us that those men who had served their country were now living on the streets in the shadow of the U.S. Capitol.

About the same time I had read Dana Priest’s series in *The Washington Post* on the rise of the national intelligence state in post-9/11 America. I was struck by how far our country had wandered from the values of our founding fathers to the highly secretive and invasive intelligence state where constitutional rights Americans once took for granted were being encroached upon and violated with increasing fervor.

(Ironically, many of the story lines in *The Good Assassin* – the use of drones against U.S. citizens, the eavesdropping by the NSA, the intransigence of the Congress against the president – have become headline news during the writing of the novel. The real danger of the situation has become even more alarming given Edward Snowden’s leaked documents.)

I’ve believed that the greatest threat to national security was not from outside our nation, but from within, especially from demagogues who prey upon the fears of the people. We have seen that pattern used throughout history by tyrants to undermine even the most advanced civilizations. We only have to point to Germany – the home of Luther, Bach, Beethoven and Goethe – as the most recent example.



In conceiving *The Good Assassin*, I asked myself: What would happen if all the power of the national intelligence state fell into the wrong hands? What if that power was used to topple our republican form of government? And what if the least likely of heroes, a homeless, alcoholic, troubled vet, living on the streets of the nation's capital, stepped forward to save the day?

My response to those questions is *The Good Assassin*.

If you have read the book and enjoyed it, I hope you write a review for Amazon. It will help put the book into the hands of many more people. If you haven't bought the book, I hope you do.

Thank you.

BECOME A WYAKIN – HELP A VET

On any given night there are tens of thousands of Hunter Davissons living on the streets of America's cities. They need our help – before they give up hope. I am contributing part of the net proceeds of *The Good Assassin* to a program that is helping veterans who are returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. If you want to help, please donate to your own favorite non-profit that benefits our veterans. My own chosen program is the Wyakin Warrior Foundation. According to Native American legend, a wyakin is a guardian spirit – often in the form of an animal like a bear or eagle – that advises and protects a person throughout life. We can all become a “wyakin” for a vet by donating our time and money to programs that advise and protect these true American heroes.

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