



Alpha

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A graduate of the Department of Defense's experimental Black Flag program, Daniel Petrovich carries a secret he'd rather keep buried. A secret his government has hidden in the deepest vaults of the Pentagon.

Someone is trying to raise Black Flag from the dead, and drag Petrovich back into the poisonous life he abandoned. Someone who knows his darkest secrets.

In exchange for the promise of a clean slate, and a chance to keep the life he has built with the woman he loves, he agrees to carry out one more mission. Now Daniel has an even bigger problem. The assassination of Mohammed Ghani, a wealthy Muslim importer, wasn't the uncomplicated mission he had been promised. Seven other prominent Muslim businessmen are killed on the same night along the East Coast, suddenly extinguishing Task Force HYDRA, the most significant counter-terrorism investigation in recent FBI history.

Daniel's life is about to disintegrate, as he becomes the focus of a relentless FBI manhunt, and the target of a vengeful CIA agent. To survive, he'll be forced to release a dark side he fought for years to keep suppressed. A dark side with no boundaries, and few loyalties.

Alpha Details

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From Reader Review Alpha for online ebook

Richard says

My favorite book of the year! What a surprise this one was.. Great characters, plotting and story.. I can't wait for the next one in the series. We write within the same genre and I'm proud to say I could not have written it better myself...please continue with this series, it is your calling... Go and buy this book folks you will absolutely love it...5 STARS

Matt Kelland says

I used to read a lot of thrillers when I was younger, but not so much these days. I think, to be honest, I'm tired of the genre. So although I'm only giving this two stars, that probably says more about me than the book. It's a solid enough thriller, but it just didn't engage me. Rogue agents, black ops outside anyone's control, retired assassins brought back for one last mission by a super-patriotic renegade commander... I've read too many of those books.

I got horrendously confused between who was who. It had a huge cast of characters, most of whom didn't have much to distinguish them. If I'd been reading it on paper, I'd have been flicking back and forth to the list of characters (if there was one) to remind myself who was FBI, who was CIA, who was NSA, who was a cop, and so on. As it was, I was reading this on a Kindle so it wasn't an option anyway.

I found the end disappointing. (view spoiler)

All in all, it was okay for passing the time, but not a book I'd urge you to read, or a book I'd want to re-read.

Richard A Roberts says

An Amazing Novel about American Government

Fast moving with intriguing subplots. Well defined characters, particularly Danny Petrovitch. Seemed to be from latest breaking news items. Great author.

Hilary Carter says

Black Flagged delivers action and excitement at breakneck speed. There are many characters but they are introduced and integrated well. No extra filler here, just the way I like it. The flawed main character is multifaceted and will be great in the proposed series. If you like your books lean and mean look no further.

Brittany says

Excited to read! Loved Konkoly's first book, Jakarta Pandemic (which everyone should check out)!

Michael Pugh says

Exciting

Geoff says

Solid writing, and very readable. Good pacing.

Nate Granzow says

With immense dexterity, the likes of which I've not seen by even the most renowned authors in the political/espionage thriller genre, Konkoly delivers a clear winner with Black Flagged. I found Daniel Petrovich an authentic protagonist, which is crucial to my reading enjoyment. Too often, authors paint their protagonist as invincible, handsome beyond believability, and with few to no character flaws. Petrovich bleeds. Another element worthy of note in Black Flagged: Konkoly, with as many characters as he weaved into the story, was considerate enough to include a cast of characters at the novel's beginning. That may seem insignificant, but for a reader like myself who reads multiple novels at a time and has limited memory, it was a major asset. In regards to his writing style, Konkoly possesses a clear mastery of pacing and characterization. He's certainly one of the best I've read, and I look forward to reading more of his work in the future.

Sheila says

Many people would probably consider this a "guy's" book, but this chick really enjoyed it! The non-stop action, the twists and turns, I felt like I was on a thrilling roller coaster ride, with no idea what was coming around the next turn. So if you like action type books at all, this is one I would highly recommend, even for all the female readers out there...in fact...especially for all the female readers out there! You won't be disappointed.

Jim A says

Stumbled across this via an Amazon recommendation. What a find.

Fast paced with pretty good character development. A couple of twists, although in retrospect the clues were there. I'm looking forward to the follow on novel.

Thanks, Steve, for the great entertainment. I'm always up for a good thriller.

Russell Blake says

Author Steven Konkoly has moved from the style he uses in his blockbuster The Jakarta Pandemic to an even faster-paced, action orientation in Black Flagged. The protagonist is capable and interesting, the story compelling, and the style a big favorite with me. There's a conspiracy, good guys who maybe aren't so good, bad guys who maybe aren't so bad, and twists and turns galore. Fans of Jakarta are sure to like Black Flagged, as are fans of Ludlum/Childs-style thrillers, and I'd expect that we'll hear a lot more from Steven moving forward. Black Flagged firmly carves out territory for Konkoly as an epic action/thriller writer with a bright future.

Patrick D'Orazio says

Black Flagged tells the tale of Daniel Petrovich, an executive for a company in Maine who is dragged back into the life he'd left behind five years before-as a member of the government's Black Flag program, which puts operatives in deep cover, infiltrating terrorist organizations among other unsavory entities. He's been asked to do one last job...a job that will put him in the cross hairs of virtually every government agency and destroy the peaceful new life he's fabricated with his wife, Jessica. It doesn't take long for things to go as badly as he suspects they would, and thus begins a race for him to escape everyone from the FBI and CIA hunting him down, while he tries to figure out how to once again sever ties with the man who has been manipulating and controlling him from the moment he joined the Black Flag program. The story moves at a breakneck pace, with the level of detail that gave it a sense of extreme realism that keeps the tension, as well as the entertainment value high.

I will admit that Black Flagged is perhaps not my typical read, so keep that in mind with this review. My father is more of a fan of the espionage and spy thriller type tales, though I will admit that I have no aversion to them, it's just not the type of books I normally seek out. That said, I've certainly seen my share of movies about covert organizations that are deeper and darker than the CIA that play by their own rules, as most of us have. I think that Black Flagged fits well into that mix, though with a main character who perhaps has a more vague moral code than what we would expect from a "hero", even if we know they have a dark past and are willing to do the things that are necessary to complete their mission, no matter how questionable or reprehensible. Daniel Petrovich, as it is explained by another character in the book, has an unhampered pragmatism. He does what needs to be done, and then he moves on, no matter what. As described in the book, when he is in the field, Daniel is always analyzing his options, taking a split second to assess the likelihood of escape, or of success, based on the different actions he can take, then he makes his decision and commits to that decision without hesitation, regardless of what he has to do. I would like to say that perhaps he is jaded, or has psychological issues that bring him nightmares based on what he has been required to do on his missions, but nothing like that comes across in this tale. Since this is the first in a series of books, I would guess that the reader will get the chance to delve deeper into the character's psyche in future adventures and find out more about what makes him tick. I suppose that perhaps that would be my criticism with this story-while I think the reader can appreciate the frustrations and distaste Daniel has for his past life and his desire to escape it, doing what he does when called upon by the General who runs the Black Flag program seems to come to him so naturally, with minimal regrets, that it was hard for me to gain much attachment to him-I felt no empathy.

Still, this is an introductory tale, allowing us to only skim the surface of the relationship Daniel has with

those closest to him, and it moved at such a breakneck pace that it isn't surprising that his character development was limited in that regard. I am sure the author will delve deeper, the further along in Daniel's overall story that we go. And I think it will be a pretty wild and intriguing ride moving forward.

Samuel says

Black Flagged- "Classification given to an intelligence officer who is to be interrogated and summarily killed if apprehended".

Black Flagged is the first in a series of spy novels that are grittier than established names such as Scott Harvath and Mitch Rapp. As the author, Steven Konkoly notes, his books often have unapologetic themes and are not for the faint hearted. The title refers to a D.O.D program founded by one of the books main characters aimed at training assassin's who could be used to get over red tape and inter-service rivalry. The book itself is like a fusion between Ludlum and Forsyth and in this review, you'll see why.

The story kicks off in 1990's Serbia with a bang. A lone assassin sets up an incredibly destructive ambush for a major Serbian militia member. After hosing down the Serbian's Range Rover's with gunfire, the assassin finishes off his target with an axe. Noting that the target was visiting his brother who helped manage his fortune, the assassin pays an off page visit and steals a sizeable amount of money taking some for himself. The book then cuts to the USA in 2005. The assassin, going under his real name Daniel Petrovich has left his old job, married and built up a highly successful civilian business in Maine. One day, he gets a phone call from a subordinate of his old superior and is persuaded to perform a favour, to kill a man. Petrovich does so but soon finds that he's helped eliminate eight major Al-Qaeda financiers, destroyed an ongoing federal investigation and as events escalate, with the CIA and FBI hunting him down, is forced to go back into a world he hates and rely on a mentor he despises.

In terms of plot, Black Flagged is solid. In the classical Robert Ludlum tradition, it's one well trained man up against the government and on the run. Only a few twists here and there but some of them will surprise you and make you smile. The book relies on the mysterious nature of the main characters, slowly revealing hidden aspects of their personality as we get near the conclusion. Action is also solid, a particular highlight happening right inside the Pentagon where one of the secondary characters gets a chance to shine with a judicious use of lethal and non-lethal weaponry. The research is superb with tactics, trade-craft and weapons having that authentic ring, just like in a Forsyth novel but not overbearingly detailed like in a Clancy doorstopper.

In terms of Characters, Black Flagged is interesting. In their world, a Darwinist world view common in most Forsyth novels is apparent. There are only the quick and the dead in the world of Black Flagged and the main cast is very quick and leaves anyone who gets in their way dead. Here are three standouts. Take Daniel Petrovich for instance. Like a ruthless version of the film version of Jason Bourne, he's highly competent, lethal and wants to be left alone with the woman he loves. Unlike Jason Bourne and Mitch Rapp however, the measures he takes to try and accomplish his goals also involve cop killing and other morally ambiguous actions. (This is just my interpretation but I think the author was trying to partially de-construct Mitch Rapp/Jack Bauer style characters through Petrovich, showing that in the course of their job, there would be much collateral damage.) He won't win fans from law abiding readers and many will have fun discussing whether he's a sociopath or merely "pathologically practical" but for me, Petrovich is quite fascinating and has a redeeming side in the form of his deep love for his wife, Jessica who despite acting like an ordinary

housewife, will surprise you near the end of the book. Next, there's General Sanderson, Petrovich's former employee. To use Patton's term for Rommel, he's a magnificent bastard, someone who is willing to remove obstacles in his way through any means necessary and in style. Charming, amoral and intelligent, during the novel he screws with the CIA and FBI and utterly humiliates the latter. He's a brilliant character that even though you're supposed to hate him, at the same time, you will be cheering him on and waiting with bated breath to see what gambit he conducts next. Finally there's Richard Farrington, a minor character who gets to show off the capabilities of the rank and file Black Flagged assassins. With his use of several unique gadgets to get rid of several people in his office covertly, he made a splash for a minor character and thankfully will return in later instalments of the series.

Overall, Black Flagged is a solid spy novel and an excellent introduction to a promising series. Many of you will be aghast at the actions of some of the characters but hey, Mitch Rapp, Jack Bauer and Scott Harvath have done worse. The Black Flagged members are at least honest about the fact there's no right or wrong, operating in a cynical world where there is only moral ambiguity. For the faint hearted, there are other, more pleasant books in the thriller genre, read them instead. For those who are happy to have their world-view shaken up a bit and are tired of misty eyed world view presented by Tom Clancy but love a well researched thriller, welcome to Black Flagged. **VERY RECOMMENDED.**

Murray McDonald says

Loved it! Great action thriller that keeps the tension and pace throughout. Black Flagged introduces us to a great new series, with some seriously cool characters. Book 2 - Black Flagged Redux, purchased and ready to go on my Kindle. If you, like me, enjoy your thrillers with plenty of action, intrigue, suspense and a few clever twists thrown in to keep you on your toes you will most definitely love Black Flagged.

Doug Branscombe says

Great first book in a series, story grabs you and doesn't let go. Characters that you find yourself pulling for, even if they aren't the most "well-behaved" sort.
