



Cold Shot

Mark E. Henshaw

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The Iranians' plan quickly becomes clear—they're building a nuclear bomb in politically unstable Venezuela, away from the UN's prying eyes. Stryker and Burke must tread carefully, though, because diplomacy in Venezuela is tricky at best. A civil war is at stake if word gets out. Can they stop the Iranians before it's too late?

From current CIA analyst and Red Cell think tank veteran Mark Henshaw, *Cold Shot* is a fascinating, thrilling, and richly detailed journey into the intelligence world that only a true insider could create.

Cold Shot Details

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Author : Mark E. Henshaw
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From Reader Review Cold Shot for online ebook

Mike Worley says

4 solid stars, excellent effort by Henshaw, a fun, satisfying read.

Lisa Dess says

I received this book from the publisher for an honest review.

This is the second book in the Kyra Stryker & Jonathon Burke series. I have not read the first book, Red Cell, but I will be, because this book was amazing.

The action in this book is really intense. It made my heart accelerate. There was one part where I had to hold my breath until Kyra made her safe passage and when she did I literally had to swipe my forehead. When a book pulls you in like that you know it's great.

I love how Mark provided you so many different perspectives on the events. Not only do you see what is occurring on the field with Jon and Kyra, you also get to see what occurs behind the curtains at the White House, and everywhere else. You also get a good understanding of the motivations behind the decisions. Love that!

The main characters, Kyra and Jon, are strong and well developed. They are both easy to connect with. There are many remarkable secondary characters as well.

The book was paced well and kept my attention. The ending leaves you with some questions but not a cliffhanger.

I highly recommend this book.

Laszlo says

Hope I can read your work more !

Jack Laschenski says

Great international intrigue, with exotic weapons thrown in.

Venezuela and Iran, partners in building an atomic bomb.

Must be stopped.

CIA and the Navy to the rescue!

Great!

Kevin says

Perhaps 3.5 Stars, enjoyable however have read better spy thrillers, laborious in places. Still worth a read. Will try another of Mark Henshaw work and Decide.

Trevor Wickie says

The follow up second novel was great this series is awesome.

Dan Smith says

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Michael Martz says

'Cold Shot', the 2nd in Mark Henshaw's Stryker & Burke series, is easily the best of a very good group. In this installment, 2 bad actor states on the international stage conspire to bring a nuke into our neck of the woods. We're fortunate, though, to have Kara & Jon on our side.

The plot seems very believable, as unfortunately do the political machinations in the middle of an international crisis. The writing is again very crisp and propulsive, which is a good match for the overall breakneck pace of the novel. The dialogue is fine, and we're beginning to learn a bit more about the characters, especially Jonathan Burke. The conclusion is exciting and very believable. The action sequences leading to it are very well done- it's difficult for a writer to keep the tension and action at a high level when writing a multi-page sequence like the one that leads to the ending of 'Cold Shot' but Mr. Henshaw succeeds in doing so.

As with the other books in the series, I'm very impressed with the author's knowledge of the procedures and capabilities of our clandestine and military services. The Red Cell series is a fine entry to the spy/thriller genre and I look forward to future additions to it!

Cathy says

*arc

Cold Shot is a great book for fans of Cussler, Flynn, and Clancy. It is a modern day thriller that will keep you up turning pages well into the night. There is no lack of action, and, believe it or not, this CIA thriller is written without much of the vulgar language you find in most novels these days. The plot is concise, realistic and interesting. Jon and Kyra are of what would happen if Sherlock Holmes and Wonder Woman joined the CIA. This is the second book of a series, but it is easy to fall into the characters and enjoy the book without having read the first one. In fact, I just checked out the first one from the library because after reading Cold Shot, I can't wait to see how it all started.

Spenser says

Good plot and decent read. Not great by any stretch. Mr Henshaw is / was apparently an analyst by trade and it shows. He still needs to work on his field operative story-lines. The ending also seemed a bit rushed. I'll keep him on my free library to read list, hoping he gets better with practice. Nothing about this book encourages me rush to read the next in the series.

Bruce says

[The ship had all the parts for a nuclear bomb that was destined for

Braden Bell says

Absolutely loved this book. The author continues to deliver thrilling, page-turning, excitement (I truly couldn't put it down). But in addition, he has also woven a lot of depth into the excitement. The characters and their relationships grow deeper in this book, and I found myself caring about them as much as I did the plot. Characters are revealed deftly, and their complex backstories are fascinating. My greatest complaint is that I have to wait until spring for Henshaw's next book.

One thing I really appreciate about Henshaw's books is that they are clean. No swearing, no sex--and it doesn't reduce the impact at all. It's amazing how much I don't miss this.

Chris says

I've now finished the Kyra Stryker trilogy. This is the best of the 3 in my opinion. They are like no spy thriller I've read. They have more detail somehow, but detail in context. I'm always frustrated by novels where the character suddenly starts quoting out of the manual about some piece of equipment like that is supposed to be normal conversation. This one has that detail, but in a way that isn't out of place and isn't hard

to understand. The only bad thing about that - this guy is an active CIA analyst and his writing is approved and so the real details are different than what you are reading I think.

Shane Amazon says

Cold Shot isn't the first book written about Iranian nuclear weapons and given world affairs it is safe to say it won't be the last. But where other books focus on political drama on the world stage, Cold Shot takes us to a more focused and personal story about a handful of dedicated CIA operatives and their handlers.

Minor plot spoilers ahead:

After what can only be called a slip up by an arrogant foreign service agent, the US intelligence community becomes aware of a ship sailing the ocean blue with an unknown destination and unknown intentions. After hunting the ship down at a port in the western hemisphere, a lone CIA agent must penetrate the dockyard and find out the ship's secrets. What she discovers is little short of shocking and has the potential of changing the world in tremendous ways. With the secret out, the agent and her partner must find a way to safely rid the world of this new found threat and do so with minimal life lost, especially their own. With the help of powerful and loyal friends back home, the agents fight tooth and nail against an enemy bent of shifting world power. Some will win and some will lose. Lives will be saved and lives will be lost. Will our heroes save the day?

Characters:

The most thrilling aspect of this book would have to be in the characters. I cannot tell you how refreshing it is to see a strong female character knee deep in events and storylines that are usually constructed for their male counterparts. And even though there is a male character that rushes in to help the female character out in a time of great danger, the author doesn't fall back on the stereotypical damsel in distress mold that so many other authors resort to. Here in Cold Shot we are not only exposed to one great female lead but three, as station chiefs and agency leaders are just as determined to see things right with estrogen as a male would have been with endless bravado and testosterone.

Setting:

Although the book is one that could easily be set on a worldwide stage with ally nations and axes of evil taking up page after page with political bickering and power plays, the book does well to offer a much more focused setting. With the exception of a few times when the story calls for a larger cast of nations, the book stays focused on two countries and a half dozen locals. This more focused telling offers more to the fast paced nature of the book and does wonders to push the story forward at an incredible pace.

Writing:

Like I said in the title of this review, the book does read a lot like an episode of 24. With the story bridging a time frame of about ten days, the book clips along at a fast pace and the writing does little to get in the way. Written with language easy to digest, the reader will not have to trudge through endless agency acronyms and yawn inspiring in depth character stories that have little or no effect on the larger picture. Cold Shot is the type of book that you can carry on the plane and lose yourself in only to find that you've reached your destination far before you realize it.

Conclusion:

With fast paced drama, great characters able to hold their own without being dumbed down, plenty of heroes to root for, and writing that can keep you hooked from page one, there is little to complain about here. My recommendation is that if you are looking for a fun, witty, and compelling book to tare apart in short order, then this is a good book to pick. Nothing here to report as a negative so this one gets five stars, a rare rating from me.

Samuel says

DEAD ON TARGET

Last year, we had Venezuela go up in smoke. Hugo Chavez had finally given up the ghost and an election was conducted. The state used violence and marshaled its significant assets to assist in getting Chavez's chosen successor into office. Venezuela is geopolitically important. A friend of states like Iran, and with significant oil reserves at its disposal, the people who run it like to thumb their noses at what they consider the number one threat to their existence, America. In Mark Henshaw's second book, "Cold Shot" he uses Venezuela as a backdrop and crafts a simple but clever conspiracy around their relationship with Iran. Now to the review. How would a country get around sanctions to develop WMD's in peace? And what would happen if the project got rumbled?

The novel begins off the coast of Africa. A team of IRGC soldiers recapture a ship with a special cargo from Somali Pirates. The team leader meets with a noted Iranian scientist. The latter gets pissed off when he finds one of the containers was blown open and takes out his frustrations with a knife on one of the surviving pirates. This mistake is revealed when a US navy vessel finds the body and catches the attention of the CIA. What starts out as a routine investigation leads the Red Cell partnership of Stryker and Burke to Venezuela, where they track the ship down. Stryker does some surveillance work and finds some dock workers suffering from radiation poisoning. From there, events escalate as the Agency attempt to expose a project hatched by Iran and Venezuela while having to contend with a new political busybody who has just taken up residence in the White House.

In terms of plot, Henshaw improved mighty from his first book. Complications and plot twists come thick and fast with the Red Cell team having to contend with surprising problems that bedevil the success of their assignment and their chances of getting away alive. From an infiltration into a hidden, jungle based weapons factory, a riot outside the Caracas US Embassy and a final, harrowing exfiltration across the Venezuelan coastline, the author takes what worked in his first book and dials it up to eleven. Mr Henshaw also continues his progress at becoming the next Tom Clancy with another well-researched narrative. From the particulars of sniping, accurate tradecraft and a plausible portrayal of the kit CIA officer Stryker uses in getting around security systems, the technical details have a constant, "insider" ring.

Characters? Once again, so many standouts so I'll focus on 4.

Stryker and Burke continue to shine once more. Stryker continues to prove herself as one of the stronger female characters in the post 9/11 spy thriller genre. This time around, she's had to bring along a Heckler and Koch 416 and acquits herself admirably with it when things go to hell in one part of the book. Still the calm professional from the last book, her relationship with her partner has also developed. She helps him through a rough patch partway through the book. Next, we get major character development for John Burke. From a flashback to one of his past assignments and the reveal that he's a decent sniper, the author fleshed him out a lot more than in the previous book.

Then there's Director Cooke. A competent spymaster that you wouldn't mind as your boss, she is faced with some major problems in the form of a commander in chief who on a whim wants to cook her goose. Fighting him off and constantly frustrating his plans is fun to watch, especially as he gets more angry and obsessed as

the book goes on.

Finally, the president himself. Henshaw crafts a perfect example of the worst possible politician an intelligence officer could have as a task master. Petty, vindictive and arrogant, at times he was making me cringe as his little game with Director Cooke turned into an idiotic obsessive vendetta. It was fun near the climax to see his chief of staff knock him down a notch but he still survived the events of the book, ready to cause hell for our main characters.

Overall, Mark Henshaw shows great promise as a spy/geopolitical thriller writer. Accurate technical details, excellent characterization (and a rare female protagonist), realistic geopolitical worst case scenarios and smooth plotting, in my opinion, he really is the next Tom Clancy. Book three in this fine series can't come fast enough!

COMPLETELY RECOMMENDED.
