



Rising Phoenix

By Kyle Mills

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Special Agent Mark Beamon is a maverick. His open disdain for the FBI's rules--and Directors--has exiled him to a no-profile post in the boondocks.

But when a shadowy right-wing group starts flooding America's emergency rooms with dead and dying, Beamon is summoned back to Washington. Teamed with an icily efficient female field agent, he is given the thankless task of stopping the slaughter--even though millions of Americans secretly approve of it!

As the body count rises, Beamon realizes there is something eerily familiar about his adversary, reminding him of the coldest killer he ever encountered--not a criminal but a law enforcement colleague. And for the first time, he wonders why he was chosen for this assignment.

Was it his expertise--or his expendability?

"An explosive thriller that launches a new genius for taut, compulsive adventure writing...."

- Tom Clancy

"In the world of political thrillers, I have the feeling that young Kyle Mills will soon be a very big player."

- Frederick Forsythe

"A phenomenal concept....Fascinating....Good conspiracy theory, absolutely!"

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"Absorbing..A fine thriller with memorable characters and enough twists to keep readers turning pages....Mills is definitely someone to watch."

- *Publishers Weekly*

"Writing in the Tom Clancy tradition, Kyle Mills has produced a power-packed drama about the men and women who battle the bad guys to protect us all."

- William H. Webster, former director of the FBI and CIA

"[An] exceptionally accomplished debut thriller. A chillingly effective and suspenseful tale, complete with the moral ambiguities and guilty pleasures of such vigilante dreams as *Death Wish*."

- *Kirkus Reviews*

"*Rising Phoenix* is gripping, authentic, and as frightening as a gunshot in the night."

- W.E.B. Griffin

"A seductive action novel....Here's one slick page turner that makes readers think."

- *San Francisco Chronicle*

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Editorial Review

Review

"[Rising Phoenix is] chillingly effective and suspenseful." (Kirkus Reviews)

About the Author

Kyle Mills is the author of *Sphere of Influence*, *Burn Factor*, *Free Fall*, *Storming Heaven*, and *Rising Phoenix*.

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Washington, D.C.,
October 15, Present Day

Things were looking good for Wile E. Coyote. His rocket-propelled roller skates gushed fire as he streaked across the dramatic desert landscape. It didn't matter, though. In the end he'd lose, left in the dust by that smart-ass Road Runner.

Leroy Marcus understood the coyote. He understood wanting and not having. And, though he had only just turned fifteen, he understood disappointment.

He punched the volume button on the remote, effectively drowning out the loud coughing coming from his mother. It looked like the coyote was about to take another spectacular fall to the earth, and he loved the low whistle that always seemed to accompany The Plunge.

"Leroy, get your mama some sugar."

He ignored her and stabbed at the volume button a couple more times.

"Leroy. Did you hear me? I need me some sugar!" The quiet desperation in her voice cut through the screech of ACME rocket skates.

He thought back to the days when his mother used to come home from work and ask for sugar. He and his older brother would run to her and bury their faces in her skirt and she would laugh and pat their heads affectionately.

But his brother had been dead for almost a year, and his mother no longer rushed out the door every morning, fussing that she was late. Now when she asked for some sugar she wanted more than a kiss. She wanted her fix.

"Leroy!"

He turned his head slowly and peered around the overstuffed chair that engulfed him. His mother sat in the kitchen, legs splayed out unnaturally under the table. She stared back at him with watery eyes.

The volume of the television increased again, this time on its own. The cartoons were over, replaced by a small leprechaun extolling the virtues of Lucky Charms. He turned away from his mother and pulled his knees to his chest.

"What you waitin' on, boy?"

Reluctantly he lowered his feet to the floor and maneuvered through the worn and broken toys that his five-year-old sister had scattered across the room. He paused for a moment to look down at his mother. She turned away and reached for a pack of cigarettes.

His sister appeared in the doorway of their mother's bedroom and ran to him. He knelt down and ran a hand through her hair.

"What you been up to, Diedre? Your braid's already falling out. Took me a half an hour this morning to make

you all pretty."

She giggled and chewed on her knuckle.

"I gotta go out for a little while, okay? You gonna be good for Mama?"

She nodded. Her smile had a way of making him forget who he was. He took care of her--and that made him as important as any rich white man. Maybe even more important.

"Okay. I'll be back in an hour. If you're good, I fix that braid. If not, you have to walk around all lopsided for the rest of the day."

She turned and ran back to their mother's bedroom. He watched her until she disappeared, and then he punched the redial button on his cellular phone.

The wind that had been flowing through the streets like a river for the past two days had finally blown itself out, leaving Washington blanketed in a cold mist. Leroy surveyed the dark sky from the doorway of the housing project that had been his home since he was born. His 'hood was particularly depressing in the rain. It was true that the sun accentuated peeling paint and cracked sidewalks, but it also spurred activity. Children ran across asphalt-covered playgrounds. Teenagers smoked and drank on street corners. Even the foul smell that the sun wrung from the neighborhood was something. Rain made it all look like a faded black-and-white photograph.

He shoved his hands into baggy jeans and began splashing slowly down the stairs. At the bottom he turned right and started up the street, covering his head with the hood of his sweatshirt. Through the mist, he could just make out another lone figure framed by a severely leaning doorway. As he approached, the figure came to life and started toward him. "Tek! Whassup?"

Leroy had earned the moniker a little over a year ago from his prolific, though less than skillful, use of a Tec-9 machine pistol. It was his weapon of choice, and an item that he was never without.

"Ain't nothin' goin', 'Twan. You ready?" The wet air seemed to suck up sound.

"Shit, yeah. Nothin' much doin' on a day like this."

They continued up the street, not talking. It took less than ten minutes to arrive at the small white house that was their destination. They paused on the sidewalk, scanning for danger signals.

The house's roof looked ready to cave in. The thick boards covering the windows seemed to be the only structurally sound materials that had been used on it. There was no yard to speak of, just wet garbage clinging to overgrown weeds. To the uninitiated, the house would have appeared abandoned. They knew better.

'Twan held back by the street as Tek walked casually to the front door, resisting the urge to look around him. He rapped three times with his knuckles, paused, then hit the door twice with the soft flesh on the side of his fist.

"Yeah, who is it," came a muffled voice on the other side of the door.

"Yo, man, it's Tek. Open up, it's fucking pouring out here!"

The door opened about two inches, stopped, then opened the rest of the way.

"Who's that?"

Tek examined the man pointing at his friend on the sidewalk. He looked like a mountain.

"He's with me," Tek explained simply, trying unsuccessfully to step around the man and out of the rain.

"You come in. He stays out."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Matthew Williams:

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