



Mission Critical

Mark Greaney

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From Mark Greaney, the New York Times bestselling author of Gunmetal Gray and a coauthor of Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan novels, comes a high-stakes thriller featuring the world's most dangerous assassin: the Gray Man.

Court Gentry's flight on a CIA transport plane is interrupted when a security team brings a hooded man aboard. They want to kick Gentry off the flight but are overruled by CIA headquarters. The mystery man is being transported to England where a joint CIA/MI6 team will interrogate him about a mole in Langley.

When they land in an isolated airbase in the U.K., they are attacked by a hostile force who kidnaps the prisoner. Only Gentry escapes. His handlers send him after the attackers, but what can one operative do against a trained team of assassins? A lot, when that operative is the Gray Man.

Mission Critical Details

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Author : Mark Greaney

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Genre : Thriller, Fiction, Action, Spy Thriller, Espionage

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From Reader Review Mission Critical for online ebook

Mojo Shivers says

In the land of the action thriller there are a few series that are atop the heap. Jack Reacher for sure. Pike Logan definitely. Orphan X of course. But right up there with those three, forming the Mount Rushmore of Badassery, is The Gray Man. Eight Books in and I'm still shocked at how well-plotted, well-written, and amazed at the level of detail there are in every Court Gentry book, especially the set pieces. These are novels begging, pleading to be turned into films and Mission Critical is no different.

I still think #4 in the series, Dead Eye, is the best of the bunch but this slots right into the #2 spot. While his solo adventures in the odd books are awesome, I really do prefer the even books where great supporting CIA characters are there to back him up and flesh out his personal non-lone wolf life. It gets kind of stale having Court going all Rambo every book, so I still appreciate the whole "one assignment for me, one assignment for the CIA" approach. It's like a movie superstar trading off between big blockbusters and darling indie films—it shows off both facets to the characters and the world they inhabit.

It's nice to see Zoya and even nicer to have this book firmly centered around fleshing out her backstory. Susan Brewer also had a fascinating sub-plot that definitely has not been resolved by a long shot. I look forward to seeing that pop up again. But, hands down, Zack Hightower—Romantic himself—takes the cake as best supporting character in this installment. He always gets the best one-liners, mostly because he's as close to the class clown/comic relief of the series—if you can call a cold-blooded mercenary with a firm sense of duty and patriotism with over 100 confirmed kills a class clown. And yet two or three times a book he just cracks me up without ever starting into John McClain territory where every scene is a comeback, quip, or smart Alec remark. Zack does it just enough to let you know he has more of a sense of humor than Court but not so much to make you forget he literally is one of the top 3 most dangerous operators in the series.

Take for instance one of my favorite scenes from the book:

—
"Who is there?" the man called. "Who is there?"

Zack Hightower knelt and spun in the doorway, fired a blast, pumped the fore-end of the weapon, and fired again.

"It's America, motherfucker!" Zack blasted three more shells from the shotgun, covering the darkness with steel shot, then spun back to concealment to reload.

—
I was laughing for a solid five minutes at this because it's so over-the-top but in a way that's believable because he's no 80's action movie star. He's just seen them all and realizes that now is the perfect time to break out his imitation of a catchphrase. Again.

Does he say it because he's a blowhard red state asshole? Nope, he mostly says it in an attempt to elicit a laugh from Court and to keep the mood light in the midst of a supremely deadly firefight where they're outnumbered almost three-to-one.

Night Train, indeed. Lol

Read the book. It's an exquisite example of what happens when a great character hits his stride thanks to a supremely talented author having full confidence in the world he's built, the way he writes, and in his ability

to stage action scene after action scene without getting repetitive or cliché. This is one of the best novel series out there and should be atop any reading list you make this year.

Kashif says

Mission Critical is one of the finest novels I have ever read. Brilliantly infused plot-lines without turning overwhelming, stunning action sequences ranging from hand-to-hand combat to shootouts and car chases involving shootouts, a roster of returning characters and wonderful humor to balance the gritty situations in the novel. Court Gentry is back as The Gray Man, wrecking havoc in spectacular sequences of action and car chases on bad guys that cross his path. It is always a pleasure to see Court hasn't lost a step. Mission Critical brings back Zoya Zakharova from gunmetal gray and Zack Hightower from the previous novels as Court's team leader during his time in CIA. The chemistry between Court and Zoya is beautifully written and is a delight to read as a long time Gray Man fan. Zack Hightower provides a comic relief in the midst of dire situations but the author makes sure the comic relief does not feel awkward or ill-written. The action sequences are written with a finesse that combines realism with pure awesomeness as Court Gentry does what he does best, take out the bad guys like a boss. The plot twists and turns are well thought out to maximize their effects as readers expect one thing to happen and the narrative takes a swift turn that keeps the readers excited. The stakes in this novel while of global reach also hold personal stakes for Court and Zoya, making the story all the more interesting. Mr. Greaney manages to create a masterpiece with all the necessary elements of an exciting action thriller and then some more. A must read masterpiece!

Slaven Tomasi says

Mission Critical, the eighth Gray Man novel from national best-selling author, Mark Greaney. Mark also wrote or co-wrote seven novels with author Tom Clancy in the Jack Ryan series and the Campus Novel series. On top of that, Mark also has another novel coming out this year, Red Metal (Out 7/16). Co-written with decorated United States Marine Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Hunter Ripley Rawlings.

Mission Critical reads like two separate thrillers combined in one, with two dangerous, highly trained assets who are part of a covert off the books, blacker than black program, code name: Poison Apple. The two assets converge on a target from different ways. One finds himself at the wrong place at the wrong time, unable to stand by while people are getting killed. This asset, code name – Violator gets involved and does not stop. The other asset, on a personal vendetta she noticed while being debriefed by the CIA in a picture. She sees something that only makes sense to her and from there this asset, code name – Anthem escapes her 'safe house' and utilizes her formidable spy skills to get out of the country, acquire weapons, gear, and intelligence. Both on the hunt, leading to the same spot with the same target, once they run into each other, the action only picks up and the stakes get bigger and bigger as our assets learn what the bad guys are up to.

The villain of this story is former GRU director, General Feodor Zakharov. This dude however goes by the name David Mars. An English gentleman who no one ever suspected of being a Russian operative. He accomplished this by utilizing skills taught to him by his late wife, whose job was to teach Russian operatives' language and proper dialect skills and groom them to live in England or the United States and blend in as if they were natives. Russia utilized her and bred many assets who were placed in deep cover as far back as 14 years ago in order to build their legend and establish themselves in various roles, some even in law enforcement. Utilizing these assets, Zakharov made it his life mission to hurt the west and when he learned about the opportunity that presented itself, he moved whatever chess pieces he needed to and came up with a brilliant plan to conduct a terrorist strike against "The Five Eyes conference." An annual get

together of the world's leading intelligence agencies, with representation from the U.S., the Brits, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. With his legend in place, 'David Mars' planned and led the terrorist organization without any official ties to Russia. He also established shell corporations and recruited other motivated individuals from other countries to help in the attack. Specifically, he recruited Won Jang-Mi, an intelligence asset and scientist from North Korea, who adopted a legend as well, Janice Won from South Korea. Janice, a true-believer in her belief to destroy the west, she was motivated by her hatred for the west due to stories she heard as a child growing up about American troops eating North Korean children during the Korean War. This resonated with me because as a Marine, having been in Iraq and Afghanistan, patrolling the streets. We would rarely get hit by an IED or ambushed. While the Army, sometimes patrolling the very same streets got into contact just about every time. Where we better? More disciplined? Less complacent? – Maybe! But we also heard stories that the insurgents feared us specifically. Knowing the difference between our camouflage utility uniform or cammis that we wore and that of the Army. They knew when the Marines were on the move. One particular story I heard is they believed in order to become a U.S. Marine, we would have to sacrifice our first born. So, while a made-up story or myth among the enemy, they believed it. Therefore, reading Mission Critical and learning what motivated this DPRK agent, it felt believable and I love being able to relate to a story on some level. Her specialty is pneumonic plague and hemorrhagic fever. She designed a plague which once exposed to a group of people, takes roughly 5-10 days to kill. All while, the person infected is highly contagious and spreads it to anyone they come in contact with. By recruiting her, Zakharov further reduces his risk of any consequences coming back to his 'Rodina' motherland.

Court Gentry is overseas and is summoned by the CIA. An agency plane happens to be flying near his location and is tasked with making a stop to pick him up. From there, the plane is to continue with its original mission with Gentry tagging along for the ride, then bring him back to the states. The plane lands and picks up the passengers it was originally meant to, a CIA team led by seasoned officer Doug Spano. Spano notices Gentry in the back and attempts to intimidate him and throw him off the plane. Unimpressed by his show of force and attitude, Court rolls his eyes and simply says, call Langley at extension XXXX (Brewer) and says, "she tells me to get off, I get off." Long story short, Court Gentry, code name – Violator stays on the plane and takes a nap. The plane lands, and Court notices their mission is a prisoner handover with another intelligence agency. Before this is accomplished, the group is attacked, and the prisoner is taken. Court, not wanting to see agency personnel killed for nothing intervenes and realizes he's just about the only guy left alive. He hijacks another smaller aircraft, a glider and pursues the attackers.

Back in the States, another asset is being held at an agency 'safe house.' This asset, code name Anthem, has been a 'guest' here for about four months. Being debriefed and just weeks away from being set free as an asset in the field. During one of the debrief sessions, Anthem's past is being discussed and the death of her father is brought up. The man, former director of GRU laid dead in a picture provided to her by the CIA, an attack by a lucky mortar shot roughly 14 years ago. Anthem notices something in the picture, a skin condition she shares with her father which would only present itself if the person was still alive. She realizes her father is in fact alive and Anthem, aka Zoya escapes her 'safe house' and makes her way to Europe in order to find out the truth about her father. Completely unaware of the current terrorist strike being planned by him and that Court Gentry, aka Violator is currently tracking a team that kidnapped a CIA prisoner and is being led to the same destination.

As I mentioned, Mission Critical reads almost like two different thrillers with two formidable assets using their skills in order to get to where they need to be. Once they converge on the same target and start to work together, more action and more killing occurs. However, the plan the mastermind 'David Mars' has laid out is pretty solid and it takes more than these two formidable assets to stop. Enter the third asset in Poison Apple, Romantic. This asset, a fan favorite in the series has been around the block a few times. Initially a Navy SEAL, then a team leader for a group of paramilitary operations officers tasked with running renditions, hits, black bag jobs, and other jobs deemed appropriate by the CIA. The group he led, Task Force Golf Sierra, or better known as "the Goon Squad." Zack Hightower aka Romantic, (He's not absolutely

thrilled with his call sign) has had a long history with Violator including a time when Zack tried to kill him, and Gentry shot him. But as Zack says, "it's cool, we hugged it out." The amount of sarcasm this former Navy SEAL spits is pure gold. I absolutely love this character and while it took him a while to get in on the action, due to the fact that Brewer had him tasked with another assignment, trying to find a CIA mole. Once he joins Anthem and Violator. The real fun and action start.

Other returning characters in the Gray Man series, Suzanne Brewer. Already mentioned a few times in the review, she oversees the blacker than black program, code name: Poison Apple and she is not happy about it. If we look back when Brewer was first introduced to the series, in Back Blast. She initially worked for Denny Carmichael, the then Director of National Clandestine Service. And she had no problem bending the rules, looking the other way in order to further her career and agenda, ultimately switching sides when she realized it was in her best interest. Well, now she's realizing that being in Ops, running this program, Poison Apple will absolutely not advance her career and she will never see the seventh floor at Langley. This motivates her to show us the readers her true colors and she makes some bad choices, from some she can escape from but not all, she may soon be a target herself if she doesn't fix the error of her ways. Matthew Hanley is back and is the current Director of Operations at the CIA. Chris Taverns, a SAD Ground Branch paramilitary officer. Sir Donald Fitzroy also makes an appearance, if you remember him, he used to run the Gray Man through his Security Consulting firm as an assassin for hire, well now retired and in a turn of events, Court gets to run him for an operation.

If Mission Critical were to be made into a movie, it would have to be a trilogy. With so many moving parts, so much action, sub-plots going in every direction with just about every character involved. This Gray Man thriller is one you will not be able to put down. Mark Greaney has absolutely upped his game and has delivered the best Gray Man novel to date. The non-stop action, the brilliant humor, the believable plot has earned this thriller novel a Blast Radius of a thermonuclear explosion, a second-generation nuclear weapon more powerful than the atomic bomb. Pre-order this Gray Man novel today and don't expect to sleep once February 19th rolls around.

Dan Curnutt says

In another "Gray Man" political thriller we find Court Gentry sucked into action while just trying to catch a plane ride back to the United States. Even though he is just trying to sleep his way through a flight he ends up in the center of the action and actually has to rescue multiple people and try and finish an operation that he wasn't even a part of.

In true Gray Man fashion he can evaluate an operation, plan on the move, take down multiple bad guys at a time and still have time to find a pretty woman in distress and rescue her.

We are introduced to a new operative, "Anthem," but before she can get oriented she is on the run. Eventually she will meet up with Court, but not by design, instead it is just purely coincidental, or is it?

The team will have to save the Intelligence community from a diabolical plot to release a Bio-weapon on the Intel assets gathered together from five major countries. This could deal a blow to the world political system's balance of control by the major players.

Will Russia, Korea, a narcissist and double agents be able to pull off the unbelievable? That is the question.

This is another great Gray Man installment and worth the read. But realize that it is a lengthy read and you will need to keep several plot lines in mind as you go.

Enjoy!

Jean says

I have read this series from the beginning. I got hooked on the series with book one and it has become one of my favorites.

The book is well written and is packed with continuous action. Greaney grabbed my attention right at the beginning of the story and held it throughout. Court Gentry is the Grey Man and now is a contractor with the CIA instead of an employee. I enjoyed getting together with the regular characters and meeting some new ones. Sometimes the continuous action exhausted me, but I just could not put the book down. I cannot wait for the next Grey Man story.

I read this as an audiobook downloaded from Audible. The book is seventeen hours. Jay Snyder does an excellent job narrating the story. Snyder has been the narrator from the beginning of the series. I like it when they keep the same narrator throughout the series.

The Real Book Spy says

Mark Greaney (Agent in Place, 2018, etc.) reignites the Cold War in his latest must-read thriller featuring the Gray Man.

Back with the CIA in an unofficial capacity, Courtland Gentry, better known as the Gray Man, is given orders by his handler, Suzanne Brewer, to return to Washington. As it turns out, an agency plane happens to be in the region, and Court's able to hitch a ride—but it's not a direct flight to D.C. Their first stop is in Luxembourg City, where another group of operators boards the Gulfstream IV with a prisoner en route to England.

After touching down at a small airfield in the West Midlands, Court realizes something is off. Though he's told nothing about the other mission his assignment is piggybacking, he's able to discern that it's obviously a prisoner swap. What he doesn't know is that the armed men lining the secluded runway are MI6 agents tasked with interrogating the prisoner about a possible mole inside of Langley as part of a joint effort with CIA. However, just before the exchange goes down, Gentry catches movement in the distance and his instincts tell him the drop is an ambush, a theory that is quickly confirmed when bullets fly moments later.

When the smoke clears, only Court is still alive, and the prisoner is gone.

More than 3,500 miles away, former Russian Foreign Intelligence officer Zoya Zakharova . . .

Continue reading this review here: <https://therealbookspy.com/2018/11/25...>

Chris C - A Midlife Wife says

Finally finished! Excellent read!!

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This story is intense from the beginning and completely grabs you. That is the one factor I love about reading this series. The author never repeats a plot or even a similar plot by another author. Each book I have read, and especially this one, has been completely unique, fast-paced, and totally gripping.

*Mission Critical* takes us to Europe for most of the story and the slow build in intensity, suspense, and information will just about stress you out but the wait is so totally worth it! Don't jump to the end.... Just don't!

Zoya is back popping in and out as she often does, along with many other characters we know and ~~hate~~ love. Many new ones pop in too along the way as strong supporting characters that round out this page turner perfectly.

Secrets, lies, twists, turns, along with plenty of violence, and the high body count we come to expect from Court and his cronies, makes this story so completely plausible, it is scary in many ways. I just loved it! Plus, I know this one would be so good on audio!

If you are a black-ops fan, you have to read *Mission Critical* and the whole *Gray Man* series. Excellent in every way - even the frustrating parts!

\* copy received for review consideration  
Full Review - <https://amidlifewife.com/mission-crit...>

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## Sharon says

*Mission Critical* follows the same formula as the previous Court Gentry novels, but it did not have the usual suspenseful hook that would keep the reader's attention. Court ends up in a seemingly impossible situation multiple times, which is nothing new. The problem that I had with the novel was that too much time was spent on side plots, especially the one that involved a possible breach in the covert chain.

The novel was entirely too long, getting bogged down in the middle due to the aforementioned side plots and the completely unrealistic story involving Court's handler. I found it difficult to believe that security for a meeting such as the Five Eyes conference would have not considered every possibility. In an effort to bring together the multiple threads that appear in this novel, the author ends up tangling them in a hopeless pile. I usually enjoy Court Gentry's unique perspective and dogged determination, but this novel fell flat for me. The conclusion of the novel left only a small avenue of possibilities for future plot lines, though I am not certain that I would seek out more in this series. Readers who are new to the series should go back a few novels to pick up the central thread, as *Mission Critical* has too many elements that are tie-ins from previous books. I was happy to catch up with Court Gentry, as I am usually a fan of his strength and determination, but I would be hesitant to recommend *Mission Critical* to other readers.

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## Paromjit says

This is the 8th in Mark Greaney's *Gray Man* series but my first, but it works perfectly fine as a standalone. The *Gray Man*, Court Gentry, code name The Violator, is the world's most dangerous assassin, an off the books contract killer for the CIA, one of those comprising Poison Apple, engaged in black ops run by Matt



Hanley, Deputy Director of Operations. Gentry's handler, the ambitious Suzanne Brewer wants him back in Langley which has him on a CIA transport flight, where a security team bring on a hooded prisoner, a Dutch banker, heading for London for interrogation by the intelligence agencies. As the plane lands on a isolated runway, a well organised surprise attack leaves almost everyone dead as the prisoner is abducted. Gentry survives, has no idea what is going on, but he does know he is not going to let this go as he sets out to chase after the kidnappers and the prisoner.

Zoya Feodorov is a former Russian SVR foreign intelligence officer, a new CIA asset confined in a safe house. Zoya notices a detail in a photograph shown to her by her handler, Suzanne Brewer, that triggers a sense of disquiet as it challenges what she thought was true. It instigates a need to escape in search of the truth. However, before this can happen, the safe house is attacked by Mexican contract killers (sicarios) of the Sinaloa Cartel with the aim of killing Zoya. She manages to escape, intent on reaching London. Won Jang-Mi is a North Korean virologist driven by a personal need for vengeance. The CIA are determined to hunt down a mole that has cost them dearly in a number of operations. Gentry finds himself facing criminal gang members from Nottingham and other UK cities, the Russian Mafia, and a former head of the GRU Aquarium HQ (Russian Military Intelligence), sleeper agents, and a dastardly bioterrorism plot aimed at striking at the heart of the western intelligence agencies at the high security Edinburgh Five Eyes Conference. Will he and Zoya manage to survive the powerful and ruthless forces arraigned against them and prevent a horrific atrocity?

Greaney writes a high octane fast paced espionage thriller that is exhilarating and compulsive, generating a huge body count. The plotting is complex and the various storylines come together in a thrilling finale in a Scottish castle. It has the American intelligence agencies running around in the UK with approval from the British, there are plenty of machinations taking place within the CIA, and frustrated ambitions in the hierarchy. As is often in this type of thriller, plotting and the action driven narrative takes precedence at the expense of detailed and indepth characterisation. This is an entertaining, nail bitingly compelling read, that will appeal to those who love action driven espionage thrillers. Many thanks to Little, Brown for an ARC.

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### **Jennifer ~ TarHeelReader says**

This is my first foray into the Gray Man series by Mark Greaney, and I was assured this book can be read as a standalone. I'm happy to report it absolutely can, and I definitely want to read more of the Gray Man books.

The Gray Man is one of the most dangerous and mysterious assassins in the world, and he works for the CIA as a contract killer.

Court Gentry is on a CIA plane when a security team brings a disguised man on board. An attempt is made to get Gentry off the plane, but the CIA says no.

The disguised person is transported to England where the CIA and MI6 will interrogate him about a possible spy at Langley Air Force base.

However, when they land in the UK, the team is under attack, and the prisoner is kidnapped. Gentry is ordered to go after the attackers, but what will he be able to do against an entire team of assassins?

The answer is simple. Court Gentry is the Gray Man.

If you are looking for a fast-paced, edge-of-your-seat spy thriller, look no further. I read this book

compulsively and could do little else. What a thrill ride. This book is all about the brisk plot and entertaining action. I'm not a nail biter, but if I were, I'd have none left. Highly recommended.

I received a complimentary copy. All opinions are my own.

My reviews can also be found on my blog: [www.jennifertarheelreader.com](http://www.jennifertarheelreader.com)

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## Terence M says

Mission Critical (Gray Man #8) – Mark Greaney

Audiobook - 17:02 Hours (512 pages) - Narrator: Jay Snyder

Started: March 19, 2019 – Finished: March 26, 2019

???? - 4.0 Stars of 5.0

I have listened to all of the 8 Gray Man audiobooks and I enjoyed every one of them to varying degrees, awarding 2 x 5 Stars, 3 x 4 Stars and 3 x 3 Stars. The Gray Man enjoyment process is pretty simple:

\*Dial Down your expectations to at least moderate credibility levels;

\*Dial Up your expectations of an intricate, exciting and suspenseful plot;

\*Dial Down trying to remember multiple weapons models and their ammo;

\*Dial Down your expectations of the Goodies losing;

\*Dial Down your care factor for dead and dying Baddies;

\*Dial Up your expectations for non-stop, fierce, fighting action and pacy, all-round enjoyment, mainly served up by the Blokes but with the input from a seriously bad-assed Chick as well.

Mark Greaney has done very well to develop and maintain the persona of Courtney (Court) Gentry, a highly skilled former special forces operative and master assassin, who was working in Mission Critical as an external contractor to the CIA, an “off-the-grid” role he has played in earlier Gray Man novels.

“Mission Critical” was quite a long audiobook at 17:02 hours (512 pages), but except for maybe the first two or three hours when characters were being established or re-established, and the main ‘plot’ (I use the word loosely) was evolving or being developed or both, the remaining 14 hours or so were pretty much good, relatively light-hearted, ‘boys-with-their-toys’ action and one fiercely scary chick-with-her-toys in action as well. At no time was I bored or looking around the corner to see what might be going to happen next. A most enjoyable audiobook and I look forward to the next Gray Man novel, even if it means waiting until 2020.

Addendum March 27, 2019 @ 4:00 pm

Rereading my review just prior to my afternoon nap (which means I am editing this review on my iPhone, not the PC which I used originally), I think I may have overstated my point about credibility and the book's plot. I did not mean specifically that the somewhat complicated ‘master plot’ of “Mission Critical” lacked credibility or required a major suspension of belief by the book's readers. Both the master plot and its sub-plots, and their implementations are feasible, even possible, as far as I know, and if I was a praying person I would ask both the Mighty Odin and the equally Mighty Zeus to spare the world from the possibility of such a terrifying event.???

Terence M

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## Liz says

If you like this genre and aren't reading this series your missing out! Not sure how he does it but Mark

Greaney just gets better and better. It has been a pleasure watching his writing evolve and growing along side this character.

This book is long, intense, and has many players. This didn't feel overwhelming as MG gave each character the appropriate amount of attention, thus the reader remains invested. The conclusion feels like our protagonist is moving into yet another chapter of his life and I am looking forward to tagging along for the ride. I really liked the focus placed on the reality of being in this line of work. This book really explored CG's vulnerability, physically and mentally. In this genre, sometimes the characters can feel superhuman. I really felt the humanity of the character; and that although he has this incredible skill set, he is just a man after all.

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## Michelle says

Review can be found on my blog here: <https://booksonthebookshelf.wordpress...>

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Thank you to the Publisher for gifting me a copy of this book to read and share my review.

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Wow! What a ride! A brilliantly written, fast-paced, action-filled novel that will have you on the edge of your seat for the whole ride! A nail-biter of a book, this will not disappoint you.

This was the first book by Mark Greaney that I have read and it definitely will not be my last! Mission Critical is book #8 in the Gray Man series, but can easily be read as a standalone novel. I had no trouble keeping up with what was going on or keeping up with the various characters. However, I am now interested in checking out other books in this series to get more background information on all the main characters, especially the Gray Man himself.

The Gray Man, also known as Court Gentry, is one badass operative. He is ruthless, dangerous, and the best at what he does. He has to be, of course, since he is the world's most famous assassin. You wouldn't want to cross paths with him or get on his bad side, that's for sure. I loved his character. He was witty, smart, and despite being an assassin I found him to be quite an interesting character.

I enjoyed the edge of your seat ride this book takes you on, and leaves you wanting more as you read chapter after chapter. This book will pull you in and demand your attention the entire way through to the very last page!

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## Lou says

Mission Critical, the eighth novel in the Gray Man series, is another high-octane, action-packed and nail-bitingly tense thriller from an author who has swiftly become a favourite of mine due to the consistently superb ride on which he takes his readers, and I would go so far as to say this is his best work to date. Here, Greaney crafts another hard-hitting, propulsive story and delivers a plethora of shocks and surprises with considerable aplomb. He also puts a fresh, modern spin on the espionage tales of old by drawing his storyline from timely, topical issues and is adept at playing on current fears of Cold War resurgence and Russian

political interference, masterfully weaving them into the fabric of this exhilarating plot.

As always, Greaney proficiently moulds a series of gripping action scenes and is one of the best in the genre in that respect. Unusually for a plot-driven spy thriller such as this, we also get excellent characterisation; you can really see the evolution of protagonist Gentry and the journey he has been on throughout these right complex instalments. He has that often stereotypical sarcasm and cockiness associated with those we deem to be heroic, and he may even be about to receive some attention from a possible love interest. I am already looking forward to the ninth instalment, and if the past is anything to go by it's highly likely to be the best yet.

Many thanks to Sphere for an ARC.

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## **Judy Lesley says**

Thank you to Berkley for an ARC of this novel.

Court Gentry is back for an eighth breathtaking thriller adventure and if you haven't read any of the Gray Man series yet, you've got quite a treat in store when you read this one. All the books are standalone but, of course, you get the full character development if you begin with the first and read right through them. Court is back working with the CIA in a capacity that is so secret even the other assets don't know the whole story. By the end of this book they will be very well acquainted.

This novel has two main areas of focus; first trying to uncover a mole inside the CIA and second, fighting against a bioweapon attack on the leaders of the intelligence agencies of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand during a yearly symposium being held this year in Scotland. The action keeps coming at a fast and furious pace while the three CIA operatives in the clandestine group begin to function, not necessarily as a unit all the time, but they are working on it. I liked having these three working together because it gives the author more scope for what missions can be accomplished. As much as I admire the Gray Man, I never would have expected to like having him share page time with other agents, but author Mark Greaney convinced me to accept this new circumstance and even to enjoy it.

I am satisfied with my five star rating but I did think about assigning four stars because of how the ending at the symposium was handled. There could have been quite a bit more explanation for the consequences of the bioweapon. The ending was too rushed and I feel that those poor people were just abandoned. I am already looking forward to novel number nine in the outstanding adventures of Court Gentry, the Gray Man. Hopefully Mr. Greaney has a long list of ideas to put in book form for those of us who are firm fans.

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