

# SILENTCIDE

THE ART OF  
UNDETECTED  
KILLING

An assassin's refusal to kill turns deadly.

WITH 135  
ONLINE PHOTOS OF  
ACTION SCENES IN  
15 CITIES IN  
6 COUNTRIES

A SUSPENSE THRILLER BY

**RICHARD EBERT**



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Cover design: Rafael Andres & Jerry Todd

Author photo: Lisa A. Crayford

Author website: [www.RichardEbert.com](http://www.RichardEbert.com)

Contact author: [Author@RichardEbert.com](mailto:Author@RichardEbert.com)

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## 135 Online Photos for *Silentcide*

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135 online photos show *Silentcide* action scenes  
in 15 cities in 6 countries.

Each photo annotated by a footnote number in book.  
All photos and descriptions by Richard Ebert.

### Three Ways to See Photos

**Author website:** [RichardEbert.com](http://RichardEbert.com). Look for *Silentcide* cover.  
Click "135 *Silentcide* Photos."

**Scan QR code** at the end of a chapter.

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# PROLOGUE

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Tuesday

**H**is breathing was erratic. Anticipation pounded in his chest. Dopamine and adrenaline flooded George Henniker's brain with a euphoric mix of greed and anxiety.

The six computer monitors encircling the desk were distracting. They displayed pulsating numbers, charts, graphs and tables – normally the lifeblood of a portfolio manager but now irritating. Focus was vital. His steel-gray eyes narrowed as his jaw clenched. He leaned within inches of the screen to fixate on four letters: LFBS.

The bid and ask prices were tumbling on heavy volume, sucked down by a marketwide plummet of the NASDAQ. A nightmare for most investors. A shorting dream for day traders. A fantasy come true for George.

He hesitated. Fleeting doubt gnawed at his confidence before he became emboldened. His trading strategy was flawless, a guaranteed win. Yet he waited. Timing was critical. The best price was essential.

His hand quivered over the mouse. This single trade would restore the limited partners' confidence and salvage Moneyer Capital Management, LLC, his crippled hedge fund. It was an all-or-nothing bet. Failure was not an option. Continued success, accolades and riches were dependent on the next few minutes.

Now!



George's index finger flinched, then clicked Enter, executing the twenty-million-dollar buy order. He hyperventilated while watching the sell confirmations ripple across the screen. \$220K, \$975K, \$3.81 million, \$5.24 million, \$6.58 million, \$7.22 million and \$8.967 million.

The price per share was surging. His fists tightened as deep grooves of worry etched his forehead.

\$16.43 million, \$17.22 million, \$17.47 million, \$18.21 million ... The trade was hitting resistance. \$18.33 million, \$18.56 million, \$18.72 million, \$18.96 million ...

"Go, damn it!"

The cursor blinked on and off and on and off, waiting for the next seller to bite. The orders trickled in. They were slowing down to chump change. "Take the bait!" he pleaded as his skin dampened from a cold sweat.

The enormous purchase was finally filled. The average execution price was above the target but well within his projected range for maximum profit.

"Spec-tac-u-lar!" he exclaimed.

This stock position in Longfellow BioSciences would easily be worth thirty to forty million dollars within a week, double again by year's end, and become hundreds of millions in the future. George was at the top of his game as the city<sup>1</sup> lay fifty stories below his feet. This was the most fun an Ivy League stud and former investment banking superstar could have with his clothes on.

The cocksure portfolio manager absently twirled a diamond cufflink on his custom-tailored shirt, mentally patted himself on the back, grinned, looked at his Rolex watch, and logged off. The reflection in the mirror portrayed the chiseled good looks of brilliance and cunning.

Today's trades could earn George ten million or more in performance fees in the first year, with larger paychecks to follow. Soon his portfolio growth would qualify as a star performer among Boston's

two hundred hedge funds. Then new, ultra-rich investors would stampede into his office with millions bulging in their pockets.

Success was simple and easy ... especially when you knew in advance that a fledgling biotech company had a cure for cancer.

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Blue seemed determined to water every tree along the Charles River Esplanade. The cocker spaniel was named after the school color of Wellesley College, Anna Monteiro's prestigious alma mater. She'd had sole custody of the "only child" since an eight-year marriage was imploded by a cheating husband.

At forty-one, it was hard, if not impossible, to find any man who measured up to the dog's unconditional love and loyalty. The sporadic dates Anna had gone on during the last five years confirmed her commitment to live alone. Cleaning up tumbleweeds of dog hair and piddles on the floor were small irritants compared to the time-consuming drama of a romantic relationship.

Boston in June was filled with tourists, all eager to explore the historic sites along the Freedom Trail. But this Back Bay riverside haven attracted mostly Bostonians. Neighbors of all ages ran, jogged, walked and strolled along this ribbonlike, three-mile path flanked by water. Anna enjoyed speculating about their lives, worries and joys. The pastime provided a temporary distraction from her problem: the quiet battle surrounding the park bench where she sat.

Boston has a rich history of rewarding visionaries but rarely without struggles and casualties along the way. Two hundred Puritans died here in 1630, months after establishing New England's second colony. Up to seventy thousand Patriots died during the Revolutionary War after Paul Revere's midnight ride in 1775.

Today's battle in Boston between visionaries and foes promised a greater impact on human history. Yet there was no gunfire, no parades celebrating victories, and no memorials to the fallen. This war was waged in obscurity.

“Sit, Blue, sit,” Anna said while yanking on the leash to prevent the dog from jumping on an elderly couple walking along the esplanade. She and the old woman exchanged smiles in passing, then Anna’s thin lips returned to a frown.

Anna took a breath of misery when her dark brown eyes gazed across the river at the shoreline of Cambridge.<sup>2</sup> Inside the inconspicuous buildings was the heart of the largest biotech hub in the world. Within a couple-mile radius of Kendall Square was the MIT campus, twenty big pharmaceutical companies, plus about two hundred fifty biotechnology start-ups. Another eight hundred to one thousand biotechs were officed across the Boston metro. Every one of these entrepreneurs had a dream to enrich human lives or improve the environment.

Encamped behind Anna’s shoulders<sup>3</sup> were the redcoats: thousands of hedge funds, venture capital firms, mutual fund companies, analysts, lawyers, accountants and consultants. They all profited from the entrepreneurs’ dreams yet barely noticed the collateral damage.

In this battle, only the smartest, best connected and well-funded biotechs survived.

Anna’s fingers covered her olive-brown complexion in anguish. By the end of the week, Longfellow BioSciences would be critically wounded and might become the next casualty of this silent war.

A ding from her cell phone interrupted the despondency. She looked down to see who had sent a text. *George! That conceited jackass!*

Why had she ever started dating him a month ago? She deserved better but doubted she’d ever find that someone.

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**Prologue: Boston, Massachusetts**

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Photos 1 through 3



# ONE

ROME, ITALY

Wednesday

The assassin was enthralled while standing at the Colosseum,<sup>4</sup> the epicenter of Roman killing where four hundred thousand gladiators, slaves and convicts had died in the name of entertainment. He remembered the advice from a childhood trainer. “Rome was born to rule, to become corrupt and to fall. Throughout its ancient history, the transfer of power was facilitated by murder. So study hard, young man, because there is much to learn from the Romans about killing.”

Of the seventy-seven Roman emperors from 27 BC until 476 AD, only nineteen died of natural causes, and two retired. The majority died violently. Their reign was typically short-lived.

What interested the assassin were several of the emperors’ “natural” deaths that may have been murders but were never proven or suspected. Such homicides required planning, patience, cunning and finesse. That was his specialty: silentcide, the art of undetected killing. He was exceptionally good at his profession.

Benjamin “Sully” Williams raised a Nikon D850 camera, got a few artistic photos of the Colosseum, then took several wide-angle shots showing tourists on the cobblestone walkway named Piazza del Colosseo.

The crowd was an eclectic blend of ages, body shapes and nationalities. The noise was an unintelligible mix of foreign languages. Tour

guides routinely recited their monologues to clusters of people – some interested, others bored – while roaming vendors hocked cheap souvenirs, street entertainers performed for handouts, and pickpockets searched for the vulnerable.

The June sun was intense, the air was thick with humidity, and pungent odors smelled as old as antiquity.

Sully nonchalantly scratched his head. His scalp was sweating beneath the bird's nest of stringy black hair dangling across his forehead and watchful eyes. Perspiration was beading below his matted beard and mustache. He dared not wipe his face for fear of smudging the applied Mediterranean skin tone. The disguise for this persona was effective – he looked like a brash Italian in his late thirties – but it was as oppressive as wearing a wool ski mask on a blistering hot afternoon.

After a few more minutes of observation, the assassin rejected the Colosseum as a manageable kill zone. Movements were too unpredictable. The area was too exposed. Nearly everyone was snapping random photos on their cell phones, risking being photographed in the act.

This was day twenty of the current assignment or, as Irene Shaw called it, the commission. His target was Angelo Moretti. He was a scumbag, pure and simple.

Moretti's specialty was sex trafficking. He operated under the radar of the Philadelphia crime family for two reasons: the FBI had weakened organized crime during the last three decades, and importing Asian girls for private collectors was not one of the Philly Mob's specialties.

However, like most career criminals, Moretti was driven by greed. He wanted to expand his territory into New Jersey and then neighboring states. To solicit financial support, he had met with distant relatives in Palermo, Sicily, for a week. Now he was spending a few days in Rome with his family before flying home. The commission stipulated that Angelo Moretti never return to the States alive.

An absolute rule the assassin had been taught during silentcide training was to never speculate or try learning who commissioned a killing and their motive, but he did anyway.

In the case of Moretti, there were three candidates. One, someone in organized crime wanted this growing problem discreetly and permanently resolved while providing complete deniability. That was hard to do using an internal hitman in the City of Brotherly Love. Two, someone wanted to acquire Moretti's business for free. Three, one of Moretti's high-profile clients wanted to cover his tracks. Who knew? The greatest likelihood was door number two.

The current commission should have been finished by now, but the target was proving to be inaccessible and unpredictable. A safe opportunity had never occurred in Sicily. Since arriving in Rome, Moretti spent almost every waking hour on the phone in the hotel. Yesterday, he had been scheduled for a private tour of the Vatican. His wife and teenage daughter arrived on time, but he was a no-show. What a disappointment!

Three days remained before Moretti would fly home on Saturday. That left today and tomorrow for reconnaissance and Friday for the kill. Time was running out.

The assassin wasn't worried. He was confident Moretti would attend the private tour of the Colosseum and Roman Forum scheduled for Friday based on the marital discord he'd listened to in the target's hotel suite. Okay, it was an all-out screaming match. His wife was livid. She'd demanded he spend at least one day of their trip as a family.

Little did she know, Friday would be the last day the Moretti family would ever spend together.

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**Chapter One: Rome, Italy**

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Photo 4

