



Angels of Vengeance

John Birmingham

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When an inexplicable wave of energy slammed into North America, millions died. In the rest of the world, wars erupted, borders vanished, and the powerful lost their grip on power. Against this backdrop, with a conflicted U.S. president struggling to make momentous decisions in Seattle and a madman fomenting rebellion in Texas, three women are fighting their own battles—for survival, justice, and revenge.

Special agent Caitlin Monroe moves stealthily through a South American jungle. Her target: a former French official now held prisoner by a ruthless despot. To free the prisoner, Caitlin will kill anyone who gets in her way. And then she will get the truth about how a master terrorist escaped a secret detention center in French Guadeloupe to strike a fatal blow in New York City.

Sofia Peiraro is a teenage girl who witnessed firsthand the murder and mayhem of Texas under the rule of General Mad Jack Blackstone. Sofia might have tried to build a life with her father in the struggling remnants of Kansas City—if a vicious murder hadn’t set her on another course altogether: back to Texas, even to Blackstone himself.

Julianne Balwyn is a British-born aristocrat turned smuggler. Shopping in the most fashionable neighborhood of Darwin, Australia—now a fantastic neo-urban frontier—Jules has a pistol holstered in the small of her lovely back. She is playing the most dangerous game of all: waiting for the person who is hunting her to show his face—so she can kill him first.

Three women in three corners of a world plunged into electrifying chaos. Nation-states struggling for their survival. Immigrants struggling for new lives. John Birmingham’s astounding new novel—the conclusion to the series begun in *Without Warning* and *After America*—is an intense adventure that races from the halls of power to shattered streets to gleaming new cities, as humanity struggles to grasp its better angels—and purge its worst demons.

Angels of Vengeance Details

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Author : John Birmingham

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From Reader Review Angels of Vengeance for online ebook

Donna Hulsey says

I read After America and at the end had to order this book, because it left everything up in the air. This book also has an ending that leaves us wondering what happens next. This one started out with the loss of a favorite character from the last book. This is a premise that I can see happening to this country, especially with what is happening right now. Very good book, with characters you will love as I did.

Matt Mitrovich says

Angels of Vengeance by John Birmingham is the latest (and last?) novel in the trilogy that began with Without Warning. Some backstory, our tale begins when a dome of energy descends onto North America on the eve of the Iraq War, covering most of the continent. Millions perish and anyone who attempts to enter the dome disappears as well. The United States of America (except for Alaska, Hawaii, and a small enclave around Seattle) is destroyed, along with large chunks of Canada and Mexico (plus the Bahamas but no one mentions them at all, so screw it). While some mourn or celebrate the loss of life, it becomes clear that a world without America is a bad place indeed. The world economy collapses and the global environment is ruined as nuclear reactors fail and fires rage in the depopulated North America with no one around to stop them.

The story continues in After America. The dome is gone and the North American wilderness is open for recolonization. The United States is struggling to retake its lost homeland from gangsters, pirates, scavengers and Islamist fighters fleeing the irradiated Middle East (after Israel carried out the Samson Option), which comes to a climax in the epic Battle of New York. A greater threat, however, comes from Texas where a mad former general will either remake America in his own image or force the country into a bloody civil war. In the rest of the world, the geopolitical situation is fluid and new powers are testing the old order.

Angels of Vengeance concludes many of the story lines began in the previous two books. While Birmingham uses many points of view to tell the story, there are three characters who are the primary plot movers, our "angels". First, we have Echelon agent Caitlin Monroe, or "Commando Barbie" as some call her. She is on the hunt for the terrorist who instigated the civil war in France and the Battle of New York. She really wants him dead and will go anywhere and do anything to accomplish her goal. Second, we have Sofia Peiraro, a teenage girl who witnessed the murder of her family in Texas and survived the trek north to Kansas City with her father, only to learn that he has been murdered. She suspects it was ordered by General "Mad Jack" Blackstone, governor of Texas, and she is now heading south to avenge her family. Finally there is Julianne Balwyn, a British-born aristocrat turned smuggler. She is being stalked through Darwin, Australia, now a cyberpunk-esque free port in this changed world, by hitmen ordered to take her and her friends out by someone powerful with a score to settle. To stop him, Jules will have no choice but to put herself in the open and let her hunters strike.

I have enjoyed Birmingham's works for three main reasons: bringing techno-thrillers to alternate history, not being afraid to kill off important characters and the use of strong female characters in a genre dominated by men. He did not disappoint me in this novel and I especially was amused by how Microsoft dominates the tech world with their smart phones having that annoying paper clip, Microsoft Where? and people saying "go MSN it." More importantly, the entire series has been a plausible and very descriptive scenario on what was

likely to happen if the United States were to disappear. It also had good character development and, of course, action.

If I had any real complaint it was how James Kipper turned out. I felt that he went from a reluctant rebel, to idealistic leader and finally to naive politician. Considering the events of After America I found it odd how he evolved into someone who could not be bothered with making the hard choices. Since he is only a minor character in this novel, however, his presence does not do enough to ruin the story, but it is disappointing to see one of my favorite characters lose what made me like the guy in the first place.

I guess the last thing to talk about is whether or not this novel is a conclusion to the series. Certainly the final epilogue leaves it open for more books and there is still so much going on in the world that could be covered. The ending, however, might just be the only plausible way to end such a story. Life does not stop for the characters just because the book ends. There are no real happy endings, only life going on, with its pitfalls and promises. I really did enjoy the series and I hope those reading this review who have not read the series will go and pick out these books to read.

Dylstra says

Oh look, the short version is “don’t bother.” The first book in the series is kind of interesting as a thought experiment but it quickly devolves into an exercise in tying up loose ends.

The thought experiment—what would happen if the stabilising influence of the US as superpower was suddenly removed?—runs out of steam surprisingly quickly. It rapidly becomes apparent that the author thinks that the current political climate has become completely unwieldy and would be greatly improved if only we could replace the current morally-murky pragmatists with, say, other pragmatists supported by other morally-murky agents who can get the really pragmatic things done.

To reduce the series to a case of nostalgia for when people could mine and burn coal without having to mind the impacts seems unfair, but it wouldn’t be completely unfounded...

Clay Kallam says

A book that is heavy on psychology and subtle gradations of emotion, or one that examines the complexities and philosophic uncertainties of modern life, may be excused for digressions and long stretches where the plot, such as it may be, barely twitches in a forward direction.

But a book that is about action -- and violent, bloody, detailed action at that -- must move at a different pace. It must be lean as well as mean, and the pages must turn without much time spent on introspection or metaphysical meanderings.

Now, John Birmingham’s “Angels of Vengeance” (Del Rey, \$26, 530 pages) does have an occasional nod to the ethical aspects of various characters’ decisions to commit bloody mayhem, but at heart, it’s a straightforward action novel – and should be about 300 pages shorter. In other words, Birmingham doesn’t cut to the chase nearly quickly enough in this concluding volume of a trilogy that began with “Without Warning.”

The setup is interesting if highly implausible: Some unknown mechanism causes every human being in 90 percent of the United States in 2003 to die, leaving everything else intact. The world is obviously much different, and the first book explores the political and economic consequences of the disappearance of the United States. By "Angels of Vengeance," however, all the world-building has been worked out, and all that's left is a too-long revenge-based action thriller that could have been set pretty much anywhere.

In short, not recommended ...

Liz says

Great idea, in all three books. But, the author has not earned my trust. They are all fantastic characters that leave impressions behind. Unfortunately some grammatical flubs (where it seems spell check won over sentence structure) left me confused. Generally, the characters are developed well, but without all having clear purposes...unless that is the point, which is acceptable as a device. The next book seems transparently looming, in favor of a reason to wrap up this one, and in many ways there were more questions at the end. I love where this all could, has, and is going.... But, it left me wanting for more and distracted by odd out of context colloquialisms, abuse of words like "bespoke," and incomplete character thought sequences (where a thought, memory, or historical context would say that a character would not do X and then two sentences later...they were doing X without explanation of the obvious personal compromise implied). Overall, I wish there was more to the story. However, there is real resonance to the idea of chance and circumstance. In that, the series is beautiful and poignant. But, you have to have read 1 and 2, in my opinion, before 3.

However, after one of the first tragic events occurred... I presupposed the outcome and felt it contrived in order to launch another thread...another idea. All valid, and I will indeed keep reading, but not without questioning where the author might be leading me along the way.

Tim Mercer says

Entertaining read and fast moving. There were some parts of the story that felt rushed but they didn't kill the book for me. The series has been closed off for now but I would happily follow the surviving characters through where life takes them next.

Otherwyrl says

Oh boy does John Birmingham like to put his characters (and his audience) through the wringer! The third and final part of this series continues to follow through on the story as set up in the first book. The author said in an interview that he likes to start off with a large cast of characters and then whittle them down, and he certainly does so in this book as we lose people we have been following through some 2000 pages of story.

At one point I was getting concerned that there may be a fourth book heaving into sight, as we were hurtling towards the end and there were so many loose ends to tie up. And then - **bam!** - everything is resolved in just

a few pages of high-octane drama. After such a long series, it almost felt anticlimactic, though I for one would not have liked to plough through another doorstop book.

One thing I did like about this series, was the way in which the female characters are handled. Out of all the people we are introduced to in this series, it is Caitlyn, Julianne and Sophia who make most of the running and solve most of the problems. It's an interesting point of view from the author, who recently caused a minor kerfuffle on the interwebs with a blog entry deriding most men for their misogynistic attitudes. Certainly its a refreshing point of view in a series that would have otherwise been a macho sausage-fest and a complete turn-off for many female readers.

So, a qualified success from my point of view, but I think this will go down well with a lot of people.

Bill says

A fairly satisfying end to the Disappearance trilogy. Birmingham has no qualms about cleaning out characters he's done with and I'm glad he takes the time to see to their end in the story itself instead of letting them vanish during the break between books. Like his *Axis of Time* trilogy, I wish he spent more exposition on the political systems that inhabit his new world setting, but I understand the need to balance interests. And to be fair, I think he kept an excellent pace and balance between the three primary characters without neglecting my favorites in Seattle.

Louis says

“Angels of Vengeance” is book 3 of a trilogy by the Australian author John Birmingham. The start of this trilogy was set in 2003 before the first gulf war when an energy wave/bubble takes out the USA (most of Mexico and much of Canada). All that's left of our country is Seattle, Alaska, Hawaii, troops in Cuba and the Middle East and any citizens outside of the country at the time.

This final book wraps up the stories started in book 1. One thing I do like about this author is that he's not afraid to kill off major characters throughout the story. That did keep me guessing.

Overall I enjoyed the series, but I felt that his focus on just his handful of characters without a broader look at the world cheated me of a much grander story. To be fair, while that is my desire that does not have to be his goal. I think I was spoiled by his previous trilogy “The Axis of Time” which would jump between characters and what was occurring on the world stage. With this series I did not feel I was seeing enough of the “world stage” story.

This series is a good beach/vacation read.

Book 1 –Without Warning

Book 2 – After America

Book 3 - Angels of Vengeance

dennis barron says

Angels of Vengeance. John Birmingham

Book three in this series. As in the two prior novels, this is an extraordinarily well written action thriller. I would expect nothing less from J. Birmingham! The world is recovering from a disaster of unknown origins most of America was destroyed, but is rebuilding. The newly elected president has some unsavory enemies . There are twists and turns on every page. Heartbreak and betrayal. This is a fantastic read! I hope there will be a fourth book!!!

Somehwatbent says

A very nice surprise! I don't knowingly start series in the middle, but as a reviewer I get what I get. In this case it was engaging enough that I'm going to hunt up books one and two, and wait and watch for book 4. I want to see the progression of how they got from wherever to here. The book is the third of a stated Trilogy, but the ending is a clear and unambiguous opening for a book Four.

Strong, smart, resourceful female characters. Without having the backstory from books One and Two I'm still missing some key pieces, but the fundamental basics of each character's thread become clear enough. The interweaving of circumstance that link Caitlin, Jules and Sofia are as complex as the shattered world in which they live. Politics, society, and general order are all in a state of flux and potential upheaval. Each of these women has a Cause -- and in working toward them, end up on paths that cross and sometimes coincide.

This isn't exactly a techno-thriller, an action adventure, or a political intrigue novel, although there are elements of all three. There are very few true surprises, but it's not so predictable as to be a 'formula' book. As a stand alone it's not quite rich enough in detail to make the events of the previous books clear, but it's skillfully written and moves fast. As I said before, it was engaging enough that I *will* find and read Without Warning and After America.

Nick Brett says

The third (and presumably final) volume in the "After America" trilogy. The series started with the premise of a mysterious energy wave killing most of the inhabitants of the US while leaving everything else intact, but encased in the wave. Set back in the early 80's with the majority of the US Military in the Middle East it was a fascinating view of how the US no longer being in the picture would have an impact on the world economy and how the balance of power would shift and old grudges would play out. In the second book the wave goes away, leaving the US a treasure trove for, pirates, mercenaries and those who are anti-US. The main focus here being the battle to reclaim New York. Much of these stories are seen from the eyes of a number of key characters.

In Angels of Vengeance the focus is on three female characters (the author is fond of strong females) as they seek the vengeance of the title in the world post the wave. Mainly set in the US and Australia this has less of the big picture and more on the three ladies in question, one of whom is a very entertaining James Bond type. Quite a few of the characters we have met over the books make an appearance which was a nice touch.

I have to say I have enjoyed the trilogy, especially the first one which was both thought provoking and clever, the next two were always going to struggle to keep up with the wow factor of the first. You could stop after the first one if it is just the big picture changing world stuff you like, but I liked the characters and the scenario so I am pleased I stuck with this to the end.

Jessica says

I finished the audio book of this one in the bath tonight, cos I was sure I didn't have much to go.

Overall, I found this really hard to concentrate on. I dont know if it was the audiobook format, or the story itself, but I found myself tuning out quite frequently. As a result I'm not sure if the things I feel this book is missing are actually missing, or just missing for me cos I happened to miss that detail.... For example, I still don't know what "the wave" is and I don't know if I missed it or it just wasn't there.

I also found I wasn't a huge lover over the follow 6 characters at once format. Sometimes the gap between follow up of a single character was so long, by the time we came back to them I had forgotten who they were. I also felt like I couldn't tell how all the characters related. I guess that's typical of this format in the beginning, and I have read other books like this and enjoyed them. I guess with this one I just didn't feel like they had all been sufficiently linked by the end. But again that could be because I missed something.

All in all I can't say I would run out to buy or even borrow a written copy of this. Especially as I didn't like the ending. I found it slow and lacking in intensity or excitement. And it was far to clear that the author was leaving everything hanging so he could write a sequel or follow up story if he wanted. Just didn't do it for me.

Aha. I have just discovered I listened to the third book in the trilogy with knowledge of the first two, this might have been a huge factor in all the things I didn't understand!

Dave Jedlicka says

I enjoyed the story, but I was let down by never having the "WAVE" or the event explained. Since this is #3 of a series, I presume it was well explained in previous books, but as a stand-alone read, you won't really know what happened to set up this edition.

Doug McClain says

Overall a good read but slower than the first two books in the series
