

Uberhoff had to give the final permission to enter the home of a US senator.

The operation was based on Blum. Well, he'd been right about the Mission Inn. The old agent was like a bloodhound on the scent. But what if he was wrong and they were about to burst into the home of a US senator who could well be shacking up with a woman, not his wife? Wouldn't that make a tantalizing story? Hansen would have firsthand proof of the government's overreach, and have evidence to limit the tools they needed—were using this minute—to peer inside his home.

They might find the senator, but what about Bastini? Even with all their surveillance resources, with the number of agents tracking her, her name and scarred face as publicized as Osama bin Laden—she'd reportedly driven across the continent to pop up in a Santa costume at the Mission Inn.

She was more dangerous and more destructive than any foreign terrorist. She was a pair of scissors cutting through the fabric of trust that held a civil community together, allowing democracy to exist. She epitomized the essential threat of terrorism—that a terrorist could be anyone—a grandmother or a white American radical from West Virginia—that a single person could attack, destroy, and move about freely in a free society. The terrible truth of modern terrorism is that anyone and everyone could be the enemy. And when everyone is the enemy, there can be no trust, and without trust, there can be no freedom, and without freedom, there can be no democracy.

The whole show was ready to go. Full agency response initiated. A hostage rescue team was at the address.

They'd gone too far not to enter the house. "Ahem. Proceed," Uberhoff said.

He hung up and hunched over his knees, exhausted. This event might end soon with disaster or drag on into a search for a United States senator and a deranged seventy-three-year-old eco-terrorist. He was tempted to go back to sleep but was afraid he wouldn't be able to wake up for the next update.