



House Odds

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Washington, D.C., fixer Joe DeMarco has been asked to handle a lot of difficult situations over the years for his boss, congressman John Mahoney. But nothing has ever been quite so politically sensitive, or has hit so close to home, as the task Mahoney hands DeMarco in *House Odds*.

Mahoney's daughter has been arrested and charged with insider trading. An engineer with a high-flying technology firm, she allegedly placed a half-million dollar bet on one of the firm's clients. DeMarco's job is to clear her name and keep his boss clean. But how did she get her hands on so much money to invest in the first place? Before long, DeMarco uncovers far more about the case than meets the eye, and the risk to Mahoney is more than just a little political embarrassment.

House Odds Details

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From Reader Review House Odds for online ebook

Cathy Biggers says

Another Joe DeMarco book which is thrilling all the way through. Have no idea how Mike Lawson keeps coming up with different scenarios for Joe DeMarco to be involved in - but he hits another home run with this one!

Diogenes says

My first DeMarco read. Engaging, heavy crimes with a light touch; fun take on mobsters and the ethics (or lack of) of congressmen. Good enough for me to want to read the other 8 in the series.

Mike Gabor says

This is the eighth book in the Joe DeMarco series. Joe works for House minority leader and former Speaker, John Mahoney. He's the guy Mahoney goes to when he needs something done and it probably isn't quite legal. He works out of an office in the sub-basement of the House and keeps a very low profile. In this book Mahoney's daughter is accused by the SEC of insider trading. She denies the allegation and Mahoney sends DeMarco out to find out what really happened. As DeMarco investigates it turns out that Mahoney's daughter seems to be less than truthful. The trail leads from Atlantic City casinos to Myrtle Beach and involves the mob and some old college friends.

I've read all eight books in this series and have enjoyed them all. DeMarco is a good character and you can't help but like him. The plots are always very believable and are easy to follow. The characters are well defined and the dialogue is good. You don't have to have read any of the previous books in order to follow what's happening. Highly recommended.

HBalikov says

Lawson is back in his groove with House Odds. A tight plot involves Joe DeMarco and his boss, the now House Minority Leader, in some shady doings centered in New Jersey. DeMarco's family history comes in handy when he has to tease out the threads of organized crime involvement in the gaming industry. The SEC is after ex-Speaker Mahoney's daughter for insider trading, which just ups the pressure on DeMarco.

Lawson displays his deft touch with action and humor as we come to know some pretty shady characters both in DC and along I-95. There are old friends that Joe needs to tap including the mysterious Emma and his information wizard, Neil. The bad guys range from menacing to incompetent with a bit of "Carl Hiaasen seasoning" thrown in.

All in all, very satisfactory.

Norman LaVelle says

Well as always Mahoney has another problem for Demarco to solve. Mahoney is a high ranking government official and Joe Demarco is his political fixer/ lawyer/investigator. This time the problem is of an ultra sensitive nature because it involves Mahoney's daughter Molly. She is being accused of insider trading and Joe is being tasked with getting clearing Molly's good name and finding the real perpetrators of this crime. But the more and more Joe digs the less and less he and Mahoney like what they find and at the center of it all is an organized crime boss. Lawson really does a great job of encasing his stories in a cloak of mystery threaded with suspense and thrills. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did. -Norman LaVelle.

Tulay says

Washington dirty dealings.

This was the first book I read in this series. Many characters and lots of killings. Started with Atlantic city casino, daughter of well known GOP senator's, addicted to gambling and drinking. She is accused of insider trading, father wanted to be VP, he is trying to keep everything covered up. Reminded me old old Ziggy cartoon "It's not HOW FAR we get in life that matters... It's the WAY we get there that really counts when we ARRIVE."

Corene says

Another excellent political thriller featuring Joe DeMarco, off the books fixer for a high powered Congressman. Well-plotted storyline about insider trading and the Mob, but what makes the series fun to read are the unexpected laughs along the way.

Mikael Carlson says

As an author, I appreciate how hard it is to create good, believable characters. The one thing Lawson can do very well is create characters that are not too good or not all bad. It is extremely difficult to do, and he does it very well. The other thing with series I have read is they tend to get stale after time. It is for that reason that I have no issue with the author replacing his more Beltway-centric tales with something that incorporated other geographic areas (Atlantic City) and criminal elements (Mafia).

I knocked it down a star only because it was not my favorite in this series. The plot was enjoyable, yet predictable in places and the intrigue was incorporated by Lawson explicitly stating what he was not telling the reader instead of allowing us to determine all the scheming and misdirection on our own.

All that said, for those who like political intrigue, the Joe DeMarco series is a must read, although it would be more enjoyable (like most series) to start from the beginning.

David Kinchen says

In the latest thriller by Mike Lawson featuring Washington, DC fixer Joe DeMarco, "House Odds" we learn that -- although he's employed by Massachusetts Congressman (and former Speaker of the House) John Fitzgerald Mahoney, DeMarco doesn't have an office in Mahoney's elaborate suite.

On Page 77 we learn that DeMarco's office is in the subbasement of the Capitol, adjacent to janitors rooms and the emergency Diesel generator for the building. His hideaway, really hidden, is not much bigger than a walk-in closet, but its door has a faded inscription: "Counsel Pro Tem for Liaison Affairs." And DeMarco is an attorney, although his work is closer to that of his neighbors, the janitors, in that they both take out the garbage.

This is my first Joe DeMarco thriller, but I wasn't handicapped because Lawson treats each book as a standalone, providing all the background we need to understand what's going on -- most of the time, at least!

In "House Odds," the work becomes personal, when Mahoney's daughter, Molly, is arrested and charged with insider trading by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). (This has to be a first, given that very few people have been prosecuted by the current administration in the wake of the 2008 financial meltdown). An engineer with a Reston Technologies -- part of the Military-Industrial Complex and a high-flying technology firm -- she allegedly placed a half-million dollar bet on one of the firm's clients. She's in the gunsights of SEC investigator Kay Kiser (no relation to Kay KYSER, 1905-1985, the Swing Era bandleader and Dean of Kay Kyser's Kollege of Musical Knowledge; Kay KISER is a tall, attractive black woman).

DeMarco's job -- and this is no "Mission Impossible" task where he can decline to accept the task -- is to clear Molly's name and keep his boss clean. First question: how did Molly get her hands on so much money to invest in the first place? This is the part when the parents, all too often in a state of denial or ignorance, learn what's really going on with their daughter.

And it's also where the chapters about the Atlantic Palace Casino in Atlantic City come in. These chapter alternate with the doings of DeMarco, Mahoney, Molly and Joe's friend Emma, a retired DIA spy who has invaluable connections and is an obsessive lawn care devotee. We learn a lot about casino operations and the inevitable links to the Mob, reminding me of the excellent (if shockingly brutal at times) 1995 Martin Scorsese-helmed film "Casino", starring Robert DeNiro, Sharon Stone, and Joe Pesci.

No, I won't continue along these lines, other than to state that Joe DeMarco soon will be involved with the world of his late, mobbed-up father. Before long, DeMarco uncovers that there's far more to Molly's case than meets the eye, and the risk to Mahoney is more than just a little political embarrassment. Featuring an extensive cast of mobsters and politicians, "House Odds" is a gripping tale of high stakes scheming from one of today's best political thriller writers.

I don't know if all members of congress have a Joe DeMarco type on staff, but it sounds like a good idea. People who long for writing by the late great Donald E. Westlake, and Lawrence Block, Carl Hiaissen and other masters of the caper novel, will enjoy Lawson's novel.

Donna says

3.5 stars

This is the 8th book in the Joe DeMarco series by Mike Lawson. I read House Blood yesterday, and I have to say that I liked this novel better than the one I read yesterday. First off, I enjoyed the humor in this one. It was unexpected and appreciated. He also created a great story that was always in constant motion, twisting and pivoting to keep the reader engaged. I loved that. I also like his characters. They are all different and end up all being a part of the puzzle that needs to be solved.

Matt says

The S.E.C. is abuzz when the daughter of former House Speaker Mahoney is arrested for insider trading. While only a minor issues in the scheme of things, Mohoney calls upon his 'fixer', Joe DeMarco, to make it go away before the next election cycle. When DeMarco begins poking around, he discovers that the insider trading is only the beginning of Molly Mahoney's issues, which are strongly tied to the Mob. When the GOP gets wind of this, one congressman seeks to cripple Mahoney and his chances of getting back in the Speaker's chair. DeMarco must now get to the root of the insider trading issue, and its subsequent issues, while dodging the seedy underbelly of Mob-run casinos, and get Molly away from those seeking to do her harm. Facing enemies at every turn, DeMarco must produce results, all while keeping things on the down low. Lawson returns with another thriller, full of nuances and pitfalls the reader will rave about for years to come.

With Lawson's move to remove Mahoney from power, the stories have taken less of a direct political impact and focus more on the periphery of issues that cross the politician's desk. DeMarco's character remains strong and full of pep, though his abilities are sometimes hampered by the less than savory folks he must encounter to get the job done. I have come not only to enjoy DeMarco's adventures, but also like the stronger character development and personal pursuits DeMarco undertakes to make things right. The story is always adventure-packed and there is a strong political undertone. Examining the world of politics from many angles keeps Lawson's work fresh and his fans sated.

Kudos Mr. Lawson for this novel, which entertains as much as many of the previous in the series. I am eager to see what adventures you have in store for DeMarco and how Mahoney can abuse his fixer and still get the results he wants.

Viccy says

You won't find Joe DeMarco on any Congressional organization chart. He is the fixer for John Mahoney, former Speaker of the House, but now the Minority Leader. When Mahoney's daughter, Molly, is targeted by the SEC, he sends DeMarco to take care of it. As DeMarco investigates, it becomes apparent Molly is guilty

because she is a degenerate gambling addict whose credit cards are maxed out and she owes a mob-controlled casino in Atlantic City a half a million dollars. Things are not looking good. Joe has to wend his way carefully through the minefields SEC investigations and Mafia hitmen. Fortunately, Joe's father was a hitman himself, so Joe knows the territory. I always enjoy another visit with Joe.

Jayhawk says

joe saves the day.

Coolchoc says

DeMarco and money

A good story with a mix of crime and money. At points it was difficult to remember who was whom. A good ending with people getting what they deserve.

TraceyK says

I know I always give Mike Lawson 5 stars, but that is certainly because the man is that good. Like I said before, I just cannot get over DeMarco in this one. He is still same ol' same ol', but with a little more kick. This storyline was just a constant ride. Holds your attention the whole time. Every book so far in this series has been a thrill & I just fall more and more in love with this authors work so I try to take my time and space out each read, even though it's so hard to. Once you're finished, it's like - Ok I need the next one NOW !
