



Cold Pursuit

T. Jefferson Parker

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California Homicide Detective Tom McMichael has every good reason to pass on the investigation of slain city patriarch Pete Braga. After all, it was former mayor and self-made millionaire Braga who killed Tom's grandfather in a dispute over money -- and Tom's own father who, allegedly, sought revenge by savagely beating Braga's son into imbecility. But there are others who hated the old man as well. And McMichael is a good cop determined to perform his duty to the best of his abilities -- despite his growing feelings for the beautiful nurse who is the prime suspect in the brutal bludgeoning death ... and despite a twisting trail that is leading him into deadly, dark, and very private places where he dearly wishes not to go.

Cold Pursuit Details

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Author : T. Jefferson Parker

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From Reader Review Cold Pursuit for online ebook

Maddy says

RATING: 3.75

At 84 years old, Pete Braga has amassed more than his share of enemies, both professionally and personally. When he's found bludgeoned to death in his own home, there are no shortage of suspects. He's been on the winning end of some nasty business deals. He's left certain key members of his family out of his will. He's been involved in some key projects that have huge political and financial ramifications. The person that seems most likely to be involved in the murder is Pete's nurse, a very attractive younger woman by the name of Sally Rainwater who Pete fell in love with and to whom he had given several valuable gifts.

Detective Tom McMichael is assigned to investigate the case, and he's not necessarily the optimal person to fill that role. Many years earlier, McMichael's grandfather had served as a hand on one of Pete's tuna boats. According to family legend, he had been treated unfairly and not been paid for his work on one of their outings. When he raised the issue, Pete shot him. Subsequently, Pete's own son, Victor, was brutally beaten by an unknown person, rumored to be Tom's father, and left permanently damaged mentally as a result. To say that there's bad blood between the families is an understatement.

Tom quickly eliminates Sally Rainwater as a suspect, at least in his own mind, and rather unwise becomes involved with her. He's been on his own for a while, coming through a divorce that he doesn't quite understand and living mostly for the moments that he is able to be with his 7-year-old son, Johnny. As the investigation proceeds, Sally falls into the spotlight again when various of Pete's valuables are found in her home, and she ends up in jail.

Sally doesn't exactly have a squeaky clean past, but there are other folks in the picture who have convincing motives for doing Pete in. There are his various family members who believed that he was going to change his will to Sally's favor. There are the political committeemen and entrepreneurs who may have been negatively impacted by some of the things that Pete was supporting to their detriment. McMichael is a fair and honest detective who is able to put the family events into the background to figure out just who the real villain is in this situation.

Parker has done a good job with the characterization in this book, making each of the participants believable and well formed. In particular, McMichael is interestingly portrayed, as we see beyond his police persona and into his role as a father and son. The "mystery" itself was not very complex and fairly easy to figure out. The resolution was just a bit implausible, particularly the outcome of a suspenseful scene involving McMichael and the villain(s).

I enjoyed spending time with Tom McMichael and hope that perhaps Cold Pursuit is the first in a series rather than a pure standalone.

Monique says

Good light read.

Alan says

Mr. Parker's writing really appeals to me. His plots are good and complex enough to keep you guessing. As usual with favourite authors, I guess I'll run out of his books pretty soon too.

Frederick Tan says

The McMichaels and the Bragas has been enemies for as long as one can remember. So the latest saga begin with the murder of Pete Braga the 83 year old patriarch of the Braga family. Pete has killed Franklin McMichael in the 50s when he worked on his Tuna boat which Pete claims in self defence. In retaliation, Gabriel McMichael beats Pete's son Victor to within an inch of his life in a back alley at the age of 13 which left Victor at 63 with a mentality of a ten year old.

Tom McMichael a homicide detective with SDPD was called upon to investigate the murder of Pete. With such a rich history between their family not to mention his romantic dalliances with Pete's granddaughter Patricia Braga in the past can seriously mess up with the investigation.

Sure enough, as leads was discovered and plots thicken, throwing in another plot of trans border smuggling of contraband with the involvement of bad cops, the mixture become volatile. Tom was involved romantically with the main suspect of the murder further push the plot to explosive proportion. The climax is a car chase scene on the Coronado bridge which ended with a plunge into the sea below. Read on. This is one of the author more explosive book. Unputdownable.

J says

I DON'T HIDE MY REVIEWS EVEN IF THEY HAVE SPOILERS. BUT I DON'T PUT THEM ON A FEED, EITHER.

San Diego is the setting for this contemporary crime story, in which homicide detective Tom McMichael is assigned the murder of a prominent self-made tycoon, Peter Braga, who was his grandfather's arch nemesis.

Turns out the Irish McMichaels and the Portuguese Bragas were both tuna fisher families two generations back, when Peter (the fresh vic) killed McMichael's grandfather, Franklin, over money after a low-yield tuna trip went sour.

The book is filled with reversals:

- 1) A top police dept. officer (asst. chief Bland) is actually dirty -- taking cuts from a cross-border smuggling of body organs for transplant.
- 2) McMichael's dad -- who for decades now has denied beating up Peter Braga's son Victor, in retribution for

Frank's murder -- admits at book's end to doing the deed. Victor did not die, but in his 60s, has the intelligence and innocence of a pre-teen.

3) Peter Braga's young, attractive home-care nurse, Sally Rainwater -- who becomes the prime suspect in his killing -- turns out to have killed a man earlier in life, before she legally changed her name. Sally also rapidly becomes a love interest of detective Tom McMike (a clear conflict of interest, though the book tries to say their dating was okay when she was just an employee of the dead guy, and the last person to see him alive ... before she became a suspect.)

4) Turns out Peter Braga was done in by his own grand-daughter, Patricia, and her husband, Gar Hansen. Patricia, who coincidentally had been Tom's girlfriend in a star-crossed teen romance that both families halted, has a "penchant for destruction." She gets pissed off after granddad Peter attempts to remove Pat-and-husband from his will, and insert the sweet nurse in their stead.

When Tom McMike gets on to the Hansens' trail, he almost gets killed in a climactic chase scene that involves a vehicle running off the Coronado Bridge.

Released from the hospital to go home, Tom soon finds Sally back on his doorstep, ready to forgive and resume their personal relationship.

Reduced to plot points, the book may sound cliche. (I write these reviews principally to help me remember what the book was about, so I don't buy or borrow it again.)

But "Cold Pursuit" (title is generic) has other assets: interesting personalities, good dialogue, a nice historical resonance (explaining how the tuna trade has died out from San Diego) as well as the plot twists I described.)

Brenda says

I really like T. Jefferson Parker and this was a really good mystery. My only problem was the repeatedly foolish acts of the protagonist. But my guess is, it would make a really good screenplay.

Joe says

BLOOD FEUD

T. Jefferson Parker is an author who doesn't get the readership or critical praise I think he deserves. His books are crime procedurals/mysteries set in Southern California, with well-developed three dimensional characters all wrapped in the tangled webs of honor, duty and allegiances to the past. The author's books are denser than others of this genre and aren't one pulse raising scene after another - maybe that's what keeps some readers away.

Cold Pursuit is in this mold and delivers. San Diego Homicide Detective Tom McMichael is tasked to solve the murder of Pete Braga, an 84 year old prominent city patriarch. The first twist - the McMichael and Braga families have been involved in a two generation modern day blood feud. To complicate matters Detective McMichael falls for the prime suspect in the case. And to raise the tension level one more notch McMichael

is embroiled with Internal Affairs. A partner from his days on the Vice squad is behind bars facing corruption charges and IA is taking a serious look at McMichael.

If this sounds messy, it is. But in this author's hands the story and the sub-plots all flow together smoothly and credibly. All the loose ends and secondary characters are tied together in the end with the mysyery(s) solved and our hero staying true to his principles.

Highly recommended.

Matt says

As a good suspense/criminal investigation novel should, it keeps you reading with cliff hangers. The line up of evidence keeps you guessing as you try and reason/solve the case yourself. I have my doubts the police would place an officer so emotionally involved in a case as the lead of the investigation. The ending is also a little unbelievably super-human, and "has to" follow the action movie script and end with a chase scene (a little played out). That being said, I'm sure "real" police are not robots and deal with human emotions and fight human nature to stay unbiased and this story touches on that often. I would read other works from Mr. Parker.

Sheila Myers says

A good mystery with two crimes to be solved. Although the plot and characters are interesting, the plot gets bogged down with a lot of unnecessary details.

David Carr says

T. Jefferson Parker (and Thomas Perry) occupy the same tier as Michael Connelly, though Connelly's mastery is somewhat more reliable. Parker's novels The Blue Hour, Red Light, Silent Joe, and Black Water preceded this one, and California Girl and The Fallen followed it. That productive period (1999-2006) tapped a vein of fine, steadily readable narrative, engaging detective work, always with a personal jagged edge and a tendency toward emotional flaws of the kind that bring shame to the cop. Frequently the flaw is irresistible sex with an irresistible suspect, not a surprise and completely forgivable in my view. Appearances of guilt, innocence, corruption, and greed shift and expand throughout the narrative, keeping truth in play throughout the whole. Though their moral territories are similar, the setting is south of Harry Bosch, and even south of Ross MacDonald: San Diego, where the border is both criminally alluring and so convenient. The novel made me want to go back there, become a detective and solve crimes, but I think that boat has left the dock. So many have, alas. Makes a novel like this one a gift to savor.

Missyjohnson1 says

Kept me interested so it was a quick read. A few little details that were out of the ordinary but still a bit predictable and the typical formula.

Donna says

3.5 stars. Millionaire Pete Braga is clubbed to death in his mansion. Cop Tom McMichael gets the case. Their families have history -- a violent history. Pete's nurse is a likely suspect. He has been gifting her several expensive items in his house. However, he's a hard man who has stepped on a few toes in business so the list of people who don't like him is long. McMichael is determined to find his killer but makes his first mistake by being attracted to the nurse.

T. Jefferson Parker writes good and intricate crime novels. The book was slow in the middle but the pace picked up toward the end. Parker is one of those authors that I would like to go back and read or re-read all of his novels from book one forward. Oh, for a little more time every day.....

Marleen says

Although Cold Pursuit didn't entirely convince me content wise, I remain a huge fan of Jefferson Parker. I've read four his books so far and he's fast becoming another favorite of mine. I love detective stories with the emphasis on enigmatic and moody characters; in this case Tom McMichael is great (not too moody...). Loved those moments of self-reflection. And above all, I have a weak spot for great police procedurals. Here, in Cold Pursuit, millionaire Pete Braga has been found bludgeoned to death in his San Diego mansion. San Diego Homicide detective Tom McMichael is on the case. Too conveniently and too quickly evidence points in the direction of young nurse Sally Rainwater as a suspect. Furthermore the Irish McMichaels and the Portuguese Bragas share a violent history – fifty years ago Braga shot McMichael's grandfather dead, then McMichael's father (a teenager himself then) was accused of an attack that left Braga's thirteen-year-old son brain-damaged.

As I said, I didn't entirely warm up to the plot. Maybe it was a bit over-plotted? Maybe because there was so much history of San Diego and its port and the world of fishery which was totally unfamiliar to me? I can't put my finger on it. This case was complicated and there were actually two distinct crimes going on: One the murder of Pete Braga and, second, the traffic of freshly harvested kidneys over the Mexican border. For sure, Tom McMichael and his colleagues had a very hard time putting the pieces together, or rather separating the pieces. Truth be told, it felt rather realistic this slow pace of investigating. Real life is indeed much more complicated, confusing and messy than we normally read in novels.

Dan says

This book doesn't have a dry spot in it! The only bad part was trying to work out the different McMichaels (dad, son, sister, etc). But once I got that, it was really good. I happily admit that I didn't know who did it until the last few pages. Very good!

Carol says

What can I say except Parker is as good as it gets borrowed from the Washington Post Book World. This

book was non stop entertainment with nary a filler to be had...A page turner and the prose at times made me go back and read it one more time..In this story Detective Tom McMichael is sent to investigate a murder. Pete Braga is the victim. The man who years ago killed Tom's grandfather over money..
