



## The Priest

*Gerard O'Donovan*

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# The Priest

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## **The Priest** Gerard O'Donovan

The first in a series of Dublin-based mysteries introducing Inspector Mike Mulcahy, who is pitched into a deadly battle with a diabolical villain.

His name is the Priest. His weapon is a crucifix. His victims don't have a prayer. A killer is stalking the dark streets of Dublin. Before each attack, he makes the sign of the cross; then he sends his victims to God. After a foreign politician's daughter is brutally assaulted and left for dead, her body branded with burns from a blazing cross, the case falls to Detective Inspector Mike Mulcahy. Mulcahy is one tough cop, but this crime is beyond comprehension - and The Priest is a nemesis more evil and elusive than any Mulcahy has ever faced: an angel of death with a soul dark as hell. As a media frenzy erupts and the city reels in terror, Mulcahy teams up with ambitious journalist Siobhan Fallon in a desperate bid to stop The Priest in his tracks before he can complete his divine mission of murder.

## **The Priest Details**

Date : Published 2010 by Sphere

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Author : Gerard O'Donovan

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## From Reader Review The Priest for online ebook

### **Marc Leroux says**

I picked up this book while browsing at The Strand in NYC. I've been reading (and been quite impressed with) a number of Irish authors over the past couple of years, including Tana French, Benjamin Black and Declan Hughes, and decided to give this Dublin set thriller a shot. I'm glad I did.

The story centers on teenaged girls being attacked and molested in Dublin. It is told from the perspectives of two protagonists. Mike Mulcahy is a Dublin police officer, who's career has been with the Drug Enforcement squad. He has recently returned from a multi-year assignment with Europol in Spain. The first girl that is attacked is the daughter of a high ranking Spanish government official, who is in Dublin on an English immersion course. Mike is assigned to the sexual crimes division, a fate close to death as far as most people in the Dublin Garda are concerned, as an interpreter.

Siobhan Fallon, a reporter for a Dublin weekly, knew Mike before he went to Spain, and their acquaintanceship becomes a relationship when they reconnect at a party. Although there is secrecy concerning the attack on the Spanish girl, Siobhan receives some leaked information from the Garda, and breaks the story. This turns Siobhan into a national celebrity, but hurts Mikes position in the Spanish police. The outcome is predictable, but has a number of interesting twists. Gerard O'Donovan makes Dublin come alive, and instills realism into the story; his characters have doubts and second thoughts. This was a good, entertaining read, and I can't wait to get hold of Dublin Dead.

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### **Jason Brennan says**

Really liked this. The characters were great - Mulcahy the cop is likable without being soft, journo Siobhan Fallon is smart and on the right side of ruthless - and the Dublin setting is as authentic as it gets. It flies along from the very first page, dragging you in and keeping you gripped all the way through. Easily one of the best from the current crop of new Irish crime writers - a top read.

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### **Sarina Morrhaye says**

Eerste boek wat ik van deze schrijver gelezen heb en wat een goed gevoel heb ik hieraan overgehouden. Het verhaal zit heel goed in elkaar, met personages van allerlei karakters die elk heel goed hun rol vervullen. Doorheen het boek word je meegenomen op de zoektocht naar de moordenaar waarin je voelt dat Mulcahy tegen gewerkt wordt, niet geloofd of vertrouwd wordt. De gruwel en martelpraktijken die de auteur hier neerschrijft, hoop je nooit mee te moeten maken.

En nu op zoek naar het volgende deel in deze reeks.

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### **Miles says**

Weighing in at a hefty 500 pages, Gerard O'Donovan's "The Priest" is a captivating and fast paced thriller

that will leave you begging for more. Without question, "The Priest" is an outstanding first instalment (in a new series) featuring Inspector Mike Mulcahy and journalist Siobhan Fallon.

Shortlisted for the 2007 Crime Writers' Association's "Debut Dagger" competition, the Irish journalist, born in Cork and brought up in Dublin, has certainly left his mark with a gritty and character driven novel.

His name is the priest... his weapon is a crucifix... his victims don't have a prayer...

Jesica Salazar, a diplomat's 16 year old daughter has been sent, along with her school friends, to Dublin by her father (Don Alfonso) to experience a different way of life. Her father, a powerful and wealthy Spanish politician, is convinced she will be safe in Ireland. After all Ireland is a Catholic country, what could possibly go wrong in just two weeks?

"I thought it would be good for her, you see. To get away from me for a few weeks, from the bustle of politics that surrounds us, to see how ordinary people live".

When the body of a young girl is discovered, battered and bruised and left for dead, the sex crimes unit launch an immediate investigation. Claire Brogan heads the unit and has her own way of doing things. When Mulcahy is ordered to join the investigation, the tight unit make it clear he is unwelcome. Rushed to hospital and in a serious condition, the victim of the brutal assault is identified as Jesica Salazar.

Complete Review on my blog <http://www.milorambles.com/2010/10/19...>

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### **Kin says**

Ottimo.buoni i personaggi, la vicenda, i colpi di scena.Tutto ben articolato.

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### **Bill says**

I really enjoyed this novel. I stumbled on it at my public library and picked it up because it was set in Ireland, a place that I just visited for the 1st time. I liked the Mulcahy character and would like to see more of him. I recommend it.

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### **Cphe says**

This was a terrific read - a good, gripping police procedural with a very determined police Inspector Mike Mulcahy, who due to "cut backs" is without a position and is assigned to the Sex Crimes Unit in Ireland. Horrific, sadistic, violent assaults of young women are being investigated and Mulcahy is asked to assist. Due to the nature of the crimes the perpetrator is dubbed "The Priest" by the press. Siobahn Fallon is a reporter on the trail of "The Priest" and in her own way is as dogged, and determined as Inspector Mulcahy. Many of the characters in this well executed mystery are flawed, Mulcahy, Fallon, Cassidy, Brogan to name a few but their flaws and frailties are what brought the characters to life and made "The Priest" such a strong and engaging read.....My only complaint was that it all ended a mite too abruptly, so I guess that I will be

reading more of Inspector Mulcahy in the future.

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### **Gary says**

Very well written mystery. I like that the detective (Mulcahy) has experience and his feet in two countries, Ireland and Spain. The fact that he can speak Spanish and knows their culture helps him with his investigations of murder in Dublin.

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### **Deb says**

Loved the premise of this book. The plot could have been brilliant if backed up by sound writing and characters that the reader could learn to know. It's flat, bland and ultimately a terrible read. When will Irish journalists learn that they can't all be John Connolly? Very disappointing.

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### **Jake Olszanski says**

This was a fantastic read. I loved the accent of the narrative on Audible.

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### **Karen says**

Serial killer story-lines. We've all said it. Over it. One more serial killer storyline and I swear..... So I'll adjust previous assertions and instead say I'm over SOME serial killer story-lines.

THE PRIEST, the first crime novel from Irish author Gerard O'Donovan has a serial killer that actually doesn't kill all of his victims. They are, however, horribly injured, disfigured, tortured and abused. And our serial attacker is one of those mad, bad, weird religious nutter types - the burns that he leaves his victim's with eventually reveal that he's using some sort of Cross shaped implement. Needless to say, the nickname of "The Priest". That probably means a whole lot of reasons why you'd think twice before picking up this book.

But there are a lot of things going for this book. For a start it's mercifully free of the dreaded "in the serial killer's head" viewpoint. Secondly, some of his victims do survive - albeit maimed and dreadfully injured. This gives some opportunity for some interesting twists in the personal stories, in particular, of the first victim. Jesica Salazar is the much loved daughter of a high-ranking Spanish Diplomat, in Dublin for just a short time to experience a different culture, she is found after an evening out in a nightclub, alive but battered and horribly burnt. The sex crimes team steps into the investigation, headed by Claire Brogan. DI Mike Mulcahy has recently returned from a high-profile specialist drug investigation position in Spain, and he's not best pleased at all when he's seconded to the team. They need somebody to translate, and when he steps into a disagreement between a Spanish Official and one of the team, he's even more involved as the Spanish authorities look to him. Which means nobody is pleased. Not the team, not Mike. Add journalist Siobhan Fallon who is as fearless in her journalism as she is insecure about her personal life, somebody that Mike's very attracted to, and there's a good combination of characters here.

Mulcahy is a good central character, of the slightly embittered, strong willed, grumpy type. He's an extremely likeable sort of character - vaguely reminiscent of Rebus, but I'm prepared to give O'Donovan the benefit of the doubt over the naming of journalist Siobhan. The tentative relationship between these two has a feeling of reality about it - particularly when the roles of Journalist and Detective Inspector clash.

Alongside excellent characterisations and a really good example of team policing tension, there's a pretty good plot here. The tension doesn't let up in **THE PRIEST** - possibly because you know that this killer doesn't always kill his victims, partly because he presents such an obvious danger as there appears to be no predictability to actions. The only downside really is a slightly heavy-handed and predictable use of descriptive language, which smacked a little too much of some sort of writing police talk manual and didn't always feel all that authentic. Having said that, despite the serial killer theme, I really enjoyed **THE PRIEST** and am intrigued by the prospect of a pairing of Mulcahy and Fallon. Hopefully there will be more books featuring one or both of these characters.

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### **Beth says**

Gerard O'Donovan's first novel is definitely an attention-getter. The title of the book, **THE PRIEST**, which is set in Ireland, suggests another look among hundreds of the scandal and criminal actions of members of the Catholic church. It isn't. The priest of the title isn't a priest at all.

Inspector Matthew Mulcahy has just returned to Dublin after years on the drug squad with Europol. He had made a life in Spain, loving the bright sun and the mild weather that kept the streets of Madrid alive, bursting with life. Mulcahy loved his job and was far from pleased when the recession led to a re-structuring of the drug unit and a reassessment of the number of police needed to keep it functioning. Mulcahy, despite his fluency in Spanish, was superfluous to requirements and found himself back in Ireland without a specific assignment. There are rumors that a new national drug squad is to be established in Cork and Mulcahy hopes his resume will get him back to what he wants to do.

In the meantime, he is something of a jack-of-all-trades. That changes when Mulcahy is required for his Spanish skills. The daughter of a high-ranking minister in the Spanish government has been brutally attacked. Despite the extent of her injuries, she needs to be interviewed and Mulcahy finds himself assigned to the sexual assault unit, not where he wants his career to go. But Jesica Salazar is terrified and traumatized and the police need whatever information she can give them.

Mulcahy goes slowly with the girl, taking his time. Jesica's injuries are horrific. She has been beaten but more unsettling are the terrible burns all over her body. Mulcahy can't get much information from her but she tells him that the man was like a priest. He was dressed in black, he had a large crucifix, and he gave her a blessing, using his hands just as a priest does. And he took the cross she always wore around her neck, the cross that belonged to her mother before she died.

Mulcahy examines the photos of Jesica's body and is stunned when he realizes that the burns were made by holding a hot, metal cross on her body. Jesica was not raped in the usual manner and Mulcahy doubts it was a sexual assault. He thinks the elements indicate that the assailant is a religious fanatic. Mulcahy has been foisted on Inspector Claire Brogan's team and she does not want to hear any alternative theories to suggest it

wasn't a sexual assault. Mulcahy persists and finds himself maneuvered out of the information loop.

When more victims are discovered, the police are confronted with a serial attacker who doesn't kill his victims. He wants them to suffer and he wants them to live with the damage he does to them, physically and psychologically. Then one of the victims dies from the trauma of the attack, and the game changes. Mulcahy isn't going to let this case go so he decides to work on his own or, at least, he thinks he is alone until Siobhan Fallon, a reporter for a weekend tabloid, decides "the priest" is the story that is going to make her career.

THE PRIEST is a police procedural that is true to form and, because it is, it is a book that the reader will not want to put down. Matt Mulcahy is a terrific character to add to the other great Irish detectives – Brian McGilloway's Benedict Devlin, Paul Charles' Inspector Starrett, and Declan Hughes' Ed Loy. Siobhan Fallon is a bit annoying, but she improves as the story unfolds.

O'Donovan is a Dubliner so the setting is brought to life, neighborhoods of the city made distinct. The book is definitely one that reflects the time, now. Ireland is no longer under the control of the Catholic church. The men of the church have done their worst but O'Donovan looks at the real country and reminds readers that crime by other deviants and monsters still continues.

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### **Rita Gorra says**

A delightful book where you like the road to the end, and are not at the edge of your seat, skimming to get to the end. I hope there are more. I was very interested in our hero and I was surprised by how he handles each roadblock. The story wasn't overly dramatic, but very engaging. I am looking forward to more stories like this.

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### **Paul Pessolano says**

Dublin's police have a real problem on their hands. A daughter of a well-to-do Spanish politician, Jesica Salazar, is a victim of a brutal attack. Although badly beaten and scarred, she is alive but traumatized.

Mike Mulcahy is brought into the case. Mulcahy is from the drug enforcement division but has been assigned to the sexual assault division when he unexpectedly returns from an assignment with Europol in Spain.

It is found that Jesica was not only beaten badly but branded over her body with a crucifix.

A newspaper reporter, Siobhan Fallon, works for what might be considered a tabloid and sees this as her opportunity to advance her career. She becomes a "good" friend of Mulcahy. Siobhan is also receiving inside information about the case from an unknown source.

There are several good suspects but the police cannot get enough evidence on anyone to prosecute.

The pressure for an arrest increases when more young women turn up beaten and branded in much the same way. The pressure escalates when one of the young ladies is found dead.

Mulcahy feels that the attacks are not only sexually motivated but have something to do with religion as all the girls have had a religious medal ripped from their necks.

Siobhan and Mulcahy become unwilling partners using information they both have to bring the killer, now dubbed, "The Priest", to justice.

Mulcahy finds himself in a race against time to save Siobhan when she is targeted as the next victim of "The Priest".

Although it will not be difficult to finger the killer, it still remains a highly entertaining mystery.

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### **Sarah says**

I thought the premise of the story was pretty good, promising, but it was just the execution that let this book down. For a start most of the middle section was completely redundant, the book would not have lost any of the plot development by taking it out. It seemed like we just meandered along, not really learning anything new at all until the last twenty or so pages where it all kicked off. Another thing that disappointed was that the killer was exactly who you thought it was, no twist that had you gasping, it was all, 'oh what a surprise, the man who they've spent the entire book postulating might be the killer, is in fact the killer' which was a real let down. Lastly the front cover says, *meet the Dublin serial killer...* in a dramatic fashion, when they killer is not a serial killer at all, one person died and the definition of a serial killer is that they kill three or more. So the entire book was started on a lie. Poor.

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