



The Outside Man

Richard North Patterson

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The outside man is society lawyer Adam Shaw. A northerner in a southern town jealous of its secrets, he finds the dead body of his best friend's wealthy wife -- and his friend is missing.

In a world where wealthy people will stop at nothing to maintain a genteel image, Shaw must gamble his career, his marriage, and his very life in a passionate quest for the real murderer -- and learn the shocking truth about his own past and future

The Outside Man Details

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Author : Richard North Patterson

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From Reader Review The Outside Man for online ebook

Susan Treb says

Riveting

Slow start with a fantastic finish. The story built intrigue until it exploded. The actions of each character defined their personality and connections to each other.

Anne H. Powell says

Wonderful

A wonderful story. Excellent character development. A real mystery. You don't know who did what and keep trying to figure it out.

Colin says

This book was one of two in the same item by this author. Having enjoyed the first one, I was looking forward to reading this. Sorry to say that it isn't one that I would recommend. It concerns a lawyer, Adam, who finds one of his lady clients dead. One of the suspects is her husband, but Adam thinks otherwise and the book is about his attempts to find out whodunnit and why. He is not helped in this by a very stropky policeman who appears to regard him with the same contempt as the husband, and also a senior partner in his lawfirm who seems to like Adam even less. The senior partner's daughter is Adam's wife. There is a mish mash of other possible motives and suspects including a relative of an executed prisoner in a racially tense murder trial way back when, a son with possible oedipal issues, a fraudulent loan and the sexual orientation and habits of one of the parties involved. To me, all these things served only to confuse and I found the end more than a bit disappointing – I could even say I didn't much care by the end of the tale, as few if any of the characters had any redeeming features. Another example, to me anyway, of the hit and miss nature of this author's books.

Hannah Etherton says

I started reading this. I only got so far and I decided I had enough of it. Court room/ legal are not normally my thing in any case. This just felt very dialoguey and I quite frequently got lost as to who was saying something. Not helped by a memory going straight into a current situation, that completely threw me. It felt very much like a high society situation, which is maybe what made me lose interest. I can see some people liking this, just was not for me.

john harding says

This is the third of Richard North Patterson's books that I have read. I came to it from Protect and Defend, admirable in the tightness of its plot and its moral strength. I could hardly believe that The Outside Man was by the same author. Morally flabby, it presented me with not a single character for whom I could feel any respect. Perhaps it is a failure in me that I can feel little sympathy for the bankers, lawyers, mill owners and country club wives of a poor southern state. It would have been something if the narrator commanded respect. A lawyer, practising commercial law, employed by a father-in-law whom he despises and hates, he seems to offer only one virtue, namely loyalty to a friend, Henry Cantwell. It is never clear what substance there is to the friendship. Cantwell is a rich banker who seems uninterested in banking, lives out a sterile marriage with a cardboard cutout of a wealthy wife and reads Aeschylus, which he had also lent to the narrator. A single sentence from Aeschylus didn't seem to me sufficient to indicate a rich shared culture in two characters in whom it otherwise seems completely lacking.

If Patterson's aim had been to paint a picture of a South with not a single redeeming feature he couldn't have done better. His Alabama is not a place I would want to go to, and I had no interest in finding out who, in this tangle of despicable characters, ended up doing what to whom.

Laura T says

Intriguing but surprisingly dated having been written in the 70s. I always enjoy RNP's books but this isn't my favorite

Judy Churchill says

Richard North Patterson has always been one of my favorite authors. His books are thoughtful and well written. This was a great exposure of layers of secrets finally coming to a head. He discovered cases of unrequited love that smoldered for decades resulting in death and destruction. He discovered that old moneyed Alabama wasn't all he thought it would be. It was an enjoyable read.

Barbara Hearn says

This book was all over the place, characters I didn't care about, totally ridiculous ending. Dumb.

Clive Barnett says

The plot builds patiently to an overly complicated finish.

Wally Goulet says

Disappointed

I have been a Richard North Patterson fan and this book was okay but not as compelling as his other efforts. His other books have had good. Character development and I just needful d myself liking most of the characters in this effort.

Sidney says

Intricate, twisty and rewarding. This early Richard North Patterson immerses lawyer Adam Shaw in a case, which sends him on a voyage of personal discovery as he seeks to defend a friend on a murder charge. It's really a tale to two troubled families, double dealings and dark desires, a compact and well plotted tale.

Lisa says

I love a good Richard North Patterson book! This was an okay book. I'm still giving it 3 stars because (1) it is his first book (& clearly he improved his writing skills by the time I discovered him with Degree of Guilt) & (2) Patterson kept me guessing - & interested - about who the killer was.

Julie says

I picked this book up at a fundraiser about a month ago. I have read RNP books before, but not often. I was a little concerned when I saw some the reviews for this one. The feelings were a little mixed, with some more recent reviews being rather harsh. But, the book was only 300 pages long, so I figured I could run through it pretty fast. I actually liked it. It was published in the very early 1980's. That is something you may want to keep in mind. Not because of outdated technology, but because of the types of TV shows and movies that were popular at that time. This book reminded me of quite a few of those made for TV movies and night time soap operas that were so popular in those days. Keeping that in mind, it was a pretty good little mystery. RNP is better known for his legal thrillers, and although this one revolved around a law office and our male protanist is a lawyer, there is no courtroom drama.

Adam Shaw, a lawyer working in his father- in- law's firm, discovers an old family friend brutally murdered. The suspects range from old enemies of Lydia's long deceased father, her husband, her son, her lover or her lover's wife. As Adam begins to ask some hard questions, he finds that his father-in-law, who hates Adam just because he married his daughter, tried to stop him at every turn, and surprisingly, so does his wife. Adam has to deal with the rivalry between himself and his father-in-law, which almost gives the novel a southern gothic feel to it. Even the melodramtic ending has that atmosphere to me.

I believe this is one of the first RNP novels. I think over the years he has probably improved his skills as a writer, but I didn't think this one as awful as some reviewers did. Maybe it is my age and my ability to remember the time frame the book was written in that helped me get past some things that irritated other people.

Overall I would say this one deserves a B-.

Susan Rescigno says

OMG ... so many twists and turns to this story ... unbelievable!

John says

What drew me to this book was that it was set in Alabama where I live and that it was described as a courtroom drama. Courtroom drama was a total over statement. The characters never set foot in a courtroom and it was much more of a detective story than a legal thriller. Not that there is anything wrong with that. I also love detective stories. As to the Alabama setting, yes it was set in Birmingham, but there was very little Southern flavor. For one thing, if you have ever been in Alabama you would know that no conversation is complete unless the subject of college football comes up. There was no mention of college football in this book. I must admit that I was sorely tempted to put this book aside early on. I didn't care for the authors writing style, too many overly descriptive phases and the characters are not likeable. But I am glad that I stuck with it and it did get better about midway. The story involves a young attorney from Cleveland who married a Birmingham girl whose father is a member of a large law firm and they move to Alabama. When a female client, and close friend of the family is murdered her husband is the prime suspect. The police detective in charge seems to hold a grudge against the husband and with no one else on his side the young lawyer sets out to investigate the case himself. It develops into a pretty good detective story and psychological drama. There are lots of red herrings. I wish I could have gone 2.5 stars, but settled for three. I understand that this was the author's first novel and was written in 1982. Hopefully his writing has improved in the passage of time.
