



Gumbo Limbo: An Alex Rutledge Mystery

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Alex Rutledge, freelance and part-time Key West crime scene photographer, awakes to his first day off in months. Late August, the off-season, the dog days. Everything's okay until his phone rings. His old navy buddy, Zack Cahill, now a successful Chicago banker, is in town and, at 8:00 a.m., drunk in Sloppy Joe's. Zack demands that Rutledge join him for a celebratory beer. When Alex arrives at the bar, eight minutes later, Cahill is gone.

The day continues downhill. A high-noon murder in the tourist district, the ransacked apartment of a local bartender, and the chance encounter of Abby Womack, Cahill's ex-mistress, combine to convince Alex that Zach Cahill's disappearance may be linked to all of these events. An overnight fire and a drive-by shooting the next morning amplify the strangeness and danger.

By calling in favors from a crew of Key West characters, stepping aside of law enforcement, and traveling to New Orleans in an attempt to help his friend, Rutledge will fall deep into a mysterious range war, a fight for the profits from a twenty-year-old smuggling deal.

Gumbo Limbo: An Alex Rutledge Mystery Details

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Author : Tom Corcoran

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C-shaw says

This book was so enjoyable because it portrayed a slice of authentic Key West life; however, there were too many characters who were too similar, and I had a hard time telling them apart. The premise of the story was rather convoluted and not fully explained: I won't give anything away by saying it all hinged on some sort of trust agreement among drug dealers to dole out their ill-gotten profits many years after the fact - a rather silly basis for the storyline, I thought. Nevertheless, Corcoran's recurring Alex Rutledge protagonist was a good and likeable guy. Call this a "potato chip" book for those interested in Florida life. :-]

Vickie says

Slow start.... took a long time to get into.... but once it got going was pretty fast paced.

Jeffrey Hammerhead says

One of my favorite of the Alex Rutledge series. I love the beginning, "This time I had good intentions." Haven't we all thought that.

Julia DeBarrioz says

I love love LOVE the way Tom Corcoran writes about Key West, and his characters are wonderful. Flawed, real, and still mostly the type of people you'd like to sit down and have a drink with in Louie's Backyard. That said, this book didn't really grab me the way his first Alex Rutledge mystery, The Mango Opera, did. The plot was super convoluted, especially towards the last fifty pages I kind of found myself tuned out. However, I will continue on to #3, because I love the main hero Alex and Corcoran's descriptions of the Island City.

Craig Pittman says

When I was younger, any time I read a thriller what stood out to me was the plot. If it moved like an express train, it was great. Taking time to set up characters or create a mood or set a scene seemed like a waste of time. But now that I'm older, I really treasure the thrillers that work hard to build a world. Ace Atkins does a superb job of it, and so does Lee Child. The master, I think, is Tom Corcoran. His portrait of Key West makes you really feel like you're there, and the characters he describes all seem like people who would be living there, not creations set up just to propel a plot.

This is the second of Corcoran's thrillers featuring photographer Alex Rutledge, and the third one I've read.

Its plot hinges on a pretty big coincidence, but Corcoran does a great job of making it seem like a logical thing to happen as part of the story.

The plot is classic Florida: former dope smugglers who have been waiting for a big payoff and the man who controls the cash suddenly disappears. He's a friend of Rutledge, who then takes it on himself to try to find what became of his friend. Before he gets to the end, a man's killed in front of the Conch Train, someone tries to break into Rutledge's house and gets shot by an elderly neighbor and a lot of other twists and turns occur. But the most vivid character in the book is an apparently homeless bum who has a big secret that Rutledge figured out a long time ago, and now exploits to get info he needs. It's a nicely done turn on the usual street-smart informant character.

All in all, this is another interesting thriller from Corcoran and I fully intend to read the whole series.

Sandy says

Because I am so familiar with Key West I loved reading about Louie's Backyard, Duval St. Sloppy Joe's and could picture everything. However the plot was confusing and so many characters that I was usually lost.

Dustin says

This series is a supremely satisfying summer read. Corcoran really puts you in the Florida Keys with the laid back, boozy atmosphere. I'm not sure I entirely followed the plot of this one, but it was enjoyable nonetheless.

Frederick says

Gumbo Limbo by Tom Corcoran - I liked this book quite a bit. It had a really good story, it kept me guessing all the way through. I'll be looking forward to reading the next book in this series.

Paul says

Hard to follow with all of the underground and cop slang.

Sprinkled liberally with undeveloped characters and old/local? language which caused lack of understanding and interest on my part.

It was work just to try to figure out what all of the seedy, dying off characters were saying and doing to each other.

Nancy Wilson says

While not my normal "genteel" mystery this was cool. A bit violent but set in Key West which makes up for a lot. Rutledge makes an interesting hero. This particular story was a bit challenging to follow with lots of twists and turns and humidity. In the end it settled out. I think I'm up for more.

Jenny says

<http://www.bookcrossing.com/journal/6...>

Great mystery set in Key West, Florida. There are a lot of weird/eccentric characters. Alex spends most of the time trying to figure out what's going on, who are the bad guys or good guys. Really good descriptions of Key west.

John says

a good read
recommended

Wendy says

I should have abandoned this book after the first couple of chapters.

Hal Brodsky says

My first Corcoran book (and his second). The writing is Sam Spade Hard-boiled ummm Key West Beach Bum photographer tough. (Well, it is.)
Corcoran can write and the action moves along and the reader really gets a feel for what living in Key West year round must be like.
.... And then about 2/3 of the way through I totally lost track of who was who because Corcoran introduces more characters per 100 pages than Charles Dickens. Then the bad guys begin acting like good guys and the good guys break all kinds of laws and it ends in an unlikely mess.
Still, I am willing to try one of his later books.

Pattie says

Not sure if I would have enjoyed this book as much if I wasn't visiting so many of the sites he mentions as I read it. But the writing was good, the characters interesting, and the descriptions vivid, so what the hell. And he's a long-time personal friend of Jimmy Buffett (he shot the covers of many of his albums), so he's earned a pass on his sly dropping of lines from Buffett songs into the text.

