



The Interrogation

Thomas H. Cook

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In his latest novel of unrelenting suspense, *Edgar Award*—winning author Thomas Cook journeys into the darkest corners of the human heart to tell a mesmerizing story of crime and retribution—and the forces that push even good people to the breaking point.

THE INTERROGATION

Albert Jay Smalls sits in an interrogation room accused of an unspeakable crime. The police have no witnesses, no physical evidence, but they are certain he is hiding the truth. With less than twelve hours before he must be released, Smalls will be put through one final interrogation. I

It is a search that leads into the shadowed recesses of one man's shattered mind—and to the devastating secrets buried in a desolate seaside town. It is a quest that takes three desperate cops down a dark, twisting road as they race against the clock to find out what really happened one rainy autumn afternoon in 1952. The answers will be more shocking than anyone can imagine, blurring the boundaries between pursuers and prey, between the innocent and the guilty, between the truth that sets us free and the tragedies that haunt us to the grave.

Against a gripping backdrop of murder and redemption, master storyteller Thomas Cook probes the uneasy, shifting bonds of family, love, and unbearable loss, proving once again why he is “perhaps the best American writer of crime fiction currently practicing” (*Drood Review*).

From the Hardcover edition.

The Interrogation Details

Date : Published October 1st 2002 by Bantam (first published September 30th 1998)

ISBN : 9780553582505

Author : Thomas H. Cook

Format : Paperback 320 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Suspense, Thriller, Crime, Mystery Thriller

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From Reader Review The Interrogation for online ebook

Tristan Robin Blakeman says

Genuinely engrossing tale focusing on several policemen and a suspect in a child's murder. Although there is an element of mystery regarding "whodunnit," I didn't really consider this a mystery/thriller. Rather, "The Interrogation" was a well-written and thoughtful dramatic novel. The characters were rather tragic - Shakespearean sorrow and failure writ small for the common man.

Flashbacks and time jumping in a novel can be very effective - or it can be confusing and irritating if the author doesn't use the conceit with skill. Here, the current murder of a child mirrors the murder of a child years before and the book handily traverses the flashbacks-and-forwards with ease.

Although this book is about heinous crimes and their aftermath, the author doesn't wallow in the gruesome details and one never cringes from the page out of horror. He is far more concerned with the examination of the people who become embroiled in the cases: the detectives, the families of the victims, the suspects.

I recommend this book to anybody who reads thrillers, but is willing to go one step further than the standard formulaic serial killer suspense novel.

Karen says

A good read, well written with a surprise ending! I will be adding another book by him to my "want to read" list.

Arthur Okun says

Once again I went back to reading former author's I loved, but I started to get involved with terror, thriller, books-----I went back to Thomas Cook. INTERROGATION was published in 2002. Thomas Cook writes in "Hypnotic prose" and in plots that cringe in the sadness that exists. The Detectives and Chiefs are amazing----
Cathy Lake, she was eight years old and was murdered in the park. Read Cook, He is the best!!!

Ann says

Three and a half stars for this one. It centers around the last ditch 12 hour interrogation of an alleged child killer. The story is told from nearly every viewpoint but that of the accused. The mood throughout the book is dark and foreboding. Each character has some deep seated sadness that they are carrying around like a very heavy load. I thought the narrative dragged a bit. As the end of the interrogation loomed, however, the pace quickened both within the interrogation room and elsewhere. I actually was pleasantly surprised with the ending; I was certain I was on the last page, but one character couldn't let previous night's events go and went on to make a further discovery, thus finally solving the mystery and tying together seemingly unrelated

people and events.

Macdiel says

Qué desespero con los personajes de este libro, dios míoooo.

Jacque says

I've seen this described as a thriller, but I felt it was really more of a drama. Well-written and thoroughly engaging.

Christie says

My love affair with Thomas H. Cook goes back several years when I stumbled upon his novel *Breakheart Hill* in a secondhand bookstore. Since then I have read several of his books including *Instruments of Night*, *The Chatham School Affair*, *Places in the Dark*, *Evidence of Blood*, *The Fate of Katherine Carr*, *Master of the Delta*, *Red Leaves* and *The Cloud of Unknowing*. Geesh, that's a lot of books by one author! In my reading life perhaps Stephen King is the only author I've read more of. (Yes, I am ending that sentence with a preposition; sue me.)

Cook is a prolific writer (he has over 30 novels to his credit) and has won many awards including the Edgar and the Crime Writers' Association Duncan Laurie Award, yet you'd be lucky to find any of his novels on the shelves at your local bookstore – trust me, I look. So how come he isn't as well known as other authors writing in the same genre? Unless you've read him, or are a super mystery novel aficionado, you may have never even heard of him. How come? Ali Karim asked the same question for an article in January magazine.

I buy his books whenever I find them and I hang on to them, usually until I can replace the one I am about to read with a new one. I like to have one waiting in the wings for the next time I need a fix.

Albert Jay Smalls is an odd little man who lives in a drain pipe in a local park. He's been arrested for the murder of a little girl. The problem is there's no evidence and no witnesses and so the police can only hold him for twelve hours before they have to cut him loose. Thomas Burke, the chief of police (a man with his own troubles) sends his two best interrogators into the room to get a confession from Smalls.

The Interrogation is the story of those two cops, Norman Cohen and Jack Pierce. Each man has a heart full of demons (Cohen is haunted by his experiences in war; Pierce's young daughter was a murder victim), but they are tenacious and accomplished interrogators. Since the story is set in 1952 they have to rely on the evidence they gather the old-fashioned way: visiting crime scenes, talking to people, chasing leads. There's no Google and everything takes time and time isn't on their side.

As Cohen and Pierce question Smalls and try to follow a breadcrumb trail, the reader will try to determine Smalls' guilt or innocence too. Make no mistake, Cook's novels are mysteries and half the fun is trying to figure out whodunit, but that's not the only thing Cook's got going on.

As with every single Cook novel I've read – his characters are really dynamic. You believe them from the minute they open their mouths. They have complicated interior lives. His heroes are always men trying to do the right thing – even when they can't. Minor characters, like garbage collector Eddie Lambrusco, are equally well-drawn. Cook can create empathy with just a few words as he does when we watch Eddie handle his father's watch and thinks

a laborer's timepiece with its chinks and scratches and slightly skewed hands that circled turgidly around the yellowing dial. After a lifetime, he thought, this.

There are a lot of father/child motifs in *The Interrogation* – dads who are helpless to save their children; dads who do everything for them; dads estranged from their children. It's a theme Cook visits often and yet he always seems to have fresh things to say about the topic.

And like with virtually every Cook novel (I almost said book there and then thought better of it) I've read, the story's resolution will be a surprise. It won't feel like a cheat, either...because with Cook the clues always exist.

If you like mysteries that are thoughtful, intelligent and well-written – try to get your hands on Thomas H. Cook. You will not be disappointed.

Plum-crazy says

A good thriller written in a different way to most crime novels. Told in "real time" & flashbacks it covers a twelve hour period in which the prime suspect in the murder of a young girl is being interviewed. It's also set in the 1950's so it's back to basics as regards the crime work...no computers or complicated forensics here!

Three desperate cops are trying to find the murderer of 8-year-old Cathy Lake but their prime suspect Albert Jay Smalls isn't giving anything away. The cops, Cohen, Pierce & Burke have 12 hours to find out what happened to Cathy & the story moves at an agreeable pace towards a satisfactory conclusion...although the outcome for some of the characters was not what I was anticipating.

All-in-all, an entertaining read that I enjoyed much more than I was expecting to.

Michael says

Noir

Suspenseful, quick, smart. It is well written and cleverly thought out. Great weekend read, or a flight across the country.

Motherbeaver says

I thoroughly enjoyed this intense thriller. The ending was a total surprise.

Andy Plonka says

A look at what can go on in an interrogation taking place over a short period of time.

Carol says

The Interrogation by Thomas H. Cook

4.5★'s

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From The Book:

Albert Jay Smalls sits in an interrogation room accused of an unspeakable crime. The police have no witnesses, no physical evidence, but they are certain he is hiding the truth. With less than twelve hours before he must be released, Smalls will be put through one final interrogation. It is a search that leads into the shadowed recesses of one man's shattered mind—and to the devastating secrets buried in a desolate seaside town. It is a quest that takes three desperate cops down a dark, twisting road as they race against the clock to find out what really happened one rainy autumn afternoon in 1952. The answers will be more shocking than anyone can imagine, blurring the boundaries between pursuers and prey, between the innocent and the guilty, between the truth that sets us free and the tragedies that haunt us to the grave.

My Thoughts;

It was basically based in the police stations interrogation room with a small man that was suspected of killing 8 year old Cathy Lake in the park next to the playground. The two veteran police detectives in charge of getting the truth from the suspect had been at it for days and still the man declares his innocence...but they know that he's guilty of something if not the murder of Cathy. From there the story spreads out to include a junk dealer...a small time con man...two trash collectors...and several other police officers that are several degrees of unprofessional...from slightly dishonest and hiding secrets that would put them off the police force if not in jail...to deceitful and highly untrustworthy. How will these people all come together? With an explosion that will rock your mind. This has been an incredible journey through the darkest depths of human nature.

Linda Myers says

This is one of my favorite authors but not one of my favorite books. Cook is always intriguing but I found this one a little forced with coincidence. Nothing is ever as it seems in his books, and that is true here as well. I liked the way the story 'braids' together in short snippets from various POVs. It might seem jerky to some, but by receiving a little info at a time, you can definitely feel like a part of the whodunit in the same way the cop characters must seek out clues.

Mary Ann Olszty says

Unlikeable bumbling idiots running an investigation fueled by their own prejudice and incompetence and stupidity. What a complete waste of time.

Linda says

It's been a while since I read a book I liked this much. I picked it up as a filler for a heavy-duty non-fiction I'm reading and finished it right away. Although I wanted to, I didn't look ahead or skim through any parts.

Cook's writing is good enough to keep reading; he doesn't pad it by putting in details you don't need. He just keeps the action moving.

An eight-year-old girl's body has been found in the park near the lake. The woman who found the body had been frightened by a strange, wild-looking man and had called for the police. She met them on the path at the point she'd been frightened; they left her to follow the path she said the man had taken and found a bum sleeping in a culvert just a little ways away. Suddenly the woman screamed and one of them returned to discover she'd found the body.

Case easy, right? Bum found in culvert with picture drawn on wall that appears to be the little girl - very good likeness. Take him in with 24 hours to hold him or let him go. Everyone is sure he did it, but he keeps insisting (of course, they say, the guilty **ALWAYS** say they're innocent) that he didn't do it and that he had suspected there was a man who watched the children. Mothers frequently in the park with their children report they never saw a strange man, so the police dub him "the Invisible Man" and don't believe the suspect.

Detectives Pierce and Cohen are assigned to the case and now have only 12 hours to crack the suspect. Chapters are given in blocks of time passing. At the start of each chapter is a shadow clock across the pages that reflects the time passing.

Ok. Did the guy do it? I'm not going to spoil it. But as well as a good, fast plot, Cook has created all manner of characters who share one thing - they feel incompetent, helpless in their lives; they are looking for something to "save" them: Pierce's daughter was murdered; Cohen, a Jew, was in WWII and saw first hand what the Nazis did to Jews; a garbage collector, a single father, works nights and feels guilty about not being able to give his daughter the life and attention she should have; the suspect, a young man, who calls himself "scum" and refuses to tell the police anything about his past and appears to be hiding something; among others.

This isn't a one-sided cop/murder story; it's a whole world of real people doing real things, suffering real hurts, showing real feelings. Just when you think things are going straight forward, they shift off in a direction you hadn't expected, just like real life.

I'll definitely be reading more of Cook's work. I only hope that it's as good as this one.
