



Runaway Town

Jay Stringer

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After narrowly surviving a vicious knife attack, gangland detective Eoin Miller thinks he's earned a break from hunting down thieves, runaways, and stolen drug money. But when crime boss Veronica Gaines tips him off to a particularly sensitive new case, his Romani blood won't let him say no. A rapist is targeting immigrant girls, and the half-gypsy Eoin knows all too well just how little help an outsider can expect from the local police. Besides, his client isn't looking for someone to arrest the bastard. He's looking for someone to stop him—for good.

But the deeper Eoin digs, the more tangled he becomes in a web of corruption, racism, and revenge...especially once his troubled past threatens to derail the investigation by raising questions about his own loyalty and family ties. With his life teetering on the brink of disaster, Eoin realizes there is a fine line between justice and punishment. Now it's up to him to decide just which side he's on.

Runaway Town Details

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From Reader Review Runaway Town for online ebook

Dana King says

I've been a reader of Do Some Damage since its inception; there's no finer writers' collaborative blog to be found. I came across Jay Stringer there, and was shocked—shocked!—when he announced the next book in the Eoin Miller series (*Lost City*) has been released, as I had yet to get around to reading its predecessor, *Runaway Town*. I immediately bought a copy and bumped it to the head of my ever-burgeoning queue.

Good decision.

Runaway Town is a example of why, when done right, the PI story is the highest form of crime fiction. Miller isn't a PI—it's hard to say what he is exactly—but he fills that role in the story. He's Roma—British gypsies—which makes him a bit of an outcast from the get-go. Used to be a cop, now is officially a “football coach” at a boys club run by the Gaines crime family as one of their many beards. He used to work for Channy Mann, the Gaines's chief competition, until he killed Channy's brother. (Which was when I realized *Runaway Town* was the second book in the series, so I'll be looking for *Old Gold*, too.) Things are complicated.

They don't get any better when Veronica Gaines, the head of the family, asks him to find a rapist who has been terrorizing immigrant girls who belong to a support group that is also a Gaines beard. The victimized girls are illegals, afraid to go to the police for fear of deportation. Meanwhile, Channy wants Miller to set up Veronica to be killed. Add some family issues and a political party with a virulent anti-immigrant position and Miller has his hands full.

So does Stringer, and he pulls it off marvelously. *Runaway Town* is that rare bit of fiction—any genre—that tries to be about more than one thing and succeeds. Miller deals with and examines issues of family, loyalty, and trying to do the right thing while struggling with what's possible and practical. It's a mess. Never so much the reader loses track, but plenty to keep one wondering how the hell Miller's going to get out of this.

Miller is a fascinating protagonist. He's flawed, fighting an addiction to painkillers he doesn't want to acknowledge, and he's in over his head. He had no desire to be a hero, and is as brave as he has to be, which turns out to be a considerably amount. The irony of his story is, once he has identified the rapist, he has to decide whether to call the police, turn him over to Gaines, or resolve the situation himself. His reflections are reminiscent of Dennis Lehane's *Gone Baby Gone*: no matter what he does, he's wrong on some level.

Runaway Town has a few endings. Not because Stringer plays tricks with the reader, trying to fool you into thinking, “ah, this is the one.” He's wrapping up what are essentially three stories. Stay with him. He doesn't cheat, but you also won't see them ending quite as you expect. He creates satisfying resolutions and still leaves things open for the next book.

There are a lot of excellent writers and excellent books out there; readers should rejoice. Jay Stringer and *Runaway Town* are one of each, and the rejoicing can begin as soon as you start to read.

Jody Patanjo says

Meh

The first book in this series was fantastic. This one, not so much. It was slow and plodding. I was disappointed.

J says

This is a book you should read.

The writing in this novel is surprising. Not because of who the author is but in it's freshness and use of common words combined together to express thoughts and emotions some of us feel or have felt but have never articulated or truly thought through. Makes you have a surprising connection to the characters.

Stephen Dorneman says

In this dark sequel to OLD GOLD, Stringer's Eoin Miller, a gypsy and former cop now reluctantly working for the mob, sees what has become of his family, his self-esteem, and the illegal immigrants that are victims and pawns in the finances and politics of a decaying industrial Midlands town - and none of it is pretty. Looking for noir twists and turns? You, like Eoin, have come to the right wrong place.

Nigel says

I really enjoyed Old Gold a lot - the previous story about Eoin Miller - part gypsy, ex cop, set in the mean streets of the Black Country. While I was pleased to get the opportunity to read it I was sort of dreading it as I thought it would be hard to maintain the same edgy drama of Old Gold. Fortunately I was wrong! Good dark read (with some violence) with Eoin trying to deal with some very current problems and avoid getting hurt too badly by folk who would prefer him not to know what is really going on. It would make a great TV series so long as no one tries to sanitise it!

Rob Burton says

Another excellent read from Jay Stringer. Although I left the black country and the midlands when I was young the book is evocative as my extended family still live there. Eoin Millar is a damaged man and has his own devils to fight. But the dastardly deeds of the local crime gangs have him turning in circles as he tries to sort out the rapes of local immigrant girls and the stresses within his own family. It is a cracking read. Or as they may say in the Black Country Bostin'

Craig Buck says

There's something about Scottish noir that warms the heart like a pauper's last chunk of coal, and Jay Stringer gets it just right in *Runaway Town*. Emotions run hot, blood runs cold, family skeletons dance and histories intertwine in this nonstop blast through the Scottish underworld. Highly recommend!

Lis says

The second part of the Eoin Miller trilogy is great - really great. But I don't want to give it five stars, because then where do I go for Part 3..?

L says

The story begins with a nightmare--Eoin's memory of the first time his family was burned out of their home. He wakes and acknowledges that he's sold his soul to the devil--in the face of a drug family. Actually, two drug families. Between them, the cops, and his family, he's playing four sides against the middle--that would be himself. This one involves an impending drug war, undocumented immigrants (and the human trafficking involved), his not-exactly-ex-wife, and his family, whom the reader meets. While Eoin is still a moral mess--he does some very bad things, again, this time he also does some clearly good things. Caught in the untenable position between what's "right" and legal and what's possible, well, he does what he thinks he has to do. This book goes into the violent racism against the Romani people much more than did the first, while touching some on cultural values. This background leads Eoin to try to protect other immigrants, as best he can, with rather mixed results, all which are familiar to him. Ok, despite the violence--apparently Eoin is one of those detectives beaten to the verge of death in every story, and does a fair share himself--apparently I'm hooked on the series.

Steve Weddle says

Jay Stringer's take on the Midlands region of the UK is fantastic and his treatment of characters -- those who have professional or familial relationships with the protagonist -- could be used as textbook chapters on how to write. This one is one of the rare books I've run across in the past few years that carries as much weight for writers as it does for readers -- and that's saying something. Because *RUNAWAY TOWN* is a remarkable story about characters you'll carry with you forever. This Eoin Miller series is one of those that ups the stakes with each outing. Each book seems both larger and more personal than the last. Just amazing, honestly.

Jennifer C says

Like a punch in the face

Excellent, well told modern noir. Some passages read like a litany of a life gone sideways. Others are like a left hook. Fucking excellent.

Joseph C. Cohen, Jr. says

Deep Character Development

Taut plot that has plenty of room for Eoin to reflect further about his identity. Topic certainly timely, touching on more than just two simple camps with opposite beliefs. Introducing Eoin's siblings pushes the reader deeper into his reality. No spoilers from me. Enjo.

David Highton says

The second Eoin Miller story, and although he still qualifies as a private eye by working on three unreported rapes on illegal immigrant girls, there are more significant plotlines involving his Romany family and his continued unresolved relationships with the two major crime families in Wolverhampton. So a very interesting read about a complex character, but so much easier if you have read Old Gold first.

Cheryl says

My family is my strength and my weakness. - Aishwarya Rai Bachchan

Eoin Miller is a study in contradictions. He loves/hates his family. He works for different crime heads around Wolverhampton, England but warns young recruits away. He coaches a youth football team and also hunts for a rapist that is targeting illegal immigrants.

I like this character and this series. It started out with "Faithless Street," a series of four short stories that are a prequel to the first book in the series - "Old Gold." I enjoyed both of these offerings but think "Runaway Town" is even better.

It is raw, hard-hitting, darkly humorous, rough, violent and a very satisfying read. The characters are getting fleshed out. The background story is being told. The area of and around Wolverhampton is perfect for this noirish series.

Do yourself a favor and find yourself a new anti-hero in Eoin Miller - read this series.

NOTE: I received a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

Jack says

Eoin is looking for a criminal whose victims can't go to the police. At the same time he has to deal with difficult family relationships. A great plot with some convincing characters.

