



Cold Wind

C.J. Box

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Updated cover of this Kindle edition.

Joe Pickett investigates a murder that hits close to home in this thriller in the #1 New York Times bestselling series.

When Earl Alden is found dead, dangling from a wind turbine, his wife, Missy, is arrested. Unfortunately for Joe Pickett, Missy is his much-disliked mother-in-law, and he's not sure what to do—especially since it looks like Missy is guilty as sin.

But then things happen to make Joe wonder: Is Earl's death what it appears to be? Is Missy being set up? He has the county DA and sheriff on one side, his wife on the other, his estranged friend Nate on a lethal mission of his own, and some powerful interests breathing down his neck. Whichever way this goes, it's not going to be good...

Cold Wind Details

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Author : C.J. Box

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From Reader Review Cold Wind for online ebook

Terri Anderson says

I like this series very much. Box portrays Wyoming with an appreciation and understanding of its beauty, isolation and the independence of its inhabitants. Joe Pickett is a hero in the tradition of the great Hollywood cowboys, generally driving a pickup instead of riding a horse. However, he does ride when necessary and loves his horses.

In this series entry, Joe has to investigate the murder of his father-in-law, Earl Alden. Alden was a multi-millionaire landowner and media mogul who was having a wind turbine farm built on his land. He is shot in mid-gloat about his good fortune in getting it built.

Meanwhile Joe Pickett, Wyoming game warden, is driving to Laramie (U of Wyoming) to take his 19-year-old daughter, Sheridan, to college. With him is his wife Marybeth; 14-year-old daughter, Lucy; and 16-year-old foster daughter, April. On the way Maribeth receives a cellphone call from her mother, Missy, but doesn't answer it. Oh-oh. When she finally answers one of her mother's calls she learns of Earl's death.

Murder suspect Missy Vankueren Longbrake Alden, mid-sixties, 6 times married, is always seeking a richer husband. She has made an enemy of her previous husband and others in the community. Joe is caught in the middle of trying to find Alden's killer and overcoming his dislike for his mother-in-law to prove her innocence (if she is innocent.)

The book presents wind farm construction in a way which most Americans don't take into consideration. Developing wind farms has developed into booming business in Wyoming at a time when other businesses have been hit hard by the recession. The wind turbines in this case require at least 50 acres per structure; the project of 100 would eventually stretch across 5,000 acres of Alden's land. There is concern about impacts on big game animals and their migratory routes. Land on neighboring ranches has been condemned in order to construct transmission lines from the field to consumers. Creating alternative energy resources is not without its hazards.

LJ says

First Sentence: He set out after breakfast on what would be his last day on earth.

Wyoming game warden, Joe Pickett, makes the very grim discovery of his mother-in-law, Missy's, newest husband shot in the chest and his body being circulated like a whirligig toy from the blade of an electricity windmill. Missy is arrested for murder and asks Joe to help prove she is innocent. In spite of his dislike for her, he agrees due to his wife and daughters. Joe's friend, Nate, has his own battles to fight after his lover is mistakenly killed in his place and revenge is his goal.

It is unfortunate that the book begins with a portent which is not only completely unnecessary, but reduces the impact and suspense of the first chapter. Fortunately, we quickly move on to detailed descriptions creating a strong sense of place and an intriguing contrast of nature versus technology as well as a strong sense of the man being described.

Box creates his characters well, providing a backstory on each one to introduce them to new readers and reacquaint those who follow the series. Although Box's secondary characters tend to be a bit stereotypical, he makes us realize that stereotypes exist because they real. These characters are nicely offset with Joe who is a man who believes in the letter of the law. However, Joe is not perfect and neither is his family which has

normal family issues and problems. Joe believes in the truth, but there is an element of cynicism and mistrust which keeps him real.

His characters are enhanced by the dialogue which has good flow and distinction for each character. Box's Wyoming Governor provides examples of this..."I need more yes-men," he said. "I deserve more yes-men." He grinned, "And fewer independent thinkers like you. Hell, I'm the governor."... and later... Rulon said, ..."What a way to go. I hope it doesn't start a trend." "Too much work," Joe said. "Most criminals don't want to work that hard."

Box writes action sequences with plenty of tension and suspense which include the emotions associated with the events. In fact, the more impactful crime is one without violence and is based on current events. Still, I did enjoy the point where Joe's friend, Nate, talks about the situation getting very Western. There are nice twisty motives and plenty of possible suspects.

The story is relevant as it involves the present economic recession, moving to sustainable energy sources and government subsidies, but not in a way that will age the book in the future. In fact, the some of those factors represent the story's more upsetting crimes. There are some minor flaws; some of the legal elements seemed off to me and the final revelation was not completely unexpected. One of the story threads probably could have been omitted but it added balance to the story and keeps it from becoming too political.

"Cold Wind" is a very good balance of all those elements one looks for in a mystery but not in any way that seems formulaic. No; Mr. Box just know how to tell one really good story and, once again, caused me to stay up way too late to finish it.

COLD WIND (Lic Inv-Joe Pickett-Wyoming-Cont) – VG+
Box, C.J. – 12th in series
G.P. Putnam's Sons, ©2011, ARC – Hardcover ISBN: 9780399157356

Sarescent says

This is my first CJ Box book, and obviously the problem with jumping in at the 11th book in a series is missing references to previous cases and being confused about certain characters. This happened a few times in the book, most notably repeated references to a case involving twins in the woods that I still don't get, and the character of April (I'm still not clear on who her parents are and why she's living with Joe and his wife). This didn't stop me from enjoying the book, but I would have appreciated it if he could have worked some more background in for first-time readers.

I really liked the character of Joe Pickett, an average Joe (haha) game warden in Wyoming who is drawn into a complex murder case when his mother-in-law is accused of murdering her Ted Turner-esque mogul husband. There is a parallel plot involving Nate Romanowski, an elite soldier turned fugitive, and his quest to avenge his girlfriend's murder. Frankly, I don't really enjoy characters like Nate, indestructible MacGyver/Bond/Superman types, as much as I do guys like Joe, who get beat up and worry about money and miss their kids when they go off to college. (It's sort of like the difference between John Sandford's Lucas Davenport and Virgil Flowers, though Lucas isn't as Nate as Nate is.) I thought the characters of Joe's evil mother-in-law, her lawyer, and her sad-sack ex-husband were well-developed and I enjoyed the resolution to the case. The political stuff about clean energy didn't interest me that much but I can see how it

would work for other, more politically/technologically-minded people.

Brian O'Leary says

Another good book in the Joe Pickett series. I really liked how he had two different story lines going at the same time, one involving Joe and the other Nate, and how the two stories came together in the end. The ending was also very good, including the set up for the next book.

Alex Cantone says

Wyoming game warden, Joe Pickett identifies the body found hanging from a wind turbine as that of Earl Auden, wealthy rancher and landowner, husband of his formidable mother-in-law, Missy. She is the prime suspect, the murder weapon, a Winchester, found in her vehicle, is sufficient grounds for Sheriff McLanahan (with a view to his re-election prospects) to have her arrested and charged. But is she being framed? The key witness, former husband, Bud Longbrake Senior, has gone to ground.

The Earl was Missy's fifth husband. She'd traded up with each one after her first (and Marybeth's realtor father) died young in a car wreck. After a five month mourning period, Missy married a doctor the day his divorce papers were finalised, then an Arizona developer and U.S. Congressman who was later convicted of fraud, then rancher Bud Longbrake. The Earl was her greatest triumph...

Missy is released on bail but the trial is brought forward to accommodate Judge Hewitt's hunting schedule. Missy's defence lawyer, the flamboyant Marcus Hand and his team from Jackson Hole, are working to cast "reasonable doubt" to have the case dismissed. But Joe's wife, Marybeth, wants her name cleared for hers and their daughters' sake. She also wants him to contact his friend, Nate Romanowski, holed up in a cave in a canyon. The two men have not spoken in a year after parting on sour terms.

Reluctantly Joe sets out to review the evidence. By talking to Auden's neighbours, the dirt-poor Lee family, he learns that Earl Auden had made more enemies than friends through his dealings and land acquisitions. Nate has enemies of his own, with the widow of a man he killed wanting revenge, and uses two wannabe cowboys to do the dirty work. These two themes weave and mesh as Nate sets out to find the man who betrayed him.

Ultimately "Cold Wind" is about manipulation; of a jury, not to seek justice for the victim, but to get an acquittal. It's about individuals manipulating limited liability company laws to set up dummy companies and sell them off, and criminal elements exploiting loopholes in the government's tax relief and investment strategies to meet unrealistic renewable energy targets that will fracture communities while failing to deliver power at an affordable price.

"Think about it," Smith said. "Let's say you are an entrepreneur or you just came into some cash. What makes more sense - to put the money in a bank and declare the income so it can be taxed, or to 'invest' it in the ownership of a company with all the benefits ... expense accounts, travel, tax credits ..."

CJ Box writes with a passion for Wyoming; the landscapes and open skies. He allows the reader to sense the rustle of the aspens, moose and antelope wandering across the blacktop, the chill waters of mountain streams.

Here the men wear Stetsons and carry hunting rifles, the women on the Shoshone reservation try to steer the kids away from drugs, the rich live in guarded enclaves and celebrities throng to mountain resorts while the townsfolk of Saddlestring struggle from day-to-day. The characters are well-formed, from honest family-man Joe to the disreputable Sheriff, to the saturnine Nate.

Well recommended.

Kenneth says

The series is strong. For me it synergistically makes each book better and more appealing than they would be alone.

I also for the most part like the characters a lot. Joe Pickett is a compelling, complicated man, the daughters--especially complicated April--are great. I am not nearly as taken with Rambo Nate Romanowski; he is interesting, but seems more like a super hero comic book character than real. Some other characters are excellent, some (the Sheriff and his deputies) a little two dimensional. Earl Alden, a ringer for Ted Turner, is nicely nuanced and real, in his brief appearance.

Plots are inventive, writing quality is excellent (but neither are in the league of another WY writer, Annie Proulx, or even Craig Johnson), locations are also excellent. This is western, 100% male, regional writing to the bone.

A couple of details that did not work for me at all. First, the body dangling and turning from the top of a 250 foot wind turbine. This extraordinarily difficult and risky action turns out to be not only totally implausible, but totally unnecessary and very much out of character for the person who turns out is supposed to have done it--not a good combination at all.

Similarly the rocket launcher. Available to a civilian rancher? By mail? Turning it over to a stranger he just met in a bar? Him instructing her on how to use it? Give me a break. In fact the whole revenge mission of Louise Talich, especially for her to be doing it herself, seems highly improbable, to say the very least.

Keeping a realistic and believable story separated from tall tale territory is a continuing issue. One of the rules of the genre, for me, is that, looking back at the end of the book, it all rings true. As an example consider Michael Connelly's 'The Scarecrow'. The plot is full of unlikely turns, but, at the end, it just seems like a great big rattlesnake was hidden invisibly under a rock I was sitting on the whole time--totally believable. I look forward to reading CJ Box again, but suspension of disbelief is a loan the reader makes temporarily to the writer, and, in general, it must be returned with interest.

Deb says

Joe Pickett and his mother-in-law Missy have never been friendly with each other. However, when she is accused of murdering her current husband Earl, Joe is pretty sure she's being framed. At the same time, Nate Romanowski is seeking vengeance when something tragic happens. Joe and Nate have been estranged and out of contact with each other, but their paths eventually cross in a startling resolution. One of the things that was different about this novel from previous Joe Pickett books is that although he's conducting an independent investigation into Earl's murder, he experiences very little pushback from the official investigators. The novel actually ends without Joe getting himself disciplined or in trouble with his bosses.

Jon says

Actually Three and a half stars. Eleventh installment in Joe Pickett series starts off very promising with a murder in the family and a hit on Nate Romanowski. Unfortunately, the denouement is a little too pat and unsatisfying. I wanted justice to be served. Last scene sets up next book nicely, though.

Malia says

Things are not what they seem.

Giovanni Gelati says

One thing I love is wind power, good stuff and fun to read about. Combine that with an awesome setting like Wyoming and Joe Pickett, and you have a dynamo of a novel. Check this out from Publishers Weekly: "Wyoming game warden Joe Pickett must try to prove that his despised mother-in-law, Missy Alden, isn't guilty of murdering Earl Alden, her fifth husband, in Box's searing 11th Joe Pickett novel (after *Nowhere to Run*). Pickett's gruesome discovery of Alden's body is followed almost immediately by the stage-managed arrest of Missy by Sheriff Kyle McLanahan. Both Missy and Earl have done plenty to earn the enmity of their neighbors, so Missy's arrest benefits McLanahan's bid for re-election, but Pickett is surprised to find county attorney Lisa Rich already convinced the case is solid. Pickett could use the help of his friend Nate Romanowski, but they are on the outs. Meanwhile, Romanowski, hunted by the widow of a man he killed, finds his withdrawal from the world has endangered others. Box parlays a heady mix of Wyoming politics and the advent of wind power into a deadly brew. This engaging series just keeps getting better with each new entry."

Do you think there are enough sub plots there? This novel has plenty of sizzle and razzle dazzle. I am quickly becoming a Pickett fan and have been enjoying the reads I have gotten on the character. The writing style of Box is growing on me and I have been trying to backtrack a bit to read past installments of the character. The amount of research he must have done on the subject of wind energy must have been huge as he seemed well versed in the mechanics and politics of it. I enjoyed the angle he took on the subject and the way he built the tension in all the various sub plots throughout the story. *Cold Wind* for me was a hot read. Don't let this novel hang in the wind; pick it up and feel its energy.

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there and suggest books for us to read and post on. Did you know you can shop directly on Amazon by clicking the Amazon Banner on our blog? Thanks for stopping by today; We will see you tomorrow. Have a great day. <http://www.gelatisscoop.blogspot.com>

Alecia says

I thought this was a very well-written book, and would give it 3.5 stars. However, it felt as if I came late to the party with this one. I am sure I would have enjoyed it more if I had read some of the previous Joe Pickett books in this series. I was not sure why Joe hated his mother-in-law, Missy, so very much from the past. It was mentioned several times, and I could see that she was a manipulating, cold woman. But something happened in past books regarding this relationship, and his other relationship with his friend Nate. These storylines are alluded to, but never explained. I kept feeling I was missing some motivational factors integral to the characters. However, the plotting, dialog, and characterizations are good, and I found it an enjoyable read.

Cheryl says

Game warden, Joe Pickett is back. He has just helped his oldest daughter move to college. Things are going well for Joe until his mother in law calls. Her husband has been gone for quite some time and she is worried. Joe offers to come out and help look for him.

When Joe finds him, it is not good. Earl Alden is dead. Sheriff McLanahan is quick to suspect Mrs. Alden, Joe's mother in law. Joe must find a way to prove his mother in law's innocent before it is too late,

Cold Wind is the first Joe Pickett novel I have read. I have been eyeing Mr. Box and this series for a while but just haven't checked him out until now. What I read, I liked. I do plan to go back and start at the beginning with book one. I could see if me though from reading some of the other peoples thoughts on this book that I may have enjoyed this book more if, I had a stronger connection to the main characters, which would happen if I had been following this series since the beginning. The one thing that I did not care for was the fact that I was suppose to believe that a sixty year old woman could shot and kill her husband...ok, yes I can believe this but a sixty year old woman, who could kill her husband and than hang his body about six feet in the air, this I can not believe. So knowing this, I was just reading this book, in order to learn the real truth behind the killer and the motive. This book did keep up a good, steady pace. Beware there is a Cold Wind blown in and it is a killer!

Jacqie says

Can't say enough good things about C.J. Box! I've gotten to meet him a couple of times and have been so impressed by how gracious and generous he is with his time to all his fans. Cold Wind's issue (there is one in every book) is wind power, government subsidies, and "skimming". If you are disillusioned with capitalism and suspect that it's all about who you know, not what you know, this book is for you.

Best line ever in a book: "Nothing spells trouble like two drunk cowboys with a rocket launcher." Nate Romanowski and Joe Pickett have been on the outs since the last book, but a horrible event sends them moving toward each other again. Joe is also in the unenviable position of having to investigate in order to defend his snake-like mother-in-law, Missy. I don't want to give too much away, but this book is twistier than a sidewinder, and will grip you like a grizzly's claws. Just tryin' to get you in the mood- you'll enjoy this one if you're a C.J. Box fan, no doubt, and I'm sure it will win him a lot of new readers.

?Susan? says

This is only my second C J. Box book but this is quickly becoming one of my favorite series. Joe Pickett, a game warden, starts his day like any other and things quickly go from bad to worse. A gun shot, a horse running without a rider and then he is father-in-laws dead body spinning on a wind turbine.

When his mother-in-law is arrested for the murder, Joe is put in a very compromising position. technically he cannot investigate the case because it would be a conflict of interest. The problem with that is that no one else is investigating it either. The Sheriff, who is trying to get re-elected and the D.A., think they have a lock on her conviction. The evidence is just a little to convenient for Joe, so covertly he uses some of his contacts to follow a hunch. There are many tentacles attached to the murdered millionaire, starting with crooked politicians, the mob, and then right on up to our Federal Government.

Nate, Joes friend, is an expert Falconer who is also an AWOL (classified unit), Special Forces Officer. He is unaware of it but is investigating another murder that has a direct connection to the case Joe is trying to get to the bottom of. Always one of my favorite characters, he adds excitement and the element of the unexpected. Nate has chosen to be bound by no laws but respects Joe and the way he conducts himself within his job and family life.

The ending has some unexpected twists and maybe some good ole hometown justice.

Shelleyræ at Book'd Out says

My edition (same isbn) is being released Jan 1st 2012 in Australia

Cold Wind is an enjoyable mystery/thriller set in the wilds of Wyoming, Joe Pickett is a game warden who reluctantly finds himself investigating the death of his father in law, Earl Alden. The local police immediately arrest his mother in law, Missy and while Joe is not averse to seeing the woman locked up, it seems unlikely she shot her husband, carelessly leaving the gun covered in prints in her car, and then hauled her husband's body 250ft in the air to hang him from the blades of his own wind turbine. Investigating on his own puts Joe at odds with the local law enforcement and DA, and without his long time friend Nate to back him up, Joe is at risk of getting in over his head.

Identifying the killer in this tightly plotted mystery isn't easy as CJ Box presents several suspects. Earl Alden, a wealthy man had alienated many of his neighbors in his pursuit of land, had few friends to speak of and when Joe starts poking around he discovers there is something not quite right with the multi million dollar wind farm project Earl was building in a far corner of his ranch.

Bud Longbreak, Missy's ex husband, started drinking when Missy left him to join Earl, taking his family

ranch with her. It seems he is the state's star witness insisting Missy is responsible for the murder. As bitter about the loss of the family fortune is Bud's some who has slipped into town virtually unnoticed.

Joe can't easily dismiss Missy either, his mother in law is the most manipulative and cold-hearted woman he has ever known but with his wife, MaryBeth, distraught at her mother's arrest he hopes the truth will prove her innocent.

With clever misdirection, CJ Box puts all of the suspects in the frame at one time or another but just as one scenario seems most likely, an alternative is offered. Revealing the killer is, if not completely unexpected, a triumph of sorts for Joe.

Cold Wind touches on several personal issues for Joe, while happy to be back in Saddlestring - his 'punishment' ended the Pickett family are struggling financially in the aftermath of the GFC and Joe's demotion, their foster daughter seems determined to make trouble and their oldest daughter is starting her first year at college. Joe's estrangement from close friend Nate, after a disagreement in Nowhere to Run is also troubling him.

Nate provides the secondary plot for this book. He is forced out of hiding after a murderous attack on his mountain refuge and the falconer, once an elite soldier, will stop at nothing to get his revenge but his vendetta may make him vulnerable to an even greater threat.

With strong characterisation, plenty of action and a complex mystery to solve, Cold Wind is an entertaining read. Despite Cold Wind being the 11th installment in the Joe Pickett series and the only title I have read, I felt the story stood alone on its own merit. I do think being familiar with the history of the characters would have enhanced my satisfaction with the book, instead I am simply tempted to pick up this series from the beginning.
