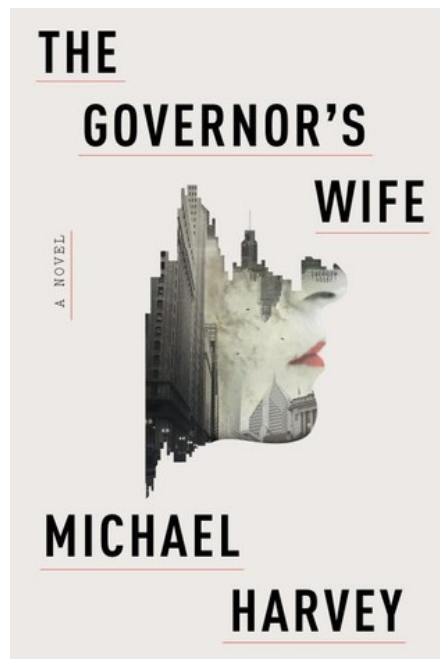




The Governor's Wife

Michael Harvey

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In the latest installment in Michael Harvey's beloved Michael Kelly series, Chicago's favorite Ovid-reading, gun-toting private investigator takes on Illinois' first family in a blistering thriller that charts the border where ambition ends and evil begins.

It's been two years since disgraced Illinois governor Ray Perry disappeared from a federal courthouse in Chicago moments after being sentenced to thirty-eight years in prison on corruption charges. P.I. Michael Kelly is sitting in his office when he gets an anonymous email offering to pay him nearly a quarter million dollars if he will find Perry, no questions asked. Kelly's investigation begins with the woman Ray Perry left behind--his wife, Marie. Ostracized by her former friends and hounded by the feds, Marie tells Kelly she has no idea where her husband is. Like everyone else, Kelly doesn't believe her. As he hunts for her husband, Kelly begins to unwind Marie Perry's past. What he finds is a woman who turns out to be even more intriguing than her husband, with her own deeply complicated reasons for standing by him. Everyone in Chicago has secrets, including the governor's wife. Some of them she shared with her husband. Some of them she kept to herself. And some of them could get Michael Kelly killed.

The Governor's Wife is a gimlet-eyed look at the intersection of the political and the personal, at the perils of trusting even those closest to us and the collateral damage of our highest aspirations. Stylish, knock-out suspense from a modern master.

The Governor's Wife Details

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From Reader Review The Governor's Wife for online ebook

Mal Warwick says

You yearn for hard-boiled crime fiction that's set in today's reality? Read on.

Marilyn Stasio covers books on crime for the New York Times Book Review. Though I sometimes disagree with her judgment, I've found interesting leads in her column from time to time. The most recent of these was *The Governor's Wife* by Michael Harvey, the fifth of his novels featuring Chicago private eye Mike Kelly.

To describe Harvey's writing, I can't possibly do anything better than Jon Foro did in his mini-review for Amazon.com of Harvey's first novel: "Michael Harvey's gritty debut, *The Chicago Way*, rips the classic crime novels of Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett from their 30s origins and slams them like a brass fist into the teeth of modern-day Chicago."

Kelly, a former cop, is a lone wolf P.I. with a network of specialists on tap to lend a hand in his investigations, including, of course, a detective still active on the Chicago P.D. Kelly is used to scrounging for cases to pay the bills, so he is, to put it mildly, surprised when he receives an anonymous email asking him to locate a missing person — and receive \$100,000 up front and another \$100,000 after he finds the man.

The missing person is Ray Perry, the latest in a long line of Illinois Governors who have run afoul of the justice system. Two years ago, Perry was convicted and sentenced to thirty years in the pen for outdoing himself in extorting money from the system. (At least some judges, even in Chicago, take a dim view of flagrant corruption.) The problem — and the reason Kelly has been hired to locate him — is that Perry disappeared from the courthouse immediately after being sentenced and hasn't been seen in the two years since.

Interesting set-up, no? One of the strengths of this novel is that Harvey is adept at surprising the reader. If you're a veteran reader of detective fiction, you may anticipate some of the twists and turns of the plot, but it's extraordinarily unlikely that you'll figure them all out. Of course, what's clear from the start is that this novel is all about corruption in Chicago. I'll leave it at that, since I don't want to spoil the story for you.

Mandy Radley says

3.5 stars

This is the first time I've come across Michael Harvey so didn't realise there were other books featuring PI Michael Kelly. Not a very long story but it packs plenty of action and a nice read. Would definitely read more by this author.

Joyce says

Another series I always listen to. This is number 5 in Michael Kelly's Chicago-based PI series, and it's probably the most complex yet. The wisecracking Kelly, whose office is filled with Greek and Latin classics, receives a job by anonymous email: \$200,000 to find ex-Illinois governor Perry who disappeared

immediately after being sentenced to a long jail term. Who hired Kelly? And who's trying to kill him? Like all Kelly's cases, this builds in intensity, but there's gritty violence and danger throughout. The plot, involving corruption (in Chicago???) is filled with twists--both in his investigation but also in Kelly's actions and characters. Harvey's books capture the classic noir tone of Spillane, et al--colorful language, cadenced speech, clever/smart dialog. And the tone is dark, gritty, and suspenseful. Harvey knows Chicago and gives an interesting glimpse of the city and suburbs. One complaint with the otherwise excellently narrated audiobook: The Chicago street Devon is pronounced Devonne, not like the English county. Harvey may be from Chicago but narrator Hoye isn't.

Larry says

"I wondered where ambition ended and evil began, and if anyone had ever charted that border (p. 230)."

Michael Harvey's five novels about Michael Kelley, Chicago-based private eye, are centered on charting that border. The power apparatuses of places other than Chicago live on that same border, but Chicago is a perfect city for such an examination because it is collectively so aware of the temptations of power. Harvey is hired by an anonymous client and for a large sum of money to find Ray Perry, the Illinois governor who was convicted of bribery and other money-related political crimes only to disappear while on his way out of the courthouse. (Illinois has two former governors serving prison time right now, but no one else has escaped punishment.) How Kelly figures out how Perry got away is interesting in itself, but he has been hired to find out more than that. Is Perry alive and where has he gone?

Then there's the business of \$60 million in ill-gotten money that disappeared along with the ex-governor. Add in the motives of Perry's wife, former girlfriend, and father-in-law (a big-time political fixer), plus the fates of others who either helped him escape or got too close to proving the source of the missing money, and it becomes clear that Kelly is at a bigger risk than even his usual high-risk status.

Kelly is a classic noir p.i. He has the requisite bottle in his desk drawer, gun on his hip, cynical outlook, smart mouth, and broken heart. He is a loner ("It wasn't like I had a lot of friends. Some of that came by design. The rest just came naturally [p. 28].) The books are throwbacks in terms of attitude and secondary characters, though they live in the present in terms of social media, electronic banking, and the internet. But they are more than the sum of the requisite noir parts because Kelly has some depth to him. When he quotes Euripides, he means it, and he surrounds himself with bits of classical learning (some of it in Greek). It's not just an affectation because a tragic viewpoint lives at the heart of Harvey's books, especially this one. Life is dangerous enough for even tough guys, but Kelly goes out of his way to protect several innocents in this book. A running sequence in a pediatric ward in a hospital is moving, and tells us a great deal about Kelly. Maybe I rate the book a star higher than I should because of my south-side Chicago childhood, but it is a minor classic of a dying breed.

Pat says

This was an engaging story of corruption and maybe even some redemption in Chicago politics and business. Ex-cop PI Michael Kelly is co-opted by an anonymous client to locate Raymond Perry, the disgraced former Governor of Illinois who was facing 30 years in prison for corruption.

He disappeared from his sentencing hearing never to be heard from again. As Kelly investigates he uncovers

a network of corruption that extends into the highest echelons of power, and the people concerned are out to get him and get back the money that the governor embezzled. Kelly isn't sure where the governor's wife stands on all this. The situation quickly becomes fraught with danger. High stakes indeed - are his detective skills up to the task? Another excellent instalment in the Michael Kelly series.

Una Tiers says

This book had a closed room kind of a start which was awesome. But then, the author went places I couldn't follow.

Cynthia says

"The Governor's Wife" is charming in part because it has such a retro feel though it's set in current day Chicago, IL. If cell phones and computer research and use weren't included in the plot it would easily be possible to imagine that the action takes place in the '30's or '40's. Michael Kelly is an ex-cop turned PI and it's impossible not to equate his worldview with Chandler's Philip Marlowe. He's pessimistic. Kelly is more erudite with his love of ancient Greek literature and how it informs him about his cases but is environment and the corruption he finds in the big city are similar to what Marlowe encounters. Sadly it's all believable.

Uncovering the characters' motivations is the key to the plot and the psychological underpinnings lead to a surprisingly satisfying conclusion. I'm not sure how Harvey did this in less than 250 pages but he did and he did it well though darkly.

Thank you to the publisher for providing an ARC.

Paul Bartusiak says

What great fun to stumble upon this!

Took a flyer at a used book sale because it was a detective story set in Chicago, written by a local Chicagoan. Didn't even realize this was #5 in the series (always seem to find out stuff like that later, after checking Goodreads).

This is a noir thriller updated to present day Chicago (or almost present day). Lots of hard-boiled dialogue:

"I walked back upstairs and considered the door to Eddie's apartment. Then I planted a size ten just under the lock."

Yes, it's written in the first person, just like 50's Film Noir.

"She knew who to woo and who to avoid. More important, she wasn't afraid to stick a knife in someone's back if she had to. And in Chicago, you always had to."

Reading the book jacket, at first I was afraid it was going to be a little too much "ripped from the headlines"

kinda stuff, but it wasn't. This was fun: disappearing people, dames, murders, stakeouts, double-crosses. There's even an homage to one of my all-time favorite Chicago films, **The Sting**. Not sure if it was intentional or not, but I kinda think it was, and I appreciated the twist.

Johnny says

The Governor's Wife is not about Patti Blagojevich and her imprisoned, former governor husband, Rod Blagojevich. The former governor is still in jail at this writing while the crooked politician in the novel disappeared from the courthouse immediately after sentencing (before the actual narrative in the novel begins). And while Patti is the daughter of a political power-broker in Chicago, her father is not the ruthless Machiavellian character "Bones" estranged from his daughter, Marie Perry (eponymous governor's wife) in the novel.

Protagonist Michael Kelly gets involved when an anonymous patron hires him by wiring \$100K into his account. The case? He must find missing governor Raymond Perry, an individual Kelly assumes is dead. This isn't necessarily so, but I don't want to spoil anything. Naturally, narrator and Private Investigator Michael Kelly suspects Marie. Investigators always suspect the spouse. The spousal angle is also escalated by the existence of an affair between the fictional governor and an aide (certainly nothing of which I am aware in real life, but typical poetic license).

Of course, Kelly will suspect Marie. He is attempting to recover from a significant breakup (He was involved with a federal judge in an earlier novel). That he wasn't doing well at recovering is well expressed in one of my favorite lines in the book. "Now there was nothing left but hurt. And hope. That was the thing that got you in the end. The hope." (p. 30) So, there is sexual tension throughout the novel and it even involves a confrontation with Marie in which she bets Kelly that he will have sex with the former aide before he solves the overall mystery (p. 64). That probably didn't help Kelly's earlier "...uncomfortable feeling that Marie Perry drank a couple of pints of blood for dinner every night and crawled into a coffin when she needed some shut-eye." (p. 28)

Indeed, there is more than one mystery in *The Governor's Wife*. The case seems simplistic, but there are lots of interesting knots to untie along the way. In fact, some of them are more interesting and more human than the main plot. And, along the way, there are some great lines. Some are quoted such as the famous line from Tacitus' *The Annals*, "The more corrupt the state, the more numerous its laws." (p. 36). Extremely appropriate to Chicago itself was the quotation from Nelson Algren's (*Chicago: City on the Make*) where he writes of appreciating the city as being "...like loving a woman with a broken nose..." (p. 29).

My favorite (besides the earlier description of Marie Perry) was the description of her assistant at one of the non-profits who smiled, "...that zombie/acolyte smile you used to only see at an *Oprah* taping." (p. 24) I also liked the description where Kelly is tailing a suspect taking a circuitous route. "I wasn't much for playing the lottery. As we drove, however, I felt like I was holding a ticket and waiting for the Ping-Pong balls to drop." (p. 178)

Reading Michael Harvey isn't a lottery. The ping-pong balls don't have to drop in order for readers to be winners.

M.K. says

Enjoyable, fast read. Set in Chicago with lots of twists and nefarious, scheming characters who are rotten to the core.

Gary Branson says

I enjoy these Chicago mysteries. Harvey writes a good, succinct story without all the extraneous stuff many mystery writers throw in. I look forward to his next... Highly recommend the whole series.

Duffy Pearce says

I read the fourth book in the series first, now I'm going back to the beginning. Chicago private eye, lots of corruption. Entertaining! Nice to have a series again. Binge reading is even better than binge watching because you can do it outside and in doctors offices or at your desk when your husband thinks you're working.

Caden's Paiges says

Places where power and political influence seem to rule become corruption's playground ultimately and inevitably. We live in a time that is inhabited by some of the most corrupt politicians of the world. Besides having persuasive talent, verbal ambition, valuable contacts and a lot of money are all it takes in order to master the art of bribery (no, I don't know this from personal experience lol). Michael Harvey's novel The Governor's Wife shows us what the temptation of power can do to someone, especially a politician...or their spouse.

Moments after being sentenced to thirty-eight years in prison on corruption charges, Illinois governor Ray Perry disappears from a federal courthouse in Chicago. Two years later, PI Michael Kelly receives an anonymous email offering him close to \$250,000 if he can find Perry, no questions asked. Kelly's investigation starts with Marie Perry, the ostracized wife of Ray Perry. Marie claims she doesn't know where her husband is but Kelly discovers that there is a lot more than meets the eye when it comes to Marie. The premise of The Governor's Wife is superb, but there are some fundamental issues that disrupt an otherwise potentially great mystery. The action is a tad slow moving and at times too coincidental. Harvey creates a vivid cast of characters, as well as brings the neighborhoods, ethnic communities and politics of Chicago to the forefront. You won't dislike this novel, but you also won't love it.

HBalikov says

"So you help her. Make up something. Tell her whatever she needs to hear...That's what I want. Nothing more. Nothing less."

"And why would I help you?"

"It's Chicago, Kelly. That's what we do."

Michael Harvey knows Chicago. He lives there. His P.I., Michael Kelly, is not so far from Harvey that he doesn't throw in a Roman mythology reference or Thucydides reference (Harvey was magna cum laude in classical languages) in almost every book. The Governor's wife is well into the Kelly saga. Kelly is bright, tough and not very good at his own relationships (but very good at figuring out things and tracking down people). In this book, he is induced by a very high fee to not inquire too much into where it came from. But, to focus all his energies on locating ex-Governor Ray Perry who made a daring escape on the day he was sentenced to 30 years in Joliet State Penitentiary. You want to know more about Kelly? Maybe this piece of dialogue will help.

"Can I ask you something?"

"Is it about the case?"

"It's about your gun. I noticed you carry one."

"Mostly for show."

"But you've used it? I mean actually fired it?"

"I have."

"Does that bother you?"

"Shooting at another human being should bother anyone. If it doesn't, you've got a serious problem."

"Yet you choose to do it for a living?"

"I chose to be a cop. Then a private investigator. Like I said, the gun's a very small part of it..."

"So you really don't know where you're going?"

"I start out by asking questions, watch how people react, and decide what to do from there."

"You must piss off a lot of people."

I grinned. "We're back to the gun again."

If you are like me, and enjoy banter, Chicago politics and a plot that could easily find its way to the silver screen, you will take a chance on this book. It's a modern version of the best of the gritty P.I. novels of the Forties and Fifties....the real stuff.

Joe Slavinsky says

Book five, of the "Michael Kelly" series, starts off with an anonymous client wiring a large amount of money to Kelly, to have him look into the strange case of a convicted former governor, who disappeared from the Federal building, on the day he was convicted, and sentenced to 30 years in prison. Kelly eschews the money, but his curiosity gets him into the case, which gets him deeper, and deeper, into the cesspool of corruption that is the reputation of Chicago/Illinois politics. The story moves fast, and furiously, with danger abounding for Kelly, and many other characters. Harvey is an expert at suspenseful detective stories, and I hope he keeps the Kelly series going for a long, long time.