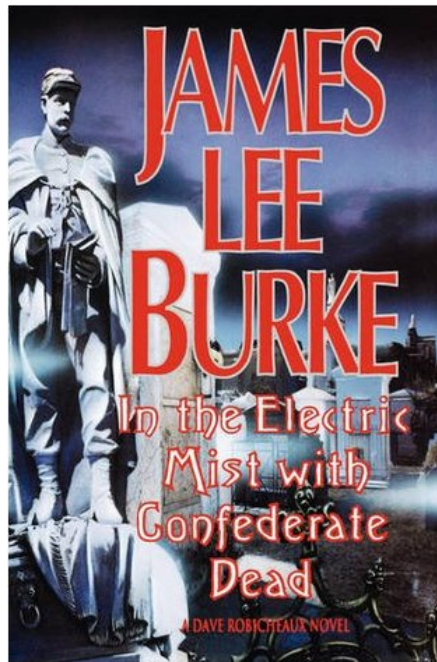




In the Electric Mist With Confederate Dead

James Lee Burke

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Haunted by the reemergence of a forty-year-old unsolved murder, detective Dave Robicheaux must also contend with a spate of serial killings of prostitutes and local dissension about the movie company that is shooting in town.

In the Electric Mist With Confederate Dead Details

Date : Published 1993 by Hachette

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Author : James Lee Burke

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Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Crime, Thriller



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From Reader Review In the Electric Mist With Confederate Dead for online ebook

Jim says

"... we had welcomed him back, winking our eyes at his presence and pretending he was not what or who he was."

The 6th, and maybe the best, in the Dave Robicheaux series thus far. Dave is returning from the scene of a particularly gruesome murder of a young prostitute when he pulls over a drunk driver and a series of events are set in motion. The driver, Elrod Sykes, is in New Iberia to star in a Civil War movie. He tells Dave about a skeleton he saw in the Atchafalaya Swamp while filming. The same location where, in 1957, Robicheaux witnessed the killing of a chained black man by two white men. Soon the body of another young woman is found in a barrel. Haunted by the past and confronting the present day apparent serial killing of young prostitutes Dave partners with FBI agent Rosie Gomez to try and apprehend the psycho. Their investigation connects the recent murders to mobster Julie "Baby Feet" Balboni who has a partnership in the movie production. A movie that is bringing a lot of money and jobs to New Iberia. In fact the mayor and the Chamber of Commerce put pressure on the sheriff to try and get Robicheaux ease up on "Baby Feet". There is also the cold case from 1957 that some would prefer remain in the past. Is there a connection between the murder of a black man in 1957 and the serial killing of prostitutes today? One thing is sure ... Dave Robicheaux will not quit the investigation of either.

Throughout the story Dave is haunted by a series of dreamlike encounters with General John Bell Hood and a troop of Confederate soldiers. What is the meaning behind these dreams? Is there a message? If so what is it? And Dave is not the only character in the story to have encounters with the Confederate dead.

In previous books in the series Dave struggled with sobriety. Often times having relapses. In this story his sobriety is strong and he works to help Elrod Sykes get sober. They say the key to sobriety is to help another alcoholic and in helping Sykes, Dave has his work cut out for him. At first Sykes is not very likable but this changes as the story progresses.

I always enjoy the close relationship between Dave and Alafair, his adopted daughter. And of course Tripod, Alafair's three legged pet racoon. The conversations between Dave and Alafair usually add some levity to an otherwise dark story.

Michael says

"In The Electric Mist" is the movie base on JLBs book, starring Tommy Lee Jones, John Goodman, and Mary Steenbergen. Have no idea if the movie is fair or not but figured I would let the the reading public know.

JLB channels both Faulkner and JD Sallinger in his style of writing. He has his own voice to be sure but the depth of his characters and the intimacy which he brings to his novels is far more than many of his peers.

New Iberia, Bayou Teche, and the Atchafalaya Swamp are characters in his books comprising Nature with

her whimsical and capricious moods are as important to JLBs novels as Dave, Bootsie, and Clete.

Reading JLBs books feels like reading literature, not a throw-away crime novel written by some novelist writing 12 books per year. JLB invites you through his writing to learn about the deep south, the role of Slavery, the swamp and its creatures, the language of its people, and the smells and cuisine of the food.

No not a book review. Read one of JLBs Dave Robicheaux novels and consider the geography as well as the prose.

Zak says

now I have read 7 books of James Lee Burke's and I can say he's probably the best when it comes to creating characters of cops, mobsters and ordinary Blake folk of South. I also like the way he describes weather in his books or captures Louisiana culture.

Peggy says

I listened to this audiobook. This is an abridged edition, and was only 3 hours of listening. This is my first James Lee Burke book. I really like the colorful descriptions of the far south in Louisiana. I loved Will Patten's narration. I realize I lost some of the story since this was so severely edited, but I still enjoyed it. Dave Robicheaux is a laid back detective in the Deep South. He is trying to solve the grizzly murders of young hookers. But he is distracted by an odd actor who tells Dave that he has seen skeletal remains in the swamp. The skeleton is a Black man who was murdered in 1957 and, as it happens, Dave witnessed the murder. Both cases are dangerous and perplexing. I wish I had heard an unabridged edition, but it was still a good introduction to this series.

Michael says

I first read James Lee Burke's fiction in the Esquire magazine and admired his ability to weave such great detail about setting and character into such fast-paced stories.

This novel was no different from that short story in this respect. Burke's Louisiana breathes. The bayous belch. You can smell the flowering trees, the rancid corpses of nutria rotting in gutters. You can see the grime on the clapboard houses, the sweat glistening on every character's skin. You can hear the E major blues progression of Sam "Pigman" Patin. And most importantly, you can feel the temperature, the hangovers, the headaches of Burke's New Iberia Parish. I won't go on any longer about this, but it's definitely the most intriguing, and important aspect of this novel. Contemporary crime fiction works best when its novelty lies less in the twists and turns and cleverness of its plot (Come on, everything under the sun has already been done.) and more in the vividness of its setting and characters.

So, on to the characters... As I've found with much crime fiction, the least understandable, least developed characters are the narrator and those closest to him or her. Dave Robicheaux, though he shows the reader a clear morality in each of his actions, doesn't have a face or personality the way some of the more minor characters do. Take Elrod Sykes - an actor starring in a movie being filmed in New Iberia Parish. His alcoholism, his tanned skin, the shirts he wears, the way he speaks, paint a picture of man battered down, but

strong.

Robicheaux's morality poses the only problem I have with this novel. The defining moment of Burke's themes justice and heroism occurs at the end of the novel when Robicheaux sheds the constraints of his badge and takes matters into his own hands, going quite beyond the law, destroying the bad guys sure, but destroying them illegally. Burke cheaply has someone else pull the trigger in the end, but Robicheaux's moral force has set the events in motion that lead to the cowboy-style climax.

There's much more to this novel than I've mentioned - Civil War history, racial tension, music, organized crime. Burke takes advantage of Robicheaux's trip into New Orleans to craft an amazing passage describing the French Quarter. I don't think I'd have understood the neighborhood any better if I had been there.

Burke is a great writer. He might be a conservative cavalier cowboy, but he can write a damn good book.

Wendy says

In the Electric Mist with Confederate Dead

I'm loving this series but I was slightly disappointed in this book. I'm not a big fan of when seeing people or dreams come into play in a story. I don't want to elaborate and give away any part of this story but honestly it wasn't as bad as it could have been. I actually almost did give it 5 stars. I still love James Lee Burke and I'm continuing with this series.

Mike says

A convoluted, almost hallucinogenic tale involving a drug-lord, movie-making in the Louisiana swamps and a Confederate army officer who appears to our hero at odd times - or does he?

Cathy DuPont says

Dave, Dave, Dave. Your moral compass seems to move constantly depending on the circumstances. The inner demons never go away either so you're in a constant battle with yourself. Maybe easing up on yourself would help? Perhaps, but probably not. And how would you do that anyway? A psychiatrist couch? That's not going to happen.

Thank god for Alafair and Bootsie who help you keep the hands on the moral compass in the green area and out of the red and yellow although sometimes they can't even help you. You can only help yourself and it's a constant battle, we know.

And if not for these colorful and crooked old classmates of yours, your life would be less eventful but then I could not enjoy the adventure you take me on each reading when I can't turn the pages fast enough.

Dave, you had multiple storylines this time around; murder you witnessed 30+ years ago; serial killer on the loose; making of a movie about the Civil War; a drunken actor who insists he's seen war torn soldiers; your

own visions; and an old schoolmate and not so upstanding citizen who moved back to New Iberia for the movie. Looks like he may have a monetary interest in the movie as a scam. Plus, Dave, there are a number of secondary storylines such as your new temporary partner from the FBI, Rosie Gomez, who has her own demons and moral compass to contend with.

On top of all that's going on, you, dear Dave, through your boss, you have to take the heat from the Chamber of Commerce and other local business owner's because these folks are bringing in money from the picture being shot in the area. Morally, who cares that there are mob connections? Or maybe a murderer among them? They're bringing in money. Oh, my, Dave, another moral dilemma, back off or do your job?

Dave, you've once again taken me on a wild ride and I thank you. Your description of the beautiful and haunting area you live in, only adds to the atmosphere, dark decisions and mood of *In the Electric Mist With Confederate Dead*. Once again, it's been great.

Dermott Hayes says

James Lee Burke's Dave Robicheaux novels are never 'typical' crime novels. First, there's Robicheaux, a disgraced, former NOPD Homicide lieutenant turned sheriff's detective in Iberia Parish. Robicheaux is a good man with a chequered past; a Vietnam veteran and recovering alcoholic who carries traces of post-traumatic stress disorder and an unspecified, but lingering, guilt from the eruption of his parents' marriage, his father's death and his mother's violent murder at the hands of corrupt, NOPD detectives. His background is working class, backwoods, Louisiana Cajun. He's Catholic. He runs a bait shop and bayou cafe when he's not detecting. He has problems with authority, is single-minded in his pursuit of wrongdoers, corporate polluters and the antebellum remnants of the southern ascendancy. Robicheaux, although an essentially good man, has a violent streak. Some of Burke's other novels, like *Two for Texas*, are historical explorations of the complex forces that combine to make up Robicheaux's contemporary environment; Louisiana's sub-tropical swamplands, struggling to survive against the elements of natural phenomena like hurricanes, corporate greed and pollution and the complicit dealings of corrupt politicians, police and the Mafia. Into this milieu in *'In the Electric Mist'*, he introduces a story about a violent and sexually perverted, serial killer, an alcoholic, Hollywood actor with psychic leanings and a sociopathic, Mafia boss turned film producer. The actor taps in to Robicheaux's own psychic inclinations by introducing him to the ghost of a one legged, one armed, Confederate general who, along with his ragged bunch of soldiers, haunts the swamps around his home.

Now he's worried it's just a dry drunk dream or living nightmare or has he conscripted into a new struggle with the Confederate dead, to fight the forces of evil, whether corporate, criminal or perverse or combinations thereof, that threaten his life and the lives of those he love as well as the environment they live in?

I've read everything I could find of James Lee Burke's and I'm a fan.

João Carlos says

James Lee Burke e o seu detective David Robicheaux são a "descoberta" na literatura policial em 2014.

“Por Entre as Brumas” é o sexto livro da série protagonizada pelo detective Dave Robicheaux, editado em 1993, pelo escritor norte-americano James Lee Burke.

Um policial que tem como cenário a pequena cidade de New Iberia, situada no sul do Louisiana, rodeada de canais de água e áreas pantanosas, e fustigada por furacões e tempestades tropicais.

O detective Robicheaux é chamado a investigar a morte de uma jovem prostituta de dezanove anos, brutalmente assassinada e severamente mutilada, abandonada numa vala. Nas proximidades está a ser filmado um filme com o actor Elrod Sykes, um bêbado crónico, que lhe indica o local onde se encontram umas ossadas humanas, um esqueleto de um homem negro, assassinato a sangue frio, um crime que o jovem Robicheaux tinha presenciado em 1957 – mas para o qual tinha permanecido em silêncio.

Inesperadamente, Robicheaux tem que enfrentar o regresso do seu amigo de infância, o mafioso e produtor cinematográfico, Julie (Baby Feet) Balboni, e um conjunto de assassinatos de prostitutas, que colocam à prova a sua reputação profissional, que revelam pensamentos e encontros melancólicos e fantasmagóricos com o general John Bell Hood, num relacionamento complexo com a agente do FBI Rosie Gomez.

James Lee Burke descreve admiravelmente um conjunto de personagens complexos, com comportamentos desprezíveis, revelando a fragilidade do relacionamento humano, com destaque para a perpetuação dos conflitos raciais, a corrupção política e policial, e a manutenção e valorização de interesses económicos dúbios.

“Por Entre as Brumas” é um livro “noir”, com uma escrita sensual e sombria, com um humor expressivo e original – imperdível.

O livro deu origem ao filme “À Margem de Um Crime” (2009) do realizador francês Bertrand Tavernier, com Tommy Lee Jones no papel de Dave Robicheaux.

Aditya says

The best written Robicheaux so far, and that is a huge compliment in itself as the series is known for its silky prose. Burke insists on clawing and pounding at the glass ceiling like it is the coffin in which he has been buried alive till it is shattered and he can set the bar higher still. The writing is mesmerizing, picture it as a pristine lake in the midst of a forest fire, it details a decrepit world filled with corruption, mayhem and despair but still retains an innate beauty. Many authors try to give the setting a vibrant personality of its own (George Pelecanos comes to mind, he describes Washington DC in minuscule detail in each of his novels), some succeed but very few do it like Burke. He describes Louisiana like the city was his unrequited first love. The descriptions are beyond vivid, they are intimate portrayals of life in and around the place.

The plot has more threads than few of the earlier Robicheaux books put together, organized crime, a depraved serial killer and a cold case combine to keep the narrative moving and the tension rising. Robicheaux is an adept cop but he is no Sherlock so the cases are solved in a procedural manner. However unlike other stories of same ilk, here the investigations don't drag, the excellent hard boiled dialogue, an overlooked part of the series keeps the exchanges terse and always a joy to read.

No crime series has such a rich cast of supporting characters and like most Robicheaux books the best of the bunch is the villain. Julie Balboni, yet another character with ties to Robicheaux's past is the pick of the supporting cast this time round. And there is Robicheaux himself. He matures with every book, he was lost in *The Neon Rain*, broken in *Heaven's Prisoners*, grieving in *Black Cherry Blues*, discovering a sliver of redemption in *A Morning for Flamingoes* and slowly losing it again in *A Stained White Radiance*. In this book, he is angry and tired and he is almost on a crusade against a system that does not work. His morality is the first victim to his sense of justice and and indignant rage. This character development (unlike say Harry Bosch who has only been angry for almost 20 books now) keeps the series feel so rich and realistic in spite of the fact that Robicheaux has more close shaves with death in a day than all the inhabitants of an ICU combined.

There is a mystical/paranormal subplot where Robicheaux sees a dead army Captain (the titular Confederate Dead) that feels strangely out of place in a gritty crime novel. It adds a surreal sheen to the writing but it is integrated only haphazardly and tangentially to the plot. Stylistically the gamble pays off, it adds to the atmosphere but plot wise it becomes a constant distraction. It is the only reason I refuse to give it the perfect rating. Violence and bleakness as always are constant companion to Robicheaux and unless they turn anyone off, all fans of good fiction should give this series a chance. Rating - 4/5.

Lorna says

I have read all of his novels. I have even read his daughters first novel, she is called Alafair, the name of Dave Robicheaux's daughter in the books! I have watched his writing mature to its present gravitas. Early on, I admit, I used to rush through his descriptive passages but as he wrote, these became more and more beautiful, and now the darkness of the crimes and violence are melded with the beauty of the landscape. In this book, the psychic element was introduced in an historical invocation of American history. Magnificent! I can never wait for the paperback to come out I rush out for the hardback as soon as they are published. Can there be a better recommendation?

Adam says

The best Dave Robicheaux so far. Almost too much of a good thing. Too much of Dave's brooding and too much sensory overload in the prose. But too much of good thing is still a lot of a good thing. The plot is bit more of a procedural but the mystery is good, the villain heinous and the magical realism/supernatural elements push this into what it is, a meditation of the south and its history of violence.(Civil war, civil rights era lynchings, and the squalid presence of Angola prison) Great character names in this one(Julie "Babyfeet" Balboni, Cholo Manelli, Doobie Patout, Bootsie, Cherry Leblanc, Dewitt Prejean, Twinky Herbert Lemoyne, Poteet, Alafair, Sam "Hogman" Patin etc.) Both a celebration of southern life and a look at its underbelly of sleaze and violence.

Jane Stewart says

Great author but I'm not enjoying his subject matter and plot choices.

I love this author's writing style, the phrases he uses, his rich and creative descriptions, and the way he develops characters. In my review of Black Cherry Blues I give examples of some of his phrases. He is a great writer, but his subject matter is too depressing for me. He writes about man's cruelty to man, torture and killing of blacks, women, prisoners, and others, and getting away with it. I've read three of his books, but with great reluctance I do not plan to read anymore.

Dave is a flawed hero but a good cop. There were two instances of hero stupidity which bothered me. One example: Dave asks his friend Lou to be his backup when Dave went to a dangerous place to meet someone. They arrive, that person is not there, so Dave tells Lou to leave but Dave will wait a little longer. So Lou leaves and then something bad happens to Dave.

I was also troubled by the way the author had Hog Man delay telling things to Dave. Hog Man knew things. But the first time Dave talks to him, Hog Man just tells him part of something. The second time, Hog Man

tells Dave to come to him for info, but then doesn't tell Dave anything. The third time Hog Man calls Dave offering to tell him the rest. I didn't see a reason or motive for Hog Man to keep doing this if he was going to tell it all eventually. I felt the author was playing me, disrespecting me. It was a contrivance, not supported with thought.

Technically there is a happy ending with some but not all of the bad guys dealt with.

There is some fantasy. Dave talks to the ghost of a civil war general several times. That was interesting, but it didn't add to the main story and it wasn't complete enough on it's own. There was a neat occurrence linking the two stories toward the end. But something more should have been done with the secondary story.

The narrator Mark Hammer was good.

DATA:

Narrative mode: 1st person Dave Robicheaux. Unabridged audiobook length: 14 hrs and 5 mins. Swearing language: strong but rarely used. Sexual language: none. Number of sex scenes: one referred to. Setting: around 1993 Louisiana. Book copyright: 1993. Genre: mystery suspense with a little fantasy.

Cher says

1.5 stars - I didn't like it.

Stereotypes and tropes galore, I could not wait to leave the southern Louisiana town full of hatred, vitriol, racism, bigotry, sexism, and where ignorance in general just runs amuck. There was no enjoyment to be found spending literary time in a shoddy place full of weak, despicable people. Not even the paranormal ghost story element could save this one for me, which is normally a fictional favorite for me.

If it had not been a selection for a local book club, it would have been DNF'd early on, easily and without regret. I never became invested in any of the characters and found almost every character to be dislikeable. To be fair, this was the first book for me in this series, so maybe those that have read the others will have more of an attachment to the characters. I dislike reading a series out of order, but again, it was chosen for a local book club.

I will say the author developed the characters enough for me to detest spending time with them, which requires more skill than poor characterization with flat, cardboard cut-outs, for which you feel nothing. I'd be open to reading something else by him, but have no inclination to pick up anything else from this particular series.

Favorite Quote: Maybe we have so much collective guilt as a society that we fear to punish our individual members.

First Sentence: The sky had gone black at sunset, and the storm had churned inland from the Gulf and drenched New Iberia and littered East Main with leaves and tree branches from the long canopy of oaks that covered the street from the old brick post office to the drawbridge over bayou Teche at the edge of town.

rabbitprincess says

I recall reading once that James Lee Burke has been described as "the Faulkner of crime fiction". I hate Faulkner more than the Hatfields hated the McCoys, but I love James Lee Burke, thanks to this book.

The story has deep roots in the past: several crimes committed in the New Orleans area are connected to a heinous murder thirty years previous. As Robicheaux investigates the crimes, he starts having visions of Confederate soldiers whose leader provides Robicheaux with oracular pronouncements that indirectly help him with the case. But how real are they, and into what danger is Robicheaux drawing his family with this case?

This book was excellent, with beautiful writing. Normally I have little patience for extensive description, but Burke is an exception. Louisiana is a rich, lush place and so deserves equally rich and lush description to do it justice. The characters are engaging and the storyline intriguing. It's been a while since I've read the book, though, so I'm a bit fuzzy on plot details. However, it was a great read, and I have since read several other Burkes. If you like Louisiana and any literature set there, then this book is for you.

Sandi says

This series just keeps getting better with each book. Dave is a fascinating character, the plot of this book was one of the best in the series, and I always enjoy the descriptions of the lush scenery. Listened to the audio version read by one of my favorites the late **Mark Hammer**.

Sandy says

Dave Robicheaux in Louisiana, with a Hollywood film bunch, a mob bunch, and a lot of bad weather. Good writing, violent plot, but his wife and child are just accessories for him to pull out occasionally when needed. Good descriptions. His mob guy, Julie Balconi, acts just as Trump would in the same circumstances.

Sophie says

Wow, I thought Harry Bosch had cornered the self-righteous detective market, but Dave Robicheaux might have bettered him slightly. This is my first (and I'll go out on a limb and say only) Robicheaux novel, and I found it fairly odd. The plot started out intriguing but quickly bogged down in a mishmash of interwoven stories—some of them supernatural but none of them terribly plausible—that the author picked up and dropped at random. Robicheaux himself was often quite annoying. In addition to the aforementioned self-righteousness, he was arrogant and unpleasant and seemed to labor under the delusion that the rest of the world was panting for his approval (which he handed out to a chosen few with a condescension Lady Catherine de Bourgh might envy). And I know the book is a few decades old, but it betrayed—underneath its virtue signalling—a sexism that grated. Robicheaux is the only man in a department of rubes who doesn't giggle at the FBI agent with the big boobs, but the author still has him stepping in to offer his manly chest of comfort when the FBI agent breaks down in tears over some disturbing clues they find. Barf. Anyway, I'll give it two stars since I made it through to the end, but I didn't care too much for it overall.

Cathrine ?? says

3.5 ★

Most of you reading this know I'm a Robicheaux fan girl but my reception to this one was a bit toned down. I've been wanting to read it so I could watch the film version with Tommy Lee Jones ?. Of course movies leave out a lot but in this case that worked for me because less was more. I liked it better than the book. Hard to say if TLJ had something to do with that. Levon Helm as General John Bell Hood was excellent also, as was Buddy Guy *playing* Sam 'Hogman' Patin—my dance pheromones kicked in immediately ?. The film, soundtrack, and audio book are all currently available on Hoopla so I'll be putting my dance shoes on later and checking out more of the music. Because I finally figured out how to mirror my laptop on to our TV husband watched with me and liked it just as much.

So was the book to blame or me? I've been in a slumpy mood lately and this was supposed to slap me out of it but even Robicheaux was channeling his Tommy Lee side.

JLB is usually my recreational drug of choice when it comes to reading fun so what was the problem? Perhaps too much of a good thing or maybe I need to start seeing some other guys—mix things up a bit and have some of that spiked Doctor Pepper Dave got himself into?
