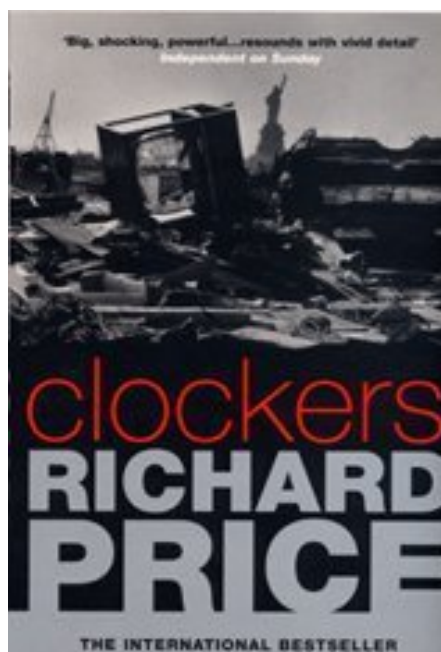




Clockers

Richard Price

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Clockers

Richard Price

Clockers Richard Price

Novelist and Academy Award–nominated screenwriter Richard Price's bestselling second novel offers "an unforgettable picture of inner-city decay and despair" (*USA Today*)

At once an intense mystery and a revealing study of two men, a veteran homicide detective and an innercity crack dealer, on opposite sides of an endless war. *Clockers* is "powerful . . . harrowing . . . remarkable" (*The New York Times Book Review*).

Clockers Details

Date : Published April 21st 2003 by Bloomsbury Publishing PLC (first published January 1st 1992)

ISBN : 9780747562733

Author : Richard Price

Format : Paperback 608 pages

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



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From Reader Review Clockers for online ebook

Richard says

Amazing!!!

Clockers tracks the parallel stories of two men on different sides of the drug game (one a young, mid-level, crack dealer, the other a homicide cop), revolving around a murder in Price's fictional New Jersey city of Dempsey. The engaging characterizations of these two men are what truly make this novel shine. From the dealer Strike (with his paranoia, orderliness, and his frustration with both his lower-level dealers and his perforated ulcer), to Detective Rocco (with his jaded outlook on his job, love for his wife and daughter, and his embarrassing obsession with pleasing a famous actor), the characters are truly vivid and feel totally genuine! Price is so wonderful at creating characters that feel really alive.

But there's also so much more here. At times it's flat-out funny, it has a suspenseful mystery, and has a huge dose of urban social commentary. An all-around classic and one of my favorites!

Jennifer says

I read this book ages ago and I still remember the rawness, grittiness and despair. This is a book populated by people trapped in a life of despair, violence and few options -- yet who still find hidden pockets of dignity and decency. The tension and stress of living in the projects is so realistically rendered that you feel that you are there ... living on the street and hustling to make a living. One detail that has remained in my mind this whole time is one character who constantly drinks Yoo-Hoo. For some reason, this detail has always stuck with me. In my mind, it was his way of treating the ulcers created by his way of life. A masterful novel that examines the American inner city during the heyday of the crack epidemic, *Clockers* is a riveting read and one not easily forgotten. Not for the faint of heart or those easily turned off by a way of life different from their own.

Paul Bryant says

Detective Klein and Detective Mazilli are discussing the suspect they've just brought in. He's an author who's accused of *recklessly wasting readers' time*. That's something that'll get you 3 to 5 in New Jersey and up to 10 in New York where they take reading more seriously. The suspect is an oldish Jewish guy who's currently in the interrogation room looking bored. The charges relate to three long novels published between 1992 and 2008, *Clockers*, *Freedomland*, and *Lush Life*. Together these add up to 1732 pages. Small print pages. They can hurt your eyes.

The detectives are perplexed.

- I'm telling you this is the guy.

- This is the guy? This skinny white mope?

- What's the problem, he even says he's Richard Price. He admits it. We got his driver's licence, we got that

woman who ID'd him –

- That one who says she's some kind of fan?

- She got a book *signed* by this guy. She waited in line for him to *sign* it. This is big in some people's world. A guy writes his name in a book. It's big.

- I could write Richard Price on any damn book you want. Here, give me one, I show you. This is just some sad fuck who has the same name, you know it, I know it. You seriously telling me an old Jewish guy can write thousands a pages a authentic black dialogue not to mention taking the reader on a tour of the whole inner city experience, the crack trade, the slingers, their apartments, their families, their mothers, how you step on an ounce, I mean *exactly* how, what these gangbangers wear, what they spend their dough on, who they wake up with, colour of their damn mother's underpants, a whole tour of black *spaces* – fast food joints, churches, jail visiting rooms, - and people – stone killers, outsize wheelerdealers, oily preachers, angsty thin wore down mothers, this white Jewish guy does all that? Nah. Toss him.

- Mazilli, you're going on appearances. In fact I now perceive, the scales have fallen from my fucking eyes, that you're one of those racist cops I have heard of. You think the perp who did Clockers has had to be black himself. You gonna tell me next that white boys can't sing the blues. You never heard of Dusty Springfield, the Righteous Brothers, never heard of Eric Clapton...

- I got no idea who those people are. But okay, it'll make you happy, let's do this Richard Price, see if it's our Richard Price.

He shrugs. They open the door to the interview room.

EXCERPT FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD PRICE, 10 AUGUST 2012

Klein : Way I see it, Richard, we're about the only friends you got right now.

Price : Yeah, with respect, it's my constitutional right to doubt that. Look, I'll make it simple - I wrote all those novels, all of them. Sure I did. And there's more you don't even know about. I could show you where to find em. I could take you there. But I never wasted any damn reader's time. That's God damned defamation. Who's sayin this shit?

Klein : Okay Richard, *I'll* make it simple for *you*. What you have here in each of these long novels are slight tales cranked up to elephantine proportions like, you know, *supersize me*. Each one concerns a simple plotline – who shot Darryl Adams? why is this guy confessing to it when he didn't do it? Or what happened when this lady's car got carjacked and her baby was in it? And in the end, after 700 pages, the solution, resolution, what have you, comes down to a banal twist of circumstance, a common misapprehension, oh I shoulda realised back on page 120 that this actually meant that and not that, blah blah, and certainly nothing which warrants slogging the reader through these interminable pages. Your damn long novels are monstrous sledgehammers cracking itty tiny nuts. You're wasting readers' time.

Mazilli : And you're a one trick pony, Price. These three books? They're essentially the same thing. Read one, why read another one?

Price : I want to call my lawyer.

Klein : Now why'd you wanna do that, we were getting along like a house on fire.

Price : Lawyer. Now!

Detective Klein and Detective Mazilli continue their conversation outside the interview room.

- Now do you believe me?

- Okay, he's our Richard Price. What do I know from modern crime literature anyways.

- We lost him.

- Yeah. We did. But he wasn't gonna cop for it. He really doesn't think he's wasted anybody's time. 1700 pages...

- Although, to be fair, he is very good on the power certain individuals hold over others in the drug underworld.

- True that, but not just there, your Rodney Little figure in Clockers could be encountered in any school playground, any local political party, he's the bully we all fear. And yet how hard is that fear to explain to outsiders? They'll say – why didn't you just walk away and keep walking? He is excellent on showing all of that. Do you remember how he has Rodney Little explain to Strike how if he, Rodney, takes a hundred dollar bill and nails it onto a tree on JFK and leaves it there, after a year it'll still be there, whereas if Strike did the same, what do you think would happen? That's cause people know who Rodney Little is.

- Also, he's brilliant in showing throughout Clockers the vapourous risings and fallings of all these visions of a life outside the clocker ghetto that Strike keeps imagining for himself – all these alternatives, they rise up like chimera and fade away when the next cruel ineluctability crashes into his life and they leave but not one trace.

- So what ya think – four stars?

- No, three. I coulda watched six ball games, time it took me to get through this damn Clockers.

Rebbie says

Rocco Klein, a tough New Jersey homicide detective, is on the hunt to discover who really killed a local drug dealer in a diner. The brother of a rival drug dealer admits to it, but soon cracks start to surface and Klein figures out that all is not as it seems.

This a bare bones, gritty urban story that makes you feel like you're right there watching what happens like a fly on the wall. It's definitely for fans of The Wire or Law & Order. There's not a lot of fluff or romance.

It's a dark but realistic depiction of life on the mean streets of an American city.

Adam says

Like Dostoevsky meets Tupac and it's pretty awesome for it. An amazingly complex and l-o-n-g tale of half-flawed people negotiating the pretty bleak world of the north Jersey projects. Every time I thought one of the characters was stooping to stereotype, Price introduced another layer of ambiguity that made much of said characterization ring true. Best of all, the story is so long that no detail is extraneous; the author had time to make everything more or less add up to something. Even Strike's annoying stutter mattered in the end. If you can stomach the bleakness of the landscape, this is well worth the effort.

Dan Schwent says

A drug dealer is gunned down in a diner and the brother of another drug dealer is the prime suspect. Did he do it? That's what Rocco Klein wants to find out. But can he get the suspect's brother, a crack dealer named Strike, to cooperate?

This is the fourteenth book in my Kindle Unlimited Experiment. For the 30 day trial, I'm only reading books that are part of the program and keeping track what the total cost of the books would have been.

Like most people who have read this in recent years, I loved HBO's The Wire and Price was one of the writers. This feels like the novelization of four Wire episodes in the best way possible.

Clockers is a crime book but it's also a window into the lives of cops and the crack dealers they're trying to catch. Much like The Wire, Clockers shows that both sides of the conflict are fairly ordinary human beings, not knights in shining armor or scene-chewing villains.

Strike and Rocco, the two leads, are both well-drawn, conflicted characters. Neither is particularly happy with his lot in life. Rocco sees an actor as his way out of the cop's life and Strike just wants to make enough money to get out.

The mystery is actually secondary. The real focus is on the lives of Rocco, Strike, and the rest. The crack business is a lot more complicated than I thought and now I'm even more keenly aware of why so many cops wind up divorced, alcoholic, and/or eating their guns.

The writing is a notch above most crime books, akin to Dennis Lehane and George Pelecanos. I thought the plot meandered a bit but not as much as in the last Price book I read, Lush Life. The city of Dempsey is almost a character.

Four out of five stars. Maybe it's time I rewatch the entire run of The Wire.

Current Kindle Unlimited Savings Total: \$77.48.

Amanda says

"Dempsey burnin'."

As in *The Wire*, in *Clockers* Richard Price explores the front line in the War on Drugs through two infantrymen on opposite sides of the conflict. There's Rocco Klein, homicide investigator, and Strike, lieutenant on the rise in the Dempsey projects. The late-night murder of a fast-food restaurant manager forces Rocco and Strike's paths to collide. Each is trapped, clocking on his side of the line. *Clockers* makes it clear that this is an unwinnable, endless war. If one man gets out of the game, another will step in his place.

If you like *The Wire* read *Clockers*; if you like Price at all, watch *The Wire*. Price is a master of these characters: his pacing and dialogue is perfect. The book is not as broad in scope, of course, as the show. It's focused on, as the title suggests, the people who are on the street—not Barksdale, but Bodie—and digs deep into that focused subject. Highly recommended.

Stefani says

Richard Price captured the greed and commingled desperation/hopelessness of characters whose desire to leave their doomed surroundings is only surpassed by their fear of reprisal if they do. The book seems perfectly tailored for a TV or movie adaptation given it's fast-paced and gripping plot-line, which had me staying up well past my bedtime to continue reading. And, since finding out that Price has written for the *Wire* as well as several screenplays, I'm more inclined to believe that was his original intention. Be warned though, the movie doesn't do the book justice in my opinion.

I am partial to tales of urban blight, and particularly interested in the psychological and environmental factors mitigating criminal behavior. This book really delves deeply into the character's motivation for their behavior and inner conflicts with their conscious, often to their own demise. Poverty often causes people to make decisions that are based more on survival and less on future goals—a perfect example would be Rodney Little's characterization of many of the *Clockers* who "buy a gold chain and spend all their money."

I'm not sure how many ride-alongs Price did with the police, but he has such an accurate ear for dialogue and situations that it's hard to believe that he resides in the Hamptons. There's a scene where Rocco is telling the actor who's trailing him for his movie role, about a woman who handcuffed her child to a hot radiator, only to disappear. When they catch the woman, Rocco's sergeant says, "It's a cycle—her father beat her brother to death." It's powerful and sad, but also gives you insight into the deep recesses of humanity.

Although I'm not a fan of preachy or overly proselytizing books, there were a lot of unexpected insights.

If you were poor, posters followed you everywhere—health clinics, probation offices, housing offices, day care centers, welfare offices—and they were always blasting away at you to do this, don't do this, be like this...

A crowd usually meant a spectacle of misery—an arrest, a fight, someone having a seizure.

The Royal was less a motel than a kind of hospital ship, a quarantine ward of the soul

Probably one of the best books I've ever read, hands-down.

Adam says

One of the great novels of the late 20th century. Comparisons to Steinbeck, Dostoevsky, and Dickens are not

superfluous. Is there characters you would rather jump of cliffs with than Strike and Rocco? Is there a character more corrupt, evil and utterly human than Rodney Little? Dismal human tragedy brought to high art that manages to give us an ability to discuss it with out cheapening the tragedy and making it palatable. The Wire is the real adaptation of this, skip the movie.

Ned says

Extraordinary. The story of a uniquely talented, scrupulously clean and intelligent teen-aged dope peddler in the projects, in some city in the north east. Spike sits on the benches with a bleeding ulcer, tolerating the daily inconveniences of thuggish cops and pondering his future. He is totally alone, caught between the urge to be upwardly mobile in the ultimately fatal drug trade, tutored by a hardened old (30 something) psychopath who runs an unending number of scams. This is a how-to about the drug trade, from the connections coming in, the turf skirmishes, the “cuts” tailored to the clientele, the supply chain mechanics on the street, and the complex system of police payoffs. Every other chapter is from another point of view, a homicide detective who is nearing the end of his career and is equally competent and empathetic to his impoverished community, despite shocking instances of tactical brutality as the cops and drug dealers conduct their orchestrated dance in an insane ritual. Richard Price displays an intimate knowledge of both ends of these spectra (law enforcement, street crime) and somehow gets deep into the heads of the entire distribution of individuals. He does not attempt to describe any female points of view, consequently this is a very masculine book. It deals with race in a frank and realistic way, without a shred of politeness, as I imagine it would have played on the street in 1992 (somehow my last 2 novels were published in this year).

I had to give this my top rating because the characters were so real and made me care deeply about their destiny as the frightening plot was revealed. I could have read this in one setting if my schedule permitted – it is not a short book but every word, every sentence crackled with realistic dialogue and constant fear and motion. I recall seeing this movie back in the day, with Spike Lee as a character, and that it struck me as more deeply meaningful and complex than most movies, but I don’t remember much else (thankfully, so my mind was not contaminated as I read the book). The book was down and dirty, in the streets, and rich with detail (the complex management required to be a middle man dope peddler is a mean feat beyond the capabilities of most white collar safe jobs, and 1000% more perilous).

I’ll be reading more Richard Price. I seem to be reading about cities, cops, thieves, black culture, crime and humans trapped in circumstances they cannot control. This book was not heroic in any sense, and far less stereotyped than others of its ilk (LeHane, e.g.). But it is the dialogue that really stands out as exceptional, building the characters into the true complex beings they are.

RandomAnthony says

So apparently *Clockers*, published in the early 90s, is a spiritual ancestor of *The Wire*. That makes sense. Reading *Clockers* is similar to watching that series; the reader switches from the perspective of the police to the dealers and back again. Scenes linger around the public housing courtyards and homicide investigator’s home lives. *Clockers* also, like *The Wire*, carries a Shakespearean dread to the (long) novel’s end. I read all 600 pages in a little over a week and the fact I didn’t get bored is a testament to Price’s smooth balance between detail and movement. So if you like *The Wire*, you’ll like *Clockers*. If you like Dennis Lehane, you’ll like Richard Price. That’s not to say Price is an imitator; he’s got his own thing, and based on *Clockers*, he’s very good at his thing.

Patrice Hoffman says

This is the first Richard Price novel I've read. I've never seen *The Wire*, nor have I watched the Spike Lee adaptation of this book. Many of the reviews I've read are by people who watched *The Wire* and were enamored with it. My opinion is as unbiased as it gets.

The book is pretty interesting and really gripping. It's a peek into the gritty and sad world of early 90s New Jersey projects. It's giving a fair view of both sides of the world Strike and Rocco live in. Rocco and Strike are on opposing sides of the law yet have finding the truth in common. Both characters have their faults and depth.

Many describe this book as great literature, compelling, or unforgettable. I don't find it to be any of the above. I've read a lot of urban fiction as a teen so the subject matter is not new. The only real difference I saw between this and other urban fiction is the view from opposing sides. This novel does a good job of showing motivations from a cops perspective and an inner-city crack dealers view, and them both being valid. For that reason alone I could not give it less than 3 stars (although I wanted to).

In my honest opinion, I was pretty bored with this most of the time. It's a pretty long book. I'm a fan of a large read but not one that is like watching paint dry. As if it isn't bad enough reading through the slang, I have to suffer through mediocre writing. This book definitely will not be in my favorites list but I would like to read more by this author. He has other books out there that are fan-favorites so I'm not giving up on Price.

Maya Rock says

God, I love this book. Everything about it is perfect--you love everyone but no one is flawless. This is one of the best books I've ever read. I think the subject matter may lead a lot of people to think it's not their cup of tea (drugs and violence), but it's really good and esp fun if you know the Jersey City area.

Matt says

Clockers - the term refers to the low-level, 24-hour drug slingers staked outside the projects - was written in 1992, and takes place before then. Which is why it took me so long to figure out why the characters referred to the cops as "Furies." It's because the police drove Plymouth Furies. Natch.

My disorientation has a point: this is a book that takes place in a world that most goodreads.com members have never been to. It's set in the fictional town of Dempsey, but is as real and bleak a look at the projects as you're likely to get. (As far as I know, of course. I was born in Bloomington, Minnesota. You know what's dangerous about Bloomington? Nothing. Stray hockey pucks from the Pee-Wees practicing on the rink).

Clockers is built around a murder, but it's not a murder mystery. You're pretty much told who did the killing, and the secret is why this person shot this other guy. In the end, the surprise is that there is no surprise. Which is life, I guess, but also a gyp in dramatic terms. Like *Lush Life*, though, the plot is not the point. It's the place. The people, the places, the dangerous and unending cat-and-mouse between cops, detectives, drug lords and clockers.

The story is told in chapters that switch between a detective's point of view (Rocco) and a clocker's point of view (Strike). Rocco is the somewhat-dated archetype: the cop who still believes in the Job. He's burnt out, of course, and has an endearing habit of chugging vodka from his freezer before he goes to bed. Strike is the more interesting character: a young man who drinks a ton of Yoo-Hoo to mask his ulcer, who is unapologetic about his business yet equally scared of his boss than of the cops.

Strike is drawn into Rocco's world after Strike's brother, Victor, is apprehended for murder. Rocco doesn't think Victor did it; he's after Strike. Strike is oblivious to this, because he's got to deal with the terrifying and enigmatic Rodney, a drug kingpin who also happens to run a convenience store and who preaches paternally to his young clockers about saving for the future: buy real estate, not sneakers. Strike also serves as reluctant mentor to young Tyrone, clocker-of-the-future, until he runs into the formidable force of Tyrone's mother.

Clockers ran on too long. At least for me. I'm not adverse to plot-less books, if I'm enjoying the world I'm in. Here, though, I was as desperate to escape as any of the street thugs. Moreover, some of the goings-on were a waste of time. For instance, there is a ludicrous sub-plot about a filmmaker shadowing Rocco in order to prepare for his next movie. This leads to Rocco harboring dreams of becoming an executive producer. In such a gritty tale, these proceedings have a shiny, plastic, sitcom feel. The whole thread could have been snipped.

Overall, though, this is a heck of a read. It's weighty, it's epic. It is filled with indelible, fully-realized, flawed and struggling characters. The dialogue rings. It is true to its world; that is, it's bleak and despairing. Probably the only reason I enjoyed *Lush Life* more is that it allowed some sunlight to filter through. In my mind, the City of Dempsey is like Fincher's New York City in *Se7en*: a place where it's always raining, where the sky is a black ceiling. At the end of the day, though some might be saved, there is no light at the end of the tunnel.

Dave says

Awesome! Price has got the inner city down. This novel which switches back and forth between two points of view. Strike is an inner city ? drug dealer who lives in the projects and sits at the benches slinging "bottles" (crack vials), hiding his cash in safe houses, and thinking someday he'll have the balls to walk out of the life still breathing. His mother told him never to come back and his brother Victor works the straight life with two jobs and a dream of getting out of the projects and a wife and two kids. The other point of view is homicide detective Rocco, who is not completely jaded even after working these mean streets. There's an unsolved homicide tying these two characters together.

What makes this 610 page behemoth sing is how well Price captures the language and the rhythm and the attitude of the two worlds that Strike and Rocco inhabit. The dialogue and the narrative is real. It's genuine. It's authentic.

Strike is not completely bad, at least compared to some of the hard cases he deals with. He's maybe in the wrong game but can't walk out. But he recruits younger kids, sells dope, and plans a murder.

You not only get the juxtaposition of Strike and his hardworking brother but the contrast with Rocco who really wants to do right and not sacrifice a lamb to the wolves.

All in all, Price gives us one helluva top-notch crime fiction novel here.

Naeem says

Price is a careful thinker and writer. He is really an ethnologist of the urban. The show the Wire is based on this book. Bonfire of the Vanities is not half the book that Clockers is -- style be damned.

There is a chapter on heroin addicts who live in a condemned building and who take out and sell the copper tubing in order to get their fix. This chapter is as poetic, as generous, as painful as anything I have read. It would make Charles Dickens envious.

Stewart says

If I could, I'd rate Clockers a solid 3.5 stars. I really enjoyed the Spike Lee film of the mid-nineties, and the combination of the recent hype surrounding Price's new novel, Lush Life, and his award-winning writing for The Wire, finally boosted this classic crime-drama to the top of my reading list. Clockers succeeds in vividly capturing a certain socio-political zeitgeist of the late-1980s and early 1990s, when continuously splashed across the New York City tabloids were lurid accounts of the twin epidemics of the age: the ravishment of crack and AIDS on urban communities.

Writing gritty, detailed prose that shows he clearly performed on-the-ground research in crafting his story, Price introduces us, in alternating chapters, to Strike, a young black "middle-management" crack dealer in a depressed New Jersey town just outside of New York City, and to Rocco, the white homicide cop trying to nail Strike on a murder rap while dealing with his own mid-life crisis. While not as eye-opening now, given TV shows like The Wire, Price deserves much credit for demonstrating the complicated relationships between drug dealers and the cops in charge of corralling them, which often involves a give-and-take compromise on both ends, and in which the concept of "justice" is many shades of gray. Price also succeeds in crafting a true pot-boiler, while still creating complex, empathetic characters on both sides of the drug war, whose mistakes come more from their tragically ignorant oversimplification of the lives of their adversaries than they do from any inherent malice.

Because of the time that has passed since the era in which Price is writing about, and because of shows like "The Wire" that have terrifically captured similar themes in even greater depth and detail, Clockers has lost some of the power and resonance it surely had when released. The book is also too long at 600 pages, with some underdeveloped and unnecessary side-characters, and could have been written more tightly (e.g. Strike's stomach aches -- we get it already). I'm sure I would have given Clockers 4 stars had I read it when it came out; but for a current reader, its slightly dated nature tips it a little closer to three.

Leftbanker says

This was one of my favorite books of the 1990s. The burned-out cop character was a bit of a cliché, but the setting of the novel in a post-apocalyptic New Jersey housing project was the work of inspired journalism. Price had a lot of great insights in this work that could only have been the result of going out and being a witness to the world he was describing. As the great novelist once said, "You can't make this shit up."

I'm sure this novel is completely ignored in college classrooms because professors want kids to read books by writers who write about writing (Updike, Roth, Irving, Joyce Carol Oates, and lot of other literati who need to get outside and get some fresh air once in a while). I've never been too curious as to what takes place

in the exciting world of academia or literary circles. Once a writer writes about writing, I stop reading. Price went out and found a great story. The human imagination is way over-rated in literature these days. They say that you have to write about what you know. The problem is that a lot of novelists don't know anything and aren't willing to go out and learn something new.

Suzanne Arcand says

Sometimes I wonder why I keep reading mysteries. Most of them are formulaic and the endings are often disappointing. Either predictable or improbable. Then comes along a book that is not just a good mystery but a great book. "Clockers" is such a book.

The author Richard Price wrote for the HBO series "The Wire" – the best series of all time - and, at first, I thought that this book was very similar to the series. We have young underprivileged black men – kids really – selling drugs – the clockers - and the narcotics cop who go after them. The narcotics cops are called "The Fury" by the clockers from the car they drive, Plymouth Fury.

Then the main characters come in focus: Strike who manages the clockers on the benches and Rocco the homicide cop. The story is told from their alternate point of views. The strength of the author is that we care equally about both. By the end of the book we understand clearly the dealer's point of view. They really believe that they have no choice in life but to deal drugs that there is not alternative. Victor's, honest brother, proves their point. He's holding two jobs and still can't get his family out of the project. They are crushed by peer pressure and by their desire to get a better life. Unfortunately the trill of the easy money and notoriety moves them further from the life they aim for. In other circumstances, Strike could have gotten is MBA and make money honestly. He does show business acumen and some leadership. And, when we think about it, is their naked ambition so different for the people on Wall Street?

The cops life is better but intrinsically linked to that of the dealers can it be much better? They hardly ever see their family. What they see are these kids making all that money and some corrupted cops take a cut. Often they don't show any respects for the clockers but some of the policemen are truly good people who still believe that what they do has value, that they are helping those kids. They have faith.

This book is all about faith. Strike has faith in Rodney, the posse boss, whom he sees as a mentor. He has faith in Tyrone, a bright kid, whom he tries to mentor with terrible consequences. Andre's, a cop, tries ineffectively to save some kids in whom he has faith. They all have faith in a shiny better future that is forever escaping them.

Then a third in the book a murder happens. (view spoiler) As the book progress, the mystery deepens and, in the last third, I couldn't turn the pages fast enough so eager was I to found out who really did it.

This book is so interesting on some many levels - beautifully constructed, written in vivid language that makes the characters alive – I could never do it justice. Just read it.

Greg says

Reading *Clockers* was a lot like watching *The Wire*, and that's a good thing. As I said in my comment when I started reading this book, I'm happy I never read this before now, and that I had never seen the movie

adaptation, which I'm sure is quite good, but which would have ruined some of the book. Not having anymore episodes of *The Wire* reading this was a nice way for a bookish and non-street white boy to return to the world of slinging drugs in the projects, and go 'slumming' so to speak amongst a socio-economic class that he knows nothing about firsthand. I don't know if this is how things really are/were, just like I really don't know if *The Wire* was really true to life, both feel pretty real to me, and they seem more realistic than say getting all my street experiences from an NWA record (not that I'm going to say deny NWA any kind of street credibility, but there is a certain romanticism to it, a gritty romanticism but there is still something that glorifies the world and doesn't necessarily paint a full picture, but maybe I'm wrong, I did spend much of my formative years in a very small city where cops had nothing better to do than fuck with freaky looking kids as if they were even a minor threat to anything by hanging out bored in an empty lot with a few benches and some stairs on the main street of town. Hmmmm this is opening up a new line of thought about the absurd parallels between my own years on the 'street' hanging out and being bored, and the clockers (drug dealers) in this book, both of them and the group of kids I'd hang around with got hassled endlessly by the pigs, the fuzz, the cops, the heat, five-oh. I developed my own paranoia about cops and their bullshit, and did fear being pulled over driving for no reason other than looking different (it's nice to know that someone thinks 'punk' is a threat, even if it is bored upstate New York cops), and maybe even being smacked around after being pulled over and realizing there wasn't a fucking thing you can do about it because they have the power and you have jack shit (ok, I wasn't smacked around by a cop, but by an off duty prison guard, a screw as they say, still wearing his uniform and when I tried going to the five-oh's about getting smacked around by this guy who had no reason/right to do so, I was told there was nothing I could do so just go home)). So anyway I was saying something about NWA before I got sidetracked. This book feels very real to me. There is the same moral ambiguity that makes shows like *The Wire* so good. There aren't really good and bad guys, but a bunch of people doing what they have to do to get by, and that goes for the clockers and the various types of cops that populate the book. There is no glamor in the book, it's devoid of any kind of romanticism for either the police, the people living in the projects or anyone else who comes into contact with the world created in this book.

I thought about giving this book five stars, and I'm not quite sure why I didn't. *Clockers* is damn near close to getting that extra star, maybe I'm just not in a generous mood this weekend for that extra star, but it's a great book no matter what my fickle star dolling out shows.
