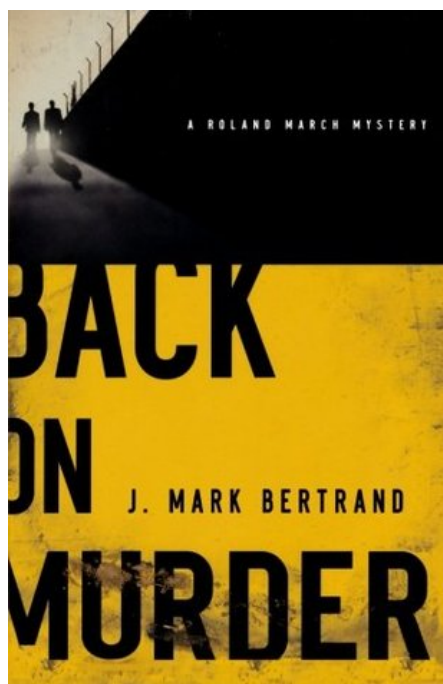




Back on Murder

J. Mark Bertrand

Download now

Read Online ➞

Back on Murder

J. Mark Bertrand

Back on Murder J. Mark Bertrand

Det. Roland March is a homicide cop on his way out. But when he's the only one at a crime scene to find evidence of a missing female victim, he's given one last chance to prove himself. Before he can crack the case, he's transferred to a new one that has grabbed the spotlight--the disappearance of a famous Houston evangelist's teen daughter.

With the help of a youth pastor with a guilty conscience who navigates the world of church and faith, March is determined to find the missing girls while proving he's still one of Houston's best detectives.

Back on Murder Details

Date : Published July 2010 by Bethany House Publishers

ISBN : 9780764206375

Author : J. Mark Bertrand

Format : Paperback 382 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Christian Fiction, Christian, Crime

 [Download Back on Murder ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Back on Murder ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Back on Murder J. Mark Bertrand

From Reader Review Back on Murder for online ebook

Cindi says

What are the marks of a good murder mystery? Multi-layered storytelling, strong and well-developed characters and a surprise every now and then are all signs that an author has the right mix of elements to keep a reader turning the pages. J. Mark Bertrand has done all that and more with his first title in the Roland March series about a homicide detective from Houston who is anything but the perfect detective.

Roland March is one of those characters that grows on you. When first encountering him, he rubs you the wrong way, but then he does something to redeem himself. Before you know it, his character flaws are what draw you to him because you come to realize he isn't that much different than the rest of us

There are plenty of surprises throughout the book. Some for the reader and some for the characters, but all are perfectly crafted. It is easy to see why there are two more titles in the Roland March series. One came out in July, 2011 (Pattern of Wounds) and one comes out in July, 2012 (Nothing to Hide). Fans of J. Mark Bertrand and his Houston homicide detective, Roland March can hope that there will be a new title released in July, 2013.

Read more of this review!

<http://www.examiner.com/christian-fic...>

Eric_W says

Caution: Contains a Naughty Word

Roland March, treated as an invisible by the rest of the homicide squad, discovers a key piece of evidence, that someone, presumably a woman, had been tied to the bed where Octavio Morales had been shot.. He's anathema to the rest of the department for reasons unknown but having to do with a personal tragedy in his life, and he has been assigned to the "Car Squad" which tricks persons with outstanding warrants into thinking they might have won a car so they show up only to be arrested. It's not considered to be glamorous duty. But because of his find, the Lt. assigned him back on the murder squad. In the meantime, Charlotte, his wife, an attorney in a premier legal firm, is on drugs to help her sleep, and wants Roland to get their garage apartment renter out for throwing irresponsible parties. And romance? Forget it.

March wants nothing more than to redeem himself in the eyes of the Homicide Squad, and things begin to look up until he tries to make a connection between the disappearance of a local girl and the girl missing from the murder scene of Morales.

For some reason this book is billed as a Christian mystery and comes from a publisher traditionally known for those kinds of books, whatever the hell they might be. It does have a couple of church member characters but they seemed quite real and flawed to me, and March certainly doesn't have majestic epiphanies. Then again, perhaps the Christian threshold is so low that all it takes is the absence of "fuck."

Just a good, solid detective story. I'll definitely read more from the author despite the label.

Christy says

This was a fair to OK mystery novel. It felt like it took FOREVER to finish. I just kept waiting and waiting and checking my progress...it seemed like there was a lot of unnecessarily long side story.

Also, I found the characters hard to like. The main character wasn't someone I could find myself rooting for. He was just...blah. The mother of the missing girl didn't behave like a bereaved mother. The youth pastor was creepy. The missing person's detective was pretentious. Half the cops were dirty. The main detective's wife was moody unreasonable. And there were so many characters it was hard to keep track of who was who.

There was a huge tragedy that happened in the life of the main detective and his wife (which they don't explain until about 2/3 of the way through the book, but you can guess after the first few chapters). It made the whole thing weirdly sad, but didn't seem to add anything to the depth of the book.

I was happy when it was over, not because it was a great book but because I could start something new.

CatherineMorland says

I honestly can't say enough good things about Back on Murder. If you like crime shows like NCIS, you'll like this book!

Things I Liked:

1. Even though I felt the book was gritty and realistic, it was something I could read at night before going to bed and not have to worry about bad dreams. I think it's a good balance between realistic and yet not disturbing.
2. I felt like J. Mark Bertrand has wonderful insight into human nature and I loved the body language and emotions and the thoughts March would have about people.
3. It's fast paced and interesting enough where it kept my attention. I never felt bored reading Back on Murder.
4. Although I guessed a few of the plot twists, most of them kept me guessing. It was cool to see how all of these different cases and people were connected in this sort of intricate web.
5. The main character, March, is so, so flawed. He's selfish, distant, makes bad choices, and is sometimes cold and unfeeling. And yet I still liked him, amazingly. I think it's because we can see how his past made him this way and how he just wants to catch a break. Even though he pretends to be unaffected by everything, you can tell it does bother him. And there's enough good in him left inside that we root for him.
6. The faith message wasn't preachy at all. There were still some lessons to take away, but I feel like this is something I could hand to my non-Christian friends and they wouldn't be hit over the head with preaching.
7. I loved the writer's style. He's the best "new" (new to me) writer I've read in a long time. I'm eager to read other books by him.
8. Seriously, you should go read this.

Teena in Toronto says

This book interested me because I like murder mysteries. It wasn't a bad book, it just wasn't great.

Though it was less than 400 pages, it seemed like a looooong book. I kept checking the chapter menu to see how far along I was and how far I still had to go.

I found that there were so many characters in this book, especially the number of cops, that I couldn't keep them all straight.

Something happened in March's past that haunts him but you don't find out what it is until about midway. Given what it was (I kind of figured it out anyway), it would have been better knowing what it was so you'd understand his behaviour.

The ending was so-so, not overly exciting. This was the first in a series but I won't be rushing out to read the others.

Blog review: <http://www.teenaintoronto.com/2011/12...>

Sarita says

Roland March is a homicide detective, with struggles at work and life. He gets a break at work, messes it up with impatient decisions and lands on a missing person case, which seems would remain unsolved forever. An event lands him a new break, which he better utilize after learning from his earlier mistakes.

The book was ok. I kept on hoping it would get better and I would like it. The narration (first person from March's view point), was so slow. I actually read another book in between (usually I will finish one fiction before continuing to another). Roland irritated me in the beginning, his thought patterns, especially towards his wife and other woman, was not something I liked. In the beginning of the book, an event is introduced to explain his actions and the relationship between him and his wife. This event was only revealed halfway through the book, after which I felt compassion for him and started to understand him. The relationship between him and his wife also improves towards the end of the book.

I love my suspense books as fast-paced, can't wait to see what happens next. This book took me long to finish. Some chapters were slow and boring, and some again faster and interesting, so left with mixed feelings.

I also like it more when the characters in christian fiction talks more to God and the relationship between them and God is more evident. Yes, March did not believe, but there was no real conversation about God, not even between the believing characters and March. Yes there was mention of it, but no real testimony really, except for Hannah the missing girl. But this is my own personal preference.

So, happy to be done with the book, but it did not leave me wanting to read the rest of the series. Will eventually finish it, maybe, we'll see...

Kevintipple says

For some police officers the dead body is the end of the case. The search for the living is over and there is nothing left to do. For homicide detectives the body is the start. The dead body is the door opening on a case waiting to be solved. For Homicide Detective Ronald March, the results of a shootout in southwest Houston are his ticket back to fully functioning in Homicide and ending his exile of being farmed out on garbage details.

If he does not screw it up.

Since that fateful tragic day seven years ago, things have not been right personally or professionally. What happens over the next few weeks and months in the summer and fall of 2008 might be his last chance at everything.

A local loan shark by the name of Octavio Morales is dead as are several of his criminal associates. Detective March should not even be in the house surveying the carnage as he has fallen out of favor with his bosses. But, a house full of dead gang bangers brings out everyone and March couldn't stay away. It has been far too long since he last worked a real murder case and he burns with the need to work one. He surveys the scene and only March spots the evidence that indicates that a hostage was there and now is gone.

Despite the fact that he alone found the evidence, March is still locked into the bottom of the pecking order and wasting his time with crummy assignments. Whether it is the frequent sting operations enticing bad guys to show up and claim the cars they won, the cop suicides he gets stuck with, or a number of others, the details are garbage jobs. March has earned his bottom feeder status and he isn't going anywhere. At least, until he spotted the evidence that no one else noticed and changed the case from a routine killing to a missing hostage search. That earns him a temporary reprieve and minor league status in the Morales case.

Assuming he doesn't screw up.

But, he will. He does. And yet, March also makes his own kind of twisted luck. It may be tarnished luck but under all the slime there is luck and every now and then he comes through in a strange way.

This debut mystery by author J. Mark Bertrand features the usual stereotypical elements of a burned out detective, a nearly destroyed marriage thanks to personal tragedy, and a city that is little more than a cesspool with a population stirred up by a hysterical media tracking a missing person's case. Usually these sorts of books are set in Los Angeles. Instead, the former Texas resident set it in Houston and also managed to weave in Hurricane Ike from a couple of years back along the way.

Somehow, despite beating the stereotype drum in nearly every area, J. Mark Bertrand makes it work. Before long, one gets pulled in the noirish style world of Ronald March where he frequently makes mistakes and yet survives against all the odds. Psychology is a huge part of this novel and March quickly becomes not only your friend but a guy you know that just seems to always have the deck stacked against him. He can't play politics, goes his own way and does not fit in, and yet manages to always get the job done.

The author's MFA in creative writing from the University of Houston shows throughout the debut novel as one gets the feeling every character trait and plot point is orchestrated for effect in order to make a nice neat check mark on the master list. At the same time, when he is actively working and on the chase, occasional overwriting and stereotypical blemishes vanish as Mr. Bertrand brings the scenes alive so well you can almost taste it. It is when the action slows and March becomes contemplative about his life and what has happened that the novel drifts a bit. That also means occasional errors in grammar, pacing, the timeline of the novel, etc. are glaringly more present.

Just like in real life not everything in Back On Murder is tied up in a nice neat package. While most plot lines are tied off well, one minor storyline involving a tenant is cut off way too nice and neat. It comes to an abrupt dead stop and results in a missed opportunity for further character development and secondary plot. Considering how hard the storyline had been pushed up until the abrupt ending, the reader is left to wonder why it just suddenly ended in that way.

Overall, the novel is good, but not as great as it could be. This may be a case where writers would be a bit harsher in their criticism of the book than the average reader as we recognize the tricks being used to tell the tale. Still, the read is full of mystery, political infighting, action, and no easy answers and results in a 382 book that will keep you guessing most of the way through. J. Mark Bertrand has a fairly decent foundation of a series to work from based on this book. It will be interesting to see how it goes in the next novel in the series, Pattern Of Wounds, scheduled to be published this July by Bethany House.

Back On Murder: A Roland March Mystery
J. Mark Bertrand
Bethany House (A Division of Baker Publishing Group)
July 2010
ISBN# 978-0-7642-0637-5
Paperback
384 Pages
\$14.99

Material supplied by the good folks of the Plano, Texas Public Library System.

Kevin R. Tipple ©2011

Nancy says

I downloaded a kindle version of this book almost 6 months ago to read while traveling. I think it is supposed to be an action packed thriller, but the story never engaged me. *Back on Murder* waited patiently in my Kindle so I read it from time to time while I was caught without something good to read. People who like reading about gun battles and gunshot wounds might enjoy the book. Maybe someone who feels disrespected at work and finds his personal life depressing will identify with the main character. Mostly I found reading the book depressing and am glad it is over.

Keanan Brand says

Excellent.

I read the e-book that's been sitting on my Kindle for several months, waiting for me to go on a reading jag, and I'm wishing I'd dug in sooner.

Despite some formatting issues (missing italics, lowercase instead of uppercase acronyms, etc.) that would normally have driven me nuts, I enjoyed this book better than I've enjoyed any crime novel in recent

memory, save one (which I'm still reading). The storytelling is solid, I believed the characters and the events, and the writing itself is excellent.

I'm adding the rest of the Roland March novels to my reading pile soon.

Recommended reading.

Tracy Krauss says

Back On Murder by J. Mark Bertrand is a murder mystery extraordinaire. Houston detective Roland March is disillusioned and misunderstood, relegated to special assignments nobody else wants. He gets his big chance for redemption when he is assigned to a missing person's case - one which he thinks is connected to a drug murder; but proving it might just cost him his life. Beyond a very engaging story line with plenty of plot twists and surprises, Bertrand's writing style is masterful. His voice is fresh, descriptive, insightful and never, ever cliché. Coming from a Christian publisher, I can honestly say that this book will appeal to the masses, no matter what one's religious stripe. There are some Christian characters in the book, but they are portrayed as real people and there is never a preachy moment. This is achieved, I think, by the use of the first person narrative. Since the main character himself is not a believer, he is simply observing the behavior of those around him, weighing their worth on a human level. This novel deserves a five star rating, without a doubt.

Laronica Conway says

A few general thoughts: This book was a satisfying read. I didn't get bored like I thought I would and I didn't dislike the main character despite his faults. And I didn't know this book was considered or listed as "Christian fiction" until after I finished the book and read some of the other reviews.

Roland March is a homicide detective who, several years ago, was at the top of his game and very well-respected among his peers. But over the years his skills diminished and he seemed to do 'just enough'. He was tired of getting the grunt work assignments and only wanted to be 'back on murder'. It was obvious early on that something tragic happened to him and his wife but we don't learn exactly what that was until at least 3/4 of the way through the book. However, one could guess what it was after several chapters and a few keenly placed thoughts.

Det. March sets out on a plan to gain back his rep and get back to doing what he did best. He was able to jump in on a murder case of a local drug guy. But March was directed to play second fiddle to a younger up and comer. After a young teenage daughter of a popular mega-church minister goes missing, March think the drug murder and the missing teenager was connected. Everyone thought he was crazy and while trying to connect the cases and solve them he inadvertently uncovers a few dirty cops who set out to make his life hell. Following the dirty cop storyline was a bit tiresome in some places, but Betrand figured out how to get back on track eventually.

I thought that I would tire of March's whining and string of bad decisions. But Bertrand somehow made me care about him and feel bad for him all while cussing him out for doing stupid stuff. Although there were a LOT of characters to keep up with and they seemed to be randomly placed, eventually their roles connected, minus one or two stray detectives and cops.

There was one particular event that wasn't clearly explained and that event was a major turning point. That was the only loose end. Otherwise, Bertrand did an excellent job of answering all of the questions and solving the cases in a tidy manner. The end was a minor letdown but we at least know who did what and why. And maybe I was sad to see the story end. It didn't move fast and there weren't a lot of surprises, nor was it a quick page-turner, but I was interested and was never bored except for a few places where he meandered (mainly about geography of the city). Good first effort and I actually care enough about March to want to continue reading more books in the series.

One more random thought...I liked the fact that Bertrand wrote March in such a way that you couldn't tell his race...you can assume, but he never comes right out and says it. To me, it doesn't matter and I like that Bertrand didn't feel the need to tell us. If he did tell us, I missed it and that's a good thing.

Valerie Dykstra says

Back on Murder, a murder mystery by J. Mark Bertrand; if you're into murder mysteries, this is a serious read. Comparable to mainstream murder mysteries, yet sensitive and moral enough to be sold in Christian bookstores. That's a pretty unique combination, I'd say.

Roland March is a used-up cop. He's been taken off the serious stuff and placed on the secondary cases. When a teenager goes missing, he's moved to the missing-persons department. When there's a suicide of a fellow cop, he's moved to the suicide division. When there's a foursome murder in a gang house, he happens to notice something the more respected cops miss. March is convinced the three cases are related, are connected. No one concurs.

Risking looking like an idiot, he continually puts all his eggs in the basket of the crimes being connected. Surprise surprise, the links become more obvious because of his superb detective skills.

This book is detailed with crime scene stuff; bullet trajectories, grainy photos, decomposed bodies, brain matter on glass, etc. If a person is into that, this is a great read. For me personally, it was a lot of detail. It is good, but sometimes it moved pretty slow because of the technical stuff. This would not be the case for a murder-mystery kind of person, I think. Even for me, who prefers suspense over murder mystery, it was really good, and I never was bored with it.

My copy of Back on Murder was provided by Baker Publishing and Graf-Martin Communications. It's available at your favorite bookseller or Bethany House books.

Jared Saltz says

Very strong. It's nice to see a modern book that realizes a good story doesn't use the language and sex that some other authors feel is mandatory. Bertrand has put together a strong character in Roland March--a detective past his prime and punching out, following the demise of his daughter. Haunted by guilt and in the middle of an existential crisis, March has lost his partner, and is only holding onto his position in homicide by riding the wave of good detective work he put in the past when a new case intrigues him. This case brings him out of the bout of depression he's in and he begins to return to who he was. The plot was strong, the characters intriguing, but it was the emotional and psychological issues that are able to be worked into the plot that really cause Bertrand's work to shine. He's able to discuss concepts of loss, repentance, forgiveness, revenge, and justice coming from various angles, many through the lens of Christians (who March just can't quit

accept). If you're looking for a solid murder mystery, a solid look at the influence of loss on lives without having to wade through dross to find it, then here's a great place to start.

Michelle says

I got this Kindle book on a whim when it was free, and I'm actually disappointed to be done with it. I'm now excited to buy or rent the next installment and I only hope the story is as good. This is not your typical murder mystery--it's more of a character study than anything else. However, the characters are interesting enough, as is the storytelling, that I didn't mind the lack of surprises or twists. I had a near 100% success rate on guessing what the reveals would be as the story went along, but that still didn't mean I had all my questions answered or knew *how* everything happened, so I still never felt cheated.

If you are an atheist or non-religious person like myself, don't let the "Christian fiction" chatter put you off. It would have given me pause had I known the genre association before reading it, but I honestly do not see this as a Christian book at all--it's a compelling little mystery that happens to have some Christian characters and themes in it. It's a book set in Houston, Texas. It would be inauthentic and silly not to, in my opinion. At any rate, it's definitely not preachy and the main character, at least in this installment, isn't even religious. I can't speak for the rest of the series, but at least in this one, you won't be rolling your eyes nearly as much as March himself!

Brenda S Anderson says

Roland March is a Houston homicide detective who seems to be headed out of the force. He's lost the respect of his fellow officers and doesn't seem to care. But then he's given one last opportunity to prove himself when an evangelist's daughter goes missing. His gut tells him her disappearance is tied to recent multiple murders at a drug house, but the facts don't point in that direction. The case becomes personal to him, and he won't back down until he uncovers the truth, regardless of what it costs.

I love a good crime novel. Michael Connelly's Harry Bosch stories are among my favorites. But, in the world of Christian fiction, finding novels that even shadow Connelly's quality are rare. J. Mark Bertrand, in his first solo effort (He wrote *Bequiled* with Deeanne Gist), has proven himself more than capable. He's penned an intriguing mystery, one that keeps the reader guessing to the end. He layers it with details that show he understands not only police procedure, but how it affects their thought process and their home life.

Bertrand also uses a couple of literary devices that I typically don't care for. *Back on Murder* is written in first person and present tense, which if not written very well, will draw the reader out of the story. More and more authors are attempting to write in present tense as it theoretically makes what happens more immediate, but what they succeed in doing is jarring the reader from the story. My internal editor can't help but edit the story to the more common past tense. Not once did that happen in *Back on Murder*. Bertrand used the device with expertise so that the reader doesn't automatically say to themselves, "This is present-tense." You're just reading his unique voice.

I look forward to reading more from J. Mark Bertrand and his character, Roland March.
