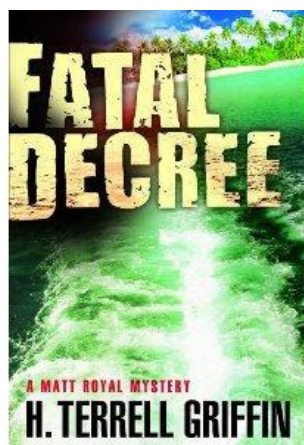




Fatal Decree

H. Terrell Griffin

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When a serial killer shows up on Longboat Key, Florida after a twelve year absence, Matt Royal is stymied. The first woman killed on Longboat Key has ties to a secretive government agency for which Matt's best friend Jock Algren works. Was this a coincidence or was she a targeted kill? Matt's friend, Longboat Key detective Jennifer Diane (J.D.) Duncan investigates the murders but also seems to be a target of the killer. Why? And where has the killer been for the past twelve years? And why has he come to Longboat Key when his earlier kills were all in Miami? The mystery deepens when Guatemalan gang-bangers try to kill Matt and J.D. and suspicions grow that Mexican drug cartels are somehow involved. The director of Jock's agency orders him to do whatever is necessary to find the killer because of the death of the woman with connections to the agency. Will Jock simply take out the murderer or allow J.D. and the law to arrest, try and convict the bad guys? Matt's life is further complicated by J.D.'s growing dissatisfaction with island living and her thoughts of returning to Miami.

Fatal Decree Details

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Author : H. Terrell Griffin

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From Reader Review Fatal Decree for online ebook

Tania Godwin-evans says

What at first glance is a simple murder mystery turns into something with many more sinister overtones. What was one body becomes multiple bodies; anyone can be a potential target. The story is cranked up from a single simple layer to multiple layers with the plot evolving at break neck speed so much so that the tension is ratcheted up and resembles an elastic band about to break.

A well-paced, twister of a policed procedural thriller. A very much a fly-by-the-seat-of-your pants story. This novel is real easy to read and the short chapters further enhance the speed with which this novel travels. The interest is kept right to the end and I defy you to guess who the killer is before then.

The two main characters were intriguing and well written but did we have to have the sexual tension and the ending was a big let-down for me but the rest was just WOW. What I particularly like about Matt was that he was an avid reader and with what downtime he did have he was always reading a book (can we please have more characters like this).

Mostly written in the first person there are some chapters that are written in the third person so not only does the reader get Matt's point of view but we also get the murder's point of view too (though without knowing who the murder is until the end).

This is a thinking reader's thriller with the psychological implications of each murder intact. The hero is not flashy, but real and believable. I whole heartedly recommend this book.

This can be read as a standalone novel but I will be going back to read the previous books in the series, possibly rereading this one in order and I will be on the lookout for future novels by this author; and this series in particular.

Full Disclosure: ARC received from Netgalley for an honest review.

Linda says

Reading through this series, each one is unique but features many of the same characters. Enjoy the setting on the Gulf coast of Florida. In this version, J.D., Matt Royal's girlfriend, is pretty hard to stomach, with her by the book attitude toward Jock, a highly regarded member of the POTUS national security staff. Will she last past this novel? Read to find out.

Lou says

A one Matt Royal resident of an island in Florida, Longboat Key, can be found running in sandy beaches or in the midst of crime detection along with his female friend J.D. In this story he finds himself working alongside a best friend Jock Algren a government agent. The body count rises in this police procedural thriller and fingers point to a serial killer and then other people are killed that don't fit the pattern and turns the investigation down the road of a cop killer and possible drug

cartel.

The story is layed out in an easy read style, the right length sentences and short chapters in a style and manner you expect for this kind of story to move with the right place.

The mystery, the search for truth creates a great need to get through story with intrigue i found that the main character Matt Royal and J.D may grow on me and will be hoping to read more from these characters in other stories the author features them in.

Barbara says

Disturbing things are happening on Longboat Key, located off St. Petersburg, Florida. Serial murders that happened in Miami twelve years ago seem to be happening on Longboat Key now. The first local victim is Nell Alexander, the wife of Gene Alexander, an agent with a secret government organization. Was Nell killed because of her husband's job?

Moreover, is it just a coincidence that J.D. Duncan, a new detective with the Longboat Key police, once worked on the Miami cases? Could someone be sending her an ominous message? J.D. and her friend, retired attorney Matt Royal, look into the crimes. (For readers who like a spot of romance there's some chemistry between these two.)

Before long there are several attempts to kill J.D, some of which she escapes by sheer luck. People also seem to be trying to kill Matt, the most likely suspects being suspicious-looking Guatemalans who've been hanging around. To cap it all off, Gene Alexander is soon found murdered, though his death has been staged (incompetently) to look like suicide.

As luck would have it Matt's friend Jock - who works for the same secret agency as Gene Alexander - is in town for some fishing. Jock has very high connections, and a word from him helps Matt get all kinds of inside information. The main action of the story consists of Matt and J.D. trying to figure out what the heck is going on while their lives are in jeopardy and additional murders are occurring all over Longboat Key.

There are plenty of characters in the story, the main bad guys being a fake lawyer and various hired assassins. These criminals seem to have very little backbone, however, and - as soon as they're apprehended - start blabbing everything they know. Meanwhile, the official investigation limps along slowly, with Matt and J.D (and sometimes Jock) going to a lot of restaurants, bringing everyone sandwiches, and so on.

I don't want to reveal spoilers so I'll just say the plot doesn't hold together and the ending - where all is revealed - is complex and completely unbelievable. ? I don't recommend this book. There are plenty of better mystery/thrillers available.

You can follow my reviews at <http://reviewsbybarbsaffer.blogspot.com/>

IslandRiverScribe says

The body was just floating slowly down the channel. It was that of a female, middle-aged, blond, naked, shot in the head. The 22-caliber round was still in the brain, a whale-tail earring had been put in the left earlobe, and the initials "KKK" had been cut into the skin just above the nape of the neck. For Longboat Key's only police detective, Jennifer "J.D." Duncan, this scenario was identical to three she had investigated

peripherally twelve years ago when she was a new detective with the Miami-Dade force. The ritualistic deaths had stopped as quickly as they had started and were, to this point, unsolved.

With the appearance of the body, J.D. finds she has far more problems than the resurgence of a serial killer or his copycat. To begin with, the dead woman is the wife of a newly re-activated agent from the same national security agency that Jock Algren works for. Then, in less than a day, someone tries to murder her. A day later, someone tries to kill Matt Royal, our main protagonist and the man J.D. cares for above anyone else. Then, in short order, there are several more attempts on J.D.'s life and another on Matt's.

Now, as nasty as all this is, for J.D., it just goes from bad to worse. The body of a second woman, murdered in the same ritualistic manner as the first, is found. And, within hours, the re-activated agent is murdered.

But all these murders and attempted murders are not the "worse." The overriding problem for J.D. is that the murder of the agent – and the nature of the project on which he had been working – precipitates a direct response from the President. J.D.'s boss is ordered, in the interests of national security, to hand over the investigation to Jock. And this means handing over all the cases - the three murders, the four attempts on J.D.'s life and the three attempts on Matt's life.

J.D. knows exactly what this means. It means that warrants and normal procedures will not apply. It means that all evidence gathered will most likely be inadmissible at trial. And she knows that she won't need the evidence anyway since the perpetrators and the masterminds of these crimes will never appear in court. She has seen Jock in action before and she knows.

Thus, when she is put in protective custody against her will and when the law she is sworn to uphold is usurped in favor of black ops, the secondary plot of this novel kicks in. J.D. is already frustrated with island life after years in the lights of Miami. She is also aggravated with the island's grapevine after years of anonymity in the big city. And she and Matt have been dancing around each other personally for months, both scared to take the next step in their relationship.

At this point, her core belief in the law is in tatters, her cases are in jeopardy and she feels that she is being treated more like a "woman" than a well-armed and well-trained cop. So, reluctantly, she sets the stage with Matt to leave the island – and him – to go back to Miami after Jock is finished killing everybody.

H. Terrell Griffin has written a convoluted tale of double agents, drug cartels, murder for hire and revenge. There are a plethora of secondary characters and it is vitally important to understanding the denouement that the reader keep them straight – the order in which they appear, the order in which they die, who is hired by whom, and who is related to whom and how.

And Griffin has penned a female protagonist that can be respected, even as she wrestles with decisions that may break the heart of the male protagonist we have followed for six books previously. She is not perfect but she does not whine or devolve into irritating self-pity. She argues logically and she plays fair. And she does not try to emotionally manipulate others – particularly Matt. As female leads go these days, she is a breath of fresh air.

Griffin uses three literary tactics that make this novel flow and build seemingly effortlessly and naturally. First is the way he writes his action scenes – and there are a great many of these. He chooses his words carefully and in such a way that their graphic and precise meanings translate into your mind's eye as if you were viewing the scenes on a screen.

Secondly, while the book is primarily in Matt Royal's first person POV, the author shifts into third person occasionally to let the reader into the minds of the villains. Griffin also uses this technique to give us, for the first time, a glimpse into Jock's psyche, while in action and away from Matt. And the author makes these

first- to third-person transitions cleanly and clearly so that there is no confusion for the reader as to whose thoughts and actions are in the spotlight.

And thirdly, Griffin uses short chapters so that the reader can conveniently stop and start as chores and sleep intrude on the world that the author has built. Then, Griffin sneaks up on you and, every few chapters, he ends with a paragraph basically saying, "If I had only known then..." So much for doing those chores and grabbing some sleep!

Ethan says

Last year, I stumbled upon the Matt Royal series by author H. Terrell Griffin. The novels follow Matt Royal, a middle-aged lawyer who, fed up with the state of the legal system, retired to the small island of Longboat Key, Florida. But small town life didn't stop Royal from finding excitement. Over the course of six novels, Matt found himself directly involved in conspiracies that rocked his hometown. Through his friendship with Bill Lester, Longboat Key's chief of police, and with the help of his drinking buddy Logan, and his friend Jock, who conveniently works for a top secret, high ranking government agency, Matt became a kind of extension of the local law enforcement.

Things seemed to change when J.D. Duncan, a female detective from Miami, joined the Longboat Key force. Her addition, and insistent moral code, caused Matt to not only re-evaluate his actions, but to discover emotions he thought he would never feel again.

In Fatal Decree, the latest novel to feature Royal, we find the characters facing the biggest mystery they have ever faced. When the body of a local woman is discovered floating in the bay, Matt is immediately called by J.D. It turns out, the body has a whale tail earring in her ear, and the initials KKK carved into the back of her neck. Even more terrifying, this is the signature of of a serial killer from Miami who J.D. investigated, and who hasn't been active for years. Now Matt must help solve the case before more islanders or killed. He hates to imagine the worst, but he is scared that the killer may target J.D. next.

I was completely invested in this series the moment I began reading. Unlike other series authors, Griffin has managed to maintain his standards of both quality and content. Seven books in, he still manages to explore unique cases and take his characters into different emotional territory. It was really nice to see Matt and J.D.'s budding relationship come to a head, especially because it didn't play out in the predictable way I feared it was going to. Griffin love of Florida and the people who inhabit it is made obvious by his detailed descriptions of settings and the inclusion of small town characters that give the sometimes outlandish story a much needed dose of reality. With Fatal Decree, Griffin proves that he is very much at the top of his game. Any fan of fast paced and original mysteries is sure to enjoy this novel.

Rhonda says

Fatal Decree: A Matt Royal Mystery by H. Terrell Griffin
4 STARS

This is my first Matt Royal Mystery but not my last. I found that I had two others on my kindle that I will read next. Fatal Decree I believe is the 6th Matt Royal Mystery. Thier are a lot of characters that fans of the series has already met in detail.

Fatal Decree can stand alone but I want to go back and read the books before in the series.

I like Matt and his friends. They have some very powerful friends in high places. There was no way I would have guessed who the killer was and why. It is full of drama, action, police detective, secret government agencies, drug dealers, murders. Did not want to put the book down until I had finished reading it.

Description

When a serial killer shows up on Longboat Key, Florida after a twelve year absence, Matt Royal is stymied. The first woman killed on Longboat Key has ties to a secretive government agency for which Matt's best friend Jock Algren works. Was this a coincidence or was she a targeted kill? Matt's friend, Longboat Key detective Jennifer Diane (J.D.) Duncan investigates the murders but also seems to be a target of the killer. Why? And where has the killer been for the past twelve years? And why has he come to Longboat Key when his earlier kills were all in Miami? The mystery deepens when Guatemalan gang-bangers try to kill Matt and J.D. and suspicions grow that Mexican drug cartels are somehow involved. The director of Jock's agency orders him to do whatever is necessary to find the killer because of the death of the woman with connections to the agency. Will Jock simply take out the murderer or allow J.D. and the law to arrest, try and convict the bad guys? Matt's life is further complicated by J.D.'s growing dissatisfaction with island living and her thoughts of returning to Miami. (Taken off Netgalley site about Fatal Decree)

Matt Royal is retired lawyer and loyal friend. He is divorced and a beach bum is his description.

Jock Algren works for secret government agency and when he is between assignments lives on the island in Matt's house.

Diane (J.D.) Duncan Matt's friend who he wants to be closer too but does not want to ruin friendship. She is the Island's detective. Someone wants her dead. Her boss is Matt's friend too.

The one thing that I did not like is that clue about what was going to go wrong with their plan. Matt hinted a lot of different times about what was going to happen. Just a little complaint.

I would love to live on Longboat Key, Florida too especially after the foot of snow in my yard this week.

I was given this ebook to read and asked to give honest review of it when I was done by Netgalley.

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Sans Washington says

#7 out of 11 in the series centered around Matt Royal, a retired attorney, and his crime enforcement friends on Longboat Key, FL - a well-written traditional mystery/suspense story with lots of twists and turns to keep you reading!

KarenC says

Won this book from the Goodreads Giveaway program. Thanks folks!

An entertaining read with multi-layered plot set in a real town in Florida. While not really a travelogue, you could use this book to pick out some great restaurants if you visit. The author lives here part-time and it sounds like he enjoys the restaurants and the town's atmosphere.

The story opens with the discovery of a dead body posed across the canal in view of Detective J.D. Duncan's

condo. The posing copies that of a serial killer from J.D.'s Miami past. However, when the body is identified she turns out to be the wife of a person who retired from the secret agency for which Matt's friend Jock Algren works. So, serial killer resumes, or secret spy stuff? Coincidences start to appear, but it's a small town, so they are bound to happen and they begin to feel natural after a while. The serial killer theory looks better every day, although Jock continues to investigate the "spy stuff" aspect. Matt tries to help J.D. and the police department with their line of investigation and to protect J.D., a possible target of the serial killer. In the end all of the crimes are explained and logical conclusions are drawn.

This is my first Matt Royal/H.T. Griffin novel, although the seventh in the series. I didn't feel that I missed a whole lot by not having read the first six, so I'd say this one can be read as a stand-alone. Relationships are developed among the characters as the story progresses. The only person who seemed extraneous was Matt's best friend Logan as he dropped into and out of the story. Had I read previous titles I'd have been aware of his relationship more easily.

I enjoyed the pace of the novel, the involved plots, the characters, and the relaxed setting. Most of the novel is in the first person, related from Matt's point of view, so the reader knows what he knows. There are several chapters related in the third person, from the point of view of a person involved in the serial killings, so the reader gets to learn more than Matt and his friends about some things. This didn't detract from the overall plot, only acted to favor the serial killer theory. Griffin is a good mystery writer with an engaging, friendly group of characters. Give this book a try. I'll be looking for his previous works.

Joanne says

I thought Fatal Decree was a fabulous mystery/thriller that was riveting from the first page and the pages that came after that were just as gripping. Although this is the latest in the Matt Royal mysteries and I had not read the previous books, I didn't feel that it in any way diminished the enjoyment of the book. It stands alone just fine.

Matt Royal is a former officer in the U.S. Army Special Forces who became a successful trial lawyer. After losing his wife to divorce, he opted out of his career with enough money to not have to work again and has happily settled in beautiful Longboat Key, Florida, enjoying his friends and the easy-going lifestyle there. When he finds a body floating in the water and it appears to be the work of a serial killer who had not claimed a victim in the past 12 years, the stage is set. The killer next takes the life of the wife of a friend, Gene Alexander, who is a retired intelligence analyst, and a prostitute with similar physical attributes all while making threatening phone calls to Matt's female detective friend, J. D., who had investigated the serial killings 12 years ago. When the killer makes several attempts on J. D.'s and Matt's life, the clues lead not only to the serial killer, but to drug cartels and even matters of national security! Was the death of Gene's wife really the work of the serial killer as it appears, or was it the work of someone targeting Gene? If that's the case, why the attempts on J.D. and Matt?

Aiding in the investigation is Matt's best friend and houseguest, Jock, who is an intelligence officer for an unspecified branch of the U.S. government. He becomes even more deeply involved when Gene, who was a friend as well as a co-worker of his is also found dead of an apparent suicide. Gene's suspicious death seems to make it even more likely that larger forces are at work than just the re-emergence of the serial killer. Jock's authority to bypass police protocol comes from the very highest level of government, and this creates some friction between J.D. and Matt because she doesn't condone some of the methods he uses to get information and justice. As the reader, however, I found them very gratifying! Adding to my enjoyment, of course, was the fact that the book is set in beautiful Longboat Key, Florida! I grew up in Sarasota, so it was wonderful to

read about all the places I'm so familiar with, and I'm already planning on getting the other Matt Royal mysteries!

I received an advanced reader copy of this book for review through Goodreads, and would highly recommend it!

Cathy says

The review is the result of winning a GoodReads giveaway.

This book is the seventh in a series about Matt Royal, a retired lawyer living in Southwest Florida. You don't need to have read the previous books to enjoy this one. It works well as a stand alone.

The cover describes the book as both a mystery and a thriller. It does work as both. You start off with a corpse in the book. The police follow the threads that spin out from the discovery. They are many and varied which keep the reader guessing what is in fact going on. The thriller comes in with the character of Jock Algren, Matt's friend and an agent of an unnamed government agency. His presence gives additional twists to the investigation.

Griffin's writing is crisp and clean. The book flows quite nicely but it never reaches the high octane levels of some others in the thriller genre. But that nicely fits into the Southwest Florida feel of the book. The characters are engaging and real even when their circumstances are improbable.

I do have a problem with one element in the book. Griffin is a former attorney. He should know that attorney-client privilege survives the death of the client. To have Matt Royal say that it doesn't isn't a mistake I expected to be made.

Teresa Michael says

The next episode in the Matt Royal adventure on Longboat Key, Anna Maria Island, Sarasota, and surrounding areas includes a great tour of local restaurants (a trip that I always enjoy). Murder comes to Longboat Key when a local woman is murdered and found in a such a way as to be considered a copycat of 12 year old Miami murder. J.D. Duncan, Longboat's only detective was involved in that murder case. Now on Longboat, why would the murderer want to get J.D.'s attention? Even more so, why are they trying to kill her? The investigation takes it's course with Matt and Jock in the mix. All along the way, Matt's feelings for J.D. continue to grow but exactly where is her head? This is an enjoyable Matt Royal mystery set amidst Paradise on Florida's beautiful Suncoast. Enjoy the visit.

Mystereity Reviews says

This isn't the first Matt Royal book I've read, and I enjoyed all the others I read, but this one was disappointing; it didn't measure up to the previous books in the series. The action read like an cheesy 80s movie; the dialogue was very cliché and stilted. It almost sounded like it was written by an over-eager high school freshman in a creative writing class. Every chapter ended with a "But little did we know..." or "But we never made it to..." to build suspense for the coming chapter, I guess. Unfortunately it didn't come. The

plot itself was so convoluted as to be unbelievable and predictable. I don't know if this concept just petered out or what, but maybe it's time Matt and friends retired for good.

Shara says

You can also read my review on my blog: <http://thebookendreviews.blogspot.com...>

Note: I got this book for free as a Goodreads.com first reads book

Matt Royal is a former lawyer who left the big city to become a beach bum in Longboat Key. Jock Algren, is Matt's best friend, works in a part of the government that a lot of people do not know exist. Jennifer "J.D." Duncan, is Longboat Key's one and only detective. Together, the three of them set out to search for the person responsible for killing two local women...the crime scenes are eerily close to a murder spree that was 12 years ago. They soon find that it may be harder than expecting after sometime tries to kill J.D.....more than once and start to come after Matt. Drug Cartel, gangbangers, and serial killers? What do they all have in common and can they put a connection to all the murders, before its to late?

I won Fatal Decree by H. Terrell Griffin in a Goodreads.com First Reads contest. At first I was hesitant to sign up since it the description revolved around the drug cartel and that isn't usually my first topic of choice. After reading up to the 10th chapter, I was glad I won. Griffin wrote Fatal Decree in the first person (of Matt) and since I'm not use to this style of writing it was different. I did enjoy it though. Reading a novel in this style made me feel like I was apart of the book. I was Matt. I also thought it was funny how towards the middle of the book, each chapter ended with a sentence that would give you a little in site of how the next chapter would begin. I found myself laughing a few times because it was like, "Oh, there at it again! Can the day get any worse?" Sure enough..it can. When I reached the end of the book, it felt like it was just too easy. Catch the bad guy and the day is over.....and all of the sudden....BAM! Plot twist!

I read that there is actually a Matt Royal series and this book was not apart of it (based on Griffin's Goodreads profile). After reading Fatal Decree, I'm a little curious to check out one of the books that is apart of the Matt Royal Series.
