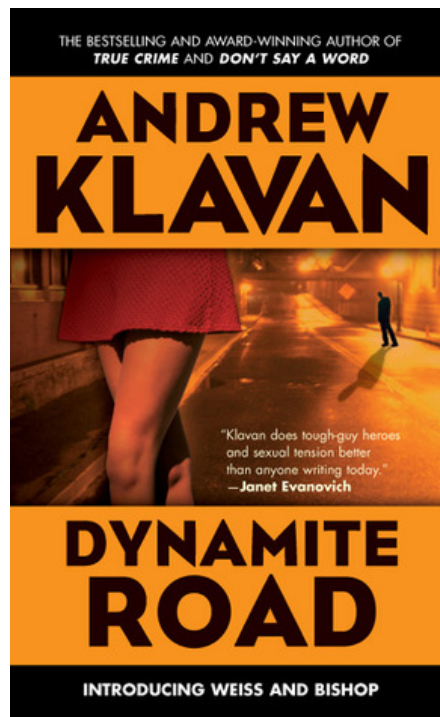




Dynamite Road

Andrew Klavan

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Jim Bishop is a hard man, as cold as the wind off the water and tough to the point of brutality. Scott Weiss is Bishop's boss, a world-weary ex-cop who runs a private detective agency out of a concrete tower in the heart of San Francisco. In this powerfully original series debut by award-winning and bestselling author Andrew Klavan, Weiss sends Bishop to investigate corruption at a Northern California airport-and so sets events in motion that will lead both men on a desperate hunt for a master assassin.

Bishop's assignment is to investigate the airport and report back to Weiss. But Bishop prefers to make up the rules as he goes along. He's willing to beat any man into the ground and draw any woman into his bed in order to get the answers he's after. A pilot himself, he takes to the air to check out the illegal flights of a thug names Chris Wannamaker. Then he coolly seduces Wannamaker's lonely wife in order to find out more.

Back in the city, as Weiss struggles to rein Bishop in, he begins a connected investigation of his own. A death in a mansion in Presidio Heights, a seemingly random murder South of Market, an apparent suicide off the Golden Gate Bridge, all seem to bear the mark of Weiss' old nemesis, an expert gun-for-hire who goes by the name of the Shadowman. It's a trail of blood, and each step of it seems to bring Weiss closer to Julie Wyant, a mysterious beauty who captures the imagination of every man she meets.

Soon Bishop has found his way into the center of a massive criminal conspiracy, a plan set to climax with an act of audacious violence and a murder that would be impossible for any killer but one. And with his operative's wife in danger, Weiss begins a race against time to outsmart the murderer who stalks his nightmares and to rescue the woman who haunts his dream.

If you like your tough guys really tough, your femme fatale and your action explosive-welcome to *Dynamite Road*.

Dynamite Road Details

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Author : Andrew Klavan

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Genre : Fiction, Mystery, Thriller



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From Reader Review Dynamite Road for online ebook

Steven says

Good read

Philip Fracassi says

Great book! Better than Lee Child or Jonathan Kellerman, a really well-written, beautifully-paced, engaging story. I busted through this thing in one evening and didn't feel like I'd taken stupid pills or had to slog through Gumshoe 101 - a smart, nicely put together product.

Kent says

This is the first of the Weiss/Bishop series.

I read this in two days. Good action, only occasionally being James Bond-ish. Great dialogue and descriptions leads to very good character development. Can only think of one innocent who met a violent death; that's low for Klavan.

I think you need to read these in order because Weiss and Bishop are obviously in the series, but I think there will be other recurring characters, and perhaps even an extended story line or theme.

On to "Shotgun Alley"

Mike (the Paladin) says

This is the third book I've read by Andrew Klavan and would probably fit in the middle as to "how much I liked it". This is another book that showcases the shortcomings of our rating system here. It comes very close to being a 4 star book. There are things I like and other things I don't.

Okay, what's, what's? The book opens with a distressing, sad...even disgusting situation. I suppose that murder in a book (or a movie or TV program, etc.) has in some ways become "simply a plot point". I still haven't gotten there, sorry. The story flow is alright here and the plot doesn't flag. We have here a book full of interesting characters and a fairly original story(I say fairly original as, really how many story lines are out there that aren't in some ways variations on other story lines? You may see aspects of this that are familiar other aspects I'm sure you'll find familiar...all in all they're put together well however.)

So all that being said...why do I find the book falling short of 4 stars? Well as I mentioned the opening of the book is in it's way disturbing. It also introduces an interesting (I use that word a lot don't I?) yet fairly disturbing character...(view spoiler)

Okay, but an unpleasant murder is no reason to drop a star from a book's rating, especially if it's a murder mystery. The biggest gripes I have here are that:

A. there are gaps in the story's "good flow" that I mentioned above. It's like now and again it sort of lost my interest. Not to worry however...the book's not so intricate that your mind wandering a bit will cause you to lose the thread.

and

B. This is a book full of miserable, desolate, pathetic people. I mean we get the introduction from Klavan where he tells us he's not one to judge or hold a person's faults against them. I hope I don't either, but in some cases here...ooohhhh boy.

There are maybe 2 people (not counting the author/narrator of course) in the book I suppose I can say I sort of liked. But, even these 2 are miserable. Bishop is (at least as the book opens) a thoroughly dislikeable....dislikeable....dislikeable...(lets see what shall we call him???? what will it be??? A creep? yes that's it a)creep. Then we get to the guy who's supposed to be running "The Agency", Weiss.

Wiess is one of the 2 I think I could find likeable. As Klavan points out in his intro, these people have their faults and those of us who fall short of perfection can and should understand these things. I do, really. Weiss is as is everyone else here a thoroughly miserable schmuck. A "homely" man (I believe Klavan uses the adjective "ugly" but I think that's unnecessarily cruel...really. Is anyone truly ugly???? Yeah, I know of course they are. sigh) anyway he's a homely gentleman (and apparently is a truly "gentle man") who has an industrial strength drinking problem (don't get me wrong, he holds it well...but our narrator doubts that push coming to shove he could give it up). Every night he downs the alcohol till shutting down. He's also a romantic...it seems in the ultimate sense of the word. He elevates women (all women) on to pedestals. But being...homely...he has no real success with them, aside from one (apparently) disastrous marriage in his past. So, he has a regular relationship with a "hooker with a heart of gold" who runs a large number of ladies of the evening she regularly assigns to "comfort" Weiss.

Then there's Kathleen. I feel for Kathleen, though to go to much into why would require spoilers...we'd end up talking about Ben Fry, Julie Wyant, Julie Angel, Chris Wannamaker and all sorts of other characters including (view spoiler). All of whom are, as I said thoroughly miserable people.

I've used this line before, but I use it here again with reason. While I might say this is a "pretty good book" I can't say "I enjoyed the book". There's just too much down right depressing misery in these lives to use the word "enjoy".

So, not bad, in some ways good and "down the road" I may follow it up...especially to complete the story of (view spoiler).

Sheryl Tribble says

Not the best Andrew Klavan I've read, but I generally enjoyed it. I was expecting straight up noir -- which to my mind means even the good guys are going to be morally ambiguous, and most people are living lives of quiet desperation. While most of the characters in this book fit that type, for whatever reason the book as a whole didn't leave me with the "there's no point to even hoping there are good and kind people living positive lives anywhere, because good and decent people are a sham" feeling some noir books do. The author clearly believes there are reasonably good people living mostly happy lives somewhere, even if very few of them appear in this book.

I think part of it is that the author recognizes that many of the characters are actively contributing to the

hellish lives they live, rather than giving the impression that their misery is entirely the result of fate. Some of the *characters* absolutely believe that their problems are entirely due to fate, of course, but that just adds to their believability.

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Maureen DeLuca says

This didn't 'move' me..... I may pick up the second book in this series in the future.... Some really good reviews here - so maybe give it a try.....

Jeremy says

This is a solid character driven detective novel. A lot of the story revolves around Jim Bishop, a man's man, who women can;t help but falling for. He is not a sympathetic character by any means, but his no bullshit attitude really drive his part of the plot. Weiss, a sad man but a good guy is much more interesting and nuanced. Finally, our narrator is a naive but good detective working as an intern of sorts int heir detective agency.

Andrew Klavan writes well and that's really what carries the story. I was very interested in all 3 plot lines (which end up tying in together at eventually.)

Fans of detective driven stories, crime novels involving undercover agents and readers that apprieace a well conceived and meticulously carried out plan (no mater how incredulous) by the bad guy, will enjoy this one.

Eric_W says

Scott Weiss, ex-cop, now owner of a private investigation agency, sends Jim Bishop, one of his operatives, to a small airport in northern California. Ray Grambling, part owner of the FBO, has concerns that one of his pilots, Chris Wannamaker, may be involved in some kind of very shady deal with Bernie Hirschorn, the other FBO partner.

Bishop, operating undercover as Frank Kennedy, enjoys living on the edge He pushes Chris to the limit by seducing his wife and spreading rumors about his drinking in hopes that he (Bishop) will be hired to replace Chris as the pilot for the big job that Hirschorn has planned.

In the meantime, Ben Fry, whom we later realize is also know as the Shadowman, has gone to great lengths (even to implanting a device under his skin that won't show up in strip searches) to get himself imprisoned in

the most secure prison in California, one reserved for incorrigibles and extremely violent offenders.

Weiss, during the course of another investigation, realizes that several people have been killed or have disappeared in seemingly unrelated events, and he finds a startling connection. They are all related to Whip, a man who specialized in creating new identities for criminals, identities so secure that once created, no law enforcement agency has been able to penetrate them. Whip, having knowledge of who became whom, is terrified that he may also have become a target, so he is placed in deep protective custody in a maximum security prison (guess what's coming?).

The book is a little unusual in that we see the story evolve from three points of view: Bishop's, Weiss's, and the first-person narrative of another Weiss employee. He stands in awe of Weiss's understanding of human nature. The narrator, whose name we never learn, inadvertently solves the Case of the Spanish Virgin and discovers some key elements of the case against the Shadowman. If this all sounds a little hokey, I suppose that's because it is. Still, a very entertaining read.

Janet says

Listened to the audiobook and maybe that is why I had a hard time telling the characters apart. They seemed one dimensional and unlikeable to me.

Bradley Valentine says

This writer is pretty frustrating for me, guys. That's the first thing I should say. The second is that however lukewarm I may sound in the rest of my review, just know that I fully intend to read at least one other Weiss and Bish story. Frankly, with titles like Werewolf Cop, it's hard for me to imagine myself not to keep giving this guy chances even if I'm increasingly sure we're not going to find common ground.

Note that while I'm talking more specifically about Klavan as a writer in this review, it absolutely applies to Dynamite Road, which I just finished. DR most significantly had the effect of frustrating along with other work of Klavan's that I've already read.

I really like Klavan's instincts for genre and the seeming lack of pretension writing "balls out" genre fare. But the same problems keep popping up in his writing over and over again to the point where I'm giving up hope that they're not just shortcomings of a writer learning his craft. If they're intentional choices, I just don't know what the guy's thinking.

For instance, Klavan has a habit of dwelling on the obvious and the absurd, even drawing those moments out to the point of wondering if it's meant as test of patience for the reader, haha. The conceit to this novel is that one of the characters is telling us what happens. I'm unclear if that's meant to apply to the whole novel or if it's just the parts the character is present for. Anyway, either Klavan or Klavan as the character affects the language to this absurdly overwrought degree where we're liable to get "x is like a x" sometimes twice in one sentence. This isn't from the book, but I mean something like, "Her kiss was like a soft pillow and when she pulled her face back to look at me her eyes swam like that guy who kept winning medals in the Olympics a while back." Not that, but you know. Just way too much. Maybe Klavan thinks hard nose writing is supposed to have as much lug headed poetry in his prose as possible?

There is a scene where a character is about to be executed. It's obvious at some point the character won't be

executed at all because, hell, there was too much work setting him up to wreck the lead character's world to chalk him up to a blind alley (which I would have respected and loved). But Klavan goes on FOREVER playing on this non existent tension. If the character were interesting and likeable, I might have liked to spend that time with him. He was neither. Nothing interesting was happening. It was a five second bridge scene (I mean a scene bridging two more relevant scenes together), but not in Klavan's hands. He needs an editor.

The moral point of view in this books is a little weird, too. Look, it's obvious Klavan must be a very religious guy. More power to him. I don't care. EXCEPT it keeps sorta coming up in the way he makes his characters engage the world. Weiss likes sex workers, so his physical ugliness is continually brought up. Bishop is an Adonis and a bad boy, so women fall for him against their will and throw away their marriages for him. Again this might just be Klavan writing a "hard nose detective story," but the morality in these books is laughable. The narrator claims to not be a Catholic (or otherwise religious, I guess?). He finds a priest having a homosexual affair, but we're meant to think the narrator does the right thing leaving an innocent man in jail (innocent of the crime, at least) in refusing to let the priest reap the consequences of his actions. The priest gave false testimony as well as breaking his vows...the guy shouldn't be left to be anyone's moral arbiter.

Stuff like that kept popping up in Werewolf Cop, too.

Kathleen says

I did not enjoy it. It started with so much filth that I didn't care what happened. I got 1/3 of the way in and put it down for good. Which is unfortunate, because I loved the 5 books I've read that he wrote for youth.

LJ says

DYNAMITE ROAD (Private Investigators) – VG

Andrew Klavan – 1st in series

Forge, 2003 – Hardcover

The San Francisco detective agency of Weiss Associates sends operative, pilot and lady's man Jim Bishop to investigate for what the planes of a small Northern California airport are being used. Meanwhile the agency's owner, Scott Weiss, is investigating several deaths that seem to tie to a beautiful, but missing, woman.

*** It's hard to say what made me like this as much as I did. While the suspense is good, it's the crisp writing and the very intriguing characters that really drew me in and kept me going. I'd not read Klavan before, but I can guarantee I'll be reading him again.

Don McCormick says

Not sure I wanted to complete this novel after the first chapter, I'm glad I stayed with it. This was a nice thriller. Descriptions of things and situations were a bit dated(words used in old novels) but was easy to follow. I finished this in 3 days so obviously I enjoyed it.

Loren says

From ISawLightningFall.com

THREE-AND-A-HALF STARS

Some combinations are simply meant to be. Consider milk chocolate and peanut butter, how that creamy sweetness meets with savory saltiness in just such a way that you want to gobble copious amounts until a cardiac infarction looms. Others obviously aren't. My wife tells a story of how, during her starving student days, a friend spiked her pasta marinara sauce with curry powder when her back was turned. A few fusions, though, sit uneasily in no man's land, neither transcendently harmonious nor gratingly wrong. Such is the case with Andrew Klavan's blending of hardboiled, thriller and romanticism in *Dynamite Road*.

Jim Bishop and Scott Weiss couldn't be more different. Muscled, mean and amoral, Bishop isn't above breaking skulls or casually bedding other men's wives to get what he wants. Weiss is a former cop, a soft, shaggy hulk of a man with such an exalted view of the female sex that he can never bring himself to build even the beginnings of a relationship, much less move it towards marriage. So it's amazing that they could stand to be in the same room together, much less form a successful working relationship. But somehow they have, and the private-eye firm of Weiss Investigations does good business. This latest job, though, may prove too dangerous for even the both of them. What begins as an inquiry into small-town racketeering soon spirals into a search for a transcendently beautiful prostitute named Julie Wyant and the murderer known only as Shadowman who hunts her. Either would prove challenging to find under normal circumstances, but these are anything but. Wyant, you see, is supposed to be dead, and Shadowman, well, no one is really sure if he even exists.

No doubt about it, Klavan knows the crime novel cold. He owns the tropes and never fails deal them out in an entertaining fashion. "Slow burn" describes Wise and Bishop's adventures to a T, everything smoldering along at an increasing temperature until some crucial bit of kindling catches and it all explodes into flame. It makes sense, then, in telling such a story to join tough-guy mystery with breakneck thriller. What seems a little odd is the unabashed romanticism infusing the proceedings. There are kisses stolen at gunpoint and lots of mooning over the come-hither glances from an angelic whore. We even learn that Shadowman himself is motivated by ... But, wait, let's not ruin it. Suffice it to say that while *Dynamite Road* is ultimately a tasty read, some parts possess a strange savor.
