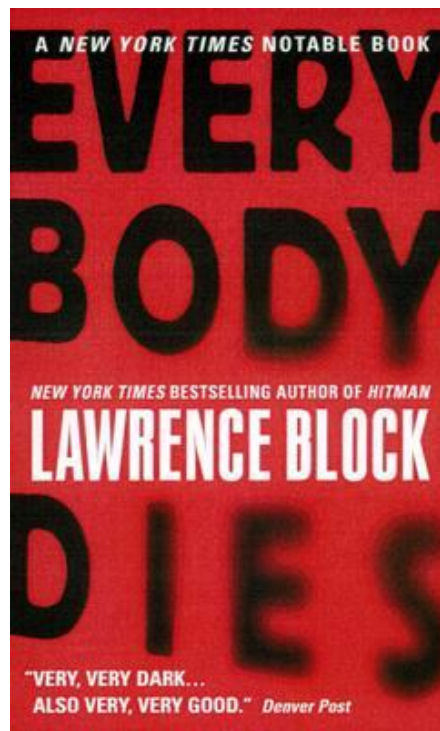




Everybody Dies

Lawrence Sanders

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Everybody Dies

Lawrence Block

Everybody Dies Lawrence Block

Matt Scudder is finally leading a comfortable life. The crime rate's down and the stock market's up. Gentrification's prettying-up the old neighborhood. The New York streets don't look so mean anymore.

Then all hell breaks loose.

Scudder quickly discovers the spruced-up sidewalks are as mean as ever, dark and gritty and stained with blood. He's living in a world where the past is a minefield, the present is a war zone, and the future's an open question. It's a world where nothing is certain and nobody's safe, a random universe where no one's survival can be taken for granted. Not even his own.

A world where everybody dies.

Everybody Dies Details

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From Reader Review Everybody Dies for online ebook

Ian says

It's a little while since I read a book in the Scudder series. The previous book had been a comparatively lacklustre entry, but I'm glad to report Lawrence Block is back on form with this novel.

Those who have been reading the series will know that throughout Scudder has been portrayed as a morally ambivalent character, and this is very much the theme here. His friendship with gangster Mick Ballou causes him to be dragged into an underworld war when Mick and his associates find themselves targeted by unknown assailants. The body count is probably higher in this novel than in any other in the series. On the other hand, the storyline avoids some of the very dark themes that featured in a few of the earlier ones.

To go off on a bit of a gripe, I made the mistake of looking at the blurb at the top of the GR page before I started. For some reason, it includes information that gives away a major part of the plot. I was really quite irritated by that, and it certainly reduced the impact of the event within the novel.

That of course, is not the author's fault. I found this to be well-paced, and it held my interest from beginning to end.

James Thane says

I've long run out of superlatives to use when describing Lawrence Block's Matthew Scudder novels which remain, easily, my favorite crime fiction series.

This is due entirely to the richly-drawn character that Block has created in Scudder who has continued to grow and evolve through seventeen novels and a number of short stories, published over a period of thirty-five years. It's hard to imagine a fan of crime fiction who has not yet encountered these books, but for those who might not know, Scudder is a former New York cop and recovering alcoholic who has spent most of his career as an unlicensed P.I. doing favors for "friends" who then pay him what they think the job is worth.

For most of this time, Matt lived alone in a tiny hotel room in the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood of New York, and the city has become a major character in the books. Now well into middle age, Matt has recently married Elaine Mardell, his longtime girlfriend, and moved into an apartment across the street from his old hotel room. He's also finally gotten a license as a private investigator, which enables him to work for attorneys and others from whom he can command a better rate of pay. The neighborhood is gentrifying which is both good and bad as Matt (along with the reader) mourns the passing of landmark institutions that had long populated his neighborhood.

In short, life is good, but then Matt's long-time best friend, the gangster and saloon owner Mick Ballou, comes under attack from a mysterious unidentified enemy. He appeals to Matt for help and almost immediately, Matt becomes a target as well.

As always, the real pleasure in this book is watching the interaction among the characters and listening in as Matt ruminates about the developments in the case and the changing world around him. This is one of the more violent books in the series, and the blood starts flowing early on. From almost the first page the bodies are dropping left and right, and the only question that matters is who will survive in a dangerous world where

everybody dies.

(view spoiler)

Mike French says

Lawrence Block is one of my favorite authors and The Matthew Scudder series have been enjoyable and entertaining . Everybody Dies is no exception to my enjoyable experience. Looking forward to reading more of this series!

Kathy says

4.5/5 stars for me

This book profoundly portrays a richly layered friendship between the two unlikely pals, a former cop (Matt Scudder) and a criminal (Mick Ballou) through unimaginable trials. It is so creatively and outrageously over-stuffed with extreme examples of male bonding that cannot be understood by reason that it leaves this reader in exhausted awe.

Tidbits include Matt Scudder recalling Mick's gift of ham for Christmas for Elaine, a Jewish vegetarian, soon after Matt's discovery that Mick had disposed of a troublesome young man (guilty of murdering young woman) by feeding him to his hogs. If that does not tickle your funny bone this book would not be one for you.

Mick has an enemy and asks Matt to investigate after a couple of his men are killed at the location where he stores whiskey for his bar.

It gets dangerous and more people are killed and property destroyed - some impacting Matt more personally than others as his own life is threatened as well. As they talk, Mick says, "There's nothing to walk away from. I don't know who he is or what he wants, the man who's set all this in motion, but it can't be anything I have. He wants to destroy me."

When the action intensifies Matt and Mick are on a country road where they admire some deer crossing the road. "It's enough of a strain killing people...I've no time to waste on deer."

As the two men walk towards a showdown considering Mick's premonition that he will not live through the night he recites all of his crimes to Matt by way of confession AA style. Read the book as this section is worth the price alone. Plenty of action follows.

Piker7977 says

When members of Mick Ballou's crew start turning up dead, the New York gangster turns to one of the city's best private investigators who also happens to be his good friend: Matthew Scudder. Working for Mick will test Matt's reputation along with some of his relationships as the murders turn into an all-out gang war. Scudder's assistance with Mick's problems will uncover the past that was thought to have been buried long ago. What Matt doesn't know for sure about his pal will be unearthed when he takes up arms with the man in the white apron.

Great book. Just great. *Everybody Dies* has it all for the Scudder fan and crime fiction aficionado alike. I

don't know if I've mentioned this in previous reviews, but Mick Ballou is my favorite fictitious character in the mystery world. Larger than life, shrouded in mystery and myth, he brings some deeper impressions to the series when our main man stops by Grogan's for a cup of coffee or when they attend Butcher's Mass in the wee hours of the morning. Well, we get to peak behind the curtain a little bit and what is there is sure to please the faithful reader of this series. Mick has a lot to offer in terms of substance and some of the stories that surround him face a reckoning in this book.

If you've made it this far you're probably going in order. That's the way to do it!

brian says

there's a joke in the 'black' chapter of *truly tasteless jokes*:

q. what's the harlem branch of toys-r-us called?

a. we be toys.

that book was written in, like, 1983. and *everybody dies*, written in 1998, has a character who actually speaks like that. now, this ain't about political correctness; i love poking fun at shifty black folks, cheap jews, dumb polacks (one in particular), and so on and on and on... it's just that in '98 nobody really talked like that. and TJ - the black character in the book - is a streetsmart black kid who'd rather spend his weekends hanging around matt and elaine scudder (a middle-aged white couple) than be out on the streets smoking crack and raping whitey... (<--- y'see?) that said, *everybody dies* is a good entry in the scudder series, marred by some irritating booooshit.

Brandon says

"The most successful war seldom pays for its losses." –Thomas Jefferson

Lawrence Block's fourteenth entry in his long running Matt Scudder series is by far the most tragic. The loss of life within these pages is astounding and there came a time near the end where I thought very few would make it out alive. Hell, if I didn't know there were more books to follow, I'd have had my doubts about Matt too.

Matt's close friend – and ruthless Irish gangster – Mick Ballou is at war. Someone is picking off members of Mick's organization and when Scudder is tasked to produce the identity of this murderous maniac, those close to Matt are threatened unless he backs off. Given how little he's accomplished during his investigation, it feels like a blessing in disguise – he can get off without the guilt associated with disappointing Ballou. Unfortunately for Matt, Mick's nemesis strikes before Scudder can officially get his hands off the case.

What follows is some of the most intense, nerve-wracking storytelling the series has ever produced and I would go so far as to say that *Everybody Dies* is my favorite of the series up to this point. Everything that makes a great Scudder story lives within this book; late night philosophical rap sessions with Ballou, comedic exchanges with T.J., butting heads with the police and memorable moments with Elaine – but you take all of those elements, add an unseen level of unpredictability and you have a novel that will keep you up at night.

Everybody Dies is so violent, so deadly, that I often wondered if Block had taken tips from George R.R.

Martin in how to cause his audience grief. However, when you pick up a book titled Everybody Dies, you should know what you're in for.

Also posted @ Every Read Thing.

Maddy says

PROTAGONIST: Matt Scudder, PI

SETTING: New York City

SERIES: #14

RATING: 4.5

WHY: Matt's old friend, Irish bar owner Mick Ballou, comes to him when 2 of his runners are killed. Ballou can't figure out who is behind the hits. It gets personal when someone tries to kill Scudder to stop the investigation. They form an alliance that pits them against the cops. Block excels at his thoughtful handling of the history of the 2 men and the things that they have done. One of the best in the series.

Bill Kerwin says

This was a pleasant surprise. Not long ago I completed *Even the Wicked*, Matt Scudder's 13th adventure, and, although it wasn't exactly bad, it was bad enough that I had begun to fear Scudder was past his best days. But then I read his 14th adventure *Everybody Dies*, and decided it was one of his best, right up there with the classics *Eight Million Ways to Die* and *When the Sacred Ginmill Closes*.

To be fair, though, I might be rating it too highly, for at the center of this tale is the fascinating, inimitable Mick Ballou, the half French/half Irish Hell's Kitchen saloon owner and gangster who combines the brutal bloodiness of the Westies with a renegade Catholic philosophy of life, making him murderous and mystical at the same time. Ballou is usually a minor figure in Scudder's tales, but he compels attention every time he appears. And this time, Scudder and Ballou have the tale almost all to themselves.

Ballou visits his storage facility stacked with cases of hijacked liquor, and finds the two men left to guard it have been murdered and all the liquor is gone. The thing that worries Mick most is that this seems like a declaration of war, and but has no clue about who his enemy might be. He hires his friend Scudder to look into the matter, which turns out to one of his most perilous cases, endangering the lives of two of the people he cares about.

Everybody Dies is both a mystery and the chronicle of a gang war, and satisfies the reader on both counts. It is an excellent book, and I recommend it to all fans of the genre.

Lynn says

This was so damned good. How does he make me love book after book? Excellent plot and nail-biting action.

carol. says

Who is ready to weigh in on "How many books in a series is too much?"

(<http://www.goodreads.com/topic/show/6...>)

Though Lawrence Sanders is on his 14th book about investigator Matthew Scudder, he has yet to reach the "too much" point. Despite being book 14, Everybody Dies still manages to surprise.

Mick Ballou has been backed into a corner. He suspects he's the target of a personal attack, but needless to say, he can't seek protection from the police. He requests Matt's help, and drives him out to Jersey to examine the death scene of two of Mick's employees. There's also a missing truckload of whiskey, worth ten grand or so, so it's possible that may be a motive. Scudder aids in clean-up but is reluctant to take the case further, and only agrees to verify it isn't a crime of opportunity. Unfortunately, even the quietest of inquiries from him and T.J. stirs up a host of trouble. Matt is walking up Fifty-third street, headed to report to Mick, when he gets jumped. Instinct kicks in and he fights back, getting away but potentially angering his unknown opponent.

Perhaps the least enjoyable section was Matt ruminating over whether or not he should become involved in Ballou's battles. After years of friendship with Mick and blatant vigilante justice, it's hardly an ethical issue at this point. Unfortunately, no matter what Matt decides, he's going to be dragged into the fray. From there, it quickly takes a number of unexpected turns. Although one small part of the mystery was predictable, the ending was shocking. My reaction on finishing was a stunned, "oh wow." I may have even wandered around the house for awhile, repeating, "oh wow."

Though it feels more violent than other Scudder books, it's actually less bloodthirsty. The violence is tempered with emotional loss, and will herald a number of significant changes in Matt's life. The attention to Matt's emotional life is one of the things that sets the Scudder series apart--the idea that there are ramifications, both political and emotional.

A compelling series that shows no signs of burning out.

Cross posted at: <http://clsiewert.wordpress.com/2013/0...>

Kemper says

I want a friend like Matt Scudder. Why? Because Matt is the kind of guy who will drop everything to come over and help you dispose of a couple of bodies in the middle of the night, and then you wouldn't even have to worry that he'd take your last beer out of the fridge. (You know, because of the whole alcoholism thing.) I have a hard time getting a buddy to come over and help me move a couch, let alone take a midnight run to give a couple of corpses the shallow grave treatment.

Matt's friend, the gangster Mick Ballou, calls him for help and then takes him to a storage unit with a couple of corpses in it. (Two corpses in a storage unit? That's worth at least a \$50 bid if *Storage Wars* has taught me anything.) The dead men were Mick's employees sent to pick up some hijacked liquor, but they've been shot and the booze is gone. After Matt helps him bury the bodies, Mick confides that someone has been targeting his organization lately and asks Matt to find whoever is behind it. Matt checks a few things out, but suddenly

Mick's enemy is attacking Matt, too, and the losses are devastating.

This is one of the more violent and action filled Scudder novels, and as a long time fan, the idea of Mick and Matt going to war together made me giddy. What I particularly like about this one is the way it's used to make Matt once again ponder his friendship with Mick. Neither man really understands why a hard drinking gangster and murderer would be BFFs with a sober alcoholic ex-cop with a deep sense of right and wrong, but the bond is well portrayed.

I also like how Block didn't use shortcuts to try and turn Matt into a bloodthirsty action hero. Matt is hesitant to help Mick at first because he doesn't want to hand anyone over to be murdered while acknowledging his own hypocrisy because it's not like Matt hasn't taken matters into his own hands a few times. When things start getting bad, Matt wants out, and Mick agrees that would be best. Even after a crime that would have most fictional detectives swearing revenge, Matt still would gladly walk away, but realizes that now that he's been identified as an ally of Mick's his only way to safety is to help Mick find and kill whoever's responsible. Once he's angry, Matt is more than willing to pitch in on that little chore.

See, that's why Matt's a good friend. And a very bad enemy.

Mike says

Lawrence Block doing what he does best! This is an excellent example of why the author is a Mystery Writers of America Grand Master and multiple winner of both the Edgar Allen Poe and Shamus awards.

Several things I should mention right up front: I am a huge Lawrence Block fan -- particularly his Matthew Scudder series -- I think Mick Ballou is one of THE BEST secondary characters ever created (seriously, the guy is well worth a series in his own right) and I've always been more fond of the early Matthew Scudder who hadn't quite found the road to sobriety and was a little more edgy.

This is the 14th book to feature detective Matthew Scudder and it finds him at something of a crossroads in his life. Long past are the days of bar hopping and blackout drinking. He no longer lives in a residential hotel. He's married to a woman he loves and, wonder of wonders, he's actually gotten around to becoming an officially licensed private investigator! After all these years he's starting to become downright respectable.

Except respectable people don't have best friends like legendary criminal Mick "The Butcher Boy" Ballou... so when Ballou asks his friend to investigate the possibility that some unknown nefarious entity is attempting to permanently put him out of business Matt is reluctant to take the case. He's not sure how far he can go before he is no longer able to tell himself that, even though one of his nearest and dearest friends in the world is a notorious lifelong criminal, he's basically on the side of the law.

But friends, real true friends, are few and far between, and these particular men share an uncommon bond that neither can quite describe, so Scudder agrees to look into it with the understanding that if it begins to lead in a direction he doesn't like he can walk away with no hard feelings.

After a little bit of nosing around it becomes obvious that all roads lead in a direction that Scudder would just as soon not follow. Not even for Mick. So he tells Mick he's out of it, no hard feelings. Unfortunately, someone else has other ideas, so, when a contract killer sent to "eliminate" the respectable licensed private investigator who has been making inquiries on behalf of Mick Ballou mistakenly kills another friend of Matt Scudder's all bets are off! He's in it up to his ears and he couldn't get out of it even if he wanted to... and Matt's not so sure he wants out.

This book is faster paced than a lot of the later Scudder books, even though Scudder is struggling with ideas of who he is and what he stands for he is less retrospective than usual because of the urgency of the case.

There are some instances of graphic violence and the occasional use of offensive language.

One of the things I have often admired about the Scudder novels is that Matt Scudder is not trapped in time. He is constantly evolving, learning, aging, readjusting to his life and the changes that have come with it. As a result these books have always been multi-layered, there's what's happening in front of you and the depths that run underneath.

In this story you can see how Matt Scudder has to finally come to terms with just how far he can cross the line he has been walking for years -- the line between good and bad, right and wrong -- in the process he has to create a new line between who he used to be, who he is today and who he will become.

This is very good stuff with several twists and turns. Some mystery, one huge surprise and a very satisfying conclusion. Long time readers of the Scudder novels will be particularly surprised and drawn in to what is revealed as the story comes to a conclusion.

Minor quibbles: I've never really been a fan of Matt's protege TJ, mainly because I find his rhyming phrases to be annoying and I think it comes across as a lame attempt at trying to give the appearance of being streetwise rather than actual experience in the street (maybe that's the point, to show that TJ isn't as street as he pretends but it's still lame and annoying).

Since the appearance of Elaine (who I do like) there are more and more instances where instead of the narrative informing what Scudder is thinking he has conversations with Elaine that often come out as stilted and unnatural. Exposition for the sake of exposition that brings everything to a crawl. Those instances are few in this book but they're still there.

You can't go wrong with this book. As always I suggest starting as early in the series as you can and going through them in order, it still works well as a stand alone novel but it works SO much better if you know more of the history between the characters.

Dan Schwent says

Someone has declared war on Mick Ballou and his criminal enterprises and Matthew Scudder is caught in the middle, first having a friend gunned down in front of him and then nearly being killed at Mick's bar. Can Matt figure out who is behind the attacks before anyone else close to him is killed?

Wow. After I finished *Even the Wicked*, I thought Lawrence Block might have been phoning in the rest of them. How wrong I was!

The thing that keeps me coming back to the Matthew Scudder books is the fluid nature of Matthew Scudder and his world. The supporting cast are as big of an attraction to me as Scudder himself. Hard Way Ray, Joe Durkin, Danny Boy Bell, Lisa Holtzman, then all make appearances in this one. A couple of them will never make appearances again. That's what made *Everybody Dies* so powerful. A few long-running cast members end up dead at the hands of a criminal gunning for Mick Ballou. Not even TJ gets out unscathed.

I had an idea who the mole was in Mick's crew about halfway through but I didn't figure out who the big baddie was until about a paragraph before Matt. This one had a finale that sticks out as one of my all time favorites in crime fiction, a glorious shit storm of violence. Like Matt said to Elaine near the end "Everybody else is dead."

I'd been waiting to read a Matthew Scudder story centering in Mick Ballou for a long time and this one did not disappoint. It's easily in the Scudder top three.

Mark says

The title of this book seems to ring true when you close the book having finished it. In this 14th tale Matt's butcher friend Mick Ballou plays a big role in this story and the story starts with a burial at his farm.

Matt is married and enjoying his life when a lot of violence enters his life due to his friendship with a "gangster" who did ask him to look into the dead of some of his employees and who might be behind this. It all turns into a bloody finale in which everybody dies.

Another well written thriller/detective tale about violence and darkness as the past catches up with Scudders friend.

If you like a smart modern detective story with great characters you cannot go wrong with the Scudder series.
