

Dooley's Back: A Novel of Crime (Otto Penzler Books) by Sam Reaves



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Author: Sam Reaves

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Dooley is not back even a day, and already he's helped a gangland punk with a switchblade in his hand and rape on his mind to a deadly fall. And throughout this gritty, hard-boiled crime novel by a master of the new noir, fists work fast, the talk comes tough, and pages turn as swiftly as the rip of a hitman's bullet. Frank Dooley used to be a Chicago cop, but eight years ago a case of homicide prompted him to take the law into his own hands—the victim was his wife—and then head south, to Mexico. Dooley's return is met by everyone with surprise, and by a few with pleasure. Like his old partner Roy Ferguson. Roy has had some weighty problems of his own. His seven-year-old son has drowned, he's gone through a nasty divorce, and a serious gambling habit has buried him deep in debt. Dangerously deep; for an over-ambitious loan shark with the mob, John Spanos, is taking the juice on Roy's \$15,000 score in favors. Dooley convinces Roy he should own up to what he's done, set up a sting on Spanos, and maybe get back his integrity as a cop. It's a good plan, but it goes very bad, and Dooley soon finds himself caught perilously between the police force he deserted on one side and the Outfit Roy betrayed on the other. This is a tough-edged urban novel of crime and suspense. "The hard-boiled fraternity has a new member, and he's a good one."—Booklist "Gritty, fast-paced, satisfying."—Publishers Weekly



Reviews of the **Dooley's Back: A Novel of Crime (Otto Penzler Books)** by Sam Reaves

Budar

I was excited to read this follow-on to Homicide-69. Unfortunately, this novel didn't pack the punch of H69. It was slow going. The plot held together all right, the last few concluding pages were rewarding in their own way...but the book dragged for me. Perhaps it was because H69 was so good. Perhaps it's just not that good of a detective novel.

Mamuro

Absolutely superb. Make sure you have a full day to do nothing but read this book. Mr. Reaves takes the time to research every story before he puts pen to paper. As a result his characters are marrow and corpuscles - they walk amongst us, not just in this intricately woven tale. The story is a true pleasure to read, yet, at the same time, a reminder of just how fragile the world we live in actually is. A gentleman and a gifted writer, Mr. Reaves has once again proven his ability to captivate the reader.

Qumenalu

Hard and spare all the way through, this is a terrific novel, with sharp characters and commanding writing. Pelecanos fans, hard-boiled fans, take note; this is a book for you.

Nothing personal

I could say that Sam Reaves is one of the best crime writers in the business, which he is, but I'd also like to add that he's one of the best writers period. In *Dooley's Back* he has written a thriller that has engaging characters, a well-thought-out plot, and plenty of thrills and action. One of the best things about Reaves's work is the moral ambiguity and complexity of his characters. *Dooley's Back* no exception. The protagonist, Frank Dooley, is an ex-cop who's come back to Chi-town after right years of self-imposed exile in Mexico. Although Dooley left Chicago under a cloud of suspicion (the man who raped and killed Dooley's wife was found murdered after being freed on a technicality), Dooley still has a penchant for getting involved in other people's troubles. He tries to convince his ex-partner to do the right thing wrestles with the ghosts of his past sins. I found this novel hard to put down and enjoyed it immensely. I actually bought it a while back and my only regret is I didn't read it sooner. Check out Reaves if you're hungry for a really good read in the tradition of Elmore Leonard.

Anayaron

This book opens with a bang--and it just gets better. The protagonist is a cop who left the Chicago PD two days after turning in his badge. A bottom dweller who killed his wife got cut loose when the evidence that nailed him is ruled inadmissible. When he's killed, everyone's pretty sure it's Dooley's work, and while they can't exactly blame him, he has to disappear. Eight years later, he's back and can't seem to avoid trouble. His former CPD partner is deep in his own nightmare, one that started after a similar personal tragedy--and the story that unfolds is told in a deceptively simple style that lucidly lays out personal relationships with enormous depth and subtlety and power. It reminds me a

little of early Elmore Leonard crime novels; Reaves has a similar knack for dialog that carries a lot of punch and authenticity, and the wise guys are not larger than life, but considerably smaller, another touch of authenticity. An added bonus is a very real Chicago--I can't think when I've read a book that does a better job of conveying the flavor of the city north of the ship canal without any travelogue stuff. It's just there. Add some terrific moral issues and a love interest that is shaded and subtle and sad and satisfying and you have an excellent piece of crime fiction. This one's going on my top ten for the year. I'm tempted to read it again--in which case it might be on the list twice!

Iraraeal

This hard-nosed thriller is Reaves' best work to date. The Dooley of the title is an ex-Chicago cop and he's 'back' from Mexico where he went to escape prosecution for killing the man who murdered his wife. Within hours of his return, he commits murder again and the second killing is as justifiable as the first. Dooley is a rich, flawed character and the plot moves with the speed of a falling body as he sets out first to help his former partner, and then to avenge his death. Reaves knows Chicago and its neighborhoods but, more importantly, he knows the human heart. Hopefully Dooley will be back...again.

Stonewing

Life has kicked our hero, but he can kick back. Well plotted tale of revenge and redemption, will keep you hooked. A good read.

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