



This Wicked World

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Elmore Leonard meets Denis Johnson in this explosive first novel set on the seedy side of Southern California.

Ex-marine Jimmy Boone-former bodyguard to Los Angeles's rich and famous-is fresh out of Corcoran, on parole, and trying to keep his nose clean until he figures out his next move. He has a job tending bar on Hollywood Boulevard, serving drinks to tourists, and is determined to put the past behind him.

But trying to do the right thing has always been Boone's downfall. When he backs up a buddy on a hero-for-hire gig-looking into the mysterious death of a kid on a downtown bus-he once again finds himself in a world of trouble.

As Boone learns more about the boy, an innocent who got involved with the wrong people, his investigation becomes a mission. Along the dangerous margins of Los Angeles, he encounters down-on-their-luck drug dealers, a vengeful stripper, a dog-fighting ring, a beautiful ex-cop, a vicious crime boss and his crew, and a fortune in counterfeit bills. Before long, Boone realizes that his quest to get at the truth about a ruthless murder may also turn out to be his last chance at redemption.

"This Wicked World "is a knock-out blend of superb writing and breakneck storytelling that grabs you by the collar and makes it impossible to stop reading.

This Wicked World Details

Date : Published June 1st 2009 by Little Brown and Company (first published 2009)

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Author : Richard Lange

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From Reader Review This Wicked World for online ebook

Jim says

I was mildly surprised that I liked this book as much as I did. I had picked it up for no particular reason. It was a pretty solid thriller. Protagonist Jimmy Boone, former con, former Marine, and current bartender was a very likable character. Boone saves a dog from a dying kid in which Dog was badly mistreated. Boone sets out to find out what happened to Dog's former owner Oscar for himself and also Oscar's Grandfather. Boone finds himself in an almost relationship with one of his neighbors, named Amy. Amy it seems is a former cop no less. Boone then has to battle the Bill Taggert gang. Taggert's gang runs dog fights and happens to be where dead Oscar's dog came from. Taggert and girlfriend Olivia are a mismatched couple to say the least. Olivia and her younger brother kidnap Amy and force Boone to pull a rip off for them to get Amy back. The story line although started out very slowly really kicked it into high gear after page 100. The book's ending was very intense and well thought out. Author Richard Lange's characters were all very lively and developed quite well. Lange's dialog also is really spot on. All in all a pretty good read. I gave it 4 out of 5 stars. It's slow start dropped it one star. I'd highly recommend this book to readers who like a strong thriller. Lange does have some great talent to spin a very good read. This book reads very quickly so give it a try. "This Wicked World" turned out to be a wicked read !

Marina says

I told Miguel that I wanted to read more mysteries, to break up the non-fiction I usually read and to make my commute go by faster. I am about 2/3 of the way through this one now and I can't say it's great, or even good, but since it's a mystery I want to see what happens so I'll keep reading. I wouldn't recommend it though.

Patrick says

This book is well written and captured the LA scene with historical dialogues about the LA riots and where it happened. It is a hardboiler novel with a decent ex-con who had been a marine and is a very likable and even a noble character. I liked how the author showed his habits of working out, running five miles a day and punching bag to show how fit the character is. The everyday scenes of his mundane work in the bar are well placed and the events that led to gunfights out of control are random and at the same time, linked and interchangeable.

It does not really stand out as a spectacular novel even though I felt it was realistically drawn with nice details. It is like a competent fan of Robert B. Parker or as I suspect the author liking, Raymond Chandler did a book and updated it to fit the times of today. I honestly don't know if that is a compliment or if I am damning Mr. Lange's debut novel with faint praises. I think the problem is that most of the good novels like Richard Yates' *Revolution Road*, Williams Golding's *Lord of the Flies* or James Joyce's *The Araby* tinge with sense of injustice and it seems that the main character broke even and even made out ahead despite the danger he put himself and his friends into.

However, the author is starting out and the crime/detective novel is well done for a first novel. I would look forward to his future works although I would not be hasty to buy it the way I buy Stephen King's novels. (I

think I put a couple of his kids through college!:) although I would look for his name in the library shelves for the time being.

Susan says

Wow. I read most of this in one sitting. While Jimmy Boone is probably not everyone's idea of hero - he does all the wrong things for the right reasons - I thought he was great. His moral compass puts him in very unethical situations, but he definitely follows his instincts. I'm hoping this is not the last we see of him.

Chris says

A story of redemption with many pauses and detours. Fast paced, riveting read. Author skillfully takes disparate and ordinary individuals and brings them together in a violent but satisfying finale. Boone, the protagonist, is a noble and selfless character who even when he does the right thing seems to suffer adverse consequences- but still he soldiers on and you, the reader, just want good things to happen for him.

Tony says

Lange, Richard. THIS WICKED WORLD. (2009). ****. This is the author's first novel, after a previously published book of short stories, "Dead Boys." His first book was highly acclaimed and won the Rosenthal Family Foundation Award from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Prepublication buzz on this book has also been heavy, with lots of rave reviews. The novel tells the story of Jimmy Boone, a former bodyguard now on parole from a four year stint in prison for beating up on a man he shouldn't have. Now he works in the Tic Tock bar on Hollywood Boulevard in LA, serving drinks to tourists and bums. When the bouncer at the club asks him to come along on a private investigation he's on, Jimmy goes along. It's a quick way to make a few bucks. The investigation involves determining the recent past history of a man found dead on an MTC bus. The man died of infections from a variety of dog bites that he hadn't bothered to get treated. Getting further into the reasons for how and why the man died leads Jimmy and his buddy into a group of people living out in the desert near Twenty-nine Palms that didn't come from the higher classes of society. He ultimately meets up with a cast of characters that include a vengeful stripper, a bunch of down-on-their-luck drug dealers, an organization of dogfighting sleazes, and a vicious crime boss and his mindless crew. The writing is fast paced and exciting. I think we have come across a new talent that should be watched. I certainly will. Recommended.

E.R. Yatscoff says

Boone, out on parole gets swept up in a series of events which could land him in a world of trouble. And of all the things that could get one in deep trouble, a dog might be pretty far down the list. A good read, and I've read this author's other book, ANGEL BABY, which I thought was a bit better. This was a library book. Hope Richard Lange will read my crime novels.

Philip Alexander says

This was a great read and a finely constructed novel. Lange separates himself from the pack of literary crime fiction writers with exceptionally forthright and lyrical prose, and by making every character intriguing and meaningful. There isn't a throw-away character or contrivance on any of This Wicked World's 400+ pages. The story is tight, believable and suspenseful. Jimmy Boone is an amazingly perplexing character and the dialogue was witty and instilled with just enough wisecracks to make me recall the work of Pete Dexter, or Ross MacDonald. I have ordered Richard Lange's back list, along with his new short story collection, Sweet Nothing, and can't wait to dig in.

Adam says

Richard Lange's debut novel is character driven literary crime novel influenced by Elmore Leonard and George Pelecanos. Like those two masters' originality and complexity of plot isn't the name of the game, it's characters. Stretching out to handle a novel Lange loses some of the focus of his short stories but retains his grasp on L.A. and its surreal surroundings and his subtle sense of humor. Some descriptions and in some character's background his imagination really unfurls. The pit bull breeder's war story, Mando's ghost story, Robo's camping preparations, and apocalyptic finale are especially memorable. So if you want a beautifully written novel go for this, which it's true doesn't bring anything new to the game but will still burn into your imagination. Plus it starts with Minuteman quote (the awesome San Pedro punk band not those desert patrolling losers) which is a cheap way to my heart.

Patrick O'Neil says

It's hard to write a mystery novel these days. The idea of a private detective in 2009 looking for a client's lost loved one being so obscure and unbelievable that I'd immediately dismiss it as the writer being out of touch with reality. It's just not 1940 and tough guys like Philip Marlowe aren't running around drinking hard and chasing dames and getting in the way of flat foot cops. At best private security firms do Internet background checks, surveillance, corporate espionage, and occasionally some shady shit – but usually in another country where they're affiliated with spy agencies and the "war" effort. So it's kind of cool when a writer puts a new spin on the genre, or at least a spin that makes sense for the times we live in. Richard Lange's *This Wicked World* is that detective-ish/mystery novel – his protagonist is a good guy, once military even, who's made a mistake and paid for it and now he's going to put things right – okay, it sounds hokey when I write it. But Lange pulled it off.

Michael says

This is another book that was written by someone I was unfamiliar with but picked up at the library on the basis of a good review. I found Richard Lange's writing very similar to T. Jefferson Parker's who I think is very good. Both write gritty, realistic crime stories with interesting characters. This Wicked World, Like most of Parker's books takes place in southern California and is dead accurate in capturing the atmosphere

and locations of the cities and desert areas there.

This Wicked World's main character is Jimmy Boone, a former marine fallen on bad times after taking a fall with jail time after a high class body guard job turns sour. Jimmy always has seemed to be in the wrong place or make the wrong decision that ends up hurting him while trying to do the right thing. This time he gets involved with trying to help a friend find out why a young illegal immigrant boy died from mysterious dog bite wounds. His desire to do the right thing once again gets him in over his head with some nasty people and he has to go through more than he bargained for to come out of it in one piece.

I really liked this book and will be looking for more of Lange's work in the future.

Dave says

Rock-Solid Action

This Wicked World is a rock-solid, action-packed crime thriller. The hero of this story is not a trench coat wearing private eye, but a bartending ex-con who somehow gets sucked into finding justice for a poor kid who collapsed on a bus, leaving behind a woman and a son and a pocketful of dreams. The ex-con is also a former bodyguard and former Marine so, of course, the reader can't help but clue in to gunfire and hand to hand combat on its way.

Lange does a great job of capturing the grittiness of Los Angeles' McArthur Park and fills out the story with drug dealers, dogfights, ex-strippers, soldiers of fortune. While the reasons for Boone to keep pushing for what happened to Oscar don't exactly add up, Lange has filled this story with so much action and so many double crosses that it's hard to put down.

James Thane says

Jimmy Boone is an ex-Marine and an ex-con who made a mistake and paid the price, although it takes a while for the reader to learn exactly what the mistake was. Now he's out on parole, checking in with his P.O. and trying to stay out of trouble. To support himself, he's managing a small apartment complex and tending bar on Hollywood Boulevard.

One night Robo, the bouncer at the bar, asks Jimmy to help him with a small problem. Robo does favors for people and is meeting with the grandfather of a young immigrant named Oscar Morales who died on a city bus after being viciously attacked by dogs. The grandfather wants to hire Robo to look into this and Robo wants Jimmy to come along and look like a cop to help impress the grandfather.

Robo gets the job, but then he needs Jimmy to give him a ride and help interview a witness. And then, and then... You can see where this is going. Before long, Jimmy, who was trying to keep his head down and stay out of trouble, is up to his neck in the mystery of the death of the young man. He's violating his parole and mixed up with dopers, gangsters and a particularly vengeful stripper. And in the end, not only his parole but his life will wind up on the line.

This is a very well-written debut novel with a great cast of memorable characters. Richard Lange definitely has the chops. I'm giving the book three stars instead of four because of my one complaint about the book, which is that several of the characters, principally Jimmy Boone, keep acting in ways that seem totally

implausible.

It's like the stock scene in the horror movie when the lights in the house all go out and the pert young teenage girl goes down into the basement. Everybody in the galaxy is screaming, "Don't do that!!", but she does it anyway. It makes absolutely no sense, except as a device to drive the plot forward.

Jimmy Boone, although otherwise a very sympathetic character, makes these bad decisions one after another. For a man in his situation, his actions just make no sense, save for the fact that if he didn't take them, there wouldn't be much of a book. I started off really loving this book, but after a while the fact that the main character continued to behave so senselessly, dulled my enthusiasm a bit. Still, as I said, Lange is an excellent writer and I'll be more than happy to give his next book a shot.

Miles Kiersen says

I'm either getting lucky or getting too old to know what I'm talking about, but the last five books I read I gave the highest rating to. This one by Richard Lange is as good a crime thriller as I've read, with just the kind of banter between the characters, stories within the story, non-stereotypical action, and people good and bad and both that I, the reader, cares about.

Jimmy Boone, a bartender in L.A., ex-con and ex-security guard, finds himself investigating the mysterious death of a young man in spite of his desire to stay far away from it. He adopts the dead man's toothless pitbull, and is thrown into a world inhabited by heartless dogfight owners and hardened criminals. Boone, himself, is no namby-pamby, and he does not hesitate jumping into the fray when there is a good reason to.

I read the last 100 pages in a sitting. I couldn't put the book down. Very engaging, very suspenseful, and very well told.

kelly says

Richard Lange is quickly becoming one of my favorite writers. I loved his short story collection "Dead Boys" and his second book, "Angel Baby." His writing is decent and his characters are always oddly compelling, so I had to backtrack a bit and read his first book, which brings me to this review. The story focuses on Jimmy Boone, an ex Marine and ex con who is hired to find out what happened in the death of a Guatemalan immigrant. In the process of his investigation he uncovers a dogfighting ring, a group of criminals, a scheme to counterfeit cash, and begins seeing a nice girl in the process.

Although the writing is passable and manages to compel you to turn the page to find out what happens next, this book is loaded with problems. As an ex con on parole wanting to keep his nose clean, Jimmy Boone kept behaving in ways that were completely implausible. The mystery of what happens to the young immigrant is solved fairly early on, a little over midway through the novel. His choice to continue to "investigate" and stick his nose into a criminal enterprise simply makes no sense. It's like the classic scene of a bad horror movie when the horny teenagers go into the woods with condoms and beer and you're shaking your head because you know fuckery and doom will follow. Yet Boone does it anyway, and it serves no purpose other than to drive a weak plot forward.

The last one hundred pages are a waste that further plunges the book downward into a mess. It is clear that Lange felt the need to wrap up every open plot end, no matter how useless and bad it was to begin with. It is unbelievable that Olivia does a complete 180 and tries to screw Boone over with a half assed kidnap job or the fact that Carl and Robo (more characters wanting to stay "clean") suddenly feel compelled to join his cause. There were also lengthy passages describing brutal dog fights that did not seem to function to move the plot forward at all. I found myself skipping over pages and pages of gory details describing pit bulls ripping each other to pieces that, quite frankly, did not enlighten me any further into why Lange went with the dogfighting angle in the first place.

Lange is an excellent writer but the fact this this is his first book clearly shows here. I'll continue to read whatever he writes, but I'd skip this book if I were you.
