



Crime Machine

Giles Blunt

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The long-awaited new instalment in the award-winning, bestselling John Cardinal mystery series.

A year after the death of his beloved and troubled wife, Catherine, John Cardinal has moved into a new, but very humid, condo. He has fallen into an easy routine of work on cold case files and platonic movie nights with friend and colleague Lise Delorme. The quiet of a snow-covered Algonquin Bay is shattered when the decapitated bodies of two people are found in a summer home on Trout Lake. The victims, visitors from Russia, are in Algonquin Bay attending the annual fur auction. This is by no means a routine murder investigation as Cardinal soon discovers, but a horrific piece of a very twisted puzzle. Blunt has, once again, given us a page-turning plot, a remarkable cast of characters and the comfort of John Cardinal at the helm.

Crime Machine Details

Date : Published August 10th 2010 by Random House Canada (first published July 9th 2010)

ISBN : 9780679314332

Author : Giles Blunt

Format : Hardcover 304 pages

Genre : Mystery, Cultural, Canada, Fiction, Crime

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From Reader Review Crime Machine for online ebook

Brenda Chapman says

Giles Blunt maintains his high quality of writing in this mystery. He plays with point of view, letting the reader in on the killers' identity early on with the exception of a hold back, which I suspected early on. The relationship between Delorme and Cardinal is finely drawn as is the Canadian setting. I found the plotline gruesome and unsettling at times and unplausible at different points. For example, I'm not sure that Delorme would have functioned as well as she did toward the end, given her injury. Anyhow, I am a Blunt fan and hope this series continues.

Larry says

The fifth of the six John Cardinal/Lise Delorme Canadian police procedurals was worth the hunt (bought at Munro's books in Victoria B. C.). Set in Algonquin Bay (Blunt's substitution for his hometown of Ontario Bay), a couple of hundred miles north of Toronto, the town of 60,000 or so is rocked by a particularly grisly crime: the murder and beheading of two wealthy Russian fur dealers in town for the annual fur fair. Cardinal is lead investigator, and is also assigned to clearing a cold case from almost forty years earlier involving the disappearance of a family. How the two investigations work out is consistently interesting, as is Cardinal and Delorme's friendship. As in the other books, supporting characters are carefully drawn, the investigations are well conducted, and there is a burst of action near the end. I'm going to reread the sixth book (bought in Winnipeg) while I hope for a seventh.

Marc Leroux says

Start with the basics. Great book. If you are a John Cardinal fan, pick it up. Immediately. If you've never heard of Giles Blunt, but like thrillers, pick it up. It's a good place to start.

I was happy to hear that Giles Blunt had finally returned to his John Cardinal series. Blunt's books are not that easy to find in the US, and the bookstores I went into on my infrequent trips to Canada didn't seem to have it in stock. This is the 6th John Cardinal book, set in North Bay (renamed to Algonquin Bay, undoubtedly at the request of the local chamber of commerce who want to downplay the number of murders that occur there), Ontario. A psychopathic killer returns to the north and starts by beheading a Russian couple up from New York for the annual fur auction. Cardinal and his partner Lise Delorme wade through the case, eliminating the Russian mob and animal activists until the pieces start to come together and the case concludes in a chase on foot, in a blizzard.

Excellent read.

Chris says

An okay, but not great, entry in the John Cardinal/Lise Delorme series.

As always, I appreciate the Canadian-ness of this series. The cops get their coffee at Tim Hortons (although

most Canadians would just call it Tim's, it's that ubiquitous up here). Lawyers gripe about their clients' charter rights (as opposed to constitutional rights) being violated. The beauty of the Northern Ontario landscape is well-described and would be inviting if it weren't for those pesky murders that happen in this series, beheadings in this case.

There were a couple of things that detracted from this one, though. The mystery itself is okay, but I read mysteries more for the atmosphere than the puzzle. The action added at the end of this one felt a little tacked on to me. I would have been fine with more piece-by-piece procedural plodding to figure things out than gunplay between the good guys and bad guys. In the woods. *In a freakin' snowstorm.* Well wrap me in the Canadian flag and drizzle me with maple syrup. This didn't just strike me as an overly obvious use of the weather to isolate the characters, but as a Canadian cliché, which has never been how the use of weather has struck me in this series before. And this is a series where the first paragraph of the first book mentions the weather.

Also, I miss Cardinal's wife being part of the series. His struggles with her struggles with mental illness were part of what I appreciated in this series.

Finally, I feel this series is at its best when Cardinal and Delorme are interacting together. Right from *Forty Words for Sorrow*, their first outing together, I have enjoyed the banter between these two. Nothing romantic. I'd hate if Blunt ever brought these two together. Just teasing banter. And this installment did not have anywhere near enough of it.

So overall, an okay entry if you already enjoy the series, but not the one to start with. For that, I would definitely recommend *Forty Words for Sorrow*.

Liz says

Another well written mystery by Blunt. I appreciate his ability to describe the Canadian landscape in such detail that you feel you are there. All characters, good and bad, are fully fleshed out. I can admit I had no clue as to how the ending would turn out.

Carolyn says

I recorded the new and excellent Canadian TV series Cardinal, which I watched in a day. It was not until I started watching it that I realized it was based on the first book in Giles Blunt's mystery series. I had read the first four books quite some time ago and enjoyed them. I discovered I had missed this one so downloaded it immediately. Cardinal is still mourning the death of his wife, and has platonic popcorn and movie nights with detective Lise Delorme, a colleague.

A horrific crime has occurred and Cardinal is heavily involved in the investigation and working on a cold case, whereas Delorme is sidelined to mostly searching for a person committing ATM robberies. A Russian couple in town for a fur auction have been found beheaded in an empty summer home. A young Native girl hears the crime while hiding under a bed in the house. She had been in the house for a romantic tryst with an

older married real estate agent who had left already. The Russian mafia may be involved with the goal of taking over the fur trade. The investigation leads to a villainous 'family' of survivalists. It seemed out of character for Cardinal to be so readily deceived by a 'reporter' and seduced into a relationship with her. This is a complicated case, set in the Algonquin region of Ontario.

Was happy to learn that the TV series has been renewed for 2 more seasons, and plan to re-read some of the past books in the series before they are aired.

I hope Mr. Blunt will write further books in the Cardinal series.

Veronica says

I actually enjoyed this crime mystery in spite of all the violence. I thought it was superbly crafted and every page was a page turner. The characters are strong and well developed (even the bad guys) and the mystery is unravelled at a good pace so that it all falls into place with a surprising ending.

Martha says

I am so glad Giles Blunt returned to his John Cardinal series. Cardinal and Delorme are a great team and I love their relationship: friends, yet flirty. I hope it goes no further than that. John Cardinal is not quite as "nordic" as the police detectives in those wonderful Swedish mysteries, but he has his issues, not the least of which is his grief over his wife's recent death. This story has multiple plot lines going - two unsettling beheadings, an old cold case, a weirdly psychotic "family", an intrepid reporter who also acts as a love interest for John Cardinal, but Blunt manages to tie them together by the end. Although not his best book, this one kept my interest throughout, and I would definitely read more in the series.

Mike says

Read this for a book club, but didn't get around to submitting a review.

Here's my brief comment, along with other members.

Consensus rating was 4-5

Me: I read the book, and quite enjoyed it. A well written crime novel, plus several elements, such as the north, police detective, and First Nations, are in my own first novel too.

J-A: First of all, I am biased toward Canadian authors because I feel they really speak to my world view. This is Giles Blunt's fifth book in his John Cardinal mystery series. The book is set in Algonquin Bay, a thinly disguised North Bay Ontario, during the annual fur auction. John Cardinal, a homicide cop with the Algonquin Bay police department, takes on an horrific murder investigation involving two decapitated victims found in a unoccupied summer home. Giles Blunt really hit a good balance between description and action in this book. While his descriptions of Ontario climate and customs evoked nostalgia they rang so true, they didn't dominate the story. The book was well paced, was an easy read, and had a satisfying twist at the end - all of which are all things I look for in an entertaining mystery. I liked the book so much I went out and bought another one in the series. If anyone else would like to read the books let me know and they can have my copies.

B-A: Crime Machine by Giles Blunt was the choice for the bookclub in April. For me it was an interesting choice because I would not have picked it for myself. Well written and suspenseful, it was an easy read and I didn't guess that the butler did it. Recommended for anyone who likes the genre.

B: I enjoyed Crime Machine very much. It wasn't perfect: there were some unexplained loose ends and some implausible bits, but overall it was entertaining and absorbing and I read it in only a few sittings. I could easily pick up another Giles Blunt book based on my experience with this one.

Toni Osborne says

Book 5, in the John Cardinal crime series

After two standalone novels I was pleased to see Mr. Blunt returning to familiar territory and his true protagonists, Police Detective John Cardinal and his partner Constable Lise Delorme. In this recent installment John and Lise investigate the beheading of two Russian business people who came to Algonquin Bay to participate in the yearly fur auction.

Since his wife's death in the previous novel "By The Time You Read This" John has become ever more obsessed with working his case files even his down time is spent with his partner, they both enjoy watching movies together in his new apartment which is conveniently situated a stone's throw from hers.

The mystery opens on a snowy night at a cottage on Trout Lake, where a married realtor and a young native woman have decided to meet for a romantic fling. He left early and during the night other people arrived. In a strange house and not wanting to be discovered, the young woman hid and witnessed one of the most gruesome moments of her life. After escaping she makes an anonymous tip to the police and when they come upon the scene, they discover two bodies, a man and a woman wearing expensive fur coats, decapitated and their heads missing. The investigation triggers many questions and scenarios for John and Lise. First: who is the tipster and what is her involvement, another thing to consider is can this be linked to a recent crime spree by a cult-like group or maybe the Russian mafia expanding into the fur trade and the list goes on. John and Lise soon discover this is not a slam dunk case; it is a complex puzzle, an endless supply of information that gradually leads them on a hunt for Papa, a ruthless survivalist gang leader.

The author has painted nature at a time when it tests a person's will and ability to survive under hard conditions and created an outstanding atmospheric setting. The storyline is captivating, as I kept turning pages I was pulled into a mystery full of intrigue and terror and into a myriad of sub-plots peppered with red-herrings. The twisted evil "family" and the dynamics between its members are particularly well-drawn and are the driving force that overshadows the protagonists in many ways. Although John and Lise take a back seat at times and Lise comes across as the dominate one it does not affect their growing relationship, who knows what Mr. Blunt has in store for the future, we can only imagine that one day there will be some spicy moments....

I am a faithful fan of this author and I am always looking forward to see what Mr. Blunt will pull out of his key board next.

Lucile Barker says

146. Crime Machine by Giles Blunt

John Cardinal and Lise Delorme are on the trail of Russian mafia fur traders, corrupt real estate agents, and their developing relationship, as well as protecting a young aboriginal year who was a near witness. Two people have been decapitated in a cottage during the annual fur auction. Blunt manages to convey the menace and cold of Algonquin Bay in winter. There is a wonderful portrait of a US agent who is also after the Russian mob, a crooked real estate agent whose wife is running for office and the usual people in the cop shop (McLeod and Commanda). Lise is becoming more of a detective and she and John are having movie nights, although he is still haunted by the death of his wife two years earlier. Part of my affection for the series is that I love North Bay, and I find all the Canadian references comforting.

Andy Plonka says

Learning the intricacy of the crime was the best part of this book. The main character. John Cardinal is an interesting guy, made more so by his history.

Ellen Keim says

Another gripping novel in the John Cardinal series set in the fictional town of Algonquin Bay. I don't like to reveal the plot when I review a book because I want the reader to discover it the way I did. Read elsewhere if you want to know what happens before you read the book (though why you would want to do that beats me).

The three main ingredients in a Giles Blunt novel are (in my opinion): the writing, the characters, and the setting. This book is one of the better ones on all three counts. The action takes place during the winter, which to me is a mysterious and dangerous time to be among the numerous lakes and deep forests 340 kilometers north of Toronto.

There are a lot of characters in this book but they don't run together because they are all so distinctive. And believable--even the Manson-like bad guy at the core of the story, as extreme as he is, comes across as a real, albeit scary, person.

Although the perpetrators are revealed early on (at least it seems that way), there are still a lot of surprises that kept me turning the pages all night long. Reading this book reminded me that the really good books are what make reading worthwhile. I only wish that more of them were like this one.

Natashya KitchenPuppies says

A Northern Ontario procedural/crime thriller.

Great portrayal of Canada; including snow, First Nations, French, and of course Tim Hortons.

Being from Toronto, it almost reads like another country.

I really enjoyed the complex mystery and the in-depth look at the characters, including the bad guys.

Very well done and worth adding to your mystery shelf.

Mook says

With crime novels it's always a huge hit or a miss. This one was a direct hit. John Cardinal is a cop who lives in Algonquin Bay, working cases with his partner Lise Delorme. The usual small time crime - ATM muggings, fur protestors, etc - is suddenly put aside when two victims are found horrifically murdered. The escalation leaves the cops and the town wondering who is going to be next.

The writing was superb. I loved the descriptions of Algonquin, of Northern Ontario winters, and the land of a thousand lakes. Anyone who has been to northern Canada would recognize the beautiful setting that Giles Blunt describes. Not to mention the French, the Tim's, and references to other Canadian cultural touchstones. The characters are (for the most part) believable; they act like people and not like caricatures.

Even if you start to guess what will happen and pull together the pieces, the execution is done very well. I will definitely be looking into the other John Cardinal novels.
