

Seat 3A: A Christian Stone Thriller

Eric Sugrue

Greenleaf Book Group Press (Jun 25, 2024)

\$17.95 (288pp)

979-888645183-2

In the series opening thriller Seat 3A, an otherwise ordinary man spots a body from a plane and initiates an investigation.

In Eric Sugrue's labyrinthine, fast-moving crime thriller *Seat 3A*, a Delaware restaurateur is drawn into a murder investigation.

Christian Stone's fear of flying has triggered some anxious moments, but never anything like this: surveying the ground below as his plane takes off for Miami, he spots a dead man in a tent-sized jersey lying on a bed of reeds on the banks of a river. He hesitates to go to the police, though, thinking he might not be believed, as the corpse is nowhere to be found once he's on the ground.

Christian is also haunted by guilt over his falling-out with a childhood friend years ago, just moments before he was murdered. He craves redemption. In addition to these challenges, his girlfriend just dumped him, so he's badly in need of a distraction when he decides to tackle this murder investigation on his own. The case puts him face-to-face with a professional hit man, though, and he winds up antagonizing some of the most powerful and ruthless folks in town.

Evoking classic noir films of the forties and fifties, the novel is driven by themes of paranoia and corruption among the elite. Christian is an able hero to handle these factors, both haunted by his past and capable of heading his own private investigation. And scenes at places like Lincoln Financial Field, the home of the Philadelphia Eagles, flesh out the local atmosphere well. The result is a fun, compelling joy ride of a murder mystery whose surprises are continual.

The book strains credulity at times, though, including with the initial event of Christian spotting the body of someone whom it turns out he knew from one thousand feet above ground. Elsewhere, an altercation distracts an usher just as Christian needs to sneak past him, and someone who's trying to hide his affair meets his girlfriend in a restaurant in front of his employees. Further, most of the people whom Christian interrogates part with information with miraculous ease—even if doing so puts them at great personal risk. "Geez," one woman tells him, "I'm just opening right up, saying anything that comes into my head." As Christian himself says on three separate occasions, "coincidences don't come that big."

In the series opening thriller *Seat 3A*, an otherwise ordinary man spots a body from a plane and initiates an investigation.

DAVID BUSHMAN (May 11, 2024)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.