

VIGILANTE JUSTICE

What the reviewers are saying...

Rating - 4 hearts out of 5

Vigilante Justice is a 2002 Eppie Award finalist thriller. This is a story about a brother's revenge. Gary Drake, an Internal Affairs detective, uses and abuses his knowledge and connections to discover all parties involved in putting poisoned crack cocaine on the street and into his brother's pipe. This edgy novel tracks a man's steady dissolution into the darkside in search of revenge. His choices don't make much sense until we learn why the detective no longer values his own life. There is much more than revenge as a theme here. The whole story is extremely ironic and the end will surprise you.

The author's plot is twisty but tight. There are ample surprises along the way to a devastating end to keep the pace a frantic one. We rated this book four hearts.

-- Bob Spear, Heartland Reviews

Rating - 4 stars out of 4

Did you ever wonder what policemen think? Gary Drake is a born cop--a good cop, but he takes on the system even to the point of defying the law to avenge his brother's death.

Right from the first line of Vigilante Justice, LaRocca has the reader hooked. He writes, "Gary Drake looked into his dead brother's eyes and knew that he had killed him."

This is not the usual, good cop/bad cop story. The hero has a problem that our society doesn't like to talk about or think about, but this talented author gives us a glimpse of what the real life of an honest cop is about. He reminds us of the hidden death--more terrifying than any bullet that can come out of a gun barrel--that policemen face everyday.

The twists of this mystery/thriller take more turns than a mountain road. In sharp and sudden curves, you find yourself embroiled in the search for Drake's brother's real killer. This story takes you to the depths of depravity in the world of drugs and the hopelessness of love and life lost, then back to possible redemption just to drop you back down to reality.

Vigilante Justice is about revenge and love--duty and hate. This sounds like a contradiction of terms, but LaRocca makes it work. This is a truly unusual "cop" story that you don't want to miss. Even if you are not much of a mystery fan, you will enjoy this book. It makes us look at ourselves, at society, at life from a different viewpoint--a frightening viewpoint, and it's worth every minute of it.

-- S. Joan Popek (<http://www.sjoanpopek.com>)

(This review originally appeared at <http://e-writers.net/books/justice.html> but the publisher has changed.)

Michael LaRocca can tell a tale. This one is a cop thriller that's about more than the usual story of tough men and women with badges and booze problems. *VIGILANTE JUSTICE* is about cops. It's about obsession and guilt and revenge and being eaten alive from the inside. And it's about hard-hitting action.

Gary Drake is one of those most hated of cops--Internal Affairs. He's investigating his brother's death, a death caused by smoking poisoned crack cocaine. What's an IA dick doing on a homicide case? Because there's strong evidence the dope came from a police drug locker, and Drake's brother is one in series of victims killed by the poisoned crack. Someone, it seems, is solving the drug problem by killing off the users. We follow Drake along a trail that winds from station house to sleazy bars as he pursues a case that jeopardizes his everything he holds dear. It's a treacherous trail, and the serpents of crack cocaine lurk everywhere.

Drake has other problems, too. His Captain is ready to toss him off the force. Drake's prime suspect is his former mentor. Drake finds himself falling for his new and very attractive partner. And Drake's doc gives him very, very bad news.

LaRocca's writing is admirable, smooth, engaging and intelligent. The author has his own way with words and a deep understanding of the human condition. His tough, but sensitive protagonist is someone I would like for a partner when the going gets tough.

VIGILANTE JUSTICE is well crafted. There's a fascinating plot with a tough crime to solve, but there are also richly drawn characters and well-written dialog. LaRocca weaves action and insight together very nicely in this story. What are the costs, the story asks, of vigilante justice? Michael LaRocca gives us a thought-provoking, pulse-quickening, and heart-wrenching answer.

I'd like to say that LaRocca is one of the "new breed" of writers making names for themselves by publishing on the web, but that would be entirely too restrictive. LaRocca has won a string of awards with his writing, and Web-savvy readers will already be familiar with LaRocca's shorter speculative fiction (if you're not familiar with his work, get that way). But what LaRocca is doing isn't new. It's some of those old concepts in the genre--like uniqueness without gimmicks, engaging social commentary without political correctness, and writing with a definitive flavor rather than homogenized pabulum-prose.

LaRocca's *VIGILANTE JUSTICE* is a good, fast, entertaining read that also makes even a jaded reader stop to think--and feel. *VIGILANTE JUSTICE* is available both as an e-book and in print. Pick this one up.

-- Todd Stone, author of *CLOSE TO HOME*

Rating - 4.5 stars

Gary Drake is no ordinary cop. He is in internal affairs, and he is one of the best. Gary is a very obsessed man and has a great deal of guilt. He finds himself in the middle of a homicide case. Internal affairs received this case because there is evidence that a cop is involved. This case is not like any other homicide case because the victim is his brother. His brother died of smoking poisoned crack cocaine. Gary must find out where Matthew got the cocaine. He must find out who would do this to anyone. Gary must do this before he runs out of time. Gary's prime suspect is a former partner and a man that he once looked up to. With a new and very attractive partner, Marjorie Brooks, Gary finds himself trying to hide a secret that is eating him alive. Marjorie must come to a moral decision. Does she tell Gary's secret?

Gary finds himself off the force. But he still finds the wait is killing him on the inside. He must avenge his brother's death before it is too late. He takes you on a wild ride. Day after day, he finds himself anywhere from sleazy bars to churches. He wants to make this bad cop pay for all the deaths that he has caused. Gary manages to return to the force. But with all the rage that was built up within him, he makes one big mistake. This mistake costs him his job for the second time. He also jeopardizes the case that he holds so dear.

From the first sentence of this book, Michael LaRocca has got you hooked. This book has it all. It is very exciting and heartbreaking at the same time. Michael LaRocca has written this book with really realistic characters that you can relate to. Vigilante Justice has a fascinating plot, a real crime and punishment book. This thriller is one of a kind that really keeps you wanting more.

--Reviewed by Elaine Leite, Timeless Tales