

30 ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED BOOKS

from The Book Ballots of 2022 and 2023

Listed by "Type"

All of these books were recommended by someone in our group!

Ver.3

AUTHOR: In Red means left over from 2023. In Blue means left over from 2022.

TYPE: Each of 16 "Types" of crime fiction is described at the very end of this list (last page).

- If the book is one of a series, the "1/3" (for example) means that the book is the first book out of three books in total.
- If the book is NOT part of a series, it is a stand-alone book, or SA.

AUTHOR	TITLE	PUB	TYPE	BLURB
Gray, Claudia	The Murder of Mr. Wickham	2022	Amateur 1/2	In a whodunit set in Jane Austen's world of fiction, Mr. Wickham—one of literature’s most notorious villains—meets a sudden and suspicious end at a party on Emma’s estate. Two young adult children of other Austen characters are the amateur sleuths: Jonathan Darcy and Juliet Tilney. (1830s English countryside) Recommended by Leslie who read and enjoyed it.– Dick
Hirahari, Naomi	Clark and Division	2021	Amateur SA	Aki Ito (F), just released from the Japanese-American detainment camp at Manzanar in 1944, hopes to meet up with Rose, her older sister in Chicago. Instead, on arrival, she learns that Rose was killed by a subway train - a suicide. Aki does not accept that her sister would die that way and is determined to learn the truth. (Chicago during WW2) This is an Amateur sleuth, not a cop or paid investigator story. But I wouldn't call it a cozy either. There is suspense in the book, but not like a thriller. It is more of a thoughtful, well researched, historical and traditional type of mystery. Close to a literary mystery. –Dick
Osman, Richard	The Thursday Murder Club	2020	Amateur 1/3	Four residents at a retirement home complex have formed a "murder club" that meets on Thursdays to discuss some cold case files they managed to get - as a "recreational" activity. When the retirement home owners engage in unscrupulous real estate deals unpopular with the residents, protests ensue- and then a murder. The retirees in the club -unhappy with the police efforts- decide to investigate on their own. (English town) This book was on last year's ballot but didn't make it onto the list. Since then, both Joan and Wendy have read the book and recommend it for our reading. Right. Now, you have another chance to read it! – Dick

Gordon, Alan	A Death in the Venetian Quarter	2002	Amateur 3/8	In 1203, the relative peace of the Byzantine Empire is imperiled when the ships of the Fourth Crusade show up outside the walls of Constantinople. The Crusaders, having sailed out of Venice, are now besieging the city. The jester known as Feste, his wife Viola, and their compatriots within the city are faced with catastrophe as the peace the Fool's Guild has worked so hard to maintain is about to be shattered. With such a disaster looming, the death of one silk merchant in the Venetian Quarter of Constantinople seems insignificant. But powerful schemers at court have taken a special interest in the case and want Feste to investigate the Venetian merchant's death. Feste must quickly uncover what forces were at work when the merchant lost his life. (13th Century Constantinople)
Peters, Ellis	A Morbid Taste of Bones	1977	Amateur 1/20	This 12th century mystery series takes place in a fog of civil war, where the English and Welsh were raiding each other's borders. A monk from the Benedictine Abbey at Shrewsbury, Brother Cadfael actually lives his religion, and casts a forgiving eye on the minor peccadilloes of his friends and neighbors. One of Brother Cadfael's fellow monks sees a vision of the Welsh Saint Winifred pleading for her remains to be transported to their Shrewsbury Abbey. Cadfael is skeptical about the convenient vision, but is sent along with the monks who are tasked to acquire Saint Winifred's bones from her grave, because he is a native Welsh speaker. But on arrival, the monks find the villagers passionately opposed to losing their saint. A murder is committed, and Brother Cadfael must sift through the many possible suspects, both English and Welsh. (12th Century England) A favorite of my brother and recommended by Beryl. –Dick
Gigl, Robyn	By Way of Sorrow	2022	Legal 1/3	Erin McCabe, a NJ criminal defense attorney, takes as a client, a young, Black, transgender prostitute accused of murdering a wealthy politician's son. As she considers all avenues of a defense, she and her client find that their lives are in danger. (New Jersey) For me, <i>By Way of Sorrow</i> was a fantastic blend of interesting characters, page-turning suspense, and most importantly - authentic courtroom action and behind the scenes legal maneuvering and negotiating. The author is a very successful NJ attorney and also a transgender woman, so I found the book holding my interest on so many levels. As soon as possible, I will be reading her second book. –Dick
Hartstone, Joey	The Local	2022	Legal SA	James Euchre is a small town Texas lawyer with persuasive jury skills. He is forced into defending a wealthy Pakistani-American entrepreneur who stands accused of killing a beloved judge -- who was also Euchre's good friend and mentor. Then, the deeper he digs, the more he fears that either an innocent man will be sent to death row or a murderer will be set free. (Small town Texas) This author was recommended by Ed, and everything looks great to me. –Dick

Lescroart, John	A Plague of Secrets	2009	Legal 15/22	The series features Dismas Hardy, ex-Assistant District Attorney turned defense attorney, and Abe Glitsky, a black, Jewish cop and homicide detective. In this case, Hardy's wealthy socialite client has a business that is not at all what it seems to be, as more people associated with it are murdered. Plagued by lies and deception, there is one terrible secret that defense attorney Dismas Hardy is duty-bound to protect. Even if the price is his client's life. (San Francisco) "About 15 years ago, I read quite a few of Lescroart's books and really liked them. But I haven't kept up. I remember one book with a scene with Abe and his young son that brought out my tears- it was so real and precious. –Dick
Freedman, J. F.	Key Witness	1997	Legal SA	A corporate attorney turns public defender and risks everything to defend a seemingly indefensible young black man charged with seven rape-murders, while the city's racial tensions erupt into violence. (Chicago) - One of my all-time favorite lawyer mysteries.
Berney, Lou	November Road	2018	Literary SA	It's November, 1963, and Frank Guidry, a loyal street lieutenant to New Orleans mob boss Carlos Marcello, is now on the run because he knows too much about the assassination of JFK. There is suspense as he is pursued by fellow gangsters, exacerbated by surprising changes as he meets, assists, and becomes involved with a woman-in-need along the way. (1963 America) This book, a literary mystery, won 9 top awards in 2019 which is highly unusual. I have not read it, and I'm relying on the incredible awards. To me, it does look interesting and worth a read. –Dick
Lee, Harper	To Kill a Mockingbird	1960	Literary Classic SA	The story is known for Atticus Finch's defense of Tom Robinson, a poor black man, in a false charge of rape, and a stacked deck of prejudicial factors in the trial. Finch, one of the best know protagonists in all of American literature- also the narrator's father, is the moral hero for many. As narrator, his daughter Jean Finch (Scout), is a secondary protagonist calling attention to issues of class, courage, compassion, and gender roles in the Deep South through minor characters and subplots. (1950s Deep South) Did you read this as a youth? Want to revisit as an adult to see what you think of it now? –Dick
Crais, Robert	Free Fall	1994	PI 4/19	Elvis Cole is a Hollywood private eye. A woman hires him to look into her fiancé, a decorated LA cop with an elite plainclothes unit. She's worried that he's in trouble. As Elvis starts to look into it, with the help of his backup strongman Joe Pike, they plummet into a world of South Central gangs, corrupt cops, and conspiracies of silence. And before the case is through, every cop in the LAPD will be gunning for a pair of escaped armed-and-dangerous killers: Cole and Pike. (Los Angeles) I have read several Robert Crais books. He is an excellent writer. I'd like to make time to read them all in order. –Dick]

Lepionka, Kristen	The Last Place You Look	2017	PI 1/4	Roxane Weary is a PI in Columbus, Ohio. She has been asked to look into the murder conviction of a man on death row because the convict's sister says, she has just seen the "dead victim" (a blond woman named Sarah) alive and well. Roxane's father had been a Columbus cop. When she realizes that Sarah's vanishing act is linked to one of her father's unsolved murder cases involving another teen girl, she is drawn in. As her investigation gets darker and darker, Roxane will have to risk everything to find the truth. Lives depend on her cracking this case—hers included. (Columbus, Ohio) I wanted to identify a really good newer, emerging PI writer. So I looked at the "Shamus" awards given by the <i>Private Eye Writers of America</i> during the last 6 years. I noticed that a female writer I had never heard of, was awarded twice in four years: Kristen Lepionka. I noted that the "Shamus" was not the only mystery book organization to select this book for an award. I was happy that Leslie volunteered to test-read the book and she gave it a solid thumbs-up. That's how this got nominated. –Dick
Roza, S. J.	The Art of Violence	2020	PI 13/14	Lydia Chin is a 30-something Chinese American private eye who often works with another PI, Bill Smith, a 40-something Army brat. While a serial killer is stalking and killing women in New York's contemporary art scene, Sam Tabor, formerly convicted of killing but now on parole, contacts Smith for help. Smith has many mental health issues and worries that he could be the serial killer. As Smith and Chin work the case, evidence one way or the other is hard to find... or keep. Then more bodies. Is Sam Tabor a serial killer, or just a crazy artist? (New York City) This is a good PI series I enjoyed a few years back and thought it's tone and pace would appeal to many of you. Carol Mc--- test-read this very recent addition, and gave it <i>at least</i> a "B" - try it for yourself! - Dick
Block, Lawrence	The Sins of the Fathers	1976	PI 1/19	A pretty young prostitute is dead. Her alleged murderer—a minister's son—hanged himself in his jail cell. The case is closed. But the dead girl's father has come to Matthew Scudder for answers, sending the unlicensed private investigator in search of terrible truths about a life that was lived and lost in a sordid world of perversion and pleasures. (New York City)
Keliikoa, Mary	Derailed	2020	PI 1/3	Kelly Pruett, a single mom of a deaf daughter, has inherited her father's PI business along with an unsolved case of a young woman struck by a train. As she gets closer to the truth, her list of sleazy suspects with murderous motives grows. On a crash course with a killer, she must piece together the puzzle of what really happened to the victim that rainy night, before her own fate is sealed and she loses everything. (Portland, OR)

Kerr, Philip	March Violets	1989	PI 1/14	In <i>March Violets</i> , the series opener, we meet wisecracking cop turned private investigator Bernie Gunther who specializes in missing persons, and as the Third Reich's power has grown, Bernie has become a very busy man. But as he takes on cases involving millionaire industrialists, stolen diamonds, and Hitler's most powerful cronies, Bernie finds himself mired in the brutality and corruption of a country on the brink of war. A highly acclaimed historical mystery series. Recommended by Dick (Nazi-era Germany)
Stevenson, Richard	On the Other Hand, Death	1981	PI 2/16	When the giant Millpond Company finds its plans for a mega-shopping mall stymied by the refusal of an elderly lesbian couple to sell their home, the ladies are subjected to ugly vandalism and frightening death threats. The powerful director of Millpond in turn hires Don Strachey, Albany's only gay detective, to protect the ladies, find the culprits, and clear the corporate name. Strachey accepts with misgivings that deepen rapidly as kidnapping, extortion, and murder darken the lives of Albany's gay community. Written at the beginning of AIDS activism, <i>On the Other Hand, Death</i> is a time capsule of gay life as it existed in smaller cities in America. I have read several in the series; they are easy, quick, and fun. Some were made into TV movies now available through Amazon Prime. (Albany, NY)
Meyer, Deon	The Dark Flood	2022	Police 8/8	Because of events in the previous book in the series, Benny Griessel, an aging, alcoholic police inspector and his partner Vaughn Cupido are banished from their Cape Town, South Africa high-profile squad, to a detective bureau in a "quiet" small suburban university town. Here they perform well on two cases: a missing university student, and a missing billionaire real estate manipulator. Neither case is as boring as they thought. And a great read for us. (Cape Town, South Africa) I read this because it is one of the five Barry Award finalists for "Best Mystery or Crime Novel" of the year (published in 2022). I have also read some of the other four on the list, including Michael Connelly's offering for last year, <i>Desert Star</i>. Both are high quality books. I am voting for Meyer's book because, all things being nearly equal, I preferred the ending in <i>The Dark Flood</i>. –Dick
Burke, James Lee	The Neon Rain	1987	Police 1/23	New Orleans Detective Dave Robicheaux has fought too many battles: in Vietnam, with police brass, with killers and hustlers, and the bottle. Lost without his wife's love, Robicheaux haunts the intense and heady French Quarter—the place he calls home, and the place that nearly destroys him when he becomes involved in the case of a young prostitute whose body is found in a bayou. Thrust into the seedy world of drug lords and arms smugglers, Robicheaux must face down the criminal underworld and come to terms with his own bruised heart and demons to survive. (New Orleans) Almost as good a writer as Connelly. Try it! – Dick

Chapman, Brenda	Cold Mourning	2014	Police 1/5	It's a week before Christmas when wealthy businessman Tom Underwood disappears into thin air — with more than enough people wanting him dead. Officer Kala Stonechild, who has left her Northern Ontario detachment to join a specialized Ottawa crime unit, is tasked with returning Underwood home in time for the holidays. Stonechild, who is from a First Nations reserve, is a lone wolf who is used to surviving by her wits. Her new boss, Detective Jacques Rouleau, has his hands full controlling her, his team, and an investigation that keeps threatening to go off track. Old betrayals and complicated family relationships brutally collide when love turns to hate and murder stalks a family. (Ottawa, Canada)
Crombie, Deborah	A Share in Death	1993	Police 1/18	A week's holiday in a luxurious Yorkshire time-share is just what Scotland Yard's Superintendent Duncan Kincaid needs. But the discovery of a body floating in the whirlpool bath ends Kincaid's vacation before it's begun. He sends for his enthusiastic young assistant, Sergeant Gemma James. But the stakes are raised dramatically when a second murder occurs, and Kincaid and James find themselves in a determined hunt for a fiendish felon who enjoys homicide a bit too much. (Yorkshire, England)
McGarrity, Michael	Tularosa	1996	Police 1/14	It's been two years since an on-the-job shooting forced ex-Santa Fe chief of detectives Kevin Kerney to retire. He is drawn back into action when Terry Yazzi, his former partner, pleads for Kerney's help. Yazzi's son, a soldier, has disappeared in the barren desert surrounding the White Sands Missile Range. Kerney's investigation resurrects the long-forgotten thrill of the hunt -- and other emotions surface after meeting the tough-but-beautiful Capt. Sara Brannon, the Army's investigating officer. Together, they uncover a crime far greater than an AWOL soldier: a conspiracy of death leading them to a final, shocking revelation that may cost them both their lives.... (various New Mexico locations)
Baldacci, David	The 6:20 Man	2022	Political Corporate SA	Travis Devine works as an entry-level analyst at the city's most prestigious investment firm. Then Devine's coworker and former girlfriend, is found hanging in a storage room of his office building, and immediately, the NYPD suspects Devine. Next he is manipulated by other to participate in a clandestine investigation into his firm, where, unknown to him, something rotten lurks. And apart from this high-stakes conspiracy, there's a killer out there with their own agenda, and Devine is the bull's-eye. (New York City)

Francis, Dick*	Straight	1989	Psy Thriller SA	Steeplechase jockey Derek Franklin has had more broken bones than he cares to count, but it seems his latest injury could very well bring his days on the race course to a screeching halt. But that's the least of his concerns when his brother turns up dead, leaving Derek as the sole inheritor of his estate. It doesn't take long for Derek to learn that his brother—a magistrate who imported and sold semiprecious stones—was keeping more than his share of secrets. Now Derek must recover \$1.5 million worth of missing diamonds—and find out who wanted his brother dead—or else his career won't be the only thing in danger of being cut short... (England) [Note: The first 21 of the Dick Francis standalone mysteries were closely tied to horse racing topics; after that, (including <i>Straight</i>) horse racing is a background theme, if that.]
Moriarty, Liane	Apples Never Fall	2021	Psy Thriller SA	The Delaney family love one another dearly—it's just that sometimes they want to murder each other . . . If your mother was missing, would you tell the police? Even if the most obvious suspect was your father? This is the dilemma facing the four grown Delaney siblings. Two of the Delaney children think their father is innocent, two are not so sure—but as the two sides square off against each other in perhaps their biggest match ever, all of the Delaneys will start to reexamine their shared family history in a very new light. (In Australia)
Taylor, C.L.	Her Last Holiday	2021	Psy Thriller SA	Wellness retreats are supposed to be good for you, aren't they? That's what Jenna thought. But is that what happened? Did she commit suicide? Was she murdered? Her Last Holiday is told from three main points of view, as well as telling about past and present retreats, so you get to see what's happening from all perspectives, how it all connects, and plays out. (Contemporary England)
Burke, Jan	Goodnight Irene	1993	Reporter 1/11	For thirty-five years the identity of the dismembered woman found under the Las Piernas pier has remained a mystery. What secret did she take to her grave? Southern California reporter Irene Kelly has uncovered a maze of forensic records and confidential files that suggest a motive far more sinister than anyone imagined. The discovery has brought her close to Detective Frank Harriman, and closer still to exposing a killer who will resort to anything to keep his secrets buried -- and Irene silenced forever. (Southern California)
Higgins, George V.	The Friends of Eddie Coyle	1972	Villains SA	These are the friends of Eddie Coyle: Jackie Brown, the gun leader; Dillon, part-time contract killer; Jimmy Scalisi, gang leader. All the hoods, gunmen, drivers, thieves and executioners wheeling, dealing, and stealing in the world of Eddie Coyle, a small time punk with a big time problem. (Boston, MA)

Westlake, Donald	The Hot Rock	1970	Villains and Humor 1/15	The first of the comical crime caper novels that feature ex-convict Dortmund, a bumbling heist planner. John Dortmund leaves jail with ten dollars, a train ticket, and nothing to make money on but his good name. Thankfully, his reputation goes far. No one plans a caper better than Dortmund. His friend picks him up in a stolen Cadillac and drives him away from Sing-Sing, telling a story of a \$500,000 emerald that they just have to steal. Dortmund doesn't hesitate to agree. The emerald is the crown jewel of a former British colony, lately granted independence and split into two nations: one for the Talabwo people, one for the Akinzi. The Akinzi have the stone, the Talabwo want it back, and their UN representative offers a fine payday to the men who can get it. It's not a simple heist, but Dortmund could use the challenge. (New York City)
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# For	% For	KEY WORD	16 TYPES OF MYSTERIES Sorted From Most Selected to Least Selected 16 People Responded By Prioritizing Preferences	2023-2024 Goals for Book Selection
14	88	Legal	Legal or Courtroom Stories: with lawyers, courtrooms, judges, juries, or prosecutors, etc.	GROUP A: 7 Books next year
12	75	Police	Police Procedurals: with police detectives, FBI agents, sheriffs, or game wardens, etc.	
11	69	PI	Private Detective (PI) Stories: with anyone who is paid to solve a crime, or find something lost; etc.	
10	63	Reporter	Investigative Journalist Stories: with reporters who track down sources to uncover injustice at all costs, etc.	GROUP B: 5 Books next year
9	56	Amateur	Amateur Detective Stories: be they storekeepers, knitters, priests, barbers, or barkeeps etc [They may be "cozies," best typified by the works of Agatha Christie which contain no explicit sex, or excessive gore or violence. Otherwise often called "traditional" mysteries.]	
8	50	Humor	Humorous Mysteries: having quirky characters & laugh-out-loud dialog more frequently than the other 15 genres.	
8	50	Doctors	Medical/Biological Crime Stories: with doctors, coroners, lab techs, or hospital admins, etc.	
7	44	Literary	Literary Crime Fiction Stories: with complex plots, deep character development, thought-provoking ideas, and/or blurry endings.	GROUP C: Put on hold for next year.
6	38	Classics	Classic Crime Fiction: books & authors that paved the way from 1748 through 1980; cornerstone books in the evolution of crime fiction.	
6	38	Psy Thriller	Psychological Thriller: where someone (or all) in the family (or neighborhood, or group of "friends") are suspect. Psychological thrillers.	
5	31	Adventure	Adventure Stories: high stakes searches for lost/stolen/buried treasure, documents, or secrets, etc.	
4	25	Political-Corporate	Political/Corporate Crime: with civilians trying to stop an injustice or catastrophe, etc.	
4	25	Romance	Romance Mysteries: where the mystery plot includes a significant love-story (or fling).	
2	13	Villains	Bad Guy Point of View (POV) Stories: with either successful or bungling burglars (heists), assassins, ne'er-do-wells, ex-cons, etc.	
2	13	Spies	Military/Espionage Action Stories: with big stakes, everyday spies, or big time bad guys, etc.	
1	6	Animals	Animal Mysteries: with pets, tracking dogs, race horses, or other animals as an important part of the plot.	